

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.

VOL. VII.]

MAY 1920.

[No. 1.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

BY

Hon'ble V. K. Ramamujashariar.

We are met here once more to celebrate the anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great soul that incarnated as an Indian on the 17th February 1836 and lived for fifty years on the banks of the Ganges not far from Calcutta. Celebrations like this are very useful institutions in that they bring us together and make us fix our reverent thoughts for some time at least on our great men and on what they have done. It is only by such meditation that what may be called the collective greatness of a nation can reach a high level. To day it is our good fortune to offer our humble tribute of reverence to the spirit of the Paramahansa.

Let me first describe to you briefly how the Paramahansa lived and then what he taught. The life which a person leads may be the life of the body, the life of the mind or the life of the spirit. The life of the body, which we share with the lower animals is concerned with self-preservation and reproduction. How the body should be fed, clothed and housed fully occupies one's thoughts. For this purpose his mind is directed to the acquisition of the material means of supporting life, and to the overcoming of the difficulties that lie in his path. He thus be-

comes a slave of the body, and spends his life in the satisfaction of his bodily wants of various kinds, each of which succeeds to another as soon as it disappears in satisfaction. Even when one has succeeded in attaining the means of a comfortable existence, he does not become free; for after the wants of the body come the demands of those who are of this body, and never-ending efforts are made to making provision for the wife and children. Even mental culture is sought only as a means of subserving the interests of the body.

In the life of the mind the impulse to know is very strong, and knowledge is sought for its own sake. Acquisition of knowledge is in itself delightful, and in its pursuit persons have been known to forget the care of the body. The biography of one leading a life of the mind describes the various circumstances which have led to the development of his mind in its different aspects, his pursuit of knowledge, the difficulties that he had to contend with, and the way in which he overcame them.

The life of the spirit centres round impersonal feeling. One who leads this life feels the same interest in the joys and sorrows of others as in his own, and he loves and hates independently of all relation to himself. He cares about the destiny of man, and makes efforts to attain realisation. To him the common things of the World appear to be a thin veil behind which he sees hidden wisdom and glory. He is anxious to grasp the ultimate truth of the world, and then to share his knowledge with all.

The life of the Paramahansa was not a life of the body. He paid no attention whatever to physical comfort. For twelve years, when he was endeavouring to attain a vision of the Divine Mother, and was for days and nights beyond the plane of the senses, it was with difficulty that he could be made to eat a few mouthfuls of food everyday. Even after he succeeded, he used to fall into trances so frequently and become so unconscious of his body, that an attendant was required to look after him. He never had a wink of sound sleep during those years. He used to say in later days "I did not once look to the preservation of my body. My hair grew till it became matted, and I had no idea of it. My nephew Hridaya used to bring me some food daily, and some days succeeded, and some days did not succeed, in forcing a few mouthfuls down my throat, though I had no idea of it."

Having no care for his own body, he was not troubled with the cares of those of the body. He was married, it was true; but when the girl attained puberty, and went to live with him, he

worshipped her with flowers and incense, regarding her as the Mother of the Universe. The maiden was a pure and lofty soul, and was able to understand her husband's aspirations. She immediately told him that she had no wish to drag him down to a life of worldliness, but she would remain with him, serve him, and learn of him. She became one of his most devoted disciples, always revering him as a divine being.

Having no care for his body or for those of his body, the Paramahansa regarded wealth with contempt. He used to say "women and wealth have drowned the world in sin." And he disarmed the former by looking upon every woman as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. How he disarmed the latter, he has graphically described. "Sometimes I would sit by the Ganges, with some gold and silver coins and a heap of rubbish by my side, and taking some coins in my right hand and a handful of rubbish the left, I would tell my soul "My soul! this is what the world calls money, impressed with the Queen's face. It has the power of bringing you rice and vegetables, of feeding the poor, of building houses, and doing all that the world calls great; but it can never help thee to realise the ever-existent knowledge and bliss, the Brahman. Regard it, therefore, as rubbish." Then mixing the coins and the rubbish in my hands, while repeating all the time 'money is rubbish,' 'money is rubbish,' I lost all perception of difference between the two in my mind, and threw them both into the Ganges." Once a valuable shawl costing about Rs. 500 was put round him. At first he seemed to be pleased with it; but in the next moment he threw it on the ground, trampled upon it, and began to cleanse the floor of the room with it, saying "It increases vanity; but it can never help to realise the ever-existent knowledge and bliss, *Sat-chit-ananda*, and therefore it is no better than a piece of torn rag." He literally carried out the rule that a Sannyasin should give up all worldly wealth. He would not touch money, and he had so trained his nerves that if one touched him with a coin while asleep, his muscles would contract, and the whole body would shrink from the contact.

If the Paramahansa's life was not a life of the body, neither was it a life of the mind. His education was very poor. His literary attainments extended to a child's primer only, and his mathematical knowledge only to simple addition. He did not know a word of Sanskrit. His elder brother did set him to study that language; but when he saw that all about him were devoting themselves to learning for the sake of money, he was so disgusted that he gave up his studies. It is unnecessary to add that he was

equally ignorant of the English language. The Paramahansa was aptly described by a contemporary, Protap Chandra Majumdar, as a "poor, illiterate, unpolished, half idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee."

Sri Ramakrishna's life was eminently a life of the spirit. Though he had no education, as the term is now understood he was well versed in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. This knowledge he owed to bands of striding players, who went from village to village, and whose themes were always connected with the incidents described in those books. He also invariably visited the Sadhus or holy men, who passed through his village on their way to Puri. A further opportunity of self-development came in the shape of the priesthood of the temple of Dakshinesvara, as is natural under God's providence in all cases of sincere longing. His daily work consisted in the offering of *PUJA* to the image of the Goddess Kali; but the worship was not mechanical as is usual with ordinary priests in the numerous temples of the land. He put his whole soul into his work. His attitude of mind is thus described by Swami Ramakrishnanda "To him she (the Goddess) was not a stone image, but a loving mother, and could a loving and dutiful child like him feel anything but intense bliss in her sweet company: he used to sing songs that she might be pleased with them. Every moment of his life passed in the thought of how to please her. Sleep forsook him in the night, when his mind tried to devise the best way of worshipping his beloved one. He forgot all about himself and was filled with the Divine Mother. When he sat down to meditate upon Her, space and time were completely overlooked, and he used to lose himself in Her." His fervour and devotion increased day by day. He became impatient to talk with the Divine Mother, and to see Her take food from his own hand. This did not appear in his eyes as an impossible task. Was she not able to create and destroy the world in a moment? Had she not previously appeared to more fortunate devotees? Thus began his search of the Divine Mother, which occupied twelve long years. This was a time of great trial. When a whole day had passed, and the ringing of the temple bell announced the coming of the evening, the Paramahansa would cry out "Another day is gone, Mother, and Thou dost not come." In the agony of his soul he would sometimes rub his face against the ground and weep. At this time a learned Brahmana lady came and taught him the different practices of *YOGA*. Then a Sanyasin, also a learned man and a philosopher, taught

him the philosophy of the Vedanta. Max Muller in the pride of the Western materialism scoffs at the coming of these teachers at the right time, and observes that it may be explained as "happy coincidences." But what is impossible to the omnipotent creator of the Universe? If it be true that His object is the spiritual evolution of the world, why should He not when He finds a sincere soul yearning for realisation, send in his way persons who would help him on? To a thinking Indian this will be very clear. If you will permit me to say a word about myself, I continually realise this in my life. When I retired from Government Service, I was so full of pride at having studied the philosophy of the Vedanta from the point of view of the Sri Ramanuja school. You may form a conception of the extent of the pride, when you learn that when Swami Vivekananda passed through Kumbakonam, all the people flocked to hear him, except myself. What had I to learn from an *advaiti*, who though a Sanyasi had crossed the sea. So I thought then; now I am extremely sorry that I lost the opportunity to know one who sat at the feet of the Paramahansa, and proclaimed to the world the message which he had to give. I make this public announcement in expiation of my great sin. But Providence saw the sincerity of my mind, and to cure me of narrowness, He first led me into the Theosophical fold—and when I had learned my lesson, he led me out of it, so that I might come under the influence of the life and teaching of Sri Ramakrishna. You may think it a 'happy coincidence'; but I firmly believe that Swami Sharvananda's invitation to me to attend the public meeting on the Vivekananda anniversary, and his subsequent suggestion that I should deliver this address, were providential. They have made me a devout disciple of the Paramahansa; and I am so full of him, as he himself was of his Divine Mother.

(To be continued)

"THE MESSIAH"

BY

Bibhuti Bhushan Roy Choudhuri M. A.

With historical science, the life of the Messiah takes its place in the great stream of the world's history; He is a human individual, who became what He was and He, as a mighty storm-wave which has arisen through the conflict of forces, is destined to sink once more into the smooth sea, in order to make room for new and stronger throes and creations. Here, in our Church, He is the rock which rules over the flood, instead of being moved by it; He, the Son of God, will survey humanity, however far and wide it may extend, permitting it only, to hold fast by Him, or to wreck itself against Him. The Messiah is the Sovereign seer of time, man's best man, love's best Love—poets' poet, wisdom's tongue. Who will not love such a Messiah—good Paragon, Crystal Messiah?

The Messiah is the central, typical, religiously greatest individual of the race—in Him, the principle of the absolute religion is manifested; He is the ideally perfect man in whom the God-Consciousness finds its fullest expression. He is the arbiter of the everlasting destiny of mankind—the infinite Inspirer; a Being essentially Divine, constituting Him not god-like alone but God.

The appearance of the Messiah in the world, is not a becoming man, but a coming of the heavenly; He—the heavenly man, is the Lord of the Churches, is also Ruler of nations and king of kings, the all-wise and almighty judge of the nations; indeed, to Him is due a worship similar to that of God Himself. He is the Lord of Glory, our Master and Lord, our Lord, glory, majesty, dominion, and power before all time, and now, and for ever more. The Messiah is the Prince of Life, exalted to the throne of universal dominion and must be a Divine Being.

Thus, we find the Messiah is a phenomenon in history which is not to be explained out of mere natural grounds, or on any principle of development, but a new creation, a true moral miracle, involving further consequences as to the origin and nature of the exceptional Personality. But in the jelly-fish lies enfolded—latent—the wealth of genius, the riches of civilisation, the powers of intellect, imagination, and heart—the treasures of human love and goodness, of poetry and art—even the Spiritual greatness and holiness of the

Messiah Himself! from jelly-fish unto the Messiah—a nice theory of cosmic evolution!!! Prolonged researches in a great Laboratory, under special conditions and extreme care, withal approved by Experts, have proved such a theory! But I firmly believe that, a few centuries hence, the history of what we call the scientific activity of this age will be a prolific subject for the hilarity and pity of future generations, these scientists were, as if, the victims of epidemic insanity.

However, in the attainment of the serene inward disposition, in unity with God, and comprehending all men, the Messiah realises in Himself the prophetic ideal of the Absolute Spirit; He had taken the Godhead into His will, in Him man made the transition from bondage to freedom. Each moment of His existence, so far as one can isolate it, represents a new and similar incarnation of God and state of being incarnate, since always and everywhere, all that is human in Him proceeds out of that which is Divine. He is the perfect Revelation of grace and truth, the central individual of the race, the founder of the kingdom of God in humanity—nay, He is the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Providence. He is the strong son of God—Immortal Love. Hence if we see in the Messiah, only his earthly origin and condition, this Messiah can as little redeem us as, say Bismarck can do. The fact is, the advent of the Messiah, is never a relative greatness but the absolute which is the appearance of Godhead in humanity; the religiously and morally perfect, and this alone, is in the domain of the human, the truly Divine, in which we can believe, and which admits of and demands worship. It is the Messianic Consciousness, which no thought can transcend, for that is truth in itself and in philosophy it is shown that the whole content of nature, of spirit, gravitates to this centre as its absolute truth. The ruling, the ground tendency of His ferment and struggle, is the Absolute Eternal Consciousness the pure form of thought.

However, we will see how Messianic "Call" and Messianic "Consciousness" constitute the inner meaning of the advent of the Messiah.

(To be continued.)

SPRIT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM.

BY

Brahmachari Khagendranath

Nowadays it has been the idea amongst many Indian thinkers that the salvation of India lies only through politics and politics alone. This craze for the inoculation of politics divorced from religion into the Indian thought have travelled to this land through those who drew their inspiration from the occidental culture. They are trying their best to emphasise upon the Indian mind the necessity for moulding their thoughts, institutions and national ideals on European models. This spirit of exclusive political frenzy relegating all other aspects of India's indigenous thought and culture to the background, has captured their imagination and blinded them to the glorious past of India. Many European thinkers have also mingled their jarring notes with them to strengthen this very idea.

But a little thinking over this question will bring home to everyone the futility of these speculations. If we look back to the dim but glorious days of antiquity and try to take stock of all our achievements of the past, we will at once be struck with those manifold activities which budded forth in different periods of Indian history with religion as the all-absorbing factor of our civilisation. From the Vedic age down to the present day the pre-occupation of the Indian mind was Religion. No doubt, politics, was one of the aspects of the Indian interests but it stood in a relation of subservience to religion. It is religion which was and is still the rock-bed on which Indian activities must have their true mould. In ancient Egyptian history art is said to be the outcome of their religion. But here in India not only art but everything affecting the destiny of the people found its inspiration from this religious spirit. India still wears on her crown the jewels of her achievements in the fields of literature, astronomy, arts, sociology, religious lore and political philosophies, etc. But one is deeply aggrieved to find that at this stage of world civilisation when Indian thoughts eddy no longer within her own landmarks, but pulse from one end of the world to the other at the disappearance of the dead wall of separation from the outside world, the Indians are going to consign their glorious past and noblest ideals to the heavily littered chamber of oblivion to make room for the

new influx of foreign ideas, in a giddiness of spirit at the sight of the dazzling glamour of the western material civilisation.

The tocsin of alarm had been sounded in the past by many but their feeble notes were lost upon the reckless people and were futile to exorcise the spell that has seized upon the Indians. But at this critical stage there came to India, one whose silent spiritual activities turned the tide of Indian thought and roused the dormant consciousness of the seething mass of humanity and inspired them to hold fast to their religious and time-honoured institutions. This was Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He knew the pulses of the nation and administered the much-needed spiritual elixir to the moribund people. He and his worthy disciple Swami Vivekananda did not ride roughshod on our institutions and customs to make room for new ones totally divorced from the ancient traditions in their eagerness for saving India from the octopus of foreign ideas, but on the other hand, animated them with their spiritual activities and taught the mankind to adjust themselves to the new surroundings in chime with their past traditions. Swami Vivekananda laid bare all the springs of Indian activities and also the hollowness of specious western culture and thundered against that spirit of scepticism and pessimism which seemed to pervade the atmosphere of Indian thought. He voiced forth the accumulated spiritual culture of the Indians and showed to the world that religion is the backbone of our national life. Historical instances are not wanting to substantiate these observations. Even as early as the days of the Ramayan we find that national life was built on "religion" and Rama established one of the mighty empires in India. During the age of Mahabharat we see the same scene enacted on a grander scale—a handful of the Pandavas got the better of the powerful hosts of the Kauravas on the memorable field of Kurukshetra where "evil was sacrificed at the altar of righteousness." If we travel more down the stream of time and make a judicious analysis of the Buddhistic age we will find that the national regeneration was entirely due to the rise of Buddhism which rejuvenated the morbid Indian mind by its catholic and exhilarating spirit. Besides these, the rise of the Shikhs and the Marhattas during the hegemony of the Muhammedans, bears an eloquent testimony to the fact that religion in India was and is still the life-giving balm without which India's social and political fabrics would crumble away to the region of dust and desolation.

But to-day India is not the land of the Hindus alone. On her Catholic breast not only the Jains, Buddhists and Hindus but also

the Muhammedans, Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians have been living for centuries side by side. This apparent diversity leads one naturally to think of the impossibility of the unity of interests wherein there lies that grand cord of unifying these diverse interests. This want has been met in the grandest personality of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who has lived in his person the whole life of the Indians and his life, as such, is nothing but a synthetic fulfilment of all religions. He has showed that whatever difference there might be in religious persuasions there is that "divine" in everyone which eliminates all apparent conflict of ideas and that the full unfolding of the same divinity within, will drown all class interests and rouse that altruistic spirit in every heart for mutual co-operation to work out the problems of India. This message found living utterance in the words of his disciple Swami Vivekananda who promulgated the sublime truth of the Hindu Philosophy which displays the highest religious aspirations of the Indian mind where the grandest philosophical facts have been the practical spirituality of the people. This he did at a time "when under the blasting light of modern science old beliefs have been shattered to their foundations, when religion in the West is only in the hands of the ignorant and the knowing ones looked down with scorn upon anything belonging to religion." For he knew with the spirit of conviction that "political greatness or military power never was and it never will be the mission of our race. The mission of the Indians is to conserve into a dynamo all the spiritual energy of the race and that converted energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world. Thus India's gift to the world is the light, spiritual."

But we should first of all know what he meant by religion and what influence should it exercise on the mind. Is it that religion should teach us slavish morbidity and create an unhealthy atmosphere of passivity? The Hindu religious spirit has never expressed itself in that light. Our religious ideal is to be found in the Vedanta-Philosophy which embodies the accumulated treasures of the Hindu's spiritual consciousness, in which the freedom of the soul has been shown not by mere abstruse intellectual speculations but by intense Sadhana and practical realisation. The great seers have shown that a constant struggle has been going on between soul and nature—the former always trying to shuffle off the mortal coil to regain its free natural state whereas the latter is trying all the while to chain down the soul by its manifold shackles. In this mystic struggle of the soul and nature do we find the vibration of life. Swami Vivekananda has truly said "Religion is the mani-

festation of the divinity already in man" and the highest end of religion is the realisation of the freedom of the divine in him. So it comes to this that religious ideal does not lead to the stagnation of activities but rouses on the other hand the latent potentialities of the human mind and the consciousness of its real freedom. The man who is truly religious is never a slave but he enjoys that nectar of freedom which is denied to all who grovel in the sink of material pursuits of life. This message Swami Vivekananda thundered forth in different theatres of his activities, the sublime note of which is finding sure responses in the Indian mind. The work has only begun and this master-spirit will work through aeons to come and galvanise the inert mass with its electric current so that they might hold fast to their ideals and Indianise everything foreign. Now has come the time when every one should cast off the sloughs of indolence and foreign glamour and mould his life on the true Indian model to stem the tide that has been trying to sweep away our precious things.

But we should be misunderstanding even the message of the great Swami if we raise a battle-cry against everything foreign. We must have that strength of adaptability to the new conditions in harmonious development of our national ideals, for this wholesale blockade against the immigration of the foreign ideas would be detrimental to our own interests. No doubt, India is a land of kaleidoscopic changes but these changes are not of the radical or fundamental nature for they only touched the surface and the fringe of Indian civilisation. History stands as an unfailing witness to the reiterated attempts of the foreigners to conquer India. Since the Persian invasion down to the present day, innumerable hordes have led their mighty legions in rapid succession to this sacred land of ours. The invasions of the Greeks, the Sakas, the Yue-chis and the Huns left but very little impression on the Indian soil. On the other hand most of these invading hordes have been conquered and assimilated by our own civilisation. The great religious and social reformers of the Mahammedan period exerted themselves to stabilise the basis of our national life and have shown that the "*Brahmavya Sakti*" which at present lies coiled up, as it were, like the sleeping sacral plexus should be roused up and made to pervade all our activities. Where are to-day those mighty empires of the Egyptian, the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Romans? The fabrics of these empires were built by the sword; but when that sword—the fulcrum of their strength, began to rust, they showed signs of inevitable decay and soon melted away like so

many atoms. But India still lives in spite of these vicissitudes of fortunes, and why? Because she never lost that stamina of national life, i.e. religion which is the matrix of all our strength and inspiration. Thus the true test of India's potentiality lies in her strength of adaptability to the new environment and the power of assimilation of the new ideas by Indianising and stamping them with the hall-mark of her indigenous thought and culture. So we must sip the essentials from a medley of good and bad foreign ideas to the rejection of trash. Now it is high time when every Indian who has the country's good at heart must energize himself to reanimate India's past with necessary changes and to heaven them with the humanising influences which have travelled to our land from different centres of human activities; and we shall see that Indian problems have been solved and that she stands no longer as a beggar but as a teacher of "Freedom" to the world at large.

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA.

BAGHBAZAR,

Calcutta,

28-2-17.

MY DEAR—

Your letter was duly to hand. It was due to the great Utsava (the birthday ceremony of Sri Ramakrishna) and idleness that I could not respond to it in time.

We believe, Sri Ramakrishna is the Guru of the Universe. If we are absorbed in Him and strictly follow Him through the grace of God, our faith and devotion towards the Guru (spiritual preceptor) even of this world will be increased. The Lord of this creation is the only real Guru and goal of all beings. There is no other way. Well, can you tell me how many in this world have the strength of surrendering their all? Who can give everything up unto one and can depend on one in every matter? And how many have the strength to take burden of others and to give shelter in every way? How many of you have the full control over the body and mind? Most of us are the slaves, externally and internally. Those who have the real control over them are not men in the proper sense of the term. They are free from bondage and far above the level of the mass. Can those people who have still attachment for the body, who feel both pleasure and

pain and who are conscious of their body and of "I" and "Mine," take the responsibility of others even if they voluntarily submit themselves? No, certainly not. Such men never give shelter to others. A blind man can not lead another. Had it been so easy to depend fully on others in every matter and to take the responsibility of others, then there would have been no sorrow and misery, birth and death in this world. This creation would have been better than heaven.

If you have given up everything, body and mind, unto one and if one has accepted, then you have no duty whatsoever in this world. You have gone far above the constraints of so-called duty. "Thou" and "Thine" are no more. And again if you have still the petty Ego in you then you, have not really surrendered yourself and one has not accepted you.

What is written by your Guru Goswami is indeed the commands of the Shastras (the Sacred books). But who can really understand and realise them without Sadhana (religious practice)? Please tell Goswami that all these are spiritual matters. These can be perceived and understand only after the strenuous Sadhana of repeated births. Now you shall devote yourself to meditation. You shall try to follow his advice. Don't write anything more. Pray for his blessings.

I am very glad to learn that you brothers and sisters have celebrated the birthday ceremony of Sri Ramakrishna. The man who sincerely follows Him, will conquer this world.

Look here, my child, we don't want name and fame, followers and disciples. We don't want to be leaders. But we only want the grace of Lord.

My love and blessings to your brothers and sisters and to yourself.

Yours in the Lord,
PREMANANDA.

II

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,

27-3-17.

MY DEAR—

Very glad to receive your precious letter. I thought, you had been to Gauhati. As I did not know your present whereabouts, I could not respond to that in time. A new letter just to hand,—is a real devotee. But such cannot be happy in this world. The world is peculiar. How can one understand the play of Maya? A devotee only depends on God. He will bear everything that is sent by Lord—he won't give up. "Oh Mother! that is the real good, if I don't forget you in every condition and at every station of life placed by Thee. Let me always remember Thee under any circumstances, high or low, in the position of a King dressed in gold and pearls or in that of a beggar living under the shade of the tree."

Husband of—is not a devotee. So she is very unhappy. One cannot be happy only with money. There is no bliss and happiness in wealth. I am very glad to learn that you are doing well. Bliss is heavenly thing. Blessed are they who get it. May our Lord grant you immense bliss.

Maharajji is in the Math. He is doing well. I wish, you would write to him. H—answers to every one. He is learned and a man of great realisation. Swami—is also here. He is a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, I am an illiterate and am not fit even to be their servant of servants. My child, may you be absorbed in our Lord! This is my earnest desire. Be always pure in mind. Purity is the strength and God. I wish you lead such a life so that there may be no enemy for you.

Read the Books of our Lord every day and try to meditate on them.

Yours in the Lord,
PREMANANDA.

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA.

Chapter III.—Isvara as Originator and Lord of the Universe.

BY

Prof. Sundar Ram Iyer.

In India at least, we do not believe in the origination of the world from nothing. "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*" is the view commonly held by almost all our Vedic teachers. Creation—or rather origination—is with them only a change of form,—a change from the finer to the grosser form of matter,—from *Prakriti* (or primordial and causal matter) to *Vikriti* (effected and transformed matter). *Prakriti* is one and homogeneous; *Vikriti*, or the effected Universe is many and heterogeneous.

As originator of the Universe, God, as stated already, is "transeunt," for he acts on it through his omniscient and irresistible power. He is no mere Absolute Existence, but associated with form and limitation,—i.e., he has, of his own grace, taken it on himself to desire and effectuate the impulse to transformation in primeval matter. Such impulse and limitation is also consistent with the maturing of the Karma of the *jivas* by which they gain the opportunity of working with their minds and bodies for liberation from the bondage of matter. Till such maturing takes place, the transformation of original and undifferentiated matter into the objects characterised by name and form in the manifested Universe known to us, does not take place. Though we cannot say that the origination of the Universe took place at any definite moment of time, modern Science is not opposed to the fact of such an origination. Huxley says:—"Astronomy leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning." Another scientific writer says:—"That the world, as we know it, had a beginning, is a truth which there is no use denying." But we must understand that this beginning is not a creation from nothing but a transformation taking place under all the conditions and influences above enumerated.

Such an origination and transformation of the primeval matter into the Universe is also perfectly consistent with the now universally accepted scientific doctrine of evolution. The American scientific writer, Le Conte says:—"Science, following one line of thought, uncorrected by a wider philosophy is naturally led towards one extreme,—pantheistic immanence; the devout worshipper, following the wants of his religious nature, is naturally led towards

another extreme,—anthropomorphic personality. The only rational view is to accept both immanence and personality, even though we cannot clearly reconcile them,—i.e., immanence without pantheism, and personality without anthropomorphism." Further, he says,—“Our own self-conscious personality behind brain phenomena compels us to accept consciousness, will, thought, personality behind nature.”—“A God, resident in nature at all times and in all places, directing every event and determining every phenomenon,—a God in whom in the literal sense not only we but all things have their being, in whom all things consist, through whom all things exist, and without whom there would be and could be nothing.” We have already (in Chapter II) shown that the Vedanta not only reconciles the ideas of immanence and personality while avoiding those of pantheism and anthropomorphism,—but also reconciles the ideas of immanence and transcendence. The transcendence of God is unscientific only to those who think that there is no world other than the earth in which we live and move. If the existence of other worlds, finer and more ethereal in their constitution, is conceded—as men of science are sometimes known to do—we do not see why the idea of divine transcendence in some form should not be accepted, too, by the modern mind. The Vedantic reconciliation of the immanence and transcendence of God make it possible even for the modern and scientific mind to believe in a divine causative force (or infinite creative and sustaining will) “which by one eternal act—ever doing never done—determines the evolution and the sustentation of an infinite cosmos.” We shall further deal with this topic when we treat of the “teleological argument” to prove the existence and nature of God.

One objection to the Vedic theory of origination is that it is open to the logical fault of a *regressus ad infinitum*. To this our reply is that (1) where a fact is established by an unquestionable Pramana or source of knowledge, no merely logical argumentation against it can be held sustainable. For example, we adduce the analogous case of the seed and the tree, each of which is perceived to be produced casually from the other in endless succession, and yet we cannot object to it on the purely logical ground of a *regressus ad infinitum*. The Vedantist says, “नहि दृष्टानुपपन्नं नाम. “An unquestionable fact of sense-experience cannot be stultified on the ground that it is not consistent with reasoning.” (2) We learn also from the Vedic religion that Isvara has primordial matter under his control, and he graciously makes it successively go into manifestation and non-manifestation, because he wishes to give all living

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA 17

souls the opportunity of gaining redemption from the bondage of *samsara* by giving them forms or bodies suited to their Karmas.

Another objection to this Vedic theory is that science neither supports the world's origination from primordial matter nor the doctrine of Karma adduced in support of it. This objection does not hold. Huxley says :—“I find no difficulty in imagining that, at some former period, this universe was not in existence ; and that it made its appearance in consequence of the volition of some pre-existent Being.” The late Professor W. K. Clifford says :—“The idea of an external conscious being is unavoidably suggested, as it seems to me, by the categorical imperative of the moral sense ; and moreover, in a way quite independent, by the aspect of nature, which seems to answer to our questionings with an intelligence akin to our own.” Clifford's allusion, in this last extract, to the “categorical imperative of the moral sense” may be taken as at least something *analogous* to our Indian doctrine of divine dispensation according to the Karma of living souls. There is no alternative hypothesis to account for the facts, or at least no purely mechanical or materialistic theory which we can regard as adequate for the purpose in view.

A *third* objection to the theory of creation is that, if the universe of name and form is derived from a finer condition of matter preceding it, the latter is its cause, not God. To this the reply is that both are alike dependent on Isvara's will for their existence and changes of form, and so both have God for cause. According to the Vedic doctrine, matter in none of its forms and neither in whole nor in part, can ever have an activity of its own apart from the will of an intelligent Being. Hence, it is only the will of an omniscient and all-powerful Isvara that can direct the transformations of matter and the course of the universe.

A *fourth* objection is that, if Isvara is the cause of the changes of form in the Universe, then such causation must effectuate a change in him. Hence, he becomes, too, a part of the world of phenomena. To this objection, the Vedantist gives a two-fold reply. *First*, Isvara is the *relative* aspect of Brahman or the Absolute Existence. So, there is nothing to frighten us if we have to regard him as included in phenomenal existence. *Secondly*, because the world is dependent on Isvara's will for its existence and purpose, it does not follow that thereby his reality as the one Absolute Existence is affected—for to say that the Absolute is affected or changed involves a contradiction in terms. The Vedantis

distinguishes तदस्यलक्षणम् (accidental or non-essential property) from स्वरूपलक्षणम् (substantial or essential property). We are concerned with the former alone when we consider God in his relation to the Universe as its originator, Lord and guide.

In connection with our present topic, we have to point out that all finite and living souls form a part of the Universe, too,—that, at the time of the world's origination, they obtain new bodies and pass through several subsequent re-incarnations during the period for which the Universe of name and form lasts. Each soul is identical with Brahman in its essential nature. Only the ignorance in which it is immersed prevents it from realising its unity as the Absolute Existence. Such realisation (*Jnana*) leads to what is known as आत्यन्तिकप्रलय (final dissolution of the Universe) as distinguished from स्वाभाविकप्रलय (the dissolution of names and forms into the primal form of matter). Such final dissolution as we speak of refers to the individual mind with which the one Atman (or Absolute) becomes associated through Ignorance (*Avidya*) during the time when the Universe of name and form as known to us lasts and till the time when the realisation of the One Atman is gained through the grace of a teacher competent and merciful enough to undertake the task of enlightening us. Till such final realisation is obtained the (phenomenal) distinctness of numerous living souls appears to be a postulate of immediate experience which cannot at all be stultified. But it is not impossible to satisfy the thinking mind that such distinctness is purely fictitiously imposed on it. For neither the outgoing knowledge gained by sense-perception nor inference from premises based on such knowledge can have any kind of reference or access to the interior Atman (प्रत्यगात्मन्). Hence, we can also take our stand on the well-known principle of the "Identity of Indiscernibles," and conclude that the distinctness of Jivas is a mere figment of the understanding due to ignorance of the real Self. Our existence as a living individual (*Jivatman*) and the activity of all kinds it implies—is not to be confounded with the Self which is identical with the Innermost and Absolute existence which is one only without a second,—for it implies the phenomenal and material not-Self or subject which is entirely different from it.

It is often asked, why cannot the phenomenally distinct souls be a democratic body of equals capable of acting on each other and on the external world for purposes of self-determination and self-adjustment and without owing allegiance to a supreme ruler determining their fates according to eternal laws? This is merely a

hypothesis founded on the analogy of democratic human societies in history. To pursue analogies to their extreme limits while engaged in rational and philosophic investigation of truth is certainly not a justifiable procedure,—especially when we can easily put forth analogies to support other views. Le Comte—the American Scientist already quoted—says:—"Our own self-conscious personality behind brain phenomena compels us to accept consciousness, will, thought, personality behind nature,"—the one personality behind nature which is homogeneous, undifferentiated, and therefore one.

We may here appropriately make a brief reference to the traditional proofs in favour of the existence of God—proofs which had much vogue in Europe at a time when men in general implicitly believed in the existence of God and which lost their old value and force when Hume traced the historical development from polytheism to theism, and later Kant showed that human reason was not competent to comprehend the being and attributes of God. The Vedic doctrine has made it clear that the existence and attributes of God in his relation to the Universe rest on a basis not to be shaken by these and other lines of argument once familiar to the thinking minds, in the West. Hence, we can afford to examine these old theistic arguments, solely with a view to see whether they have a value for the purpose for which they were intended.

First, we have the *ontological* argument. According to it, whatever thought is consistent with itself, must also necessarily imply its reality—i.e., its actual existence—in the objective world, although we may have no experience of it. Further, if a conception is merely confined to thought, it cannot be the highest. For, that which exists both in the understanding and in reality is higher than one confined to the former only. Hence, God as the highest being capable of being conceived by the understanding, is not only an idea, but a reality.—To this argument Hume made the reply that, because we can conceive of something—say, an island or lost currency note—excelling all the known specimens of either kind,—we ought not to assume that a perfect island or currency note is actually in existence. So also with God. Moreover, existence is not in itself a necessary factor in *ideal* perfection. Even if it were, we are not justified in passing from *ideal* existence to existence as a fact.

Secondly, we have the *cosmological* proof. The world—or myself, as a part of it—exists, and its cause is God, for everything

has a cause.—This is not a legitimate inference from the universality of the law of causation, for it involves a transition from a contingent, imperfect, and phenomenal world of experience to a perfect, necessary, and Absolute Being as its cause. *Secondly*, it is easy to see that the Cosmological proof presupposes the validity of the ontological proof. *Thirdly*, we cannot be sure that the cause we arrive at is the First (or Final) Cause, and that we cannot proceed further in the regressive search after causes. *Fourthly*, how can we arrive, by purely scientific reasoning, at a cause like God who is a Person and possesses all the qualities we ascribe to him? *Finally*, Hume points out that, in a scientific search after causes, we have to base ourselves on a uniform and invariable sequence. But here we have one Universe only, and not a number of them,—on which to base our discovery of God.

According to the *third* or *teleological* argument, certain special and marked adaptations in the order of the world reveal a purpose which can only be due to an intelligent and benevolent designer bent on rendering help to man.—To this argument, two objections are usually made: *First*, many organisms have failed to secure the needed adaptations and have not survived in their special environment. *Secondly*, in numerous instances of adaptation, scientific inquiry has shown that the only purpose served has been to contribute to the increase of painful diseases and mortal agonies to others.—In truth, however, such objections fail to take due note of the fact that our experience is after all limited, and hence we are not justified in jumping from such seeming failures, to a conclusion which upsets the theory or conception of the divine purpose in carrying out the entire scheme of the Universe. The *Vedic* doctrine postulates, *against Hume*, the eternal and continuing purpose and activity of a “creator to whom all things are subject,”—and, *against Mill*, one who is not “obliged to adapt himself to conditions independent of his will and to attain his ends by such arrangements as those conditions admitted of.” The blessed Bhagavan says in the Gita, (IX-18) as follows :—

गतिर्था प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् :
प्रभुवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥

He also calls himself the “Master” (अव्यय) of matter. Janet says well :—“If it be admitted that matter, obeying necessary laws, must perforce take the form of an organism fit for a certain function, the idea of finality must be sacrificed, and only blind necessity must be admitted.” Even the operation of natural selection through the conditions of the environment, in order to

develop an organ does not eliminate a truly scientific teleology, but only what Huxley calls “the commoner and coarser forms of teleology.” The teleological argument, as thus understood,—according to which the Universe is conceived as an intelligible order and systematic unity “originated from the intention and design of a supreme reason” (Kant)—should not be understood to denote a fact of history proclaimed to us as having taken place in the divine mind at a particular moment, but a successful realisation or satisfaction of a purpose or will flowing from Isvara’s relation to the Universe as its originator, lord, guide, benefactor, and friend, as stated in the Gita. We are thus brought back to the Vedic postulate of *Prayojana*—which is akin to the modern conception of Value—as governing the entire evolution of humanity in this changing world.

HEGELIANISM

BY

Bibhuti Bhushan Roychoudhuri, M.A.

With due respect to Hegel, we may say that much of Hegel’s Philosophy is too obsolete to be revived again. Hegelianism, at least, has failed to satisfy our demands for truth and religion, not to speak of its serious philosophic aberrations. A modern thinker will laugh at the meaningless utterances of the Absolute Philosophy—the explication of the Absolute Mind of course; a Hegelian alone can defend all the paradoxical statements, scattered throughout the Hegelian Bible; moreover a Hegelian brain alone can understand the cumbrous Hegelian Absolute. Undoubtedly a Hegelian is a human being, like Kant or Fichte, but in Absolute knowledge he rises to the stand-point of the Absolute and transcends the limitations of his nature. Plotinus saw face to face his “one”—six times throughout his life. He was a mystic! But a Hegelian Absolutist feels the very pulse-beats of the Absolute, when he opens the pages of Hegel’s Logic. “Culture” has made a Neo-Hegelian more dogmatic than Mysticism could have done with the Mediæval Christian Theologian. But a Hegelian is above criticism, not because Hegel made an advance on Kant’s critical Philosophy, but he cannot endure any statement which his coherent brain cannot make an integral element of his subject—object-self-consciousness. To him, the Universe is most rational, but any principle or theory going against his unintelligible as well as absurd Absolute, is, dielectically, irrational. It may be that he has consumed, with great dielectical skill and subtlety, all irrationalities which he abhorred.

Now, we are all aware how Hegelianism has got its death-blow from the vigorous shafts of James and Bergson—two great thinkers of our age. A Hegelian is nervous about James's "Radical Empiricism"—probably still more about Bergson's "Creative Evolution."—two most important philosophical systems of the present century. We should congratulate William James and Henri Bergson, on their tremendous success against the genuine and professional Hegelians. The former brought out the inherent defect contradictions, absurdities of Hegelian Philosophy; the latter did the same. Moreover, Bergson has given us his "New Philosophy." We may also mention the honoured name of Rudolph Eucken, who has done his best to expose the irrationalities of the most rational philosophical system—Hegelianism. James and Bergson have rightly questioned the legitimacy of Hegelian Logic and much vaunted Hegelian Epistemology, just as Eucken has laid bare the incompetency of Hegelian Ethics and Philosophy of Religion. Henceforth a Hegelian shall not question the strength of the Triple Alliance of James, Bergson and Eucken,—unless he is gone mad for his Master and Messiah.

By-the-bye, we may note that Hegel's Philosophy has been banished from the cultured people of his own Fatherland. Once, the Celtic temperament, strangely adopted the Hegelian Idealism, though at present, they are more partial to their own native philosophy—Empiricism and recent Humanism. As regards Uncle Sam, we are quite sure that Hegel's Philosophy could not charm him. But we cannot ignore the presence of a few Indian Neo-Hegelians,—still lurking in our midst. Our Indian Neo-Hegelians seem to be the most ardent advocates and followers of the dead Hegelianism. The most novel characteristic of these worthy followers of the most helpless Philosophy, in their fanatic defence of Hegelian Dialectic, etc., still more novel and original is their "interpretation" of Hegel's Philosophy—a horrible task which unnerved the celebrated Caird Brothers and Green, Dr. Stirling and also Bradley and Bosanquet. The Apostolic succession of the Absolute Philosophy, is unintelligible even to a super-man, as "Interpreters" of the Hegelian Philosophy, have contradicted each other almost as variously as the Christian Theologians their "Bible." However, our Indian Neo-Hegelians will do better in their lives (or negations!) if they turn out themselves Thinkers or Metaphysicians (just as in the West) than running after a Ghost, which an illusioned child will not dare. Sincerity has led us to make these beneficial remarks about the better prospect of our Neo-Hegelian friends and truth-seekers.

However, a Hegelian to be sure of his own inward convictions, must answer the questions put forth by Modern Pragmatism as well as "la Philosophie nouvelle"—not to speak of the retort of Voluntarism. Of course, since the death of Hegel, Hegelians are convinced that no danger lies from Schopenhauerism. Similar other prejudices of a Hegelian mind will show how it is the strangest and most intricate possible of museums of antiquities. The dialectic of the prejudice may be that Hegel posited, negated and some how synthesised "will" in his absolute spirit. However, it is better to mention, in the beginning, certain typical infirmities of Hegel's own philosophy, as we will be much occupied with the perfect scandal of his dialectic. The great Master, (as an Indian New Hegelian in his religiosity would have exclaimed) begins with a tenable first proposition and ends most dialectically in an untenable and absurd second proposition (without warrant or justification). The dialectical method, after a strict measurement of absolute Reality, sums up the possibilities of Divine knowledge in 70 items (or categories) of Hegel's Logic (1st edition). The Herculean labour of Hegel ended in equating Absolute Knowledge with 60 categories! (which since the days of Hegel are the life blood of God of the world). God's knowledge is neither more nor less than the seventy Hegelian categories! It is not only ludicrous but monstrous. Such are the profound truth with which a Hegelian heart and soul are filled with. Analyse—atomise the Hegelian Absolute, you will find the bloodless categories tied together by a heart-less Absolute. Neo-Hegelians, have most admirably powdered these skeletons—these "categories" into a fine powder, dialectically synthesised into life-blood of the Absolute (from skeleton to life-blood is the development of Hegel's Logic to Neo-Hegelian Logic) We are sorry for these inevitable conclusions. It is impossible to admit the sanity of the Hegelian doctrine of the identify of logic with Absolute Self-consciousness.

We must note another specimen of Hegelian rationality. We have heard from a Hegelian that God reveals Himself in History only on the shores of the Mediterranean and most gladly returns to Himself only in Hegel's Dialectic—the last message of God. Why God goes out to the shores of the Mediterranean than the Baltic or Pacific and still more why God is so happy in Hegel's Logic, are left to the cultured Hegelian to answer.

(To be continued.)

THE GOLDEN STAIRWAY

BY

K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri, B.A., B.L.

There is nothing more wonderful in this wonderful world than the steep and shining stairway leading unto God. That highest endeavours in life are of value only as strengthening us to ascend that slope leading up to our Heavenly Father. All the stirrings and renunciations in life are only *Sadhanas* or means to react and attain communion with eternal wisdom and love. Hinduism has given to us a clear vision of this steep and shining stairway unto God.

The first step in this stairway is certainly Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is not mere Karma. This is the introduction of an element of transmutation and transfiguration into Karma that supreme value of Karma Yoga lies. Karma Yoga is that efficiency of self-directed action which leads to the maximum spiritual enlightenment. Man is not a mere worker. He is a born lover and enjoyer of bliss who has to fit himself for the enjoyment of the nectar of love and bliss by the purifying discipline of selfless work. Motion is the law of life; bliss is the law of the soul. Nature is in a state of ceaseless flux; the Atman knows no change. Time and space are the forms and conditions of thought. Time is succession; space is coexistence; intervals between successive ideas form time-sensations; intervals between simultaneous ideas form space-sensations. But these relate to what is outside of us; the Atman is beyond time and space. Hence the true Karma Yoga is that which enables us to realise permanence amidst impermanency, peace amidst agitation, eternity amidst the hastenings of time and the varieties of space. Hence the Lord has said in the Gita :

“कर्मण्य कर्मयः परयेद कर्मणि च कर्मयः ।

सुखद्विमान्मनुष्येषु सयुक्तः कृत्स्नं कर्म कृत” ॥

But how can we realise this witness, this Atman who is beyond thinking which is a vibration of the mind substance, who is beyond the senses, who is beyond the body? What exists without is only a variety of vibratory conditions. It is the mind acting through the senses transforms the vibrations into sensations of colour or sound or taste or smell or touch. Life is all relativity. Our movement is different as we take into consideration or leave out of consideration the motion of the earth. It is rest if we take the universe as a whole. Hence the whole universe is relativity, variety, change. The soul is Absolute, One, Eternal. Our actions, if they lead to this realisation, are Karma Yoga; otherwise, they are not.

Once we relate ourselves to the supreme in everything that think and say and do, our action loses its relative and fragmentary character and has a new meaning and value and purpose and

result. The whole cannot work against itself. Selfishness will vanish only then. Our work must be worship (इष्टरा राधन), and its result must be dedicated to God to distribute them to the world (श्रीकृष्णा पणमस्तु). Separation will cease only when oneness is realised.

Hence it is that the *Sattvic* worker is selfless and unattached and full of peace and joy and love. The secret of work is in passing through it to God. All work is equally good if it leads us to God; all work is equally bad otherwise. Why should we therefore worry ourselves to cast aside our Dharma and take up another's Dharma? The prenatal Karma determines our birth and our work. But our present karma yoga can lead us through work, to worship and wisdom and purify our *Vasanas* and lead us into the Bliss of God. The goal is the self-realisation of Eternal Freedom by flying out of the small prison houses of desire.

Let us therefore work not for personal ends but for the glory of God. Let us realise that the good that we do is one way of discharging all the world has done for us. Or better still, let us realise that work is a means of bringing us communion with God and spreading His reign on earth. Our body, our senses, our mind, are merely fragment of cosmic being, our Karma has brought them to us. When we know their cosmic character and dependence on God, whom are we to benefit by trying to exclude others? Those others are as much a portion of the cosmos, of God, as we are, injury to them is really injury to ourselves. When we realise our real relations with the universe and our real nature, work will cease to bind us but will become a condition, nay a manifestation, of freedom. Karma cannot be cancelled by inaction but only by Karma Yoga.

Hence we must do work not to gratify the body or the senses or the mind but out of a sense of duty, out of a sense of obedience to His will, and out of love for God. There must be a shifting of centre from the body to God. Our love must spread through family society, and humanity unto the supreme. Duty must displace selfishness and must in the end itself make way for Love. The test of true duty is its ripening into God-love and God-realisation. It leads to self-liberation in the love and bliss of God-consciousness.

Thus Karma Yoga is the first step in that self-control of the lower self that leads to the self-realisation of the Higher Self. With the help of the mind we must control the body and the senses; and with the help of the self we must control the mind. Earthly pleasures satiate and cloy; change is the very condition of enjoyment of pleasure. But the Joy of self is unchanging and endowing and hence blossoms into the bliss of God-love and God-realisation. Pain and pleasure are relative; but love and bliss are absolute. The next step in the Godward stairway is therefore Raja Yoga, our dormant *Vasanas* are agitating our mental ocean with unceasing waves. The law of persistence of force explains to us how actions leave *Vasanas* or tendencies behind besides bringing us

their fruits as pleasure or pain. These 'Vasanas' are the seeds of desires. They migrate from embodiment to embodiment. The mental restlessness which is caused by them and which is a hindrance to self-realisation must be overcome by *Yoga*. For successful yoga, the Lord says in the Gita that practice and renunciation (*Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*) are indispensable. By the self-restraint of each mental state and by devotion to God we can become experts in self-control. Convergence and concentration of mind, as of light, is the augmentor of illumination. The Yogi's mind is to ours what a searchlight is to a rush light, nay, a sun to a spark. Even in the ordinary affairs of life, concentration is the only means of fulfilment. The focussing of our purified dynamic mental energy increases our powers of inner-vision. Meditation is concentration on God. Emerson well says: "The one prudence in life, concentration; the one evil is dissipation." There is a vital connection between control of breath and control of mind. **महद्वदः मनोवदः**. The soul attains self-freedom and mastery of nature by processes of *Yoga*. Morality is disciplined manhood and spirituality is perfected morality. The blessedness of *Yoga* is not in acquisition of *Siddhis* but in the disciplined poise of mind where in the Supreme reveals itself. Yogic *samadhi* is not mere unconsciousness, or trance or catalepsy but is the superconscious vibrant bliss of God-realisation. Spiritual vision is not a postulate but a fact.

Thus *Yoga* tells us the secrets of Nature's subtler and finer forces. The body is not a mere machine but is self-adjusting vital machine governed by will. *Prana Sakti* is vibrant everywhere and is the cause of life and motion. Life has not come from non-life. But life force is an even more primary constituent of things than the elements. It is not a result of mechanical forces but they are variants and resultants of it on a grosser plane. It is active in the elections or centres of force. The cosmic life force is operative in a denser medium and on a grosser plane in the case of mechanical forces. In the body the motor power is this *Prana Sakti*. The mind and the senses being subtler forces than the mere mechanical forces of the outer universe, the *Prana sakti* has a peculiar and rich self-manifestation through them. The *mind-sakti* and the *Prana sakti* have a subtle inter-connectedness. A yogi rouses the latent powers of his *Prana* and his mind. He is able to cure disease by directing the healing power of *Prana*. He is able to generate higher mentation by his focussed energy of mind. He is a master of the parental energy whence have come the resultant lower energies which have made the universe and are energising it. It is by this mastery of yoga that the soul disciplined by unselfish duty, begins to realise more and more clearly its, real nature and blessedness.

Thus *yoga* is union. It is the means of the union of the soul and the oversoul. *Hatha yoga* tells us how to conquer laziness, hunger, thirst, and sleep; heat and cold; and decay and disease. It enables us to bring our involuntary muscles under the domain of the will. It is the challenge of the spirit to the body. *Hatha yogis* are able to be without food or sleep for many days. But this *Hatha*

Yoga is only for the purpose of removing physical obstacles to spiritual attainment and is not an end in itself. It leads to Raja yoga which leads us unto God. These are intricate and difficult subjects which require separate and detailed exposition.

The next step is *Bhakti yoga*. It is becoming one with the oversoul in love. Only a soul disciplined by Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga can rise to that ecstatic continuity of blissful love which alone can be called *Bhakti*. The preparatory stages of *bhakti* are many and various and cannot be fully detailed here. They slowly lead up to that *Para Bhakti* wherein the soul and oversoul become one in the ecstasy of blissful love.

Such supreme *Prema-bhakti* and supreme *Jnana* are hardly separable from each other. The path of *Jnana* leads us to that ultimate infinity of *Sachchidanandam* which is the cause and basis of the universe. It first of all enables us to separate the self from the non-self and ends by making us realise how the self and the non-self are not separate from the Absolute. The subject is different from the object so long as the idea of subject and object persists but not afterwards. The realisation of this oneness is the supreme dispeller of all grief and illusion. **तत्रकोमोहः कः शोकः एकरसः मनुपरयतः**—asks the *Isopanishad*. The perfect *jnani* realises the bliss of cosmic consciousness.

In fact the infiniteness of seemingly finite things is divinely visioned by us even in our present state of limited vision. We are always haunted, by a sense of the beyond. It is, however, only in *jnana* that we realise the Infinity of God, that God is above Time, Space, and Causation, that life is Infinite and Eternal Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. He is the pure, infinite, self-luminous infinity of *Sachchidananda*. He is called God when viewed in relation to the soul and the universe. *Maya* is the name given to the seeming variety which is realised as unity in *jnana*. In the plane of created variety there is manifoldness but in the plane of absolute reality there is the unity of infinite conscious bliss. In the plane of the subordinate reality of created variety there are gradations; in the plane of the higher reality of the Eternal Absolute, there is absolute unity. In the plane of creation God is the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe; He is its creator; He is both immanent and transcendent; He is the repository of infinite auspicious qualities (*Ananta kalyana guna*); He is Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence; He is our Eternal Father, our Divine Mother. In the higher plane of the Absolute, He is *Sachchidananda*.

Such is the golden stairway and such the shrine to which it leads. It is the holy men and the holy scriptures that show it to us and lead us up through it to God. When we have the blessed privilege of meeting them, our dateless desires and griefs and sins are cancelled and we have new impulses of energy and love and endeavour; and with their help and under their guidance we can and will go up the steep and shining stairway leading unto God.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The birthday of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great eclat at Pudukotah under the presidency of Swami Nirmalanandaji who had specially gone over there for the occasion. Hundreds of poor were fed in the morning in the bungalow of Dr. K. Narayana Aiyer, Chief Medical Officer of the State. In the evening there was special puja followed by a few lectures. Mr. K. R. Venkataraman, B.A., L.T., M.R.A.S., Mr. M. Chidambaram Aiyer, B.A., Dr. K. Narayana Aiyer and Swami Nirmalanandaji spoke on the holy life of Bhagawan. After the lectures there was a grand procession of the portrait of Bhagawan with Bhajana parties round the principal streets of the town. The local I. B. scouts rendered much assistance both on the occasion of the poor feeding and the procession in the night.

Swamiji's stay was a source of great inspiration to the *bhaktas* of the place and a public Library is under contemplation.

We are glad to acknowledge a copy of The Sacred Books of the Hindus by the late Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vidvarnava, published by the Panini Office, Bahadurganj, Allahabad. It is one of the best Catechism of Hindu Dharma. It is a good collection of many useful things. This Book is a summary of so many Puranas and other Sacred Books of the Hindus. It contains many information regarding the rituals, religious practice and social and religious customs of the Hindus. One may be greatly benefitted by short Books like the one on our table. It will fully serve its purpose.

We are very glad to have a copy of Navayuga, a Bengali Monthly Magazine, published from Silchar, Assam. It contains so many various articles. We are sure it will help and refresh its readers. We welcome the advent of the same. May Almighty grant full success.

Prabuddha Bharat Office writes to us:—

With a view to give facility to the customers to get our publications without any difficulty and delay from the Prabuddha Bharata Office at Mayavati, we have opened a branch centre in Calcutta. All the publications of the Ramkrishna Mission in India and abroad will be available henceforth from our branch centre. Our trade-terms will remain the same.

Please apply to:—

**Manager, ADVAITA ASHRAM,
Publication Department.**

• 28, COLLEGE STREET MARKET (FIRST FLOOR)
CALCUTTA.

Taittiriya Upanishad.

CHAPTER VI.

असन्नेव स भवति । असद्ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् । अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद्दे । सन्तमेनं ततो विदुरिति । तस्येव एव शरीर आत्मा । यः पूर्वस्य ।

अथातोऽनुप्रश्नाः ।

उताविद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य । कश्चन गच्छती । आदो विद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य । कश्चित्समभ्रुता उ ।

सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपीऽतप्यत । स तपस्तपवया इदं सर्वमसृजत । यदेदं किंच । तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविश ।

तदनुप्रविश्य । सच्च त्यच्चाभवत् । निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तं च । निलयनं चानिलयनं च । विज्ञानं चाविज्ञानं च । सत्यं चानृतं च । सत्यमभवत् । यदेदं किंच । तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते

तदस्येव श्लोको भवति ।

असत् Non-existent एव verily सः he भवति becomes चेत् if ब्रह्म Brahman असत् non-existing इति thus वेद knows. ब्रह्म Brahman अस्ति existing इति thus चेत् if वेद knows एनं him सन्तं existing ततो then विदुः know इति thus. तस्य of him एवः this एव verily शरीरः embodied-आत्मा self. यः what पूर्वस्य of the former.

अथः Next अतः there upon अनुप्रश्नाः questions.

उत Does he? अविद्वान् who knows not प्रेत्य having departed अमुं that लोकं world कश्चन ever गच्छती goes. आदो or tell me विद्वान् one who knows प्रेत्य having departed अमुं that लोकं world कश्चित्समभ्रुताः ever get.

सः He-अकामयत desired बहु many स्यां may I be प्रजायेय grow forth. सः He-तपः tapas अतप्यत performed सः He तपः tapas त्यच्चा having performed इदं this सर्वं all असृजत brought forth यत् what इदं this किंच whatever तत् that सृष्ट्वा having brought forth तत् that एव verily अनुप्राविशत् entered.

THE VEDANTA KESARI.

तत् that अनुप्रविश्य having entered सत् Sat (what is manifest) सत् tyat (what is not manifest) च and अभवत् became निरुक्तं defined च and अनिरुक्तं undefined निलयनं supported च and अनिलयनं not supported विज्ञानं knowledge च and अविज्ञानं without knowledge सत्यं truth च and अनृतं falsehood सत्यं true अभवत् became यत् what इदं this किंच whatever तत् therefore सत्यं true इति thus आचक्षते call तत् about that अपि also एव: this श्लोकः verse भवति there is.

Non-existent, verily, he becomes who knows Brahman as non-existing. He who knows Brahman as existing, him they regard, then, as existing. Of him, of the former this verily is the embodied self.

Thereupon arise the (following) questions (of the pupil). Does he who knows not, after having departed this world, ever go there? And also does he who knows, after leaving the world, ever obtain that?

He desired: "May I be many, may I grow forth (through propagation.) He performed *tapas*. Having performed *tapas*, he brought forth all this,—whatever there is. Having brought forth, he entered it.

Having entered it he became *sat* (what is manifest) and *tyat* (what is not manifest), defined and undefined, supported and not supported, sensient and insensient, real and unreal. The *satya* (true) became all this—whatever there is, and therefore they call it *Satya* (existent).

On this there is the following verse.

[Non-existent.....as non-existing—He who does not believe in the existence of Brahman, who is beyond all sensuous perception, loses all faith in the Sruti or revelations and as a consequence, he lives and moves in the domain of the senses, which seem to be the only reality to him. But in truth the senses delude us and lead us to evil. And from an Absolute standpoint these senses and all objects of sensuous perception are non-existent. He having identified his life with the life of the senses becomes non-existent in that sense; i.e., he fails to attain the Immortality of life. From the depth of ignorance he leads himself to the abyss of darkness.

He who knows etc.—On the other hand, he who believes in the existence of Brahman, cannot live the life of senses, the life of ignorance. He will struggle his utmost to realise that super-sensuous reality. And ultimately he *must*. Hence, it is that the wise men regard him as existing, for they know such a person to become one with the real existing Brahman. Moreover such souls become the salt of earth.

Of him,—of the former, etc.—Anandamaya is the embodied self of the Vijnanamaya. Anandamaya is a subtler sheath than the Vijnanamaya and hence is it called its embodied self. Vide note on chapter V.

Does he who knows not, etc.—These are the questions put forth by the pupil. But why at all there arise the doubts whether the ignorant and the knower both obtain Brahman, or neither of them obtain Him? As Brahman is the common cause of all, be he ignorant or the knower, the effects when dissolved, or properly when departed, must go back to the common cause which is Brahman. If the ignorant cannot obtain Him, the knower too cannot get, as both are the effects of the same cause Brahman.

The succeeding portion of the text is begun in order to answer these questions.

He desired "may I be many, etc.—The Vedanta has taken two views of cosmology; the first, the *prima facie* view of it, is commonly known as *Parinamavada* or the process of transmutation of the primal cause into the successive states of transformation and manifestation. According to this view originally there existed the transcendental Brahman, with all its perfection and fullness of existence and knowledge absolute. Then there arose a tremor within It in the form of desire, *kama*, which brought forth subsequently the transmutation of its Being into the various forms of subtle and gross objects. This view has been adopted from the psychological fact that every action of ours proceeds from a certain will to act, a certain purpose. The purposiveness that we mark in the great activities of Nature is nothing but a reflection of that grand Purpose which stands at the head of the whole creation. Creation means a change, a motion, an expression of energy; and if the gross is the concretisation of the subtle, this movement of creation must have had its origin in the subtler movement of thought and the subtlest movement of thought is in the will to act, i.e., *kama*.

But this view contains a serious defect, although it satisfies the ordinary assumptions of causality. Brahman who is transcendental and perfect in itself cannot have any reason to change unless we suppose some coeval law of its being to change which is incompatible with its transcendental nature; change is possible only in Time and Space; but Transcendental Brahman is beyond both. Hence, no change can logically be imaginable in It. Yet, there is present before us this grand phenomena of creation, and how to account for it. To answer finally this question Vedanta assumes the second theory of cosmology known as *Vivartavada* i.e., the theory of super-imposition. According to this theory Brahman in reality, has not undergone any change to bring forth the creation, but by some mysterious inherent power of its own has developed this vision of creation before It and subsequently got itself mixed up, as it were, with the objects of the vision. That mysterious power which produced the phantasmagoria of

creation is popularly known as Maya. And this Maya is referred here by the word *Kama*.

He performed tapas.—The Sanskrit word *tapas* is derived from the root *tap*, i.e., to heat, to agitate. So, *tapas* primarily means that which produces heat. But in the secondary sense it means penance which produces the spiritual fire or spiritual knowledge. In this last sense the word is used here, i.e., Brahman made manifest within Itself the knowledge of the previous creation in accordance with which It has to create the future. According to the Vedanta one of the causes of creation is the Prarabdha karma of the Jivas of the previous kalpa or creation. Brahman has brought forth the present creation that the Jivas may suffer or enjoy the karmas, they did in the previous kalpa. So, the Sruti refers here to that fact by saying that Brahman meditated over the nature of His future creation. And this meditation concretised itself into the visible and invisible creation.

Having brought forth He entered it.—In the previous sentence the Sruti denoted that Brahman is the efficient cause of the creation and in the present and the succeeding sentences it refers to the fact that It is not only the efficient cause but also the material cause of the universe in as much as It is immanent in creation. This combination of the two different kinds of causes in one being has been most poetically described here, that having created the universe He entered into it and has become one with it. More over the Sruti here hints at the fact that Brahman is to be sought and realised within our own being, as the innermost reality of our life.

The Satya became etc.—Here the Sruti reveals the wonderful truth about reality; the crucial test of the real is our abiding consciousness of it, i.e., that which appears as-existent in our consciousness for all time and is not negated by another experience is the Real, the True. The universe which appears so real before us, how much more so must be its cause from whom it has derived its reality. Therefore the Sages, the seers call Brahman the Supreme Reality.

Note.—The disciple raises the questions about the *post mortem* condition of both the knowing sage and the ignorant man. And what the preceptor says in lieu of the answer in the successive sentences would apparently appear anything but relevant. But there is a deeper significance in the mode of reply adopted by the teacher; in the first place the preceptor purports, to signify that Brahman is the only reality of this real universe, and one knows it as such as his own being,—finally becomes one with It. But the other who denies its reality, spiritually denies the reality of his own being, although he is conscious of his physical existence and when this physical existence ceases to be after death, he finds no permanent footing in his spiritual being and thus he is dragged down again into another mortal sheath. So, he drags on from birth to death and death to birth again and again, finding no immortality of life.

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.

VOL. VII.]

JUNE & JULY 1920.

[No. 2 & 3.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda.

Besides the afore-mentioned events of his rising to the heights of highest consciousness (Samadhi) we have heard of many other incidents of his boyhood which go to prove the wonderful powers of his mind. We shall cite here some instances of them.

The expert potter in his village used to make the idols of gods and goddesses. By chance Sri Ramakrishna would come to him with his friends, and looks at the idols intently. Sometimes he would burst out with the remarks, "These are not properly done. The eyes of gods and goddesses never like what you have drawn." "This is the way how to draw"—So saying he explains to him the art of drawing which if followed, would make the idols look like living gods and goddesses with spiritual powers, grace, introspection and bliss—all superbly blended in the lustre of the eyes. The boy Gadadhar never learnt the art of drawing and yet how he could understand and explain it, nay, even teach it to experts was a great

wonder, and inexplicable to many. Sometimes when he himself used to mould the images or draw pictures of the gods and goddesses, they appeared like the handiwork of an expert.

Again sometimes he would fling out a few words to some one, unasked and carelessly, but they cleared away grave doubts which had been agitating in his mind for a long time; or, they would light up a new vista for his future life. The man would think with an astonished heart, could it be that the boy Gadai had been made the instrument by his beloved Lord out of His great mercy to show him the right path?

Take another example. The Pandits well versed in the Sacred Scriptures could not come to any decision regarding a certain point. The boy Gadai spoke a word and that cleared away the mist, they found the problem solved.

It is true that all the wonderful events of his boyhood we know of, are not expressions of his Divinity made manifest from the uncommon state of Super-consciousness. Though that may be said true regarding a few of them, but all the rest can generally be classified under six heads: Some of them go to prove his wonderful memory; some, his great power of intellect; some, firm faith and strong resolve; some, his uncommon boldness; some, his love for fun and mirth, and some again, his infinite love and mercy. But in and through all the incidents that may be classified under these heads, there is in evidence most markedly his earnestness, purity and selflessness; as if these were the natural ingredients of his mind, and the numerous events that happened around him gave rise at times to its different waves in the form of memory, reasoning, resolve, boldness, mirth, love and mercy. This fact will be clear if we only relate a few incidents from his early life.

In his village on holy occasions there would be theatrical performances of some play from the life of Rama or Krishna. As usual, boy Gadai would also be present there with many others. The performances being over next day, the other folks of the village would go about their own respective business with their mind perfectly oblivious of all the beautiful things they had heard in the drama. But there was no end to the thought-current that flowed incessantly in the boy Gadai's mind evoked by such performances. The boy got hold of his friends, gathered them all together under the mango-forest on the outskirts of his village, made them learn by rote their respective parts, which the boy remembered verbatim himself taking the main part of the drama began to play to the astonishment of the simple peasants who were cultivating in the

adjacent fields and witnessing their merriment and play. "How could Gadai remember all the songs and acts of the play on hearing once only in his life?"—so wondered the simple-hearted peasants.

At the time of investiture of the sacred thread, the boy accepted contrary to the prevalent social customs, and in spite of all remonstrances from the elders,—Dhani, a woman of low blacksmith caste, as his God-mother. Again, he was so charmed by the love and affection of Dhani, that he forgot all social distinctions, and snatched by force and took the food cooked by the woman. Dhani's timid but earnest remonstrances were of no avail to his acting otherwise.

The sight of Sannyasins and Faquirs with their long matted locks, naked body besmeared with ashes, always strikes a terror in the minds of the village children; for, the general impression among villagers is that such people kidnap away the young boys to swell their rank. Many such Sannyasins and Faquirs used to come to Kamarpukur abegging, as by its southern side runs the road that leads to Puri, the famous place of pilgrimage. His friends would run away being afraid of them, but the boy Gadai could not be frightened. On the other hand, he would enter into their company and regale them by his sweet conversations, sometimes being friendly with them he would serve them with personal services but always would study minutely their ways and manners. Some days he would partake of the *prasadam* offered unto gods by them and after coming home relate the same to his mother. Once out of great reverence for them, he tore off his new cloth made of *Koupinum* and *Vahirvasa* of it, and dressed himself in the garb of a *Vairagi* after having painted his body in the *Vairagi* fashion and thus came before his mother to her utter surprise.

In villages very few people specially among the lower classes, know to read and write. But most people are fond of hearing stories from the Ramayana, or the Mahabharata or such holy books. And at times, when they have leisure, they would catch hold of some Brahmin, or some one who knows to read, and would request him earnestly to read to them portions from these Scriptures. The usual custom is that if they found any such man, they should treat him with all respect by giving him first water to wash his feet, then serving him tobacco in a new *chillum* and last offering him a high seat of honour. The boy Gadai would be present there on such occasions with all seriousness, but the mirthful boy would not fail to study, keen as he was, how such readers in general being inflated

with vanity for the honour showed to them by the simple villagers, would mount up the high seat with a grand imperial air and solemn message, how they, while reading out the scriptures would gesticulate most funnily and tune their tone in various sing-song modes in order to impress upon their audience about their uncommon superiority. The boy would carefully mark all these and at times, would play their roll gravely imitating their gesticulations and tone with great perfection and make all laugh and enjoy the fun.

If we study carefully these various incidents of his early life we come to know the proclivities of his mind with which he came to tread on the path of spiritual *sadhana*. We know that such a mind must have a strong will to do, must carry out its resolve does never forget what is once heard, and will at once remove with an iron hand anything that may stand on the way to the realisation of the Ideal. We further understand that a heart like his moves forward for the accomplishment of deeds with a strong faith in God, in self and in the inner latent divinity of all human beings. The thoughts that have even the least odour of meanness cannot find any room in such a mind. What to speak of any low, vulgar, evil propensities! On the other hand, it will always and in all matters respond to and be guided by such thoughts only that are holy, pure and kind. Further we know, no thought or emotion, be it of his own or of anybody's can deceive such a pure heart and mind, having concealed its own ugly form. If we always keep in mind that Sri Ramakrishna's self was made of such stuff, then only we can follow him in all his struggles in the life of *Sadhana*.

The first manifestation of the *Sadhaka* aspect of his life, we notice, while he was in Calcutta, in his brother's school, when in answer to the severe reproaches and behests of his elder brother, Ramkumar, to be more careful in his studies, he speaks out plainly, "I don't want to learn the knowledge which fetches one bread and butter only. I want to acquire that which brings in true knowledge and makes the life all blessedness." Sri Ramakrishna was only seventeen years old then. Finding no progress in his studies in the village school, his guardians brought him to Calcutta, some time after. His coming to Calcutta and this above event happened in this way. His elder brother who was well versed in Logic and Astrology had opened a *tal* at Jhamapukur in Calcutta, and was teaching a group of students there. Further, he was officiating as a family priest in some rich families of the neighbourhood. After finishing his daily religious duties he would look to the teachings of his students, and these almost took away the whole of his time; so he found it difficult and a heavy burden to carry on along with

these also the priestly functions. But he could not refrain from them either. For, his earnings in the profession as a teacher were too scanty to meet the expenses of his family. So, after giving serious thoughts on the matter he brought his younger brother, Gadadhar to Calcutta and gave him the charge of the priestly works of his, himself minding only his school work. And Gadadhar also was very pleased to do this work as it was to his own taste and temperament. Besides this work of officiating as a priest, he began to do some services for his elder brother and minded a little study also. The beautiful young boy soon won the heart and love of all the female members of the families where he used to officiate as a priest. As at Kamarpukur, so here also, the ladies of high respectable families were very free before him and they all liked him for his ability, his sincerity, his sweet talks and lastly for his great devotion for the Gods. They always showed their eagerness to hear songs from his lips. The young boys of his age too had a great fascination for the boy, Godai. Thus like Kamarpukur, here also there formed of itself an association with Godai as the moving spirit and whenever they could snatch up any leisure, they passed happily in various ways with him. Hence, we can easily understand that here too he had no time to devote to his studies and practically there was no progress in that respect.

Ramkumar had noticed all this. But still did not say anything. For, he was painfully conscious that he had brought him there, depriving the young affectionate boy of the loving care of his mother, and that also to help him in his own earnings, to meet his selfish ends. Would it be proper under the circumstances to deprive the boy of the little happiness that he was deriving in the company of his admirers and friends, for they always gladly invited him to their respective houses to keep company with the sweet boy? If he did so, would it not be painful for a young boy of his age to live in Calcutta, away from his loving mother? There was no need of his bringing him there, but for the wants of his family. He could easily be sent to study under some Pundit in some village near Kamarpukur. In that case the boy would not have missed his mother. Thoughts like these at first stood on his way to reproach his brother for his conduct. But at last the sense and duty gained ground and he reproached the boy mildly for not attending to his studies. For, though the boy was so simple and forgetful of himself, Ramkumar thought, he must have to enter into life and take up its burden some day. If he would not learn then to manage himself in such a way as to improve his worldly prospects, he could never learn it hereafter. Some such ideas and a strong

sense of duty coupled with a tender love for his brother prompted him to reproach the boy for his conduct.

But the affectionate brother Ramkumar, though greatly experienced in the ways of the world, and of its people, being well worn by time and age, had but little knowledge of the wonderful mind of his younger. How could he ever dream even, that a boy of his tender age had already found out the secret of all human struggles and endeavour and that he could despise the name and fame and the enjoyments of the world that make but a nine days' wonder, and that he had already found out some other Ideal as the aim of his life? So, when being not the least moved by the reproaches, the boy gave vent to his feelings plainly in answer to those rebukes, Ramkumar could not truly understand him. He thought on the other hand, that the boy was a pet child of his parents and that he became cross, and answered like that for the rebukes which perhaps he got for the first time in his life. The honest boy tried in various ways that day to express his inmost feelings, he tried to express as plainly as was possible with him that he did not like to waste his time in the learning of knowledge which only fetches bread—but, whoever cared to take seriously the words of a boy? Why, of a boy—even if we hear such words from the lips of any elderly man and if we find him negligent in his selfish ends, we at once gravely conclude that some screw must be loose in his brain.

Ramkumar could not understand the feeling expressed by the boy. On the other hand, as one who rebukes ones' own darling, gets the reaction of pain the next moment and tries to derive peace of mind by loving him a thousand times more dearly, so, every behaviour of Ramkumar towards his younger brother, showed henceforward such feeling and reaction. But from his actions and behaviours we can understand that Gadadhar also from that time forward was seeking every opportunity to carry out into practice the inmost cravings of his heart.

The current of events for two years that followed after the abovementioned incident, in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and his elder flowed rather rapidly. The income of his brother was every day growing less and less, and he could not mend it in spite of his various efforts. He was even seriously thinking of closing the school and taking to some other profession. But he could not settle anything definitely, though he was certain that if the turn of events continued like that and he did not find any other new means of earning, he was certain to run into debt and get himself entangled in all sorts of difficulties. But what means should he

adopt? He did not learn any other profession but that of a teacher and a priest, and it was too late in life now to learn anew any lucrative profession. Moreover, even if he learnt any, and would strive thereby to earn more, he was quite certain, that would hinder his daily duties of worship and meditation. So, he concluded that there was no other help but to remain firm in his own profession and resign himself completely to the will of the Lord. He continued in his former profession consoling his heavy heart with the thought. "Let Lord Raghurir do what He wills." Moreover, we are certain, that an honest man of Ramkumar's temperament, who was God-fearing and easily contented could never endeavour hard to improve his worldly prospects. However, in the midst of these uncertainties, an event followed, which soon, through the grace of the Lord, showed Ramkumar the way out to prosperity.

INFLUENCE OF INDIA ON WESTERN CIVILISATION

BY

Swami Abhedananda.

Many people have an idea that India is inhabited by idolatrous heathens, who have neither philosophy, ethics, science nor religion, and that whatever they possess in that line they have acquired from the Christian missionaries; but since the Parliament of Religions at the "World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, the educated men and women of this country have cast aside all such erroneous notions. They now know that India is inhabited by the descendants of the ancient Aryan family, from which is descended in turn the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races. Though we are known as Hindus the word does not mean anything to us. This name was originally given to us by those who came from the west, like the Persians and the Greeks who invaded India from the north-west. In that part of India you will notice on the map that there is a river known as the Indus; this river was called Sindhu in Sanscrit. The Greeks and Persians called it Hindu. Hence those who lived on the other side of this river were called Hindus.

The educated men and women of this country understand to-day that India has always been the fountain-head of every system of philosophy—that India has produced, since ancient times, a nation of philosophers. The civilization goes back to 5000 years before Christ. While the nations of Europe were tattooing their bodies, living in caves, wearing animal skins and eating animal flesh, the Hindus were already civilized. If we read the writings and historical accounts left by Pliny, Strabo, Megasthenes, Herodotus, Porphyry and a host of other ancient authors of different countries, we shall see how highly the civilization of India was regarded by them. In fact, between the years 1500 and 500 B.C. the Hindus were so far advanced in religion, metaphysics, philosophy, science, art, music and medicine that no other nation could stand as their rival or compete with them in any of these branches of knowledge. On the contrary, many of the nations which came in contact with the Hindus through trade or otherwise, accepted the Hindu ideas and moulded their own after them. Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century B.C., states that the Hindus were the greatest nation of that age. They were more civilized than the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks or the Romans. Victor Cousin, the eminent

INFLUENCE OF INDIA ON WESTERN CIVILISATION 41

French philosopher whose knowledge of European philosophy was unrivalled writes :

"When we read the poetical and philosophical monuments of the east,—above all, those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe,—we discover there many a truth, and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the east and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy." Elsewhere he declares that "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell."

When we study the voluminous writings of the six different schools of philosophy which the great thinkers of ancient India developed during the period between 2000 and 500 B.C., we find that the thinkers of those days anticipated the conclusions of Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Hume, Haeckel, Herbert Spencer, Hegel, Ralph Waldo Emerson and others. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Williams that "the Hindus were Spinozites 2000 years before Spinoza was born, they were Darwinians centuries before Darwin, they were evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time and before any word like evolution existed in any other language of the world." In their attempts to solve the mysteries of the phenomenal world, Hindu seers of truth developed six principal systems of philosophy, each having numerous branches of its own.

Kapila, who lived about 700 B.C., was the father of the theory of evolution in India. He traced the evolution of the world to one eternal cosmic energy, which is called in Sanscrit, Prakriti (Latin, Procreatrix, the creative energy). He did not believe in the creation of the world out of nothing in six days, as you are taught from your childhood in Sunday schools. Science is now advocating the idea of the evolution of the world from one eternal energy. The Sankya philosophy of Kapila is devoted entirely to the systematic, logical and scientific explanation of the process of cosmic evolution from that primordial energy. Professor Hopkins says in his "Religions of India"—"Both Thales and Parmenides were indeed anticipated by Hindu sages, and the Eleatic school seems to be but a reflection of the Upanishads. The doctrines of Anaximander and Heraclitus were perhaps not known first in Greece." He also says : "Plato is full of Sankyan thought worked out by him but taken from Pythagoras." Frederic Schlegel writes : "The Divine origin of man, as taught by the Vednata, is continual

inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. "Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason, as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigor of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noon-day sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

From prehistoric times India has been the motherland of the different branches of knowledge such as, geometry, algebra, arithmetic, trigonometry, music, medicine, astronomy and higher ethical religion. The earliest records of the civilization of India have been handed down to us through generations from mouth to mouth long before the art of writing was known to the people. These records are known as the Vedas of which the Rig Veda is the oldest. The science of geometry was first invented by the Hindus from the Vedic rules for the construction of sacrificial altars; from these rules they gradually developed geometry, and it has been admitted by great scholars that the world owes its first lesson in this science not to Greece, but to India. The geometrical theorem that the square described on the hypotenuse of a rectangular triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of its other two sides was ascribed by the Greeks to Pythagoras, but it was known in India at least two centuries before Pythagoras was born. These rules formed a part of the *Sulva Sutras* which date from the eighth century B.C. Professor E. W. Hopkins says:—"Before the sixth century B.C. all the religious-philosophical ideas of Pythagoras were current in India. If there were but one or two of these cases, they might be set aside as accidental occurrences, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance." "After geometry fell out of use among the Hindus, all geometrical problems were represented by algebra. The Greeks could not rival the Hindus in the science of numbers.

The world owes decimal notation to India; arithmetic as a practical science would have been impossible without it. This, as well as algebra, was learned from the Hindus by the Arabs who translated it in the eighth century A.D.; Leonardo de Pisa first introduced algebra into Europe in the thirteenth century.

The Hindus were the first teachers of plane and spherical trigonometry.

In astronomical observations the Hindus were the first to fix the lunar mansions, lunar zodiac and the division of the constellations. The Chinese and Arabs borrowed these from India.

In medicine the Hindus were highly advanced. Dr. Royle of King's College, London, wrote in 1837 his celebrated essay on "Hindu Medicine" in which he showed that Hippocrates, the Father of medicine, who lived in Greece in the fourth century B.C., borrowed his MATERIA MEDICA from India. Dr. Royle says. "We owe our first system of medicine to the Hindus." Alexander the Great always had Hindu physicians in his camp for he preferred them to the Greek physicians. Megasthenes, Nearchus and Arrian spoke highly of the wonderful healing powers of the Hindu physicians.

The Hindus first developed the science of music from the chanting of the Vedic hymns. The Sama Veda was specially meant for music. And the scale with the seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before the Greeks had it.

It will be interesting to know that Wagner was indebted to the Hindu science of music especially for his principle idea of the "leading motive" and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many Western people to understand Wagner's music. He became familiar with Hindu music through Latin translations.

Chemistry—in Sanscrit, Rasayana—was also familiar to the Hindus from very early times. "The alkalies and acids were early known to the Hindus and were borrowed from them by the Arabians. The Hindus were acquainted with the oxides of copper, iron, lead, tin, zinc; with the sulphurets of iron, copper, antimony, mercury and arsenic; with the sulphates of copper, zinc and iron; with the diacetate of copper and the carbonates of lead and iron."

Dr. Royle says:—"Though the ancient Greeks and Romans used metallic substances as external applications, it is generally supposed that the Arabs were the first to prescribe them internally." It can be shown that the Arabs learned this from the Hindu physicians.

Vegetarianism originated in India and was spread by Pythagoras among the Greeks. The idea of the fifth element—the ether of space (Akasha)—was known in India before the Greeks and Egyptians knew anything about it.

Buddha, the founder of the great religion which is known as Buddhism was born in India and lived about 500 B. C. His

disciples and followers built temples and monuments—also they made caves out of the solid rock. Some of these may be seen to-day in a good state of preservation. Wherever the Buddhists went they carried their arts and sciences with them. Asoka, the great, Buddhist Emperor, the Constantine of the east, sent out missionaries from China to Egypt, and from Siberia to Ceylon to spread the doctrines of Buddha, of peace and good-will. A record of their wanderings, one of the success with their work was met, their treaties with the monarchs of various countries may be seen in the rock-hewn inscriptions which have been found in Egypt, Palestine, in different parts of Asia, west and east. These Buddhist monks were the great civilizers of the ancient world. The Buddhist caves of Karli and Ellora of the pre-Christian era gave the first idea of a cathedral; and the so-called Gothic architecture was to be found in the old temples of Southern India.

The Hindus of ancient India traded with Syria, Egypt and Babylon and their soldiers wore armour made of steel and they used steel weapons. They were the first to use gun powder—the Chinese got it from them.

We know from authentic sources that Hindu philosophers were living in Greece at the time of Socrates. There is a record of a conversation between a Hindu philosopher and Socrates. The Hindu asked Socrates what he was trying to gain. Socrates answered that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the nature of man, upon which the Hindu smiled and said; "How can you know things human without knowing things Divine?" None other than a Hindu could have given such an answer, because the Hindus ascribe all true knowledge to Divine origin and did not care much for knowledge of human affairs.

Christianity as a religion owes much to India. For instance the idea of the immaculate conception, of the birth of a Saviour from a Virgin, of an incarnation of God, of the immortality of the soul, the practice of baptism by water—all these were prevalent in India long before the birth of Jesus the Christ.

The monastic system and the nunnery were first established in India by Buddha 500 years before Christ. Buddha's son was the first monk and Buddha's wife the first nun. Those who have studied Schopenhauer's philosophy have undoubtedly noticed that it was full of Buddhistic ideas as well as the principles of Vedanta philosophy. He paid a great tribute to the latter when he said—There is no study more beneficial and elevating to mankind than the study of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life

and it will be the solace of my death." Professor Max Muller who is the greatest Sanskrit scholar of the day was also greatly influenced by the ideals which he learned from the Hindu writings. Ralph Waldo Emerson was the first pioneer of the Hindu philosophy in this country. It was Carlyle who gave him his first copy of the Gita. After studying it Emerson immortalized it in his poem "Brahma." "If the red slayer thinks he slays, or the slain thinks he is slain, he knows not well the subtle ways, I keep and pass and turn again" is his free translation of the verse which runs like this—"If the slayer thinks he slays, or if the slain thinks he is slain they do not know the truth. The soul can neither slay nor be slain."

Thoreau, the Concord sage, was also deeply imbued with the sublime teachings of Vedanta. "The Hindus," he writes, are more serenely and thoughtfully religious than the Hebrews. They have, perhaps, a purer, more independent and impersonal knowledge of God. Their religious books describe the first inquisitive and contemplative access to God, the Hebrew bible, a conscientious return, a grosser and more personal repentance. Repentance is not a free and fair highway to God. A wise man will dispense with repentance. It is shocking and passionate. God prefers that you approach Him thoughtfully not penitent, though you are the chief of sinners. It is only by forgetting yourself that you draw near to Him.

"The calmness and gentleness with which the Hindu philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable.

"What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through a purer statum-free from particulars, simple, universal. It rises on me like the full moon after the stars have come out, wading through some far summer statum of sky.

"The Vedant reaches how "by forsaking religious rites" the votary may "obtain purification of mind."

"One wise sentence is worth the state of Massachusetts many times over.

"The religion, and philosophy of the Hebrew are those of a wilder and ruder tribe, wanting the civility and intellectual refinement and subtlety of the Hindus.

"I do not prefer one religion or philosophy to another. I have no sympathy with the bigotry and ignorance which makes transient

and partial puerile distinctions between one man's faith and another's as Christian and heathen. I pray to be delivered from narrowness, partiality, exaggeration, bigotry. To the philosopher, all sects, all nations are alike. I like Brahma, Hari or Buddha, the Great Spirit, as well as God."

The Hindus have always been the teachers of higher ethics, of philosophy and religion. Wherever they went they preached their doctrines of peace and good-will. They taught that the highest truth may be realized in this life. They did not consider civilization as a means of extracting wealth from other nations, nor that a man is civilized when he is untruthful, when he is selfish. Their civilization was founded upon moral and spiritual laws. Buddha taught that hatred is never conquered by hatred; that hatred is overcome by love; that avarice is overcome by generosity and evil by good. To-day western civilization is just beginning to wake up to the fact that robbing poor nations does not pay, that it ruins the robber in the end. The highest standard of civilization must rest upon the ethical law. That law does not teach the survival of the fittest, but it makes us realize that the survival of the fittest, is the law which governs the animal nature. When we shall have learned *to make others fit to survive* we shall have risen above the animal plane; we shall be worthy to be called human beings. How far that ideal can be practiced in this western civilization remains to be seen. The ideal is that we should control our brutal nature, perpetuate our spiritual insight, and embrace all mankind as children of divinity; then should we belong to one brotherhood, to one family; every action of our lives would be a free offering to humanity for the good of humanity. That is the ideal of civilization that modern India holds in her bosom.

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA.

Chapter IV.—Isvara's Cosmic Purpose.

(Continued from page 21).

BY

Prof. K. Sundara Ram Iyer, M. A.

If Isvara, as already shown, is the Almighty, all-knowing, and Perfect Lord and source of the Universe, how can he have a purpose to fulfil at all? Purpose implies an act of will which seeks to realise, by effective means and methods, a plan of action calculated to obtain the fulfilment of a desire and the satisfaction thence resulting. Isvara is beyond the region of finiteness and imperfection, and so there is for him no want to satisfy, no difficulties to overcome, nothing worthy of endeavour or attainment in any future, near or remote.

The objection thus put cannot apply to the Vedantic conception of the Personal God. In the Vedanta doctrine as propounded by Sankaracharya, Isvara is a Divine Person who is the lord of the finite universe and of the finite intelligences or Jivas forming a part to the same. These Jivas, too, conceive of him (through the Veda) as a Person related to themselves and the universe as the Supreme arbiter of their destiny and as the loving friend and helper who is to raise them to the perfection of bliss which is theirs in essence and in truth. He is not the Noumenal existence which is beyond the unreal flux and manifold of the universe. Being a Person, he can have the will, purpose, and satisfaction arising from his relation of the universe, and not unworthy of it or of himself. The blessed Bhagavan has himself said :—(III 22, 23)

न मे पाभर्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।

नानवासमवसत्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मयतन्द्रितः ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

"There is nothing for me to do in (all) the three worlds, nothing to gain which has not been gained still I do engage in action. For, should I at any time not be active in (my) endeavours without yielding to sloth, men would follow my example in all manner of, O Arjuna".

Another objection to a divine cosmic purpose is that the evolutionary doctrine of natural selection may be taken as accounting for

for the gradual and orderly advance towards perfection of all organisms in the conditions in which they are placed. To this the answer is that it only amounts to the assertion in a general way of the prevalence of law and order in the universe, but does not explain it,—does not explain its goal, aim, or value. The good and evil in the world are not distinguishable as such by any inherent attributes existing in their own nature, but are due to man's capacity for sensuous perception developed in accordance with the Karma of past lives. Matter in itself is neither good nor evil, and the life of the senses does not appertain to the soul which reincarnates from birth to birth. Some modern thinkers put forward the hypothesis of an "Unconscious purpose" to explain the prevalence of order in the phenomena of nature. How a mental act can be *purposive*, and yet *unconscious*, is not easy to understand! There are, indeed various processes or activities in the life of plants, animals, men, and societies which tend towards a definite result, even though they are neither conscious nor purposive. Schopenhauer's *will-in-itself* or Bergson's *Vital Impetus* which are said to be known by Intuition, and therefore without consciousness or intelligence are evidently explanations of the prevalence of law in the universe which are suggested by these and similar phenomena. The Vedantin denies that an *unintelligent cause* can account for the "orderly arrangement" which we see in the course of events as we see them happen in the universe. The *Brahma-Sutra*, (II 2—1) says :—*"रचनानुपपत्तेश्च"* "The orderly arrangement (in the universe) is not (otherwise) to be accounted for." Sankara explains this Sutra to mean two things,—(1) that we do not see in the world that any unintelligent cause is capable of producing, by its own independent working and without the guidance of an intelligent person, an effect which serves the purposes of an intelligent being; (2) that it is not reasonable to suppose that objects in the universe (whether purely external or associated with our bodies) can become productive of the feelings of pleasure, pain, and delusion, for these appear *internal* while the former are not, and it is only the difference in our *Karma vasanas* that make them sources of pleasure, pain, &c. Thus we see that the idea of an "Unconscious purpose" is altogether out of place as an explanation of the order of the universe. Hence the Brahman of the Vedanta is not to be identified with it or with the *Will-in-itself* of Schopenhauer or the *Vital Impetus* of Bergson, for both these are stated to be capable of influencing the order by nature by "unconscious purpose." Brahman, on the other hand, is, in its essence, of the Nature of Intelligence or consciousness (*Chit*) and bliss (*Ananda*); moreover it is non-different from, but identical with, *Isvara* or the Personal God who is the omniscient cause

of the origin, existence, and dissolution of the universe and, therefore, conscious of its entire course and ultimate destiny.

When, at *Isvara's* will, the *Prakriti* (unmanifested matter) which is the primordial centre and source of potential energy becomes *Kinetic*, the world starts into being and begins its career of change and evolution. Even in a mechanism, we see that a definite result is possible only when the action of each part so influences that of others that there is no conflict between them. The mode of action of each part influences that of others, but continue the same even when there is a change in its position towards others or even if these latter are removed altogether. In an organism, on the other hand, the character and activity of each part or element stands in intimate and inseparable connexion with those of the rest, and hence any injury to, or removal of, any one of the parts will injuriously affect the life of the whole. In all the higher organisms, it is the function of a mind which is incessantly and permanently active to establish an uninterrupted continuity in the co-relation of the functions of the several parts or organs so as to secure a harmonious and progressive evolution of life, while removing all sources of conflict and disturbance.

The theory of evolution which was first fruitfully applied to the animate world has now been extended to comprise not only the inanimate world,—not only, also, to the specific forms of matter, but to the conception of matter itself. So long as the old mechanical theory prevailed, matter was conceived as self-existent and imperishable, without beginning or end, occupying (together with ether) infinite and boundless space, in ceaseless motion, and producing, through its interminable modifications, all that has been and will be. Thus, everything in the universe can be explained in terms of matter, force, and motion. As Tyndall put it in his famous Belfast address, we can "discern in matter the promise and potency of every form of life." This theory is now replaced by the theory of Evolution. Evolution is conceived, by biologists, as an unfolding of the embryo step by step, into the nature and final form of a living organism. The idea of evolution is now applied to the material universe and denotes the process by which the mass and energy of the universe have passed from a primeval homogeneous state to their present condition of distribution and heterogeneity and will undergo further changes till some ultimate form of distribution is reached, when there will be a counter-process of dissolution. Herbert Spencer says ;—"There is an alternation of Evolution and Dissolution in the totality of things." This is surely implied in the modern scientific conceptions of the conser-

vation of mass and conservation of energy in the universe. Scientists speak, no doubt, of the dissipation or disappearance of energy at times. But this can only mean that energy assumes and persists in a form which is no longer available for work and so not capable of being applied to the purposes of life. The universe, as a whole, is thus *finite*, though it may not be measureable. It is its finiteness that makes it a cosmos, and so ruled by law and order. We find the prevalence of law and uniformity in all the operations of nature, obvious and hidden, and throughout the entire course of its successive stages of evolution or the reverse.

The same idea of evolution through successive stages of progress and decline meets us when we study the history of human society. Here, too, thought, feeling, and will embody themselves as a common purpose and unifying principle of the life of societies. In all forms of social organisation, individuals identify themselves, more or less completely and consciously, with the general or social will to advance the interests and purposes of the forms of social organisation of which they form a part. It is the general will and its manifestations that constitute the rules and traditions of a community. The state, too, whatever its form or stage or growth—owes its authority to the manner in which it conforms to the character and content of the common will and purpose of society. Furthermore, these principles hold good with society and the state in all their forms and stages of advance. Every individual has the power of response to the common will and purpose as it adjusts itself to the changing world, and this fact alone determines the growth of societies and the transformations undergone by states and constitutions. Through all these transformations and developments, we find, from epoch to epoch and in all stages of growth, a principle of synthesis or harmony asserting itself triumphantly against the forces of dissolution, and individual minds enter into wider and deeper relations with one another, and a common purpose asserts itself as the result. But this common purpose is one which, as already stated, varies from age to age in every society, and so we have successive alterations and even sometimes revolutionary changes in the institutions of the society and the state.

The question now for consideration is—how do we reconcile this revelation of flux and reflux, of evolution and involution of growth or revolution, in the world of nature and in the social world with the idea of a *cosmic purpose* as the goal to which they inevitably tend. The thinkers of to-day who belong to the Pragmatic School hold that the conservation of value is the fundamental truth of all true philosophy and religion. This idea is in India as old as

the Veda,—i.e., it is not only as old as the Hindu religion, but as old as the universe itself. Sri Sankaracharya says,—

यत्र प्रयोजनं स्यात्प्रतिपादयति श्रुतिस्तदेवासीत् ।

“This Veda propounds as established truth only that which has value (for man).”

Value is either an end or a means,—i.e., immediate or mediate. The highest aim and end of life is of the highest value for man, and so its attainment or conservation can alone be accepted as Isvara's *cosmic purpose*. Is the highest value one which is “*ever* in the *making*,” or one which is *ever present*, *ever permanent*? This is the question of questions in philosophic inquiry. In India, the Vedic religion has ever had to maintain a conflict with those forms of faith according to which the valuable can only maintain itself by a perpetual struggle with the forces of evil. The latter hold that this struggle ever goes on in space and time, and so the valuable can never get into *final* shape, though it ever tends towards it in the course of evolution. Men can only share in values as the latter evolve, but can never reach or realise the highest value as the final goal of activity. Against these forms of religious faith, the Veda asserts the existence of the innermost Bliss of Love, one and absolute (प्रत्यगात्मन्) as the ever-present reality (सिद्धवस्तु) which we have to realise as the goal of all struggles in this world of chance and change, of all the dualities of good and evil, joy and sorrow, heat and cold, etc. This world of phenomenal change and limitations is real only so long as we do not rise to the immediate, inner, and intuitive cognition of the noumenal Self which is of the nature of Bliss, one only without a second. The value of this world of *Samsaric* births and deaths lies in its being the scene where we pass through the preliminary processes of probation needed for attaining to the purity of mind विच्युद्धि which is essential to such direct cognition of the Self. But, while we are in it, we cannot avoid undergoing innumerable sorrows and troubles and disappointments, and hence we cannot make it the final goal of our life's activity. Hence we read as follows in the Gita (VIII 15, 16) :—

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाऽऽप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

आब्रह्मभुवनलोकः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य दुःकोन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

“The high-souled ones, who have reached the highest perfection, having attained to me, do not have again a life which is

transient and the abode of woe. All worlds, O Arjuna, up to the world of Brahma, are transient, and so we have to return from them. But, after attaining to me, there is no further birth (with a body)."

It is, therefore, necessary that we must pass beyond the cycle of births and re-births in various worlds to the supreme light and bliss of the Atman beyond all limitations of time and space-beyond all the distinctions of cause and effect, of perceiver and perceived. The blessed Bhagavan represents himself as the Supreme Self of all which is beyond all the limitations of personality in the universe of space and time, of cause and effect, of births and deaths. He is above all the fear and misery which springs from the duality (*i.e.*, variety or *bheda* in the universe. "द्वितीयादौ भयं भवति" "Fear springs from that which is second." In the Vedanta philosophy, the Chitta or mind stuff (which is only matter highly evolved) is the source of all our dual perceptions and of the variety around and without us. When the mind has even the least of its desires gratified, it has a taste, however slight, of the ocean of joy which is the Self. But when it has attained to the highest Samadhi, it is free from all desires or passions,—it is absolutely pure and calm. It has altogether turned away from the world, and then it has the inner vision of Absolute Love and Bliss in all the enchantment of its perfection. This is alone our Self,—the आनन्द (joy) which is the antipodes of the universe already spoken of as the abode of misery (दुःखालयं). It is the Spiritual Peace and Perfect Joy which is the final goal of all embodied souls now struggling along the roads and tracks of Samsara,—*i.e.*, when they have turned away from all sinfulness and worldliness to the self (or Atman) which is *Inward and One* (अत्यगभिन्न.)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY

Hon'ble V. K. Ramamujachariar.

(Continued from p. 5.)

Let me return from this digression. The Paramahansa had now learnt whatever he had to learn, which was worth knowing from his point of view. He had next to attain realisation. He had heard that the soul in all beings is alike, and that the soul of a high caste Brahmana was not different in its essential nature from that of the outcaste. To realise this and to get rid of the pride of birth, he did the work of the street cleaner and scavenger. In the night possessing himself of the brooms and utensils of the scavenger, and entering the places in the temple which it was his duty to cleanse. Sri Ramkrishna knelt down and did the work of purification with his own hands, wiping the place with his hair. When the outcastes and the people of no character, who were daily fed in the temple, had finished eating, he would gather together the fragments of food, which they had left, and eat them. In doing this He used to pray 'Mother! destroy in me all idea that I am great, and that I am a Brahman, and that they are low and pariahs; for who are they but Thee in so many forms.' Next, he wished to get rid of the sex idea, because the soul is neither male nor female. He began to think that he was a woman; he dressed like a woman and spoke like a woman; he gave up the occupations of men, and lived among the women of his own family, till after years of this discipline his mind became completely changed. Thus, he realised the soul in its essential nature. His efforts at realisation of God have been referred to already. Protap Chandra Majumdar, a contemporary of the Paramahansa, observes "He is the worshipper of no particular Hindu God. He is not Saiva; he is not a Sakta; he is not a Vaishnava; he is not a Vedantist. Yet he is all these. He worships Siva; he worships Kali; he worships Rama; he worships Krishna and is a confirmed advocate of Vedanta doctrines." He realised Siva as the incarnation of contemplativeness and Yoga-Mahadeva is the ideal of all contemplative men forgetful of all worldly cares, ever enjoying the bliss of Divine Communion, calm, silent, and immovable like the Himalayas. He realised Sakti or Kali as the power of God. She is the mother of creation, and while tyrannising over all tyrants, she saves and protects her children—those that go

to Her as their mother, and ask the shelter of Her feet. He regarded Rama with the love and profound loyalty of a devoted servant, and Hanuman was to him a model of a faithful servant, devoted to his master's cause and scorning alike danger and death in his service. And Krishna was the incarnation of love. As a loving child he monopolised all the fondness of aged parents; as a loving companion and friend he attracted the profound loyalty and affection of men; and as an adored master, the tenderness of his teaching and his affectionate persuasions converted girls and women to heart-felt piety. Sri Ramakrishna used to dress like a milk-maid, and identify himself, with Radha to realise her experiences of Krishna, her Lord. While he worshipped personal Gods in this manner, he held firmly to the impersonal God of the Vedanta without a form. The explanation of these incongruities lies in the fact that he realised each of these deities as an aspect of the Supreme standing in a particular relation to the devotee. And he says "God is one, but His aspects are many; as the master of a house is father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third, and is called by different names by different persons, so one God is described in various ways according to the particular aspect in which He appears to His particular worshipper."

This realisation of the soul and of God became reflected in his conduct. Though he lived in a body, he was not of the body; and he was like the ripe arecanut which becomes detached from the shell. He was like the kernel in a dry cocoanut, which has become separate from the shell, and which cannot therefore be touched by nails driven through the shell. The stage of realisation reached made him see God in every human form—in the sage and the sinner, in the virtuous and the vicious. When he looked on the chaste women of respectable families, he saw in them the Divine Mother arrayed in the modest garb of a chaste lady. When he looked upon the public women of the city sitting in their open verandas he saw in them the same Divine Mother sporting in a different way. My brothers, if you remember what our religious books say, you will find no difficulty in understanding this. The Bhagavad Gita explains in chapter XI how when Arjuna was given divine sight, he saw on every side Sri Krishna with his peculiar marks—diadem, club and discus. Sri Bhagavata chapter 13 of part X conveys the same lesson. You have heard how Brahma, wishing to test the power of the boy Sri Krishna, secreted the calves which He was grazing in the jungle and His companions, and how for a whole year Sri Krishna took as many forms as there were calves and shepherd boys, resembling the real ones in every respect. When Brahma at last appeared, he was surprised to see the calves and shepherd boys,

and for one instant he was permitted to see what they were in reality. Every calf and every shepherd boy was Sri Krishna Himself. As a consequence of this attitude it became impossible for him to get angry with any-body. He was all humility and tenderness; and his sympathy with suffering was profound. Returning from a pilgrimage with a rich friend, he saw in a village many poor emaciated human figures, and he told the friend that he could not leave the place, until he fed and clothed the poor men.

Sri Rama Krishna had thus grasped the ultimate truth, and he wished to share it with all. "There are" he said, "two classes of perfect men in this world—those who get the truth and become silent, enjoying it all to themselves without any thought of others; people of the other class get the truth and cannot find pleasure in keeping it to themselves, but cry out in trumpet voice to all 'Come ye and enjoy the truth with us!' To the latter class Sri Ramakrishna belonged.—He never went to seek disciples. They came to him, as bees come to "the full blown flower, when its sweet aroma is wafted by the breeze." Yet, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher. He always said "If any good comes from my lips, it is the Mother who speaks; what have I to do with it."

Let us now see what was the message which he had to give to the world. In the first place he taught perfect tolerance. This is necessary in India peopled by different races following different religious creeds, and to this all the great teachers who appeared in this Country addressed themselves. Sri Ramakrishna advised each to follow his own religion. He said 'A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mahomedan should follow Mahomedanism. For the Hindu the ancient path, the path of the Aryan Rishis, is the best.' In his opinion like the bathing ghats in a large tank all the religions of the world were ghats leading to the water of the fountain of Eternal Bliss. He therefore taught that no one should say that his own religion was better than that of another. Nor should he discard his own religion because of some imperfection in it. He said 'He who feels thirsty does not discard the water of the river, merely because it is muddy, nor does he begin to dig a well to find clear water. So he, who feels real religious thirst, does not discard the religion near at hand, be it Hinduism or any other religion, nor does he create a new religion for himself. A really thirsty man has no time for such deliberations.' He inculcated respect for all religions, and said "As the young wife in a family shows respect to her father-in-law and mother-in-law; ministers to their wants, and does not despise or disobey them,

while at the same time she loves her husband more than any of them; even so being firm in your devotion to your own special Deity (Ishta), do not despise other Deities, but honour them all. They all represent one Authority and one Love." He stoutly opposed all disputations. He said "As you rest firmly on your own faith and opinion, allow others also the equal liberty to stand by their own faiths and opinions. By mere disputation you shall never succeed in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends on him, every man will understand his own mistakes." In his opinion disputation was unnecessary. We have come into the world as human beings with a view to attain God by means of *sādhana*. Our duty is therefore to try our best to acquire *bhakti*. He compared the spirit of disputation to the gurgling sound heard when a pitcher is being filled with water. As soon as it is full, the sound ceases. "Similarly, the man who has not found God is full of vain disputations about Him. But he who has seen Him silently enjoys the Bliss Divine."

In the ultimate truth as Sri Ramakrishna saw it the points of view of the dualist and the non-dualist are reconciled. The former regards God as being a person with form and attributes, while the conception of the latter is that God is impersonal, without form and without attributes. The Paramahansa considered both to be right. He said "As the water of the Ocean is now calm, and again agitated into waves so are *Brahman* and *Māya*. The Ocean in its tranquillity is *Brahman* and in its moving state is *Māya*." Again, "As water when congealed becomes ice, so the visible form of the Almighty is materialised manifestation of the all-pervading formless *Brahman*. It may be called in fact *sat-chit-ānanda* solidified. As the ice is part and parcel of water, and afterwards melts into it, so the personal God is part and parcel of the Impersonal. He rises from the impersonal, remains there, and ultimately merges into it and disappears." *Brahman* thought of as *nishkriya*, neither creating, sustaining, nor destroying, was called by the Paramahansa *Brahman* or *Purusha*. The same regarded as active i.e., creating, sustaining, or destroying, is *Sakti*, *māya* or *prakṛiti*. The former state he calls the *nitya* or absolute state, and the latter the *līla* or phenomenal state. In the former state the attributes are latent, and *Brahman* is one and indivisible. In the latter state attributes are manifested, and the One Being appears as many, differentiating into *jīva* or soul and *jagat* or world. He cited the analogy of milk turning into butter and buttermilk. The original milk is *Brahman*, the butter is the impersonal—personal God, and the buttermilk is the universe made up of twenty-four *tattvas*. This

analogy is imperfect, as it suggests that as the butter can be separated from the buttermilk, so God can be separated from the universe. According to the school of Sri Ramanuja this separation is impossible, as God ever pervades the universe, supporting it and directing its movements. He is therefore the soul of the cosmos, as each of us is the soul of his body. The analogy is defective in another respect. God and the universe become one again, when cosmic activity comes to end; but the butter and the buttermilk can never become the original milk again. In this analogy we see the differentiation of *Brahman* into God, and the universe only; but in the analogy of the shell, the pith and kernel of a fruit all produced from one parent seed of a tree, we see the differentiation into the *jīva* also. The shell is the universe, the pith is the *jīva* or soul, and the kernel is God.

This brings us to the thorny question whether *Brahman* and the *jīva* are one or not. Sri Ramakrishna observed "God alone is true, and his manifestations as *jīva* and *jagat* are untrue—non-eternal." Again, "the water and its bubble are one; the bubble has its birth in the water, floats on the water, and is ultimately, resolved into the water. So the *jīvātman* and the *Paramātman* are both one and the same; the difference is in degree. The one is finite and limited; the other is infinite. The one is dependent, the other is independent." This dependance is illustrated thus—"As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God." God and the soul are usually separate, though interrelated; but they may become united as often as favourable opportunities occur. When the sense of separateness is lost as in *samādhi*, the *jīva* is absorbed in God.

(To be continued.)

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA.

I SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,

Belur,

3-4-17.

MY DEAR—

My child, I am exceedingly glad to learn that you are happy. As our Lord gets done a lot of small works by this insignificant and unfit person, I do not always get time to write to you. But you must not mind it and do not think that I forget the devotees. It is no matter whether you get letters from us or not, but firmly believe that our Lord is and will be always looking after you.

R—is a sincere devotee. I received a letter from her to-day. The company of unbelievers is very painful to the devotees. So, to whom else could she write her feelings other than yourselves? On hearing what you have written to—praised highly of your faith and devotion. He blessed you that you be all the more absorbed in meditation and be always in bliss.

One of the American disciples of the Great Swami Vivekananda is going to England in these perilous days of shipwreck. But she writes to me, "while I am going with the blessings of the companions of Sri Swamiji behind me, not to speak of myself, but all the passengers will reach there safely." What faith! It matters little if she is an American or European. Faith and devotion alone can make one God, seer and Jivanmukta. The lady was staying at the guest house of our Math for three or four months. She is a noble and broad-minded lady. She is familiar with the Governor and others. She did much for the Math. We are doing well. My blessings to yourself.

Yours affectionately,
PREMANANDA.

II

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,

Belur,

14 4-17.

MY DEAR—

Very glad to have your letter. Had you seen Miss—you would have understood what wonderful faith and devotion she has. As occasion arises such souls take birth to fulfil some mission of God. They are our own people. Their exterior is like the westerners but the interior is quite like the devotees of our Lord. We are anxious for her.

Many hearty thanks for your thoughts of Sister Nivedita. Sri Swamiji wished that thousands of Niveditas would come out from Bengal. May the country be overflowed by self-sacrificing spirit of Nivedita. Let there again be so many bands of Gargi, Lilavati, Sita, Savitri in this country. Man can become God by purity, sincerity and by unswerving loyalty to the Ideal. May Lord have mercy on you and fill you with Godly sentiments.

Sri Swamiji used to say that men could not train up the children so well as the women, the manifestations of Divine Mother, would do. Begin to teach a few little children as far as practicable for you. The rules and regulations will be formed as a matter of course as the necessity arises. If you have got real feeling, you won't require so many rules. You have strength and worth in you—believe it and have faith.

Take the name of Sri Sri Guru Maharajji and Sri Swamiji and then start your work of education. Try to open the School. Our Lord will send help. Sacrifice is the only religion in this Kaliyuga. Is there anything better than education in this world? Give education to the people, ignorance (illusion) will vanish by culture.

Read every day Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna with close attention. You will find even one single saying sums up the truths of all the Bhagavatas and Gitas. Study the letters and Lectures of Swamiji and you find infinite strength latent in them. After the advent of Sri Ramakrishna a new yuga has begun. Do not miss this golden opportunity. Let the people find the beautiful way to peace and blessedness. Whosoever will come to this path, will surely get bliss. We shall have to form a brotherhood embracing all humanity. None will be excluded—none will be indifferent to us. If there is any hindrance, it is only this petty "I" and "Mine". This little "I" and "Mine" is the greatest enemy. We shall have to kill and root out this enemy. Then and then alone the whole universe will be our own, the place of peace and blessedness and of God. None but the man who has completely destroyed this "I" and "Mine," can give real education. If we firmly believe in the name of God, this Avidya, illusion will be destroyed through His powers. Everything is done by His power. He opens the veil of our eyes through grace. Sri Hari Bhai received your letter. He may go to Dacca. If the devotees call, God Himself cannot help coming, not to speak of the devotee. The devotee is but a servant of the Lord. We are doing well. With my blessings.

Yours affectionately,
PREMANANDA.

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA.

"If you want to see the wonderful miracle of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, see that in the life of Latu Moharaj. I have never seen the like before." Indeed the supermundane life of Swami Adbhutananda, known also as Latu Moharaj, was a great miracle and wonder to the modern materialistic world. And that great luminary of the spiritual galaxy of Sri Ramakrishna has set on the 24th April, 1920. He passed away to the Life Eternal, to the elisian presence of his Heavenly Master. Although the release of bodily limitations makes his soul free, still it brings home to those who had the blessing of his acquaintance, the pang of separation from one who was one of the most intimate and loving disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and whose unworldliness, simplicity, purity and all-consuming love for God was ever a beacon-light to the worldly.

The saintly life of Swami Adbhutananda is one of subtle spiritual realisation. One with a purer mind and endowed with the higher realisations of the spiritual world can only feel the profundity of his hallowed life. It is inexpressible in words. But yet as a token of respect for his noble remembrance, we jot down the following reminiscences of his life.

He came of humble circumstances from the district of Chapra in the Province of Behar. He was formerly known as Latu. He lost his parents in his early youth and came to Calcutta in search of a situation. Dr. Rama Chandra Dutt, a householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, employed him as a boy in his house. Ram Babu used to send now and then fruits and sweetmeats to his Master through him. In this way he came into contact with his Blessed Master and got His grace. But the Great Master could recognise His own intimate disciple though he came to Him as an ordinary servant boy, and asked him to 'come again.' This 'come again' was peculiar to him. He used to say these two words to every one of His intimate disciples. They were so potent with wonderful chorus, so imbued with an ineffable love that they never failed to produce the desired effect in the minds of the hearers. They all felt their hearts drawn to Him by some subtle attractions of the soul which was at once irresistible and all-absorbing. Moreover, even from the time of their first meeting with the Master, they would feel as if an obscure avenue of their hearts was opened through which flowed the Master's all-consuming, nay,

seraphic love. So naturally Latu Moharaj, as he was commonly known afterwards, also felt a deep attraction for Him though he knew not why. He would seek every opportunity to go to the Great Master. His heart used to pulsate with an inexplicable joy whenever Rama Babu would ask him to go with fruits and sweets to the Master, and in all haste he used to run to Dakshineswara with the offerings. Thus Swami Adbhutananda used to avail himself of the golden opportunity of serving Sri Ramakrishna. Sometimes he used to stay on there at Dakshineswar two or three days continually.

(The Holy Mother was then living at the garden of Dakshineswar. Though the Northern Indian Ladies are naturally too shy to come out before outsiders, they are a bit free before servants. So the boy, Latu, had an easy access to her. He would think himself blessed to do some jobs for her.) In course of time Sri Ramakrishna expressed His desire to Rama Babu to have the young Latu at his service. Both Rama Babu and Latu Moharaj felt much gratified at the request. And this was the inception of the holy organisation of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Latu Moharaj, being thus the first man, among the Sannyasin disciples of the Great Master, to renounce the world at the call of his Master and to surrender himself and his all to His hallowed feet.

Latu Moharaj was very fond of hearing the *Kirtan* and other songs in the praise of the Lord so much so that he would totally forget himself and be in perfect transport while such devotional songs were sung. We heard of this temperament of his mind even during his stay in the house of Dr. Ramachandra Dutt. Whenever any singing party happened to pass by that side, he would forget all his duties and eagerly join them and lose himself in ecstasy in their company and remained in that state of self-absorption for a long time. Sometimes he was reproached for the negligence of his duty. There used to be often *Kirtanams* at Dakshineswar in the presence of the Master. Latu Moharaj and other young disciples used to take part in the *Kirtanam* and lose themselves in the ecstatic dance with its accompaniment. Having seen their strong devotion to God, Sri Ramakrishna prayed to the Divine Mother, "Oh Mother! May Thou vouchsafe them some spiritual experiences." When their heart is pure, even a little exertion in the field of religion produces good harvest. It was not otherwise in their case also. A few days after the Master's prayer to the Divine Mother, Latu Moharaj and a few other fellow disciples of His gradually began to experience the beatific visions, and the veil of Maya began to thin away before their gaze.

Latu Moharaj devoted himself to the service of his Master with heart and soul. Being in the holy company of Sri Ramakrishna he was greatly improved in spirituality and the illumination was perceptible. In course of time the Great Master taught him the highest forms of devotional practice like *Dhyana Dharana*, etc. As he had to work the whole day, the young Latu used to retire very early in the evening. Having noticed this one day his Master said "What, why do you sleep so early? If you go to bed so early, when will you meditate?" That was enough for him. From that day forward he gave up sleeping at night, and kept up this habit till the last day of his passing away. While he was in the blessed company of his Master, and even after his passing away, he used to keep up the whole night and spend it in meditation and devotional practices and sleep in the day. The truth of the following saying of the Gita—

“यानिशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
“यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

was literally fulfilled in his life.

The wonderful manifestation of spirituality, God-absorption of his later days were the fit fruition of such arduous and long standing practices of spirituality and devotion.

Though he spent the whole of the night in meditation and *Japam*, he would regularly wait on his Master whenever he required him. He was always with Sri Ramakrishna during the Master's illness at Shyampukur, Calcutta as well as in the garden of Kashipore, and nursed Him with utmost devotion and care. When Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna consecrated the fiery band of His young disciples with the initiation of *Sannyasa* and *Kasaya*, Latu Moharaj was also one amongst them. After the sad passing away of the Great Master His young Sannyasin disciples were at a fix as to whether they would finish their educational career first or band themselves into a spiritual brotherhood. As Swamis Adbhutananda, Shivananda and Advaitananda had already cut off all connections with their families and renounced themselves wholly in the services of the Ideal, a house at Baranagar was engaged for them. This was the beginning of the Sri Ramakrishna Math. Afterwards the illustrious Swami Vivekananda and other Sannyasin co-disciples of his came in. The unquenchable thirst and eager search after spiritual realisation made them forget all,—the whole world. They were so absorbed in the attainment of the true knowledge that they were almost unconscious of the passing of days and nights. At that time the immortal Swami Vivekananda and his other Gurubhais per-

formed '*Viraja homa*' and adopted the Sannyasin's nomenclature. Having noticed the marvellous nature and wonderful love for God of Latu Moharaj the Great Swami conferred on him the name of Swami Adbhutananda.

Afterwards the Swami Adbhutananda passed his days first at the Maths, of Alambazaar and Belur and subsequently he removed himself to the house of Balam Bose at Baghbazar where he stayed for a long time. Adbhutananda accompanied the Great Swami to Almora, Rajputna, Kashmir and other places, after his first return from the west. Swamiji started the Math, Mission, and other philanthropic works for the good of the country and the world at large, and invited all his brother disciples to help him in the great work. Almost all of them came forward in the field. But the most revered Swami Adbhutananda was not willing to do so. He could not reconcile himself to the preaching work and other such activities of *Rajas* with his life-long habit of the higher spiritual practices of *Dhyana*, *Dharana*, etc. So he preferred to pass his days in meditation.

He had no book knowledge. The story runs that Sri Ramakrishna brought a first primer of Bengali alphabets and wanted to teach him, but his peculiar intonation made his Master burst into a loud laughter and Sri Ramakrishna gave him up for a hopeless case. So his studentship was nipped in the bud. But he would listen to the sacred books with great attention and could easily understand and assimilate their import. Through the grace of his Master, he knew that by knowing which all other things become known. So nothing was new to him. One day one Sannyasin read out to him a Sloka from the Katha Upanisada :—

अंगुष्ठ मात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदाजनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।
तंस्व च्छरीरात्प्रवृहे न्मुञ्जादि वेपीकां धेयम् ।

"The Purusha of the size of a thumb, the inner soul, dwells always in the heart of beings. One should separate Him from the body as the stalk from a grass." He was very pleased to hear this and said "It is quite right." As he had attained this stage, he could easily understand the most subtle indication of the above *Sruji*. Hearing from other people he arrived at such well-thought solutions of all intricate problems of life ; that even modern cultured people would be astonished to hear his clear expositions of them in plain and simple language punctuated with homely illustrations. The perfection which is the aim of all education, he did achieve.

The immortal Swami Vivekananda used to say, "If we think of the humble circumstances which Latu came from and how he

was illumined in spirituality just the same like all of us, he must be regarded much greater than any of us. All of us are born of high family and came to the Great Master with cultured minds and tutored intelligence.

But Latu knew not the a, b, c, of his own language. When we could not continue meditation and higher religious practices, we would take to reading for some time for a change. But he had to continue the same routine of Sadhana throughout his life. But still he kept his brain cool. We get the proof of his innate strength and the boundless grace of the Master upon him from the high spiritual attainments of his."

Latu Moharaj was of a peculiar temperament. He could mix with all—both the young and old—equally and wholeheartedly. All people would flock to him to get his Prasadam. His egoism was completely killed in him. He was very frank, plain-spoken, and at times fiery even. His holy conversation with the devotees was but the breaking forth of the fire of spirituality which was burning within.

He went to Benares to pass his last days at the blessed Feet of the Lord Viswanatha. Even at this old age he would keep up the whole night and meditate. He did not care for his food as if he was always absorbed in something. He spent his whole life in the atmosphere of God, and so in fact he looked like a blazing fire of spirituality. He could not utter anything but the glory of God. He would lose himself at the topics of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and the immortal Swami Vivekananda. The devotees and admirers would hear him with rapt attention as if they were spell-bound. At the close of the conversation he used to distribute some Prasada among his hearers and bid them goodbye. His behaviours were so loving and tender!

In this way owing to such severe religious practices and consequent strains on his aged body his health began to break down slowly. He was suffering from dyspepsia for the last two or three years. But he did not care for his body. One could hear constantly from his mouth the words, "It is a nuisance to have this body." Latterly, one who saw him, noticed a greater absorption within, and more and more recession from external objects and interests.

Ultimately he was attacked with gangrene at the right ankle which spread up to the knee. During the last four days of his life two or three operations had to be done daily but he paid the least heed to them as if they were done on some external thing. He was almost unconscious of his body, and remained in Samadhi;

his eyes were always directed upwards. Nothing could bring his mind down, as if his soul was roaming constantly in the midst of beatific visions of the Region far above this vale of shadows—he became established in that "यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन तृहणापि विचल्यते"

His passing away was a wonderful thing and a fit culmination of a glorious long life of spirituality and realisation. His Holiness Swami Turiyanandaji writes :—

My dear—

* * * * I hope, you must have received the sad news of the passing away of Latu Moharaj, by wire. One seldom witnesses such a marvellous passing away of a soul. Lately, he used to be more and more absorbed within. From the beginning of his illness he remained merged totally in meditation and his eyes were turned upwards. He receded within completely from all external objects and interests. He was always conscious yet paid the least heed to external things. One day when the dressing of the wound was being done, he asked me "What is the disease? what do the doctors say?" I replied, "Nothing so serious. It is only due to weakness. You have starved yourself for a long time and now can't move even. If you feed yourself well and get a bit of strength, everything will be cured." Then he said "It is better to leave the body." "You should not say so." I retorted, "May the will of our Lord be done." "I know that," he answered, "but we are suffering." After that I had very little talk with him. He used to call P—. He would take his food from him only. If he did not take anything, P—used to say that he would also go without any meals. Then Latu Moharaj would take something. But the night before his passing away he did not touch any food. P—requested in vain. This time he was stern and unsympathetic. He gave him a most unkind answer as if the tie of love was no more. * *

Next morning I went to see him. He had high fever. I felt the pulse—no beating. Doctor was called in. He too could not feel the beating of heart. Temperature was 102.6. He was perfectly conscious—but there was no external effort, nor could he sit up like other days. He refused to take anything except a few drops of Pomegranate juice and water in spite of our earnest request. He took most gladly the 'Charanamrita' of the Lord Viswanatha. Ice was being applied to his head. I came back at about 10 o'clock hoping to see him again in the afternoon. Dr. Sripatisahaya also was to call at that time. When I was taking a little rest

after my meal I got the news that Latu Moharaj had left the world for his divinely appointed destination at 12-10 P.M. I sent one to wire to you and to S—and went to see him for the last time. He was lying pressing himself on the right side as if he was asleep. I touched his body and felt it quite warm as it was during the fever. It did not seem that he was in *Mahasamadhi*—only the appearance was more placid and solemn. All the members of the Math were present and they began to chant the Holy Names and the songs in praise of the Lord. It was kept on for about three hours. He was offered flowers, decorated with garlands and sacred fragrance and after *Aratrikam* being done to his holy person, his body was taken down stairs at about half past four.

It is difficult to write the heavenly aspect and unearthly beauty of his countenance at that solemn moment when he was offered Puja. Such calm, compassionate, heavenly, blissful look of his holy personality I have never seen. Formerly his eyes were half-shut, but now they were wide open. Such deeply affectionate graceful and godly appearance his countenance wore as cannot be expressed in words. Whoever saw it, was charmed by that heavenly sight. There was not the least touch of sorrow on it. A halo of cheery blessedness spread all over his holy person, as if he was greeting every one around him to bid them the final adieu. The sight of this moment was really most wonderful and touching. Lord granted us this wonderful heavenly sight as if to complete the significance of the name of Adbhutananda. Having clad his body with new cloths and decorated with garlands and sacred fragrance, the cot with his body was taken before the public and all were filled with wonder and shouted with joy in glory of the truly saintly life. Such death-defying death is indeed uncommon and unprecedented. It is truly a clear example and marvellous demonstration of the infinite glory of our Lord. For sometime, all irrespective of caste or creed, both Hindus and Muhammadans, saw his holy person and offered Puja to their heart's content. Subsequently his body was carried to the Kedarghat by the sannyasin members of the Math and thence taken to Manikarnika by a boat. Puja was again offered to him and the lights were waved before his presence, and his final obsequies were completed by consigning his body to the Ganges. Whoever saw the supremely blissful appearance of Latu Moharaj at that solemn moment, felt deeply impressed with the most exalted spiritual truth of life. Glory unto the Great Master, and glory unto His Latu Moharaj

ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE,—CONFESSIONS.*

BY

Le Frile.

Rights Reserved by the Author

"Stray Musings."

I

My uncontrolled musings into the regions of the unreal are at most times a source of the highest pleasure to me as they are sometimes of the most agonising misery. Yet, thus with their ballast, I will preserve and continue my musings. The strange forms which they assume, the fanciful ideas which they give rise to in my mind, the wonderful and everchanging attitudes which they put me into, are great sources of pleasure for me. There is no other sweeter pleasure than that of the fancy. Even the practical, the so called real pleasures of man are constituted of nothing else than fancy. No pleasure is possible for man without the aid of fancy. While the normal pleasures accruing from the proper enjoyment of real objects and conditions of life are aided and sustained by normal and necessary fancy, mine, arising from the contact of unreal, yet, the most grand, sublime, unbounded, ever-agreeable conditions of life, wholly guided under my control, are sustained by the abnormal, ever-flowing, sumptuous fancy of mine. Who can ever become wiser without traversing through all the gorgeous apartments and the intricate subterranean passages of this divine mansion? Who can ever become wiser without experiencing in himself, the multitudinous, ever-changing, ever-new moods aroused by fancy? I will ransack the treasures of fancy to its innermost corners,—to its last doits. I will soar high, I will dive deep, I will wander through all the private windings of its boundless parks. I do not yet want truth nor peace. I do not yet want to wake up. I will not exchange this wealth and enjoyment for that of the whole world.

II

Observation, analysis and the consequent knowledge of the working of the diversity of mental states are productive of more pleasure to me than the mere experience of pleasant states. My pleasure lies more in the knowledge of the experience than in the mere feeling of it. The pleasure of knowledge is superior to and

* These are the recollections of a sincere heart struggling for the Supreme Light.—Ed. V. K.

finer than every other. *Knowledge is the highest of all objects of experience.* It is knowledge alone which finally remains with man after the straining of all gross experiences of fugitive moments. And it is this resultant knowledge which transforms his state gradually, raises him higher and higher in the scale of individual evolution and finally fulfils the object of his existence.

III

Pleasure is at first an act of wantonness; at last a relief. At first a natural awakening; at last an artificial stimulant. At first, an adamant reality; at last a filmy vapour. At first it leads one tightly grasping by the hand; at last, invites from afar and eludes one's grasp.

Pleasure is one of an inseparable family of mental states—a segment in a whole cycle of mental experiences. (One who wishes to reach it, must pass through the whole cycle.) Desires, cares, fears, pride and jealousy, plans and cogitations are all allied to pleasure. The experience of the state of pleasure necessitates the proportionate experience of every one of its allied states. It can never be got unalloyed.

There is no provision made for pleasure in the arrangement of life. Life is woven through with purpose. Pleasure attaches to certain conditions of life occurring few and far between. But purpose attaches to every condition of life occurring in every moment of time. When we view life from the standpoint of pleasure, it appears most imperfect. When we will view life from that of purpose, it appears most perfect. He who seeks after pleasure can obtain it only on rare moments. But he who understands and sets himself to the fulfilment of purpose finds uniform satisfaction in every moment of his life.

IV

Man thinks life is all happiness but for his ignorant or wicked deeds. He frames laws forbidding the doing of evil and instructs himself in the knowledge and practice of the path of virtue, thinking thereby to avoid all unhappiness in the course of his life. But, in this he is mistaken. Happiness necessarily involves unhappiness. Satisfaction involves dissatisfaction. Pleasure involves pain. The one cannot exist without the other. The two are correlated to each other. And life is a balanced build of both. The experience of life cannot be made to consist of the one in the total absence of the other. No faith, no law, no path, no virtue can effect a separation between them. The happiness derived from the practice of virtue is counter-balanced by the unhappiness experienced in training oneself

in virtue, *i.e.*, in abstaining from the satisfaction of natural cravings which virtue forbids. The misery resulting from the practice of vice is counterbalanced by the pleasure experienced in its course, *i.e.*, in the satisfaction of natural cravings which virtue forbids. Deep pleasure involves deep pain. Shallow pleasure involves shallow pain. And normal happiness is attained only as a result of a course of normal unhappiness. So the difference between the virtuous and the vicious, the happy and the unhappy consists in the manner in which they experience the relative states of pleasure and pain, but not in the total absence of the one or the other in their lives.

V

Is this what is called life after all? To suffer under a perpetual disadvantage, the reason and the author of which remain unknown—to feel ever short and ever thirst for more—to be constantly fighting—fighting in vain against a pre-made decree—an eternal slave, bound under an eternal law—a little happiness, a little sorrow, a little care now, a little satisfaction then, always under bondage, always under an enchantment—a dissolution, knowing not whither after,—this life seems too unworthy to desire for and too mysterious to continue with safety.

But man desires for life, for the development and continuance of his life with all the strength of which he is possessed. Life in one form or another, under one aspect or another is the goal of each man consonant with his conditions. The blind impulses of life prompt him to labour blindly in the blind quest after more life. Man understands not the real nature of life,—its worthlessness, its evanescence, its obstinacy and its mystery. He desires for it, knowing not its true nature, or, knowing a part of it, with the hope of mending its defects by his own wit. But no man since the beginning of his race, however holy or wise or powerful, has as yet succeeded in altering the nature of life. Man is a product of the forces of life and ever subject to their sway. A strange absurdity in him to go about to mend their defects—an impossibility!

Life is a slavery. There is no other hope for man. His existence is a bondage, his labour is a drudgery, and his end forced and unwilling. Man has no independence much less any ownership. Man is owned and swayed upon. How then can he own and sway upon? His sense of independence is a veritable illusion. He becomes elated with this illusory warmth. But, in every step of his life, at every turn of his course, he is brought down to the cold conviction of the truth. The spirit of life possesseth man and ever drives him on and on without pause or rest. Poor restless man tossed amidst the immortal waves! A profound contemplation of life inevitably leads to a profound sadness and consequent despair.

VI

Despair is the basis of man's spiritual activities in all his ages. Despair is the foundation stone of early religion. It is the spirit of despair which seizes great observers of mankind and prompts them to abnormal efforts. Lord Buddha was possessed of despair when he made his great renunciation. The Lord Christ's propaganda to save souls as many and as quickly as possible was desperate. In all the great activities of human life, no department is characterised by so much despair as that of religion. The Vedic Rishis cry out their teachings with all their vehemence as if to keep off despair.

Man in his helplessness had to devise various means for driving off despair arising out of his contemplation of life. So, Religions arose. Various stories of consolation imagined and belived in to make up for want of truth.

The deepest felt need of man is that of spiritual consolation. To ensure happiness here or hereafter as compensation for his present unhappiness. To offer a reasonable explanation for the seeming reasonlessness of earthly conditions. To prove the existence of an infinite good beyond to counteract his present evils. Of a stable power outside of earth to guarantee for unstable earth. To supply this need which arises in diverse forms is the office of religion which is set up in diverse forms. The strength of religion in any age, represents the strength of the despair of humanity arising from there outlook on life.

VII

I am disgusted with this simulation—this self-deception—this life in dreams. When I wake up as I sometimes do, I find this life empty. The airy form of thought vanishes, and I find myself going down and down and finding no bottom. For, this life of mine has no sure foundation. Yet, I will compose myself again to sleep, and build me airy castles of thought to immure myself within. Oh! How I long for a crash! the crash of the lamp yonder, of the roof above, of my life by some invisible stroke to assure me that this is solid earth. Oh this monotony! this quiet! There is a roaring noise in my mind but it is inaudible. There is a lion roaming there but it is invisible. There is a mill grinding there but the workmen are not seen outside. Oh how I long for a crash again!

VIII

I regret for the wasting of the past, but I don't repent for it. I desire good for the future but I don't strive for it. Repentance does not come into my heart. Who can force repentance from a stubborn

heart? Activity does not arise to vivify me. Who can force activity out of a lazy mind? Nothing but adversity can effect it. But the prospect of adversity is fearful. I don't want it, but I need it.

IX

I want the great love of a great man to raise me from my present miserable state, or a terrible calamity to befall me that would shock the foundations of my mental constitution so much that it might be completely changed. Nothing else would raise me up or change me.

X

Rest, Rest, Rest! I long for rest. I long for rest as much as I ever longed for excitement and pleasure. My brain is like a boiling cauldron. The little excitement which I at first created has been prolific and has multiplied itself terribly. I am tired of pleasures. I am tired of beautiful thoughts. I am tired of analysing the mind and its states. I am tired of the hairbreadth differences, of subtle expressions, multiplying categories and confusing laws. I want a way out of this web of thoughts. I want to stand, just to stand a bit, to sit, to lie down peacefully. I want one all-comprehensive truth to believe in and one single simple purpose to live for.

XI

To desire not. Desire is the forge in which the chains of our bondage are finished. To desire is to become a slave—to give up one's own will, to be mad and led away (by the nose like an ass.) To see not one's path, nor the end to which that path leadeth. No man can desire and yet say that he is free. To cherish the least desire for the least object in life, is, to become a positive slave.

Desire is the outcome not of a sense of need, but of a state of weakness. Need and desire do not ever go together. The needful is always present for the needy. The needful is always obtained by normal efforts. The sense of need is a normal sensation. The state of desire is an abnormal state. Desire prompts to abnormal efforts. The sense of need is spontaneous. The state of desire is reflex. The weaker one's state of mind is, the stronger is his force of desire. The state of mind becoming stronger, the force of desire diminishes in strength. The measure of one's desire is the measure of one's weakness.

Desire is nothing but the expression of a state of weakness—a state of hollow struggling to be filled up, a discontent, unrest, unhappi-

ness. To desire for that which is not, in place of that which is, is nothing but to desire for a condition easier in place of that which is harder to bear. Desire is cowardice. It is a bending, cringing unmanly state. It shows one is not equal to the conditions of his life. To desire for that which is not, in addition to that which is, is also the same.

XII

What is sin? Sin is not a transgression of divine law as is commonly supposed. No law of life is so unstable as to permit of transgression by puny man. The laws of life are eternal and unchanging. No man can break the least section of them.

Sin is a transgression of human laws, made to preserve human ideals, got out of human experience and set up by human generations.

XIII

The law regulating the growth and progress of the human soul is most unsatisfactory and fearful to contemplate upon. The path which man is compelled to tread in his slow progress in life, is not smooth, easy and harmonious. Step after step is built of pain larger in size and more solid in strength. The least law of life is learnt only after the experience of pain be most excruciating. The least change in the attitude of the soul is effected only after a pain amounting almost to death.

KNOWLEDGE AND REDEMPTION.

By S. E. Waldo.

The fundamental teaching of Vedanta is that every soul is Divine and must eventually realize that Divinity; and that this can be accomplished in a variety of ways;—nay more, that it must and will be accomplished. There are no lost souls and no sinners in the Vedanta. It is often objected that Vedanta lays too much stress upon "knowledge," and seems to ignore what we are accustomed to call "ethics." I think it can be shown that this objection is largely founded on a misconception of just what is meant by the knowledge which can bring man liberation or realization of the Divine; and a forgetfulness that the only possible gateway to this knowledge is found in the loftiest morality.

The knowledge which leads to salvation has no reference whatever to book-learning or to any amount of information about the

things of the external world. It refers entirely to knowledge of the real nature of man, as embodied in the old adage—"Know thyself." The Vedanta philosophy is the record of the carefully formulated teachings of those sages and seers who thousands of years ago succeeded in carrying out this injunction. It is the work of human beings like ourselves, who by patient, long-continued effort were able to go beyond the sense-world and identify themselves with that Infinite Ocean, from which all this universe is but an infinitesimal projection. These great ones make no claim for themselves, their very names are lost; and they live only in the grand results of their labors, results so great and glorious that they have survived all these ages and will never die. As I said before, the Vedanta knows no lost souls and no sinners. How can it? How can the One Soul be lost? And that One Soul is the essence of every apparently individual Soul; only apparently individual as yet, because only when the Soul recognizes what it really is, does it attain any true individuality.

How can there be any sinners, in the sense in which Western theology uses that word? Everything is on its upward way, because good is the final goal of all; and what we usually call "sin," is regarded by the Vedanta as merely a mistaken effort to attain that goal. All these efforts give experience and will eventually lead the Soul to the discovery of its real nature. Do not imagine from this that the Vedanta encourages sin. It most emphatically does not, and it makes every effort to show man the better way. Only, it does not take that hopeless view of these mistakes which would condemn those making them to eternal damnation. It sees plainly that ignorance alone is the cause of these so-called "sins," and it seeks to remove this ignorance by the light of knowledge.

In India the universal acceptance of the doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation gives rise to the idea that delay in seeking salvation, though a great mistake, is not necessarily fatal. This one little life does not represent the only chance a man may have; nor does he who fails here and now to attain the goal "perish everlastingly." The Vedanta philosophy clearly recognizes that man is in a state of evolution; and that only those who have developed to the spiritual stage, are ready to accept its final conclusions and strive to reach liberation from the endless wheel of birth and death. Around and around this wheel we must go until our own effort releases us. No one can do that for us, the greatest Teachers can only point the way. Thus the Vedanta appeals to our strength and not to our weakness. It tells us to help ourselves and be free. We have by our own actions woven the web that holds us, and only by our own exertion can that web be thrown off. It is useless to expect any being to do this for us. But the Vedanta tells

us plainly and clearly that this is no impossible task ; that it has been done, and that it can and will be done again and again by those who work hard enough, and have sufficient strength of purpose to persevere in their attempts until they reach the goal.

For the very weak and for those who are still content to seek only material satisfaction either here or hereafter, the Vedanta has no condemnation ; it only tells them, as a loving mother tells her little children : " By and by you will be wiser, you will grow up and then you will naturally forsake childish things." No mother would dream of telling her little one that he was naughty or that she would punish him, because he preferred a toy to a treatise on teleology. " So with the Vedanta. It has a place for those who cannot yet rise to the loftier heights. This wise philosophy leaves these " children of a larger growth " the toys of material pleasures which now so delight them, and says to them : " Through trying these and finding out for yourselves their transitory and unsatisfactory nature, you will come to desire that which is eternal and all-satisfying ; and so desiring you will seek and find that One Existence, your real Self."

It is perfectly true that the essence and flower of the Vedanta, which is called *Advaita* or pure monism, will ever be adopted by the few rather than by the many ; and this, not because of any exclusiveness in the teaching, but simply because, as the majority of mankind are constituted to-day, they prefer a more concrete form of philosophy or religion. The *Advaita* is the topmost pinnacle of the vast edifice, and to many seems a height too dizzy to be attempted. To such the Vedanta says : " You are quite right, choose the way best adapted to you ; all ways are but so many radii leading to a common centre." But it adds this warning : " Take no step blindly. Understand what you are doing and why you do it. Set the goal clearly before you and then strive to reach it as best you can. Do not wander in darkness, following in the footsteps of others you know not why. Enquire, search for yourself, and then faithfully persevere in the endeavor to reach the highest."

While laying great stress upon the knowledge of our true nature, the Vedanta also inculcates a rigorous system of morality—not as an end, but as the indispensable means of gaining that knowledge which alone can make men free. That only the pure in heart can see God is asserted over and over again by the Vedanta. In fact, until purity and right action have become perfectly natural and desirable to a man (even though he may often fail in the attempt to live up to his ideal), he is not ready even to make the attempt to realize his true nature or to discover his oneness with the Divine. Sin, which the Vedanta calls ignorance, creates the veils which hide the Self ; and until the heaviest and densest of these veils, caused by lack of self-control and indulgence of the animal propensities, have

been removed, we do not catch a glimpse even of that higher Self which is our real nature. We have first to rise above the animal plane and attain a certain degree of unselfishness and of illumination, which only this purification can bring, before we can even desire to reach something higher and better.

That is why trouble and sorrow are such great teachers. While we continue to find satisfaction in material things, it is not likely that we shall seek spiritual things. But when, by having them suddenly removed from us, we learn the temporal character of these material delights, we are often led to enquire after the things which are eternal. As St. Paul says : " First the natural, then the spiritual ;" and this applies to the whole human race.

Only by fulfilling all the demands of morality until it has become as it were, our very nature to do right, can we rise to that higher plane where law ceases to bind us and where we become " a law unto ourselves." When a man has reached that plane, it is positively certain that he will never use his freedom in defiance of the moral law which he has transcended, any more than a naturally honest man would steal, even though no penalty were attached to such action. Seeing only the good, the man who has realized his true nature cannot even see what we call wrong, much less can it have any temptation for him.—*The Message of the East.*

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH.

O Strength of Nature I fill my body and soul,
And make me whole,

That through thine energy I may fulfil
My Father's Will,

And do the task allotted me from birth
Upon the Earth.

To find, beyond all vain imaginings,
The Heart of Things

Is my desire. I would attain the Truth,
And then, in Sooth,

Proclaim it to the world—if this may be—

To set man free.

O Strength of Nature, flow through nerve and brain !
That thus again

The Spirit of Beyond grow manifest,
 And through my breast
 The Secret Sun ray forth upon the world,
 Be thou unfurled
 O Rose of Love's immaculate Desire,
 Whose sweet, swift fire
 Sustains with its pure life the soul of man !...
 The strength to span
 The dread Abyss be mine ; the strength to strive,
 Dead or alive,
 To that one Goal I set myself to win !
 Fate's fingers spin
 The web called Destiny, but man moulds Fate,
 And, soon or late,
 Will prove the master, and fulfilment find,
 No longer blind,
 But wise, enlightened, moving in the Light
 Whose rays unite
 With That Ineffable, past thought and speech !
 I do beseech
 Thee, Mother, Nature named, that thou wilt pour
 From thy Heart's care
 The strength thy child doth crave. For then indeed
 The Mystic Seed
 Of Life and Love will blossom, as before,
 In my heart's core.

MEREDITH STARR,
 ANNE PORT, GORBY JERSEY,
 Channel Isles, England.

SISTER NIVEDITA'S KALI THE MOTHER

BY

K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

This is a book whose intuitions of sympathy are as remarkable as its felicities of expression. If there is one idea that has gone into the very soul of the Hindu racial life and has dominated Hindu thought and emotion more than anything else, it is the idea of the Motherhood of God. The mother's love is the purest form of love on earth, and God's love which we can only imperfectly comprehend through the poor medium of thought and the poorer medium of language cannot be better expressed than by the conception of God as Mother.

Each language has its magic of verbal sweetness and its magic of associations. Sister Nivedita takes for purposes of illustration *Twilight* and *Sandhya*. The former has reference to the broad space of time between day and night as we see it in the North and the latter refers to the "time of union" because in India, Night treads upon the hastening heels of the day. Sister Nivedita well says: "While the facts of nature determine the main developments of speech, yet every language and group of languages differs from every other as the characters of individuals and of nations." Similar are the self-realizations of man in religious symbols. "Short of perfect realization, we must see the Eternal Light through a mask imposed by our own thought." Religious genius has as its mission the revivification or the higher intensification of such realizations. "To do this, or even to carry a whole race to a new rallying-place round a standard planted on the old frontier is the peculiar mission of religious genius." Jesus perfected and fulfilled the Jewish conceptions of justice and righteousness into the conceptions of love, mercy and grace. Sister Nivedita well says: "And so every one of us, simply by thinking his own thought, and living his own life to the full, may be answering his brother's cry for God in ways beyond the dreaming of the world.....Like all veil, it brings at once vision and the limiting of vision. Only realising the full sense of every symbol can we know the whole thought of Humanity about God."

But is not the yearning for God-love and God-realisation that cannot brook the bondage of word and symbol? Does not our heart go out in a passion of search that desires instantaneous fruition and attainment and realisation? Yes but yet the laws of God-attainment cannot be overleapt but should be obeyed. The ignorance and

sins of innumerable births have to be laid aside by efforts of outer and inner purification. Sister Nivedita says in a passage full of spiritual fire :

- “ But down with all masks ! The uncreated flame itself we long for, without symbol or veil or barrier. If we cannot see God and live,—let us then die—what is there to fear ? Consume us in primal fire, dissolve us into living ocean, but interpose nothing, no, not the shadow of anything, between the soul and the divine draught for which it thirsts ! True ! Yet for each of us there is a chosen way, we ourselves may still be seeking it, where and when still hidden from our eyes. But deep in our hearts is rooted the assurance that the moment will yet come, the secret signal be exchanged, the mystic name will fall upon our ears, and somewhere, somewhen, somehow, our feet shall pass within the gates of Peace, we shall enter on the road that ends only with the Beatific vision.”

It is no doubt true that “our daily life creates our symbol of God.” I am however unable to agree with Sister Nivedita when she says that the Arab gave to the world the idea of the Fatherhood of God while the Aryan gave to the world the idea of the Motherhood of God. It is no doubt true, as she says, that “in the Aryan home, woman stands supreme. As wife in the West—lady and queen of her husband—as mother in the East,—a goddess throned in her son’s worship,—she is the bringer of sanctity and peace.” But in India our racial mind has approached the lotus feet of God with a rich and symphonious compositeness of outlook that is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. The Lord says in the Gita :

पितृमस्य जगतो माताधाता पितामहः ।

गतिर्भर्ताप्रभु, साक्षां निवासः शरणं सुहृन् ॥

(I am the Father of the Universe. I am its Mother, its Protector, its Grandsire, its Attainment, its Bridegroom, its Lord, its Witness, its Abode, its Refuge, and Its Companion.)

In spite of this completeness and compositeness of outlook there is a sweet and haunting beauty of tenderness about the conception of the Motherhood of God that has held spell-bound the Hindu mind. As Sister Nivedita well says : “The soul that worships, becomes always a little child : the soul that becomes a child, finds God oftenest as mother.....But it is in India that this thought of the mother has been realised in its completeness.”

She is described in the Lalita Sahasranamah as Mahasakti and Premarupa (Supreme Energy and Love). Love is the Supreme energy in the universe. Nations and individuals rise in higher energy

as they rise in love. This is the divine law of being. It is in the realisation of the great conception of God as Mother that we come into the very heart of Being where Love is Energy and Energy is Love.

Sister Nivedita would have us take it that the Himalayan peaks with the crescent above them and girdled with clouds gave us the conception of Siva. This is a pretty fancy and nothing more. The *yogic* realisation of Siva as “त्रिलोचनं नलिकर्णं प्रशान्तं” does not require poetic fancies to buttress it up. But Sister Nivedita’s development of her idea has a charm and force of its own. She says :

- “ It was as though Nature, the Great Mother, were clothed in raiment of green, brodered with birds and flowers and fruits, and veiled in blue, adorned with many jewels, and yet as if, amidst all the restless pomp and clamour of her glory, would shine through now and then, a hint of something different. Something white and austere and pure ; something compelling quiet ; something silent and passionless, and eternally alone.”

Sister Nivedita takes Siva and Kali as representing Soul and Energy, God and Nature. It seems to me that the more correct representation would be to regard them as two aspects of the Supreme—as Law and as Love. The Hindu conception of God is not idolatrous at all. Sister Nivedita says : “Of all the peoples of the earth, it might be claimed that Hindus are apparently the most, and at heart the least, idolatrous. For the application of their symbols is many-centred, like the fire in opals.” The beatific vision of self-realisation is the shining temple crowning the top of a steep path of lower realisations.

The cheap ridicule of anthropomorphism in religion in India is absurd. If you conceive of God as a Ruler, is there not an anthropomorphic touch in that conception ? The realisation of the Supreme in the human form as the highest of nature’s manifestations is the necessary and immediate step to the realisation of the Supreme in Itself. India has panted after God realisation in a fervent passion of longing. Renunciation has been regarded as a sign and as a cause of the search for, and attainment of, God. It is then that “the red rose of the love of God springs and blossoms in a man’s heart.”

Sister Nivedita, however allows her poetic imagination to run away with her that India’s passion of renunciation led her to imagine Siva as a Yogi absorbed in eternal meditation and beholding all things with His third eye of inner vision, as the refuge of animals, as the leader of even demoniac followers, and as the drinker of poison ! India would rather say that her ideal is one of renunciation

because God is the Supreme Lover whose renunciation and yogic self-awareness show to us the path to attain His grace.

Sister Nivedita's interpretation of Kali is inadequate for the same reason. Kali is not "the fleeting diversity of sense." She is Cosmic Energy and Love—the energy of destruction and the energy of creation, the Love that perishes and the Love that blesses and saves. The Kali symbolism is one that we can realise rightly when we behold her Supreme form in yogic vision. What to the outsider's mind is symbolism is to the mind of faith a truth and to the mind of the yogi is a realisation. The interpretation that the blue-throated Siva is the flame with its blueness at the throat and that Kali is one of the red licking flames is a mere fancy and nothing more.

Sister Nivedita then describes "the two great saints of Kali Ram Prasad and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. She says very well :

"Greatness is but another word for interpretation.....Every profound truth waits for the life that shall be all its voice, and when that is found it comes within the reach of multitudes to whom it would have remained inaccessible. But we cannot find truth in a word, unless it is illumined by our own experience. That statement which we have lived but have not spoken, even to ourselves, when uttered by another's lips, we have a revelation. And that alone..... So it happens that the interpreter, the poet, must be for ever telling to the world those things of which it has already won heart-knowledge. This is the sign that we demand always from the messenger—that we speak of a common memory. And to him who does this we listen gladly, believing that life will yet bring the significance of those words of his that do not, for the nonce, explain themselves to us. Highest of all the poets stands the saint. His task is not to take the brilliant patches of love and sorrow and heroism, and fit them into jewelled settings for the admiration of the many. He takes the whole of life, all the grey, sombre stuff of which it is chiefly made, and the blackest and the brightest with this, and throws on the whole a new light, till even in the eyes of those who suffer it, life is made beautiful It is not then the voice of the prophet, but the great heart of the vulgar that brings a new religious intuition to the birth ".....He (the Master and Teacher,) is the crest of the wave, but all these are the wave itself."

Ram Prasad was "a great poet whose genius is spent in realising the emotions of a child." He had "a radiant white heat of child-likeness." Hindu piety knows the truth "that the pure in heart shall see God" is a truth stating the reality of the Blessed

Vision. It was felt that the body is a hindrance to the perception of the Divine and has found locations within the body where the Divine can be realised (उपलब्धि स्थान). We must resynthesise our prismatic fragments of consciousness into the whiteness of direct, intuitive, absolute consciousness. Ram Prasad and Ramakrishna Paramahansa are pure and perfect incarnations of this innermost spirit of Hinduism. Sister Nivedita says of the latter : "It is not as the interpreter of man's love to God, but as the great Incarnation of the spirit of the Mother towards Her children, that we pass on and kneel at the feet of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.....In the case of Ramakrishna, innumerable prayers and unheard of austerities had culminated in a realisation so profound that there was scarcely a memory of self-hood left. The man who lived and moved before his disciples was a mere shell, that could not fail to act as the in-dwelling motherhood willed." He felt "the perplexities of every heart as if they were his own." "His was, probably, the one really universal mind of modern times. Yet the whole was wrought to such a unity that the peace of it fills to this day the little chamber where he dwelt, and abides like a mighty presence under the great tree of meditation." How did men and women feel in his presence? "Men felt themselves in his presence to be dealing with forces that they could not gauge, drawing on wisdom which they were unable to fathom. As if he were great music, they touched there the state that mighty music hints at, and went away saner, sweeter, stronger to their daily tasks.....They were bathing in that Ocean of the Real to which his presence was a perpetual access." His pupils and disciples were full of him and so became perfect. Sister Nivedita well says : "And is it not the wisest of all teaching to make sure of the essentials and leave the minds of the instructed to work out their own results, like a young plant growing up from seed? For we may be sure of one thing,—the order that is imposed upon us may be geometrical but only the order we create ourselves can become organic. It was the old Indian ideal of a university to live in the forest with the Master and realise the meaning of culture in the touch of his personality." "His was in fact the most perfect religious culture that the mind can conceive." He realised all religious intuitions and saw that all religions lead unto God. He knew that "rites and ceremonies contain religious experience, as the husk contains the germ." Creeds are like "contemporary languages, all expressive of that one consciousness." "His longing was for the salvation of every soul in a whole world." He knew and taught that human learning, if it touched the feet of God, becomes joy, as iron becomes gold on touching the philosopher's stone. He was full of the ecstatic vision of the Mother. Nivedita well says about him : "He had inherited the long-gained knowledge of his race, that religion is no matter of belief, but of experience. The worship of the Great God of Getting on disgusted him ; and

he longed to attain the sweetness of Divine Union even in boyhood. With all this, he kept caste strictly, and without thought of personal comfort.....And is it not a great doctrine that every man's cottage door stands open on some high-road to the Infinite?.....It was as a seal upon this teaching that whoever came to Ramakrishna afterwards went away with profound courage. For the Master put his finger always upon the core of strength, and even his limitations became as wings upon the feet to the man so touched.....He is a witness to the world that the old Indian wisdom was not in vain. It is of course true that in no other country could he have occurred. But it is not true that he expresses the mind of India alone, or even chiefly. For in him meet the feeling and thought of all mankind, and he, Ramakrishna, the devotee of Kali, represents *Humanity*."

Then follows a stirring chapter on *The voice of the Mother*. What is Her Mandate to us? She says: "Think it was for My pleasure thou canstest forth into the world, and for that again, when night falls, and My desire is accomplished, I shall withdraw thee to My rest. Ask nothing. See nothing. Plan nothing. Let my will flow through thee as the ocean through an empty shell.....To-day the flame of renunciation shall be lighted in My lands and consume men with a passion beyond control of thought. Then shall My people thirst for self-sacrifice as others for enjoyment.....Uproot every interest that would conflict with Mine."

Next comes *A visit to Dukshineswar*. In it occurs the following beautiful description: "A universe that was all Mother—of a love of which the love of human mothers for their children is but a feeble glimmer—of a life that whether hard or happy-seeming, was all alike the dealing of that universe-Mother with Her babes."

The next chapter is called *An Intercession*. It is a conversation between the soul and the universal Mother and is full of beautiful thought beautifully expressed. The Mother says:

"When you have reached that place where the communion of souls is enough, you will find that it is more than the knowledge of the senses, faith will already be swallowed up in sight.....Give me your heart, and let me govern it alone. Be the witness of earth's joys and sorrows, sharing them not."

The next chapter is *The story of Kali* which concludes with the following beautiful passage—as beautiful in its utter simplicity as in its utter truth—with which this sketch also may fittingly close:

"All the children She plays with, and the lambs, and the flowers, and the great trees, and the little fishes." She loves all these, and She loves too the stars in the sky. And so do we. For we are Her children and everything that She loves we love too, because She is the Mother, and we cannot help it."

IN MEMORIAM.

The Holy Mother.

Before we could recover from the shock of the passing away of Swami Atbhutanandaji, we are stunned again by the saddening news of the *Mahasamadhi* of our most revered and beloved Holy Mother. Though she was more a disciple than a wife and helpmate of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, yet she was always a loving mother and perennial fountain of spiritual inspiration to all the devotees of the Bhagavan. After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, she had ever been the spiritual backbone of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood; even the late illustrious Swami Vivekananda used to look up to her for counsel and inspiration. Her numerous disciples were drawn not only from all castes and creeds of Hinduism, but from among the Mohamedans and Christians also. Many Europeans and Americans even sat at her feet and got spiritual instruction to the solace of their lives. Though unlettered she was like an ordinary Hindu lady, yet she was the very ideal of womanhood and the most exalted type of Hindu wife. If Sri Ramakrishna has shown unequivocally to the world the spiritual soul of India and that all the glorious accounts of her spiritual past are not a myth, that such attainments are possible for her even in this dark materialistic age, the Holy Mother has shown in turn by her life that Sita, Savitri, Damayanti and also Maitreyi, Gargi and Sulva are not things of the past, but they are recurring elements of Indian womanhood and form the hallowed custodian of all that is most precious, delicate and glorious of the virtues of her soul.

So it can be guessed what an inestimable loss our country has sustained in her passing away. Her solemn, unostentatious, silent life brought solace to, Oh, how many hundreds of people! Making her the centre, there has already been growing an organisation of ladies of great culture, piety and self devotional spirit at Calcutta to redeem the Indian womanhood from its present sorrowful state. Well, when the heart is too profoundly stirred with an emotion, the mouth becomes naturally mute. We cannot proceed further. If possible we shall try to present our readers with a short account of her blessed life in our next issue. She had been ailing for some months past from an acute type of malaria, and at last the fell disease carried her away from us in the 66th year of her age at the Ramakrishna Math, Bagh bazar, Calcutta, on the 20th of July. Her remains were taken to the Belur math next day in great procession and cremated before a large gathering of devotees and admirers. The occasion was marked with great solemnity and mourning.

Bala Gangadhara Tilak.

In this very same month we have to record with profound sorrow, also the sad demise of one of India's greatest patriots, Srijukta Bala Gangadhara Tilak, on the 31st July. The whole of India has gone on mourning at the death of this most illustrious son of hers. With Mr. Tilak, the love of his motherland was at once a religion and a passion, and his indomitable spirit that braved many a tribulation for his country's cause, was and shall ever be a perennial source of patriotic inspiration for his country men. And so they fondly dubbed him with the appellation of Lokamanya, i. e. one who is universally honored; it speaks eloquently of his wide popularity, though there are many eminent men in this country who do not see eye to eye with him in politics, yet there are few who can question his lofty sentiments and sincerity of purpose or surpass him in his self-denial for his motherland. Also the graces of his head were of rare kinds. His contributions towards the study of the ancient history of India and her religious literature are of abiding value. Though his whole life was spent in struggle for the freedom of his country without apparently achieving anything tangible in that direction, yet posterity shall ever remember his name with great affection and regard as one who was the sower of the seeds of liberty of his people and thus one of the greatest benefactors of his country. His bold uncompromising spirit, keen penetration, all-consuming patriotism, perfect self-denial for his country's cause, and above all his sterling character shall ever be the beacon light to his compatriots. May God give peace to his soul!

AN APPEAL.**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.***Puri Famine Relief Work.*

The public are well aware of the terrible famine that has broken out in the district of Puri, Orissa. In 1918—1919 there was a complete failure of crops in the district owing to excessive drought. The situation was aggravated because some parts of the district were devastated next year by the inundations of the rivers Kushabhadra and Bhargabi the two branches of the river Mahanadi. To mitigate the suffering of the famine-stricken people of the district some relief measures are being taken both by the Government and by some charitable associations. But still there are many places where no help has as yet reached and it has become a pressing necessity to relieve a very large number of persons from the hands of dreadful starvation. In order to afford relief to these people we have already sent workers to the affected parts to open centres there with the small balance left after closing of the Cyclone relief work,

last year, being confident that the generous public will come forward promptly with their financial help as on previous occasions. Details of the situation as well as the report of the work will be published as soon as we receive them from our workers. In the meantime we appeal to all generous and kind-hearted people to kindly send their contributions as soon as possible to any of the following addresses and oblige.

Already our workers have opened a centre at Kanas, a village 12 miles off from Kurdha Road Station. For the present they have undertaken to relieve at least two unions under Kanas Thana and the distribution of rice will take place in the course of this week. The report of our work will be published as soon as the first distribution is over. We are informed by our workers that at least Rs. 300 will be required per week for this purpose. If sufficient funds are forthcoming our work will be extended to those Unions that are similarly affected. Our funds are short; therefore, on behalf of the suffering brethren we appeal to all generous public to contribute their mite as soon as possible to

(i) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, P. C. Dt., Howrah.

(ii) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukerjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Contributions however small will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged.

(Sd.) Saradananda,
Secretary.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, 1919.

The annual report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service for the year 1919 under review, testifies to the startling progress it has made in the work of serving the suffering humanity since it first saw the light in 1900 with a very humble beginning. It has secured a widespread sympathy of the generous public. The young men who started the invaluable institution, were inspired by the great Swami Vivekananda and they began to follow the great motto of the Indian Sannyasin आत्मनः मीमांसा जगद्धिताय च. The message of the immortal Swami has stimulated the band of sincere workers and infused in them the spirit of practical Vedanta and directed them to look upon the indigent, the diseased, the destitute irrespective of caste, creed or sex as the veritable manifestations of God. The Institution has made a wonderful expansion by directing its activities towards the material and spiritual uplift of the society,—by providing for its poor and diseased and by giving an opportunity

to its members to purify themselves by the service of the suffering humanity. It is needless to dilate much on the importance and usefulness of the Institution in a cosmopolitan city like Benares and the great possibilities of the future towards the service of India's suffering millions.

In the year under review 16,790 persons obtained relief, there being 6,719 men, 4,337 women and 5,734 children. The people from every province of India were ministered in a spirit of catholicity without any distinction of caste, creed or colour and special attention was paid to their religious scruples and feelings.

In connection with the indoor relief (i) medical and surgical aid was administered to 1,113 patients of whom 491 were women. Three wards were kept reserved for them where no sweepers were allowed, the menial services were done by the workers themselves. The average daily number is 72. The Home admitted 85 surgical cases of serious nature. Besides these 132 helpless (other than patients) were supplied with food and shelter in the Home.

(ii) Moreover 47 homeless women were sheltered, of whom 25 invalids were maintained at Dasaswamedh Branch and 18 widows and helpless women of respectable families were maintained in another Branch at Luxa under the charge of an accomplished Lady Superintendent who was training them in reading, writing and sewing.

(iii) Eleven helpless boys were admitted into the Boys' Home which had been opened two years back. They are being trained under a whole-time graduate worker.

(iv) The Home admitted 7 paralytic patients.

In connection with the out-door relief (i) altogether 14,50 sick persons were treated, the average daily being 94, of whom 178 deserving patients were supplied with diet.

(ii) 204 destitute persons were relieved with weekly doles of rice and money or monthly allowances.

(iii) Besides these, 726 helpless persons were helped in various ways in the shape of money, food and cloth.

Now it will be easily understood how the work of the Home will get heavier and more complex day by day. The nature of humanitarian work which the Institution has carried on will bring home to every one the usefulness of the Home. We are glad to note that the Government was kind enough to sympathise and patronise the Home. The remarks of the Commissioner, District Judge, Collector and other distinguished visitors bring out the responsibilities of the

Home and the success achieved by it. The Institution is situated at the heart of a city like Benares where people from all corners of India come to dwell. It stands in the most sacred place, before the public, spreading the high ideal of self-sacrifice and the practical side of Vedantic doctrine. The complexity of work and new responsibilities necessitated the immediate erection of two segregation wards, quarters for the Lady workers and quarters for the Resident Medical Officer. Much has been done, and yet more remains to do; for the facility and betterment of the works some changes have been introduced. The general expenses of the Home during the year under review amounted to Rs. 24,000 whereas income was Rs. 2,000 only. It would necessitate curtailment of its manifold activities unless untiring help is forthcoming from the general public. The financial position of the Home is not at all satisfactory to its scope of works. We are sure, our generous countrymen will come forward with their help to maintain the status and progressive nature of the Home.

We regret very much that the Institution does not get any help from the public of the South. The Home of service is being represented from all parts of India—a fairly good number from the South. We hope, the ungrudging help will pour forth from all quarters and make this institution All-Indian.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged by the Honorary Assistant Secretary, the Ramakrishna Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City.

The Ninth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sevagram, Muthigunj, Allahabad 1919 has been lying on our table. It is gratifying to note that it has achieved marked success in the course of nine years. The Institution is thoroughly represented by every nationality. It tries its best to serve the suffering humanity with a spirit of catholicity without any distinction of caste, creed and colour.

During the year under review 11,143 persons were treated in the Out-door Dispensary. It is evident from the abstract account sheet that the Institution could not meet its recurring expenses. Owing to insufficient income, Mission had to labour under much difficulty to cope with the ever-increasing wants.

Since the remotest time Allahabad has been one of the holiest places in India where pilgrims flock together from all parts. We need not emphasise much on the importance of the place. It is a crying necessity that the Shevasrama should have an in-door hospital for the diseased and destitute humanity. A hospital of six beds with a small surgical ward attached and a separate room for infectious cases might serve for the present. The new responsibilities necessitate

immediate acquirement of a plot of land and erection of new buildings for the indoor patients and the workers. We hope, the eyes of poor will not fail to strike the chord of sympathy in the hearts of our generous countrymen. All contributions should be sent either to the Secretary Ramakrishna Mission, Shevasram, Muthigunj, Allahabad or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah.

It is a pleasure to review the Twentieth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Branch Centre, Dacca. The message of the great Swami Vivekananda that the destitute, diseased are the visible manifestations of God is the motto of the sincere workers of the Institution who devoted their lives for the service of 'Narayana's' the shape of the diseased and the destitute humanity. वेदो ब्रह्मैवनापरः the well-known teaching of Upanisad, is practically being realised by them in their own lives. We make bold to say that they are not only consecrating their lives but also demonstrating the lofty Ideals of the Vedanta to their fellow beings.

The present condition of the Branch centre is the result of gradual and steady expansion. The Mission has directed its activities in three distinct lines of work with a view to serve humanity on threefold planes of its existence—spiritual, mental and physical.

(i) The monastic members are being trained. The weekly meetings intended for the public form part of the Mission work. The scripture classes are regularly held.

(ii) A free school was started long long ago. The pressing need of our poorer brethren compelled the Mission to raise its standard up to the High School. Its object is not only to impart education to the poor to solve bread and butter problem but also to train them up in high spiritual Ideals so that they may achieve true manhood. The monastic members impart the education according to our own national Ideal. The opening of a Duffry (book binding) class and other such technical branches are under contemplation. Besides the free school during year 1919, 10 indigent students were regularly helped. Occasional help was also given to some other students.

(iii) In the Sevasram the total number of patients during the year under review was 1780. In the indoor Hospital 34 people were admitted. Besides these the workers nursed so many people in their respective houses and rendered medical help where necessary. During the small-pox epidemic at Dacca, the Mission formed a relief party. The number of cases attended was 284.

(iv) Occasional reliefs form a part of the Mission's activity. The workers rendered great help to our distressed brothers during the last great cyclone in the eastern part of Bengal. Famine relief

work is always carried on. In May and June last when there was a general scarcity of food some people were supplied with food every day.

The aforesaid report shows all the practical importance of the institution and the success it achieved. The ever increasing wants of humanity necessitate the widening of the scope of the Mission. The Mission is in urgent need of acquiring land for the firm footing of the free school and to provide more rooms for giving shelter to the diseased in its indoor Hospital. This complexity of work and new responsibilities compel the Mission to erect new buildings. The Seva is being done in a purely nonsectarian spirit. We are glad to note that it is fairly represented by all sects. We trust that noble souls of our country will come forward to help the institution for the great cause. The sufferings of the people give ample scope for the new zeal towards social service.

We received the Eleventh Annual Report of Sir Sir Ramakrishna Asram, Bharukathi, Barisal. It is indeed a wonderful thing for a village to carry on such work in the spirit of true self-sacrifice. The different sides of the activities testify to the usefulness of the Asram and to the sympathy it called forth from the generous public. It is a pleasure to note that even the remotest parts of Bengal are answering the call of the immortal Swamiji. Every one is doing his best to discharge the duties and responsibilities entrusted by him. We believe, such organisations will fully serve the purpose of village unions. We are sure that every part of India will follow the high example of the Asram. May the Lord grant its full success.

We are glad to acknowledge an appeal of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Asram, Mymensingh. It has been serving the humanity for more than eight years in many ways. It is evident from the report that its multifarious activities are fully taken advantage of by the public. We are much concerned to note that the Asram although situated in the heart of the biggest district of Bengal, has not got a firm footing of its own and has to labour under great pecuniary difficulty. In spite of these it carried on its work with great enthusiasm and was crowned with success.

The present sphere of its activity is mainly threefold. It is carrying on its work with a Catholic spirit without any sectarian feeling. Night School is a part of the Asram. During the small-pox, and other serious epidemic the Institution formed a relief party. The call of the illustrious Swamiji is truly responded by the sincere workers of the Asram. The complexity of work and responsibilities necessitate an acquirement of a plot of land and the erection of buildings,

We are glad to find the names of all the leading members of local Bar and other communities in the appeal. We hope, the practical sympathy will be pouring in. We firmly believe that our kind-hearted country men will unstring their purses to mitigate the sufferings of the distressed. All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received either by Babu Kaminikamal Sen, Pleader, Mymensingh or Secretary Sri Sri Ramakrishna Asram, Mymensingh.

In response to the earnest solicitation of a group of students of Vedanta in San Francisco, Swami Abhedananda has closed his Ashrama in West Cornwall, Connecticut, and is making his headquarters in San Francisco, California. The Swami has established an Ethical and Spiritual Society called The Vedanta Ashrama in this city. It holds its meetings, classes and lectures in Los Angeles Hall in the Native Son's Building, 414 Mason Street. From the start, the work has met with unqualified success, necessitating a move from smaller rooms to the present commodious quarters three weeks after its inception. Most of the former students of Swami Trigunatita have hailed Swami Abhedananda as their Master and Spiritual Guide, while new members are drawn by Swami's eloquence, sincerity and magnetic personality. The work includes in its scope Sunday lectures on subjects of interest to the reading public; for the more vitally concerned are the Gita classes held on Monday evenings; while to the private students (of whom there are already 100 or more) are reserved the Raja Yoga classes on Wednesday afternoons and Friday evenings, and the individual instructions on Tuesday afternoons. The growing interest in the Vedanta philosophy as expounded by the Swami argues well for the future of the work.

In response to an invitation from the Paul Elder Company, the leading publishers and book dealers of this city, Swami Abhedananda delivered a lecture on May first, at 2-30 P.M. in the Paul Elder Gallery on "The Influence of India on Western Civilization," which is published elsewhere in this issue. The lecture was very much appreciated by the audience.

NOTICE.

We regret very much that owing to the great labour trouble and consequent dislocation of the press business, our printers could not print the May issue of the Vedanta Kesari in proper time; consequently we are compelled to publish our June and July issues together. So, we hope our readers will kindly excuse the delay.

MANAGER,

The Vedanta Kesari.

Taittiriya-Upanishad.

CHAPTER VII.

असत् वा इदमग्रासीत् । ततो वै सद्जायत । तदात्मानं स्वयमकुरुत । तस्मात् तत् सुकृतमुच्यत इति । यद् वै तत् सुकृतम् रसो वै सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वा नन्दो भवति । को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् । यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् । एष ह्येवाऽनन्दयाति । यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन् दृश्येऽनात्म्येऽनिरुक्तेऽनिलयनेऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते । अथ सोऽभयं गतो भवति । यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन् दुर्दमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ तस्य भयं भवति । तच्चेव भयं विदुषोऽमन्तानस्य । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ।

असत् non-existent वा verily अग्रे in the beginning इदं this आसीत् was. ततः thence वै indeed सत् existence अजायत was born, तत् that स्वयं by itself आत्मानं itself अकुरुत made तस्मात् therefore तत् that सुकृतम् well-made उच्यते is called यद् which one वै verily तत् that सुकृतम् well-made (self-caused) सः he वै indeed रसः joy (lit. taste), अयं this रसं joy हि एव verily लब्ध्वा having attained आनन्दो blessed भवति becomes. कः who हि indeed अन्यात् would have lived कः who प्राण्यात् would have breathed यद् if एषः this आकाशः sky (effulgent) आनन्दः bliss न स्यात् would not have existed. एषः this हि verily एव alone आनन्दयाति bestows bliss. यदा when हि एव indeed एषः this एतस्मिन् in this अदृश्ये invisible अनात्म्ये unembodied अनिरुक्ते unpredicated अनिलयने abodeless अभयं fearless प्रतिष्ठां existence (lit. basis or support) विन्दते attain अथ then सः he अभयं fearlessness गतः भवति obtains. यदा when हि एव verily एषः this एतस्मिन् in this उदरे in the smallest degree अन्तरं difference कुरुते makes. अथ then तस्य his भयं fear भवति gets, तत् that तु and again एव verily अमन्तानस्य unthinking, (unwise) विदुषः of the knower भयं fear तत् about that अपि again एषः this श्लोकः verse भवति is.

In the beginning was verily this non-existent. From that was generated the existent. That made Its self by Itself. Therefore It is called Self-made. That one who is the self-made is verily the joy. Having attained this joy (man) becomes blessed. Who would have lived and breathed, had not this sky of bliss existed ! This verily It is that bestows bliss. When It finds in that invisible, unembodied, unpredicated, abodeless (Atman), the basis (of life), free from fear, then verily It transcends (all) fear. But when It makes (any) differentiation in It in the least degree, then for It, there is the fear. For the unwise knower indeed, It is the fear. There is the following verse about it.

[Non-existent.—i.e., the undifferentiated and unmanifested state of existence, not defined by any Name or Form. Here, non-existent does not refer to the absolute negation of existence or nihil, as existence could not be possible from the absolute non-existent.

The existent.—i.e., the manifest or the created world, differentiated by Name and Form.

That made Its self, etc.—i.e. Brahman, the first principle transmuted Itself into the visible form or creation by Its own inherent power without any extraneous aid. In other words, It constitutes by itself both the material and efficient cause of the universe.

Self-made.—the text is *Sukrita* which may mean either self-made or self-created, or, it may mean the cause which is *par excellence*.

Who is the joy—blessed.—The Sruti here indicates that all the joys of life that man feels either through their senses or in the domain of thought, are but reflections of that one supreme joy of the Atman. Otherwise, the abstemious saint denying all the enjoyments of the sense-pleasure could not have found this perennial source of eternal bliss of life in Self-contemplation alone.

Who could have lived and breathed, etc.—The Sruti asserts here that this principle of joy which forms the very core of our being is the main source of our life and the activities of our senses. The prime motive of life is the attainment of this eternal joy of the

Atman. In the state of ignorance, man seeks it in the ephemeral senses and the sense-objects, but when wisdom dawns through experience and bitter failures, he turns his eyes inward and finds it in his own self only. So, whether in the state of ignorance or in that of wisdom, Life means nothing but a prolonged search and enjoyment of this joy or bliss of the Atman.

Unembodied.—i.e., one that has no name or form.

Unpredicated.—i.e., devoid of all attributes.

Abodeless.—i.e., self-existent, devoid of any other basis or support.

Then verily it transcends, etc.—Fear is the feeling of the apprehension for the possible extinction of life or for its limitation. So when the Jivatman or the individual soul realises the truth that its being is not separate from that Universal yet Transcendental Reality, the Supreme Atman, then it finds no cause of fear inasmuch as, there exists no chance of its extinction or limitations,—it attains then that transcendental state of eternal bliss known as *Brahmi Sthiti*,

But when it makes, etc.—i.e., when the Jivatman feels a differentiated existence of his own being as apart from the universal, then by the very fact of his self-imposed limitations and assumed separateness, he creates wants and miseries for himself ; and by his false identification with the mind and the body, he raises the spectres of fear around him.

For the unwise knower, etc.—Though the Supreme Atman constitutes the very soul of both the wise and the ignorant, yet the ignorant, not knowing the truth of this blessed unity feels his littleness and looks upon the universal soul, God, as an object of great terror, as one who would punish him for his faults and shortcomings ; but the wise knowing It to be his own soul, enjoys the calm repose of the eternal bliss in Him.

Unwise knower.—the passage may also mean that the person who unwisely considers Atman as an object of knowledge, also falls into the same pit of fear and misery, owing to his ignorance of the fact that the transcendental Atman which is beyond the three aspects of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge (*Jnana*, *Jneya*, *Jnata*) can never come within the scope of intellect.

CHAPTER VIII.

भीषाऽस्माद्वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषाऽस्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति । सैषाऽनन्दस्य मीमांसा भवति । युवा स्यात्साधुयुवाऽध्यायकः । आशिष्ठो दृढिष्ठो बलिष्ठः । तस्यैयं पृथिवी सर्वा वित्तस्य पूर्णा स्यात् । स एको मानुष आनन्दः । ते ये शतं मानुषा आनन्दाः । स एको मनुष्य गन्धर्वाणामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं मनुष्यगन्धर्वाणामानन्दाः । स एको देवगन्धर्वाणामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं देवगन्धर्वाणामानन्दाः । स एकः पितॄणां चिरलोकलोकानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं पितॄणां चिरलोकलोकानामानन्दाः । स एक आजानजानां देवानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतमाजानजानां देवानामानन्दाः । स एकः कर्मदेवानां देवानामानन्दः । स एकः कर्मदेवानां देवानामानन्दः । ये कर्मणा देवानपियन्ति । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं कर्मदेवानां देवानामानन्दाः । स एकः देवानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य ते ये शतं देवानामानन्दाः । स एक इन्द्रस्याऽनन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतमिन्द्रस्याऽनन्दाः । स एकः बृहस्पते रानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं बृहस्पते रानन्दः । स एकः प्रजापतेरानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं प्रजापतेरानन्दः । स एकः ब्रह्मण आनन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । स यश्चायं पुरुषे । यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः स य एवंवित् । अस्माद्धोकात्मन्य । एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ।

अस्मात् from its भीषा fear वातः the wind पवते blows. भीषा from fear सूर्यः the sun उदेति rises. अस्मात् from its भीषा fear अग्निः the fire च and इन्द्रः Indra पञ्चम the fifth मृत्युः death धावति runs, (to their respective duties). सा that एषा this आनन्दस्य of the Ananda मीमांसा examination, reasoned conclusion भवति is युवा youthful स्यात् if be साधुयुवा pious youth अध्यायकः well versed (in scriptures). आशिष्ठः full of hope, of sanguine temperament दृढिष्ठः resolute बलिष्ठः strong तस्य his (for him) इयं this सर्वा all पृथिवी the earth वित्तस्य with wealth. पूर्णा full स्यात् if be. सः that एकः unit मानुषः human आनन्दः joy bliss. ते of that य what शतं hundred मानुष आनन्दः human bliss सः that एकः one मनुष्यगन्धर्वाणां of human gandharvas आनन्दाः bliss. (तथाच so also) श्रोत्रियस्य one versed in the Vedas अकामहतस्य not smitten by desires. त य what शतं hundred मनुष्यगन्धर्वाणाम् of the human gandharvas आनन्दः bliss. सः that एकः one देवगन्धर्वाणाम् of the celestial gandharvas आनन्दः bliss. ते ये what शतं hundred देवगन्धर्वाणाम् of the celestial gandharvas आनन्दाः bliss. सः that एकः one चिरलोकलोकानाम् of those whose region of abode is the eternal loka पितॄणां this mines आनन्दः bliss ते ये what शतं hundred चिरलोकलोकानाम् पितॄणां of the pitris whose abode is the eternal heaven आनन्दाः bliss सः that एकः eon आजानजानां those born of celestial heaven देवानाम् devas आनन्दः bliss. ते ये what शतं hundred आजानजानां देवानाम् of the devas born of the celestial heaven आनन्दाः bliss. सः that एकः one कर्मदेवानां those exalted by their sacrificial deeds देवानां of the devas आनन्दः bliss. ये who कर्मणा by sacrificial work देवान् godhood अपि यन्ति have attained. ते ये what शतं hundred कर्मदेवानां देवानां of the devas exalted by work आनन्दाः bliss. सः that एकः one देवानाम् of the gods आनन्दः bliss ते ये what शतं hundred देवानाम् of the gods आनन्दाः bliss सः that एकः one इन्द्रस्य of India आनन्दः bliss. ते ये what शतं hundred इन्द्रस्य of Indra आनन्दाः bliss सः that एकः one बृहस्पतिः Brihaspati आनन्दः bliss. ते ये what शतं hundred बृहस्पतेः of Brihaspati आनन्दाः bliss. सः एकः that one प्रजापतेः of the lord of creatures, Brahma, आनन्दः bliss ते ये what शतं hundred प्रजापतेः of Prajapati आनन्दाः bliss. सः एकः that one ब्रह्मणः of Brahman आनन्दः bliss. सः he यः who च again अयं this पुरुषे in man यः who च and असौ in that आदित्य in the sun सः

he एकः one सः he यः who एवंविद् knows thus अस्मात् from this लोकात् world प्रेत्य having departed एतत् this अन्नमयम् consisting of food आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रामति attains. एतं this प्राणमयम् consisting of Praṇa आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रामति reaches. एतं this मनोमयं consisting of manas आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रामति goes to एतं this विज्ञानमयं consisting of Buddhi आत्मानं self उपसंक्रामति attains. एतं this आनन्दमयम् consisting of ananda or joy आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रामति reaches. तदपि about that also एषः the following श्लोकः verse भवति there is.

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.

VOL. VII.]

AUGUST 1920.

[No. 4.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda.

Dakshineswar.

To understand the further development of Sri Ramakrishna's life, and the opening up of a new avenue of earning for Ramakumar, we have to acquaint ourselves a little with the events that were happening in a famous contemporary family at Calcutta.

At the southern end of the Indian Metropolis, in the quarter of Janbazar, there was the residence of the famous Rani Rasamani. The Rani was widowed at the age of 40 with her four daughters and became the sole owner of the vast property of her husband, Raj Chandra Das. Since her husband's demise she had been managing the estate herself. And through her numerous philanthropic deeds and acts of charity she built up a great name and fame for herself among the residents of Calcutta. Moreover, she won the heart of many by her great devotion and faith, indomitable courage, unbounded sympathy for the poor and unstinted gifts of alms. An extraordinary intelligence; presence of mind, great

assiduity to uphold a righteous cause, were also markedly manifest in her. These virtues and her continuous endeavour to do some good turns to the people endeared her very much to the inhabitants of the West of Bengal. Though born of the low fisherman caste (*Kaivartaka*) yet by virtue of the excellences of her head and heart, and the various good deeds, she gave a real and glorious significance to her title 'Rani,' and was able to earn love and regard from people of all castes,—from the highest Brahmana downwards.

At the time we are speaking of here, all the daughters of the Rani were married and they had their children also. When her third daughter had departed from this world leaving behind a young son, the Rani who had a special partiality for the third son-in-law Mathuranath Biswas, thought of re-uniting him with her family by a new tie, and so she married her fourth daughter Jagadamba Dasi to him. The descendants of these four daughters of the Rani are still alive in Calcutta. Rani Rasamani was particularly devoted to the Divine Mother Kali. The seal that she had for her State business bore the words—'Srimati Rasamani' Dasi, the aspirant of the grace of Kali.' We have heard from the Master himself that the devotion of the Rani towards the Divine Mother was thus manifest in all her words and deeds.

Tradition has it, that the Rani had been fostering fondly for sometime past a great desire to go to Benares once and worship the Lord Visweswara and Mother Annapurna to her heart's content. And for that purpose she had set apart a large amount of money also. But owing to the fact of her great responsible work that had befallen upon her shoulder after the death of her husband, she could not translate her pious intention into action till then. Now, all her sons-in-law had become quite capable of looking after their own, and specially her youngest son-in-law, the said Mathuranath relieved much of the burden of her shoulder by helping her in carrying out the estate business. So the Rani thought of going to Benares in the year 1255 B. S. When all arrangements for the pilgrimage were completed, on the eve of her proposed starting she got the *Pratyadesha* (Divine command),— 'there is no need of your going to Benares. Erect a temple on a good site on the bank of the Ganges, install there a stone image of Mine and make proper arrangements for the daily worship and offerings of that image. Being present in that Image I shall accept all thy worship and homage!' The devout heart of the Rani accepted the commandment in full faith; and with much joy gave up the desire of going to Benares and resolved to utilise

all the money she had set aside for the purpose to carry out the Divine command.* 1

We don't know how much of the above tradition is true, but there is no doubt that at that time the great devotion of the Rani for the Divine Mother moved her to give itself a concrete shape, and she actually bought an extensive plot of land on the eastern bank of the river Ganges and began to build on it a huge temple with nine towers (*navaratna*) and some other small temples along with it, and laid a big garden around the temple * 2. The work of construction was carried on for several years till 1261 B. S. (1855 A. D.) Still it was not finally completed. But having thought of the uncertainty of life and being eager to do the installation of the Divine Image as soon as possible, she hurried through the building work and had the Image of the Divine Mother installed in the Temple on the auspicious day of 18th Jyaisbtha, 1262 B. S. (1855 A. D.). But here our readers must know something of the incidents that led to the installation.

Either owing to a *pratyadesha* or through the natural inspiration of her pious heart the Rani had a great mind to worship the Divine Mother with the offerings of cooked rice. She mused that the temple was completed after her heart's desire and she was going to endow the temple with a large property sufficient to carry on the daily worship, yet if she could not carry on the worship and offerings as her heart desired,—if she could not offer Her, the Divine Mother, the dishes of cooked rice along with the side dishes then all would be in vain* 3. Though this pious work of hers might bring to her some more name or fame,—though people might speak highly of the temple and her charity, yet all these were useless, she thought, as they could not give her any true and abiding solace of life; her soul would be satisfied only when she could worship the Mother of the universe as her very own. And so the pious Rani kept up praying constantly to

* 1. Some say that the Rani had actually started on the pilgrimage and came even up to Dakshineswar by boat, and while staying there at anchor for the night, she got the *Pratyadesha*.

* 2. It is recorded in the gift deed of the Temple that the extent of the Temple land is 30 acres. It was bought on the 16th September 1847 A. D. from one Mr. Hasty, an Attorney of the Supreme Court, and it took nearly ten years for the full construction of the Temple.

* 3. A true devotee always likes to worship God by establishing some relation with Him and, serving Him as he would do to one of such human relations of his. Thus with a Hindu, offerings of food, clothes and other necessities of daily life form an integral part of his Divine worship. The Rani meant to include dishes of cooked rice in her offerings of food to the Divine Mother.

her *Ishtam*, the Divine Mother, to become manifest, accept her worship and offerings, and thus fulfil her heart's inmost desire.

And the great barrier in her way of fulfilling that cherished intention of hers was her caste and the current custom of the society* 4. Otherwise, the instinct of her heart never told her, she thought, for a single moment that if she were to offer dishes of cooked rice to the Divine Mother, She would refuse the offering, when the very idea of making such an offering brings an elation of her heart with joy! Had it been sinful it would have brought in its train a feeling of dejection and gloom only! Then, who could have been the originator of this un-humane custom! And why? Is Shashtra the promulgator? Could it be then that the author of the Shastras was so heartless as to give sanction to such custom? or, perhaps certain selfish motives might have prompted him to reserve such high privileges only for the highest caste, even in matters related to religion and spirituality. If it were so, away with such Shastras; no need with such Shastras for her! She would follow the promptings of her own heart in this matter. Yet, she meditated, that would not bring a satisfactory solution of the problem. If she were to go against the current custom of the land, none of Brahmin devotees, Sadhus and good people would come to her temple and partake of the food offered to the Goddess. That itself was a matter of great disconsolation! So, to find a way out,—a satisfactory solution of all these difficulties that arose in her mind in connection with the installation of the Divine Image and the proper conducting of its worship and offerings, the Rani sent for the opinions of all great Pundits and scholars of the land, yet none of these opinions she received was after her liking.

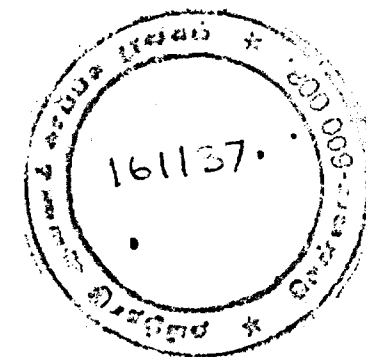
In the mean time the constructions of the temple and the Image were completed and were ready for installation, yet she found no hope of fulfilment of her heart's desire. All the Pundits of the country gave their opinion in one accord to the effect that a Sudra had no right to offer cooked rice to the Deity. And when all hope of hers in the matter was about to flicker out, there came the scholarly opinion from the Chatuspathi at Jhamapukur saying that if the Rani could dedicate the temple to any Brahmana before the installation of the Image and if the said Brahmana would have the installation done in his name and make arrangements for the offering of cooked rice then there would be no infringement of the

* 4. According to the current custom of the Hindu society evidently based upon some of the dogmas of the later ascensions of Hinduism, only Brahmanas can offer cooked rice to Gods and Goddesses in the Temples: other castes are permitted to offer other edibles, such as, fruits, sweets, milk, etc., but no rice. (*Angnam*,

mandates of the Shastras, and all the upper castes like Brahmanas, could partake of the offerings without being degraded for the same.

This opinion of Ramkumar revived again the withered hope of the Rani and she thought of dedicating the whole of the temple and the temple property in the name of her Guru and then to remain herself as an agent of his to look after the proper management and worship of the temple. Next, she sent round the opinion of Ramkumar Bhattacharjee to other eminent pundits also for criticism and none of them said that the opinion was against any Shastric injunctions, although it might be opposed to the current customs.

We can well understand that the above incident must have attracted the Rani's attention particularly towards Ramkumar. And in truth in those days, when Brahmins, the leaders of the society, were so narrow-minded and immured within the walls of bigotry, that few of them could see a broad purpose in the words of the scriptures and accordingly give religious advice suiting to the occasion, it was no small measure of catholicity on the part of Ramkumar to give the above kind of opinion on the present occasion which solved the difficulties so satisfactorily.



SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY

Hon'ble V. K. Ramanujachariar,

(Continued from page 57).

A few words as to Sri Ramakrishna's conception of *avatāra* or incarnation of God may be added here. He says "On the tree of Absolute Existence—Knowledge—Bliss (*sad-chit-ānanda*) there hang innumerable branches of Ramas, Krishnas, Buddhas, Christs, &c. Out of those one or two now and then come down into this world and produce mighty changes and revolutions." Again, "It is all one *avatāra* that we have. Having plunged into the ocean of life the one God rises up at one point and is known as Krishna. And when after another plunge he rises at another point, he is known as Christ." There is another class of *avatars*, in which the *avatāra* is a human messenger of God. He is like a viceroy of the mighty Monarch. As when there is any disturbance in some far province, the king sends the viceroy to quell it, so whenever there is any waning of religion in any part of the world, God sends His *avatāra* there to guard virtue and to foster its growth. This is the object of the *avatāra*. The power of the *avatāra* is described by comparing him to a large and powerful steamer. As it moves swiftly over the waters and tows along flats and barges behind it, so the *avatāra* easily carries thousands to the haven of safety across the ocean of *Māya*. There is nothing difficult to the *avatāra*. He solves the most intricate problems of life and soul, and his expositions carry conviction even to a child.

From a consideration of the ultimate truth as seen by Sri Ramakrishna, let us pass on to his idea of man's goal. This is realisation of God, as the first step and then union with Him. Some idea of realisation may be gathered from the description of an illiterate devotee who would be in tears while a Pandit used to read from Gita. Being asked the cause of his tears, he replied "It is indeed true that I do not know a word of the Gita. But all the while that it was being read, I could not help seeing with my mind's eye the beautiful form of my Lord Sri Krishna seated before Arjuna in a chariot on the field of Kurukshetra and giving out all these sublime thoughts known as the Gita. This it was that filled my eyes with tears of joy and love." To see one's special Deity in this manner is realisation, and when this takes place, one becomes unconscious of everything outside himself, so much so that he

does not know even if birds build their nests in his hair. Sri Ramakrishna had frequent realisations of this kind, and he would for sometime be unconscious of his surroundings. Sukadeva expounding Sri Bhagavata to King Parikshit would similarly fall into reveries at the end of each narration, and he required to be roused by fresh questions of the King. Realisation should be followed by union with God. Some idea of what this was intended to be, may be gathered from the following saying of the Paramahansa. "As a noble master pleased with the honesty, good service and constant attention of an old obedient servant, takes him to his own seat, and forcibly seats him thereon, although the servant may hesitate in modesty, so the great Master of the Universe pleased with the long austere devotion and genuine self-sacrifice of His beloved servant takes him to His own seat, and graciously endows him with divinity, although the servant does not like to leave service and be one with his Master."

What is the means by which the goal may be reached? To understand the means pointed out by Sri Ramakrishna let me note the means described in the Bhagavad Gita, the essence of the wisdom gathered by Sri Krishna from the numerous Upanishads like honey gathered by bees from full-blown flowers. Three paths are pointed out—*Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga*. The first is the performance of every act—be it that prescribed by the Sashtas or that relating to the preservation of the body without looking forward to its fruit. When, by the practice of this the mind is rendered serene, the disciple enters on the next path—*Jñāna Yoga*, which consists in separating in thought the soul from the body and its adjuncts. It is somewhat as follows:—I am not the body; for I remain unchanged, while the body continually changes. I reside in the body; I am therefore different from it, as I am different from my house. I am one, and indivisible, while the body is made up of parts each with its own function. I am ever the same, though the body in which I may be for the time being belongs to this race or that, and though it is now male, and then a female. I differ also from the senses and the mind; for they are my tools. I am existence, knowledge and bliss. In the Bhagavad Gita these two paths are combined. While one does an act without concerning himself with its fruit, he says to himself—'This act is not done by me; it is done by the body, by the senses or by the mind.' By this means he detaches himself from them, and as this is repeated in every act, *Jñāna Yoga* is practised as well as *Karma Yoga*. The third path—*Bhakti Yoga*—is loving meditation on God steadily done day by day. One who is doing this surrenders all actions to God—that is, he regards the fruit of all actions as belonging

to God, and himself as God's agent merely. He also looks upon every being as God.

Sri Ramakrishna advises the abandonment of all these paths. He said that work without attachment was exceedingly difficult especially in this age. It is possible for the ideal man alone to live a life of work without attachment. Others get easily attached more or less to things of the world, without their knowing it. Equally difficult is *Jñāna Yoga*, as our life depends upon food; as the term of human life is much too short; and as it is almost impossible to get rid of the *dehabuddhi*—the notion that the soul is the body itself. One practising this means has to think that he is not subject to the necessities of the body (*e. g.*), hunger, thirst, birth, death, disease, etc. For one subject to these necessities to feel that he is not subject to them is very difficult indeed. The only easy means is the practice of *Bhakti Yoga*; but that described in the Bhagavad Gita emphasises self-reliance, and this makes it difficult. The young of a monkey clasps and clings to its mother tightly when she moves about, because it relies upon its own strength. So does the *bhakta* of the Bhagavad Gita. The kitten, on the other hand, merely mews piteously and the mother grasps her by the neck. There is, therefore, no danger of its falling down and getting hurt. Sri Ramakrishna advises the adoption of the kitten's policy and the seeking of communion with God by *bhakti* or devotion and self-surrender.

We should get a clear conception of these terms—devotion and self-surrender. Devotion is love of God. One should see Him as the nearest and dearest relative, just as the Gopis, the shepherd women of Brindavan, saw in Sri Krishna not the Lord of the Universe, but their own beloved. The love should be intense. Sri Ramakrishna advises that the following should be combined—the love that a devoted wife possesses for her beloved husband, the attachment that a miser feels for his hoarded gold, and the yearning that the worldly man fosters for the things of this world. The devotion should be also single-hearted like the devotion of Hanuman to Sri Rama, and of the Gopis to Sri Krishna. When the latter went to Muttra to see Him, and found Him robed in regal dress, they could not recognise him, and began to whisper among themselves—“Who is this man? We cannot talk with him, lest we should be culpable of infidelity to our Krishna. Oh! Where is our Lord, who wore yellow cloth and peacock-tail crest?” Love of this kind will destroy all evil passions, and has therefore been compared to a tiger. Self-surrender is complete resignation of oneself to God's mercy. One should be like dry leaves blown about here and there

by the wind. He should have no choice of his own, and make no exertion, but should move in harmony with God's will. As self-surrender grows, egotism will wane. Egotism consists of several elements. The notion ‘I am the doer,’ ‘I have done this good work,’ and ‘I have done that bad work’ is egotism. One, who knows that God is the doer and that he himself is the non-doer, is truly free, though living in the body. Pride is egotism, which says: “I have so much money; who is so wealthy as myself; who dares surpass me? Possessiveness is egotism, which says: “This is my house, my child, my wife, my body.” The right thought is ‘everything is God's.’ The only egotism that is not objectionable is the egotism of the servant, of the devotee and of the teacher. When a person has become one with God, he still retains a slight trace of individuality to mark his separate existence from Him for the purpose of serving Him, of loving Him, and of teaching others the truths of Religion. But this egotism is only in appearance, and is like a line drawn across a sheet of water.

How is the self-surrender to be made—Sri Ramakrishna explains the mode. “O! Mother Divine! I am without *Bhakti*, without *Yoga*; I am poor and friendless. I want no one's praises. Only let my mind always dwell in Thy lotus-like feet.”

Certain other qualities also should be cultivated. Faith is one of them, faith unshaken, which made Hanuman the faithful servant of Sri Rama, cross the Ocean with one jump. The faith-healers of this country utilise this fact in driving off disease. Patience and endurance should be learnt from the anvil of the black-smith, which though hammered and beaten, does not move from its place. Steadiness is another virtue that is needed by one to reach his goal. To change from one road to another at the suggestion of every passer-by is dangerous. The disciple's mind, the compass-needle of the ship of life, should always be turned towards God. If it remains without oscillation, it will steer clear of every danger. And finally, daily meditation on God is necessary to prevent the mind from becoming impure, like daily rubbing a brass vessel to prevent its getting rusty.

Is it easy to attain devotion, to make the self-surrender and cultivate the qualities which have been enumerated? Yes, by seeking the company of the holy and the wise. The society of the pious drives the moisture of greed and lust, and makes the fire of *viveka* or discrimination burn steadily. It makes even the wicked righteous, awakening awe and reverence in them. It was the society of holy men in a previous incarnation, when he was the son of a

servant woman, that led the sage Narada to reach the high position which he occupies. Help may also be obtained from the constant repetition of the name of the Lord of Love. This is the practice suited to the present age. Says Sri Ramakrishna "Chant forth the sweet name of Hari (God), keeping time for the while by clapping your hands * *. If you clap your hands while you are sitting under a tree, the birds on the boughs will fly away in all directions. When you chant forth the name of Hari and clap your hands, all evil thoughts will fly away from your mind."

Sri Bhagavata Chapter V of part XI emphasises the importance of repeating God's names. "The wise who can appreciate the good in everything, praise the Kali age; for in that age by the mere repetition of God's names every one reaches his own goal."

The *Bhakti Yoga* by self-surrender taught by Sri Ramakrishna is known to the followers of Sri Ramanuja in Southern India under the name of *prapatti*. It was taught to Arjuna by Sri Krishna in the closing verse of His teaching, verse 66 of Chapter XVIII. "Abandon all the *dharma*s (i. e.,) the paths already taught, and find refuge in Me alone." This was developed by Sri Ramanuja and fully elaborated by his great follower Vedantadesika. *Prapatti* is self-surrender, i. e., placing, at the Lord's feet the burden of reaching one's goal. This surrender consists of the following elements. The first is the resolve to co-operate with God, and the second is the abandonment of the attitude of hostility to Him. The next is unshaken faith in the capacity and willingness of God to help. The fourth element is the sense of impotence in treading the path prescribed—*Karma*, *Jnana*, and *Bhakti*. To this should be added the prayer that God will take him to his goal. The placing of the responsibility for this at God's feet together with the five elements described is perfect *Prapatti*. From the very nature of the case the surrender can be made but once, and occupies but a few minutes. The *Prapanna* has nothing more to do on this account, and has merely to wait with calmness for the moment when God will be pleased to take him to Himself. And this depends upon the *Prapanna* himself. If he chooses to reach the goal at the end of this physical existence, the Lord waits till then. But if he elects to do so at once, his wish will be complied with.

From the moment of the self-surrender till death the *Prapanna* should remember that the self-surrender has been made, and should serve God with devotion. This is what he seeks when the bondage of *Karma* is removed, and he anticipates it while he remains here. In order that he may not forget his own nature and his true goal, these elements are sometimes included in the *Prapatti*. The

Prapanna prays: "Make me steady in the thought that I am Thine; may I ever regard the attainment of Thee as my only goal; keep me from actions that are prohibited or are done for fruit; make me your eternal servant; utilise me and all that is mine, animate or inanimate, as instruments in Thy service."

The knowledge of *Prapatti* is confined to a small community, and owing to its age it shows signs of decay.

A great teacher was required to extend the teaching of *Yoga* by devotion and self-surrender to all and to remove the dust that has gathered round it in course of time. That teacher came in the form of Sri Ramakrishna.

Max Muller with all his sympathy is unable properly to value the service rendered to humanity by Sri Ramakrishna. He says "Ramakrishna was in no sense of the word an original thinker, the discoverer of a new idea or the propounder of any new view of the world." The same charge may be made against Sri Krishna, who in the Bhagavad Gita did not give expression to any idea not already found in the Upanishads. As observed by Syami Vivekananda "Religion is neither words, nor doctrines, nor theories." "It is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is said, it is the personality of the speaker that dwells in everything he says and carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We listen to splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned discourses, and we go home and forget them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest language, and they accompany us all our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves, and produce lasting results." The sayings of Sri Ramakrishna produce this effect. It is to influence the world in this manner both by their spoken words and their silent life that great souls incarnate from time to time. Plunged in the stream of existences, we need an ideal, set by one who lived among us, and was not separated from us by distance of time. We require one to show us what is possible for all of us, if only we follow in his footsteps. Sri Ramakrishna serves these purposes, and he has purified the traditional teaching, and has set an example of perfect tolerance for the benefit of India and the whole world. Let us therefore pay our humble homage to him and pray to him, that though he has withdrawn from physical existence, he will continue to inspire us from the higher worlds.

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA.

Chap. V.—The Jivatman's Spiritual Evolution.

BY

Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M. A.

According to the Vedanta, the evolution of the Jivatman is co-extensive with the evolution of the universe. Both the Jivatman and the material universe have ever changed, but both, too, are the same from moment to moment. There has never been an entirely torpid mechanism called the universe which at a particular stage of its history developed motion, activity, and life, and still later instinct and the phenomena of intelligence in their numerous gradations as we know them to-day. Change and identity imply each other,—and this is true of both the Jivatman and the material universe. It has been well said :—"You are not a succession of different persons, nor is the universe a succession of different universes. You are conscious both of your identity through all changes and of the changes through which you go. The universe also is identical through all its changes." Sankaracharya says :—"If everything known as 'this is only that' is momentary and changing,—and if, for that knowledge of momentariness, another (previous) knowledge (of momentariness) is needed,—and if for this latter also another such knowledge is needed we have (the logical fault of) *regressus ad infinitum* (अनन्वस्य). Against this view, M. Bergson offers his philosophy of change. He says :—"There are changes but no things which change,—changes require no substratum or substance. There are movements, but not therefore unchanging objects which move,—a movement does not presuppose a moving thing." These allegations are made both of the self and of the material universe. For Bergson, as for other pragmatists, "reality is in the making,"—not a "thing made," a permanent thing. At the same time he holds that "it is our self which endures." But duration for him is only "a survival of the past into the present, and does not mean that which persists amidst all the changes known as past, present, and future. Hence he says :—"As our attention has artificially distinguished and separated the states (of the mind), it is by an artificial bond that it is obliged subsequently to reunite them. Consequently it *imagines a self or me*, amorphous and unchanging, on which the psychological states that it has converted into independent entities may be threaded and

moved like the different pearls of a necklace ; it is simply bound to imagine a thread to keep the pearls together." "In truth this substratum (*i.e.*, self or subject) is not a reality ; it is for our consciousness merely a sign intended to remind it perpetually of the artificial character of the operation by which attention sets one state side by side with another, where really there is continuity unfolding itself." But if the self (the subject) is unreal, then its faculty of attention and the states to which the attention is directed are equally unreal, and hence there can, in truth, be no reality, either in the making, or made.

We know (from the discussion in the previous chapter) what Isvara's purpose is in the evolution of the universe, *viz.*, the Jivatman's realisation of his identity with the Atman as the one reality which is the Innermost Bliss of Love. Though the Jivatman is, in essence and truth, free from the trammels of life in the world of matter, his ignorance of the truth has involved him in a succession of births and rebirths which has made him, as it were, an inseparable part of the universe and even organic with it in the course of its evolution. It is only the Vedic seers that realised, even at the dawn of creation, and taught the world that there is no solution of the world of matter—its origin, working and purpose—apart from the needs of the evolving Jivatman and from Isvara's gracious resolve to be his helper by assigning to him all the opportunities which his Karma has earned for him and even more in accordance with his deserts. In the West, thinkers and philosophers have been handicapped,—*first*, by their absolute faith in the noumenal reality of the universe and of life as an organic part of it ; and, *secondly*, by their absolute faith in the scientific conception of the evolution of matter in all its phases, independently of the Jivatman's personality and its course through the universe.

Let us *first* consider the question of the reality or unreality of the universe, as it stands at present among Western thinkers and scientists. We in India find it impossible to realise what sensation has been recently caused there by Einstein's theory of the relativity of matter. The triumphs of scientific experiment and discovery have been so rapid and absorbing in the Western world that men have not been able to pause and reflect upon the nature of the deductions to be made from them. However much science and its practical applications, may develop, we must not fail to wisely estimate their value and bearing on the nature of the universe and on man's life, ideals, and destiny.

It is only recently that the attention of thinkers and investigators has been turned to such verifiable facts as the anomaly in

the motion of the planet Mercury (shown not to fit into Newton's gravitational theory) and the deflection of light near the sun observed during a recent solar eclipse. They have resulted in the interesting speculations of Einstein, the German thinker, estimating the true significance of time, and its combination with space so as to form the order of nature into one four-dimensional continuum consisting of "a single order of time and a three-fold order of space." The separation of time and space, however, is—as stated by a recent writer on Einstein—"not a separation in the external world, but is something contributed by the observer and dependent on his circumstances,"—i.e., introduced by himself when he contemplates the order of nature and his own progress or track through the world as consisting of a "long chain of successive positions at successive instants." "Observers taking different tracks will have different perceptions and measures of space and time"—differences which are not to be dispensed of by merely allowing for differences of velocity in different bodies,—differences of a more fundamental order and varying with each observer as he takes a track of his own in time and therefore also in space. Thus Einstein's relativity-theory makes the connection of time and space more intimate and fundamental than was formerly supposed,—a change, however slight, in the present order of nature having its own effect in the determination of the future.—Time, too, depends on the motion of the observer, and not on a particular direction. Further, length in space and duration in time are known to us as measured with the aid of scales and clocks, and the results obtained by such measurements cannot be held to have a significance of absolute value in the external world, as is assumed in physical theories and calculations based on the Euclidean geometry of space,—i.e., cannot be held to give the thing itself which enters in the most direct manner into the order of nature. Finally, the new theory leaves no room for the identification of even a single particle of matter or ether,—for we cannot say of it that it occupies the same position in space even for two successive moments. Hence the idea of rest or motion relative to ether becomes meaningless, and we look away from particles to the etheric space as a *plenium* and the forces which pervade it and give instability to the order of nature as a whole. All this recent speculation regarding the relativity of matter as combining space and time goes to confirm the world-old Vedic doctrine that the material universe in all its stages of evolution is only a phenomenal, and not a substantial and absolute, reality.

In the second place, the doctrine of the evolution of matter in the West has failed to give a satisfactory account of the

phenomena of life and personality. Every scientific man allows that by its nature matter is inert. How, then, are we to account for the first transition from the passive to the active? It is simply a begging of the question—or at best an attempt to avoid the issue—to say that "at some sudden crisis, an unusual stress of the will dormant in matter evoked an unprecedentedly strong response," and thus arose the will to action and then the transformation of this will into the striving or the action itself. It is similarly tantamount to an evasion of the issue to say that circumstance is the source of the power to act,—for, what is circumstance but matter which has evolved into the stage when energy which is potential is ready to become kinetic! How does matter which is inert—without motion or the possibility of it—develop the property of movement? How does it develop the phenomena of life and all that life, as it develops, implies,—viz., the will to live, the will to propagate life, and the capacity to live for the life of others? How does life in animals free itself from the limitation which renders plant-life incapable of changing the environment and only capable of giving a passive response? To say that accident or chance had to do with the earliest phases of development and that then the struggle for existence helped to bring on the further stages of evolution is simply to confess the incapacity of the trained scientific intelligence to explain the origin and early stages of the process of evolution. A truly scientific theory of evolution cannot afford to leave some of the facts unexplained and content itself with explaining what it can to the best of its lights. Further, it is wrong to suppose that all interpreters of the theory of evolution are agreed regarding all essential points. While some have held that evolution is a continual and progressive adjustment of inner to outer relations, Huxley has expressed his view that *ethical* evolution is opposed to, and liable in the end to be defeated by, the *cosmic* process, so that morality is only a transient phenomenon and man will or can get on without it as he proceeds with the process of struggle for existence inevitable in cosmic evolution.

The doctrine of the Vedas not only guards us against the snares and pitfalls of the theory of evolution, but gives a consistent and satisfactory reconciliation of the evolution of the Jivatman's life and personality with the evolution of the cosmos from its earliest to its latest stages. The origination, maintenance, and evolution of the universe in all its stages are, as explained at the commencement of this chapter, earned as the fruits of the conjoined karmas of all the Jivas in their previous lives in so far as

they harmonise with each other and help to earn for them those opportunities for their further advance which Isvara graciously places at their disposal in order to help them forward to the attainment of that perfection of their true Self as the innermost Bliss of Love—an attainment which (as shown in the last chapter) is also His own cosmic purpose. The *Karma-Vasanas*—or tendencies and impulses left behind and lodged in the mind as a part of its organisation or furniture—determine all such phenomena of human personality and life as are now known as the will to live, the will to propagate life, the will to live for the life of others, the capacity for the higher life of the spirit, the will to action or power which leads to the modern competitive struggle among the nations for the exploitation of the earth's resources.

The Brahma-Sutra—प्रवृत्तेश्च also points out that Pravritti or the faculty of action is that characteristic of the Jivatman which enables it to achieve its advance towards all the stages of evolution until it reaches the goal of enfranchisement from the bondage of matter and from those conditions of the environment which limit its powers of intelligent functioning and its discriminative choice of methods for the due fruition of its aims. It is a mistake to suppose that, in its course of evolution, matter was long without guidance from intelligence and that only at a certain stage of its history did its original inertia and passivity give place to the power of action or locomotion so as to develop life in all its forms and the struggles for life in all its forms among all the grades of intelligent beings. Isvara, in his gracious and supreme mercy, is ever awake and ready to help all Jivas forward towards their destined goal. Even as he originates the universe as the reward for the Jiva's Karma, he watches over the evolution of matter for the same reason and purpose and gives us all every help towards the attainment of our goal of spiritual perfection.

Of the impressions or tendencies left behind by the Karmas of previous births and stored in our minds, a part becomes ripe for fruition and tends to determine our present activities. These tendencies are known to the Vedantin by the technical name of *Daiva* (देव). For, after we have experienced the effect of those Karmas which are already ripe, we have to descend from Devaloka with what remains unspent of the stored-up tendencies of the past. It is this stored-up remnant of tendencies that help the Jivas here in their further efforts and advances. Hence, the *Yoga-Vasishtha* says :—

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA 113

देवलोकादिहागल्य लोकद्वग्रहितं भवेत् ।

प्राक्तनं पौरुषं तद्वै देवशब्देन कथ्यते ॥

"That human endeavour of the past (births) which, having brought us here from Deva-loka, proves to be a source of good for us in both worlds, is spoken of by the term *Daiva*."

The Karmic impressions of past lives stored up in men's minds have to be counteracted and rendered infructuous in order that the Jiva might have the right kind of evolution,—that which leads to the shining of that Innermost Bliss of Love which is the one true Self of all Jivas. The *Yoga-Vasishtha* says further :—

कर्मयः प्राक्तनं तुच्छं न निहन्ति शुभेहितैः ।

अज्ञो जन्तुरनीशोऽसावात्मनः सुखदुःखयोः ॥

यस्तुदारचमत्कारः सदाचारं विहारवान् ।

स निर्याति जगन्मोहान्मृगेन्द्रः पिञ्जरादिव ॥

"He who does not by auspicious effort, counteract the contemptible (effects of) past Karma is an ignorant brute and incapable of so regulating himself as to secure happiness and avoid misery. He who has the capacity for lofty endeavour and acts according to right rules of conduct liberates himself from the general ignorance even as a lion from his cage."

Sadachara or Dharmic endeavour (*Paurusham*)—पौरुषम्—is here pointed as the means by which the store of Karmic tendencies is to be wiped out and replaced by the pure aims and activities (*शुभेहितानि*) which are to lead to the goal of Self-Realisation. The *Yoga-Vasishtha* defines this *Paurusham* as follows :—

स्वाधैप्रापककर्मैकप्रयत्नपरता बुधैः ।

प्रोक्ता पौरुषशब्देन सा सिद्धयै शास्त्रयन्त्रिता ॥

"The constant and whole-hearted endeavour which secures the aims of the self is, by the wise, called by the term *Paurusha* (Right Human Activity). Such Shastraic endeavour leads to the attainment (of those aims).

It is thus a mistake to suppose that the Vedanta counsels mere passivity or indolence as the means to the Jiva's goal of self-realisation. At the same time, it does not preach the exploitation of the innocent, the disorganised, or the numerically weak as the one divinely-appointed means to the gaining of glory and power on earth. The Vedanta recognises shastraic activities of all kinds as the means to the Jiva's spiritual advancement and to the final realisation of the One Self which sustains and pervades the universe.

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA.

I
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
BELUR,
7-8-13.

My Dear—

Received your note. Initiation is of essential importance. You can take initiation from any one on whom you have unflinching faith. We heard from Sri Guru Maharaj "One got the blessings and grace of Guru, Krishna (Lord) and Vaisnava (devotee), yet was ruined without the grace of one particular thing"; namely the grace of mind which is the most important thing. We want pure mind. "If the mind is pure and strong, one will get the Ganges in one's own house," i.e., will see God in one's own self. I must realise God with this mind, this buoyant faith is badly wanted. I must have, must I have Him, such adamant and firm determination is required. Let the soil be prepared, the plant will grow as soon as the good seed will be sown. What is the good of taking initiation only to imitate others? Develop your love towards God, let there be unquenchable thirst after truth and firm Vairagya (unsecularity) then and then alone you can feel the grace of the Lord—you will enjoy peace. Take the name of God secretly without any show, you shall have to attract Him with heart and soul, then and then alone our Lord will bless you with His holy presence. My blessings to you.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

II
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
BELUR,
23-8-16.

My Dear—

Very glad to have your letter and still more to hear that you have come round. Accept my best love. • • • It is good that you tell beads, repeat the name of our Lord—we need not obey so many rules. Let other people obey whatever they like. We want the *Sadhan* and *Bhajan* of path of love what was prevalent amongst the Gopies of Brindaban. "Friend, their feeling is of words, mine is the pang of heart, so I cannot help going." One must be mad with eagerness—this is the *Bhajan* of the path of devotion. Now, through the grace of God there is a flood of Bhakti and Prema—after the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. Be overflowed, be mad; no fear, no fear. Plunge into it—you will be immortal. Man, Oh brother? get new life, go forward by the new path. Glory unto our Lord, glory unto the devotees.

Yours ever,
Premananda.

CONFESSIONS,
ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE.

BY
Le Frile.
Second Series:—"The Trodden Path."

I

I feel as if I have just reached the threshold of peace. I have only to enter, to drink in large draughts the clear sweet waters of the fountain of peace. I feel as if my struggles are all at an end. I feel as if I am miraculously growing strong, my chest heaving with the sense of acquired strength, my eyes shining bright and prominent with the lustre of purity and the fulness of courage, and my mind elated and enthusiastic at the bright prospects stretched in front. I feel as if the sun of truth has just dawned in upon me, his twilight of the morning surrounding me, but he himself not visible to me yet. I have reached that point which settles my earthly destiny, not to a shore of dreams whence issued my paths of old, but to a real and practical haven from which sets out a romantic and glorious path for my life. The fitting opportunity has presented itself uncalled for, and I am pushed forward to activity by a superior and stronger impulse than that which backed me all these years of my life. Although I have not arrived at peace yet, I have a strong belief that I am nearing it. I do not believe that any seeker after truth on earth found it all on a sudden. As the sun dawns slowly and gradually in harmony with the rhythm of the music of the cosmos so, the light of truth dawns slowly and gradually in the view of the enquiring mind, oppressed with the darkness of doubt and despair.

I pray Thee, Oh unknown Lord I make Thyself known to me. Drive off from me for ever and ever the little tormenting devils of doubt and despair. Back me, guide me, teach me, command me, love me and lead me and on my part, I will love Thee and obey Thee with all I am worth.

Oh Lord! I thank Thee for all the bitter cups which Thou gavest me. I fear them no more. I have realised their sweetness. Make me pure, make me strong, and above all make me straight. Let me never lose sight of thee,—Thy laws and Thy protection. Let me always walk in the path which leadeth to Thee, the path of love, the path of purity, the broad and generous path, the straight and narrow path.

II

Oh Lord! I fear myself. I fear my own changing moods. Preserve me in my present faith and resolution. Let this not become a sincere farce to be laughed at after the moment of excitement is over, as were my resolutions of old.

Oh Lord! I long for Thee with all my heart and strength. I love and revere Thee in all sincerity and humbleness. I feel myself profoundly calm and happy and free in having based my faith on

Thee at last. So, let me never more doubt. Above all, I fear doubt. Protect me from its sly approaches, that I may not again relapse into unbelief. Let me not think. Let me not think again to see if my faith is based upon truth. In this I implore Thy grace, Oh Lord!

III

Great hopes come suddenly to a crash. My misery is extreme. But I have most right on His dispensing kindness. Not the right of my virtue, nor of devotion, nor faith, but that of my inability, my helplessness and my extreme misery. If He is not to help me, to heal me, to teach, strengthen and encourage me, He is not for anything else. No other office hath He.

IV

Enthusiasm cannot sustain me for long. The spirit of enthusiasm is transient. Nothing permanent can be effected on earth by enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is abnormal. It must eventually be absorbed in the normal.

The normal state is alone solid. It cannot fluctuate. The normal is perpetually productive. The world is sustained and carried through by the normal force. But enthusiasm is aroused by fits and starts. Every tide of it necessitates a subsequent depression.

I must control my enthusiasm. I must realise God practically. My faith must not be let to soar away to the heights, leaving me faithless. My faith must be normal—yet whole. My aims must be high—yet practicable. My thoughts must be pure—yet real. My deeds must be devotional—yet practical. This is the cult of true divinity.

V

Oh Lord! Why must I suffer while it is in Thy power to make me happy? Thou art my only hope—My only source of rest. Show me a bit of thy majestic presence, a little bit, a spark of Thy divine glory, a flash of Thy divine light, and I will have rest. Why art not Thou pleased yet to show me Thyself? This is the right time and the right place. I am at the end of my wits—at the end of my resources. I cannot keep up appearances any longer. I cannot but show myself to the world in all my madness and misery. Save me now, Oh Lord! All doctrines, all philosophies having come out of the mouth of created man are imperfect like him. Nothing satisfies me. I do not ask for sublime ideas—not subtle expressions. No more thoughts, no more words. Oh Lord! I want a state, a purer state, an elevated state, a truly spiritual state.

VI

Oh Lord! My Lord! Lord of heaven and earth! Thou art my Lord. How little I feel in Thy august presence! At every step of my life, Thou makest me to understand that I am a worm, Man, the worm-man, what is he before Thee? He tries to teach others, but he knows not himself. He tries to protect others, but he cannot protect himself from himself. He tries to administer justice but he knows not his own judgment. Thou abasest him at every step. Thou makest his judgments go wrong. Thou makest his knowledge fruitless, and his power to fail. Thou makest him perplexed at every turning, until he acknowledges Thee as the Source of love, light and life.

Oh, Thou upsetter of all selfish calculations! I apprehend Thee in this aspect easiest. Let me never have the spiritual conceit to add "except mine" to this Thy undeniable name.

VII

Oh Lord! If Thou art as the sages say, show me Thy sign for which I long with all my heart and strength. Tell me Thy word for which I languish with all my weakness. Unless I see Thy sign and hear Thy word, I cannot believe, I cannot proceed, I cannot live.

How long am I to live content with words and with thoughts? How long can I nourish hope without a concrete foundation? But, Thou wilt neither show me Thy sign nor tell me Thy word. If Thou didst so, then I arrive at conclusive truth. But no man on earth since the beginning of his race has yet told conclusive truth. For, no man has yet seen Thy sign nor heard Thy word. How wouldst Thou grant an unprecedented favour for my sake? But, I cannot know the full truth by any other means, and nothing but the full truth can satisfy my full longing.

I shall not be content with a part. I refuse all shadowy abstractions of Thee. I refuse to believe the priest's and the philosopher's account of Thee. I do not want the highly-spiced, false, unhealthy, man-made scripture of Thee. I long to know Thyself in Thy truth and essence. I shall not be deceived with a counterfeit. I follow not any man. I look up to Thee to quench my thirst. Reveal Thyself; Oh, Lord!

VIII

Nature is too laborious and too slow for me. She is coursing in her normal speed. I am running faster than she, for I am running towards Thee Oh, Lord! I am not satisfied with her. How can I be? Nature keeps ever balanced and self-satisfied, for she feels no cares. But, I am ever in a state of high-pressure, for all my cares are centered on seeking Thee, beyond where vast nature stretches.

I long for Thyself in Thy simplicity. I am disgusted with nature with all her varied complexity. I long for Thyself in Thy fulness. I have known Nature's emptiness. How can I rest on nature?

Nature is unsympathetic. She cares not for individual welfare. She grinds on mightily, along her mighty path to fulfil her mighty purpose. Nature is blind. She knows not one from another. Discriminating man is carrying on a perpetual struggle with indiscriminate nature. Man's tender feelings are every now and then wounded by untender nature. His bright prospects are shadowed at many a critical moment by dark nature. The gaudy-dressed forms of nature first attract man's childish hopes to cruelly disappoint him after. Nature is ever on her march. But, man feels tired and seeks for rest. How can he rest on nature which itself hath no rest?

* * *

IX

Oh, Lord! Thou art the father to man and Thou alone canst love him. Thou knowest his frailty and his sins, and Thou alone canst forgive him and purify him. Thou feelest for his aches and for his pains, and Thou alone canst cure him and soothe his troubled spirits. Thou art the truth and Thou alone canst satisfy him. Thou art his final goal and Thou alone canst give him rest.

* * *

X

Oh Lord! Thou neither givest me spiritual happiness nor earthly ones. Give me spiritual grace, open my spiritual eyes and show me the spiritual world in its eternal shadowless sunshine, then, I would be able to despise the fleeting joys of earth. I would stand firm unaffected by the sorrows of earth. Or, give me earthly happiness, satisfy my earthly needs, and do away with anxieties which creep in my mind for lack of confidence in Thy protecting providence; then, my earthly days would pass as heavenly ones and the transition of the aim and course of my life in due time from the earthly into the eternal would be harmonious and painless.

RAMADAS.

BY

Mr. C. Ramakrishna Rao.

Ramadas, the Devotee of Rama—Rama, The Charming One—is a name, not given by the parents at the birth of a person but of adoption by the people who adore the Saints who go by that inspiring name. At the very sound of the name of the subject of this sketch, one's mind flits past to the saint-politician of Maharashtra, who went by the same name, and who was known to be the

Guru of Shivaji, the founder of the Maharatta Empire in India in the 17th century. Several accounts corroborative, as well as contradictory of the life of Samartha Ramadas and of the part he played in the formation of the Maharatta Empire by Shivaji are extant, but it is not our purpose to deal with that subject here. The hero of this sketch was an Andhra by birth, and he is different from that saint who flourished in Western India. It will be noted, in passing, that there is a notion prevailing in certain quarters, that Ramadas of Shivaji fame had gone to the south at some time and that the Andhra Ramadas was no other than the former. There are, however, proofs, which conclusively refute the theory of the identity of the two. Firstly, the Maharatta Ramadas was an ascetic all his life, while the Andhra Ramadas was a householder. Secondly, the Maharatta statesman-saint had never been known to have had any connection with the state of Golconda (the Deccani-Hyderabad State) whereas, the hero of this sketch was a Tahsildar under the Nabob Sultan Abu Hasan, Ruler of Golconda from 1674 to 1687.

His Birth and Parentage.

Ramadas was born of very pious Brahmin parents in the village of Nelakondapalli in the Nizam's Dominions in the latter half of the seventeenth century. His father Linganna along with his wife Kamamba was said to have made severe penance to God Vishnu for being blessed with a son. A son was born to them, and he was named Gopanna. A precocious lad, he had from the very childhood shown a tendency towards prayer and song. The father who, it is supposed, held some small employment in the service of the State, made no delay in putting him to school. At the early age of eight, after the investiture with the sacred thread, he was sent to a teacher to learn the Sanskrit lore, the Sastras and the Agamas. As the old indigenous system of education was instruction by direct contact and association of the Guru to the chosen few, man-making, in short, unlike the modern system of education, which is purely mercenary and man-dwarfing, the teacher was every day explaining to the boy the stories from the sublime Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He drew inspiration from the story of Rama the Avatar of Vishnu in the pure Satvic state; and the following song that he had sung even at that early age characterised by the melody, the innocence and the purity it contains, shows the lofty heights to which he was raised.

"Oh that I were born along with the sweet Ramamurti, to play and jump and frisk with him, to share the joys and the trials of his youth, to feast my eyes with the sight of Sita clasping his holy hand and the broken bow of Parasurama lying before! It is a pity O Soul, that thou wert not born then, to enjoy those lovely sights, yea, to be privileged to minister to him!"

It is stated that he had regularly gone through the entire courses of study in the Vedas and the Shastras and that, soon after finishing the courses, the spirit of Vairagya or Renunciation dawned upon him, which he gave vent to in the following song:—

"To the Soul that has to proceed from birth to death and from death to birth among the 84 lakhs of Jivas, the journey is endless; and there is no relief, rest nor happiness. Bless me, O Lord, that I may be freed from the ceaseless wheel of Samsara!"

Just at this time the parents of Ramadas passed away and some time afterwards he was married at the age of twenty to a pious girl. He got a son by her whom he named after the God of his own choice, viz., "Rama" and was leading the life of a typical Grihastha, a life of piety, devotion and charity.

To the Indian, the householder's life is as noble and sacred as that of the ascetic. It is in some respects regarded as nobler than the ascetic's. The householder is the prop of all grades of society. Upon him depend the younger folk. The student Brahmachari gets his food from him; and the wandering hermit and the fakir and the needy beggar alike depend upon the householder for support. Aye, it is the training ground for the Higher spiritual Life. It has been aptly observed by Swami Vivekananda that to the conformity of the householder to his Dharma, is due all the success and the greatness of the Sanyasashrama.

As a true householder, then, Ramadas was ever seeking to relieve the poor, the needy, and the distressed, to comfort the hermit and the wandering traveller and to worship the saint and the Swami that passed by his gate.

(To be continued.)

SIXTH SENSE—ITS POSSIBILITIES.

BY

Mr. S. Sivakuri, M. A.

In the April issue of "The Nineteenth Century" we have a thoughtful article under the heading 'Warming the Five Wits.' The author—one Mr. Tilby takes the reader through the intricate processes which have resulted in the development of the five senses of man. In fact, he gives an account of their evolution, which is at once interesting if not convincing. Consistent with the prevailing notion among scientists, the writer begins with the postulate that at the beginning all forms of life were absolutely passive and inert in the extreme, and that they were subsequently raised to different degrees of animation through the ceaseless "hammerings of external stimuli." We, Hindus, accustomed as we are, to think of the whole universe in terms of the spirit (or Purusha) "which pervades the whole of it and extends beyond it to the extent of ten inches," may be tempted to fling our first stone at the postulate itself and lay aside Mr. Tilby's essay as some profitless stuff dressed up with modern theories. According to us, there is nothing like passivity or quiescence on Earth or anywhere in God-created space, there being a constant struggle of Spirit with Matter. Spirit tries to manifest itself and Matter tries to set limitations upon it and all the beauties of Nature which our poets sang and our Rishis drank in days long gone by, are but visions of the eternal Spirit smiling

through tangles of matter, out of which it is trying to break out. This is our theory of a dynamic universe; and through Mr. Tilby's postulate goes against this theory, it is worthwhile to get on to his other deductions, for many a piece of valuable information often lies behind bad postulates.

Mr. Tilby has it that the sense of Touch was the first to develop. It is the only sense which is common to all living things. Its possession by plants seems to argue theoretically at least, "a low degree, possibly the lowest degree of consciousness." The sense of Touch arose as the response of matter to the stimulus of temperature. Alternations of heat and cold 'warmed out'—to use the writer's phrase—the sense of Touch out of the passive being. When it developed, it became sensitive enough to be aware of mere contact, while at the same time it got localised in some of the species in special organs as in the antennæ of the cockroach.

The sense of Smell was the next to develop. The essential basis of this is a series of automatic and unconscious chemical reactions which occur when air or food is taken into the living organism. With the formation of gills and other respiratory organs and the localisation of the nutritive process in the alimentary canal, we have a corresponding development of the smell—apparatus in the nose—where the faculty of smelling gets highly specialised. The existence of the sense of Smell argues therefore a higher order of beings who possess respiratory and digestive organs and as such it may be taken for granted that Smell is a younger brother to Touch.

Similarly the sense of Sight was originally the response of the living to rays of light. Where the creature lives under-ground, no light-rays reach it and hence no attempt on its part to respond to it. Like the earthworm it feels content with the senses of Touch and Smell and avoids light. But in the case of surface-life, exposed as it is to the full blaze of the Sun, it cannot but respond to the stimulus of light-waves.

Many creatures had to respond to avoid light by developing an instinct to flee from it—like the sea-urchin. Others with a terrestrial habitat developed the sense of Sight. With the perception of colour and beauty this sense became highly specialised and got located in special organs known as the eyes.

The sense of Taste is an auxiliary to the sense of Smell and so can be dismissed without notice.

The sense of Hearing is the last to develop according to Mr. Tilby. The origin of the auditory organs lies in obscurity, but this much we can rightly predict, viz., that the faculty of hearing began as a response to the stimulus of sound-waves. It became specialised as a warning of approaching danger. It survives the approach of sleep longer than other senses. Why! except in very deep slumber, "hearing is always nearest the threshold of consciousness. With the differentiation of sex and the growth of the art of courtship, we find the faculty of Hearing approaching a point of exquisite fineness.

If our five senses have been brought into existence as a result of various kinds of stimuli acting on living matter, can we not go a step further and fancy the coming into being of a sixth sense in response to a new kind of stimulus which is probably acting without our knowing it? If we postulate the existence of the stimulus, we may feel cocksure about the awakening of a new sense in us. While we can well *imagine* another kind of stimulus can we *assume* it? Yes! we can. What right have we to say that temperature, contact, flavour, light and sound are the only stimuli known to the Earth. Nothing forbids us from assuming that there are other stimuli we know not of. We do not feel them, because, we have no organs which will respond to them. Now, supposing under the continuous impinging of these stimuli on our consciousness, we develop a new sense through which the stimulus may pass and make themselves felt in the realm of our consciousness, there is no need to stand aghast surprised. We have little reason to be amazed if some of us are already grown hyper-sensitive and catch sensations which escape our dull consciousness. The mental delights of a Yogin and the ecstasy of Samadhi probably evidence the opening up of a sixth sense; for the ordinary man cannot feel either, and more often than not turns sceptic about them and becomes a scoffer. How is one to get possession of the new faculty? Well! by exposing oneself to the free play of the new kind of stimuli which creates the faculty. What are the stimuli like, and where do they come from? The answer to this question lies clothed in mystery. Are they the ethereal waves of God's Grace? Are they the hypnotic passes of invisible beings more powerful than ourselves? Or are they merely self-created activities of our own mind? We do not know which it is.

But there is no gainsaying the fact that we are sure of two things—viz. (1) that a Yogin tastes pleasures and feels sensations we know not of, and (2) that he is able to do so because he is in possession of some kind of a new sense.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

Puri. Famine Relief.

An Appeal.

Our workers have opened two centres, one at Bhubaneswar and another at Kanas about 12 miles from Khurda Road. We learn from them that the distress of the people in those areas is very acute. Many able-bodied persons have left their villages in search of labour. Others have run away being unable to give a morsel of food to their hungry wives and children; it is impossible to describe in words the piteous condition of these deserted women and children. Again most of the families have sold away their utensils and clothes to procure rice and now they have absolutely nothing valuable to fall back upon. Coarse rice is selling at

3 seers per rupee but there are very few people who can afford to buy this commodity at such an exorbitant price. People have been actually seen to subsist on herbs and grass seeds called "Sua." Emaciated skeleton-like figures with scarcely any rag about their loins go about for food to fill their hungry stomachs. At many places women put on torn rags of gunnies. Ladies of the middle class families are specially in a precarious situation. Scarcity of cloth has made them unable to stir out from their huts in quest of food. We are confident that this piteous account will suffice to call up the sympathy of the generous public and that they will lose no time in providing for the immediate relief of their unfortunate brethren by helping the Mission with money, rice and cloth.

(a) To have a definite idea of the extent of help required to meet the situation it will be enough if we mention that in 16 villages at Bhubaneswar centre alone about Rs. 350 worth of rice had to be distributed in one week. We give below the report of our distribution at the above two centres.

Bhubaneswar.—1st distr.	3 Vill.	23 Recipients.	1 md.	6 seers.
2nd "	3 "	25 "	1 md.	10 "
3rd "	4 "	1254 "	6 mds.	11 "
4th "	16 "	674 "	33 mds.	28 "
5th "	19 "	678 "	33 mds.	36 "

In addition about 6 maunds of rice were given to individuals as doles.

Kanas.—1st distr.	27 Vill.	226 Persons.	11 mds.	12 seers.
2nd "	28 "	282 "	14 mds.	4 "

In addition about 1 maund of rice was given to individuals as doles.

As will be evident from a glance at the table given above the number of cases to be relieved is steadily growing but the funds at our disposal are very inadequate even for the purchase of rice. But the necessity for the distribution of cloth is equally urgent.

Contributions in the shape of money, rice or cloth will be thankfully received and acknowledged. Contributions may be sent to any of the following addresses.

THE SECRETARY, THE PRESIDENT,
Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Ramakrishna Mission,
Udbhodhan Office, The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,
1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

(Sd.) SARADANANDA,
Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission.

NOTES AND NEWS.

It is a pleasure to review the first annual report of Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home Bangalore City. It was started in May 1919.

How to educate our young men is the most important problem with all our sincere thoughtful countrymen. It is certain that the modern system of education is not sufficient nay, dangerous in the soil of India. From the ancient times India played preeminently the most important part in the sphere of spirituality and intellect which cannot be gainsaid by any scholar, European or Indian. Since the dawn of civilization which broke for the

first time not in any other country but in India. India was greatly influencing the whole world in every branch of activities. Now, if we try to find out the fountain of her inspiration in the past, we shall be able to understand clearly how to proceed now in the multifarious spheres of activity to regenerate our country and the people at large. It is spirituality and spirituality alone which was the basic principle of Indian civilization. The quintessence of Indian culture is spirituality which is still a potent fact in the reconstruction of the whole world. India is guiding all like a beacon-light and is the mother of all inspirations. The great Swami Vivekananda truly struck the keynote of the drift of Indian civilization, not long ago. India is trying to diffuse spirituality which helps the progressive march towards the perfect manifestation.

So, the purely materialistic education will stop our progress, nay, will be poisonous and mortal to our national life. On the other hand, our old type of education is not sufficient for the present age. Our education must be efficient enough as to preserve our individuality and to make us in a line with the people abroad.

The Home tries its utmost to meet the exigencies in the best possible way. It provides for a number of indigent students and supplements their university education by a Home training to bring about a harmonious development of head and heart. The close contact of the students with the Sannyasins of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission inspires them. Religious training is regularly imparted to the boarders. The Home has made some arrangements for the physical culture of the inmates. The institution is so fortunate as to have His Holiness Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji as its moving spirit. The students are coming in direct contact with him.

The institution is in sore need of its own building. It should also have a good library attached to it. We hope, ungrudging help will be forthcoming. Our countrymen will surely unstring their purses so as to push it up to its glorious future.

We are glad to acknowledge the Eighteenth Annual Report of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo. It is indeed a pleasure to know its activities. It is trying its best to cultivate spirituality in various ways. May the Almighty grant it a crowning success.

We thankfully acknowledge Prakruti, a monthly Telugu magazine. The avowed object of publishing this journal is to popularise the hygienic principles amongst the masses. It is indeed a great work for the country. We congratulate the Editor Mr. N. Hanumiah.

Swami Paramanda has returned to Boston and resumed charge of the services and classes at the Vedanta centre. The attendance throughout the month of May grew steadily and many new-comers were seen at the meetings. The Swami intends to remain in Boston until the late summer, when he will set out on another lecture-tour throughout the north-west.

TAITTIRIYA-UPANISHAD.

From Its fear, the wind blows ; from fear rises the sun, from the fear of It again Indra, Fire and the fifth, Death, proceed (to their respective duties).

The following is the conclusive examination of bliss :

(Suppose) there be a youth, noble, well-versed in the scriptures, full of hope, resolute and strong, and if the whole world be full of wealth for him,—that is the unit measure of human bliss.

A hundred-fold of that human bliss is the unit measure of the bliss of Human-Gandharvas. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss Human-Gandharvas is the unit measure of the bliss of celestial Gandharvas. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of celestial Gandharvas is the unit measure of the bliss of the manes whose abode is the eternal heaven. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of the manes, whose abode is the eternal heaven, is the unit measure of the bliss of the Devas born in heaven. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of the Devas born in heaven is the unit measure of the bliss of gods known as Karmadevas who have been exalted to the heaven by their sacrificial deeds. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of the gods known as Karmadevas is the unit measure of the bliss of the Devas. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of the Devas is the unit measure of the bliss of Indra. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of Indra is the unit measure of the bliss of Brihaspati. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of Brihaspati is the unit measure of the bliss of Prajapati. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

A hundred-fold of the bliss of Prajapati is the unit measure of the bliss of Brahman. And so also (is the bliss) of one versed in the Vedas and unafflicted by desires.

He who is in man, and He who is in the Sun—both are the same. He who knows this, having departed from this world (first) attains the self consisted of food, (next) attains the self consisting of the *Pranas*, (again) attains the self consisted of the *manas*, (again) attains the self consisting of *Buddhi* (and lastly) attains the self consisting of bliss.

There is the following verse on this :

[*From Its fear, etc.*—According to the Vedic conception of the cosmic activity, it is held that all the different functions of the universe are presided over by different intelligent beings who are known as Devas. These Devas are, according to the Mimamsakas, different individualities eternally existing with the cosmic process and functioning their respective duties for the upkeep of the universe. But according to the Vedanta, they are but different manifestations of one Universal Intelligence, even as are also the Jivas, with this difference that the Jivas have evolution within a cycle (*Kalpa*), but these Devas have no evolution in the same cycle. With the beginning of creation, or, better, projection of the present

cycle from the womb of the Uncreated, they have got their being and respective spheres of activity. So, their very existence like the existence of everything else in this universe is wholly dependent upon the Supreme Being, Brahman. By the special mention of the names of the gods like Vayu, Surya, Agni, Mritya etc., here, the *Śruti* means to point out that even such mighty celestial potentates run to their respective works like menial servants through the fear of that almighty Iswara.—Such is the omnipotence and infinite grandeur of Brahman.

The fifth, Death—i.e. the god of Death, Yama whose name has been enumerated here as the fifth in order.

Human-Gandharvas—i.e., those who were previously men, but by virtue of some special knowledge (*Jnana*) and action (*Karma*), have attained the quasi-celestial forms of the Gandharvas. They being of subtle form and having a wider range of perception and activity than man, have naturally a greater scope and intensity of the enjoyment of bliss.

Celestial Gandharvas—i.e., those Gandharvas who have been born as such even at the beginning of the present cycle. And so they are of still higher capacities and subtler nature than the Human-Gandharvas.

Manes whose abode is in the eternal heaven—i.e., the *pitris* or the inhabitants of the third world known as *pitri loka*, who remain in their high heaven for the full long period of one cycle.

Devas born in heaven—i.e., those who have been translated from the human world into the celestial sphere by the sacrificial deeds as enjoined in the *Smritis*.

Karmadevas—i.e., those who have attained the divinity by virtue of their performances of the great sacrifices like *Agnihotra*, etc., as enjoined in the Vedas. They are of superior potency and subtler nature than the Devas spoken of previously.

The Devas,—i.e., the thirty-three gods who have been created as such even from the beginning of creation and of whom we have referred in the first note. The thirty-three gods are, viz., the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Adityas, Indra and Prajapati.

Indra—i.e., the king of gods, who is the supreme authority of the heaven known as *Svarloka*.

Brihaspati,—is the divine preceptor of the gods. So, he is superior even to Indra by the virtue of his knowledge and is considered as Brahmana among the gods owing to his *Sattvik*

nature, whereas Indra and other gods are said to belong to the lower castes of Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.

Prajapati—i. e., the Virat, the macrocosmic being who forms the aggregate (*Samashti*) of all individual lives (*Vyashiti*). He is called Prajapati or the lord of creatures as in him exist all individualised beings in both *Sthula* or gross body and *Sukshma* or subtle body.

Brahman.—According to Sankara, "*Brahmanah*" of the text refers to the bliss of *Brahma*, i. e., the Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic mind whose plane of existence is the world known as *Satyaloṇa*. That is the climax of heavenly attainment. But we may as well take it to mean the Supreme Brahman whose first manifestation in the conditioned form within Maya is Hiranyagarbha. As the Sruti wants to point out the different measures of bliss that a soul may experience in various planes of existence and by gradual exaltation of it in higher and higher planes of life, it points out conclusively that its climax or *sumum bonum* is reached only when the soul attains unity with Brahman, so it would be better to take the word in its impersonal sense also.

So also is the bliss of one, etc.—By constant repetition of the assertion that the man who is well-established in the knowledge or *Jnana* embodied in the Vedas and thereby who has got the highest illumination about the Atman and also who has the virtue of *Vairagya*, i. e., whose mind is not smitten by any desire of worldly and heavenly enjoyments, enjoys all the different kinds of bliss enumerated here including the supreme bliss of the highest heaven of *Brahma*, the Sruti indicates the great superiority of such a sage to all other beings of the universe.

He who is in man, etc.—i. e., the Being which enlivens man as his self is the same as the One which energises the great sun which is the source of all energy (*Savitri purusha*), c.f. Ishopanishad 16, Note.

The self consisted of food, etc.—Here the self means the different Koshas or sheaths of the soul referred here before.

CHAPTER IX.

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह । आनन्दं
ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न विभेति कुतश्चनेति । एतं ह वाच न तपति ।
किमहं साधु नाकुरुम् । किमहं पापमकरवमिति । स य एवं
विद्वानेते आत्मानं स्पृणुते । य एवं वेद । इत्युपनिषत् ।

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.

VOL. VII.]

SEPTEMBER 1920.

[No. 5.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda.

Dakshineswar.

(Continued from page 101.)

However, the connection between Ramkumar and the Rani was not ended here only. Even after dedicating the temple in the name of her Guru the intelligent Rani found out quickly that the descendants of her Guru were devoid of all scriptural knowledge, and quite unfit to conduct the services of the temple properly. So she thought of appointing some good Brahmana in the office of the priest who could conduct the worshipping strictly according to the Shastric injunctions. But here too she felt the current custom of the society as a great impediment on her way. In those days no good Brahmana would even make obeisance before any image of gods or goddesses installed by a Sudra, leave alone the acceptance of the post of a priest in such temples. Those Brahmins who did the priestly functions in such places, like the Guru family of the Rani, were considered as fallen Brahmins (*Brahmabandhu*). So, it was very difficult to get a good learned Brahmana to be the priest of the

temple. Yet the Rani did not give up all hope. She sent her men to different places to find out such a person and made the post a high-salaried and lucrative one. Srimati Hemangini, the sister of Ramkumar lived at Sehere, a neighbouring village of Kamarpukur. Many Brahmins also resided in that village. A particular Brahmin, Maheschandra Bhattacharjee by name, was employed in the Rani's service at that time. It seems, he undertook to supply the priest, the cook and other Brahmin servants necessary for the temple, before the Rani. And soon after he sent his own elder brother Kshetranath as a priest of the temple of Sri Sri Radha Govindaji, a temple which was also to be dedicated along with that of the Mother Kali and slowly he got other Brahman servants and officers also for the temple, but could not succeed to get a proper man to be the priest of the temple of Mother Kali.

Ramkumar Bhattacharjee was well acquainted with Maheschandra, and the latter knew it also that there were few in those parts of the country so pious, so thoroughly well-versed in the Shastras, and a devotee of the Divine Mother as Ramkumar. And it was known to him too that Ramkumar was initiated in the *Shakti Mantra*. And he thought that out of family necessity Ramkumar might accept the priest's office in the temple of Mother Kali, although at first he harboured a little doubt about his acceptance as he knew that both the father and the son scrupulously avoided all priestly relationships with the Sudra castes. Yet, he thought of trying. As the auspicious day of installation was drawing near, Maheschandra went one day to the Rani and advised her to invite Ramkumar to undertake to do the priestly functions at least on the day of installation, and until a proper man was found for the post. The Rani took the advice to her heart and most gladly sent an invitation to Ramkumar to the effect that as it was he who gave the nice opinion about the installation of the temple according to her heart's content, and a certain day had been already fixed for the installation ceremony which was approaching nigh, that though a priest was secured for the temple of Sri Sri Radha Govindaji, yet no proper man had been yet found for the temple of Mother Kali; and that without a priest the installation ceremony could not be gone through and no ordinary man could be entrusted with the same and that he was a great Pundit, well-versed in the Shastras and just the proper person for such a task, and so she requested him to relieve her from the difficulty by accepting the post himself.

Maheschandra himself, carried this letter of invitation to Ramkumar, and, we can well imagine, urged upon him the necessity of accepting the post to the advantage of all. The first thing that

struck Ramkumar was that for the want of a proper priest the installation work of the Divine Mother was going to suffer, and if he could help in the matter it was his bounden duty to do so. So being actuated first by that noble impulse and not by any sense of gain he accepted the invitation and came to Dakshineswar on the day of installation. And subsequently owing to the earnest request of Rani Rasamani and her son-in-law Mathuranath, and also perhaps realising the continued want of a proper priest of the temple, he must have condescended to stay on there which he did till the end of his life. All events of life, be they great or small, happen through the will of the Divine Providence; and who can tell that this advent of Ramkumar to the temple of Dakshineswar was not planned out by the Divine mind for the fulfilment of a great purpose which had its glorious manifestation in the grand life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.*

However, having secured Ramkumar thus in the unpremeditated manner, Rani Rasamani installed the Image of Mother Kali in the newly erected beautiful temple, on Thursday, the auspicious day of *Snana Jatra*, the 18th *Jyaishta* (month of *Vrsha*), in the year 1262.

* The above narration as regards Ramkumar's first coming to the temple of Dakshineswar was heard by us from Srijuktahridayaram, the nephew of the Master. But Srijuktā Ramlal Bhattacharjee, another nephew of Sri Ramakrishna and who is still in charge of the worshipping at the Kali's temple, tells a different story about it. He says :—

One Ramdhan Ghosh of the village Desera, near Kamarpukur, was employed at that time under Rani Rasamani. Through his competency and cleverness he attracted great favour of the Rani, so much so that he became even her Dewan after wards. At the time of installation of the Kali's temple he sent an invitation to Ramkumar to come to the temple on that day and receive his honorarium, the Rani would be awarding to all learned Pundits on the occasion. Ramkumar was well-known to Ramdhan and having received the invitation he went to the palace of the Rani at Janbazar and told Ramdhan that he was a high-caste Brahmin and so if he were to accept any invitation or present from the Rani who belonged to a very low caste he stood the chance of being ostracised. To that Ramdhan showed him his book of invitation and said that many high-caste Brahmins were invited for the occasion and that all of them would come and accept the presents. Such acceptance on his part would not tarnish the fame of his family in any way. Then Ramkumar accepted the invitation and went to Dakshineswar on the previous evening of the installation day. A great festivity was going on in the temple during that occasion; and even in the night, the festival was kept on in full swing and the whole temple was illumined with thousands of torches and other lights. Sri Ramakrishna used to say referring to that occasion, "That night the temple looked as if the Rani has brought a big mountain of silver and placed it there."

Ramkumar came to the temple on the previous day of installation to see the festival that was going round so merrily.

From the above statement of Srijuktā Ramlal Bhattacharjee we may guess that Ramkumar possibly came to Dakshineswar and accepted the priest's post through the request of Ramdhan and Maheschandra.

B. S. (1855 A. D.) It is said that the charity of the Rani knew no bounds that day,—her bounties flowed through many channels and in many shapes. All the guests who came to the temple were fed with sumptuous meals and given handsome presents. Hundreds of learned pundits and professors hailed from far and near, from great centres of learning like Kanoj, Benares, Sylhet, Chittagong, Orissa, Nadia etc., and got their proper honorarium in the shape of gold coins and other presents. The Rani spent nearly nine lakhs rupees over the building of the temple and its installation ceremony. After-wards she purchased a big Estate, called Shalbari in the District of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon sub-division, from Mr. Trailakshanath Thakur, for two lakhs and twenty-six thousand rupees, and endowed it to the temple for its maintenance before her death.

Gadadhar also accompanied his eldest brother Ramkumar to Dakshineswar to enjoy the festival. It is said that though sumptuous meals were served to each and all of the guests who came to the temple on that day, yet Gadadhar did not partake of the feast. He maintained his rigid orthodoxy on that point. After enjoying the merriment of the occasion for the whole day, in the evening he bought a pice worth of puffed rice and satisfying himself with that frugal meal came to the Jhamapukur Chatuspathi in Calcutta walking all the way on foot.

About the installation of the Kali temple of Rani Rasamani at Dakshineswar we heard many anecdotes from Sri Ramakrishna at different times.

• He used to say,—The Rani once made all preparations for her pilgrimage to Benares; having fixed the day for departure, she had made ready nearly hundred boats, full of all necessary articles for the journey, on the bank of the Ganges. Just on the previous night she got the command from the Divine Mother in dream and so she gave up the idea of going to Benares and searched for a suitable site to erect the temple.

First she thought of securing a good site on the western bank of the Ganges, as it is generally believed that the western bank of the Sacred River is as glorious and holy as great Kasi (Benares). But having failed to secure any suitable land on the western bank, she had to come to the eastern side and purchase the plot on which stands the temple to-day.

He further used to say that the land at Dakshineswar on which the temple was built partly belonged to one European gentleman and the other part was a big burial ground of Maho-

medans. The land had the shape of the back of a tortoise. So, according to the Tantrik scriptures the land was most suitable for the installation of an image of the Divine Mother and a fit place for Sadhana. Therefore it seems that the Rani selected the site, being guided by the Divine will, as it were.

And again he told us, why the Rani performed the installation ceremony on the *Snana Jatra* day, an auspicious day according to the Vaishnavas, instead of selecting a day that is considered auspicious for Shakti installation. He said, "Since the day of commencement of the construction of the image the Rani observed rigid *Tapasya*, strictly in accordance with the injunctions of the Shastras: she used to take bath thrice, and one meal a day, had her bed on the floor, and spent much of her time in meditation and worship. When both the temple and the image were completed, she was waiting for an auspicious day for the installation, and the image was kept in a closed box lest it might be broken. Subsequently it was found out that the image somehow or other was perspiring and the Rani too got the Divine command in dream, 'How long will you keep me closed in a box? I am feeling much pain in this position. Instal me as soon as you can.' Having received this Divine command, the Rani grew extremely anxious to complete the installation as soon as possible. And having found no auspicious day other than the *Snana Jatra* day near by, she had to perform the ceremony on that day.

The next morning Gadadhar again went to Dakshineswar probably to get news of his elder brother Ramkumar, or it might be, to see the remnant of the festival. He stayed there for some time and having understood that there was no chance of Ramkumar's returning to Jhamapukur even on that day, he came back alone to Calcutta for his meals, although his brother asked him repeatedly to stay there for the day and take his food in the temple. For the next six or seven days Gadadhar never went to Dakshineswar thinking that Ramkumar would be returning to Calcutta as soon as all the business in connection with the installation would be over. But when he saw that even a week was past and yet his eldest brother did not return, he grew anxious and went to Dakshineswar to know what was the matter with his brother. Coming there he learnt that Ramkumar had accepted the priest's office of the Divine Mother and had undertaken to remain there the rest of his life through the earnest solicitation of the Rani. The news was startling for Gadadhar. He tried his best to dissuade his brother from accepting the post by telling him that his father never used to keep any priestly relation with the Sudra

caste, nor used he to accept any gift from them. It is said, that first Ramkumar tried his best to make his younger brother understand the matter with all arguments and supports of the scriptures, but having found at last that nothing would convince Gadadhar about the innocence of his action, at last had to take recourse to *Dharma Patra** according to the prevailing custom in those days among the villagers. The *Dharma Patra* exhibited—"Ramkumar did not commit any wrong by accepting the priest's post. That would bring good to all."

Though the simple mind of Gadadhar was easily satisfied by the decision of *Dharma Patra*, yet another feeling was agitating his heart. He thought that now the *Chatuspathi* had to be abolished, and what was for him to do next. His mind was sorely troubled on this point and he did not return to Calcutta that day. His elder brother first asked him to partake of the food offered to God, but Gadadhar did not yield to his request. At last seeing him obdurate Ramkumar told him to take some raw food-stuffs and cook himself on the bank of the Ganges, as the bank of the Ganges was always considered as the most holy place by the Hindus. This time all his obduracy gave way before his love and faith for the Mother Ganges. In fact, this profound regard and devotion for the Ganges was visible in the Master's life all throughout. He used to call the water of the Ganges as *Brahmavari*. He maintained that all those who lived on the banks of the Ganges and those who resided on those places which were touched by the wind flowing from the Ganges were all men of pure heart and *Satvik* nature. Through the grace of the Mother Ganges they naturally get God-devotion, purity of life, catholicity of nature and charity of heart. If any body would speak of worldly matters before him for a long time, he would ask him to take a little Ganges water to purify himself; or, if he would find any place defiled by the presence of a grossly worldly-minded man, he would ask the place to be purged by the sprinkling of Ganges water.

However, then he took the advice of his brother and cooked his meal himself as told by him and remained with Ramkumar at

* It is still prevalent in the villages of India that whenever any question would arise which is impossible to be solved by any ordinary means they adopt the following method: First they write, 'Yes' or 'No' on some pieces of paper and keep them well closed in a vessel and then a young boy is called and asked to take up one of the pieces of paper from the vessel and if the piece thus taken up by the boy shows "yes," then it is accepted by all parties that it is the will of God that the action should be done; if on the contrary the paper piece exhibits "no," then the action has to be abandoned. Sometimes the partition of family property is also done with the help of this method.

Dakshineswar. The beauty of the place and the hallowed presence of the Divine Mother in the temple, the great love of his brother Ramkumar and the most sanctifying sight of the Mother Ganges flowing by,—all these began to weave slowly a charm on him, and it was not long before he could reconcile himself with his surroundings in an easy heart. Nay, a new delight sprang up in his heart which cleared away all the mist of doubt and despondency that was growing within him regarding his future life.

Here some of our readers may remark that this narrow orthodoxy of the Divine man was anything but commendable, nor did it auger well of the spiritual greatness of his after life. To that we may reply that this was an instance of unflinching devotion to the mandates of the Shastras, known as *Nistha* among the Hindus, and it was quite different from a narrow orthodoxy of a bigot. The latter has its origin in egotism and self-complacency which makes one think that what he has understood is the supreme truth, and thus he draws a circle of exclusion around him separating himself from the rest of the world; and the former has its birth in faith, faith in the words of the great sages and the injunctions of the Shastras. With the appearance of this *Nistha*, this unflinching devotion to the words of the scriptures, one's egoism gets attenuated. There comes an efflorescence of the spiritual life, and gradually the soul is led to the realisation of the supreme Truth. In the beginning, this *Nistha* may look like narrow bigotry, but subsequently with its help, as man ascends upon the higher and higher rungs of spiritual ladder, that apparent garb of rigid orthodoxy drops off of itself and the devotee reveals his true nature of universal love and toleration. So, in the path of spirituality, the importance of *Nistha* cannot be overrated. Such instances of *Nistha* in the Master's life only tell us in unmistakable terms that if we aspire to realise the true universal love and all-embracing catholicity in our life we must have to begin with this unswerving devotion and unabated *Nistha*. Through its help alone we shall be able to realise the supreme truth of spirituality and attain the eternal blessedness. It is one of the wise sayings of the Master himself that to extricate a thorn from the flesh another thorn is necessary, so to get rid of all the narrowness of life it is of utmost importance to take the help of this *Nistha*,—that is the path to the realisation of Universal Truth. Through the obedience to all laws of life alone we can hope to get beyond all laws,—to reach the transcendental.

CONFESSIONS, ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE.

BY
Le Frile.

Second Series:—"The Trodden Path."

XI

I am not firm in my wants. Sometimes, I long for the highest ideal that I could conceive. At other times, I long for the lowest grade of pleasures that I have tasted. How then would the giver of all give me and which?

"I am thinking of the gifts—not of the giver and author of them. How then would He give them to me? If I had thought half so intensely of the author and giver of them, He would have granted by this time all my desires, or, if things were sensible in themselves, they would have come crowding to my feet for the very fierceness of my longing. As it is, I have wasted, and not profited.

My soul! Thou art a fool. Why has not God come to thy help in spite of thy repeated cries after Him. Don't thou know the reason? Thou longest not after God, but thou longest after earth, although thou criest after God. Thou needest God for the sake of earth, but not for His own sake. When thou wilt want Him for His own sake, then he will surely come to Thee and provide thee with all Thou needest. Providence is His office, and why carest thou for provisions? Thou must first be in God, then alone earth is good for thee, then alone earth will minister to thee.

* * *

XII.

My desires are violent, my strength is feeble, my misery is acute, the glimpses of pleasure accompanying flashes of truth—revelation are exhilarating, but they vanish soon and again darkness enshrouds.

Misery is my only treasure. I hug it, feed it, guard it and grow it.

Discontent is my estate. Complaints are my wealth. Searching for, and finding out complaints, developing and setting them in order form my business the livelong day. The least ray of real hope dawns not in my horizon and all my struggles have been

ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE

137

utterly profitless and come to nothing. Vain hopes can satisfy me no more, and the time is long past for the attainment of wisdom, peace, stability of mind. Hopelessness is my doom. Why say anything more and why exert still?

XIII.

Thou art really good, Oh Lord! A miracle has happened within twenty-four hours of my hopeless bawling of my fate. I am happy now. The pleasures of hope are sweeter after the bitterness of long hopelessness. I offer Thee thanks Oh Lord! for this sudden revelation of Thy mercy. The suffering which I underwent was good for me. It has taught me what none else could teach me. It has changed me as nothing else could change me. Again I offer Thee thanks Oh Lord! Thou art good.

* * *

XIV.

Thy creator stands in nearer relation to thee than Christ or any other teacher of mankind. Christ belongs to a particular age, to a particular nation and to a particular form of culture, so also the other teachers. The teachers of God stand in relation of teachers to the world, while the world stands as pupils towards them. Thy God is still nearer to thee, for has it not been said, "The Kingdom of God is within thee?" Thy God is the power and thou art the product. Thy God is the wish and thou art the realisation. Thy God is the source and thou art the end. Deep in the bottom of thy heart, thou canst see the source of thine own being. It is His power which projects thee, His life which animates thee, and His love which sustains thee. The basis—the foundation of thy existence is God. Thou art the shadow and He is thy substance. Why leave thy age and go back as if God incarnates in one age, in one individual and denies Himself in others? Why turn over volumes to seek the source of thine own existence? Turn within and thou wilt see face to face thine own God.

* * *

XV.

Vain men offer Thee Oh Lord! fruits and flowers, food and coins to obtain Thy grace. Wealthy men feed the poor, bequeath charities and build temples in Thy name. Kind men do deeds of kindness, wise men teach wisdom, the virtuous offer virtue all in Thy name, all seeking for Thy favour,

I have none of these to offer Thee. I offer Thee my aching sores of heart and beg for balm. I offer Thee my frailty and beg for firmness. I offer Thee all my evil and beg for all Thy good.

Thou art my lover Oh Lord! Who else can bring love into my desolate heart? Thou art my physician—who else can cure my aches? Thou art my life and light—who else can infuse new life into me, who else can dispel my darkness? Thou art my all-in-all. I offer myself to Thee all-in-all. Take possession of me all-in-all.

* * *

XVI.

Oh Lord! Why dost Thou play hide and seek with me? I cannot exist without the sense of Thy presence in me. The moment I was fixed in communion with Thee, I felt supremely blissful. But, then doubts came and dispersed my state. I cannot reproduce that happy mood again.

My faith stands not firm. Doubts assail me. Doubts distract me. They conspire all to drive me mad. But I do not want to doubt. I do not want to think at all. Thoughts persecute me. Thoughts are a hollow. They have no solid basis, nor substantial end. They are all vanity and avail nought. Yet, they are most burdensome. They are ever in a flux. They tire me without benefitting me.

I take refuge in Thee Oh Lord! Receive me in Thy unbounded grace and fill my heart with faith and firmness. Immerse me in the sweet fountain of Thy grace—let me be immersed for ever. Let me ever be in touch with Thee—ever conscious, ever full of Thee. Forsake me not, kind Lord! Thou art my one ideal—one goal. If Thou too forsakest me—then—a whirlwind, a speck of dust, a feeble struggle and last, a bottomless bottom—the end.

* * *

XVII

I am a slave to moods. The whole family of moods successively come and enslave me. Moods and thoughts are correlative. Moods excite thoughts of like colour, and thoughts in their turn create consonant moods. The one cannot help me against the other.

Doubts assail me—I get into a rebellious mood and question the truth of everything. Desires impel me—I forget my doubts, and become enamoured with objects and long for them without means of realisation. Despair seizes me and misery sits heavy on

my shoulders,—I see all my future dark and vow never again to smile. But again, hope dawns and faith sits on my head and sings sweetly. I see bright prospects and vow never again to grieve. How many hundreds of times have I gone round this cycle of moods? How can I be freed from the sway of darker moods? How can I ever be possessed of brighter ones? Faith, faith, nothing but faith. Faith in every moment, faith under every condition. Merciful Lord! fix me in faith.

* * *

XVIII

I humiliate myself to the utmost before Thee Oh Lord! Spare me the humiliation before man.

Man has no sympathy for man. Man has but a narrow heart. He is not enough unto himself, how can he extend himself unto others? His spirit shrinking and self-centering admits not of expansion.

All his sympathy is rooted in selfishness. All his unselfishness is but a deeper stratum of selfishness. Man's life is constituted centering round his little self. Every voluntary motion of his, proceeds from a prompting of self. Every prompting of self is primarily in its own interests.

Oh Lord! Thou alone canst have sympathy with creatures, for Thou alone hast created all. Thou art the root of all. Thou sustainest all and Thou alone art the final refuge for all. Thou keepest infinite life for the support of Thy finite creatures. Immeasurable love to gladden the wounded hearts of Thy suffering children. Thy all-powerful arms are the refuge and protection of the weak. Thou relievest the burdens of the heart-burdened, Thou consolest the grieving, Thou savest the falling. Save me from humiliations at the hands of man!

* * *

XIX

I want the ideal. But I get only the actual. The actual always lags far behind the ideal. How can I rest in the actual? The actual satisfies me not.

My mind is always engaged in making out ideals. My mind is always engaged in struggling with the actual—in trying to convert it into the ideal. But, the actual stands obstinate. For, the

power behind the actual is great and that behind the ideal is small. How can I acquire power greater than the actual?

The power which sustains the actual is nature's. That which sustains the ideal is man's. But, the power which upholds both and is superior to both, is God's.

Now, Nature's power never fluctuates. It stands ever of the same degree. Man's power is subject to fluctuation. It stands lower when propped by self, higher when propped by God.

God alone can empower me over nature. He alone can support me in my struggle with nature. He is my final and only refuge.

* * *

XX

The human soul may be said to have three different stages in its relations with nature. The first and lowest is that of "slave to nature" when it knows not nature—her constitution and laws. In that stage, the human soul is childish and is subject wholly to the influence of nature. It is unconscious of its own strength, which again is yet undeveloped. Then appealing objects attract it, in-born propensities impel it and the moods of nature subject it to their sway. It experiences blindly the various states of mind, arising from the varying conditions of life, which nature successively presents, knowing not the precise means by which the agreeable ones are to be attained nor those by which the disagreeable ones are to be avoided or met. It acts solely by force of inclination and habit.

The second and middle stage is being "equal to nature," when by gradual development of faculties and artificial culture, it has attained to the recognition of self and some insight into the operations of nature. In that stage, the human soul is manly, when it has discovered a part of its own strength, and is subject only partly to the influence of nature. It feels familiar with nature and equal to her. It feels its strength in the value and amount of intellectual acquisitions in possession and the plane of its source of activity is the brain-consciousness. Then the unknown course of nature is not depended upon for the attainment of desirables, but her precise laws are put into operation to reach precise ends.

The third and last stage is that of "master to nature" when the spirit of man after long experience and by the proper exercise of faculties which are above the intellectual ones, has thoroughly unbound itself from the trammels of nature and risen higher. In that stage the human soul is superhuman, or rather, more properly

perfect, when it has risen above the world of nature to the spiritual one, when it has known the beginning, middle and end of nature and that her laws are but shadows of spiritual ones, when spirit has joined with spirit, when it has become impervious to natural affections, when its essential state is bliss and outward manifestation is love, in grading degrees beginning with the dawning of spiritual self-perception, to the attainment of spiritual self-perfection.

XXI

* * *

Jesus is but a teacher, not a giver; a physician, not a lover; a prophet not God. He is but human not divine. I went to him often attracted by his note of love. He invited me to freely repose in him. He promised to unburden me of all my weight. And what does he do? He imposes heavier burdens than I ever had.

"Take my yoke and follow me" he says, "and I will give you rest." May he be true. Oppressed under the weight of my own little yoke, I sought his help for strength or relief. But the merciful condition he imposes on me, before he will help, is, "Share in my heavier one." Afraid of a little suffering, I sought his help towards its mitigation. His kindly advice is, "Suffer more, suffer all at once and you will become all-happy in the end." Losing a part of strength, spirits, happiness I sought his help towards recovery. The remedy he lovingly proposes to me is, "Lose all, all at once, and you will gain all in the end."

He bears his heavy cross out of his giant strength. Give me strength first to bear mine own, then gradually I can share in thine. But "Grow faith and strength shall grow in thee" he says, as if faith is easy to obtain. True faith is hard to grow and nothing but true faith can effect anything. If I had faith and strength, what need I go to him? Faith is equivalent to power and strength, to happiness. Faith and strength will beget their equivalent benefits irrespective of the favours of Jesus or any other.

Jesus is but an example and enlightener. He helps not in advance but merely points out the way. He consoles not, soothes not, but prescribes the unpalatable remedy.

Struggle is the only path. Struggle within oneself. Hardest, deepest heart-piercing struggle. No one can render help gratis. No teacher, lover of mankind or avatar offers his help in advance. None of them give initial faith to the faithless, initial strength to the weak. "Help thyself first, then I will help thee", "Give me thine first, then I will give thee mine" is the common condition, imposed by them all on those who seek them.

One must help himself, must himself fulfil his life. Self-help is the only path to salvation. Self-help is the title of every scripture, the placard on every path.

(To be continued).

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA.

I
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
Belur, Howrah,
18-9-16.

My Dear—

P—, your letter was duly to hand. But after that I went to Puri and came back day before yesterday.

Is Dhyana (meditation) a matter of joke? Is it a thing of words? Any and every one cannot have it. This is the same with all people of this world, some express this or some suppress this feeling. Take the name of our Lord within yourself, pray to Him, coax Him, according to your own feelings and ideas. Everything will be all right in course of time, don't fear. He is the very embodiment of infinite kindness. Sri Guru Maharajji says, "It is not the *Mantra* but your mind". If you can surrender your mind to God, you must realise Him.

Initiation is of great importance. One must follow one particular path. Initiation is the path, and Guru is the guide. One must have Guru, this is the command of the Shastras. One should obey what the Shastras say. Every one cannot grow up without proper care and other necessary helps only by independent thinking. Earnestness is the only *Mantra*, it is a matter of immense fortune, every one cannot have it. We get in the Mahabharata that a certain Bhakta, named Ekalabya learnt the science of archery having made an earthen image of Drona. But we hear such things only of one Ekalabya. Try to learn again and again at the feet of him from whom you wish to take initiation. * * * *

We all are doing well. Nowadays there is scarcely any famine. Tender my love and blessings to your brother and accept yourself.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

II
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
Belur,
30-10-16.

My Dear—

Read your note. Take the name of God, He will grant you sincerity and truthfulness. Well, child, you shall have to try. Pray to Him with heart and soul, then and then alone you will get response.

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA 143

Try to detect your own weakness and wickedness. If you think that your mind and words should be of the same tone, then what are you doing to become so? If I take medicine, will your disease be removed? Every one must try for his own self and work out his salvation.

If you think that sexual and other sense enjoyments are bad, what remedy have you found out to get rid of them? Detect your own weaknesses and take a vow, repent that you won't stray to that path any more—"I must never go that way;"—then you are saved. No mercy drops down from the sky all on a sudden for nothing. It is the mercy of the Lord that you are getting such good ideas. One must reason and then meditate upon.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

III

My Dear—

* * * Try to go on and to work together being united and in harmony with all without any hitch or trouble. Your lives should be the ideals for other people. Only love is required, nothing more. Let the world have peace and bliss at your sight. Let not mean selfishness enter into our body. * * * *

Yours ever,
Premananda.

IV

My Dear—

BENARES CITY,
3-1-17.

Received your letter and read the contents. Have you not read the sayings of the Master?—One must be a "*bonafide farmer*". Why should one sell one's plough and cows for the failure of crops in one year? One must stick. It is not a sign of a Bhakta to become quite disheartened if he does not have good Dhyana. A devotee always sticks to God, in pleasure or pain, sorrow or disease, peace or unhappiness.

"The Man-Guru gives *Mantra* in the ear and the Guru of the world gives *Mantra* in the mind"—Sri Guru Maharajji used to say. If one can get hold of the Guru of the world, He grants one pure *buddhi* (mind) *prema* and love and attachment towards His lotus feet. So, what else does one require who always keeps Him in the mind?

Hoping you all are doing well. Sri Hari Maharaj has come here from Almora. He is doing a little better. As soon as he recovers we shall start together for the Math. We are doing well. My hearty love and blessings to you all.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA.

Chap. VI.—Isvara as the World's Helper.

Sri Krishna calls himself "the friend of all beings" (Gita, V. 29) and again (IX. 18) as "the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the refuge, the friend, the place of origin and dissolution, &c., of the universe." Furthermore, he says of himself:—"There is nothing ordained for me to do in (all) the three worlds, nothing to gain which is not already in my possession. Still, I do keep constantly engaged in (my own) activity. For, should I at any time not engage diligently in (such) activities, men would follow my example in all manner of ways. If I did not engage in activity, these worlds would be destroyed, I should become the cause of caste-commingling, and I should be ruining these people," (III. 22, 23, & 24), as they would not follow the avocations suitable to their innate dispositions and tendencies.

We have already pointed out what is the Supreme Lord's "Cosmic purpose" (Chap. IV.),—the realisation of the unity of the Bliss of Love which is the changeless Interior Self (*Pratyagatman*) of all living beings. The activities in which he informs us (in the Gita passage above quoted) that he is constantly and diligently engaged, are all therefore clearly dedicated to the accomplishment of that purpose. The Lord claims not only thereby to save all living beings from the ruinous consequences of neglecting the activities *prescribed* as suitable and natural to them, but also to be the supporter, friend and helper of all to attain to the perfection of bliss which is their true self, and which the veil of beginningless ignorance (*Anandavidya*) keeps concealed from their mind's vision. This primeval ignorance may be understood to have in the Vedanta a place analogous to the "original sin" in early Christianity as it probably issued from its first founder, though we can by no means be certain of it,—because it is veiled by the puerilities of the story of the Fall of Man as given in the Old Testament.

How do we know that Isvara in his supreme wisdom, power, and goodness, is our universal helper and friend? In the *first* place, we owe to him this universe and this clothing of ours, physical and mental (with all its innate tendencies), which forms a part of the universe (*Brahma-Sutras*, I. 1.—2). In the *second* place, he is the *Sastra-yoni*,—the revealer of the science or knowledge spoken of in the next aphorism (*Brahma-Sutras*, I. 1.—3). In explaining this *Sutra*, Sankaracharya says:—"Isvara is the cause (*i.e.*,

revealer) of the eminent and revered system of knowledge—the Rig-Veda, &c.,—which is supported by the teachings contained in various other branches of knowledge and which, like a blazing light, illuminates for us the entire truth regarding reality. No such system of knowledge as this, possessing the quality of omniscience, could have had its source except in the omniscient Supreme Divinity." Thus, the two grounds on which the Vedanta asserts its doctrine of God as the helper of all are:—(1) that he has given us our clothing of personality and our place in his universe in order to attain to the perfection of which we are capable; (2) that he has revealed to us the system of knowledge and culture needed to achieve that supreme destiny of ours which is also at the same time the one purpose of God's Cosmic Activity.

A recent writer in the "*Hibbert Journal*" speaks of the world as "a self-governing world, a world that contains within itself the power and the impulse for self-direction and self-improvement." He says further:—"The world is not governed from outside, but organises itself from inside and directs itself, expresses itself, and shapes its own destinies,—all in virtue of that spirit of self-improvement which animates the whole." All this is true, but the writer is not quite right when he goes on to say that "the old idea of the world as being governed by some distant external ruler is now being abandoned as not in accordance with observed facts." The well-known South Indian missionary teacher and educationist, Dr. William Miller, in one of his Madras Sermons, proclaimed his conviction that the world owed to India alone the revelation of the Vedic doctrines of "the omni-penetrativeness of God and the solidarity of man." Though he was subjected to much obloquy for saying so, the quotation we have made above from the *Hibbert Journal* shows that his view of India's importance in religion has now gained universal acceptance. Still we need not or cannot deny that God is (and can be) *transcendent* (or *transcendent*) quite as much as he is *immanent* or "omni-penetrative." We have, at an earlier stage, explained the true significance and need of the Indian doctrine of the universal *immanence* of God. Briefly, it is this fact that enables us to know him truly, if we would, here and now. Isvara's transcendence or externality, however, is also known to the Vedanta, though not pressed therein (as already stated), for it has little bearing on our present fortunes or future destiny. In the Puranic side of our religion, however, it plays a prominent part. For, the unenlightened popular mind can only worship God as a being outside it and as a ruler seated aloft in the empyrean above the material universe and settling our affairs on

earth and the future fate of all of us according to our deserts. In the Vedanta, where his immanence assumes an enormous practical importance, it is stated (see *Taittiriya-Upanishad*, II. 6) that he "willed" the creation of the world and, having brought it into manifestation, he "entered" it in the form of Jiva. Sankaracharya points out that, as the Atman has no material form or body, its "entrance into the universe of material forms cannot be likened either to the entrance of a person into a house or to that of a reflected image of the sun into the water." Sankara further explains,—“As the Atman undifferentiated, but the causal basis of all difference—is to be realised in this cave (of the human heart), he is depicted as having entered into it.” The Brahma-Valli of this Upanishad is intended to teach us that the Noumenal Atman, in its personal aspect as Isvara, helps all souls to realise in its essence the pure innermost Bliss of Love. Jesus taught,—“The Kingship of God is at hand.” This difficult saying of his is often explained as meaning that a new epoch of righteousness and peace was to dawn upon the world when his disciples had done the work he had entrusted to them of preparing it for his Second Advent and his rule over the Kingdom of God then to be founded by Him. Jesus frequently explained that he wanted all to do “the will of the Father in Heaven”—not to render service or loyalty to himself. Nor did he play the role of the founder of a new state or society,—he was no statesman, economist, socialist, democrat, or revolutionist.—It is, thus, clear that the idea of creation cannot apply to the spirit of man. It is the clothing of the spirit with a material body that is spoken as “*srishti*” or *manifestation* in the Vedanta. There can also be no “creation” of anything, whether self or not-self, out of nothing. “*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*”—In the second place, the realisation that we have spoken of above comes to us also through Isvara’s grace and help. For, he alone has revealed to us the Veda and Vedanta which contain the teaching needed for making the effort needed to attain to such a realisation. This is also clearly pointed out at the very commencement of the Brahma Sutras in I. 1—3.

We have, in the present connection, also to explain the special importance which is assigned to the *Acharya* (teacher) in the Vedanta. He is regarded as Isvara himself acting as the revealer of the truth and the enlightener of the human understanding. Says the Veda, “the man who has a teacher obtains realisation.” Sankaracharya says in one of his famous hymns :—“If your mind is not fixed on the lotus-feet of the Guru, what thence,”—i.e., what does it profit a man to have all the various sorts of worldly posses-

sions and gains? In his Bhashya on the Brahma-Sutras, he also says :—“The supreme Isvara assumes at pleasure various illusory (Maya) physical forms in order to show his grace and reveal the truth to those who are engaged in austerities.” The Guru who removes the veil of ignorance and reveals the truth which is behind the phenomenal world is also to be regarded as the Divine Person Himself. It is not possible for us to perceive or imagine the forms, methods or regions of activity in which Divine love can reveal itself to those who have sought to attract it towards themselves by faithful endeavour. It is easy enough to have love for family, friends, country, and the world in which we live and move. But the man who can rise beyond these transient forms and external shows to the Divine love which is the one substance hidden in all of them has a joy and freedom all his own. He alone can be the bearer of a message to others which will remove all heart-aches and make this life itself with all its evils and trammels a veritable Heaven of joy and freedom.

Only when we realise how Isvara helps us all by bringing into existence this universe of forms and names in which we live and move and hope and aspire and achieve, and how he helps us not only by proclaiming the teaching we need for our true self-revelation as the perfection of the light of love but also by making each of us (in our own good time) the channel for the transmission of his message of love to others—only then and not before or otherwise—we can understand in what sense Isvara is the universal helper. The Vedanta gives us the true and full revelation when it says—“Whenever righteousness languishes and unrighteousness is at its height, I manifest myself in the world. I am born age after age for the protection of the good, for the destruction of those who do evil, and for the establishment (once more) on a firm basis of the law of righteousness in the world.” (Gita IV, 7&8). Moreover Sri Krishna says :—“I serve men in the way they approach me.” (IV. 11). Furthermore, the blessed Baagavan graciously informs us that “men follow the path (which leads to me) by whatever road they proceed” (IV, 11). Sankaracharya explains this statement as follows :—“Those who—whatever fruits they may desire—endeavour (to reach them) by the activity enjoined (by the shastras) on them in accordance with their inborn tendency (or qualification) are (to be) called men, and no others.” It is only thus that they form the family of the Divine Father,—a brotherhood of his disciples, of comrades bound together by a common obedience to Him and observing the duties enjoined on them by Him so as to reach finally the goal of *Chid-gnanananda*, the unquenchable joy of the intelligent self which is all Love.

The blessed Bhagavan's Incarnations (*Avatara*s) are, however, only exceptional instances of the help he renders to his universal family out of his unique love for them. For, they occur only when they have fallen away from, and forgotten, the truth he has revealed to them. His love flows towards them in a perpetual stream of revelation of truth both through the succession of teachers (and disciples) who have maintained the traditional teaching, and also by himself when he graciously takes special forms at will to enlighten the minds and fulfil the needs and hopes of all who are steadfast in their fidelity to him. The blessed Bhagavan mentions four classes of godly men who are *devoted* to him in the order of merit. He says :—"Four kinds of men of righteous activity offer devotion to me,—the distressed, the inquirer after truth, the man who seeks wealth, and the man who has attained to a knowledge of the truth. Of them, the man who knows the truth (the Jnani) and who is steadfast in his devotion to me (because he knows that I am alone worthy of devotion and no other) attains to a unique excellence. To the Jnani I am exceedingly dear, and he is also dear to me. They have all, indeed, attained to high excellence. But I regard the Jnani as my very Self. For, resolved to rise to the highest truth (in regard to me) and steadily concentrating his mind on me, he endeavours to attain to me as the highest aim (of life) to be attained." (Gita VII, 16—18). From this passage we see clearly that Isvara is always watchful to discover who are fit objects for loving help and interposition, and that he is ever engaged in the effort to raise them so as to enable each to attain the fruition of his endeavours and aims.

In this age of ours there is much disturbance and strife everywhere both among individuals and communities, and the world is full of sorrow and suffering. The chief reason is that the idea of democratic equality of all persons in society has been sown broadcast all over the world. Such a thing as the seeking of Isvara and the earning of his grace so as to rise to the progressive realisation of Him in all his glory and truth has disappeared from the world. An English writer—the late Mr. W. S. Lilly—has said :—"The masses in every country must be fetish worshippers." It is the lower sort of ideas and aims that can become universally current among men. Hence such motives as self-assertion and self-advancement, and the advancement of the interests and welfare of one's own community or nation, have a far greater vogue and value at the present day than the service of God through the fulfilment of his behests and the emancipation of the Jivatman from the bondage of sin and sensualism. The old conception of *Chitta-suddhi* (or

the purification of the mind from all aims and desires other than the desire to do the will of Isvara and to realise Him truly in accordance with the teaching given in the eternal oracles of our race) has given place to the endeavour after social, industrial, commercial, and political betterment. The destiny of the human society and community on earth is the thought now most prominent in the minds of all Western leaders and Western Churches,—not at all the effort after one's own conversion or deliverance from sin or the saintliness, goodness, and beneficence which, after having accomplished one's own redemption, seeks to accomplish the deliverance of others from samsaric bondage,—the duty, which the blessed Bhagavan assigns to the Jnani under the name of *loka-sangraha*. Isvara's grace is promised only to those who go through the travail involved in offering him in full measure the homage and devotion of their hearts and in the fulfilment of all his commands. The conversion of men and their redemption from sin, the vivid enjoyment of Divine Love, and the glory and enchantment of self-realisation can be only individual and personal—not communal or collective. It is nothing but delusion to speak of religion in the public life of a democratic state or to seek the deliverance of a whole people from their collective sins through their *social* regeneration under the renovating influence and consciousness of a social creed and gospel.

RAMADAS

BY

C. Ramakrishna Rao.

(Continued from Page 120.)

Arrival of the Guru.

On one occasion, when Ramadas was engaged in his household duties, his ears caught the sound of a deeply devotional song sung at his door to the tune of the Tambur and the sound of the cymbal. It almost took him out of himself. He ran to the place from which the sound issued, and at once found in the singer a soul that spread radiance all around, and intuitively recognised him as the Guru that he had so long yearned to see. He bowed at the feet of the Saint and offered him welcome to stay with him for sometime. It is a peculiarly characteristic feature of the spiritual cult of India, that the *Chela* who yearns for a spiritual guide and the *Guru* who seeks the true disciple are brought together by an unerring spiritual law, a law whose workings are as perfect as are the physical laws and the laws of chemical affinity.

Spiritual affinity brings about the contact of the *Guru* and the *Chela*, the period of tutelage varying in proportion to the intensity of the desire that each has for the other.

Call it the hand of the Almighty Providence that works unseen to bring about that holy moment, attribute it to that apparently indefensible and yet inexorable law of Karma, which imperceptibly shapes the destiny of individuals as much as of nations, defend it, as we have attempted to do, by the law of spiritual affinity or deny the one or the other or all of the above theories, the solid fact is there, that the fulfilment of the desires of the *Chela* and the *Guru* are brought about at an undreamt-of moment to change the course of more lives than one, through the disciple himself.

The Initiation.

The moment of the meeting of Ramadas and Kabir—for that was the name that is traditionally given to the *Guru*—was one such, wrought by the relentless law of spiritual affinity. If it is not the original Kabir himself, it must be one of the order of Kabir, which bore the name of the founder. There seems to be a vast interval between the times of Kabir and Ramadas. Ramadas had by this time equipped himself by incessant spiritual exercises and the faithful performance of the duties devolving upon the life of a householder, with the necessary qualifications of a true aspirant. To Kabir, the joy of having found a worthy disciple was immense and he lost no time in whispering into his ear the *Taraka Mantra* and initiated him thereby into the cult of Rama. He is said to have laid great stress on the value of prayer, and desired his disciple to be the upholder of the Bhakti cult, the easiest path to obtain the Grace of God.

Having given the mantra to the disciple and enjoined on him the importance of incessant prayer to Rama, the Guru Kabir took his departure, not however without exacting from him a promise, by way of *Guru Dakshina* (offering to the Guru) that he would never cease to sing the praise of *Hari Rama*. He also promised on

his own part that whenever Ramadas might pray for him, he would immediately make his appearance.

Ramadas fell prostrate at the feet of the Guru, in token of absolute self-surrender. With many tears in his eyes he allowed his guest and guru to depart. He gave extemporaneous expression to his feelings, in songs in which his praises of Rama and gratitude to Kabir were superbly blended. Kabir was overjoyed at it, and departed with a final blessing.

How Ramadas Saw God.

The following incident is related of how Ramadas once wanted to have a vision of God and failed to recognize Him when he actually appeared. During the early period of his discipleship under Kabir, Ramadas was one day possessed with an overwhelming desire to see God and to this end, he prayed that his Guru Kabir might appear to him. Kabir made his appearance in accordance with the promise he had given to Ramadas and being informed of the purpose of his having been invoked at that moment, he quickly consented to favour him with a vision of God in broad day light and asked Ramadas to arrange for a grand feast for the Brahmins as a preparation for the God's appearance. A sumptuous dinner was accordingly arranged and the whole town was splendidly decorated to offer a grand and hearty reception to the honoured guest who was no less than God Almighty Himself. Great was the anxiety and the expectation of the people to have a look at that hitherto invisible being called God. The hour of midday appointed for the arrival of the guest had come and gone; but He had not appeared. The hours of one, two and three also passed away but yet God had not arrived. The Brahmins now pressed by hunger grew quite impatient and began to make a great uproar. Ramadas, his faith beginning to shake, yet tried to appease the irate Brahmins, when suddenly in addition to this disappointment, there rushed in uncontrolled a buffalo covered all over with mud and dirt and it began to roll over the heaps of rice, curry and cake, and the other delicacies that had been stored in abundance; it upset the pots of ghee, and milk, and other things and made a whole mess of all the arrangements. The Brahmins were provoked to their utmost. Ramadas felt humiliated; and all combined to catch hold of the buffalo and beat him mercilessly till blood began to ooze. The buffalo ran out of the pandal, the blood dripping all along the pathway; it went straight to the abode of Kabirdas. He was filled with grief at the sight and began immediately to dress his wounds, and exclaimed 'O Lord! Is this the treatment that you have received from Ramadas?' 'Yes' replied God, 'it was he, to whom I went at your request, that gave me this treatment. But these are nothing to the wounds in my great battle with Ravana' and disappeared.

Of course, the disappointed Brahmins had another meal prepared—and partaking of the meagre second-rate meal, departed cursing Ramadas who made them wait for an imaginary God who never appeared.

Kabir came to Ramadas in the evening. After the preliminary salutations and enquiries were over, Ramadas narrated his experi-

ences of the day to Kabir in an angry mood. Kabir replied that it was God himself who visited the dining hall in the form of the buffalo, and admonished Ramadas for brandishing him so rudely. Ramadas was extremely mortified. Kabir then taught him to see everything in the Universe as God Himself and to recognise that He does not dwell in the temple and the church alone but in every being of His creation.

More Intense Bhakti.

Ramadas grew more devotional day after day. He put up an image of Rama in his house and used to sing sweet strains of music before the image and to worship it in the presence of a number of devotees. He also fed a number of devotees on many such occasions.

The Dream and the Command.

One day, while Ramadas was engaging himself in meditation, he had a vision. A pious-holy looking Brahmin sought the shelter of his roof: Ramadas looked to his comforts. The guest appeared satisfied with the services rendered to him by Ramadas and departing showed His real nature, and lo! He was Rama Himself; then He told his devotee that He gave a revelation of Himself in material shape on the hill of Bhadra in the Taluk of Bhadrachalam on the banks of the Godavari and enjoined on him to erect a temple and raise the pinnacles thereof, and to make the required arrangements for the regular celebrations of the periodical festivals connected with the temple service.

At this great disclosure, his joy knew no bounds. A fit of ecstasy at once overpowered him. Whether his lips audibly expressed a promise to abide by the command of the Lord he knew not, but the resolve had already been formed within him to literally follow the injunction, and it mattered little whether the ascent escaped his lips or not. By the time Ramadas came to himself, the Lord disappeared. The vision had vanished.

This incident made him more firmly devoted to his Lord of Love and he was forming projects as to how he might be able to fulfil his promise.

An Accident.

The regular course of his domestic duties were in no way neglected by him and while on one day, a number of Sadhus were being fed in his house, his own son, then a boy of two or three years suddenly fell into a big kettle of boiling water and died almost instantaneously. His wife thus suddenly immersed in sorrow, as she was at the tragic and unexpected loss of her son, assumed an absolute silence for fear of disturbing the feeding of the saints, and did her duties most composedly. Her courage and composure had so astounded the Sadhus when they came to know of the fact soon after their feeding was over, that their admiration for her became boundless and they all wished to devise some means by which to restore the little one to life.

Ramadas too, came to know of the accident and as his son's restoration to life was supposed to be hoping against hope he began to grieve bitterly for sometime.

REVIEW.

Siva and Buddha.

We have the pleasure to receive a copy of *Siva and Buddha*, a posthumous booklet of Sister Nivedita, an intimate devotee and disciple of the Great Swami Vivekananda. We need not write anything as introductory for her, who is well-known amongst the educated circle of India for her unparalleled service for India. She had no patronising air and came to learn the religious ideals of the East. It is truly said that she was the real devotee, nay, adopted daughter of India. The present handiwork shows her true deep current of sympathy and familiarity with Hindu Mythology. It also displays her characteristic beautiful style and peculiar charming method of weaving of scattered facts together in a masterly way. It seems from the perusal of the book, that the avowed object of writing it was to present the pearls gathered from Hindu Mythology in order to make the general reader of the West, familiar with the central ideals of the East. She picked up two gigantic ideals, of the Hindus.

The authoress attempted to trace the gradual evolution of the conception of Siva. The graphic description of how the idea of the possession of a bull came in, how the idea of the moon is accrued how Siva is satisfied with little offerings, besmearing of ashes, and deep meditative and ascetic nature of the Great Lord has a peculiar charm of its own. She traced how the Hindu mind began to work out all sorts of accessories and symbols. The authoress gives us many beautiful stories relating Siva at the end.

No less interesting is the nice description of Buddha, the Light of Asia. She presents the readers a sketch of the life of the Great Epoch-maker collecting the thrilling incidents by her ingenious way. Her telling description of how Buddha's future was foretold, how he abandoned the world being stung by the woes of men, in spite of utmost and earnest care of his father, the King Siddhadhan, who tried to encage him for ever with the transient playful things of the world in order to avoid his religious life as a beggar, his marriage with Yasodhara, and how none could turn back the page of destiny was indeed beautiful and the most attractive. After his renunciation Gautama passed seven years in deep meditation and attained *Nirvana*. He discovered the Great Secret and found all Knowledge. Since then he was known as Buddha or the Blessed one. As soon as he was illumined, Siddhartha learnt that the thirst after life was the cause of all

wretchedness and found out the panacea and preached openly the Universal Truth and invited all. All these happened in the forest known as Buddha Gaya under a Bo-tree. He first preached his great doctrine at Benares, the holiest City in India. His all-embracing love was indeed wonderfully described.

We are quite sure that even the casual readers will be greatly helped by this booklet. She gave an original interpretation to our Mythology. The artistic presentation of facts and the many-sided genius of the authoress make the book charming. Sister Nivedita finds a place in the heart of every Hindu as a past-master of story-telling and the present book shows her mastery over Indian ideals. We congratulate the publisher for the preservation of such valuable literature and offering it to the public. It has a beautiful get-up and a few pictures befitting its rich contents. Price As. 12.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We are glad to receive the following monthly report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary at Bhuvaneswar, Puri, during the month of August 1920, and have the pleasure to record the usefulness and immense serviceableness of the dispensary in a quarter where no help for the suffering humanity is forthcoming from the neighbours. The people of a pretty long area containing a few square miles do not get any proper medical help. The diseased and distressed poor people flock together for help from a distance of 7 or 8 miles, sometimes even of 14 or 15 miles. The growing number of patients is increasing day by day. The institution is labouring under great pecuniary difficulties. Although the dispensary building is nearing completion, still it could not make any arrangement for the surgical cases. It is in sore need of special room, operation table and all sorts of surgical requisites and instruments.

We are much concerned to note that the local people have no practical sympathy for the Institution, though the best advantage is being taken of by their suffering poor neighbours in various ways.

Total number of new patients during the month	...	776
Do. attendances	do.	1,179
Total number of new cases to date	...	5,843
Do. attendance	do.	10,128
Daily average of new patients	...	25.03
Do. attendances	do.	38.03
Total number of men 446, women	...	330
Do. operations	do.	2

We fervently hope that the crying necessity of the suffering humanity will strike a cord of sympathy of our generous countrymen.

Our kind-hearted men will come forward with ungrudging help to make it all round. All contributions, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O., Bhuvaneswar, District Puri, Orissa.

It is gratifying to note the great service of the Ramakrishna Free Dispensary, Natrampalli, P. O. Jalarpet, District North Arcot. It is indeed a wonderful thing for a village. The Institution is doing its best to mitigate the suffering of the poor brethren. It is truly responding the call of the Great Swami Vivekananda and is doing its utmost to discharge the duty entrusted by him to our countrymen in the best possible way. We need not emphasise on the importance and usefulness of the work.

Ramakrishna Free Dispensary.

As per the general report of the Manager M. R. Ry., Samundi Achary Avergal of the Ramakrishna Free Dispensary from 1st October 1919 to 31st August 1920 managed by Nattarampalli Swamy Vivekananda Sangam runs thus:—

Month and Year.				Number of patients treated.	Income. Rs. A. P.	Expense. Rs. A. P.
1919	October	...	...	312	40 8 0	40 7 10
	November	...	...	353	35 2 4	32 8 4
	December	...	...	363	38 14 0	36 5 1
1920	January	...	...	352	27 0 0	31 0 0
	February	...	...	278	26 0 0	28 1 4
	March	...	...	318	29 12 0	30 10 8
	April	...	...	335	28 0 0	21 0 0
	May	...	...	294	23 5 8	26 12 6
	June	...	...	324	34 15 0	34 4 10
	July	...	...	310	35 4 0	33 14 7
	August	...	...	310	28 0 0	27 0 0
Grand Total				3519	316 12 0	315 6 0

Balance in hand Rs. 1-6-0. The income includes the Taluk board grant Rupees eight per month.

We have received the following for publication :—

The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, has been trying its best to solve some of the civic problems for the last 20 years. From a very small nucleus the institution has grown to its present status capable of accommodating 100 diseased and indigent souls besides providing for over 200 helpless persons regularly with weekly doles of rice and money in their own houses. All these poor and helpless Narayans, are generally old men and women of all sects belonging to the different provinces of India. But one well acquainted with the miserable state into which a good many of our fellow beings are cast in this City, is sure to be of opinion that their want and distress amount much in excess to the various works of relief carried on by this institution. For the last four years or so works have been expanded but the help that is being received from the public in cash or in kind is not adequate and this has checked further steps of widening the scope of relief. Moreover the dire pinch of scarcity especially of cloth which is being felt more or less everywhere is afflicting this institution too. In response to every call for help our generous countrymen have so long given to the institution every facility of development and to them it looks for this pressing need. Cloths for wearing purposes, for shirts, coats and bed sheets, are badly needed for the indoor patients of the Home. Even a clean piece of old cloth serves some purpose in a hospital. Donors are requested to mention expressly "for cloth" if they so desire, when they remit money to the Secretary. Annual Reports will be forwarded to any address by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, when written to.

TAITTIRIYA-UPANISHAD.

यतः from which मनसा with mind सह with वाचः speech अप्राप्य without reaching निवर्तन्ते turns away (तं that) ब्रह्मणः of Brahman आनन्दं bliss विद्वान् the knower कुतश्चन any one न not विभेति fears ह वाच verily एतं this (तं him) न not तपति distress. किम् why अहं I साधु good न not अकरवम् have done. किम् why अहं I पापं sin अकरवम् have done. इति thus. सः he यः who एते these two एवं thus विद्वान् knows आत्मानं his own self सृष्टुते fosters. यः who एते these उभे two (or both) एवं thus वेद knows हि verily एव only एषः this आत्मानं the Atman सृष्टुते fosters. इति this उपनिषत् the Upanishad.

Whence speech returns along with mind without reaching it,—the knower of that bliss of Brahman fears naught.

Such (thoughts) certainly never distress him that why he did not do the right, and why he did what is sinful.

He who thus knows them fosters his self; verily he fosters the self who knows these two in this way.

Here ends the Upanishad.

[Whence speech returns, etc.—The speech has the power of, describing and the mind is capable of comprehending all objects of the universe that are conditioned by Name and Form. But Brahman being unconditioned, without Name and Form, it is both indescribable by the speech and incomprehensible for the mind. This incapacity of the senses of cognising and expressing Brahman is figuratively described here as their ineffectual return from It without-being able to reach It.

The knower.....fears naught.—One who realises the supreme bliss of Brahman as described in the previous chapter, comes to know the unity of the all-pervasive Atman interlooming like warp and woof, the entire existence of all objects of this universe. And by such knowledge of unity all feeling of differences in existence drop away from his consciousness for all time, and so he feels no fear from anything, as everything that exists is naught but his own Atman itself.

Such thoughts, etc.—The knower of Brahman comes to realise the fact that what the world esteems as the good and what it puts down as bad,—are but different manifestations of the same Atman; and he feels then that this vision of superiority and inferiority—this notion of dual existence—arises from the misconception of one's own self, taking It to be individualised and identified with the little body and the mind. Therefore a man of such realisation never mourns over his past actions and inactions, be they good or bad: both appearing to him, then, alike in colour and potency, both fetters of the Atman forged by ignorance. Further he realises the perfect non-agency, i.e., *nishikriyata* of the Atman and that it is the mind which is the doer of all actions. Neither such a saint aspires after the fruits of the actions done by the mind, as having attained the supreme bliss of the Atman, all feeling of want disappears from his heart and so do also all desires.

He who thus knows, etc.—i.e., he who thus realises that both good and bad, *dharma* and *adharma*, are but different aspects of the same Atman, strengthens his knowledge of Atman by such visions of unity: if one tries to see this unity in everything around him he gains an abiding consciousness of Brahman. This is called *Brahma-Sthiti* in the Vedanta.

सह ना ववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहे ।

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ओं ॥

* May Brahman protect us both together. May He nourish us both together. May we both work together with great energy. May our study be vigorous and effective. May we not hate each other!

Om Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

HERE ENDS THE BRAHMANANDA VALLI.

TAITTIRIYA-UPANISHAD.

BHRIGU VALLI.

सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहे ।

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ओं ॥

CHAPTER I.

भृगुवं वारुणिः । वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अथोहि भगवो
ब्रह्मेति । तस्मा एतत्प्रोवाच । अन्नं प्राणं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाचमिति ।
तं होवाच । यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि
जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति ।
स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा ।

वारुणिः भृगुः Bhrigu the son of Varuna वै so the story goes
पितरं father वरुणं Varuna उपससार approached भगवः sir ब्रह्म Brahman
अथोहि teach. तस्मा to him (सः he) एतत् the following प्रोवाच said
अन्नं food प्राणं Prana चक्षुः the eyes श्रोत्रं the ears मनः the mind वाचम्
the speech (सः he) ह again तं to him उवाच said. यतः from which
इमानि these भूतानि beings जायन्ते are born जातानि being born येन
by which जीवन्ति live प्रयन्ति having gone यत् which अभिसंविशन्ति
they enter तत् that विजिज्ञासस्व seek to know, question तत् that,
ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus. सः he तपः penance तप्यत performed
सः he तपः penance तप्त्वा having performed.

Bhrigu, the son of Varuna, approached his father Varuna, (and said). 'Sir, teach me about Brahman.' To him he replied, 'food, prana, the eyes, the ears, the mind and the speech.'

To him he further said, that out of which all these creatures are born, being born by which they live, (and again) having departed into which they enter, seek to know That. That is Brahman.

He performed penance ; and having performed the penance.

[Food, Prana, etc.—There are the objects constituting so many gates, as it were, of the great mansion of Brahman (*Brahmapuram*). Without passing through these, i.e., without knowing them, it is not possible to enter into the *Brāhmapuram*.

By which they live—i.e., which is the sustenance and life of their being.

Into which they enter—i.e., when they cease to exist in the time of *Mahapralāya*, they get dissolved into their primal cause, the Brahman.

Note : In the answer Varuna enjoins his son to know that First Cause from which all things of this universe have come out in manifestation, in the beginning of the creation, in which they remain even while being manifest in the middle, and into which they go back in dissolution in the time of *Pralaya*. This *Sruti* speaks of the *Parjuna Vada* of creation.]

CHAPTER II.

अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । अन्नाद्भवे स्वस्तिमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । अन्नेन जातानि जीवन्ति । अन्नं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय । पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तम् होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्या ।

(सः he) अन्नं food ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus व्यजानात् understood (यतः for) अन्नात् from food हि एव verily इमानि all these भूतानि beings जायन्ते are born. अन्नेन by food जातानि being born जीवन्ति live. अन्नं into food प्रयन्ति having departed अभिसंविशन्ति enter. तत् that विज्ञाय to know पुनः again एव indeed पितरम् father वरुणं Varuna उपससार approached. भगवः Sir ब्रह्म Brahman अधीहि teach. तं to him ह so it is reported उवाच said. तपसा with tapas (penance) ब्रह्म of Brahman विजिज्ञासस्व should ask. तपः tapas ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus. सः he तपः tapas अतपयत performed. सः तपः tapas तप्या having performed.

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.

VOL. VII.]

OCTOBER 1920.

[No. 6.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.

He becomes the Priest.

Within a short time of the installation of the temple, the prepossessing appearance of the youthful Gadadhar, coupled with the soft temperament and devotional nature, did not fail to attract the notice of Mathur Babu, the son-in-law of the Rani. We often notice the curious fact that those who are to remain linked together with the closest tie of some relationship, feel on the very first occasion of their meeting, a kind of mutual attraction of love. Our Shastras say that it is due to the *samskaras* (latent impressions) born of the relationship of our previous lives. So, no wonder that Mathur Babu, who, was destined to be, later on, one of the most devoted disciples of the Master, felt a keen attraction towards young Gadadhar at the first sight.

A month passed after the installation ceremony and Gadadhar remained at Dakshineswar in that unsettled state of mind about his future. In the meantime Mathur Babu first thought of engaging him in the work of decorating the Divine Image and even made a proposal to that effect to Ramkumar ; but Ramkumar told him

about the temperament of his young brother and that it was not likely that Gadadhar would accept the post. But Mathur was not to be discouraged so easily. He waited for an opportunity to materialise his intention.

Just then came also to Dakshineswar another person who was to be closely associated with the Master's life hereafter. It was Srijukta Hridayram Mukhopadhyaya, the son of a cousin of the Master, Srimati Hemangini Devi. He had gone first to Burdwan in search of some employment, but finding no chance of a job there and having heard that his uncles were then employed as priests of the newly established temple of Rani Rasamani, he hurried to Dakshineswar. His age was only sixteen years then. And his youngest uncle Gadadhar being almost of similar age he found an agreeable companion in him.

Hriday was a tall handsome figure. His body was as strong and stout as was his mind fearless and energetic. In working hard, in managing things suiting to the occasions, in pluck and resourcefulness amidst unfavourable circumstances, there were few to match him. And above all, he had a genuine love for his young uncle Gadadhar and spared no pains or trouble to see him comfortable and happy.

Hriday was wonderfully active and had a strong will too; but sentiments and emotions had no place in his heart. Like an ordinary worldly man of active temperament, his mind could never free itself from the selfish motive in any of his actions. What little of noble sentiments we would notice in his life hereafter, was due to the constant association with one whose divine life was a perennial fountain of all lofty sentiments and unselfishness. When one becomes absolutely indifferent to even ordinary requirements of the body,—when one's mind remains ever absorbed in the meditation of the transcendental,—when one gets inebriated with the perfume of lofty sentiments and emotions, leaving behind all vestige of the little self—as it was the case with the Master—then for the fulfilment of such a life, it is absolutely necessary that an unemotional, intensely practical, yet lovingly devoted person like Hridayrama should be by the side. Could it be that the Mother of the Universe out of Her unbounden love, for that very same reason, brought Hriday in time and kept him near the Master, during the period of his unparalleled sadhana! But it is true, if Hriday were not present by the side of Sri Ramakrishna, during that time, probably, the physical body of the Master could not have been maintained. And so the name of Hridayrama

remains ever inseparably bound up with the life of Sri Ramakrishna,—and our reverence, thanks and gratitude are ever due to him.

When Hriday came to Dakshineswar, Gadadhar just then crossed his twentieth year, and having received him as a companion; his stay at the temple, we can imagine, became more pleasant and easier. Henceforth both would eat, sleep or walk about and do other little functions of daily life together. And thus Hriday grew into a loving 'chum' of Gadadhar.

Referring to this period of his life, once Hriday related to us—"From that time forward I felt a kind of inexplicable attraction towards the Master and like a shadow I used to be always with him. I felt much pain to be separated from him even for a moment. We always used to be together all day and night, while sleeping, talking or roaming about. Only at noon we used to part for a short while. For, at that time the Master used to go to Panchavati and cook himself his own meal, while I went to the temple and partook of the offered food. But before I went to take my meal, I used to keep everything ready for the Master's cooking. Even though he cooked his own meal, he could not feel any ease of mind,—so strong was his scruple about food at that time! Though in day time he cooked his own meal, yet in the night he used to partake of the *luchi* dish offered to the Divine Mother, along with us all.* Oh! how many days, have I not seen him actually shedding tears and lamenting before the Divine Mother, 'Mother, alas! Thou art making me eat food of a *Kaivartaka*!'

Referring to that time the Master himself also told us,—“I used to feel then an excruciating pang thinking that I had to eat the food of a *Kaivartaka*. For the same reason even poor beggars never came for food to the temple of the Rani Rasamani at that time. It happened then many a day that for want of men to eat, the offered food had to be given away to the cattle or thrown into the Ganges.” But we heard both from Hriday and the Master that he had not to continue to cook his own meal himself for a long time. Perhaps, he did the same as long as he did not accept the post of a priest in the temple, and it was about three months after the installation that he accepted the same.

Though Hriday was a constant companion of Gadadhar and knew it very well that his young uncle had a great love for him, yet,

* In Northern India the scruple about food exists only as regards cooked rice but not about sweets or any kind of preparation out of wheat flour, etc.

a particular conduct of his was quite enigmatic to Hriday: whenever Hriday used to go to assist his senior uncle Ramkumar in any of his works, or when he went to take a little rest after his midday meal, or when he went to the temple to attend the vesper service, Gadadhar would evade his company and remain absent for sometime. Then Hriday used to search him everywhere, yet could not find him. Gadadhar used to return after a lapse of two or three hours even. If questioned where he had been, he used to give simply an evasive answer that he was only very near the place. Sometimes while going out in search of him, Hriday used to notice that he was returning from the side of the Parichavati grove.

At that time, once Gadadhar felt a desire to worship the great God Shiva, by making an image of His with his own hand. We have already told to our readers that he used to do the same often at Kamarpukur. To effectuate his desire he brought some mud from the bank of the Ganges and made himself a beautiful image of Lord Shiva,—complete with His trident, *damaru* and the bull; and then he engaged himself in the worship of the God. Just then Mathur Babu chanced to come up there while promenading in the Temple Garden. And when he beheld from a distance that young Gadadhar was engaged in some worship, he was drawn to the spot by curiosity. As he came near, he saw the image. Though it was not a big one, it was of exquisite beauty. And Mathur was exceedingly delighted to see it. He understood at a glance that no ordinary person could have done the same, as such divinely expressive image was rare to be had in the market. Afterwards being more curious, he asked Hriday, whence they got the image and who was its maker. In answer, Hriday told him that Gadadhar was an expert in making images of gods and goddesses, and he knew also how to repair efficiently the broken images. Mathur was much surprised to hear it and requested to give him the image after the worship. Hriday complied with his request after Gadadhar had finished his worship. When Mathur received the image, his surprise was still more heightened as he closely scrutinised the construction of the image, so much so, that he sent the image, it is said, to the Rani. The Rani too expressed her great admiration for the image, and like Mathur she also was surprised to learn that it was made by Gadadhar.* Mathur had already in his mind to engage Gadadhar

* Some say that this incident took place when the Master was performing the priestly function of the temple and showing the image to the Rani Rasamani. Mathur is reported to have said,—“we have got so efficient a priest that I am sure the Goddess will make her manifestation soon.”

for the temple work, but now after seeing this accomplishment of his, he became more eager to translate his desire into action. Gadadhar had heard of this intention of Mathur Babu from his elder brother, but he had an idea from his very boyhood that he would not serve under anybody except God and so he did not pay any heed to the words.

In fact, the Master had the utmost aversion for service. In his later life, he could not even bear to see any of his intimate devotees, engaging himself in any service simply for the service's sake without there being a dire need for it.

Having learnt the intention of Mathur Babu from his elder brother, Gadadhar always used to avoid him and keep himself away from his presence. As he was unflinching in his pursuance of the path of rectitude and *dharma* and cared for nobody's opinion in the matter, so also he was always very careful not to wound anybody's feeling wantonly. And again, it was his innate nature to adore the talents of the talented and show respect to the respectable in his own child-like simple way without harbouring any idea of securing an advantage thereby. So the above attitude, of Gadadhar towards Mathurnath was probably due to his apprehension that if the latter would ask him to accept the post he would be in painful necessity of giving him a blank refusal. He knew Mathur Babu was the right hand of the Rani and a very respectable gentleman, so a refusal to his request would be tantamount to an insult and be anything but becoming on his part. Yet his whole being revolted against the very idea of service. At the same time it was not hidden from his self-searching mind that as days were passing by, he felt more and more attraction for the place to stay on. And he thought if he could stay in the temple of Dakshineswar without being harnessed with any responsibility, it would be indeed not objectionable. In fact a kind of composure and serenity in relation to his environment had begun to dawn slowly in him.

At last, what he was apprehending so long came to pass one day. Mathur Babu came to visit the temple, and seeing Gadadhar at a distance, sent for him. Hriday was in the company of Gadadhar at that time. No sooner the latter saw Mathur Babu at the temple, than he wanted to get away from his sight. Just then the servant came up and told Gadadhar that Mathur Babu was wanting him. Gadadhar first hesitated to go. And when asked, by Hriday why he was hesitating, he said, “If I go he will at once ask me to accept the service and to stay here in the temple.” But Hriday asserted: “No, there is no harm in that. The place is so nice and it is

rather glorious than anything of infamy, to be in service under such a great personage. I wonder why you are hesitating!" "I have absolutely no mind to be ever in bondage of any service," Gadadhar replied, "specially here if I am to accept the post, I am to be responsible for all the ornaments and jewellery which are on the person of the image. And that I feel highly troublesome and onerous. It is not possible for me to undertake the responsibility. If you take that responsibility upon yourself then I have no objection to remain here and worship the Goddess."

Hridoy came to the temple with the veritable purpose of getting an employment. So, he gladly accepted the proposal of Gadadhar. When Gadadhar went to Mathur Babu and was requested by him to accept the post, he told him the same thing as he had told Hridoy. Mathur Babu also agreed to his proposal and from that day he was engaged in the work of a decorator of the image of the Mother Kali and Hridoy was asked to help both Ramkumar and Gadadhar in their respective duties.

All the above incidents took place within three months after the installation ceremony. Then came the sacred day of *Gokulastami*, in the month of Bhadra of the year 1262 B. S., when the holy nativity of the divine Incarnation Krishna was performed in the temple of Radha-Govindaji. A great festival was going on in honour of the sacred occasion. After the noon-day worship, when the priest Kshetranath Chattopadhyaya was taking the image of Govindaji to the anti-chamber, where the images of the God and the Goddess were to be kept to rest in the bed for the afternoon—his feet slipped and he fell down with the image on the floor, and thereby one of the legs of the image was broken. This caused a great consternation in the whole temple. When the Rani and her son-in-law came to know of it they were terribly mortified at the incident and called for a congregation of learned Pundits to decide if the regular worship of God could be conducted on a broken image. Many Pundits assembled in the temple for the purpose and after much deliberation came to the conclusion that no worship of God was possible according to the Shashtra on a broken image. So, another new image of Govindaji was ordered for. But Mathur Babu who had already noticed the trance-like states of Gadadhar and observed his markedly uncommon spiritual tendencies, was now eager to seek his opinion on the point. When Gadadhar was asked by Mathur Babu, Hridoy told us, about the matter, a kind of spiritual mood came over him and he pronounced that there was no need of changing the broken image, and he further remarked if any of

the relations of the Rani broke his leg by such a fall, would she relinquish him and substitute another person? Or, she would hasten to call a doctor and set the broken limb right. Why not then the same thing was done in the present case also? Let the broken limb be cemented and made whole and the worship of God be conducted on it as usual. All those who were present on the occasion, were struck to hear the remark for the profundity of true love and devotion it breathed. The Rani and Mathur Babu were perfectly satisfied with the counsel of Gadadhar and the Master himself had to repair the image at the request of the latter. He repaired it so nicely that even to-day it cannot be detected easily that the image was ever broken. When there came the new image ordered for, it was kept aside in a corner of the temple. Subsequently after the passing away of the Rani and Mathur Babu, some of their descendants tried now and then to install this image and replace the broken old one. But something or other, it is said, would happen in their family to prevent the fulfilment of their desire. And even to-day the other image of Govindaji could be seen put in a corner of the temple, uninstalled.

For the time being everything went on well, yet many people began to speak ill of the act of the Rani and remarked that the worship of God on a broken image could not be fruitful. But the pious Rani and Mathur Babu paid no heed to these remarks and put firm faith in the advice of Gadadhar which had touched their devout heart. However, the priest Kshetranath lost his job on account of the carelessness. And thence Gadadhar was engaged to do the priestly function of the temple of Radha-Govindaji and Hridoy got the work of the decorator of Mother Kali, and also he had to help Ramkumar during the worship of the Mother.*

We have heard from Hridoy that when Gadadhar used to worship, it was a sight worth to be seen,—whoever saw it, was

* While talking of this incident of the breaking of the Image, Hridoy told us, that once Sri Ramakrishna accompanied by him went to worship the Divine Mother *Dasamahavidya* in the temple situated near the bathing ghat of Ratan Rai, the famous Zemindar of Narail; it is very near to the Khatighat of Baranagar. Formerly the temple had been in opulent condition but during the time we are speaking of, it lost all its former splendour and was in a state of great want. So, Sri Ramakrishna asked Mathur Babu to give two maunds of rice and Rs. 2 every month to the temple for its up-keep. While the Master was returning from the temple after the worship, he met Joynarayan Bandopadhyaya, the big Zemindar of the place. Both were well acquainted with each other. Joynarayan Babu having saluted the Master, in course of conversation, asked him, if it was true that the Govindaji of Rasamani's temple was broken. To that Sri Ramakrishna replied: "How foolish it is of you to think like that,—one who is *Akhandamandalakara*—the undifferentiated, indivisible, infinite,—how could he be broken?" Fearing that Joynarayan Babu's question might raise all sorts of unnecessary talk, he turned the conversation in the above way and told that it should be the effort of everyone to accept the essence of everything and give up the non-essential. The intelligent Joynarayan Babu took the hint and kept quiet.

charmed to behold the effusion of his godly-devotion. And again, the enthralling song of his sweet voice!—no one could ever forget it if one had heard it once. There was nothing of the astounding feat of the musical art in it, but there were the effusion of the soul-captivating rhapsody of his heart, the perfect attunement of his mind with the ideas expressed in those devotional songs and the purity of the music, as regards *tala* and *laya* (time and its demarcation). All those who heard him sing felt it in their heart of hearts that the soul of music consisted only in the deepening of the emotion and its effective expression, and not so much in the modulations of sound. And again, by comparing the songs of Sri Ramakrishna with those of others, it becomes clear that emotions cannot get their full expressions if the songs are not sung in the purity of proper tune and observances of proper time. When Rani Rasamani used to come to the temple of Dakshineswar she often asked him to sing some songs to her. Besides, there was another reason for the Master's songs hearing so sweet: when he used to sing, his mind merged so deeply into the depth of the feelings expressed in those songs that he used to be utterly unconscious that he was singing for the pleasure of any body else except for the revelling of his own soul. We have never witnessed anybody else like him to lose himself so completely in the feeling while singing a song. Even the feelingful songsters expect some praise from their audience while they sing; but only in Sri Ramakrishna we have seen that if anybody would praise his song, he took it really as a praise to the ideas expressed in the song and none of it was due to him.

* Referring to this period of the Master's life, Hriday further told us that when he would be singing any devotional song, his eyes shed torrent of tears, and when he would be engaged in the worship, his mind used to get so absorbed in it that he would be perfectly unconscious of any one who might chance to come to the place. Sri Ramakrishna told us, that at that time, when he would be doing the *anganyasa* and *karanyasa*, etc. he used to actually see those letters of the sacred mantram radiantly located in the different parts of the body as described in the scriptures. He used to see actually the serpent-like *kundalini* getting awakened, was passing through the *Sushumna* towards the *Sahasrara*, and he perceived those parts she left in Her upward course, as getting inert and lifeless. And again when he would utter *Rang iti jala dhārayā Vanhi prākāram vichintya* * according to the process of worship,

* That is, sprinkling a little water around the worshipper with the mantram *Rang*, he has to think that there exists a great wall of fire around the place of worship protecting him in the worship from all possible disturbances from outside.

he used to actually perceive that there existed a big wall of fire with its thousand tongues of flaring flame around the place of worship protecting it from all external disturbances. Hriday said, that at that time his body used to emanate a peculiar ethereal lustre and his mind remained always highly introspective.

Having come to Dakshineswar, no doubt, Ramkumar felt much relieved as regards the maintenance of his family, yet one thing used to cause much anxiety in his mind. For, he noticed, since their coming to the temple, his younger brother exhibited a kind of indifference to the worldly life and had grown an unusual fondness for solitude. Moreover he showed no eagerness even for any kind of work that concerned the conducting of the daily life. First he thought that Gadadhar was still a boy and that his indifference might be due to his eagerness to return back to his mother at Kamarpukur and that the thought was haunting him much. He used to observe that the boy used to pace up and down on the banks of the Ganges, all alone, as if, merged in the depth of his own thought and perfectly unconscious of his surroundings. Sometimes he would notice him sitting quiet underneath the Panchavati trees; again at other times he would find him emerging from the neighbouring bushes after a long absence. But several days passed away in this manner, Gadadhar never spoke anything to his elder brother about his returning to the village, nor the latter could elicit anything of his desires to that effect by questioning him. So Ramkumar naturally kept quiet, although his loving heart and anxious mind was closely watching the movements of the younger brother. But another thought might have struck Ramkumar that as he was getting old day by day, it was high time for him to see his younger brother well-equipped with the necessary accomplishments to stand on his own leg and earn his livelihood after him. So, when Mathur Babu proposed to employ Gadadhar into the temple as the decorator of the divine image, he assented to it with great pleasure. Further, when he saw him accepting the post of a decorator first and then the office of the priest, and performing his duties to the satisfaction of all, he felt a great ease at heart. Subsequently he began to teach Gadadhar also the process of worship of the Mother Kali. Gadadhar learnt the process quickly, and knowing that no one could worship the Divine Mother in the proper way without being initiated in the Shakti Mantram he made up his mind to get the initiation.

At that time, in Vaithakkhana Bazar of Calcutta, there lived one Srijukta Kenar, a Bhattacharya. He was a devout old man and

well-established in the devotional practices concerning the realisation of the Divine Mother (*Shakti Sadhana*). Now and then he used to go to the temple of Rani Rasamani and was well-acquainted with the members of the family of the Rani. Hriday told us that those who knew him intimately always spoke very highly of his spiritual attainments and showed him great respect on that account. Ramkumar was acquainted with Kenaram long before. So Gadadhar thought of taking the initiation from Kenaram. We have heard that as soon as the Master got his initiation, he fell into a spiritual trance and Kenaram was much surprised to see the wonderful expression of devotion in him and blessed him with all the fervour of his heart that he might realise his *Ishtam* soon.

The initiation being over, either owing to his own ill-health or probably to get Gadadhar well posted in the worship of the Mother Kali, Ramkumar henceforth engaged his younger brother in the worship of Kali, himself taking up the worship of Radha-Govindaji. When Mathurnath came to know of this, he asked Ramkumar to remain permanently, as the priest of the temple of Radha-Govindaji and requested Gadadhar to conduct the worship of the Divine Mother with the assistance of Hriday as the decorator of the image. Mathur Babu's purpose in bringing about this change of worshippers was probably this: he must have noticed that old Ramkumar was not physically capable owing to his age to do all the various functions in connection with the worship of the Divine Mother, and, it would be a lighter task for him to do the worship of the Radha-Govindaji temple. Ramkumar too was much pleased at this change, and taught his younger brother all the details of the worship by being personally present in the Kali temple when the latter would be conducting the worship. After some time Ramkumar requested Mathur Babu to make Hriday the priest of the Radha-Govindaji temple and give him leave for a while to go home. But alas! Ramkumar could not return home. He had to go on some business to a place called Shyamnagar Mulajora, north of Calcutta and there died all on a sudden. Ramkumar Bhattacharya remained for a year as the priest of the temple of Rani Rasamani after the installation of the temple. So, probably it was in the year 1857 A.D. that he passed away.



THE HOLY MOTHER

WITH THE KIND PERMISSION OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE BELUR MATH

THE HOLY MOTHER.

• The life of Sarada Devi, or 'the Holy Mother,' as she is reverently designated by the followers and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna, is not an eventful one, if external vicissitudes and crowding of events mark the eventfulness of life in the earthly pilgrimage of a soul. It was a life bereft of all spectacular charm and lived exclusively in privacy. "Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilisation"—puts a devotee who had a closer intimacy with her. Thus, leaving the external, if we look into the inner life, the true life of all religious persons—if we turn our eyes to that stage upon which the great drama of our spirit-life is enacted—then the life of our 'Holy Mother' becomes one of enthralling interest; and such is the light in which every devotee of Sri Ramakrishna has always regarded it.

She was born on the 22nd December of the year 1853 A.D., of a poor Brahmin family, at Jayrambati, a village three miles west of Kamarpukur, and was the eldest child of her parents. There is nothing worth recording in the lives of her parents Ramchandra Mukhopadhyaya and Srimati Shyama Devi, except that, they, being the people of a remote Bengal village, where the light of civilisation had not found its way in, and even now has not been able to shed much of its benignant lustre, were simple, God-fearing, orthodox Hindus of the old type.

Now, it is the custom among orthodox Hindus that they get their daughters married when very young. Our Holy Mother was married to Sri Ramakrishna while she was aged only six years. A story is told about the incident of her marriage by the biographers of Sri Ramakrishna. When it was settled that Sri Ramakrishna, then known as Gadadhar, had to be married, friends and relations went out in search of a suitable bride. But everywhere their attempts became futile owing to some cause or other. Thus when his mother and brothers almost gave up any hope of finding out a suitable bride for their beloved Gadadhar, he one day fell into ecstacy and in that state of consciousness he had told, "It is useless to go about here and there for my bride. Go to Jayrambati, and there in the house of Ramchandra Mukhopadhyaya you will find the select bride."

Inscrutable are the ways of Providence and, more so when His Spirit incarnates in the form of a man. He knew beforehand, though not while in his ordinary consciousness, whom to make his

life-long companion, to fulfil the great mission for which he was born, and who was destined to set the ideal of true womanhood. Another mysterious story is told by a biographer relating to the pre-knowledge of their relationship. It is the custom in the villages that when any songster happens to come to a village, people from the different villages gather together to hear his songs. It happened one day that while Holy Mother was a little baby, she was carried by her mother to such a place and Gadadhar also came there. After the close of the songs, some lady from the crowd asked the baby in fun, whom she liked to marry among the boys standing before her. And strange though it might appear to us, or though we might explain the matter as a mere happening of chance, she pointed out with both of her hands to the young Gadadhar. However, these are stories current in both the families of Gadadhar and of Sarada Devi, and even to this day there are old people living in their respective villages who testify to the same.

Thus Sarada Devi was married to young Gadadhar while she was only six years old, in the year 1859 A.D. On the day of their marriage, Sri Ramakrishna's mother borrowed some ornaments and jewels from her rich neighbour, the Laha family, and decorated the person of her dearest daughter-in-law. But after some days when the time for returning them to the owner came, the poor old mother was at a loss to find out how she could take out the ornaments from the person of the young daughter-in-law. Sri Ramakrishna, though not told, knew the mental sufferings of his mother, and while the little girl was asleep, he took them out with such dexterity of hand, that she could know nothing about it. But when she woke up she enquired about the ornaments giving descriptions of each, that were in her person. Though herself stricken by remorse, the mother-in-law consoled the child saying, "My darling, Gadai will decorate you with many ornaments and jewels hereafter, that will surpass in beauty and grandeur, those you had." And her words were truly fulfilled in spirit though not in letter.

The marriage festival being over, she was brought back to her parents' house and there lived the free life of joyous merriment and play, child as she was. The days of her childhood were passed in the simplicity and innocence of village life.

In the year 1876 A. D. when Holy Mother was about fourteen years old, Sri Ramakrishna came to Kamarpukur from Dakshineswar on a short visit. At the request of some of his relations Sarada Devi was sent for from her parents' house at Jayrambati. Since her marriage, she had seen Sri Ramakrishna only once before

this time. It was next year to the marriage and she was then only seven years old. So she knew nothing of the importance of that meeting with her beloved lord. She could only remember one small incident that had happened during that time. Sri Ramakrishna had come to her parents' house with his nephew Hriday. And Sarada Devi in her shyness had hid herself in a little corner of a room. But there was no escape. Hriday had gathered some lotus flowers, and after a long search, when he found her out, though she was feeling shy and nervous, Hriday worshipped her feet with the offerings of those flowers.

Six years after this incident, she was brought to Kamarpukur once, but that time Sri Ramakrishna was absent at Dakshineswar. Having lived at her father-in-law's house for a few months, she came back to Jayrambati. Not many months had passed away, when came the happy news that Sri Ramakrishna had come to Kamarpukur and that she must go there. In fact, this was her first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna after the marriage, which produced impressions upon her.

Having come to Kamarpukur, Sri Ramakrishna turned his attention to discharging his duty towards his wife. For, though he was so long indifferent to her, but when she actually appeared before him to offer her all at his feet with an uncommon love and devotion for her lord, Sri Ramakrishna also became eager to do her real good by his teachings, counsel and advice. In this connection we are reminded of what his Guru Totapuri had told him, when he learnt that Sri Ramakrishna was married. He said, "What does that matter? He who can keep his fire of renunciation, discrimination and knowledge ablaze, even if the wife be living by the side, is truly established in the knowledge of Brahman. He who can see always the same self in man and in woman alike, and can conduct himself accordingly, is the real knower of Brahman. And those who observe any difference of sex, though they may be Sadhakas, mere aspirants, are in fact far away from the realisation of Brahman." These words were still fresh in the memory of Sri Ramakrishna, and thus he stepped forward to test his knowledge acquired after a long practice of Sadhana, and also do real good to the one who had dedicated herself so completely to him.

It was the nature of Sri Ramakrishna not to look with an attitude of indifference about any matter, if he was once convinced that that was his duty to perform, and neither would he ever leave it half-done. Similarly it happened in the present case also. His

young wife was in every way dependent on him about her welfare, worldly as well as spiritual. And when Sri Ramakrishna had already given his mind to teach her, he never could keep it half-done. She became his first disciple and he kept a keen watchful eye upon her and taught her at every turn by precepts as well as by examples of his own life, every detail of the ideal life he wanted her to live. He was not satisfied with mere imparting to her the higher knowledge of spirituality and Dharma, but having forestalled the role she had to play in his mission, he wanted to enrich her worldly knowledge also and taught her the human psychology and also how to deal with men and money in accordance with the propriety of time, place and circumstances. But, needless to say, his constant effort was, most of all, to help her to manifest her higher self. Even at that time he strongly implanted in her heart, though so young, the lofty ideal of self-devotion and universal love. What fruits these teachings bore in her, we shall see as we proceed with the narration. Suffice it to say, that having lived the whole life in rigid austerity and Brahmacharya and in spiritual devotion, she became the veritable emblem of the Divine Mother to her devotees. Moreover, her heart and soul was filled with the aroma of the noble love of Sri Ramakrishna, that bore not the least tinge of physical attachment, and thus it is that she learnt to worship her husband as the embodiment of God Himself, and succeeded in building up an ideal character and an ideal life before us. This time she had the fortune to live with her husband for seven months only, after which Sri Ramakrishna came back alone to Dakshineswar.

"We have already told our readers that she was then aged only fourteen, just the age perhaps when there dawns the power of discretion and enough light of knowledge to understand the seriousness of a married life. And we know that the pure-hearted girl was beside herself with the joy of divine bliss from that time forward, having received the love and tender care of her husband and having lived in the sanctifying company of his whose mind always dwelt above the regions of the body and the senses." Many a time did our Holy Mother describe the feeling of her ecstasy of this time, before her lady-disciples. She said, "My heart was at that time so full of ecstasy, so full of inexpressible bliss, that I felt that there had been kept a pot brimful with divine love in my heart, and it was there always. There used to be a continuous current of bliss inside my heart."

After a few months when Sri Ramakrishna left Ramarpukur for Dakshineswar, Sarada Devi came back to her parents' home;

but this time a changed girl, for she had tasted the ecstatic joy of pure love of her husband which is sought by all chaste wives. And we can well understand that due to that continuous overflow of ecstasy in her, there was wrought a complete change in all her speech and action, in her movements and behaviour. But there remains a grave doubt if ever she was so detected by the eyes of ordinary human beings. There had vanished all want from her heart and it made her feel for all humanity for their sufferings, and thus she became a great emblem of grace. When her heart was always filled with that ecstasy of love, she cared very little for her own physical comforts and discomforts, for nothing could move the serenity of her mind. Thus the young girl passed her days in her parents' house forgetful of all relating to the body. For, though her external form, her physical vesture was left at Jayrambati, her mind always clung to the feet of her Lord at Dakshineswar. Though there would arise at times a strong desire to see Sri Ramakrishna and come near him, she would restrain it with great patience and self-control. She used to give herself the consolation, "When he had shown such affection and tender care and had loved her so dearly at their first visit, he could certainly never forget her, and when time or opportunity would come, he would surely call her to his side." Thus passed away one day after another, and the girl grew into a young woman awaiting all the time with a longing heart for the advent of that auspicious day when her soul's craving would be satisfied.

And in the stream of time four long years had rolled away. There was no ebb to the tide of love that flowed in her heart. For, indeed, true love which is only the manifest glow of the spirit within, defies all time and space, and the former dares not touch it with his ravaging hand. But the physical body changes like everything else of the material universe. So it happened also with our Holy Mother. She was now a grown up girl of eighteen. The divine bliss that she had realised during her first visit with her Guru and Godly husband, still flowed in her heart and kept her above the touch of the happinesses and miseries of daily life. But hardly is there the opportunity to enjoy a continuous bliss in this world! For, the people of the village began to spread the rumour that her husband had turned mad, that 'he goes about in search of Hari (Lord), having left off even his loin cloth;' and when her friends used to look upon her with pity, as the wife of a mad husband, though she would not speak a word, her heart was filled with remorse. Grief wrung, she would think, "Is it true then that he is no longer the same person? Can it be true

that *he* has turned out what these people are reporting? If by the will of Providence, *he* has become such, I must no longer remain here. But I should remain by his side and nurse him." Thus after much deliberations she settled to go to Dakshineswar and see with her own eyes, how he was doing and then would do as the occasion necessitated.

Her father Ramachandra Mukhopadhyaya came to learn of her intention and at once agreed to take her along with him to Dakshineswar. There was no railway communication at that time. There was no other alternative except either to walk or go by a palanquin. But as they were too poor to hire a palanquin, they had no other option but to walk on foot all the way from Jayrambati to Dakshineswar, a distance of nearly fifty miles. The father and the young daughter began their journey. About three days passed away happily. But on the fourth day of the journey, Sarada Devi was attacked with fever owing to the fatigue of the long journey. So they took shelter in an inn on the way. The heart of the Holy Mother was panting to meet Sri Ramakrishna, but her body was failing. She was comforted in her illness by a strange vision which she afterwards narrated before some of her devotees. She said, "When I remained almost senseless in my bed, I saw that a young woman came and sat by me. Though she was black, she was so beautiful and charming that I could never forget her. She sat by me and put her hand on my head and body. The touch was so tender and soothing that all my pain and suffering of the body were gone. I asked her, 'where are you coming from, sister?' 'I am coming from Dakshineswar' she replied. Being surprised I said 'you are coming from Dakshineswar! I thought I would go there. I must see him (Sri Ramakrishna), I must nurse him.' But now that I have fallen ill, I don't think I will be blessed with his sight.' But she at once said, 'why? You must have to go to Dakshineswar. You will recover soon. You shall go there and shall see him. I have kept him there for you?' I asked, 'Is it so? But who are you?' She replied, 'I am your sister!' 'O, that's why you have come here?' So saying I fell asleep."

Early in the morning when Ramachandra got up from his bed, he found his daughter free from fever or any other ailment. So he made up his mind again to start with her, as there was no use delaying on the way. Sarada Devi also gladly expressed her wish for the same. As they went a little distance, they could get hold of a palanquin where Holy Mother was conveniently carried till they reached Dakshineswar safely. On the way though Mother

had got fever again, she did not let her father know about it, as it was of a very mild type.

At about 9 P. M. she reached Dakshineswar and approached the feet of her beloved Lord. Sri Ramakrishna cordially received her. He was very anxious on her account, as she had slight fever till then. He made her comfortable in his own room in a separate bed. Next morning he made all arrangements for her treatment and in about four days she perfectly recovered. Those four days she was placed in Sri Ramakrishna's room under his own supervision and as soon as she was well, she was sent to live with his Mother in a small room inside the Temple-Garden.

There was an end to all her anxiety. The little doubt that arose in her mind at the false rumours regarding her beloved, was cleared away when she came and saw him personally and when she found how lovingly he treated her. The Holy Mother understood in the heart of her hearts that her lord was as he had ever been. Only the people of the world misunderstood him and had spread all sorts of rumours. The lord was still her lord and far from forgetting her, he was as kind and loving to her as ever. She began to live with her mother-in-law in a small room and happily engaged herself in the service of her Guru and husband, and his mother. Her father Ramchandra left for his village finding his daughter quite happy and comfortable in her new surroundings.

(To be continued).

LETTERS OF SWAMI PREMANANDA.

I
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
Belur,
7-2-17.

My Dear—

Your letter was to hand. It is true that man is the slave of the world, but one shall have to pray, 'Oh Lord! Purify my *buddhi*, so that I can rise above the circumstances.' However, none is to blame. Who knows, one day you may go beyond all *maya*. Lord is now playing under the mask. All of us are dragged down by the *Samskaras*, (impressions of our past deeds). He who is the Lord of the world, looks after His creation and let Him only look after it.

'Oh Lord! grant peace to the universe,' this is our constant prayer. "I have heard, understood, got the shelter, and have realised that all these are only your play (*Maya*). I am lamenting over this, oh Mother, Tara! (Divine Mother), I am lamenting over this affliction only." We are only the tools in the hands of the All-Blissful. Gobinda (God) is my only shelter.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

II

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
Belur,
20-2-17.

My Dear—

D—received your letter in due time. I feel nervous to learn that you have shown the letter written by one illiterate like myself to Mr. A—who is a great scholar and a devotee. *Srimat* Hari Maharaj spoke highly of this great devotee. Devotion and faith are the only riches in this universe, all other wealth brings only ruination. Please let me know the present state of health of Mr. A. May Lord keep the devotees in good health, this is our constant prayer.

I came to know from H—about your high school, a few days back. Yes, try your best and push on with the work of establishing schools, spreading education and imparting literacy

and knowledge to the masses. This was the heart-felt and earnest desire of the great Swami Vivekananda. Those who help in this great cause, are indeed blessed. They are really gods in the forms of men. They are the real *Nishkam karmis* (Selfless workers). Blessed indeed is their human birth.

But why a few charitable dispensaries and one or two schools scattered here and there?

Through the grace of God with adamant faith in the name of Sri Ramakrishna, spread a net work of schools and hospitals in hundreds of towns and villages. But remember it is the Lord that does His own work. The moment this little 'me' and 'mine' peep in, the Lord runs away. Everything will be futile then. So, be careful, oh man, be on the watch. Beware of this little puny "I." Have strong faith in the grace of the Lord and pray with an earnest sincere heart to become established in the ego of knowledge and to be rid of the little self of ignorance, and then and then only can you become a real Karma Yogi, a real selfless worker. Then you won't be bound by karma any more. You will realise that you are a mere tool in His hands, beyond all worldly adjuncts. The disease is, no doubt, very serious, but the physician is also of the first grade. No sooner you utter the name of the physician than the disease flies off. Take the name of the Lord, with heart and soul sing the name of Lord—sing in praise of Him, * * * The root of all these big wars is the obdurate pride, the outburst of "I" and "Mine". "My only shelter is Rama, I have no other desire." If one does everything having reliance on Rama, one will be a real conqueror. If you rely on man, you will be ruined.

If you have understood that Lord is doing everything and is making all people do, then where is the fear? May Lord grant you devotion and strength, this is my only prayer. My love to you all.

Yours affectionately,
Premananda.

CONFESSIONS— ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE

BY

*Le Frile.**(Continued from page 141.)*

XXII

Oh Lord! Thou showest me no path. How long am I to suffer in doubt and weakness, in misery and despair? I have become most humble-minded, if my sufferings and Thy standing aloof were intended to break my pride. But, pride I have none. Desires, none. I have abandoned all desires. I have totally abandoned my quest after thoughts, after pleasures and after earth. I am fully convinced of their vanity. I want to reach at Thee. My quest is wholly after truth, after peace—after Thee. Then why this miserable struggle still? I cannot understand.

Oh Lord! I am suffering deeply. I am undergoing the saddest, the maddest, the fiercest of all struggles—the struggle with self.

The law of nature has enslaved me. Action and reaction, Karma and consequence have caught me in their clutches. I find no way of escape. I have gone too low. I feel utterly helpless.

What was my sin after all? Nothing else but this. I rode upon my life faster than nature's normal speed.

Nature is merciless. She is all law. She is devoid of sentiment. She brooks not the least violation of her laws. She has punished me cruelly. My energy is all exhausted. My mental stability is wrecked and further motion is made impossible. I cannot move. No, not even towards Thee, Oh Lord! The wages of sin is death. I am dead—that way.

Oh Lord! if Thou didst love me, Thou oughtst to have given me strength. If Thou didst care for me, Thou oughtst to have shown me the path. As it is, Thou hast abandoned me helpless, weak and ignorant into the hands of this over-powering law and Thou standest aloof, indifferent to my helpless and miserable struggle. I cried unto Thee, but Thou didst not hear. The evil spirit comes with his evil load and oppresses me. He beats me. He suffocates my spirit. He tears my soul to pieces. Oh Lord! I cannot, I cannot bear this incessant, tortuous and fruitless struggle any longer. Stop my little breath and I will become a nothing. Better, better, do that, Oh Lord!

XXIII

It seems to me that, God, after creating the universe and establishing fixed unalterable laws for its maintenance, has retired for a long rest. The Puranic idea that Narayana the Supreme Being sleeps

on the ocean of milk and will wake up only after the deluge, or on serious emergencies,—I think the begetter of this idea must have had my experiences. I see everywhere, nature, with her exacting laws, but no provision made for divine mercy. Probably the mercy is included in the laws and they are made with merciful intentions. But, humanity knows a lawful nature and needs and believes in a merciful God above.

I have been hoping to turn over a new leaf in my life with a deep-rooted faith in God; to walk the path of virtue, leading to the goal of peace. I considered long over my new path in all its aspects. I dwelt upon my change of mental state, my changed attitude towards life and the resulting changed conditions of my life. The contemplation has been most pleasant and encouraging. But, when I set about to work practically to realise my scheme of life, I find myself in a deep unfathomable pit. To my utter surprise and chagrin, I find that I cannot raise myself in order to walk the new path. Here is sadly wanted the provision for divine grace or mercy.

I sinned against nature, and nature, true to her laws, punished me by making me physically and morally weak. Well, so far her dealings are fair and just and we are quits. Now, the very weakness and misery which are the lawful consequences of sin, have produced a reaction in me, making me desire for health, strength and happiness to be attained through the path of virtue. I sincerely repent for my sins and am as sincerely eager to tread on the hard, yet, robust lines of virtue. But, the pity is, that the law of nature has punished me for my sins so cruelly as to completely break my will and scatter it to the four winds, leaving only the desire for virtue, which makes me feel still more helpless without any means of attainment. Now, nature will not help me. She has stopped her lawful kindness to me with creating in me a desire to embrace virtue. And she refuses to move a step farther with me, not even so far as to place me on the first step towards good. Then, I can shift for myself. But, it is not in her to do anything more than what is barely lawful, nor do I blame her for being what she is.

But God,—this is His time. I have been repeatedly told, told at every turn, that God is all mercy, all grace, all love, all pity, all condescension especially towards His prodigal sons, His lost sheep. My sincere penitence for my sins and as sincere eagerness to attain unto virtue are not beyond His absolute knowing. God now must grace me with strength. The divine eye, as I conceive, must be on the look-out for repentent needers; must search for the sorrowful at heart and brace them with strength.

But, the men of piety of all shades of worship, say to me that I must pray to God to obtain His grace. Here is the source of my misery and discontent. Prayer is the concentrated communion of the human soul with God. Mere words and a certain physical attitude cannot constitute prayer. Prayer, to be true, demands, in the first place, a yearning, a thirst, a soul-consuming thirst;

secondly—yet, the most important element to make prayer effective,—the power to concentrate the mental activities upon one object—God. Then is needed the true spirit of prayer, the love prompting to ask and the sure hope of receiving: But, I can't pray. I have not the power needed for it—the power to concentrate my mind. How can I concentrate my mind when fierce storms are raging within? I cannot concentrate a single moment. It is the power to pray that I need. True prayer can be explained as the process of taking possession of one's needs from God's treasure-house, for, there can be no failure in true prayer. I want this very power to go into God's treasure-house and take possession of the strength of soul which I so sadly need in my struggle with nature. What shall I do?

Even the extremely pitying Christ says, "Knock and it shall be opened." The divine father is represented as opening unto all those who care to knock. But how much more should the all-merciful, all-pitying, all-loving Father open to him who lies at His door having not strength enough to rise up and knock, open to him; call him in and feed his hungry soul? My misery is enclosing me on all sides. I can't rise and pray. I can't make a regular prayer. I only ejaculate in moments of extreme anguish. I have lost my will. I have lost my hope. I want to surrender, but none is found to take possession of me.

(To be Continued.)

RAMADAS

BY

C. Ramakrishna Rao.

(Continued from page 152.)

The Lost One Revived.

It is said that Ramadas then took the corpse of the boy on his back and standing before the image of Rama which he had installed in his own house, began to pray before the image. In doing so, he was so much absorbed in concentration upon the thought of God, that the hands had automatically kept ringing the cymbals, the dancing was done bereft of self-consciousness and in the song he went into rhapsodies that far exceeded any of his previous experiences. The people were surprised to see Ramadas thus singing and dancing unceasingly before the image and when his human frame appeared to bear the strain of the dance no longer, the spectators kept close watch around him to protect him from falling down with the corpse on his back.

In those ecstatic fits of rapture, which are the most sacred moments of human life, Ramadas had the least trace of self left in him and as he was able to please the Lord, the boy he was bearing on his back showed signs of life. He was in fact restored to life and not only were the people supremely gratified to see the child's revival, they all became deeply impressed with the power of Bhakti.

His Entire Renunciation.

Incident after incident only helped to make him more confirmed in Bhakti Marga, and less attached to world, wealth and possessions. He very soon spent away all his money and possessions in the shape of charities and in the end, came out of his house, it is said, with just the actual wearing apparel on his person. Naturally, the wife had begged of him not to part with his all as they would have need of something even the next day, but Ramadas only said "It will all be looked to by my God Rama". She faithfully followed him day and night, always ministering unto his wants and taking care of his body. While they went begging in the streets of his village, the people were touched to see them reduced, as they thought, to that sad plight, while Ramadas's mind was least affected by that condition and his vigils and Sankirtans for the Lord grew in duration and intensity.

While daily engaged in this life of prayer and meditation, the thought of the promise he had made to that Brahmin some time back in the dream suddenly came to his memory; and immediately, it involuntarily struck him that he should go to Golconda and acquire money for its fulfilment.

In pursuance of this determination, he one day set out on a journey to Golconda where Akkanna and Madanna, his maternal uncles were all-powerful in the state, the one being the Generalissimo of the Muhammadan armies while the other was the Premier. Having had no occasion to see their nephew since the death of their sister, they were greatly rejoiced at his (Ramadas's) arrival. They gave him a most hearty welcome, enquired after his welfare and desired him to stay with them for some time. Having seen with their own eyes his poor condition, they loaded him with presents, and did all they could to make his stay as comfortable as possible.

An Interesting Episode.

Now comes another interesting episode. Madanna, the Prime Minister dreamt a dream. Two Brahmins appeared with beaming countenances; one was bearing the conch and the wheel, the mace and the disc with the *Kodanda* swinging down his shoulder and both were wearing *Tulasi* garlands around their necks. They appeared to him and told him that their devotee, Ramadas, should be appointed *Tahsildar* of *Bhadrachalam*. Their sight was sublimely charming. The minister at once recognized them to be no other than Rama and his brother Lakshmana. Madanna at once gave his word of assent. He rose in the morning as usual; but with the strange experience of his dream. It left a very lasting impression upon him. In fact he could not forget their beaming countenances, and the expression of their love towards their devotee.

In the regular round of duties as usual he happened to have a conference with the Nabab; and the topic discussed by the Nabab was the heavy arrear which the revenues of the *Bhadrachalam Taluk* had fallen into, and the inefficiency of the *Tahsildar*

there. The Nabab was very serious on that question and he desired that the services of the existing Tahsildar should be replaced by another more reliable and efficient.

Ramadas's Appointment as Tahsildar.

This gave an opportunity to Madanna to propose the name of his nephew for the *Tahsilship*. At the suggestion of the name of Gopanna, the Nabab expressed a desire to see him and ordered that he should be sent for immediately. A messenger having been duly despatched by Madanna with detailed instructions, Ramadas arrived and made *Salams* to the Nabab after the usual fashion, and answered some questions put by him. The Nabab, pleased and satisfied, ordered that a *hukum* of his appointment should be given to Ramadas, while a messenger was simultaneously sent to Bhadrachalam directing that the existing *Tahsildar* should hand over charge to the new *Tahsildar*, Ramadas.

Public Institutions Opened.

In due course, Gopanna proceeded to Bhadrachalam, took charge, made arrear collection of *cist* very quickly and remitted the same to the *Huzur* Treasury. His administration went on very peacefully. The people were contented and it was stated that strict and impartial justice was done to all. He opened several charitable institutions, built public wells, tanks, temples, choultries and watering places for the travellers and so on. By his loving and kind nature and by his persuasiveness, he obtained the money required for their construction and maintenance by donations from the people of all creeds and situations in the *Taluk*. His own monthly earnings he would give away in entirety for one or the other of the public institutions without an eye for saving and with those who gave him a word of caution not to spend away his all he pleaded that the blessed Lord who makes provision for the frog that dwells in the rock, for the fowls of the air and the beasts of the forest would as well look after the wants of his creatures and that neither he nor for the matter of that, any man need have the least concern so far as his own living was concerned and exhorted all those, that so pleaded before him, to take up the word of God and leave all their material possessions alone. "The greatest danger, to man growing to perfect manhood, rather, god-hood" he said, "lay, in man being possessed by what he mis-styles 'his' property, while everything, in fact, every atom of their universe belongs to God and should properly be dedicated to Him alone." Thus, by pleading, persuasion and precept he succeeded in converting most of the State employees God-ward. The officers would attend to their official duties in the day and spend the nights in singing and praising God.

Sankirtan Parties.

They would form into Sankirtan parties and go round the streets now and then adding on each such occasion, a few converts into their fold. Ramadas would also at times join the Nagar Sankirtan parties and his inspiring presence and the rhapsodies

into which he went, when steeped in song, would attract crowds by the thousand, who mechanically accompanied the parties, till they moved on to their destination.

His Administration.

Such as was the inspiration that the people drew by his presence amidst them, more so was their regard for him in his capacity as administrator, so much so that never a tenant kept any arrear in the payment of the tax due to the *circar*. Some years passed in this manner, when one day Ramadas took it into his head to call an informal conference of the tenants of the *taluk* in order to propose that the Temple of Rama in Bhadrachalam the seat of his *Tahsil* should be repaired and the pinnacles constructed. What with their love for him as a great Bhakta, what with their regard for him as a Tahsildar, the *kabus* and the *kurnam* that attended the meeting by invitation promised to help his undertaking each according to his mite. His project succeeding to that extent, the artist and the sculptor, the mason and the labourer were sent for and the work of repairing the temple and raising the pinnacles was commenced. The able-bodied poor among the tenantry, it is said, subscribed their quota of manual labour and assisted in the work in various ways. With the money collected from the people and with his own money he got finished the Gopuram, the Mandapam and the compound walls. These preliminaries being finished, the *Samprokshan* ceremony had still to be done and no money was left with Ramadas for the purpose.

An Astounding Act.

Here came a critical point in the life of this great Bhakta. By some unknown influence he felt strongly impelled that he should finish the work. "The voice of conscience is the voice of God," he said to himself. There was no faltering. He had no money that he could call his own. The rich and the poor alike of his *taluk* had contributed to the very last pie that their resources could provide. All that was now left was the *circar* treasure of which the balance left with him was 6 lakhs of *varahas* amounting to £160,000 at current exchange. He felt the impulse too strong for him. He then got the Installation ceremony performed with great pomp and splendour with the *circar* money. He felt enraptured by the presence of saints from various parts of the country who arrived to witness the sacred ceremony. No secret was made of the fact of his having utilized the State Treasury for this purpose but neither layman nor priest, saint, nor sinner questioned the conduct of Ramadas. According to the canons of conventional law, man-made, selfish and imperfect, his act was one of embezzlement of public money punishable with nothing short of a penalty of seven years rigorous imprisonment under the Indian Penal Code of Lord Macaulay but in those times of uncommon rigour under Mussalman sovereigns, with unlimited penalty at the pleasure of the sovereign, capital penalty not excepted. We do not propose to discuss the rationale

of punishments prescribed in the Penal Code as a means of reducing or mitigating crime or rectifying a wrong once committed. We will only point out that Ramadas, in following the Divine Impulse, which was too strong for him had only followed Truth to which alone the homage of every one of us is due, come what may and lose what we might. He did all with a clean heart. As subsequent events will show, God Himself bears ample testimony to it.

As is naturally to be expected, the time for the remittance of collections came and money was streaming forth to the Huzur Treasury at Golconda from the Talukdars of the Provinces one after another, but Bhadrachelam's remittance that year was long overdue. Akkanna who was in charge of the Treasury finding that his nephew kept the money in arrear and that all other provinces had already sent in their collections, he immediately despatched messengers to Bhadrachelam to warn Ramadas to remit the money expeditiously. Ramadas made no reply and the messengers quickly grasping the meaning of his silence—having on the way heard all from the people returned to Golconda to inform with great disappointment and regret that Ramadas spent away all the money belonging to the Huzur in the service of the God of Bhadrachelam.

The uncles were surprised to hear this news about their nephew's conduct and were greatly grieved that he was bringing about his own ruin. Their own positions were felt most delicate swinging between the kinsman's bond and servant's duty to the State. The delicacy of their positions was aggravated by the fact that it was at their recommendation that Ramadas was appointed as Tahsildar.

The Disclosure.

Tanisha, as the Nabab was popularly called, was in due course informed of the way in which Ramadas spent the circular money. He flew into a rage and ordered that Gopanna (our Ramadas) should be brought before him without a moment's delay.

Armed men were sent with *lukums* empowering them to bind fast and bring Gopanna into the presence of Tanisha. For all the magnificence and the outward pomp of the Mussalman sovereigns, for the noble specimens of art and sculpture that they have left behind, for the Peacock throne and the Taj, for the Kutub minor and the Kohinoor, the rule of Islam was certainly a blessing to India in that it had ever stemmed the tide of India's wealth flowing into foreign lands and helped the growth and development of our indigenous industrial arts and crafts renovating every common piece of workmanship with new life and a new potency and grace. But with scarce exceptions, the Mussalman sovereigns had always lacked in control of temper which is essential for Kings and Administrators. Religious bigotry, fanaticism and uncontrollable fits of passion were their chief drawbacks.

(To be Continued.)

IN MEMORIAM.

We have to record with deep and profound sorrow the sad and premature death of Swami Gokulanandaji at the age of twenty-nine, on the 2nd August in the Ramakrishna Sevashram at Benares. He joined the Ramakrishna Brotherhood at an early age in 1907. From that time onwards he stayed in different centres of the Mission and was trained under the blessed and loving care of the Holy Mother and other Mahapurushas of the Brotherhood. Some years also he passed in the Himalayas and sacred places like Brindavan and Benares wholly in *Tapas* and devotional practices. For the last six years Swami Gokulananda was an active worker of Sri Ramakrishna Math in Madras. By his untiring activity and amiable disposition he won the love and esteem of all people who ever came in contact with him. His memory is still green with us which makes us feel so sad to think that he will not be with us any more.

Lately he was suffering from Asthma, and so he went from here to Benares for a change and there he fell a prey to an attack of typhoid fever. He was fully conscious even to the last minute of his earthly sojourn. When the last moment was drawing nigh, he was heard to repeat the peace chant. "Om Peace, Peace!"

Then he was asked by some of the brothers who were attending on him if he had any desire for anything. He gave a negative answer, and further remarked with a fullness of heart, "what is there more delicious than the Lord's name." He was repeating then the Lord's name. He then asked for the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother and a copy of *Chandi* and *Gita*. Holding these sacred books in both of his hands, and fixing his gaze on the sacred pictures and uttering the names of the Lord he passed away into Mahasamadhi. The soul of the devotee fled into the bosom of the Lord! The calmness of his appearance at that time was so solemn and serene that every one was struck with wonder. It is really a death-defying death. All these are the play of the Almighty. Glory unto Sri Ramakrishna!

Om peace ! peace ! peace.

In this very same issue we are to note with heavy heart the sad passing away of Prof. T. Rajagopalachariar, Professor of the Law College here, an earnest devout soul and a great friend of the Mission. His profound scholarship was acknowledged on all hands, and he was considered an authority on the Visishtadwaita Philosophy. He filled often the pages of *Vedanta Kesari* with his learned contributions. By his character and genial nature he won the love and esteem of all. We offer our heart-felt condolence to the bereaved family. May the Almighty grant peace to the departed soul!

NOTES AND NEWS.

We have great pleasure to review the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal for 1919.

The total number of persons who obtained relief during the year under review was as large as 15,351, of whom 9,272 were males and 6,079 were females belonging to all classes and coming from all quar-

ters of India. Among the people who were relieved there were 12,307 Hindus, 1,575 Mahomedans, 28 Christians, 1,039 Chamars, 26 Kaiyer and Dome and 376 Sweepers. (The last three are the Paria classes of the North). Of the Hindus nearly 44 per cent. belong to the higher castes. The total number of the distressed and diseased Narayanas admitted in the indoor Hospital during the year was 381. Altogether 34,985 out patients of which 19,634 old repeated numbers and 15,351 new people were treated in the Sevashram.

The indoor department was formerly meant only for the Sadhus and Brahmacharis. It is well-known that Hardwar, Kankhal and other neighbouring places are mainly inhabited by mendicants and other Sanyasins who resort there for the purpose of passing their lives in the holy place on the banks of the Ganges in devotion and spiritual practices. As a rule they are homeless and have no one to look after. So the indoor department of the institution was first meant to nurse and afford medical aid to these noble souls at the time of their illness. But the authorities of the Sevashram were keenly feeling for sometime past the sore need of a general ward also for poor patients, specially those belonging to the depressed classes. Though a start was given by some kind hearted gentlemen, yet the Institution is labouring under a great pecuniary difficulty. It is in urgent need of a fully equipped up-to-date in-door dispensary including a few rooms for in-patients and a surgical ward for the purpose.

The Sevashram is trying to impart primary education to the depressed and down-trodden people in its Night School branch. In view of the paucity of the funds it could not construct a building for the same.

A rest house for the relatives of the in-door patients is also a great desideratum. When the pilgrims suffering from plague, cholera, etc. are admitted in the Hospital, their relatives want to stay near them. Some people come to the Sevasram from such a distance that they cannot return home the same day. So they want some shelter for the night.

The ever-increasing demands and new responsibilities necessitate the erection of new buildings. We are quite sure the adequate help will be forthcoming from our generous countrymen. Contributions, however small, may be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Saharanpur, U. P.

We are glad to review the report of the Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Kalma, Dacca. Its sphere of activity is three-fold, spiritual—mental and physical. The Samity is trying its utmost to spread literacy to the boys and girls in its free schools. It is gratifying to note that it established a Technical branch. This is indeed a new thing for a village to have a special attention to this direction. Cyclone, famine, epidemic and such other temporary reliefs also form its activity. It is trying its best to get fully equipped reading rooms and small museums for the advancement of general knowledge of the common run of people.

All these testify to the fact that our countrymen are wide awake to the call of distressed, diseased and depressed suffering humanity. The noble workers are paving the way for the uplift of the country and people at large. We wish all success to their efforts.

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD.

(He) learnt that food is Brahman (because) from food these creatures are born; having been born, by food they live; and having departed into food again they enter.

To know It he approached his father Varuna again (and said), 'Sir, teach me Brahman.' To him he replied, 'with penance thou shouldst ask of Brahman. Tapas is Brahman.'

He performed tapas and having performed tapas,

[He learnt that food, etc.—Food being the gross material out of which the gross aspect of existence of creatures, i.e., the physical body, is manufactured, it struck Bhrigu first that food is Brahman. It is indeed true in one sense inasmuch as food is the real cause and sustainer of the physical life. But evidently he was not satisfied with his finding, as he perceived that food has its own beginning and so it cannot be Brahman, the uncaused. Hence he questions of Brahmagathi.]

Having departed into food, etc.—i.e., after death the physical body dissolves into its constituent elements which give rise to food or gross matter.

With penance thou, etc.—In the previous Sruti as well as in the subsequent ones much stress has been laid on *tapas* i.e., self-mortification and penance. From that the Sruti means to import that without this *tapas*, knowledge of Brahman is absolutely impossible. When Bhrigu took the gross matter of food for Brahman, it was evident to his father that his vision requires clarification which could be accomplished only by *tapas*, so he tells his son that he should question of Brahman only when accompanied with the requisite virtue of *tapas*. Next he asserts that *tapas* itself is Brahman inasmuch as it is the great means to its realisation. The whole method adopted by Varuna in taking his son, step by step, from the gross to the subtle and subtler aspects of existence by implication and association, is really very admirable, and it is called in the Vedanta *Arundhati darshana nyaya*.]

CHAPTER III.

प्राणो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । प्राणाद्वेव स्रविमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । प्राणेन जातानि जीवन्ति । प्राणं प्रयन्त्याभिसंविशन्तीति ।

तद्विज्ञाय । पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं
होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत ।
स तपस्तप्त्वा ।

प्राणः the Prana ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus व्यजानात् understood (यतः for) प्राणात् from the Prana हि एव verily खलु (indeclinable) इमानि these भूतानि beings जायन्ते are born प्राणेन by Prana जातानि being born जीवन्ति live. प्राणं to the Prana प्रयन्ति having departed अभिसंविशन्ति enter इति thus. तत् that विज्ञाय to know पुनः एव again वरुणं to Varuna पितरम् the father उपससार approached. भगवः Sir ब्रह्म Brahman अधीहि teach (me) तं to him उवाच said तपसा with tapas ब्रह्म Brahman विजिज्ञासस्व should enquire of तपः tapas ब्रह्म Brahman सः he तपः tapas अतप्यत performed सः he तपः tapas तप्त्वा having performed.

He understood that the Prana is Brahman, (because) from the Prana these creatures are born ; having been born, by the Prana they live ; and having departed into the Prana again they enter.

To know it (further) he approached his father Varuna again (and said) 'Sir, teach me Brahman.' To him he said, 'With tapas thou shouldst enquire of Brahman. Tapas is Brahman !

He performed tapas and having performed tapas

[He understood that etc.,—The next sheath of subtlety that envelops the soul, after the gross body, is the Pranamaya Kosha or the vital energy that energises the physical being and keeps all the senses going. When Bhrigu wanted to know if there were anything subtler, and therefore more lasting, than the gross body and pursued in his analysis of the aspects of human personality, he perceived this Pranamaya Kosha. Prana in its microcosmic aspect is the real cause of re-production, sustenance and death of beings, inasmuch as birth takes place, according to the Upanishads, through the functioning of the *Apana*, the sustenance is maintained by the functions of all the five Pranas and death takes place with the help of *Vyana*. (Vide Garbhopanishad and Prasnopanishad). In the macrocosmic aspect it is the *Viraj* or *Hiranyagarbha*, the aggregate of all physical and mental existence. But evidently, this finding of his did not satisfy Bhrigu. He perceived also that this Prana could not be Brahman, owing to its changeable and unintelligent nature. So he again questions his father about Brahman.]

CHAPTER IV.

मनो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । मनसो ह्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । मनसा जातानि जीवन्ति । मनः प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय । पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा ।

मनः manas ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus व्यजानात् understood. मनसः from mind हि एव खलु verily इमानि these भूतानि etc.

He understood that the *Manas* is Brahman, (because) from the *Manas* these creatures are born ; having been born, by *Manas* they live ; having departed, into the *Manas* again they enter.

To know it further he approached his father Varuna again (and said), 'Sir, teach me Brahman.'

To him he replied, 'With tapas thou shouldst ask of Brahman. Tapas is Brahman.'

He performed tapas and having performed tapas,

[Note :—The sheath subtler than the Prana is the *Manas*, i.e., the volitional and perceptual aspect of the mind. Since thought is the father of action and sustainer of life, it was but natural for Bhrigu to mistake it for Brahman. It is also said in some of the Upanishads that Isvara willed to create and so the creation proceeded from His will, etc. Further, the re-incarnation of the *Jivas* takes place according to the *Manas* ; so *Manas* both in its microcosmic as well as macrocosmic aspects is in a way the cause, the sustainer and the element of dissolution of the existence. Hence Bhrigu thought it first to be the Brahman, but perceiving it afterwards that *Manas* is but an *Antahkarana*, i.e., a sense or an instrument of cognition and not the cognition or intelligence itself, he found out, it could not be Brahman. *Sruti* declares that Brahman is intelligence. So he approaches again his father to be taught about Brahman.]

• • CHAPTER V.

विज्ञानं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । विज्ञानादेव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । विज्ञानेन जातानि जीवन्ति । विज्ञानं प्रयन्त्यभिसं

विशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय । पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि
भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो
ब्रह्मेति । स तपो तप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा ।

विज्ञानं Intelligence ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus व्यजानात् understood
विज्ञानात् from the intelligence, etc.

He understood that intelligence is Brahman, (because)
from intelligence these creatures are born ; having been
born, by intelligence they live ; and having departed, into
intelligence again they enter.

To know it (further), he approached his father Varuna
again (and said), 'Sir, teach me Brahman.'

To him he replied, 'With tapas, thou shouldst ask
of Brahman. Tapas is Brahman.'

He performed tapas and having performed tapas,

[Note :—The sheath subtler than the Manas is the Vijnana or
intelligence which defines the object of cognisance to our conscious-
ness. In many places Sruti has spoken of Brahman in the terms
of intelligence. Further it is the intelligence that controls the
mind, the senses and the body and propels them into activity, and
as such it can fairly be taken as the cause of birth, sustenance and
dissolution of all creatures,—even after death it is the intelligence
which takes the subtle body, the *Ativahika Sarira* to heavens or
hell and brings it back again to this earth for re-incarnation.
Hence Bhrigu found it first to answer to the definition of Brahman,
but subsequently perceived that this intelligence is the agent of all
actions of a Jiva and also the enjoyer of the fruits thereof, and as
such it is not absolutely pure and free from sufferings and conditions
of life. Moreover, objects like *Akasa* and other primary elements
cannot be produced from this intelligence. Hence it could not be
the first principle Brahman. So, he again went to his father and
asked of this Brahman.]

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.

VOL. VII.]

NOVEMBER 1920.

[No. 7.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—THE GREAT MASTER.

His Spiritual Yearning and First attainment of God-vision.

When his father died, Gadadhar was then very young. So,
since the day of his attaining the age of discretion, he had been
nurtured in the loving care of his mother Chandramani and his
eldest brother Ramkumar. Ramkumar was nearly thirty-one
years older than his youngest brother. So, it was but natural
that Gadadhar should look upon his eldest brother with something
of filial regard. Hence it was certain that the passing away of
Ramkumar made no little impression upon the young mind of
Gadadhar. It is well known to all that the sights of the old,
of the diseased, and of the dead caused dispassion for the world
in the mind of Lord Buddha. So, who can tell how much this
incident might have inflamed the fire of Vairagya in the pure heart
of Gadadhar, who had already begun to perceive the evanescence
and hollow vanities of life? However, we know it for certain that
henceforth he used to devote more of his attention and time
in the worship of the Great Mother of the Universe, and his heart
thirsted to know if it was really possible for man to behold Her
divine presence and get blessed thereby for all eternity. We have
heard that at that time, the worship being over, he used to sit for
hours together in the temple before the holy image and pass his time
in deep absorption of mind, or, sometimes in singing the devotional
songs of Ramprasad, Kamalakanta and other devotees, and when
he would be singing them, he used to lose himself in the fervour
of ecstasy those songs breathed. And again, henceforth he never

wasted his time or indulged in idle talks, and in the afternoons and in the nights when the temple was closed, he used to retire from the company of men and repair into the jungle around Panchavati to pass the time in meditation of Divine the Mother.

But Hriday did not like these ways of the Master. He thought of checking him in many ways, but he knew the strong will and tenacious nature of his young uncle. He knew it too well that whatever he thought of doing, none could detract him from that. So, at first he was uncertain about the method he should adopt for mending the ways of his uncle. But when he found that Gadadhar was proceeding with a headlong speed in the course, and further when he saw him going out of his room in the night and remaining absent for a long time, his anxiety for his uncle was all the more increased. He thought that such breaking of the nightly rest was sure to tell upon his health, and might cause some serious consequences. So, he made up his mind to make proper investigation as to what Gadadhar did in those hours of absence and if possible to check him in his ways.

The surrounding land of the Panchavati was not so level then as it is now. It was all uneven, full of pits and overgrown with bushy jungles. There was one *amalaka* (emblic Myrobalam) tree in the midst of other wild shrubs. As it was once a burial ground, and now so full of dense jungle, that no one dared to go that side even in day time, nothing to speak of at night, so terrible was the fear of ghosts in the popular mind about that place. We have heard from Hriday that the said *amalaka* tree being situated on a low land, if anybody sat underneath it, no one could see him from outside. Gadadhar used to go and sit underneath that *amalaka* tree in the night and pass hours in meditation.

One night when Gadadhar was going there as usual, Hriday followed him at a distance, unperceived. He noticed him enter into the jungle where the *amalaka* tree was situated. But thinking that lest Gadadhar might be offended at his intrusion, he kept himself at a distance and began to throw stones on all sides of the jungle just to frighten his uncle. But seeing that all his attempts to frighten him became futile, he at last returned to his room. Next day he questioned Gadadhar, what he did going to the jungle. The Master replied that as there was the *amalaka* tree in that side of the jungle, he went there to sit under the tree for meditation, for it was said in the *Shastras* that whatever one desired and meditated upon, sitting underneath an *amalaka* tree, one was sure to attain it.

However, since that day, for sometime whenever Gadadhar used to go to the jungle for meditation, there used to be disturbances around him and fall of stones on all sides. Gadadhar understood it as the work of Hriday and kept quiet.* But the latter having perceived that nothing could frighten away his uncle from his determined course, one day actually followed him and when he came to the very spot, he found to his horror, that Gadadhar was sitting in deep meditation, having kept aside all his clothings and the sacred thread. The sight produced not a little anxiety in his mind; he thought that such conduct could only be possible for a mad person. Could it be that his uncle had gone mad? Otherwise, how nakedness could be associated with meditation? So, it being unbearable to him any more, he went straight to Gadadhar and accosted him rather roughly, "Well, what is all this you are doing? Why are you sitting naked throwing away your clothes and the sacred thread?" At first Gadadhar did not respond. But after he bawled for a few minutes, he spoke out, "What do you know? Being thus free from all bondages and fetters, one should meditate. From the very time of birth man has been fettered down with the eight-fold shackle of hatred, shame, family-pride, social conventionalities, fear, prestige, pride of caste and egotism. Even the sacred thread is a fetter,—it is a token of egotism that makes one feel that he is a Brahmin and superior to all. So, when one would meditate upon the Divine Mother, one should make himself free by throwing aside all these shackles. Hence I have kept aside my clothes and the sacred thread now; after the meditation, when I would return, I would put them on again." The words struck a strange note in the ears of Hriday and he found nothing to say in reply to his uncle's, and at last he had to beat retreat from the place. First he had thought that he would rebuke his uncle for his mad conduct, but the words of Gadadhar utterly confused him in his purpose.*

* It will be well to tell our readers here a few more words about this trait of the Master's character. From the above incident we see that in order to make himself free from the aforesaid eight shackles of life, he was not content in their mental renunciation alone but did actually translate their relinquishment physically as far as it was possible. In his after-life we find him pursuing the same method always. For instance, in order to destroy the pride of birth and caste and bring true humility of the soul, he cleansed with his own hands with great care the place which others would consider most dirty.

When he heard that unless one could look upon earth and gold with perfect equanimity and reject the latter which the world considers so precious, considering it as useless as a clod of earth, the human mind cannot curb its love for physical enjoyments and engage itself entirely to the contemplation of God, nor it can ascend to the higher planes of yoga, he hastened to do the same with all his mind and body,—with one hand he took a few pieces of coin, with another some clods of earth and thus keeping the both side by side muttered within himself "Gold is earth,"—and, "earth is gold", and so saying, after having impressed the idea deeply on his inner consciousness, he threw them both into the Ganges.

To realise the fact that all beings are but different manifestations of God, one day, after the poor beggars were fed in the Kali temple, he took a little of the remnant of food left by them as the *prasada* of the Lord, and then he carried all the *uchchishiksha* leaves on his head threw them into the Ganges, and cleaned the place with water with his own hand. Further by such services he actually felt within himself that he was indeed fortunate to render such an insignificant service to God with his mortal body.

As we would proceed with this glorious life, we shall come across with many more of such incidents, which would show to us in an unmistakable way that whatever he thought to be impediments in the path of God-realisation, he was not satisfied in renouncing them in his thoughts, but he forcibly engaged all his body and the senses also, to relinquish those objects and keep themselves always away from them. By such method, it has been seen, the former tendencies of his mind used to be completely annihilated and in their stead there used to arise so strong a new set of opposite tendencies that it was absolutely impossible for the mind to think even of undesirable things. And so long as he could not translate physically such newly acquired ideas into action, he never acknowledged within himself that those ideas had gained any footing in him.

Such things of the Master's life must strike us quite novel. We may think that it is not absolutely necessary always to have our mental renunciation so tangibly expressed in the physical world, that it is enough if we can maintain a mental attitude of abstinence, although the senses may be engaged in the enjoyment of the sense-objects. But those who think like this, fail to perceive the deception of their mind, in such thoughts; behind such tendency of compromise between the divergent body and the mind, there is the hidden affection of the latter for the physical enjoyment. Hard as it is to wrench out the innate hankering of the mind for the sense-pleasure, the most arduous as it is the task of curbing the senses from the pursuance of their respective objects, man tries to hoodwink himself by thinking, 'Let my body do as it likes, it is enough if my mind remains unattached.' In fact, behind such attempt of compromise between *yoga* and *bohga*, between spiritual life and worldly enjoyments, there are the promptings of both the brute and the God in man. But on the very face of it such compromise is impossible, even as it is impossible to unite light with darkness. No one has ever discovered up to this time in the religious world a means of reconciliation between the true devotion of God and the worldly enjoyment. So, the scriptures of the Hindus repeatedly tell us that a spiritual aspirant can only hope to attain his goal when he renounces things that he has to renounce, with all his 'body, mind and speech,' and again similarly accepts in his soul those that have to be accepted with the same three,—body, mind and speech.' The Rishis tell us that no one can realise the Atman, if his penances and austerities become devoid of their physical counterparts, i.e., their proper signs and expressions on the body.* The

* Ye cannot serve God and Mammon together.

—Holy Bible.

• *Tapasa vatyā lingat*—Vedānta sūtras.

natural course of development of the mind is in its ascendancy from the gross to the subtle and then from the subtle to the causal.

However, we are definitely told that since the passing away of his elder brother Ramkumar, Gadadhar was found more and more contemplative and absorbed with a deeper fervour of devotion in the worship of the Mother Divine; and whatever he thought to be helpful for getting the divine vision of Hers, he performed the same with a rigid faith and unflagging fervour of the soul. We have heard from his own mouth that at that time the regular worship being over, he would sing the devotional songs in praise of the Divine Mother composed by such great saints like Nityarama, Ramaprasad and others before the Image of Kali and he did so, thinking it to be a part of the regular worship. When he used to sing those songs to the Mother, his heart was filled with lofty spiritual emotions and joy of hope. He used to think that when the sages like Ramaprasad and others had had the divine vision of the Mother, it must be true that one could get it in this life,—why then could it not be possible with him also to be blessed with the same! Sometimes he used to appeal to the Mother with a heart gnawing with anguish—"Mother, thou revealedst Thyself before Ramprasad, then why wilt Thou not appear before me? Wealth, worldly pleasures, family happiness—none of these I want, O Mother, do thou but appear before me once! While he would be praying in such strain his eyes shed flood of tears and his whole soul used to lose itself in the fervour of emotion to realise the Divine presence; next when his heart used to get lightened a little after much weeping, he used to sing again the songs for the grace of the Divine Mother. Thus his days were passed in worship, meditation, prayer and devotional songs,—he had no liking nor leisure for anything else. And thus also his devotion and thirst for the spiritual realisation began to increase in an uncommon way.

His mode of worship also assumed then a form quite different from the ordinary ways of worship. He began to take more time than usual in each period of the divine service: in the morning while worshipping he would put a flower on his head and sit in meditation, and a couple of hours would pass in this posture before he would take up the next item of worship; similarly while offering food to the Mother he would spend an hour in the contemplation that Mother was actually eating it during the time; sometimes he would pick flowers early in the morning, thread them into a nice garland and spend good deal of time in decorating the image with the garlands and flowers in various ways. Some days, much time was spent in doing the vesper service; some days again while

singing songs to the Mother he would lose himself so completely in it that he had to be reminded of his other duties in connection with the worship.

For sometime the worshipping in the temple of Kali went on like this, and it attracted the notice of all. But when Mathur Baby came to know of this he at once understood the exalted nature of Gadadhar's devotion which expressed itself in his worshipping and commended him in high terms of eulogy to the Rani. Gadadhar had no time then to pay heed to anybody's praise or censure so wholly occupied was he with the quest of his own soul.

At last one day the mad hankering of his to get the Divine vision reached its climax. He himself told us, "One day I was feeling an unbearable pang for not having been blessed with the divine vision of the Mother,—I felt as if somebody was twisting my heart as they do with a cloth in wringing out water, so excruciating was the suffering. I began to writhe in agony of the idea that perhaps I was not destined to be blessed with the divine vision ever in my life. A terrible frenzy of despair seized me and I thought "if it is to be so then away with this life. There is no need of it." There is the big sword in the shrine room of the Kali temple and my eyes suddenly fell upon it. And at once the idea shot through my brain that with it I should put an end to my life. I rushed to it and took up the sword like a mad man and oh, just then dawned the glorious divine vision of the Mother—it robbed away all my natural consciousness and I fell down on the floor of the room, completely lost in the ecstasy of the vision! I was perfectly unconscious as to things that happened outside and also how that day and the next passed. The one thing which I was internally conscious of, was that through my soul was rolling an ocean of ineffable joy, the like of which I had no experience before, and also at the same time I was conscious to the very inner core of my being of the hallowed presence of the Divine Mother."

Another day, referring to the same incident of the wonderful vision, the Master told us, "The room with all its doors and windows, the temple and everything around me vanished away from my sight—I felt as if nothing existed,—and in their stead I perceived a boundless effulgent ocean of intelligence, to whichever side I turned my eyes I saw from all quarters huge waves of that shining ocean rushing towards me and in a short while they all came and falling upon me engulfed me completely. Thus getting suffocated under them, I lost all my ordinary consciousness and fell down."

After being blessed in this manner with the divine vision there came a strong desire in his heart to see the divine appearance of the Mother constantly before him. And under its impulse an unceasing prayer used to proceed from his heart to the Divine Mother to vouchsafe to him her blessed appearance and make him live in Her presence always. Sometimes his feeling for the same used to be strung up so highly that he gave vent to it with bitter tears of grief and cried loudly, "Mother, vouchsafe Thy mercy—Thy grace to me. O, appear before me"; and that used to attract a crowd of people around him, but he never cared for a moment to ponder over what others would think of him. He used to tell us, "If a concourse of people happened to gather around me, they appeared to me like shadows or so many figures drawn in a picture,—so unreal and shadowy, and therefore I never used to feel any kind of shame or shyness before them. But whenever I used to lose my external consciousness through an unbearable pang of heart, the next moment I always used to behold the radiant spiritual form of the Mother!—I used to see the form sometimes laughing, sometimes talking with me and giving me great consolation and advice!"

The wheel must turn, and we should help it, not hinder. The waves of religious thought rise and fall and on the topmost one stands the "prophet of the period." Ramakrishna came to teach the religion of to-day, constructive, not destructive. He had to go afresh to Nature to ask for facts and he got scientific religion, which never says "believe," but "see"; "I see, and you too can, see." Use the same means and you will reach the same vision. God will come to every one, harmony is within the reach of all. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings are "the gist of Hinduism"; they were not peculiar to him. Nor did he claim that they were; he cared naught for name or fame.—Swami Vivekananda.

THE HOLY MOTHER.

(Continued from Page 177).

We have already told our readers, how Sri Ramakrishna was reminded of the teachings of his Guru Tota Puri, that 'there is no sex in Self,' when Holy Mother came to live with him at Kamarpukur; how he approached her as a spiritual teacher and tried to do his duties towards her, and thereby also he wanted to test how far he himself got established in the knowledge of Brahman. But he could not remain at Kamarpukur for a longer period than a few months. So, her discipleship simply began at Kamarpukur, when the Guru had to leave for Dakshineswar. Now that she had approached him again, he devoted himself to her real welfare.

A question may arise,—well, he could have brought the Holy Mother with him to Dakshineswar and there he could have easily trained her up, keeping her by his side. Why did he not do that? Certainly any other man would have done so. But Sri Ramakrishna had the peculiar characteristics of depending for every thing on the will of the Lord. Those who have learnt to depend every moment for every minute affair of life on the will of the Divine, always feel an aversion for exerting their own free will, neither do they take the initiative to do anything of their own accord. They truly become then, as the Lord has said in the Gita. "सर्वस्म परित्यागी ।" Even when any good has to be done to themselves or to others, they feel no inclination of seeking the help of their own limited, individual will, but on the other hand, they wait patiently for the Divine will only to act through them. Further, when complete self-effacement in the Self of the Lord is the constant sadhana of their life, there remains absolutely no scope for the exertion of their individual will; so it was that Sri Ramakrishna resigned everything, every affair of his, to the Divine Mother, and acted at every turn, like a little child, according to the dictates of that higher will. And who can tell that there was not a great purpose in keeping her away from him in that period of his life when he was intensely engaged in the sadhana of God-realisation. When the Divine will had brought again the Holy Mother before him, he never hesitated to accept her as his disciple. Sri Ramakrishna had a very peculiar method of training up his disciples. He would first conquer the heart of his disciples by giving them his unbounden love. He would then slowly and gradually impart to them the higher teachings and keep a keen watchful eye on them if they were following them strictly, and would lovingly correct them whenever they committed mistakes. We can well understand, what a genuine love he had for his wife, when we learn how she was

THE HOLY MOTHER

201.

received and nursed by him during her illness. Sister Nivedita describes in her fascinating style, what she heard from the Holy Mother about this period of her life. She writes, "She was young when her tutelage began and in hours of quiet talk, she will tell some times in how many directions his training extended. He was a great lover of order, and taught her even such trifles as where to keep her lamp and its appurtenances, during the day. He could not endure squalor, and notwithstanding severe asceticism, he loved grace and beauty and gentle dignity of bearing. One story that is told of this period of her life, is of her bringing to him a basket of fruit and vegetables one day, with all the eagerness and pride of a happy child. He looked at it gravely, and said 'But why so extravagant?'—'At least it was not for myself!' said the young wife, all her sunshine gone, in sudden disappointment, and she turned and went away, crying quietly. But this Sri Ramakrishna could not bear to see. 'Go, one of you' he said, turning to the boys beside him, 'And bring her back. My very devotion to God will take wings, if I see her weep!' So dear she was to him."

During this period, one night while the Holy Mother was massaging the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, she asked him, "What do you take me to be?" He replied, "The Mother, who resides in the temple, and who gave birth to this body, is now massaging my feet in this form. Truly do I see Her in you,—the same Blissful Mother."

Thus the young Sri Ramakrishna and the youthful Holy Mother lived together in Divine consciousness and when we learn of their *leela*, their Divine play, played together, we are forced to believe in their divinity and our heart is dragged, as it were, to offer the sincere devotion at their blessed feet. Sri Ramakrishna, whose mind always lived above the plane of the senses, used to pass the whole night in samadhi, and even when he came down to the plane of ordinary consciousness, the momentum of its Godward flight used to keep it still hovering in the firmament of the transcendental, and make it impossible for him to feel his physical existence in so tangible a form as does the ordinary man.

Thus passed away days after days, months after months and they lived together for more than a year, but this wonderful man and his wife were as pure as the virgin snow, and never for a moment, even in their hours of physical consciousness, their mind desired for physical enjoyment. Remembering the incidents of this period of his life, Sri Ramakrishna once told to his disciples: "If she were not so pure, who knows, whether I could have controlled myself. After I was married, I prayed to the Divine Mother, to purge her of all lust, and while I lived with her I realised that the Divine Mother had heard my prayer."

Then Sri Ramakrishna understood that his *Sadhana* had reached perfection. He felt his individuality getting dissolved into the

spirit of the Divine Mother. To quote his own sayings, "The salt doll merged and melted away in the Divine ocean." And in a strange way he concluded his spiritual practices.

It was a Kali Puja festival in the year 1873 A. D. There were special arrangements made to worship the Mother. But they were made in Sri Ramakrishna's own room instead of at the temple. Holy Mother was asked to be present during the Puja, and she had come there. Sri Ramakrishna took his seat. The things and flowers, etc., for offering were purified. In the mean time while Holy Mother was witnessing the process, she lost her ordinary consciousness; and Sri Ramakrishna now made her signs to take seat on the seat intended for the Mother Kali. She did not know what she was doing. Hypnotised, as it were, she got up and sat down on the seat. Sri Ramakrishna began to say his prayers, "Oh Mother, open the door to the realisation of perfection. Purify her (Holy Mother's) body and mind and having made Thyself manifest in her person, do good to the whole world."

Then the puja commenced and sacred food was offered. Sri Ramakrishna took some portion of food and put it in her mouth. Holy Mother lost all her external consciousness and fell in deep Samadhi, motionless, absorbed in the Self of the Goddess Herself. Sri Ramakrishna too was so long saying his prayers and uttering the *mantrams* in a semi-conscious state, but now fell into samadhi. The worshipper realised a perfect unity with the Goddess in the supreme plane of the Infinite Consciousness.

A few hours passed in that state. Now could be seen the signs of regaining the ordinary consciousness in the worshipper. And in a semi-conscious mood, having surrendered himself completely at the lotus feet of the Goddess, with the fruits of all his sadhana, he made obeisance with the *mantram* :

सर्वमंगलमंगल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके ।
शरण्ये नमोऽस्तुते ॥

Here ended the sadhana period of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, by worshipping the living Goddess.

This incident is known as the *Shorasi Puja* in the circle of devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna. Subsequent to the happening of this incident Holy Mother lived at Dakshineswar for about five months, after which she came back to Kamarpukur.

Next year in 1874 Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar for the second time. This time she was accompanying a party of female pilgrims of her village, who were coming to bathe in the Ganges on the occasion of the ensuing eclipse. Being not accustomed to

walking such a long distance, she got tired on the way and sat down to rest for a while. Her companions had gone ahead, quite ignorant of her stay in that lonely road. When she started again, it was almost getting dark in the evening. She got nervous, for there was an extensive waste land on the way, before her, which was a notorious haunt of dacoits. She was at a loss to find out what to do, when at a distance, she saw a tall, black, strong built man with a stout stick, approaching her with rapid steps, accompanied by his wife. The man asked her roughly, "Who are you standing here at this hour?" She felt more nervous, and in her despair took hold of his wife's hand and said, "Mother, I am your daughter, Sarada. Being unable to walk fast with my companions I lagged behind. It is most fortunate that Father and yourself have come here, otherwise I do not know, what I would have done." This simple and trustful attitude of the Holy Mother melted the hearts of the man and his wife, who promised all possible help for her. They took her to an adjacent village, gave her food and drink and did everything to give her comforts. Next morning they reached Tarakeswar and found out her companions. There was no end to their rejoicing when her companions got back their Sarada Devi, whom they had thought as lost. But again, the thought of separation from her protectors who had treated her like their own daughter! She did actually weep, and the man and his wife were bitterly crying, so dear she became to them in such a short time! These strange acquaintances could not forget their daughter and visited the Holy Mother more than once at Dakshineswar. The Holy Mother used to refer to this man as her 'Dacoit Father,' who, she thought, must have been a robber in his former life.

This time as before, the Holy Mother lived at Dakshineswar for some time with her mother-in-law in the small room of the Nahavatkhana in the Temple garden. But subsequently, Shambhu Chandra Mallick, a great devotee, coming to learn of her discomforts, built a special hut on a piece of land adjacent to the Temple. There she lived happily for sometime in the service of her husband and mother-in-law. She used to cook food for Sri Ramakrishna and carry it herself everyday for him to the Temple. Sri Ramakrishna would occasionally pay her visits during the day time; only once he had to break this rule, and passed the night, being deterred by heavy rain.

She lived there for a year when she was seriously attacked with dysentery. Shambhu Babu made all necessary arrangements for her nursing and treatment. After she was partially recovered she came back to her parent's house at Jayrambati. But very soon she got a relapse of the same, and it turned out so serious, that her life was in danger. Her father Ramachandra was no more living at that time. Her mother and brothers took care of her. But when

there was still no hope of her recovery, it struck in her mind to go and pray before the Goddess *Singhavahini* of her village and without the knowledge of her mother and brothers, she repaired to the Temple and prayed for her recovery. In a few hours, the Goddess was pleased to prescribe to her a medicine which completely cured her of the ailment.

She came back to Dakshineswar again in the year 1878 A.D. But the very day she had reached there, she left for Jayarambati owing to some causes. Last time she came to Dakshineswar in the year 1881 and lived there till the passing away of the Master.

A story is told of this period of her life which goes to prove that like Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother also possessed much humour. Once a lady came to Sri Ramakrishna asking for medicine which would cure the evil habits of one of her intimate relations. It is a general belief in India that Sannyasins know of wonderful medicines which can cure people of the most incurable maladies. So the lady went before Sri Ramakrishna and earnestly supplicated him to give her some medicine. Sri Ramakrishna's heart melted to hear her grief. But he wanted just to make a little fun, so he told her, pointing to the little hut where the Holy Mother was living, "Go there. You will find a woman Sadhu living inside the hut. She is an expert in medicines." The poor lady sincerely believed in his story and went to Holy Mother. She was worshipping at the time. The lady bowed down before her and said that she had been directed there by the Sadhu who was living in the temple. Holy Mother at once understood the fun, and in her turn, told the lady that she knew nothing of medicine, but that on the other hand, he was the greatest of physicians. She must not despair but should press him even if he wanted to avoid. The lady hurried towards him, but this time too he cleverly managed to send her back to the Holy Mother for the medicine. In this way, the poor lady had to go thrice to both of them and every time she was disappointed. But when at last she reached her limit of despondency, she would not leave the presence of the Holy Mother, unless she got the medicine. Holy Mother gave her a sacred Vilwa leaf, which she said, would cure her relation of the malady.

Another incident we may relate here which shows how completely she had surrendered herself to the will of her lord. Almost every year Sri Ramakrishna used to attend the grand Vaishnava festival at Panihati on the bank of the Ganges. Holy Mother sent a lady-disciple to get Sri Ramakrishna's permission, if she should accompany him to see the festival. He said to the lady-disciple, "You are all going. If she (Holy Mother) wants, she may go with you." The exact words were reported to Holy Mother,

but she refused to go, and gave some excuses to her lady-devotees. Sri Ramakrishna came back in the evening, and while taking his meal at night, in course of conversation, he told a lady-disciple, "It was such a huge crowd, and the people's attention was all drawn towards me for my getting Bhava Samadhi. She (Holy Mother) did well in not having accompanied me; for then she would have been so conspicuous in my company. She is very intelligent indeed!" And he continued his talk about Holy Mother. He said, "A Marwari devotee once offered me ten thousand rupees. But even the thought of its possession gave me so much pain, that it seemed as if somebody was sawing my head. And I got angry with Mother for having tempted me. But in order to test her (Holy Mother's) mind, I called her and said, 'well, this man (the devotee) wants to offer the money. But as I have refused to accept, he wants to give you. I hope you won't have any objection to accept the sum. What do you say?' But she at once replied, 'How can that be possible? I too can't accept the money, for my possession is yours. Whatever wealth I may possess, I can't use it for myself, but must spend for your comforts only. So, practically it becomes your possession. And people come to you for your spirit of renunciation. So, the money can't be accepted.' At these words of her it gave me such great relief!"

At night when the lady-disciples went to the Holy Mother and told her what Sri Ramakrishna said about her, she said, "In the morning when I learnt that he simply said, 'if she wants, she may go,' I understood that he did not give me permission with an open heart; for otherwise he might have said, 'Oh yes, she must go.' Hence I gave up my resolve to accompany him."

In the year 1885, when Sri Ramakrishna went to see the festival at Panihati, he was suffering from the throat-sore; and there in the excitement of religious fervour and ecstasy, his pain in the throat increased; and subsequently it developed into cancer. The doctors advised a change to Calcutta where he could be better nursed and cared for, as they would be all very near him. So he was removed to Shyampukur, in Calcutta. Holy Mother was still living at Dakshineswar. But soon the disciples realised the impossibility of managing things without the Mother. And again, there was the difficulty of accommodation in the small house where they were putting up with their Guru! For, there was no separate room where she could live. And the devotees knew how very shy in nature she was. So they were rather hesitating. At Dakshineswar, though she was all the time devoted to the service of her lord, none except a few chosen young devotees whom Sri Ramakrishna had introduced to her, could have access to her. None had the fortune

to see her blessed feet. * Of course, as has been already hinted, she was visited by the women devotees, who had free access, and had found comfort and solace of life in her blessed company. She had a couple of small rooms, all to herself, and there she lived and cooked for Sri Ramakrishna and often for his devotees unobserved by the crowd of visitors who daily frequented the Temple Garden. She would get up early in the morning at 3 A.M. before any one was awake, finish her ablutions and enter her room. She would never come out of her room at day time and there having attended to her daily duties, would pass the whole time in Puja, prayer and meditation. This was her routine, day after day, month after month, for several years. One night while descending into the Ganges, she had well-nigh trod on a big crocodile which was lying on the steps. Hearing the foot-steps, it jumped into the water. Henceforth she always carried a lantern with her.

One who was accustomed to such strict privacy, how she could throw away her shyness all on a sudden and live in that small house among so many male inmates,—was a problem before the devotees. Yet she must be brought, otherwise there was no help. So they told Sri Ramakrishna about it, and he too was diffident whether it would be possible for her to live there, but any how he told them to report everything to Holy Mother and leave the whole affair to her own decision and choice.

But there was no choice left to her on her own side. "One must regulate one's life according to time, place and circumstances, otherwise none can live happily and peacefully in the world, neither can one reach the true ideal,"—this is one of the teachings of the Master; and the Holy Mother had learnt to accommodate herself accordingly. If necessity would arise, she was ready always to give up her habits and old *Samskaras* that had very little value to real life, and we have already mentioned instances of the kind when fearlessly she travelled and faced calmly all odds in her anxiety to meet Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, from Jayrambati.

Thus the Holy Mother, regardless of her own comforts and discomforts, gladly came to Shyampukur and cheerfully undertook to go through the ordeal, and satisfactorily performed all her duties, resting only three or four hours in the night. It goes without saying that the strenuousness of her duties was increased a hundred-fold here, and she had to get up still earlier here than at Dakshineswar.

* Even in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna, she kept her face veiled, she never lost her first girlish shyness. She told a western lady disciple, of one evening, when she had gone with another Brahmin lady to serve Sri Ramakrishna and he had begun to talk of God. All night he talked, unmindful of the hour or them? "And when dawn broke" she said, "I found myself standing before him with my veil thrown entirely back from my face, lost in the wonder of his words. The daylight recalled me to myself. I quickly drew my veil and ran to my little room."

Thus with an earnest hope in her bosom, for the improvement of Sri Ramakrishna's health, she had devoted herself to the most arduous task and the most important of all duties silently and without a word of complaint for her own discomforts. But alas! neither her best efforts, nor those of the devotees, including among others, the sturdy band of would-be Sannyasins, headed by the great Swami Vivekananda, were of any avail to bring about a recovery, and in August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna passed away to the regions immortal, casting a gloom in the hearts of all his devotees and admirers.

As is the usual custom among Hindu widows, the Holy Mother was putting off her ornaments and was about to take off the bangles, when lo! there appeared the radiant form of Sri Ramakrishna before her! He seized her hands. Hear him! He was talking to her! He forbade her to take the mourning weeds and said that he was not dead but still living and he was just as he had been.

She retained her bangles and did not put on the mourning weeds; and from that day forward till her passing away, the Holy Mother used to daily worship, and give food-offering to Sri Ramakrishna. She knew that it was the spirit of the Divine Mother who moved amongst men in the form of Sri Ramakrishna and it is said that after his Mahasamadhi, she wept with the words, "Oh Mother! where art Thou gone, leaving me behind alone!" What a strange relation is this between husband and wife!

Sister Nivedita, who had the fortune to move intimately with her, writes, "One of her most striking traits is the absolute detachment with which she speaks of the husband she worships. She stands like a rock, through cloud and shine, as those about her tell, for the fulfilment of every word of his. But "*Guru Dev*!" "*Divine Master*," is the name she calls him by, and not one word of her uttering ever conveys the slightest trace of self-assertion with regard to him. One who did not know who she was, would never suspect, from speech of hers, that her right was stronger, or her place closer than that of any other of those about her. It would seem as if the wife had been long ago forgotten, save for her faithfulness, in the disciple. Yet so deeply is she revered by all about her, that there is not one of them who would, for instance, occupy a railway berth above her, when travelling with her. Her very presence is to them a consecration."

"To me," she further adds "it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new? In her, one sees realised that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her

sainthood. I have never known her hesitate, in giving utterance to large and generous judgment, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilisation. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments, beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver. The novice whom she may condemn, for so many years to beg his bread, will leave the place within the hour. He who has transgressed her code of delicacy and honour, will never enter her presence again. "Can't you see," said Sri Ramakrishna, to one who had erred in some such way, "Can't you see that *the woman* in her is wounded? And that is dangerous!"

"And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music," all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.

"The Mother can read, and much of her time is passed with her Ramayana. But she does not write. Yet it is not to be supposed that she is an uneducated woman. Not only has she had long and arduous experience in administration, secular and religious; but she has also travelled over a great part of India, visiting most of the chief places of pilgrimage. And it must be remembered that as the wife of Sri Ramakrishna she has had the highest opportunity of personal development that it is possible to enjoy. At every moment, she bears unconscious witness to this association with the great. But in nothing perhaps does it speak more loudly than in her instant power to penetrate a new religious feeling or idea.

"I first realised this gift in the Holy Mother, on the occasion of a visit that she paid us in recent years, on the afternoon of a certain Easter-Day. Before that, probably, I had always been too much absorbed, when with her, in striving to learn what she represented, to think of observing her in the contrary position. On this particular occasion, however, after going over our whole house, the Mother and her party expressed a desire to rest in the chapel, and hear something of the meaning of the Christian festival. This was followed by Easter music, and singing, with our small French organ. And in the swiftness of her comprehension, and the depth of her sympathy with these resurrection-hymns, unimpeded by any foreignness or unfamiliarity in them, we saw revealed for the first time, one of the most impressive aspects of the great religious culture of Sarada Devi. The

same power is seen to a certain extent, in all the women about her who were touched by the hand of Sri Ramakrishna. But in her, it has all the strength and certainty of some high and arduous form of scholarship.

"The same trait came out again, one evening, when, in the midst of her little circle, the Holy Mother asked my *Gurubhagini* and myself to describe to her a European wedding. With much fun and laughter personating now the "Christian Brahman," and again the bride and bridegroom, we complied. But we were neither of us prepared for the effect of the marriage vow. "For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health,—till death do us part," were words that drew exclamations of delight from all about us. But none appreciated them as did the Mother. Again and again she had them repeated to her. "Oh the *Dharmini* words! the righteous words!" She said."

The above passages express tacitly the general traits of her characteristics.

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother lived under the filial care of Swami Yogananda and after the Maha-Samadhi of the latter that of Swami Saradanandaji. She lived sometimes in Calcutta or at Belur and often she passed her days in the simplicity of village life at Kamarpukur or at Jayrambati with her brothers.

Swamiji, as indeed all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, had unbounded love and devotion for the Holy Mother, and it was his earnest wish to build a permanent house in or about Calcutta for her and to open a *Math* for women with the Holy Mother as its centre of inspiration. But they were not carried out during his life-time. Subsequently after his passing away, as indeed a *Maha Purusha's* wishes never remain unfulfilled, his *Gurubhai's* worked hard at it and a house was built in Calcutta for the Holy Mother and in the same locality has been started a Women's Math, attached to Sister Nivedita Girls' School, where young ladies are trained up to live the purest life in the service of the country and of God; and Holy Mother was ever its fountain-head of inspiration.

Swami Vivekananda's devotion to Holy Mother, and also as a matter of fact, her love for her son, were indeed unparalleled. It is not possible to give all the instances, but here we shall refer only to one or two incidents which amply prove the same. When Swamiji was still hesitating whether he should go to the west with the message of his Master, it was the blessings of the Mother that consolidated his intention. The biographers of Swamiji describe in the following words: "Mere feelings of assurance would not satisfy his discriminating mind; he must have the direct Command, the *Adesha*,

Then the thought occurred to him, 'The Holy Mother is the visible embodiment of my Gurudeva. Let me write to her; she will be sure to advise me properly. And by her will I shall abide :

"Even as when he first set out upon the *Parivrajaka* life he had sought the blessings of Sarada Devi, so now he realised that her blessings on this more distant journey would surely bring about a similar success. After much meditation and much prayer he finally wrote to the Holy Mother. The letter was filled with reverence, tenderness and love deified. * * * But one of the most important items in the letter was a charge that she should let no one know of his determination till she heard from him from the west. * * *

"The feelings of the Holy Mother when she received this news may well be imagined. For many, many months she had not heard from him. And he being the most beloved disciple of her 'Guru deva' was cherished in her heart with a special affection. * * * She had often thought of him and wondered where he might be. She would see him, in her mind's eye, wandering along afoot and weary, and her mother's heart would wish that she could be of service to him. But then she also knew the spiritual yearning and the spiritual glory that come upon the wandering monks; and so she resigned herself to the thought that, though he suffered he was blessed. Her heart desired to inform his brother-monks of his whereabouts, but he had charged her not to tell anyone! So she respected his wish. How could she bless him on leaving India? Her natural impulse would have been to advise him *not* to go. But the Holy Mother saw deeply into the nature of the future. And as she struggled in her heart, lo, a vision similar to that with which her 'Noren' had been privileged, visited her likewise. Then she felt joyous; yes, now she could send him to the very ends of the earth, for the Master had spoken to her soul! And so she sent him her blessings and sanctioned the *Adesha* by informing him of her own vision. She added many words of love and counsel. But still there was a note of sadness and anxiety, for the Holy Mother is ever, indeed, a MOTHER to her spiritual sons.

"When the Swami received this letter, he alternately danced and wept with joy. He went into his room to conceal his elation and later on to the sea-shore, and there by himself and in solitude of his thought, his determination grew all of a sudden into prodigious proportions. And he said to himself, "Ah! It is all right now. It is the WILL of the MOTHER!" * * * "The Mother Herself has spoken."

Another incident is related in the life of Swamiji, of the time he went to seek the blessings of the Holy Mother prior to his taking to *Parivrajaka* life. "The Swami went on foot to Ghusrrie, a village across the Ganges, where he sought out the Holy Mother to receive her blessings. And he told her, "Mother, I shall not return until I have attained the Highest Jnanam!" The Holy Mother looked at

him as though he were a child, and touching his forehead she blessed him in the Name of the Master. And a sudden joy welled up in the heart of the Swami. Yes, with that blessing he felt that he could go anywhere, facing all dangers and all uncertainties, even the terrors of the solitary jungle, aye, even death itself. The Holy Mother said, "My son, will you not see your mother (earthly mother) at home before leaving?" and he answered, "Mother, you alone are my Mother!" And seeing his spirit, the Holy Mother again blessed him."

And indeed hers was a true mother's heart. Whoever had the fortune to touch her blessed feet forgot his earthly mother, nay forgot anything that is earthly, and Mother and Mother alone was topmost in his consciousness. The devotees not only found in her the ideal spiritual guide, but what was far more valued, a real Mother, whose perennial love was more potent than any amount of formal instruction. And she had disciples not by tens and hundreds but by thousands. These included men and women, monks and householders, and her bestowing of initiation was not the common function of that name—unfortunately too frequent in India,—it was a real transmission of spiritual force. Every one felt it tangibly at the time and as days are rolling on everyone is realising the effects of it. In her broad infinite heart, there was sympathy for all, and she could never say nay to anybody that approached her to seek the spiritual aid. She made no distinction, amongst her children, between caste and creed or nationality, be they white or black, Hindu or Parsi Christian or Mahomedan; even the casual visitor was won over by her motherly affection and care, and we have known the most intellectual and the erudite men overpowered by this surging outflow of her love, and becoming for the time being almost like children in her presence. The same tender welcome awaited all who sought her, whether from East or West. As a Western disciple writes, "All alike were her children. Hers was the universal mother-heart, which wrapped itself in love about every child born of woman; and her family was the human race."

When she would be living in her village, she was all attention to her guests. Innumerable devotees used to visit her there, and sometimes, she would be wakened at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning by eager pilgrims, who not daring to cross the long stretch of unshaded fields under the scorching heat of the sun, made their journey after the nightfall, thus arriving very late. And she would receive them with a mother's heart, though they might be personally unknown to her, prepare food for them with her own hands, serve them with the breakfast. Among those, again, who visited her at her village home were many who were accustomed to the comforts of town life, and the Holy Mother would perhaps be seen, early in the morning, asking of her neighbour if she had milked her cows, for she wanted some milk for "her son to take tea with."

In this connection we give a translation of the *Bengali* reminiscences of a disciple who visited her at her village-home. "We reached Jayrambati and blessed indeed we were to see the holy feet of our Mother. She made us sit by her, and she seemed to be glad at heart when she came to know of our intention. And we forgot all for the time being, when we looked at her face, overflowed with tender motherly affection; as if she had with her hands washed off all our sorrows and miseries and we were children once more before our Mother. Two among us were in the service in an office, and once they told Mother that they did not like to serve any more. But then Mother had charged them not to leave off service. But when they actually came to the Holy Mother having resigned off the services, Mother affectionately told them, "yes, my children, you have done right. Why live in slavery for nothing?" Learning of our intention to go to Puri, the Holy Mother forbade us and said, "I am told, at Puri, some epidemic has broken out. You better go to Benares. I shall write to the people of our Math at Benares." And again when we told her of our intention to go separately and alone, she said, "No, my boys, you must not undergo so much hardship. All three of you can go together; one may cook, another may go out for begging and in this way if you go, there won't be much trouble." Before we took leave of the Holy Mother, she took us to her Shrine, meditated for some time, and then gave us Sri Ramakrishna's blessings with hers. She folded her palms before the Lord and prayed, "May they get a morsel of food wherever they might be, either in deep forest, or in a lonely road, in the ocean or in the high hills."

Such was indeed the anxiety of a true mother's heart.

• Sri Ramakrishna had emphasised on her the value of fortitude with the words, "Forbear, forbear, forbear,—one who does so survives, but one who fails to do so, comes to ruin." Those who had witnessed the Holy Mother in her behaviour towards her niece and brothers, knew how literally she carried out the above precept.

"A gentle cheerfulness there was about her always," writes a lady disciple, "and a lurking sense of humor, which made it possible to talk to her of anything. The smallest concern was of interest to her, and she could lose herself in childish play with as much zest as the little niece, of eight, Radhuby name, who lived with her. I can still see her keen amusement over a jack-in-the-box brought from an English shop. Each time it sprang out with the familiar squeak, she would repeat the sound, laughing heartily. Another day when I came in I found her engaged in stringing little glass beads and Radhu exclaimed, "My Baby Krishna had no

jewels as the images in the Temples have." There was no mockery of play in Mother's manner. Even this little toy was a sacred symbol of Divinity, and she decked it with the same grave devotion as a devout nun might dress the Baby Jesus for a Christmas *Oreche*."

Her human frame was latterly much debilitated by the repeated attacks of malarial fever and the last illness proved ultimately fatal. She passed away in her residence at Calcutta on the 21st July last, at 1-30 a. m. Sri Ramakrishna took her back to his side, when the time came. Her sacred remains were taken over to the Belur Math and there cremated with proper ceremony. Her absence in the physical plane has created a deep void in the hearts of her innumerable sons. But again they are consoled. For "The sun may draw up its waters, but they fall again to refresh the earth. So these saintly ones in body may be lifted from our sight, but their holy influence falls back upon us to revive our fainting hearts and give us new spiritual life, new strength of purpose."

“देवीं प्रसन्नां प्रणतार्तिहन्त्रीं योगीन्द्रपूज्यां युगधर्मपात्रीं ।
ताम् शरदां भक्तिविज्ञानदात्रीं दयास्वरूपां प्रणमामि नित्यं ॥
ओं शान्तिः ! शान्तिः ॥ शान्तिः ॥

UPS AND DOWNS IN THE VEDIC RELIGION.

BY

Brahmachari Khagendranath

Universalism is the principal note of Hinduism. The great glory of the Hindu religion lies in its synthetic comprehension of all the ethical and spiritual laws that underlie all other religions of the world. The wonderful revelations of the ancient sages of India as found in the Vedas, are unquestionably the greatest contributions to the sum-total of human knowledge and spiritual progress of mankind. It is no wonder that these spiritual revelations, which, in later ages, expressed themselves in various forms in harmony with the temper and drift of the national mind, have, ever since, been the indubitable source of manifold activities in India and the basis of later philosophical systems that testify to the great heights to which the genius of the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas soared in the infancy of world's intellectual life. Innumerable were the invasions of the foreigners, countless were the revolutions in the forms of Government and religion, but still these eternal truths of the Vedas defying all the frowns of time and all "drive and hurry of materialism,"

have since antiquity been resuscitating the drooping spirit of the Indians in moments of their dire social and political calamities; and even to-day after so many centuries of national lifelessness they have found a living utterance in the holy person of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna whose spiritual life synthesised almost all the various shades of religious beliefs and, what is more, his life, as such, is an embodiment of how the human soul in the progress of its spiritual evolution passes in succession from dualism or monotheism to qualified non-dualism and ultimately reaches the spiritual climax of absolute non-dualism or monism. The varied religious sects in India are but the living expressions of the same truth, rising in accordance with the needs of the times to satisfy the demands of the divergent proclivities of the human mind. They are nothing but so many bubbles playing on the surface of the ocean of one Eternal Religion. Thus the different religions of the world flourished in different periods of the world's history in response to the spirit of the time. So the rise of the one and the downfall of the other are not, in their totality, indicative of the destructive tendencies in the religious life but show, on the other hand, the progressive march of the collective life of humanity towards its higher manifestation. But as the rise and fall of our national life are inextricably bound up with the vigour and decline of our spiritual activities, the ups and downs in the Vedic religion reveal to us the history of a race that has passed through the myriad vicissitudes of fortune and different phases of flow and ebb in its progressive march towards the goal. Whenever there was any political pre-eminence or social solidarity in India, it was religion and religion alone that backed up the all-round growth of the Indians; and it is now an undeniable fact that India must rise through religion for it is the only conning-tower of the Indian life from which the destiny of the nation can be guided to the land of eternal Bliss and Freedom. The history of the religious life of the ancient Hindus is matchless in its fulness and its philosophical truths. So a careful study of the ups and downs of our Vedic religion will be a fruitful source of enlightenment to all who are interested to know the causes of our humiliation and also the weapons that lie at our disposal for regaining past national glory.

Since the very dawn of human civilisation, The Aryan mind struggled hard to get beyond the limitations of nature and it is remarkable indeed to find that in moments of the rapturous praises of any of the Gods by an ancient Rishi, he forgot the existence of other Gods besides, and his solemn hymn has the sublimity of a prayer to the one God of the universe. Thus the great characteristic

of the Vedic sages is that "these Gods are taken up, as it were, one after the other, raised and sublimated, till each has assumed the proportions of the infinite personal God of the universe." No doubt we find a good deal of similarity between India and Ancient Egypt so far as the origin of nature-worship is concerned; but the Egyptians lacked the fire and penetration of the Hindu imagination which peered into the mysteries of the universe and caught a glimpse of the beyond—the idea of Infinity which makes even the mythologies of the sanhitas so entirely different from others. The serene, blue Egyptian sky with the glorious effulgence of the tropical sun coursing through it, the crimson blush of dawn that wakes man from slumber in the morning and above all the majestic Nile and the towering hills reverberated with the melodious warblings of the mystic birds winging in their bosoms, were insistent realities to the Egyptians, which quickened their religious impulses and painted their plastic imagination with the ideas of the supernatural deities presiding over each of these phenomena of nature. Late in the fourteenth century B.C. during the sun-set glow of the Pharaonic imperialism, the history of Egypt witnessed one great attempt of Ikhnaton to breathe a spirit of universalism on the dry bones of traditionalism and thereby to wipe off the plurality of gods to make room for Atonist monotheism. But he was too much in advance of his age and the resentment of the mass of the Egyptians soon crystallized into active hatred of the "Criminal of Ikhnaton" and the Egyptians returned back once more to the worship of their myriad deities. Henceforth Egyptian civilisation ran an uninspired and undeveloped course till the days of the Saïtes and the Ptolemics. Such were indeed the religious histories of other great nations that throve on the ever-memorable banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The different manifestations of nature whose bright and awful aspects struck their imagination with corresponding admiration and fear, were invoked and worshipped as Gods by all the great nations of the Near East—the Assyrians, Babylonians, the Greeks and the Jews. But the wings of their imagination began to flag, and the tidal fury of materialistic ideas which made a startling progress in their lands stifled the genial current of their soul and nipped in the very bud their aspirations for the attainment of higher philosophical truths. The Aryan mind on the other hand did not stop with nature-worship but steadily passed from nature to nature's God and ultimately reached a plane of spiritual consciousness through subjective penetration, which is beyond the ken of even the most pre-eminent intellectual Titans. So says Prof. Maxmüller that "these thinkers climbed up to heights where their lungs only

could breathe, and where as those of others would have burst." Thus for the satisfaction of the higher cravings of the Soul whose nature is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss absolute, their imagination worked more and more, until at last they realised "the infinite oneness of the Soul which is the eternal sanction of all morality."

Thus the first recorded attempt among the Aryan nations to pierce into the mysteries of creation, the conception of the nature-Gods and the single-minded fervency with which they were worshipped on the banks of the Indus four thousand years ago, argue the simplicity and vigour of a manly race as well as the culture and thoughtfulness of a people who had already made a considerable progress in civilisation. The high standard of culture which the ancient Hindus have bequeathed to the modern world stands as an unadulterated rebuke to the prejudice-bound men of the west who have not the slightest scruple to cast strictures and aspersions without rhyme or reason on the cultural achievements of the Hindus. The dim but glorious days of antiquity—away back where history fails to peep into the gloom of the past—the days of Rama and Krishna who shone bright in the firmament of the epic age, throbbed with a quicker pulsation of their superb spiritual deeds; and the country reached the highest water-mark of national glory and material prosperity hand in hand with the progress of spirituality. With the march of time the spirit that was breathed into the nation grew in strength and volume and finally showed itself again in the religio-philosophical renaissance in India, which brought into being the six great systems of philosophy and added more momentum to the progress of world-civilisation. In that period of vigorous spiritual growth and intellectual outburst, the entire atmosphere of India became surcharged with a spirit of rejuvenescence and soothing tranquility. Kapila one of the great figures of this Rationalistic age was the progenitor of a system of philosophy which furnished the kernel of many philosophical thoughts in later ages. His Sankhya system was more for the tutored intellects than for ordinary brains as he addressed himself to the speculative scholars and high thinkers. But Gautama Buddha who flourished some centuries later, was imbued with a deep sense of high-souled piety and an all-embracing sympathy for the high and low and naturally therefore the title of his catholic but purely ethical religion rolled onward unhampered, demolishing all the deep seated barriers of caste prejudices and inequalities of law—a boon which the Hindus have never had enjoyed since they have ceased to be a living nation. The teachings of Buddha were a violent and triumphant protest against the Vedic rites which seemed

to stifle the true spirit of religion. The outward paraphernalia of ritualism which now occupied the chief place in matters of spirituality became the greatest weapon in the hands of the self-deluded Brahmins to hide their actual degradation in the plane of spiritual realisation and consequently the saner minds soon rose in revolt against all these sanctimonious and pompous ceremonials. Buddha, the light of Asia of the sixth century B. C. grasped with an iron-grip the rudder-line of religious faiths of the nation and steered it safe and sound to the haven of enlightenment. The "Forest Philosophy" of *Mukti* or *Nirvana* was thus again proclaimed to the world by him. It brought in its wake a glorious age of national prosperity in India and a simultaneous religious upheaval in almost all the parts of the globe. Isaiah the apostle of freedom in the land of the Jews, Confucius and Lao-tze the celebrated founders of the two systems of Chinese philosophy, Zoroastrianism of Persia, and Pythagoras the forerunner of Socrates and Plato in Greece, were undoubtedly the great master-figures whose activities sent forth waves of spiritual resurgence throughout the length and breadth of the then known world. This world-wide movement is all the more remarkable since Buddha in India was laying down at that time the foundation of an infant religion which after his final exit, grew up into a mighty spiritual force that counts one third of humanity as its staunch adherents even to this day.

But even that wonderful religion of Buddha ultimately became degraded at the hands of his followers who, being unable to grasp the deep spiritual truths underlying his simple teachings swerved from the track of spirituality and developed a horrible system of worship known as Vamachara in which the lower instincts of man found their gratification under the cloak of religion.* But the great redeeming feature in the world's religious history is that whenever this world of ours on account of added circumstances, requires a new adjustment, a wave of power comes on both the spiritual and material planes on which man is acting. So says Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्टकृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापणाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

"Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, then I body myself forth and come into being in every age for the protection of the

* Of course the Vamacharin Tantriks themselves deny the charge. They hold that the erotic and other imprudent practices sanctioned by the system are meant to sublimate the animal propensities of man into spiritual impulses.—Ed. V. K.

ced, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma";—and as a fulfilment of this solemn pledge to humanity, the Lord incarnated himself at this critical juncture of Hinduism in the sacred person of Sankara who restored it back to its pristine purity and saved mankind from the octopus of sensual atheism which rode rampant at that time in India. He thundered forth the triumphant note of the Vedanta—the flower of Hindu philosophy, which is more critical than the Kantian philosophy as it recognizes and proves the identity of the objective reality of the universe with the subjective reality of the Ego, whereas Kant could not realise that the 'thing-in-itself' of the objective world and the 'Ding-an-sich' of the subjective world are one and the same. Though the ordinary intellects could not penetrate into the subtleties of recondite metaphysical reasoning of Sankara, still the force that he instilled into Hinduism, stemmed the tide of the atheistic propaganda of the degenerated Buddhism and infused a new fund of enthusiasm and energy into the drooping national mind. But soon after his passing away, the fate of our religion again seemed to be quivering in the balance. The wave of Islamic invasion began to surge on the shore of Hindustan; wave after wave had flooded the land before this catastrophic event; but the Indian nation was not killed. "It had borne the shocks of a thousand such waves of change. No doubt the sword flashed and "Victory unto Allah" rent the skies of India, but these floods subsided, leaving the national ideals unchanged. Deathless it stands and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up spirituality." The volume of energy accumulated under the spiritual aegis of Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Sri Chaitanya, Ballavacharya, Ramananda, Nanak and others found a living utterance in the virile political life of the Rajputs, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs during the Islamic suzerainty. As in politics so in social life the bead-roll of these master-figures of this period rejuvenated the Hindu society with a new spiritual impetus and rendered all the more stable the basis of our religious beliefs which defied all the storms of relentless persecutions and scornful hatred of the foreigners. But notwithstanding these violent outrages on our religious faiths, every student of history knows fully well what a wonderful influence the Hindu thought and culture exercised on the Islamic civilisation in India; and the Hindu-Moslem unity of the present day is an inevitable outcome of the assimilation and better understanding of their mutual ideas and aspirations. However that might be, the Hindu reformers of that age were undoubtedly the founders of different denominations

which count even to-day millions of followers who worship the one Infinite Absolute Being under various names. So says the Sruti—"एकम् सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति". The Eternal Being who is worshipped as Christ by the Christians, Jehova by the Jews, Jina by the Jains, Hnura-Mezda by the Zoroastrians, Ti-Tien by the Chinese, Allah by the Muhammadans and Buddha by the Buddhists is the Brahman of the Hindus. Thus the dynamic Hindu religion has survived the storms of cataclysms that have swept over the land since antiquity.

But in the beginning of the present century, when western influence began to pour into India, when the western conquerors, sword in hand, came to demonstrate to the children of the sages that they were mere barbarians, that their religion, God, soul and everything they had been struggling for, were mere words without meaning, that the thousands of years of renunciation and austerities had all been a gigantic failure, even in these days of the gathering gloom of materialism, a man appeared on the horizon of the East, whose spiritual force brought back the wavering national mind to the true fold of Hinduism and to its glorious ideals. This was Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, whose religion unlike the religion of the ordinary Hindu Sadhus meant ecstasy, whose worship meant transcendental in sight and whose utterances were but the breaking forth of the spiritual fire that burnt within. His advent at this critical juncture of Indian life sounded a deathknell to the further progress of materialistic refinement and Godless morality in our land. Sri Ramakrishna is the prime-mover in the great religious upheaval which has begun in India. The tidal wave of this universal religion rising from him as its centre, has inundated the whole spiritual field of India and is rapidly spreading all over the world, creating a revolution in the world's religious thought which will surely produce wonderful results in time to come. But he did not come alone; all his ideas and spiritual forces have expressed themselves in and through the activities of Swami Vivekananda and other great giants of the modern age. The signs of the coming dawn are manifest in the national consciousness. "The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking, and a voice is coming unto us gentle, firm yet unmistakable in its utterance, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awaking. Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away and only the blind cannot see or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening. None can resist her any more, never is she going to sleep any more, no outward powers can hold her back any more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet," so says the immortal Swami Vivekananda.

Thus the study of the ups and downs of the Vedic religion up to the modern age shows without fail what constitutes our national weakness and strength. We pride ourselves on our past glory and the intrinsic merit of Vedic religion which is the adamant basis of the Hindu Society and the sustaining stamina of national existence in season and out of season. But still in spite of these, India has been experiencing in almost all ages, an awful lack of solidarity, a cohesive action and unity of purpose both in the domains of religion and politics. What is then the cause of such occasional lapses in our national life and the ultimate loss of political freedom? Besides the natural causes which led to the disintegration of the political life, the narrowed vision of the ancient Brahmins who were in the past the great custodians of our Vedic religion was responsible to a certain extent for the ultimate loss of liberty for they did not possess that reforming zeal, that high-souled sympathy and charity for everybody and that wonderful leaven which Buddhism brought into the masses, and this led to the inevitable separation between the higher and the lower classes of the society. Not to speak of the Brahmins alone, the followers of Buddha also lacked the brain and philosophy of the Brahmins, for "on the philosophic side the Buddhists dashed themselves against eternal rocks of the Vedas and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every one, man and woman, clings so fondly". Thus the separation between the "heart and the brain"—the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the root cause of the downfall of India. What is needed at present is the significant combination of the wonderful intellect of Sankara with the heart, the noble soul and the humanising power of the Lord Buddha without which it would be a child's prattle to launch reforms in politics and religion for the betterment of the lot of humanity. The sublime teachings of the sages coupled with the manifold experiences of the past will serve as a beacon light to guide us to the land of Freedom through the darkness that besets our path. Let us also not forget that one Infinite Religion existed all through eternity and this religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. But the great fault of humanity is that it gives up the true spirit and clings to the outward coatings of religious dogmas only and quarrels with one another in their stupid ignorance. The study of our religious history—its ups and downs from the dawn of human civilisation to the present day—has thus this merit in it that it shows the total absence of the narrow range of vision and an utter lack of religious intolerance which are the besetting sins of the narrow-minded zealots of the west; it opens further more the eyes of the children of the soil to the fundamental causes which brought about such lapses in national life from time to time, and also the remedies that still lie at our disposal to ward off the evils and to wipe out the stigma of national humiliation. It is no exaggeration to say that "already a power has been set in motion which at no distant date will bring unto mankind once more the memory of their real nature and the place from which this power will start will be India"—the infinite ocean of knowledge, of love and of work.

CHAPTER VI.

आनन्दो ब्रह्मति व्यजानात् । आनन्दाद्येव खल्विमानि
भूतानि जायन्ते । आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति । आनन्दं
प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति ।

आनन्दः bliss ब्रह्म Brahman इति thus व्यजानात् understood
आनन्दात् from bliss etc.

He understood that bliss is Brahman, (because) from bliss these creatures are verily born; having been born, by bliss they live; and having departed, into bliss again they enter:

(Note:—Now through continued tapas and steady concentration of mind, Bhṛigu came to know at last the reality,—the basic principle of all existence. The scale fell from his eyes and before his inner searching gaze, revealed the *Pratyagatman*—the Inner Intelligence—that stands behind all personality of man in the microcosmic aspect, in the form of eternal unconditioned Bliss.

Brahman getting itself reflected in the *Mâyâ* forms an image in it. This image in its microcosmic aspect is called *Jiva* and in its macrocosmic or collective aspect is called *Iswara*. This *Jiva* is the basis of ignorance or nescience, which by its *Avarani Sakti* hides the nature of Brahman from the *Jiva* and by its *Vikshepa Sakti* begins to produce the different modifications in the form of mind, senses and so forth. The *Jiva* in its essence is the same as Brahman inasmuch as it is an image, a reflection of the latter; but it is conditioned which Brahman is not. This primal nescience enshrouding the *Jiva* that is holding the image of Brahman in her bosom, is called the *Karana sarira* (causal body) or *Anandamayakosha* of the *Jiva*. That aspect of Brahman which stands in relation of witness (*Sakshin*) to the *Jiva* or his personality is called *Pratyagatman* or *Jivasakshin*. In the causal state of the *Jiva* there exists no modification of the nescience, and the bliss which is the nature of the *Pratyagatman* gets also reflected along with its nature of intelligence in the nescience, and so in that causal body, the *Jiva* feels a kind of undefinable vague, yet certain in its feeling, bliss, of the *Pratyagatman*, as it is the case in the deep sleep state. Hence this causal body is called *Anandamayakosha*.

Bhṛigu in his attempt to know what exists even beyond the intellect or *Vijnanamayakosha* came to perceive the *Anandamaya* or the causal state of the conditioned existence; and having

reached them he perceived also the *Pratyagatman*, his inner self of reality whose reflection had been hitherto appearing to him as his ego. So, thus by the process of self-analysis and self-elimination, he reached at last the *Pratyagatman* or Brahman which constitutes the basic principle of life and existence. This *Pratyagatman* is realised in the form of bliss.

From bliss these creatures, etc :—There are two views in Vedanta about the causal relationship of Brahman with creation, viz., (1) the *Parinamavada* or the Pantheistic view, (2) the *Vivartavada* or the theory of Superimposition. According to the first view—the *Parinamavada*, *Mâyâ* is the *Sakti* or energy of Brahman, which undergoes actual modification in bringing forth the creation. So, Brahman is really related with the creation in causal relationship, His intelligence, aspect, constituting its efficient cause and *Mâyâ* or energy aspect, furnishing the material. But *Parinamavada* has all the logical fallacies of Pantheism. So another school of philosophers headed by Sankaracharya postulated the second theory that is *Vivartavada*, the theory of superimposition. According to this school, *Mâyâ* is not an inherent energy of Brahman nor has an absolute reality of existence like that of Brahman. It is an entity which is undefinable in terms of either Existence or Non-existence. And so they call it *Anirvachaniya*, i.e., has no absolute existence nor is absolutely non-existing. In philosophy, absolute existence is understood to mean the existence of an object whose consciousness is never negated or stultified in any period of time—past, present or future. And similarly absolute non-existence is taken to mean an object which is never cognised in any period of time like the classical example of “the barren woman’s child.” But the *Mâyâ* with all its products,—the *Jiva* and *Jagat* is in the midway between the two,—Existence and Non-existence : hence it is undefinable. According to this view, there exists no actual relationship of a material cause between the creation and Brahman, since, this *Jagat* aspect is only a superimposed phenomenon upon the noumenon, Brahman, even as the snake phenomenon is superimposed upon a rope. According to this view, Brahman is the material cause of the creation so far as it furnishes with the real basis for the superimposition and as such, in a sense, it can be called the origin and the basic principle of the creation, even as the rope by furnishing the basis of the snake delusion, causes to arise the snake phenomenon. Further this world delusion is maintained by that inscrutable *Mâyâ* having Brahman as its basis. And finally when the delusion breaks, the *Jiva* comes to realise the *Pratyagatman* as the inner core of his being and the whole phenomena of creation fade away into nothingness in the glory of the *Atman*. Then the realisation is

that Brahman whose nature is Unconditioned, absolute Intelligence and Bliss, is eternally existing, untrammelled and unchanged and unaffected, by any such visions of the bound *Jiva* as time, space and causation and their resultants. Hence when Bhrigu realised this *Pratyagatman* or Brahman, all ignorance of his soul was dispelled and there was nothing left for him to know more : he became *âptakama*.]

सैषा भार्गवी वारुणी विद्या । परमे व्योमन्प्रतिष्ठिता । स य एवं वेद प्रतितिष्ठति । अन्नवानन्नादो भवति । महान्भवति । प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान्कीर्त्या ॥

सा that एषा this भार्गवी वारुणी of Bhrigu and Varuna विद्या knowledge परमे Supreme व्योमन् sky (space) प्रतिष्ठिता is established सयः he who एवं thus वेद knows प्रतितिष्ठति is established अन्नवान् possessing food अन्नादः eater of food भवति becomes महान् great भवति becomes प्रजया with progeny पशुभिः with cattle ब्रह्मवर्चसेन by spiritual lustre महान् great कीर्त्या by fame.

This is that knowledge of Bhrigu and Varuna (which) is established in the Supreme Space. He who knows thus, is also established (in the Supreme Space). He becomes rich in food and is able to eat food. He becomes great by progeny, by cattle and Spiritual lustre (of his person). (He becomes) great by fame.

[Note.—Which is . . . Supreme space :—i.e., which culminates or better, has for its basis the supreme space or Brahman. In Vedanta, mention has been made of three spaces, viz., Mahakasha, Chittakosha, and chidakosha, i.e., the gross space which contains all gross objects,—the mental space, which contains the world of thought and lastly, the space of pure intelligence which makes possible all cognition and through it, all existence, both subtle and gross. So here by Supreme space is meant Brahman or the *Chidakosha*—the unconditioned intelligence. The knowledge which was taught by Varuna and learnt by Bhrigu and as embodied in this upanishad, is said here to be established in Brahman, because one who pursues this *Vidya* step by step, ends in realising the supreme Brahman. Here the supreme space may also mean the cavity of the heart where Brahman is meditated upon in the form of a smokeless flame and its spiritual effulgence is realised.]

CHAPTER VII.

अन्नं न निन्द्यात् । तद्वत्तु । प्राणो वा अन्नम् । शरीरमन्नादम् । प्राणे शरीरं प्रतिष्ठितम् । शरीरे प्राणः प्रतिष्ठितः । तदेतदन्नमन्नं प्रतिष्ठितम् । स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितं वेद प्रतितिष्ठति ।

अन्नवानन्नादो भवति । महान्भवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन ।
महान्कीर्त्या ॥

अन्नं food न not निन्धात् speak ill of तत् that व्रतम् vow प्राणः
Prana वा verily अन्नम् food शरीरम् the body अन्नादम् eater of food
प्राणे in Prana शरीरम् body प्रतिष्ठितम् is established शरीरे in the body
प्राणः Prana प्रतिष्ठितः is established तत् therefore एतत् this अन्नम् food
अन्ने in food प्रतिष्ठितम् is established यः who एतत् this अन्नम् food अन्ने
in food प्रतिष्ठितम् established वेद knows सः he प्रतितिष्ठति is established
अन्नवान् अन्नादो भवति etc.

Let him not speak ill of food : that is the vow. Prana is food ; the body is the eater of food : in Prana the body is established. And (again,) in the body, Prana is maintained ; so thus food is established in food. He who knows that food thus rests on food, is established. He becomes rich in food and becomes eater of food. He becomes great by children, by cattle and spiritual lustre. He becomes great by fame.

[Note.—Let him not speak, etc : since the *Annamayakosha* which depends upon food for its sustenance, has been the first gateway, as it were, of the realisation of Brahman, so the aspirant of God-realisation should not condemn or speak ill of food. In other words, this body which is the main instrument in the hands of the aspirant with which he has to realise Brahman, should not be neglected and the food which sustains it, should not be belittled in the path of Spirituality. Moreover, the sannyasin aspirant should not condemn any kind of food, be it well cooked or ill, when it happens to reach him by chance. This should be the vow of an aspirant of *Brahmajnana*.

Prana is food.—Prana in its microcosmic aspect is the vital energy which sustains the body, but in its macrocosmic aspect is the energy that manipulates matter and produces manifold objects of the creation. In this sense food is nothing but an expression of Prana ; and again, inasmuch as food gives strength and energy to the body, food can be called as Prana.

So thus food is established in food.—Here the Sruti glorifies food by pointing out the fact that both the body and the vital energy of the physical system which are mutually dependent upon each other and sustain each other, are but two different aspects of the same food. And again, as no one can attain the highest knowledge of Brahman without the aid of body and Prana, so the glory of food should always be remembered, and let none condemn it as the grossest object of life. From the gross, one has to proceed to the subtle and the subtler, till he reaches the subtlest,—Atman, even as Bhṛigu did.]

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.

VOL. VII.]

DECEMBER 1920.

[No. 8.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda

IN THE MADNESS OF ECSTASY.

Following the divine vision as described in the previous chapter, there came for some days such a madness of ecstasy and elation of heart, that it became impossible for Gadadhar to do any work, neither was it possible for him to conduct the daily worship of the temple. Hriday managed it somehow or other with the help of another priest, and taking his uncle to be really suffering from a touch of lunacy, put him under the treatment of a physician. But apparently the medicines failed to produce any effect upon Gadadhar. Being extremely anxious for his uncle, Hriday also sent the news to the mother and brother of Gadadhar.

But those days when he used to be not beside himself with his mad ardour for the Divine Vision, he conducted the worship as usual, being in the normal condition. Referring to the feeling and experiences he used to have while meditating at that time, the master used to tell us, “you have noticed the image of Bhairava in the serene posture of meditation in the parapet wall of the front hall before the temple ; well, when I sat for meditation, I used to give strong suggestion to my mind that I should sit calmly like that

motionless Bhairava image, as long as I was in meditation. Then no sooner I sat for the purpose I used to hear a peculiar sound from the different joints of the body, commencing from the feet upwards, as if, some one was locking up all the joints from inside; so much so, that, as long as I used to sit for meditation there was no power left in me to change my posture or move about on my own accord. Nor it was left to me to get up from meditation in the middle of its course. As if somebody used to keep me tied to that position by force. And until the same kind of sound was heard again, but now commencing from the upper joints of the body proceeding downwards, I was not allowed to get up. While in meditation I used to see bright sparks of light moving about on all sides; sometimes I saw a mass of luminous mist pervading on all sides; sometimes again I beheld all things bathed in a broad sheet of brilliant white light, looking like molten silver. I saw all these, sometimes with the eyes closed and sometimes when they were wide open. I could not understand the significance of what I saw, nor did I know then if all such visions augured ill or well for me. So at times with much affliction of heart I used to tell mother—"Mother, I know not what is happening to me, nor do I know any means or mantra by which I can attain Thee! Unless Thou vouchsafest to me out of Thy grace the way to Thine realisation, it is not possible for me to know. Mother, do Thou tell me, how I can realise Thee. I have no other help but Thee, O Mother. I used to pray like this and shed tears out of bitter emotion of sorrow".

That time his worship of the Divine Image assumed a different aspect altogether. In it was manifest more the sweet outpouring of the heart of a helpless child towards its loving mother than the conventionality and rigour of the regular worship as prescribed in the sacred books (*Vaidhi Puja*). Besides, his self-absorption attained to such an exalted state as to make him feel the external world as mere shadows, and so he lost all its former bearing of concrete reality on him. On the other hand what kept his mind and soul constantly absorbed was the radiant divine form of the Mother he beheld in his vision, and that appeared to him as the only reality in the universe. Moreover, he used to witness often that the same form of the Mother was moving about with him and sometimes telling him—"do this", "do not do that" and many such other instructions. And again, while going to offer food to Her, he used to see Her sit actually before the plates and eating from them. We have heard from Hriday that one day taking the *Arghya* in his hand, in the middle of the worship, when he was about to offer it to the Image, he cried out—"Wait, wait; let me consecrate them first with the Mantram, then Thou canst eat them." And so saying

he offered the food first to the Goddess, even before the worshipping was finished. Henceforth not only he used to feel always a living presence of the Divine Mother in the image, but he felt, behind it the existence of the real spiritual form of the Mother radiant with divine light and vibrant with divine life. He told us that he actually examined it one day by putting his hand below the nostril, and he found the image was breathing. He saw Her spiritual figure moving about within the compounds of the temple, but it never cast a shadow. Several days he used to hear Her going up to the upper terrace of the temple, making jingling noise with Her anklets, and to verify the fact he would come out from the room and see Her actually standing on the terrace sometimes facing the Ganges and sometimes looking towards Calcutta.

Hriday gave us the following description about the Master's mode of worship of that period:—"Sometimes he used to take flowers in his hand and first touched with them the different parts of his own body—even his feet—and then offered the same to the Divine Image. Sometimes he looked like a drunkard—his eyes red and chest ruddy with flush of blood, and in this state he used to get up from his seat and in unsteady steps, quite like an intoxicated man, approach the image, and holding Her by the neck would kiss Her on the cheek with the tender affection of a child. At times he used to cut jokes with Her and hold long conversations or dance near Her holding Her by the hand."

"And again, while offering food to the Mother he would take a handful of rice and curry and ascending the altar of the Image press it into the mouth of Hers saying, 'Eat Mother, eat it to Thy heart's content.' Next moment perhaps he would say, 'What you want me to eat? Well, I shall eat it now,' and so saying he would himself take a little quantity of the offered food; and again taking the remaining portion from the dishes he would place it before Her mouth and say, 'Now I have taken. You should eat the rest.'

"One day, during the worship time, seeing a cat enter into the room, the Master accosted it saying, 'Mother, will you eat a little? and so saying he gave to the cat a portion of the food intended for the offering to the Divine Mother.'

"Sometimes while going to place Her on the silver cot for Her nightly rest, he would tell, 'What, are you asking me also to sleep with you. Well, I shall lie down with you' and so saying he would lay himself down on one side of the cot.

"When he sat for meditation, he used to get so absorbed in it that his body used to become rigid like a corpse; and there remained not the slightest sign of external consciousness."

"In the morning, my uncle used to go out and himself pick flowers, for the garland of the Mother. Even then, while picking flowers, I used to find him sometimes talking, sometimes laughing, sometimes cutting jokes with some unseen person, as if, there were somebody by his side all the time.

"I never saw him sleep in the nights then. Whenever I got up at night, I invariably found him awake, either talking in the similar strain with some invisible person, or singing some devotional songs, or engaged in meditation underneath the Panchavati trees."

Such strange behaviour of Gadadhar caused no little apprehension in the mind of Hriday. But he could not speak out his heart to any one of the temple. He feared lest it might cause some harm to his uncle if it came to the hearing of the Rani or of Mathur Babu. But how long such things could remain hidden from the notice of other servants of the temple! Soon some of the temple clerks came to know of this strange method of worshipping of Gadadhar and when they saw it with their own eyes, they thought that either he had become mad or been possessed by some devil. But one thing was certain in their judgment that he should not be allowed to conduct the worship any more, because that would mean desecration of the worship of the Divine Image. So thinking they reported the whole matter to the authorities of the temple. In reply, Mathur Babu sent words to them not to disturb Gadadhar in his worship until he came and inspected the matter himself. What was necessary, he would do himself after coming there.

Soon after, without telling anybody, one day during the worship time, Mathur Babu came all on a sudden and entered into the temple and remained there for a long time observing minutely all the actions of Gadadhar. But the Master was so absorbed in the worship, that he was quite unconscious of Mathur Babu's presence. In fact, while worshipping, his mind used to be too engrossed with the thought of Mother and Her worship to take any notice of any one's coming in or going out of the shrine room. Mathur Babu understood this fact no sooner than he entered into the temple. He further noticed that the fond appeal and prayer of the Master and the other child-like importunities of his towards the Mother proceeded from the deepest depth of devotion and love of his heart for the Divine Mother. Moreover his heart was filled with the charm of heavenly joy when he beheld the blessed priest sometimes flooded with tears of devotion, sometimes bursting with uncommon effusion of ecstasy, sometimes sitting like a statue with the calm repose of an inert substance, but always absorbed in the inner light and unconscious of outward things. Mathur Babu felt within his heart of

hearts that the temple was radiant with the glory of the Divine presence. He also clearly perceived that Gadadhar was blessed with the realisation of the Mother of the universe. And then he must have felt within himself that at last the installation of the sacred Image and the founding of the temple had become fruitful through the wonderful spiritual devotion of its hallowed priest. He came away from the temple that day without telling anything to anybody. Next morning he sent an order to the manager of the temple to the effect that no body should interfere in any way with the mode of worship of Gadadhar; they should let him do it in whatever way he liked.

Those who are conversant with the Hindu scriptures can well understand from the aforesaid incidents that there occurred then a great change in the mind of Gadadhar; having broken down all the limitations and disciplinary restrictions of the *Vaidhi Bhakti* it was running in a mad speed along the path of *Prema Bhakti*. And that change had come upon his mind in such a natural, easy course that he himself could not clearly understand it at first. He was conscious then of one thing only that the all-consuming love of his heart for the Divine Mother did not allow him to pursue any other course but the one he adopted,—as if somebody was forcing him, in spite of himself to do or act as he was doing. And for the same reason there arose a doubt in his mind now and then if he were pursuing the right path. He would often appeal, as we have said before, in fervent prayer, with the deepest emotion of his heart, to the Mother, "Mother, I don't know anything, nor do I understand what is happening to me. Pray, teach me what is beneficial—show me the path that I should adopt." As the prayer went out from the inmost recesses of his soul it was heard by the Divine Mother and She was actually leading him by the hand during the whole course of his remaining life as a loving mother does to her child: for the fulfilment of his wonderful life of devotional practices, whenever a need was felt for a particular thing or for a devotee of particular devotional path to teach him its secrets, She brought the thing or the devotee in a mysterious way to Dakshineswar and the divine child of the Mother had thus his spiritual life consummated. We shall come to know of all this as we proceed with the narration. The promise of the Lord that He brings all that are necessary for the fulfilment of life to the devotee who is devoted to Him with all his life and soul and thinks of nothing else but of the Lord, * was literally fulfilled in the life of the Master. As if, in this age when the whole of humanity is lost in selfishness and sense-pursuit, a necessity was felt for re-iteration and verification of that promise

* Vide Gita chapter IX, 22.

of the Lord. Though from age to age, at the different parts of the world it has been exemplified in the lives of all great saints and sages of the world that those who give up all in the name of the Lord, get all in return, yet the weak-minded, purblind man of to-day has lost sight of this one redeeming fact of life. So a supreme necessity arose for the re-assertion of the same from High—hence was the grand and wonderful display of this life of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Master used to say, "whenever there comes the great flood of maddening God-devotion in the soul, it is not possible for man to suppress it in any way or hide its external expression, however one may try to do the same; moreover when it comes it shakes and sometimes shatters to pieces this physical body, it being too weak to stand the onrush of the spiritual emotions." Thus many devotees have actually died through such break-down of their physical frame under the strain of spiritual impulses. To bear the stress of the supreme wisdom or the illumination of the highest knowledge and of the exultations of supreme Bhakti, it is absolutely necessary to have a fit body strong enough for the purpose. History tells us that only great souls like the Divine Incarnations could remain alive bearing the full strain of such *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, which were manifest constantly in their lives. So the Scriptures of the path of Bhakti tell of these incarnations as having bodies made of pure *Sattva Guna*, and owing to the fact that in the elements of their physical frame there is not the least touch of *Tamas* or *Rajas*, it is possible for them to endure the stress of those lofty spiritual elements, the like of which it is not possible for ordinary human beings to endure. Even possessing such divinely constituted body, we have seen sometimes their physical frames suffering greatly under the strain of Godly emotions—it happens so specially with those Incarnations who trod the path of Bhakti. We have heard how under the terrible stress of spiritual exultation, Lord Jesus perspired drops of blood, or Sri Chaitanya felt all the joints of his body loose and dislocated! However painful physical contortions and disfigurements may appear to us, yet with the help of these only the Incarnations get accustomed to bear the great strain of their uncommon spirit on their physical frame. Afterwards when their bodies get accustomed to those strains and as they become quite natural to their physical life, we see no more manifestations of those unnatural contortions and pain. So, from this time forward, under the strain of spiritual emotions, there began to appear various kinds of physical contortion and pain in the Master's body. From the very commencement of his spiritual practices he felt a kind of unbearable burning sensation on his body. At times he suffered

very much from its increase. The Master himself told us once the cause of that suffering. He said, "at that time, before I commenced worshipping I used to think according to the injunctions of the scriptures that there was the sinful being (*Papa Purusha*) in me and he had been burnt by the *Pranayama*. I did not suspect then that there is actually the *papa purusha* in man, and it is really possible to destroy it. From the commencement of the spiritual practices I began to feel the burning sensation on my body. I took it to be a disease and gradually it increased to an unbearable extent. I applied various kinds of medicated oil but nothing could alleviate the pain. Afterwards one day while I was sitting underneath the Panchavati I saw a person, jet black in colour, blood-shot eyes, terrible in appearance, came out from this (pointing to his own body) and began to wander in front of me with unsteady steps in the mode of a drunkard; after a while again, I beheld another person, beautiful in appearance, wearing an ochre-coloured garbe and holding a trident, came out from this body and attacked the former black fellow with his trident, and after some struggle killed it outright! After I got that vision the burning sensation of the body disappeared for some time. But before I had the vision, for six months I had to suffer from it continually without a moment's cessation."

We have heard from the Master that though for a while the burning feeling ceased after he had the afore-said vision, but it appeared again no sooner than he took up the path of Prema bhakti in the worship of the Mother. Gradually it increased to such an extent that he had to keep himself immersed in water of the Ganges for several hours and put wet towels on his head, still it gave him no relief, and subsequently how it was cured in a wonderfully novel way by the Brahmin lady, we shall relate hereafter in its proper place. Once more this burning sensation came to him when he was engaged in the devotional practices, known as *Madhura bhava*. Hriday told us that at that time the Master felt an excruciating pain and burning sensation in his heart, as if, a potful of burning cinders had been placed on his chest, so unbearable was the heat. He suffered from it for long. Afterwards under the advice of one Kanailal Ghoshal of the village Barasat, when he wore an amulet dedicated to his *Ishtam* (*Ishta Kavacha*), on his neck, the burning sensation left him.

(To be continued)

SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

Statement of the problem:—In the national purpose of life, every thought and deed is coloured and controlled by certain end, be it social, political, moral or religious. Certain aspect is more prominent in certain individual who makes all others subservient to that particular one, and the real man is found only when that particular side of his is ungrudgingly emphasised, and securely given a full play. What is true of an individual, is equally true of a nation or a race. For every race or nation has a life peculiar to itself, and the customs and institutions are but the creations of the self-unfolding Mind of the nation. Their inner hidden light casts a fringe, so to speak, around it, and this halo in course of time gains luminous lustres to guide the destiny of the race.

Now, we are here concerned with the characteristic of the national life of India, and how that peculiar culture controlled and should control the movement of Indian education which undoubtedly runs counter to the natural flow. Attempts will be made to give a form of this culture, and a few practical measures will be suggested to give a natural bent to the current form of education which has been quite faithfully serving the purpose of those who introduced it. To those patrons of learning our gratitude is due for their sincere efforts and endeavour to better the condition of India physically, intellectually and morally by the diffusion of western learning and civilisation. It would be the height of folly on our part to depreciate altogether the good effects of western education. But one should not lose sight of the fact that the well-wishers are often more earnest than foresighted, and their views are limited by the consideration of the time.

It is not our scope to discuss in this essay all the important items in which the ordinary high schools or colleges are not strikingly successful.

The main defects can be summarised as:

It does not conserve the learning of old.

It substitutes intellect for heart.

It does not check anti-social tendencies, and so on.

But what is most shocking is that it does not give us culture and prepare for life what India or a true Indian needs.

Spirit of Indian culture.—What is culture? Culture is an expression of manifestation of the inner life or Reality; as knowledge it is manifested in Science and Philosophy, as feeling pictured in Arts

and Religion, as will, displayed in conducts and behaviours. In course of evolution every aspect of culture seeks to give expression to the inner Reality. Culture cannot be one sided, it has three distinct stages; material, intellectual and spiritual. As for instance, the Greeco-Roman culture is highly intellectual, the modern 'civilised' culture is extremely material, and the Indian culture is intensely spiritual. The facts mentioned above have been recognised in the history of nations, without inviting any criticism from the rational quarters, and in the vibration of the central notes consist the true civilisation and teachings of respective nations.

Now, the superiority of a culture depends upon the longevity of the nation whose culture it is. To quote a Christian Scholar, "A merely material or intellectual civilisation bears within it a disease which leads to death. The end of culture is the realisation of the kingdom of Heaven on Earth, 'on Earth as it is in Heaven'." Histories of Greece and Rome, and the recent continental war testify to the above statement almost word for word. But what about India? A Vedic Scholar writes "A sketch of the life of the people of Ancient India in the second millennium B. C. proves how little India has changed these four thousand years. Almost every custom, every institution referred to in the Vedas can be yet observed, many mantras mentioned can be heard, many images described can be seen in thousands of villages to-day, even those wherefrom one can hear the panting of the steam-engine, and the hoot of the motor-horn. And this, notwithstanding that during the long period India has witnessed numerous volcanic upheavals of society like that which was caused by the spread of the teachings of the Jina, and the Buddha, notwithstanding the tremendous thunderstorms that have broken over India from the invasion of Alexander of Macedon down to the invasion of Baber, the Moghul. The conservative instincts of man, his averseness to change of all kinds, which dominated Europe up to the age of the French Revolution, still hold India in their icy grip, and affords us this spectacle of a people that have remained unchangeable as their own Himalaya during the shocks of ages." This shows the genuinity of the Indian culture.

Form of the Spirit.—Now, what can possibly be the form of culture which is seen to be spiritual in essence? Though it is extremely difficult to give any particular concrete form as the country abounds with so many creeds and sects of Religion, yet they can be profitably analysed to contribute to one fundamental form; this is, the Finite to be controlled by the Infinite, the Relative by the Absolute, the personal by the Impersonal, and the ultimate

submersion of the former in the latter. The concept of the absolute can be traced even to the hymn portion of the Vedas. Atharva Veda 8, 1, declares, "The greatest who presides over the past, the future, the universe and whose alone is the sky". In the Samaveda Samhita xxiii 47 is put the question what light is equal to the sun? What lake is equal to the sea? The next verse supplies the answer "Brahma is the light equal to the sun; the sky is the lake equal to the sea". This is the root of the Vedantic conception which has been expounded in various ways, and has given rise to various schools of thought and belief with their corresponding sects and societies. Of these one has knowledge, other has love, third has self-less action and so on, as the central note for the realisation of the impersonal higher life be it soul, Brahma or Iswara (God).

A word of explanation is needed to throw light upon the form of the spirit namely 'The finite to be controlled by the infinite,' which the western scholars are apt to misunderstand and misinterpret; this they think to be the complete annihilation of the individuality and freedom of the man for the pre-organised society, the present for the past, the man for the environment. They are quite right so far they study facts from the angle of European vision. People of the East do not believe in the law of evolution inasmuch as it is an unbroken, continuous line of development. Every rise has its fall and evolution presupposes involution, a theory of *change* in time, and not one of eternal progress. When the people of the East seek the past in the present they do not arrest the progress of forces, rather they are reluctant to have any change, for in the past they got something which all strive to have, and it would be a great loss to go without that. A conservative element in a nation which prefers stability to so called progress, shows that the nation had a period when all its hankerings and yearnings found satisfaction. Quite the reverse is the case with the other nations. Notwithstanding their inhuman activities and depth of thought in the worlds of mind and matter, the spiritual mines, the only support of human lives, are left unexplored. So we mark a sort of maddening in the lives and activities of the westerners who lose in length what they gain in breadth. How beautiful is the figure in whom has reconciled the energetic activity of the west to the tranquil meditation of the East!

One more point as regards individuality. To the Indians, individuality is a spiritual entity,—perfect freedom in that particular sphere. They are glad to give up this social or material individuality for the more esteemed one.

In the words of Plato and Hegel the lower self is sacrificed for the higher self, 'Die to live'. Now the question which naturally presents itself, is why should I give up that which is so very dear to me? The answer again involves the long wearied problem of Egoism and Altruism of the English School of Morality. The Psychological phenomenon which I propose to advance in order to answer to the question is that this is the human nature to cherish what it once hated and to hate what it once liked, the feelings remain as they are, only the objects change places. Through this process the human nature realises its true spirit, and in realising the true self it suffers a good deal, though that feeling of pain is not unmingled with that of ethereal pleasure, and we all know that pleasure, though small in quantity, short in duration and is long looked for on account of its intrinsic value.

Now, the great oriental nations of old e.g. China, India, Persia, Egypt, etc., all hanker after that spiritual individuality, that perfect freedom of the soul which they once enjoyed, so they are slow to move towards something uncertain and hazardous; but it should be remembered that these nations are defeating their own purpose inasmuch as they crush the forces of life in spite of giving them a right direction. The checking of the natural forces kills the spirit and keeps the forms,—a lifeless mass of prejudices and vagaries. In India whenever the country presents such a dreary spectacle of lifelessness some mighty spirit comes to restore life. Peculiarity of the revival is this that there is no new life in the old body but the old spirit is regained with certain modifications here and there, to meet the demands of time.

A thorough study of the lives and teachings of the great sages and saints of India makes the point clear, and this is, in short, the cycle of Indian History.

At present the task before us is to deduce an educational Ideal for India from the History of the nation and the spirit of education, we all know, should enable the learner to be conscious of his place in the race and the universe, that the life of the race and the life of the individual may help each other's growth. So let us see the condition of our education in the Past and the Present, and suggest something for the future.

SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION IN INDIA.

(1) *What it was.*—If the aim of education is to establish right relation between man and man, man and society, man and nature, the human and divine aspects of man and what is most important the just and regular balancing of the claims of the life of the world and the life of the spirit, we feel relieved to see how naturally and

scientifically these principles were carried into practice in olden days through the four stages (Asramas of life), every stage what a sort of preparation for the next, and how practically the whole life was a school of severe discipline. The Rishis of old laid much more stress on life than on intellect which is but a part of the former, and thought that life as a whole and not intellect merely can solve the mysteries of life, and fulfil the cravings and hankerings of the inner life.

The students, at that time, had to live with their teachers, and in the course of daily life they had to learn and practise what they were taught. As a rule, a nation is practical only in that sphere where it discovers its life and culture. India makes everything subservient to the spiritual life, and she is practical in her own sphere. The students were taught to pay debts to the Gods, to the ancestors, to the rishis, to the society, and even to the vegetable and the mineral kingdoms. This is how a high sense of duty and responsibility was ingrained in boys, and they were being prepared for a higher life which consists in helping and loving everything sentient and insentient. This is what is called true universal love.

Now, to give a course of studies in the student life, I should do well to quote a passage from a lecture of an Indian educationist of note, "The boy is taught of course the sacred scriptures, because in India religion permeates every action of life. He is taught the Vedas which he must memorise. But after learning the sacred writings he must learn also certain additional things * * * * Grammar is studied not in order that he may read and write but as a science in itself * * * * Then the boy must know all about poetry, how to compose poetry, what is good poetry and bad poetry, and all about metres. Then the boy must know all about ritual; the ritual ceremonies of religion are in themselves a science. Then he must know something about Astronomy and he must also know the nature and quality of sounds, and the stories of the myths of his religion. All these definite studies are organised with the aim of giving a synthesis, of bringing the individual to a centre in life, so that life is not a series of disjointed parts, but is grasped by him as one whole. This one whole the Hindu synthetic aspect of life, is seen in the sense of the unreality of the universe round man, and the reality of another universe which the individual has to discover. The aim, then, of their particular education is to make you see each event in life as only reflecting a larger event, of seeing a transitory quality in all things, so that you may develop within you the vision of what is permanent. * * * The idea of the Indian type of education is for the individual to discover himself as a fragment of reality."

What is most striking in the above description is that the Indian life was confined within its great mountain barriers, there was no 'principle of give and take' carried out in any department of life and thought. We are sorry to remark that the purity of the indigenous culture was bought at a very high price which rendered the nation poorer and poorer, for a culture is rich and beneficial only so far as it makes its national spirit the nucleus of the organism which must have the gifts of other nations for its components. The different forces should be so arranged as to help the organic and indigenous growth of the culture of the race. If the above two points are disregarded, the result will be suicidal, everything will result in utter stagnation. Tagore rightly observes, "The society which makes stagnance to be the end, knows ignorance as its help and intoxicates the mind with opium."

This is why every university should be liberal and receptive, and at the same time conservative and productive.

(2) *What it is.* In modern time the conditions of life in India have greatly changed. India is a part of a world-wide empire, and she is given a world role to play. She can't stand apart. Mr. Lloyd George has rightly remarked, "India must march with other nations, or her fate will be sealed." At present she is required to be up-to-date, and accordingly she has been trying to adapt herself to the new environment. So far good. We make a mistake when we lose our hold on the national culture. What is great and good in others should no doubt, be gladly accepted to serve our own ideal and purpose of life. The modern system of education is under the control of a foreign government, and it is as it should be from the standpoint of the rulers who are not expected to know the Ideal of Indian life, and grasp the spirit of Indian culture. The evil effects of the present system of education are nearly set out in an educational pamphlet. To quote those "The missionary system of education in India sterilises children spiritually. They miss their own Dharma, and begin to hate that which ought to inspire them. Government and private enterprise in education is non-religious, non-moral, and non-patriotic, and only means the mental assimilation of some knowledge without character-building or enthusiasm for the life round about." So Swami Vivekananda says "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain, and runs riot there undigested all your life. We must have life building, man making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If education is identical with information the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and the Encyclopedias are the Rishis." So let us see what should help the spontaneous growth of man and his intellect.

(3) *What it should be.* As circumstanced India is put to a very critical situation, she is moving, so to speak, in a sensitive balance, either to drop down or to rise high up in the estimation of other nations. She is conquered physically, her spirit and culture are still free. Foreign culture is transgressing and trying to absorb the Indian culture altogether, hence there is a conflict of cultures. In this conflict, if the other party is successful, India will be crushed for ever; if India is successful she is sure to deliver her message to the world, as she has done in the past, from time to time. Cultural conquest is the only conquest, so education in all its branches should be guided by the spirit of Indian culture that we may prepare ourselves for our self-preservation, and self-development for the good not only of India, but also of the world at large.

It follows from the above consideration that the characteristics of an Indian university should be so as may bring the students to the centre of Indian life, the inner life, the life of spirituality. All outer events or departments *e. g.*, social, political, military, etc., should also be duly emphasised, but they are needed for no other gain than to secure the ideal of the nation. Everything outside should be controlled by the life within. An Indian university is truly Indian in so far as it helps the spiritualisation of the different subjects of life and thought, and inculcates the idea of sacrifice of one's life to God in all the stages and walks. If India is to be unified it must be unified by the revival and representation of her own spirit.

A clause in the Report of the Calcutta university commission, declares the necessity of reconciling or synthesising the systems of education eastern and western. Cultures being quite opposed to each other they cannot be reconciled in spirit to illustrate the different lines of cultures. Let me quote a thinker, "The spirit of oneness is the keynote of the philanthropy of the east, just as the sense of separateness of mine and thine, is the keynote of the west. The one leads to a spontaneous sympathy with all head, and a simple and natural pleasure in relieving it, the other to critical judgment and investigation of the worthiness of the needy and a heroic effort to reform them according to approved philanthropic methods. The one leads to individual responsibility, not for the morals, but for the happiness of one's neighbour; the other leads to organised charities to inform the poor 'en masse'. The one flowing from simple brotherly love with no sense of superiority, awakens simple gratitude, and harmonises all classes in a sense of the unfailing kindness of God. The other projected by a well-meaning but egoistic sense of moral caste awakens natural irritation and widens

the gap between the fortunate and the unfortunate. The spirit of the two is totally different, and the spirit determines the method." Though they cannot be reconciled in spirit, but they can be reconciled in forms, there is no harm if we accept what is great and good in the lives and teachings of the western people, their critical methods of looking at things, their political views, their social organisation etc. We must have what we lack, but everything new should be brought under the control of the national culture. In short, every school and college should be a centre where all the forms from the various parts of the country should accumulate along with what are conducive in other nations, and they should be arranged in a way that it may serve the ideal. In a word, a university should render education a living organism and not a conglomeration of facts.

X. Y. Z.

SISTER NIVEDITA'S : AN INDIAN STUDY OF LOVE AND DEATH.

BY

K. S. RAMASIVAMI SASTRI, B.A., B.L.

This is an imaginative phantasy full of spiritual passion and fervour. Look at the pathos of its opening.

"How is the city become desolate, and how lonely is now the household, that once were full of people!

How is the fountain stopped up, and the lamp become extinguished!

How is our fire gone out, and how the ashes scattered upon the hearth!

For now the hand of the Potter hath shattered the vessel that He made.

And the Mother hath hidden from us with a veil, the face of our beloved.

Dark is the night, and terrible is the storm in the midst of the burning ghat.

Swift and deep is the river to bear away the scattered dust.

Infinite is Time, into which hurry the passing souls.

And love cries out in vain to stay the hand of death.

Verily are the flowers withered, O Beloved, in our forests.

And all the pools are emptied of their lotuses.

For us the voices of the singing-birds become silent, and dark clouds have passed over the face of the stars.

Since thy feet come never again across our threshold.

Neither is light seen again within thine eyes."

Equally pathetic is the salutation to the dead.

"For all wounds and loneliness,

For all angry and impatient thoughts,
 For all wherein we failed in love,
 Or loving, failed to say to thee, we loved, forgive !
 For all thy need in life,
 For all thy need in death,
 For labour that left thee weary.
 And for love that failed to comfort thee forgive ! ”.

But Love is stronger than Death. Many waters cannot quench, nor the floods overwhelm it. The soul is immortal and endureth for ever. The meditations that follow in the book are about the soul, love, the inner perception, peace, and triumphant union and are full of beauty of sentiment and beauty of style. “Life is a rhythm, a rhythm of rhythms, and rhythm is but a continuous movement from one point to the reverse.” Love is of spirit to spirit, and is as deathless as the spirit. Death is but the removal of the veil. “To the soul, time does not exist. Only her own great purpose exists, shining clear and steady through the mists before her. To her death brings no change. Death changes the body alone. The tokens of love are seen and felt only by the soul. Life is but as a word revealing the soul. The soul remains even though the word is heard no more.” The soul’s experiences are garnered and treasured up. “An irresistible conjecture is often unremembered knowledge.” Love is realised in peace and peace in love. “Faithfulness lies in community of soul-life. Separation is but an austerity that passes.” “The Beloved becomes the Divine and the lover forgets self.”

“We cannot wander outside the circle of God’s Heart, that mighty love that has revealed itself to us in glimpses here and there.” Then follows the following superb passage:

“And of that knowledge, the knowledge of the Beloved, presence and absence are but two different modes.

Either without the other is incomplete. For had presence been prolonged, we should have that presence, that companionship was the end. But they who think thus are deluded. Union is the end.

And union is not an act. It is a quality, inherent in the natures that have been attuned.

And that infinite music, whereby our spirits are smitten as if they were harp-strings, into an endless accord of sweetness and sacrifice, that music is what some know as God. Only through God can human beings reach each other, and be at one.

Therefore must love be in restraint of sense. And separation by death is to a lover the secret of all austerities.

It is also the highest, because it is imposed by God alone.

Pain borne with intention carries us to fresh heights.

Separation consecrated by faith reaches to deeper union.

Thus love is crowned by sorrow. And love, to be made perfect needs sorrow as well as joy.

But when he is crowned, then death and Love put sorrow beneath His feet and shine forth alone. And this is in truth, O blessed soul, the very Triumph of thy love.”

Then follows a chapter on the Communion of the soul with the Beloved. It is full of sweet poetry and sweeter spiritual rapture. The soul asks, “O thou Ineffable Sweetness, wherein I was wont to see

the face of my Beloved, rise Thou once more within my heart, that I may find him whom my soul seeks !” The Beloved replies : “Know only that separation is a dream, parting is but on the surface. Thou art in me, and I in thee.”

I reserve to the last the splendid *Litany of love* that follows. The book concludes with a description of some Hindu rites for the honoured dead. The mysterious rhythm of life ends. Sacred sounds speed the parting soul. Sorrow is relieved by sanctity and worship. “The vexed record of the personal life erased”, the peace of death reigns in sad silence. The body is taken away from the home for ever. Psalms, hymns, and prayers follow it to the final resting place. The consecration of the dead is of the very essence of the Hindu idea of life. To the soul speeds on into the unknown with its Dharma as its only friend.

I shall close this brief sketch of a noble work with a reference to the *Litany of love*.

“O love, lifted high above all qualities and persons !
 Love, delivering from bondage,
 Love, casting out all fear,
 Love, in which the body has no part,
 Love, eternal—transcendent—universal, —
 Love of the Sacred Heart, ever self-consumed in its own light,
 To Thee our salutation
 Thee we salute. Thee we salute.
 Thee we salute.
 Soft wings of the divine Motherhood,
 Folding into their own depth and shadow all things that
 cannot bear the light,
 All little children crying out that they are lost,
 All error and defeat, all sin and sorrow,
 All loneliness and weakness, and all unprotectedness and
 simplicity of love,
 Thou the All-pitiful, folding us closer to one another beneath
 Thee,
 To Thee our salutation,
 Thee we salute. Thee we salute.
 Thee we salute.”—
 O Infinite Love, reveal to us Thy Face !
 O Infinite Love, awake and abide in us !
 O Infinite Love, burn us till we be consumed !
 We desire not to possess Thee.
 We desire not to behold Thee.
 We desire to become one with Thee.”

RAMADAS.

BY

C. Ramakrishna Rao.

A Pathetic Scene.

Ramadas submitted himself into the hands of the men that brought the dreaded warrant and was following them, singing all the way, the name of Rama.

The scene of his removal from Bhadrachalam was indeed pathetic. The people who had variously assisted him with money and with their labour, the officers who served him and the people of the Taluk surrounded him all along the way and wept most piteously and begged of the messengers to leave him alone. They recounted to one another his life of piety and love, lived amongst them, for several years. They spoke of him as a god-man, whose one avocation was the service of Rama, that Avatar of Vishnu, in Whom are so exquisitely blended the qualities of love and duty and mercy and valour, as one who never swerved an inch from the path of duty to the sovereign at whose command he came out as Tahsildar, who administered impartial justice throughout the Province, whose destinies were entrusted to his care, as if, by Divine dispensation, whose devotional practices were neither hidden nor obscure but were patently observed by the common folk, whose Sankirtans drove men into maddened love for the Lord, keeping them transfixed to the spot for hours together, the sweet Bhakta of that still sweeter God Sri Rama. And when he, their idol of adoration, was now drawn before their very eyes, by the rude hands of the cruel servants of the Sultan Abul Hussain, the people could no longer contain their grief at his being so roughly handled by armed men and wept torrents of tears.

Ramadas's Unflinching Courage.

Ramadas, who had the coolness and composure that always marked the true Bhaktas of all countries, who had drunk deep of the nectar of Divine Love, who could look upon every atom of universe from the blade of grass to the lofty Himalaya, and from ant to man as the manifestation of the Lord Himself, who knew not to make a distinction between the life of the prison and the palace, to whom the sod of the common earth is as sacred as the precincts of the Holy of Holies, he, the true and fearless man, taught them not to be grieved for his removal and once more enjoined on them all to join hands and sing and praise once more the name of the Lord on High. The assembled crowds then all in one voice sang aloud in praise of Rama so that the sound produced by their united voices tore up the heavens.

An Interesting Dialogue.

The final parting over, Ramadas followed the guards and reached Golconda in due course and was taken to the presence of the Nabob. The following dialogue took place between the Nabob and Ramadas and it is recorded below at some length in order to give the reader the pleasure of learning Ramadas's line of argument in support of his having spent the Huzur Treasure.

Tanisha. Well Gopanna, with what defiance of authority you have spent away the State money for your own mad projects?

Ramadas. Sirkar ! I have built Mantap and Gopuram in such a way that your own fame may be immortalized.

Tanisha. Whoever spends money earned by his own labour in charity and in the service of God is a wise man. But does wisdom lie in embezzling public money ? Who taught you this logic ?

Ramadas. One should follow the dictates of one's own conscience looking upon it as the voice of Truth, i. e., God, and never depend upon others' criticism or approbation.

Tanisha. Have you no fear of the King ? How foolishly you retort my argument ?

Ramadas. Why fear anyone when the Lord impels me to all action and when I am entirely at His service ? No personal motive lies behind my actions.

Tanisha. If you have no personal motive you should not have touched state treasure.

Ramadas. I am His instrument. The money is thine and the fame goes to thee. Neither do I lay claim to the treasure nor to the fame it brings.

Tanisha. Enough with your reasoning. Bring me my money.

Ramadas. The money is all expended. Even so thy name is hallowed above all kings on earth.

Tanisha. If you have that regard for your earthly king you would not have embezzled public property. I appointed you to high office, hearing that you were faithful and trustworthy. How you proved false ? What virtue is it to misappropriate Government treasure to build a temple ?

Ramadas. Why rely on transient riches ? Why grief when God is praised ?

Tanisha. You talk like a madman. You forget that I am your king. Be prepared to pay my money or you will die. Who else is to be praised but I your king and Lord ?

Ramadas. I care not for this mortal body. Kill it if you like but live the life spiritual.

Tanisha. How reckless you are, fearless of my power.

Ramadas. I cannot recognize any power but that of my Lord Rama. I dedicate all my actions to Him alone.

Tanisha. How impertinent you are ? Pay now the penalty.

So saying he dismissed Ramadas from his presence and ordered that he should be taken hand-cuffed through the streets and imprisoned in a cell. He gave directions to the servants to inflict severe blows, whip and put him to all sorts of torture and make him pay up the money.

Ramadas's Confinement in the Prison.

While Ramadas was taken along the streets, unconscious of himself; lost in contemplation and heedless of the way, the people of Golconda were moved to tears but being unable to do anything, prayed to Rama to save his Bhakta who renounced everything for him. The crowds accompanied Gopanna till he was taken to the prison-house. The heartless prison-warders now took charge of this prisoner and thrust him into a cell. The clang of the heavy iron gates gave the awaiting crowds at the door notice of his having been confined in the cell intended for him and with heavy hearts and sympathetic expressions the people that were assembled gradually dispersed.

O the prison-house! Is it not the place best fitted for the contemplative Yogi to pursue his religious practices and meditations with unabated vigour and with the least distraction from without? And so it proved in the case of Ramadas who never cared where the body was, provided his own devotional practices were left undisturbed.

We have stated before that the Tanisha left directions to the guards to whip, torture and cause any amount of physical pain to Gopanna and coerce him by any means they liked, to pay the money due to him.

Horrors of Prison Life.

Gifted by nature with hearts harder than steel, merciless countenances and rough and rude hands, with an overpowering passion to pander to the will of their Nabob, they did not long allow Ramadas complete rest. They put before him bare barley flour to eat, which Ramadas took with great pleasure, neither feeling, disconcerted nor unhappy treating it as the *Prasad* of Rama. They beat him several times demanding payment of their master's money for which he made no reply. The more they demanded for money, the more he began to send up prayers to that *Suddha Satya* Rama, his *Ishta Deva*. When the mind, in contemplation, is merged in the *Ishtam* of the Devotee, no more is there of *meum* and *tuum*. The devotee becomes one with the God of his choice. It is a spiritual fact and a matter that each one of us at one time or other, in however small a measure, must have experienced. Are you not aware how one day you sit yours if in a place absorbed in the thought of the object of your love—the object may be a material object—steeped, engrossed in the said thought; a serpent passing you by without your least noticing it and you being surprised to hear of such a thing having ever happened? Go thou early morning to the river side and see the rising sun on the eastern horizon with its glorious and resplendent hues stretching out before thee, a

veritable Renovator of life to the whole world. Is not your mind then uplifted and do you not forget your own self? If on a minor scale and on the material plane these are hard and solid facts, with how much more force should these very experiences apply to Bhaktas who incessantly performed their devotions with inexhaustible faith? As in the case of Prahlada, the beatings and the tortures inflicted on his body at the instance of his father, Hiranyakasipu caused him no physical pain, so in the case of Ramadas too, the whipping, binding, and other methods of torture employed by the faithful servants of the Mussalman King, produced no painful effect on Ramadas and ever and anon the tales of such strange experiences carried to Tanisha caused only to provoke his vengeance all the more, each discomfiture suggesting new and novel methods of torture to be employed against him, while Ramadas though apparently undergoing these bodily penalties, felt always inwardly happy and always praised and sang the Lord's name.

His various sufferings.

The following are the methods used by Tanisha to force money from Gopanna.

- I. Binding hands and feet by the rope and whipping.
- II. Raising him by a long pointed pole and whirling him round.
- III. Placing a huge iron weight on the back and taking him round the streets.
- IV. Exposing him to the midday sun, by making him stand bare-footed on a burning boulder or rock.
- V. Threatening to thrust him with open swords.

The more the guards troubled him, the more he persisted in singing the name of Rama. One incessant repetition of the *Taraka Mantra* on his lips was the only answer he made to all the tortures they had put him to. Once Tanisha enquired of the guards to say if Ramadas had given any reply to his demands when they stated that he had been singing that 'Rama' his God would make payment. He came to see Gopanna who appeared as cheerful as ever. Some days after, a similar question having been put to the guards, they replied that they heard him saying that a certain sowcar, Ramji by name, of Bhadrachalam would pay the money for him. Then Tanisha ordered Ramadas to be brought before him, but when questioned, Ramadas gave the blunt reply that the money was already spent in the name of God and that he might do what he liked, upon which Tanisha sent him out in disgust.

The Reaction.

There is a culminating point to every sort of excess. That is the Law of nature. Even the steel-hearted Mussalman guards at last got disheartened and began to muse themselves thus: "Perhaps we are committing a great sin towards Allah's chosen disciple. Perhaps he is Allah himself, taking human shape." A reaction at last came upon the hitherto merciless guards who, feeling doubtful about their future fate and casting aside their devilish weapons of death, made *srams* to Ramadas and approached him in a spirit of

obedience and prayed of him to tell them how he was able to withstand all the merciless tortures which they had subjected him to.

He replied, "Rama, the God of Love, mercy and valour is the pure and sinless Saviour of all. He would save us from all danger and protect us, as does the mother, the child. He alone is to be praised on earth above all. The cloudy day is not inauspicious but that day when we do not sing and praise the name of Hari is verily an inauspicious day. Absolute surrender to Him brings one complete happiness. Bend low your heads to the Lord. Praise Him with your tongues. Hear His name with your ears. Think out his thoughts and He the ever pure and stainless Lord will appear before you and protect you from all danger. Such absolute dedication will carry you safe over the ocean of Samsara." So saying he went into raptures and began to dance and play singing Hari's name. The guards were surprised to find that he addressed Rama as if He were present before him. They felt that his God Rama was a true God and were deeply impressed with the sincerity of his prayers. Then again the spirit of the fanatic that was lurking behind the surprised Mussalman guards resisted them; they tottered; reason and intellectual quibbling came to their aid to shake what little faith was dawning upon them. They thought, "He is a mantrika, a sorcerer. He had run out the treasures of the State, embezzled them and now teaches us faith in a heathen God. False! All false! The sorcerer deceives us." So saying, they reported to Tanisha that it was impossible to get even a *cowdie* out of that maddened Ramadas. Tanisha was no more catholic than his bretheren of the faith. He the Defender of the Faith in name could never know the unbounded faith of Ramadas in his Ishta Deva. He ordered Ramadas to be now consigned to a dark cell in the prison and the order was no sooner given than carried.

His Solitary Confinement.

The prison is certainly a fine place for meditation as stated in a previous paragraph and now that he was confined, after all resources of torture at the disposal of the Nabob and his advisers had been exhausted, Ramadas was left alone undisturbed unlike on the previous occasion. Oh, to what poetic heights the mind of one would soar when one is confined to a cell freed from the buzz of the busy world, freed from all the trammels of Samsara. On such occasions, free to follow his own way, each man would create his own dream, form his own hopes and pursue his own practices. And in the case of a man like our hero, who from birth had been of a deeply devotional nature, whose heart beat in unison and harmony with the tune of the Infinite, who for want of a name had called the same Infinite by the personal name of Ramā, to him, this solitary confinement extended the opportunity to compose a centum of chaste and beautiful verses in Telugu, known as Dasarathi Satakam.

His Poetry.

We quote below two selections out of the centum to show the strain of the music that was set so deftly in inimitable verse in immortal Andhra.

"To thee I abandon myself entirely. Do call me Sinner if you please, but what sin attaches to the servant of Thy servant's servant when he knows not what sin is. Art thou not the back ground of the whole Universe O Lord? I know not aught but to resign myself to Thee. Throw me where Thou Likest, only grant me to serve Thee."

"Thou Immortal God! Omnipresent! All knowledge! I cannot refrain from singing Thy name. Protect this, Thy son, and purge him from all sin. Speak, O Rama, in the inner chamber of my heart which I reserved for Thee." The mysticism contained in these verses is typical of the Bhakti that Kabir's poems also convey.

A leap from the Personal to the Impersonal and from the Impersonal to the Personal is a feat that the Eastern mystics so easily perform, while the mind weighed and over burdened with the philosophic notions of the west has not yet grasped the relation between the two.

The Scene Transformed.

Ramadas underwent the jail experiences for about twelve years. He then found at the end of the twelfth year, a hukum from the Nabob releasing him from the jail and praying that Ramadas might grant audience in his Durbar. To the sound of the music and the drums, and gaily dressed against his will, the be-maddened Ramadas suddenly found himself taken to the Durbar hall of the Nabob who had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of Ramadas. Immediately Ramadas entered the hall, when in the presence of the grand array of gaudily appalled courtiers, ministers and commanders, Tanisha fell prostrate at the feet of Gopanna. The latter's surprise knew no bounds and after the first surprise had subsided, Ramadas drew him up and enquired what all that meant when Tanisha made the following disclosure, all present hearing with wrapt attention.

"Last night while alone asleep, I had a vision in which two men with beaming, beautiful countenances, dressed after rich merchant men in flowing gowns of yellow and purple and calling themselves brothers appeared and on my questioning who they were, replied, that they were called Ramji and Lakshmanji, servants of one Gopanna the Tukidar of Bhadrachalam, that they were prepared to pay up the dues of State left by their master. I said that 6 lakhs of varahas was the amount due to the treasury. They immediately let loose the strings of their purses and poured down a heap of Treasure in gold coin. My wonder knew no bounds. I intuitively felt a strong desire to do them a good service, and due honour. They stayed not but demanded a receipt for the amount. I gave one without counting the money feeling sure that it must count much more than 6 lakhs by the height of the heap. They departed hurriedly. After their departure, I felt doubtful if all was true or a creation of my own fancy. I also doubted how at midnight anyone could have dared to enter the bed room of the harem

and how the guards who kept watch had allowed the men in. To make myself sure I woke up and woke, up my queen also and both of us examined the treasure which rested safe on the ground floor."

Ramadas elated at his honourable release and the way in which his God at last helped him out of the incarceration in jail by taking his debt upon Him praised the Lord in great ecstasy, the chorus being taken up and sung by all present in the hall including the Nabob and other Mussalman courtiers etc. Such is the power of Bhakti.

Strange Revelations.

The story becomes incomplete unless what had become of the receipt obtained by Rama is known to us. And we ask the reader to patiently hear what Ramadas says to complete the thrilling story by narrating his part as follows :—

"My trials were unlimited. To the last, I endured all the torture to which I was subjected. But the physical frame growing weaker day by day, I lost all hope of the body bearing further suffering. I then resolved, the same day, that if my God Rama did not appear to me nor devise some means by which I could be released from the prison, I thought of putting an end to my life by taking poison. I kept watch till midnight praying to the Lord, but eventually upon my eyelids dawned sleep. I awoke after a time and found myself in the same situation, in the same solid solitary cell as before. But then I prayed for the last time. I fell into a reverie. Coming back to senses, I felt certain that there was no hope of being released. Then flashed upon my memory the thought of how the Lord saved Gajendra, Droupadi, Prahlada, Vibhishana and so forth and lastly when I saw that He did not appear to save me I began to curse Him. That attempt also failed. I once more had conjured up before my mental vision the form of a Personal God as did the Bhaktas above enumerated and lost myself in my mental worship. I felt a hit which brought me back to consciousness but what did I find? Two human forms dispatching with great haste. I could not recognize them. But when I looked around me, I found that my cup of poison was upset and removed to a distance. Following that experience, I found myself already surrounded by men who brought me rich apparel to wear and bidding me to his Durbar where I now stand."

Tanisha's Regret.

"We next find that Tanisha having learnt that the two radiant Beings that figured before him in the vision of the previous night were none other than the Lord Rama and his brother, Lakshmana, profoundly regretted for his indifference towards them in spite of a passing thought that had occurred to him that he should do them due obeisance and honour. He sincerely prayed Ramadas to pardon him for the troubles he had put him to in his ignorance of the greatness of his Devotion, asked his blessings and prayed that he might be pleased to stay with him for some days more.

(To be concluded.)

NOTES AND NEWS.

With profound sorrow, we have to record the sad, premature death of Sister Sudhira on the 23rd November last, at Benares Ramakrishna Sevashrama. She was the Lady Superintendent of the Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta. Since the demise of Sister Nivedita, her school and other educational activities of the Mission were kept up by Sister Christina and Sister Sudhira. For the last seven years, the institutions were entirely under the management of the latter.

When Sri Swami Vivekanandaji started the organisation of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood with the monastery at Belur as its chief habitat, it was his fond dream to start a similar institution also for women, where they will be trained up in the ideals of renunciation and service and solve for themselves the educational problem of women in India. But in his life-time, as no such an efficient Indian lady as to take charge of such an institution was available, he could not start it then, although a nucleus of the organisation for female education was started in the form of the girls' School in Baghbazar quarter of Calcutta, under the direct supervision of his illustrious disciple Sister Nivedita.

Sister Sudhira joined this school as a teacher as well as a student some twelve years ago, and she was trained up with particular care by the late Sister Nivedita. Subsequently after three or four years the entire charge of the school fell upon her, and she began to develop the institution in various ways; and what was more, it was she who could concretise the dream of the great Swami into a home, which was named 'Matri-mandir,' where a number of young ladies and girls are taken up for training and the whole organisation was placed under the spiritual influence and loving care of our late blessed Holy Mother with the guiding control of the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission. The austere life of renunciation of Sister Sudhira inspired a number of young ladies who have joined the 'Matri-mandir' and like her dedicated their whole life in the service of God and their own Mother country. The establishment of this Matri-mandir is a great achievement of the late sister. Through her untiring labour and wonderful organising capacity, a number of Girls' Schools and similar institutions have been started in different parts of Bengal. Her amiable disposition, motherly love and noble method of discipline brought forth so much success within such a short time in their lives. Her method of education was quite in accord with the national genius of the Hindu race and was perfectly imbued with spiritual ideals of life. She commanded the love and esteem of all who came in contact with her.

Recently, she had been to Allahabad on a pilgrimage. On her way back to Benares, when the train was nearing Benares Cantonment Station, she fell down from the running train through the open door, being unable to bear a sudden jerk. She was carried from the place of accident to the Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Benares, in an unconscious state and passed away into Mahasamadhi on the following day. The soul of the devotee fled to the bosom of the Lord creating a great void among the workers of the great cause. She was only about 32 years of age when she passed away. It is too premature a shock for the infant institution. It is a novel enterprise of the immortal Swamiji which was being fulfilled by the untiring activity of his brother disciples and devotees. At this time, when the constant care and loving attention of a sincere soul are always required to bear the responsibilities of guiding the organisation along the right lines, we are extremely mortified and are unable to express our feelings at this tragic event which makes us feel the pang of separation of a true worker. Peace be to her soul!

• An esteemed correspondent from America writes:—

As is customary each year, seventeen members of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco spent the month of June at the Shanti Ashrama in the St. Antoine Valley in the practice of Yoga with our beloved teacher the Swami Prakashananda. For the first time the men predominated in numbers. It is a cause for great congratulation that our Swami seems gifted with the power of drawing all sincere souls to a point of intense ardor and devotion towards God. In this western world where the great struggle and reaching out is for material gain, and sense enjoyments, it is very noticeable and uplifting to see so many young men turn their backs on the worldly things and seriously strive to follow the teachings that the Swami so benevolently gives them.

At first the attempts at meditation and concentration require all our courage and determination, and for the first time we are face to face with ourselves as we are, and not as we would like to be or should be. Then too, comes the realization of how very practical are the methods taught for gaining the mastery of self, thereby making a foundation for real spiritual growth, and so with our efforts each day there comes a peace and contentment in the fact that we have at last taken a real and vital step in our evolution.

To the spreading oak tree which bears the symbol of Siva on its three sides we repaired three times a day for meditation. Under its huge limbs which reach far out covering the platforms is an atmosphere of peace and holiness made so by the many chantings of the name of the Lord and by the Swamis who have visited the place for years.

The meditation begins with chanting by the Swami; then a half hour's meditation, followed by reading from the "Life of Sri Ramakrishna," "Crest Jewel of Discrimination," "Upanishads"; a hymn ended the hour's devotion and while the students returned to their cabins singing praises to the Lord as they went.

• The weather this year was ideal, and as the students took charge of the details in the kitchen (cooking, etc.) the Swami was enabled to enjoy somewhat of a rest which was urgently needed after his strenuous year of lecturing in the city.

And the night of nights!—"Dhuni night"—was celebrated on the 19th of June,—a night that stays stamped on our memories as the most sacred and solemn of the year, with the walking around the sacred fire, with the chanting "Hari bol! Hari bol!" followed by meditation and hours of reading by the Swami from "Gurugita," "Upanishad," etc., an occasional hymn by the ladies, then more reading from Swami Vivekananda's works.

After the midnight offering into the fire for purification of our heart and soul many students were given Sanskrit names by the Swami. The ceremony commenced by invoking the Holy Oms and our Blessed Lord Sri Ramakrishna to bless each and every student there. If ever prayer was answered then surely our Lord Ramakrishna must have come at the deep earnest call of our Guru to Him. The hill upon which we stood seemed to lift us closer to heaven, and as the night was cloudless there seemed to be no barrier between us and the Infinite, so peaceful and holy was everything. After the bestowing of the Sanskrit name Swami requested each student to say a few words. Then was displayed how deep and sincere was the devotion of the student. For men who had a short time before been worldly were overcome by the exquisite exultation of love and devotion and found it difficult to express themselves.

Truly a wonderful privilege is ours to have such close association with a great soul and through him to be in touch with a Saviour of the World.

Swami Paramananda of the Vedanta Centre, Boston, spent some time in June 1920 in Cincinnati, U. S. A., and gave a series of lectures on "Vedanta," "Spiritual Consecration," "Life after Death," and "Unity and Universality" were three of the best lectures. His lectures were greatly appreciated by his audience. This is the fourth visit of the Swami to Cincinnati. The steady growth of interest has led to the formation of a study group.

We are glad to go through the report of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta, for 1919. It was started many years ago. But the society was animated for the last four years by the complexity of works and

different spheres of activity. The Institution arranged 41 public religious lectures, 12 monthly classes and 37 weekly religious classes. It organised some anniversaries and conducted a good library and a free reading room, besides the services of the worship room. The Society has a charitable dispensary attached to it, treating 1,584 cases of which 843 were new. 37 students were helped with monthly stipends and a few students were partially helped for their examination fees. Relief works formed its part of activity. The Society had an increase of 131 members on its rolls during the year. The total income and expenditure were Rs. 3,171-15-6 and Rs. 3,259-0-9 respectively. Though the Society is rendering great help to the public by responding to the great message of the immortal Swamiji in various ways, it could not have a firm footing of its own. It is labouring under great pecuniary disadvantage. We are very glad to learn that a fund is being collected for the purpose. We firmly believe, the organisers will shortly be crowned with success.

We are glad to note that one branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math has been opened at Bhavanipore on the southern side of Calcutta. A devotee made a gift of the Math House and about 150 people gathered to celebrate the occasion. Worship, *homa*, etc., were made on the 17th November last, the opening day of the Math, under the supervision of Swami Shivananda of the Belur Math.

Acknowledgment.

We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of the following books, which will be reviewed in the next issues of our journal:

1. National Education in India, by Lajpat Rai
2. Josiah C. Wedgwood (The Man and his Work)
Publishers—S. GANESAN & Co.
3. The Call to Young India, by Lajpat Rai.
4. Goods and Bads, by Alban G. Widgery.
5. The Heart of the Bhagavadgita by Lingesha Mahabhagavat,
6. Rabindra Nath Tagore : a Critical study of his later works,
by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri,

CHAPTER VIII.

अन्नं न परिचक्षीत । तद् व्रतम् । आपो वा अन्नम् ।
ज्योतिरन्नादश्च । अप्सु ज्योतिः प्रतिष्ठितम् । ज्योतिष्यापः प्रतिष्ठिताः ।
तदेतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् । स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् वेद प्रतितिष्ठति ।
अन्नवानन्नादो भवति । महान् भवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन ।
महान् कीर्त्या ॥

अन्नं food न not परिचक्षीत should reject तत् that व्रतम् vow.
आपः water वा again अन्नम् food ज्योतिः fire (heat) अन्नादम् consumer
of food, अप्सु in water ज्योतिः light प्रतिष्ठितम् rests, ज्योतिषि in light
आपः water प्रतिष्ठिताः is based तत् so एतत् this अन्नम् food अन्ने in food
प्रतिष्ठितम् is established सः he यः who एतत् this अन्नम् food अन्ने, in
food प्रतिष्ठितम् is established, etc.

Let him not reject food : that is the vow. Water is food. The fire is consumer of food. On water rests fire and in fire rests water. So food rests in food. He who knows that food thus rests on food is established. He becomes rich in food and becomes eater of food. He becomes great by children, by cattle and by spiritual lustre. He becomes great by fame.

Water is food etc.—As water that is drunk is digested by the heat of the stomach, so water is called here food and fire *i. e.* the heat of the stomach, the consumer of it.

Or as crops grow with the aid of water, so water is the cause of food and so again it may be called as food itself. And it is the *Jyotih i. e.* heat and light that help the growth of human body by the assimilation of food; so *Jyotih* is described here as consumer of food.

On water rests fire etc.—As the lightning is present in the rain water and as perspiration occurs when the body is heated, water and fire are regarded as each other's support, and for the same reason they are contemplated as each other's food.]

अन्नम् बहु कुर्वीत । तद्व्रतम् । पृथिवी वा अन्नम् ।
आकाशोऽन्नादः । पृथिव्यामाकाशः प्रतिष्ठितः । आकाशे पृथिवी
प्रतिष्ठिता । तदेतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् । स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् वेद
प्रतिष्ठिति । अन्नवानन्नादो भवति । महान् भवति । प्रजया पशुभि
र्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान् कीर्त्या ।

अन्नम् food बहु much कुर्वीत make. तद् that व्रतम् vow, पृथिवी
the earth अन्नम् food आकाशः the sky or the ether अन्नादः consumer
of food पृथिव्याम् on earth आकाशः ether प्रतिष्ठितः rests. आकाशे
in the ether पृथिवी the earth प्रतिष्ठिता is established तद् so एतद् this
अन्नम् food, etc.

Let him acquire plenty of food : that is the vow. The
earth is the food and the ether is the consumer of food.
On earth rests the ether and in the ether, the earth is
established. So thus food is established in food. He
who knows that food thus rests on food, is established.
He becomes rich in food and becomes eater of food. He
becomes great by children, by cattle and by spiritual
lustre. He becomes great by fame.

[The earth is the food, etc.:—As the earth is enveloped by ether
on all sides, it may be looked upon as the food and the ether as the
consumer of the food. And for the same reason, both may be
contemplated as resting upon each other by their close contact.
And the devotee should meditate upon both as the food of each
other.

Note: In the last three chapters, glorified conceptions of food
are enjoined for contemplation ; it begins with *prana* and cultivates
in the contemplation of the earth and the sky; thus the notion of
food which is so vital for the earthly existence of man and on which
all his interest is practically based, is sublimated to such an extent as
to evoke a universal concept of the same, and thereby it means to
render an expansion of this self and self-interest as well, without
which it is not easy to pursue the spiritual life.]

न कंचन वसतौ प्रत्याचक्षीत । तद्व्रतम् । तस्माद्यया कया
च विधया बहुन्नं प्राप्नुयात् । अराध्यस्मा अन्नमित्याचक्षते ।
एतद्वै मुखतोऽन्नं राद्धम् । मुखतोऽस्मा अन्नं राध्यते । एतद्वै
मध्यतोऽन्नं राद्धम् । मध्यतोऽस्मा अन्नं राध्यते । एतद्वा अन्ततोऽन्नं
राद्धम् । अन्ततोऽस्मा अन्नम् राध्यते । य एवं वेद ।

कंचन any one वसतौ from the house न प्रत्याचक्षीत should not
be turned away. तद् that व्रतम् vow. तस्मात् therefore यया कया by
whatever विधया means बहु much अन्नम् food प्राप्नुयात् gather अस्मै
for him अराधि prepared, well-cooked अन्नम् food (अस्ति is) इति thus
आचक्षते (they) say एतद् this अन्नम् food वै verily मुखतः in the best
manner. राद्धम् given अस्मा to him अन्नम् food मुखतः in the best
manner राध्यते given एतद् this अन्नम् food वै verily मध्यतः in the
medium manner राद्धम् prepared अस्मै for him अन्नम् food मध्यतः
in the medium way राध्यते given एतद् this अन्नम् food अन्ततः in the
low manner राद्धम् is prepared अस्मै for him अन्नम् food अन्ततः in the
lowest way राध्यते is given. यः he who एवम् thus वेद knows.

None seeking shelter should be turned away: that is the
vow. Therefore by whatever means let him acquire much
food. For him, food is ready,—they say. If food is pre-
pared in the best manner, food is given him also in the
best manner. If the food is prepared in the medium
manner, to him food is given also in the medium way.
But if the food is prepared in the lowest manner, food is
also given to him in the lowest manner. He who knows
this, (gets also the similar results).

[None seeking shelter, etc.—i.e., he who meditates upon the earth
and the sky in the aforesaid manner, should not turn away any guest
seeking shelter, in his house: that should be the vow of the devotee.

Therefore by whatever means, etc.:—i. e. when guests come, not
only they should be given shelter, but also food; hence much food
should be acquired for the purpose ; that is the Dharma of a house-

holder, as the Sruti enjoins that an inhospitable person is debarred from all good, both here and hereafter, (*vide Katha up 1,8.*)

By 'whatever means' of course, is referred here the honest means of earning livelihood in accordance with the mandate of Sruti and Smriti and *shistachara* (the practices of the noble persons).

For him is ready, etc. :—The Sruti quotes here the custom of the wise and the virtuous : whenever guests come to a wise man's house, he never turns them away ; on the other hand, always offers them food, by saying that it is ready for them. So this is another reason why much food should be acquired.

If the food is prepared in the best manner etc. :—i. e., if food is prepared in the best manner and offered to the guests amply and with much courtesy and humility, the giver is blessed in return with ample food in the next life. The best manner means the *Sattvic* manner. (cf. Bhag. gita XVIII, 20-22.)

If the food is prepared in the medium manner etc. :—i. e., if the preparation of food is neither ample nor with much care or devotion and if it is offered with vanity and reluctance, it is called gift of medium value or *Rajasic* gift, and the giver gets only the merit of medium kind, and in his future birth, food accrues to him in the medium way.

If the food is prepared in the lowest manner etc. :—It refers to the *Tamasic* way of making a gift of food when food is prepared meanly and offered with insult and disregard. So the giver gets equally a mean return of food in the future life.]

क्षेम इति वाचि । योगक्षेम इति प्राणापानयोः । कर्मेति हस्तयोः । गतिरिति पादयोः । विमुक्तिरिति पायौ । इति मानुषीः समाज्ञाः ।

क्षेमः Preservation इति thus वाचि in speech योगक्षेमः (योगः+क्षेमः) acquisition and preservation इति thus प्राणापानयोः in the Prana and the Apana कर्म activity इति thus हस्तयोः in the two hands. गतिः movement पादयोः in the two feet विमुक्तिः evacuation पायौ in the anus इति so far मानुषीः human समाज्ञाः meditations.

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

VOL. VII.]

JANUARY 1921.

[No. 9.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda

(Continued from P. 231.)

However, when Mathura mohan came back to Janbazar, he did not lose the first opportunity to report to Rani Rasamani about the wonderful mode of worship, Gadadhar was performing in the temple. The Rani was besides herself with joy when she heard about it. She had already formed a very high, favourable opinion about the young priest for his keen intellect, his sincere yearning, and his fervent devotion, so it was no wonder to her that young Gadadhar might win the grace of the Mother so soon. But anyhow she wanted to see for herself his mode of worship. So she came to the temple at Dakshineswar. She took her bath in the Ganges and went inside the room and sat before the image for the worship. Then she requested Gadadhar to sing her some songs in praise of the Mother while she was engaged in the worship. In compliance to the request, the Master sat near the Rani and began to sing the songs. As usual, he lost himself soon in the aroma of emotion of those songs, and for the time being, the temple, the Rani and all the surroundings disappeared from his consciousness, and what existed in his mind were the Divine Mother and Her devoted child.

in him. Sometime passed in this wise and all on a sudden the master stopped his song as if held up by some uncongenial thought-wave; he rushed to the Rani and gave a blow on her person, bluffly remarking;—'Even here you are thinking the same thing!' In fact just then her mind was deeply contemplating over the issue of a case that was pending in the Court, although she was externally engaged in the worship of the Deity. So her thoughts were perceived by the Master and to bring her to her senses and teach her a spiritual lesson, he gave her the blow. But it had its salutary effect upon the Rani, when it rudely awakened her from her reverie of worldly thought, she felt much abashed and stricken with self-compunction. Further she was much amazed to find her thoughts thus read by Gadadhar in such an unscrutable way. However, the action produced a great row in the temple among her servants and they all thought of punishing him for the behaviour. But understanding their attitude the Rani warned them not to do anything of the kind. The incident produced a very deep impression, we are told, upon the Rani and her estimation of the Master was very much heightened.

In connection with this incident we may point out to our readers that such things happened more or less in the lives of all great spiritual teachers of the world. For instances, we may refer to the behaviour of Jesus in the temple of Yave in Jerusalem towards those who were holding shops within the sacred precincts and how he beat them with a cane. In the life of Krishna we notice the same fact when he goes out to punish the wicked and the worldly in order to bring them round to the path of Dharma and godliness. In the life of Sri Chaitanya similar incident happened when he went with his band of minstrels to punish the Mahammedan Magistrate Kaji.

Within a short time after the above mentioned incident, the spiritual ardour and ecstasy of the Master ran so high as to make it quite impossible for him to carry out any more the functions of daily worship of the Mother. It is one of the sayings of the Master, that, as in the case of a daughter-in-law in a house, so long as she is not with child, her mother-in-law allows her to do all sorts of work of the household. But when she becomes enciente, with the advancement of her period, the mistress of the house, lessens her work gradually and keeps a close watch upon her well-being. At last when her time for confinement draws nigh she stops all her work in consideration of the welfare of the child in the womb. And when the child is actually born, her whole time is devoted only in nursing the babe. So is also with spiritual devotees,—as their ardour and

devotion for God-realisation increases—as they advance in the path of devotional practices, their attention to external work and worldly life grows less and less. At last when the God-realisation is attained, all Karma falls off of themselves. The truth of the saying was literally demonstrated in the life of the Master! In this period of his life, as his all-absorbing devotion and love for the Divine Mother was gradually increasing in volume and intensity, the work of the daily external worship and such other formal duties of life began to fall off from him quite naturally. As we have said before, at that time his mind outgrew all the limitations of the mandatory form of worship, known as *Vaidhi Bhakti*; and so under the impulses of his mad love for the Mother, he would do things which would look quite improper in the ordinary eye: he observed, henceforth, no time limitation or punctuality about his worship, nor any ordered method in its process. And the Master often told us that he did so because he was having then a constant vision of the Divine Mother. We have further heard that at that time whenever there occurred a break or a cessation in the appearance of that blessed vision, he used to become frantic with grief, rent his heart with wail of woe and rubbed his face on the earth in the very bitterness of anguish! Sometimes, he used to knock his head in that mood with stones, so much so, that blood used to ooze out. But he was quite unmindful of the physical pain, so great was the pang he felt in his heart. But the next moment the cloud of anguish used to pass away, the mist cleared up before his eyes, and he beheld the blessed form of the Mother radiant with the halo of divine light and joy.

Hitherto, the daily worship of the divine image was being carried on by him somehow or other. But now it became quite impossible to carry it out any more. So, Mathur Babu thought of making another arrangement for the continuance of the regular worship. In this connection, Hriday told us of an incident as follows: One day when both Mathur Babu and Hriday were inside the temple, the Master got up from his seat of worship in a peculiar spiritual mood and taking Hriday by the hand, made him sit on that seat and told Mathur Babu, 'From to-day forwards, Hriday shall worship the Mother. Mother is telling that She will accept the offerings from Hriday as She does from me.' And the reliant Mathur took the words of the Master in full faith as the veritable command of the Deity and made the necessary changes in the worship accordingly. We are not quite sure how far this narration of Hriday is true, but it is certain, that seeing the condition of Gadadhar, Mathur must have understood that it was not possible

for the Master to conduct the regular worship any longer and so he made the subsequent changes.

Here we may as well mention incidentally about the growing feeling of love and admiration of Mathur Babu for Gadadhar. We have already said, in the previous chapter, that from the very first day he saw the Master, he felt an inexplicable attraction for him. Afterwards as days passed, and as he came to know more and more about the graces of his nature, his kind regard deepened into love and admiration. And under its spell he was always eager to serve him in the way as occasions demanded and keep him in the temple at all costs by warding off all difficulties and dangers from the Master.

One day, when Gadadhar went into the Siva temple and was reading out the famous hymn on siva, called *Śiva Mahimastotra*, and as he came to the verse that tells about the glory of Siva, that it is so great that if the ocean be the ink-pot and the great Himalaya mountain be ink dissolved in it, and if the trunk of the celestial tree *Kalpātaru* be the pen to write with and the face of the broad earth be the paper to write upon and if the goddess of learning, Saraswati herself writes through all eternity, still it cannot be fully described, his mind was so taken up by the ideas expressed in the verse that he forgot himself and all his surroundings and cried out with the fullness of his devotion, "Oh Lord Mahadeva, infinite is Thy glory; how can I describe it?" His eyes opened the flood-gate of tears, and he lost all his consciousness in the thought of the Great God. He cried so loudly that it attracted quite a crowd at the temple-door and some among the crowd thought that he had actually gone mad and wanted to remove him by force from the temple. But just then Mathur Babu turned up to the place and understanding the whole affair at a glance, posted himself at the door of the temple and commanded the crowd with a determined voice, not to molest or disturb the Master at that time. When Gadadhar came to his normal consciousness he saw Mathur Babu standing near the door. Being frightened at the sight like a child, he asked Mathur Babu if he had done anything wrong in that state of ecstasy. To that Mathur Babu replied with great reverence "No, Sir, you have not done anything wrong. You went into ecstasy while reading out the hymn and lest somebody without understanding, you might cause disturbance, I am standing here to guard you."

Another incident that happened about this time which further enhanced Mathur Babu's admiration for the Master, as we have heard it from the Master himself, we give below in his own words:—

"Once Mathur told me that even God had to obey the laws of His own making; whatever laws He had made once; He could

not undo them any more. To that I replied, 'what nonsense are you talking! If it is He who has made the laws, certainly He can undo them whenever He likes, or, He can change one law into another. But he did not take my word in good grace then. He remarked, 'Well, only red flowers are produced of the tree that gives out red flowers, and no white flowers can ever come out from that tree; because such is the law He Himself has made. This, He cannot violate Himself. He cannot produce now a white flower from the tree of red flowers.' 'He can do everything,' I replied, 'whatever He desires. He can do also what you say.'

"At that time he did not believe me. Next day when I went towards the jungle in the garden I saw there in a hybiscus plant on the same stalk, there were blossoming two flowers one white and another red,—and the plant itself was of the red variety. The white flower was of snowy whiteness, without even a spot of red mark on it! I at once plucked both the flowers along with the stem and showed them to Mathur. He then acknowledged that he was wrong and what I said was true."

But the conduct of Gadadhar towards the Rani might have roused some suspicion in the mind of Mathuranath as regards his sanity. Though he admired, nay, at times, wondered at the uncommon devotion and godliness of the Master, yet worldly minded as he was, he could not understand the full depth and significance of the Master's spirituality. He thought the uncommon effusion of spirituality in him might have had touched his brain also. And so, he made arrangements for the medical treatment of the Master under the then famous physician of Calcutta Kaviraj Ganga Prasad sen. At about that time, in the year 1265 B.S. (1858 A.D.) a cousin of Gadadhar, Ram Tarak Chattopadhyaya by name, happened to come to the temple of Dakshineswar in search of an employment and so Mathur Babu appointed him in the worship of the Mother Kali until the recovery of Gadadhar.

The Master used to call Rama Tarak by the name of Haladhari. We have heard much about him from the Master. He was a good scholar and orthodox devotee. He had very great liking for such holy books like *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Adhyatma Ramayanam*, and used to read them every day. He was more devoted to Vishnu than to Shakti. Still he had no prejudice against the latter. So, although he was a devotee of Vishnu, yet he accepted the post of a priest of the temple of Kali. But in one function he could not whole-heartedly join in the worship of the Divine Mother: it is customary in the Shakti temple to offer animal sacrifice and this he did not approve with all his heart.

Those days when there used to be animal sacrifices in the temple, he did not feel much ease of mind, nor could he devote his whole heart in the worship of the Mother. In this way he worshipped in the Kali temple for about a month, and, it is reported that one day when he was engaged in the worship, he beheld in a vision the appearance of the Divine Mother in a terrible form, and She commanded him to get up from the seat of worship and get away from the temple and that She did not like his worshipping and She told him that for his defective worship, he should suffer the bereavement of his son. And within a short time after this, it is said, Haladhari got the news of the death of his son. So, being thus terrified, he gave up the worshipping of the Kali and became the priest of the Radha Govindaji temple. And Hriday began to worship the Divine Mother henceforth. The above incident, we heard from Raja Ram, the younger brother of Hriday.

STUDIES IN MANTRA SHASTRA.

(Dhyanī).

BY

Arthur Avalon.

Motion may be either produced or unproduced. The latter is the causal stress itself and the former the effect of it. In the world, sound is produced by the contact of one thing with another—of (say) the hand and the drum in case of unlettered sound and the vocal organs and air in the case of uttered speech. Causal stress itself is uncreate, is self-produced and not caused by the striking of one thing against another. For this reason it is called Anāhata. This Anāhata Shabda which is Brahman-movement is heard in the heart which it has produced and which it causes to pulse, a movement which we can feel and hear.

This uncreated self-existing Shabda as causal stress manifests in double form as unlettered sound or Dhvani and is thus called Dhvanyātmaka Shabda and as lettered sound or Varna which is Varnātmaka Shabda. And so the Bhāṣāparīchchheda says:—

Shabdo dhvanishcha varnashcha mridangādibhavo dhvanih,
Kantha-sangyoga-janmāno varnādyāh kādayo matāh.

That is Shabda is of two kinds—Dhvani and Varna. The first is illustrated in the sound given forth by a drum and the like. In the production of the second the throat organ is exercised and it is manifested as Ka, Kha and the other letters of the Alphabet. That is in certain sounds such as the beating of a drum, the roar of thunder, the sounds of laughing, crying and so forth no letters appear to be manifested (Varna-visheshānabhivyanjaka) but that in certain others, letters or Varnas are manifested as in the case of sounds of articulate speech. The former class are called Dhyanis and the latter Varnas.

In both cases it is to be observed that sound is produced by the clashing (abhighāta) of two created things, viz., the drum and the hand or drumstick and the vocal organs in contact with the circumambient air.

The distinction therefore between the two classes does not depend upon this—(1) that whilst Varnas are produced by the mutual impact of the throat, air, and the ear, the Dhvanis are produced by an assemblage of conditions of which the throat is not one. In other words the Vyāpāra or functioning of the vocal organ does not constitute the distinction between Dhvanyātmaka and Varnātmaka Shabda. For the vocal organ is exercised in laughing, crying and so forth and also in the cries of animals, but in them we hear no Varnātmaka Shabda or articulate speech. Thus Dhvanis may be produced by the vocal organs. (2) Nor can it be said that the exercise of the vocal organs is the *sine qua non* of the Varnātmaka Shabda. Thus when we hear articulate sounds over the telephone or from a gramophone, the immediate cause of the sound is not the Vyāpāra of the vocal organ; though the non-immediate cause may be so. Nor again (3) can we say that the Varnātmaka Shabdas are in all cases significant or expressive of meanings and that the Dhvanyātmakas are in all cases insignificant. In a general sense this is so, and thus, in common parlance, we speak of Varnātmaka Shabda as having a meaning and Dhvani as being without it. But this is not necessarily and always so. Doubtless to Ishvara every Dhvani has a meaning, and even to us unlettered sound may express a meaning. Again some Varnātmaka Shabdas may not. For even to a man who knows a particular language any combination of letters or any combinations of words will not be expressive language—but only letters in certain order and combination. Thus the sound of laughter or crying is Dhvanyātmaka yet the sound may express a meaning in the sense that it is recognised at once from the sound that a particular person is happy or in trouble. Many of the Dhvanis, of animals may be significant

in this sense. The sound of a bell, bugle, or drum may be suggestive of meaning as in the case of the midday gun. On the other hand many Varnātmakas may not express a meaning. Thus the combination M, A, N has a meaning and spells "man" in English but M, N, A and other combinations (except N, A, M which may have some sort of meaning) do not express meaning. Each letter separately may have a meaning. According to the Vyāsa Bhāṣya on Yoga each Varna is capable of expressing all Arthas or meanings. But any arbitrary combination of separate letters will not give a meaning. A special combination of Varnas is necessary to express a special meaning. Electricity may be latent in all material objects but we require to make special combinations of such objects (e.g., zinc, copper and sulphuric acid in a cell) to make such electricity patent. Any arbitrary combinations (e.g. of wood, water and oil) will not effect this. In an unsuitable combination of Varnas, their Shaktis check the one the other.

The distinction between the two classes is therefore a distinction between sounds which manifest themselves as letters and others which do not. The former are usually produced by the throat (Kāṇṭha-sangyoga-janmānah) but not invariably. On the other hand, as we have seen, Dhvanis too may be so produced. Both Varnas and Dhvanis again are momentary (Kṣhanika). Both therefore are produced by the contact (Abhigāta) of two or more created things. Let the letter 'Ka' be uttered a hundred times. Each time it is a different sound which is uttered. Again one person says 'Ka' and then another says Ka. The sounds again are different. The sounds produced and heard in these cases are indeed different. Nevertheless we may still recognise that one Varna sound, e.g., 'Ka' is being uttered by oneself all those hundred times and by oneself and the other person. We recognise here oneness in the midst of all differences of the individual sounds produced and heard. The recognition (pratyabhijñāna) takes this form :—

"It is the same 'Ka' that I utter now and that I uttered a moment before. It is the same Ka that you have uttered and I have uttered." Western psychology may attempt an explanation of this recognition of Varna-identity by comparison, abstraction and assimilation. Thus if Ka is uttered by one person ten times, actually different sounds are produced, varying in pitch, softness, harshness and so on. If another person utters the same letter ten times, then each of them is a different sound and the sounds are also different from the sounds produced by the first person. But though all these Dhvanis are different in pitch, timbre and the like,

it will be admitted that both persons have uttered the same letter. Western psychology would explain this as follows :—

The Dhvanis are different but we make a rapid comparison of them and find that though they have differences in pitch, timbre, etc., still they have a great deal of similarity. The differences are then thought away or abstracted and then the twenty sounds are assimilated so as to give us a generic sound which we recognise as the Varna sound "Ka." It is in this way also that we form the generic notion of "Man" or "Book." The generic sound Ka is not something that actually exists apart from the twenty variations which either of the two persons mentioned have heard. On the contrary the variations are the actual phenomena. The type (the generic sound) is simply our mental construction through comparison, abstraction and assimilation. To a mind which cannot compare abstract and assimilate the sounds are different sounds and it cannot recognise any typical sound in their midst. The Indian theory on the subject is, on the other hand, as follows :—

The Varnas or letters have imperishable and invariable (Nitya) forms. As the Paramāṇus or prime "atoms" of matter are imperishable so are the Varna-shabdas. "Nitya" however here means "imperishable" so long as the cosmic order itself lasts. *Natu madhye varnānām utpatti-vināśau.* (Vedānta Paribhāṣā). That is in the period of cosmic life beginning with creation (Sṛishti) and ending with dissolution (Laya) the Varna sounds persist. They are compared to a jar in a dark room which cannot by reason of darkness be seen. (Andhakāraṣṭha ghaṭānupalambhavat—Vedānta, Paribhāṣā) just as the jar existing in the dark may not be seen with the eyes. So the prime Shabdas or Varnas, though always given, may not be always manifested as acoustic phenomena. To be thus manifested they require a manifestor (Abhivyanjaka) or vehicle of expression. This vehicle (Abhivyanjaka) through which an eternal existing letter becomes an acoustic phenomenon now and then is called Dhvani. The period of cosmic life (Madhye) is a 100 years of Brahmā when the world dissolves (Laya). The Varnas persist during all these years of Brahmā—a time which is called Kalpa. In Laya they enter the germinal state as seeds of potency. This view is thus essentially different from that of ordinary western psychology. Plato's doctrine of ideal archetypes and their sensible variations comes nearer the Vedānta doctrine.

According to this the Varna-shabdas are always (i.e. during a Kalpa) actually going on (Nitya and Anāhata i.e., continuous and uninterrupted.)—produced by artificial means. But they are often unmani-

fest (Avyakta) to the gross perceptive organs. They become manifest (Vyakta) to gross sensibility through certain manifestors (Abhivyanjaka) which are the Dhvanis. Thus the Shabda "Om" is uninterruptedly going on, but this it is said, one can only hear in certain stages of Sādhana, or in a quiet place particularly during night time when there is little promiscuous interference of the sound-waves. The Kālimārti is an eternal symbol of the world-process (involving Chit and the play of Shakti) and the Garland of Letters (Mātrikās) on the breast of the Mother is also an eternal possession. Whether the Varnas are uttered and heard or not they are Anāhata sound-forms and according to Indian ideas they are more real and more actual than the variations (differing in pitch, timbre and so forth) which are uttered and heard. Thus the variations alone are not the actual phenomena as the ordinary western empiricist would hold.

Therefore a Dhvani as an acoustic manifestation of a Nitya Shabda is subject to all conditions of place, time and circumstance and is non-permanent (Anitya) and variable (Vikāri). This variableness and transitoriness which really pertain to the Abhivyanjaka Dhvani are transferred by us (through association) to the manifested letter (Varna). Thus we say "Ka is now produced and is no more." But really that which comes to be or ceases to be is the vehicle (Dhvani) and not the Varna-Shabda. As the Vedānta Paribhāṣhā says :—

Utpanno gākāra ityādi pratyakshantu so'yaṅ gākāra ityādi pratyabhijñā-virodhād apramānam. Varnābhivyanjakadhvanigatotpatti-nirūpita-paramparā-sambandha-vishayatvena pramānam vā. "The apprehension (pratyaksha that "Ga" is now produced) is not right apprehension because it conflicts with the recognition (pratyabhijñā) of the present 'Ga' (i.e., at present uttered and heard by me) being identical with all other 'Ga,' (i.e., those uttered and heard in the past). Or we may take it as a correct apprehension if we ascribe the idea of production to the Varnas (which are manifested but not produced) seeing that the Dhvanis which manifest themselves are produced and using a characteristic which really belongs to the manifestor for the manifested.

Shangkarāchārya discusses the theory of Varna and Sphota in his Shārīraka Bhāṣhya (1-3-28). He describes Dhvani in these words :—

Kah punarayaṅ dhvanir nāma yo durād ākarnayato varna-vivekam pratipadyamānasya karnapatham avatāraṭi pratyā-sīdatashcha mandatva—patutvādibhedam varneshvāsanjayati tān nivan-dhanāchchodāttādyā avisheshān avarnasvarūpadhvanikandhanāh.

Varnānāṅ pratyuchchāranāṅ pratyabhijñāya mānatvāt, etc." By Dhvani is to be understood that which is heard by a person listening from a distance without distinguishing the separate letters and which in the case of a person standing near by affects the letters with its own distinctions of high and low pitch and so forth. It is in this Dhvani that all the distinctions of Udātta, Anudātta and the like depend and not on the intrinsic nature of the letters which are recognised to be the same whenever pronounced.

When a man is heard shouting from a great distance we do not catch his actual words and yet we can hear the pitch, modulation and so forth of his voice. When he speaks close to us we catch his words as well as the modulation, pitch, sweetness or otherwise and so forth of his voice. In both cases the pitch, etc., of the sound constitute its Dhvani. These qualities of pitch, sweetness and the like do not inhere in the Varnas themselves but belong to their acoustic expression, the Dhvanis. Thus Dhvanis are (1) gross embodiments (Anitya, Vikāri) of nitya avikāri varna-Shabdas ; (2) other gross sounds (either produced in nature such as the sound of the storm or produced by ourselves such as laughter or the sound of musical instruments) which do not appear to us as embodying Varna Shabdas. Those who believe (such as the Grammarians) in Sphota regard Dhvani as its Abhivyanjaka. Shankara however contests the necessity of assuming Sphota or that which causes the apprehension of the sense of a word.

Dhvani however is used also in a sense different from that in which it is defined in Nyāya or Vedānta as expounded by Shankara and different from Dhvani as conceived by those Grammarians who regard Dhvani as the manifestor (Vyanjaka) of the ideal sound called 'Sphota.'

In the Tantras Dhvani is a form of Causal Shabda. Thus we hear of the "sweet murmuring Dhvani of Kundalinī" the Creatrix of all Shabdas and Arthas.

Vāchaspatyo quotes the Shārādā Tilaka to which I have repeatedly referred :—

Sā prasūte Kundalini Shabda-brahmamayī vibhuh.
Shakting tato Dhvanis tasmān nādaśtasmān Nirodhikā.
Tato'rdhendus tato Bindus tasmādāsīt parā matā.
Pashyantī, Madhyamā vāchāṅ Vaikharī jñānajanitābhūh.

The words italicised are various forms of Shakti producing one another in the order in which they are mentioned in the verse

From Kundalinî issued Shakti, from Shakti; Dhvani and so on. From the order of evolution it will appear that Dhvani in such Shâstra is a subtle causal principle and not a gross manifestation of Shabda which is its ordinary sense. It is Vaikharî which is the gross manifestation of Shabda. Here the Shabda manifests from its subtle state as Madhyamâ which issued from the causal state as Parâ, Pashyantî, through the Dhvani caused by the contact of the vocal organs and air. Parâ and the rest are located in various Chakras and tracts of the bodily organism. Râghava Bhatta quoted by Vâchaspatya says :—

Saivorah-kantha-tâlustha-shiro-ghrana-radâdigâ
jihvâmûloshtha—nishkrântâ saiva varna parigrahâ,
shabda prapancha janani shrotra 'grâhyâ tâ vaikharî.

"She (Kundalinî) being in the heart, throat and palate and going through the passages of the head and nose and teeth and coming out from the base of the tongue and the lips become audible Vaikharî—the Kundalinî who has invested Herself with the Varnas and is the Mother of all varieties of Shabda"

Shakti, Dhvani, Nâda and the rest are described as various aspects of Chit due to its varied association with the Guṇas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Thus Shakti is defined as the Sattva-predominant (Sâttvika) condition of Chit; Dhvani as the Râjasik—Sâttvik condition (Rajo'nuviddha Sâttvika of Chit that is a Sâttvik condition in which there is also a trace of Rajas and Nâda a state of Causal Shabda in which there is a trace of Tamas (Tamo'nuviddha). These are called Paramâkâshâvasthâ, Aksharâvasthâ, Avyaktâvasthâ. Whether then we have to deal with Dhvani in the sense of a form or causal Shabda or as a gross manifestation of Shabda depends upon the context.

I, LIKE HIM, LIVE FOR EVER

BY

Eric Hammond.

The Why and Wherefore of Being, on this variable earth, among all the vicissitudes and perplexities of mortal existence, is a problem of such significance as to exercise the thought of all serious-minded people. Indeed one may surmise that even the most thoughtless persons have, at some time of compelling difficulty, put the question to themselves. To it—to this arresting question,—there is, however, a definite and vitalising reply; a reply shaped, for example, in adequate form by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, poet and prophet who rested in the consciousness of "One far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." Sorrowing greatly over the "loss" of a beloved friend to whom he was deeply devoted, he pondered over and produced, for the consolation and comfort of many readers, that remarkable, and, one ventures to suppose, permanent work, "In Memoriam." Let us quote one or two of its earliest verses.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;
Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest, manhood, Thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.
Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.
Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature whom I found so fair
I trust he lives in Thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved."

Throughout the pages of the poem we find a growing confidence in the purpose of Being.

"My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,

And dust and ashes all that is.
Or again ;—

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill ;
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood ;
That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.
I faller where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,
I stretch lame hands of faith and hope,
And gather dust and chaff and call
To what I feel is Lord of all."

Our great poet, we cannot fail to observe, uses the word "lame" relative to his "hands of faith and hope," the twin hands of his aspiring soul. "Lame," verily, because enveloped in and expressed by limbs of human frailty, at a far later period, after long years of experience and meditation, he composed a death-song ; a song which of all his works, should surely endure for the gain of many generations. The tenor of this later verse of his is firm as it is musical, as true in tone as it is in determination ; "Twilight and evening star, and one clear call for me." So, when the Angel of Death should come with his summons, the poet would recognise and respond to the call, ignoring the "lame-ness, trusting in the wisdom and mercy of the All-Father."

Acquiescence in the divine order of things ; complete resignation to the law of The Law-giver ; this is the attitude of those who, with all reverence and submission, seek and, through seeking, find the image of the image of The Lord reflected brightly upon the mirror of their own souls, "Sweet to lie passive in His hands and know no will but His." Life Eternal shines upon that mirror ; shines before it, behind it, without it and within it, illumined by the Everlasting Sun. As a man cannot even conceive of his own "beginning," neither can he postulate his own "end."

The question "Why and Wherefore Am I ?" is asked in various accents by various sons of men among all creeds and in all countries. The householder is as much interested in the mystery of existence as the teacher ; the student as the master. Perhaps

the first phase of enquiry has the strongest and most universal appeals ; "Am I Immortal ?" Here, the very universality of questioning furnishes a reply ; inadequate it is true but distinctly helpful. What myriads of men have thought of, hoped for, prayed for, unfailingly believed in, must have some warrant for belief, the more certain guarantee lies in the Sparing of Life itself and the proof in personal realisation of inalienable relationship to it. If we grant, as we are obliged to grant, that only a few thrice-graced souls, here and there, are blessed—almost beyond blessing—with that intense Realisation which signifies Knowledge, still we have the ardent testimony of those few, and we in our turn, are blessed because of their blessedness. Does not, also, the ordinary person, "the man in the street," receive now and again, may be for one brief passing instant, a glimpse of the glory of Life Indivisible. The perfume of flower, the sparkle of a star, the vibration of a word of love, the sudden sense of the strength of omnipotent power upholding in loss or pain or distress ? These, slight as they may seem when translated into words, are strong enough to dispel fear of "death" and add clarity to one's dim perception of un-ending life.

Let us, for a moment, turn to Tennyson again ; it is well, is it not, that the Eastern should get a glimpse, of the movement of the Western mind. Concerning the persistence and prevalence of questioning, he alludes to "One" who

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out,
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creed.
He fought his doubts and gathered strength !
He would not make his judgment blind ;
He faced the spectres of the mind ;
And laid them ; thus he came at length.
To find a stronger faith his own ;
And power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light
And dwells not in the light alone."

Doubt, then ; questioning ; proves, at least on occasion, a ladder to belief, "through darkness into light."

Browning, and her poet of position, sings, as all true poets must sing, of the doubts, the questionings, to which mankind is prone. He, Browning, in one instance, shows that the dazzling appearance, the utter realisation of the Divine One, might be, for some souls, unbearable because of its majesty ;

"Pure faith, indeed—you know not what you ask; naked belief in God the Omnipotent,

Omniscient, Omnipresent, Scars too much

The sense of conscious creatures to be borne,

It were the seeing Him no flesh shall dare."

Was it not been written no man can see God and Eve?"; yet the occasional glimpse, the fleeting phantom of His presence, uplifts, ennobles, revivifies; and yet again is not one glimpse more than sufficient to compel the seeker to prosecute his search? More; does not that seeker, so compelled, eventually find."

Browning concerns himself, elsewhere, in approaching with a jesture of consolatory hope, the man who imagines himself cut off from divinity because of his imperfections. This man is led to consider that, even in him, despite his frailties, weaknesses, possibly wickednesses,

"All I could never be,

All men ignored in me,

This was I worth to God

Whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

This intuition, this sense; that each living soul has part in the very being and design of the Creator, is assuredly, an earnest and a promise of perpetuity. The inspired and illuminated saints of God; those whose intimacy with the divine is so complete that they partake of, and bestow upon others, the essence of unfailing love and life, are links between man and the maker of man. Such links are adorable, because in them, and through them, the Light shines. Where the Light so shines, the vehicle of the Light is universally receptive. In whatsoever person men observe the beckoning beauty of the light, they discover a width and wealth of love that is all-embracing. We are not surprised, but we are re-assured, when we read that the Holy Mother, the honoured and revered widow of "My Master," Sri Ramakrishna was "Mother to all, irrespective of caste or creed, and, as such, her doors were always open to all her children, be they white or black, Hindu or Parsi or Christian." She revelled in the sure and certain hope; not only that man is immortal but that "the soul can neither slay nor be

RAMADAS

BY

C. Ramakishna Rao.

Actual Congratulations.

Ramadas congratulated Tanisha in that he excelled him as Tanisha had the clear vision of God while he himself had caught but a glimpse of the figures and congratulated him on his good fortune; while Tanisha in his turn said that the Bhagavata was greater than Bhagavan himself, because the former is the means of others' obtaining God vision through them, that while they themselves were never bound they may help many other souls to obtain freedom from the trammels of this world.

Further Strange Revelations.

While they were thus rejoicing in each other's company, there just arrived messengers from Bhadrachalam with the tale that on one morning when the temple priests opened the gates, where the idol stood, they found to their extreme wonder and astonishment that the old idol was not there but instead stood Rama's transfigured form. In fact, the idol was in the form in which He appeared to Tanisha in his dream. The new Idol had to its waist a receipt attached which on opening, contained the seal and the signature of Tanisha. Their wonder was unspeakable and fearing what might happen to them the priests immediately sent a messenger to carry the news with utmost expedition and to hand over the receipt to Tanisha. Tanisha on opening found it to be the self-same receipt that he had granted to the resplendent Beings of his dream of some days ago, and he became so exceedingly elated that he had been fortunate to see God himself in human form and grieved for his ignorance in not having known the fact at the time. He expressed his gratitude in no small measure to Ramadas as he was the cause of his obtaining God-vision and regretted that he had put such a great Bhakta to immense trouble and prayed most sincerely to be granted pardon and offered the Taluk of Bhadrachalam and Palavantha as a permanent Jaighir to Rama's Temple at Bhadrachalam and granted a Firman, besides cheerfully giving back the six lakhs of varahas and a host of jewels and precious stones etc. to the temple God and himself became transformed into a pious and saintly man.

Permanent endowment Granted.

He also endowed the temple with an annual payment of one lakh of rupees, for the celebration of the Chaitra festival which extends over five days of the first fortnight of Chitra corresponding to March—April every year. The festival is a very grand one and the number of pilgrims attending it would be from 15 to 20 thousand in spite of the difficulties to be faced on the way. The endowment of one lakh of rupees was reduced to Rs. 19,125 annually in 1841 by the then Nabob and a permanent Sanad was granted for that amount. We hear that it is further reduced in 1919 to only Rs. 11,000 by the present Nizam.

Ramadas's Bhakti put to the test.

To resume the story of the saint Ramadas, he took the Firman granted by the Nabob, the jewels and the six lakhs of rupees which the latter presented to the God and was travelling back to Bhadrachalam, when on the way he was intercepted by a band of robbers. It is said that God Himself caused this appearance of robbers to put Ramadas to test, as to how far he loved the money that was now in his possession. His mind, fixed on the lotus feet of the Lord, was firm as the rock. He neither treated the robbers as such, but treated them also as the manifestation of the Lord Himself thus fulfilling the statement of the Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita "In the Brahmin, in the dog, everywhere am I" and began to continue piping and dancing and singing the name of the Lord as freshly and cheerfully as before. Then the Lord was said to have been completely satisfied with the devotion of Ramadas and all the robbers became transformed into his old friends and acquaintances of Bhadrachalam who took Ramadas to Bhadrachalam with great eclat accompanying him to the sound of music, dance and sankirtan.

Welcome at Bhadrachalam.

A grand reception was awaiting Ramadas in his own old Bhadrachalam of Blessed memory and he in his turn made a magnificent feast to all the people, saint, sinner, pariah and Brahmin. The first act of his after reaching that place was to visit the temple and pray before the new Image of Rama whose arrow's un-erring aim pierces the Demon of ignorance, the very utterance of whose name is enough to destroy the sins of endless births. The rhapsodies in which the saint had sung the music of his soul attuned to the Divine, can only be left to the imagination of the

sincere soul aiming at God-hood who might have tasted a bit of the 'Life Divine.' Indeed, if it were possible to describe that state in terms of human expression, would not, The Infinite, The Transcendental, be defiled by being uttered by human mouth? Therefore it is, that He is called 'IT' 'Avangmanasagochara.' 'Na tatra chakshur gacchati Na mano gacchati Na vaggacchati.'

Ramadas's Dotage and his end.

Ramadas, it is said, remained in Bhadrachalam a number of years in that transcendental samadhi enjoying the sight of Rama Para Brahman and lived till a ripe old age giving himself up to Him. And in due time, it is said that with this mortal body he was taken to the heavenly regions in a celestial car specially sent down for him. Ramadas's life is an instance of the life of one who truly lived the Life Spiritual, the life of absolute self-surrender and the life of entire renunciation as described in that luminous passage of the Song Celestial, embodying the crowning spirit of the Gita in world-reverberating tones "Sarva Dharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam vraja."

Thus ends the inspiring life of Ramadas of Bhadrachalam whom every Telugu knowing man from the child to the grand sire in Andhra Desa knows at least in outline.

The Spread of Ramadas's Songs.

The songs compiled by him are very popular and are often sung by the beggars at house-doors and singing bards on special festive occasions and at almost all Melas, Bhajans, Sankirtans and periodical festivals in temples in the Telugu country. It is certainly a sight to see the bards being engaged in the act of singing the songs from Ramadas's life as they also appear to have drunk deep of the cup of the Divine Joy. The sight of a band of from half-a-dozen to a dozen men forming a circular group around a brass-stand with lamps lit in the middle and in the four corners, each one of the group holding a bundle of peacock feathers in one hand and waving lights or sounding bells in the other with silk cloths tied around the waist and over the head and small bells ringing tied to their feet and singing Ramadas's songs till they grow unconscious is a most common sight in every village and town in the Telugu country on important festive occasions. A number of such groups is a necessary accompaniment to the paraphernalia of all car festivals in important centres in the Andhra Desa. They are specially attractive to the masses.

This is how India has still a living religion, a religion of Catholicity, a religion that is open to every soul from the lowest to the highest and to all classes and creeds without distinction. A religion that has permeated every layer of Hindu society from the lowest and most down-trodden to the highly intellectual and philosophical, a religion so dynamic, can it die? Can it be stifled by any amount of on-rush of materialistic civilization over it? The answer of History is an emphatic 'No'.

Such is the religion of India and here in this sketch the reader finds ample scope for learning the life of the normal citizen of the Andhra Desa and how the great saint Ramadas of Bhadrachalam of revered memory occupies an important place in the heart of every son of our sacred Andhra Mata.

Om Santih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

(Concluded.)

INDIA—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE*

The study of a nation's history is the most important of all studies for young minds. Because it is the history that reveals the true potency, the inner possibilities and the genius of the race ; as well it reveals the purpose for which each nation is ushered into existence by the Almighty Providence. I will start with a small example. Take the case of a tree. It sprouts from the seed, grows, develops and ultimately the purpose of its being is realised when it bears fruits. It is natural that various trees serve but various purposes. So also in the whole history of humanity, various nations through the influence of many causes are brought into existence, with a set purpose in the mind of the Great Providence. Each nation must fulfil a certain purpose and until that is fulfilled, it is left alone and when it serves its purpose it yields its fruits to the whole humanity and sometimes dies or exists in a superannuated way. This fact has been accepted by all the great sociologists and students of history.

Comparing the history of all the different ancient nations of the world, those that are existent still and those that have disappeared,

* Summary of a lecture delivered by Swami Sharvananda at the P. S. High School Literary Society on 17th December.

we find this fact exemplified. To people not conversant with history it will be sufficient if I tell you that there were existent nations like Greece, Rome and Egypt which have disappeared from this earth. Of all the ancient nations, the Indian and Chinese are still living races.

Coming to our own nation, broadly speaking our history is divided into four main divisions—the pre-Buddhistic, the Buddhistic, the post-Buddhistic and the mediæval and the modern periods. I shall take up each of these and show the main points of peculiarity for study.

The pre-Buddhistic period has its beginning somewhere in pre-historic age of which there is no record. According to western Orientalists the real period of Indian history begins with 5400 B.C. But according to our own tradition it is beginningless. The Hindu race has its existence from the beginning of time. Whatever historians might say we cannot fix the proper date. We do not find from the study of our own literature, even from the Vedic scriptures any indication that the race or nation was emerging from barbarity. On the other hand even in the Rik Veda,—the most ancient record of the Hindus, we find certain features of civilisation which marks certain prominent developments of national life. Further it reveals the development of higher powers mental and spiritual.

Man has three aspects—physical, mental and spiritual. The savage man is anxious of only the physical existence and his whole life is concentrated on that. As he outgrows this physical life there develops his intellectual aspect. When the intellect reaches a certain stage he begins to perceive another subtler aspect of his being—the Soul and then begins the spiritual culture. As this is true in the case of an individual so also is it true with the nation. A nation has to outgrow the former two stages before it develops the third. So when we come to the study of the Indian Civilisation we find, even in that remotest period, the Vedic age, the Indian mind, the Indian Rishis had realised this spiritual truth of life. That shows that the true civilisation of India reached its full zenith even then.

A word is necessary to explain the meaning of the word 'civilisation.' You may say that there was not then present its modern aspects. We do not find then the modern fineries of life, the modern emblems of civilisation. To that we reply, that civilisation does not mean the multiplication of the creature comforts of life. If civilisation is a stage of growth from barbarity, then this growth reaches its height when it reaches the ultimate Truth of Life, which is in Soul. Judging from this we can assert that our forefathers had reached the height of civilisation even in that remotest period.

Some idea of the history of this pre-Buddhistic period we gather from our ancient scriptures. These consist mainly of the Vedas, the

Sutras and some Puranas. Even then we can find our civilisation reached a certain type of the modern age. Society was well organised and all the different requirements of social life were present and well satisfied. Each social unit was well organised and self-contained. Life in its political aspect was more or less perfect though it was ruled no doubt by the king. Although the Government was monarchical it was not controlled by the whims and fancies of the royal head. The king was bound to rule under the common law which was not formulated, but co-existent with Nature. That Law was discovered long before and known popularly as *Dharma*—that which upholds evolution Godwards. As there are laws governing the physical life, so also there are equally unerringly exact laws governing the mental and spiritual life. *Dharma* includes all these. *Dharma* based on physical life was known as *Sariraka Dharma*. That based on mental life was known as *Manasika Dharma* and that based on spiritual life was known as *Adhyatmika Dharma*.

The effort of our ancient forefathers was to formulate the entire society in accordance to these laws. The kings were enjoined to observe the Dharmas. The subjects lived their lives contentedly in their respective spheres. There was no conflict, no oppression or revolution, as the whole basis of society rested on the natural principle of life. In the Vedic age we find kings as sages instructing spiritual matters. Such men who had realised the final verities of life cannot abuse the greatest privileges of the land. We can conceive from the ancient saying—‘as the king, so the people’—that the country could not have been in barbarity. The *Dharma* of the king was reflected in the life of the people. If the king was virtuous so also were the subjects. Both the ruler and the ruled were governed by the eternal law of *Dharma*.

Similarly the whole society was divided into different classes according to different aptitudes and necessities of society. And based upon the division of labour various classes of people came into being. Each village which was the unit in civic life was self-contained and self-sufficient. Each had its ruler, educational institutions, artisans, merchants etc. Whatever was required was produced in the village itself. The duty of the king was only to see to the well-being of the people and protect them from internal and external dangers and there ended his duty. He had to see that the subjects observed the life of *Dharma*; but he never used to interfere in the working of the social life. Nor was he considered the only organ of the nation. Of course he was the pillar of the civic life in the sense that he was the protector of national rights.

Another fact of this period is that life was not stagnant, was not enclosed within the boundaries of a few districts. The vigour of the nation was so great that even then missionary agents went out to

different parts of the world. The Hindus went out not with the idea of conquest but with the only hope of civilising, of Aryanising the whole world. The major portion of the world was sunk in barbarity. The Hindus out of the fullness of their life went out and this process went on through various ways,—through commerce, through direct contact with great scholars, etc. There was then an intimate commercial connection with Asia Minor, Babylon, Egypt, and we find also great scholars going out to Persia, Arabia, Egypt and the border cities of the Atlantic.

Indian culture was the model at that time. India was considered as the land of wealth and plenty. No doubt, here and there we find kings going out on expeditions and they were in a way religiously ordained to do so. A *Chacravartty* was enjoined to perform the *Rajasooya Yajna*. There was a political significance underlying this. By this a monarch had to spread the suzerin power by taking allegiance from other kings. The direct result of such a conquest used to be, in one word, Aryanisation of the conquered country. The political significance is not so much in importance as the philanthropic motive and cultural nature of the effect of such conquests.

Coming to the Buddhistic and post-Buddhistic periods we find the same tendencies more marked in their effect. The whole of India was brought to a general cultural level. The average culture became more or less the same. Buddha by his life and teachings gave a very great impetus to the ethical development of the people. We find the spirit of Aryanisation was more systematically and in a way aggressively carried out. We see Buddhistic missionaries going out to China, Japan and even to some places in South America. They all went as missionaries of religion with the banner of peace and benediction and not with an idea of territorial expansion and economic gain but simply filled with the idea of doing good and raising the masses from the stage of animal life.

In India itself we find the verity of the race was quickened and the development of the national genius took place on all sides. It brought forth flowers of various hues. In literature, art, science and even in political conception, the nation developed. Especially the ethical sense was deeply roused and the spiritual culture which was more or less present in the upper strata filtered down. The reason was that Buddha and his followers preached in the language of the people. Buddha refused to use the Sanskrit language. Before him, all preached in Sanskrit. Hence the lower strata did not get any direct benefit from the teaching of great personalities. Of course, the indirect influence cannot be ignored. Buddha by preaching ‘*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*’ captured the imagination of the masses and his influence was very great. By his

influence the Hindu culture was made the common property. Further it was he and others that followed his footsteps that showed that every activity of our life should take cognisance of the spiritual truths and then to proceed in other directions. The distinguishing feature of this period was the ethical development of the masses and regeneration of the country by enlarging the sphere of action.

Subsequently coming to the post-Buddhistic age which is considered as the Augustan period in our history, literature and art reached the greatest development and the Indian mind became very active. The best in philosophy, poetry, mathematics, music and astronomy were produced now. But owing to the concentration of the national energy to mere intellectual side only and partly perhaps due to the negligence in organising the civic life there was some weakness. So India was unable to bear the brunt of external attacks. The military power was very weak and it might be due to the rigid observance of the distribution of labour under the rigid caste system. The fighting class was less strong than was required to preserve the liberty of the nation. So when Muslims came, India could not withstand. But the true civilisation of India both intellectual and spiritual was not impaired in its essential value. Though India was subjugated politically, yet her mind remained intact. Her culture was not in any way defiled. On the other hand the Muslims coming in contact with India were deeply influenced by the Indian civilisation and they were Hinduised to a great extent. Sadir, a Persian poet deploras that the bark of Muslims came to India only to sink in the waters of the Ganges. In some non-essential matters the Muhammadans influenced the Hindus; but essentially the Aryan culture was left intact. We find a social upheaval in every sphere of life.

From now onwards we begin to notice a change coming on, destructive forces beginning to cast their shadows. In the first place, we begin to notice amongst our men a tendency to ignore the true nature of their culture, secondly owing to this ignorance their minds were prepared to be decoyed by the occidental life. And this was what really began to happen when India opened her gates for the European nations to come in. To-day as a result a great wavering in our national life has come. We find various currents and cross currents in our national life that have disturbed its even flow very much. So we hear some say that we must adopt the western ideal of life in order to become materially like them. Others suggest the same with some modifications as a remedy to merge out from the present state of servility and the means is the adoption of some of the western methods. In short these persons are also equally westernised in their outlook of life. Few hold that our real life is not impaired and the true means of regeneration lie not in imitation or changing our institutions or society, but in reawakening in us the true Hindu spirit, and rehabilitating the ideal of Dharma, formulating

and conducting our life in accordance with that Dharma. This Dharma alone can take us to that ideal and this is not to be done, according to the whims of erroneous men. They alone can guide us who are efficient and exalted in these eternal laws of life.

Each nation lives to fulfil a purpose. For India there is only one purpose to fulfil and that is to truly civilise the world. In the pre-Buddhistic, Buddhistic and post-Buddhistic periods, India served the same purpose. Even when she was in shackles, her soul converted her barbarian enemies.

As Srimat Swami Vivekananda says,—it has been India's mission to raise man from the brutish plane to the divine. Man following the creature comforts of existence is still a brute—at best an exalted one. The higher function of civilisation is to raise him above the flesh. Out of India, the whole world is engaged to serve one purpose—the enjoyment of the senses. In the East nations like Japan, in the west America, England, France, etc., all—their whole ideal before them is, how to live efficiently to the satisfaction of the physical life. Here and there might be lurking a few philosophers, but the general struggle is to enjoy the physical life—to live the brute in a polished way which they call civilisation.

It is now incumbent on India to show that real greatness is not in the multiplication of the creature comforts of life. The abiding joy of life is not in the senses; but in the realisation of the highest possibilities of man—the Eternal Truth in man.

So it is the mission of India to spread this spiritual culture. For the fulfilment of that purpose India still lives. Her contemporaneous nations are all gone. India lives because she has a message still to give. It matters not whether we are politically fettered or that millions are starving. Her glory is not thereby dimmed. The death of Indian nation comes not through pestilence or famine as some casual observer apprehends, but that death is sure to come when we cease to live the life spiritual and banish Dharma from our hearths and homes. Our true thinkers never considered the darkest days of economic and political breakdown as days of catastrophe. The stability of Indian culture will be shaken only when spiritual souls are not produced.

So, young friends, in conclusion I like to impress upon you once again that the future of India lies in the rekindling of Dharma in our souls.

If politically conquered by foreigners, never mind. We must get up and conquer the whole world by our soul power.—That should be our ideal. Every one of us should think that he is a soldier of India. Our conquest is not through Krupp guns or Howitzers, but through the voice of peace and benediction. That policy has to be

developed and then we go out to raise the brutish man to the God stage.

If England conquered India, India must likewise conquer England. Hence the future should be not political expansion or economic stability but the establishment of spiritual culture. I do not say we can go without economic stability. For the spirit of man is encased in flesh. We have to look to physical needs; but that is only secondary. The real attention should be directed to fostering firmly the Dharma of the country. You who would be the future citizens of India, should feel that the true means of our life does not lie in political efficiency or economic greatness or social fitness, but it is in the consciousness of the spiritual value of life. If this is realised all other activities will be developed. If the spirit is quickened, mind and body will be active. The present degradation is due to the negligence of this spiritual life.

It is not too early to think of the spiritual aspect of life. Even from his early days the Hindu boy is asked to think of God first and then his body. The greatness of India in the past was spirituality. The greatness of India to-day also lies in her spirituality. If to-day the proud west bows to anything in India it is to her spiritual greatness. Hence the future greatness of India also lies in the exaltation of her spiritual life. Every one of you should meditate on this and try to develop this consciousness to a marked degree. The Reality of Life is based on the consciousness of God. You may have every thing, but only make *Dharma* the basis of all.

SISTER NIVEDITA'S NORTHERN TIRTHA

BY

K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

This book is a pilgrim's diary. It describes the Himalayan journey from Hardwar "that miniature and unspeakably beautiful Benares" to Kedarnath and Badari :—the journey that will make us "realise the Invisible Presence inhabiting and consecrating the holy home." Thousands of Indians travel there and Sister Nivedita says: "The first impression gleaned from the pilgrimage as a whole is a deepened sense of Indian unity."

"And thus is kept alive the tradition of those spiritual impulses which within the last thousand years have come always from the farthest end of India. First Magadha and then Dravida-desh has originated the waves that have transformed the Himalayas; but in either case the fact is equally conspicuous, that the Motherland is indeed one, that south and north are inextricably knit together, and that no story of its analysed fragments, racial, lingual or political, could ever be the story of India. There must be recognition of a synthesis, to do justice to that tale. For the Indian peoples have in the past known how to shape themselves as a unity, definite and coherent, and behind them stands ever the Motherland, one from end to end."

Sister Nivedita well describes the flashes of sweetness and brightness in the pilgrim throngs with their free masonry of spiritual brotherhood and the "refinements of eastern salutations." The spectacle of men and women lost "in the world of their own reverence," is a joy and an inspiration. Sister Nivedita then describes Hrishikesh. Only the Ganga can teach us "the physical rapture of the religious bathing of Hinduism". We are then taken by Sister Nivedita to Devprayag and thence to Rampur and Bilwakedar. Then we have a description of Srinagar and other places. Sister Nivedita cries out: "How grand is India, possessing within her boundaries every kind of beauty! She could not but be the home of a vast and complex civilisation."

Sister Nivedita's interpretations of Indian life and Indian traditions have regular sweetness and beauty and truth. She says: "Ancient life was vastly more coherent and organic than modern, and monastery or temple was the scene, not merely of prayer and meditation, but also of school and play, of bazaar and parliament, of drama and art and hospitality."

We then reach Kedarnath. It is "as if all India converged upon Kedarnath as its northern point, and all roads met at the sacred feet of the Lord of Mountains." There is the road by which the Pandava

heroes and Droupadi went up to Heaven ! Equally sacred and beautiful is Badari Narayana. "Kedarnath and Badari Narayana are thus to be regarded as the cathedral cities of adjacent dioceses."

This excellent book concludes thus: "The Northern Thirtha forms a great palimpsest of the history of Hinduism. Record has here been written upon record. Wave has succeeded wave and still the bond that knits these farthest points north, to the farthest south, is living and unbroken, and the people stream along the pilgrim roads, in worship, to testify to the fact that without the conception of India as a whole we can explain no single part or item of the Indian life. But the greatest of all synthesis is that which is written in the minds and hearts of the simple Himalayan peasantry themselves. Successive waves of sectarian enthusiasm have made their country what it is but the people themselves are no sectaries. To them Siva, Devi, and Narayan are all sacred, and in their grasp of the higher philosophy of Hinduism, they are, without exception, true Hindus."

*Jay Kedarnath Swami Ki Jay
Jay Badri Visal Ki Jay."*

THE TENTH GURU.

BY

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

In the three corners of this triangular peninsula, have risen three great cultures close towards the decline of the Mogul rule—Maharashtra awakening of the South, the Vaishnava revival of the East and the Sikh culture of the North-West. Each has its distinctive feature and an element to add to the national store of spiritual culture. Vaishnavism brought a flood of love which rolled like a sweet torrent of nectar over Bengal and penetrated even beyond the Vindhya into the South with Sri Chaitanya. Ramdas and Tukaram and a host of other mighty spiritual giants created in Maharashtra by their tapas a great self-conscious Hindu nation which it was given to Shivaji to organise and lead. In the Panchanad, the sacred land of the five rivers, Guru Nanak cemented the hearts of the Hindus and Muslims in the name of Alakh Niranjana and thus laid another foundation stone to the mighty edifice of Indian Nation-building. To count by the central figures, Chaitanya gave love, love and again love, Ramdas gave calm knowledge and creative force, coupled with a ring of Bhakti, (Guru) Nanak gave the pure knowledge of soul-unification. Punjab, ancient Brahmavarta where was first sung the first Rik of our national hymnology, perhaps still conceals behind her stolid skulls and strong bones a great potentiality of pure knowledge force, bequeathed by Sri Nanak. Nanak was the worshipper of the Alakh and the Akal Purusha, the impersonal, eternity—Niranjana, void of the tinge of quality. In fact, upper Hindustan, *minus* Bengal, is the land of Jnana and Karma, of predominant Knowledge and work, as Bengal is of Bhakti and Shakti, and the Dakshinaty is of Bhakti and Jnana. Indeed, it is a beautiful ring of three-fold puiances which run in twins round the three corners of the peninsula. Taken together, India herself is pre-eminently the Deva-Bhumi—the land of divine sadhana.

Be that as it may, Punjab has great contribution to offer in the way of nation-building in the life of the Ten Gurus. Each, a towering monument of fiery spirituality, each has left a record of sacrifice and suffering, ever memorable in the history of the land. Indeed at times we feel confounded as which to place first in our estimation between the patriotic heroism of Rana Pratap and the religious heroism of the Sikh Gurus. Really both are inestimable. Considered on a collective scale, the reckless bravery of the Rajput men and women, shrinking not in the least from fire and steel, pouring blood like

pools of water for the honour of mother and motherland,—admirable and wonderful as it undoubtedly is in its flaming brightness, must yet be admitted to present a less constructive, when placed beside them as much deliberate self-sacrifice of the Sikh leaders, who however when they bled, they bled to build a nation.

The greatest gift of the Sikhs to the nation is their firm-rooted Guru Bhava. In the midst of the diadem of Sikh culture, like a ring of Kohinoors stands this cluster of mighty Gurus. Really, the intense and solid line of spiritual power, which Guru Nanak founded in the heart of the Sikh sub-nation is unexampled in any history of any nation. Sikh history rings throughout with the glorious war cry—"Shri Wabuguru jiki Fateh." That history is a splendid record of the heroic careers of the great Gurus. Nowhere else do we find or hear of any such brilliant record of a whole nation, growing round one central chain of spiritual personalities, with unabated faith and unfaltering consecration from its day of start up to the present day.

That which had its beginnings in Nanak and Angada, and flowered in Har Govinda and Teg Bahadur, came to some sort of a crowning culmination in the Tenth Guru Govind Singh. Nanak initiated the Sikhs in the fire of spirituality. Guru Teg Bahadur died with the name on his lips—the very emblem of heroic leadership, but he died without resistance, a true Satyagrahi. Guru Govind Singh, the militant churchman, clasped the sword himself and transformed a race of udasies into a race of fiery Kshatriyas, whose sword-blades clashed more than once at the gates of Delhi and shook the Masnad to its foundations. Here again is a burning truth of history, which never wearies to be told. What exasperated the Sikhs, the Mahrattas, even the loyal Rajputs whom Akbar had literally wedded to the throne? It was the ruthless soldier-statesman Aurangzeb, whose blind and reckless policy sowed the seeds, which were left to be reaped by Shivaji in the South and Guru Govind Singh in the West. Or else, there would have been no necessity of the peace-loving children of that Indian province being turned, as if by a miracle into a nation of armed soldiers. It is not always the people that were responsible.

That was a glorious chapter in our national history, when Guru Govind Singh called five picked up souls from the multitude and breathed fire of faith into them. That was the beginning of the Pants—the mighty solidery, that became a power. That immortal flame never left the Sikh heart. It grew mightily splendid when the Guru's two heroic lads defied an insulting Mogul officer and were sacrificed to his wrath, being infamously buried alive. They died with not a single scar of fear in their countenance—young lions whose last words on the lips were the national cry of faith,—the word of Guru Teg, was once more immortalised in another baptism of blood.

The Sikh nation was made a solid rock over the suffocated corpses of the brave sons of Guru Govind Singh. That was Govinda Guru's undying gift to his people—the blood of martyrdom, of his dearer selves—dearer than his own self.

The birth-anniversary (10th January) of this saviour of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Govinda Singhaji, we are told, is drawing nigh. Young India, we hope, will not fail to worship one of their great heroes in the silence of their hearts.—*The Khalsa Advocate.*

NOTES AND NEWS.

We have to record with deep sorrow the sudden passing away of a sincere friend and devotee, Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao. Those who came in contact with him, could not but be struck by the remarkable graces of his head and heart. He was one of the leading physicians of the Presidency. He was very sincere in his service of the suffering Narayanas and was truly a friend of the poor. Always bold and energetic, he seldom failed to translate into action what he really believed. He came in close touch with the illustrious Swami Vivekananda when he was in Madras and the Mission has lost a best friend in him. May the Lord grant peace to the departed soul!

The fifty-ninth Birthday Anniversary of Srīmat. Swami Vivekanandaji comes off on Sunday the 6th February. As usual, there will be Puja, Bhajan, Lecture and the feeding of the poor. The tithi Puja comes off on the 30th January.

A weaving School has been started by the authorities of Sri Ramakrishna Math, at Belur. Two looms have been set up. Some students have joined the institution with the object of starting similar schools in the villages after having finished their course. A similar department for weaving has been attached to the Nivedita Girls' School with a lady teacher at its head to impart the same knowledge to the girls.

Swami Paramananda's recent visit to Los Angeles proved very fruitful. The large increase in the number of audience at the meetings of the centre, shows the appreciation of his work. One Sunday the Swami spoke on "the Science and practice of Yoga." He delivered several other beautiful lectures in many important places. Many prominent ladies and gentlemen took a very keen interest in his activities.

We are glad to review the Annual Report of Sri Ramakrishna Sevak Sampradaya, Cuttack, Orissa. This institution was started in 1906. Since its first existence the institution has been serving the suffering humanity in various ways. A boarding house was opened in 1909 by the Sampradaya under the name of Sri Ramakrishna Cottage to look after the moral, intellectual and spiritual improvement of the indigent students. A library is kept up attached to the Cottage for the use of the inmates and the members of the Sampradaya. It is maintaining nearly twenty students. The sampradaya meets its expenses by collection of rice, voluntary subscriptions and donations. The inmates of the Cottage live under the guidance of a resident superintendent. We are very sorry, the Cottage is still in a rented house although it is situated in the heart of Orissa. The society is trying its best to have permanent quarters of its own and for that purpose it has collected a sum of Rs. 2,536. We hope, it will have a firm footing in no time. Many distinguished visitors spoke highly of the institution.

It is gratifying to acknowledge the prospectus and scheme of Life and Marriage Assurance Company, Limited, Mysore. It has been started with some noble purpose. The Company has an object to utilise a large sum of its profit for a Theological College to be affiliated to Sri Ramakrishna Mission and other religious and charitable purposes. It is indeed an original idea. We are sure that it will be crowned with success. We heartily congratulate the organisers.

A WORTHY PURPOSE

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD OF THE MOST WONDERFUL
SCHEME CALLED THREE-IN-ONE (SHARE POLICY
INVESTMENT) SCHEME

BROUGHT FORWARD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN INDIA BY THE
MYSORE GOVERNMENT SECURITY LIFE AND
MARRIAGE ASSURANCE CO. LD.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INDIANS?

HEAD OFFICE: MYSORE (S. INDIA).

If not, enquire for necessary information and avail of the undermentioned

"Only As. 4/- premium (in place of As. 8/-) per share will be charged as a special case to the subscribers of "Vedanta Kesari" in case the applications are received within a fortnight from the date of this publication."

**Extraordinary benefits hitherto unknown to the
insurance and Banking worlds**

What all you have to do is to apply for ten shares of the Company and pay only Rs. 10 (Rs. 5 towards share amount and Rs. 5 towards premium) with the application and Rs. 5 on allotment. After this, you can pay the balance Rs. 90 by nine quarterly instalments in course of two years and three months, i. e., at Rs. 10 in every 3 months or ask us to show you the way how you can get the same adjusted without touching your pocket under our novel free policy system.

The extraordinary benefits are.

1. SAFEST INVESTMENT. The Capital of the Company is Rs. 5,00,000 divided into 50,000 shares of Rs. 10 each. Out of Rs. 5,00,000 to be paid on 50,000 shares at Rs. 10 (excluding premium) per share by the shareholders to the Company's Bankers the Allahabad Bank Ltd., Bombay, the said bank is authorised to purchase Government of India 3 per cent. Securities in the name of the Company to the face value of Rupees Two Lakhs and lodge the same itself direct with the Comptroller General to the Government of India as per Insurance Act 1912. Rupees three lakhs out of the above will be invested in the Property Investment Department of the Company at 3 1/2 per cent. interest per annum to be utilized in advancing loans only on security of immovable Properties in India. Rupees one lakh and odd being the amount of discount to be gained by the Company in purchasing the above said Government securities (as Government of India 3 per cent. securities are selling at 30 and odd per cent. discount now-a-days), will be utilized in constructing a Building a suitable place at Mysore. The share-holders who will take up shares and so complete the payment of all calls on the same before two lakhs of rupees are amount is paid up, will have preferential lien on the assets of the company and are charged only As. 8 premium per share while those who take shares afterwards will be charged at Re. 1 premium per share.

2. PROFITS. Out of enormous profits to be earned in all the Departments of the Company, viz., Life Insurance with medical examination, Property Investment and Personal Investment, dividends will be distributed among shareholders every year for generations. When the Companies which Life Insurance Business alone, are declaring dividends up to 30 per cent. or annum, the would be share-holders themselves will consider the rate of

dividend they may expect from the business of this Company when it has got most profitable business like those of Property Investment and Personal Investment also, the details of which are given separately.

3. INSURANCE BONUS. Those share-holders who hold 10 or more shares in their individual names will be entitled to an Insurance Policy for Rs. 500 free of premium and without any medical examination from the Life Insurance Department of the Company and as such, the heirs of the share-holders will on their (share-holders') deaths be entitled to a bonus of Rs. 500 each out of Rs. 20,000 interest to be got from the Property Investment Department of the Company every year on three lakhs of rupees to be invested therein as mentioned in the foregoing Para I.

4. LOANS. Those share-holders that hold 10 shares and more than ten shares will be entitled to a free deposit Bond of Rs. 25 and 50 each respectively from the Personal Investment Department of the Company only on payment of admission, stamp and annual fees (as the Free Deposit Bond amount Rs. 25 or 50 as the case may be, will be treated as an advance of 6 per cent. interest per annum against the share-holders and adjusted out of dividend amounts entitled to by them every year as per Article No. 8 of the Articles of Association of the Company and as such, they will be entitled to a loan of from Rs. 500 to Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 8,000 respectively free of interest and without any security as determined in the drawings that take place every year as detailed separately. The share-holders will also be entitled to loans on security of their immovable properties out of the funds of the Property Investment Department by which they can save the principal amount itself by paying more interest as detailed separately.

5. CHARITY. As only a small portion of the Company's Building to be constructed as mentioned in para one above will do for the head office, the major portion of the same will be utilised for Theological College and Rs. 6,000 being interest to be accrued on the above two lakhs of rupees Government Securities will be utilized for (training up preachers of Hindu Religion, nursing the suffering, feeding the poor, etc.,) charitable purpose under the guidance of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Mission as per Article No. 9. Provision is also made as per Article No. 91 for constructing more buildings as well as for expenses for the above-said charities in other places also.

6. MANAGEMENT & SHARE-HOLDERS' PRIVILEGES. All the Directors including the Honorary Organizer and all the officials at the Head Office are working honorarily and the accounts of the Company are audited by one of the auditors appointed by the Government of Mysore. Those share-holders who hold 50, 25 and 15 shares in their individual names will be eligible to be elected as Directors on the General, Provincial and Local Boards of the Company respectively whenever vacancy occurs. The share-holders in each Presidency or Province can select Provincial Directors among them to supervise their respective Presidency or Provincial Branch or Chief Agency Offices and also to attend all the General (whether Ordinary or Extraordinary) Meetings of the Company on their behalf at the cost of the Company.

N.B. This notice is not intended as an invitation to subscribe for shares. Applications for shares will be considered upon the terms mentioned in the form accompanying this as well as in the Articles of Association of the Company which can be either seen freely at or obtained from the Head Office on remitting Re. 1 only by Money Order as no V.P. Dook-post system will be accepted. Enquiries shall be addressed to Honorary Organizer, Mysore, or Messrs. P.K. Rao & Sons, Chief Agents, 57, Thambu Chetty Street, Madras.

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.

VOL. VII.]

FEBRUARY 1921.

[No. 19.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER.

More of the Sadhanas of the first four years.

With regard to the period of his devotional practices, we have heard from the Master himself, that he was engaged for full twelve years in the practice of different kinds of sadhanas as enjoined in the various denominations of Hinduism, as well as those of other religions. From the Rani Rasamani's Trustdeed of the temple, we get the true date of its installation, which was Thursday, 31st May, 1855 A. D. And the same year some three months after the installation, the Master accepted the priest's post. All this we have already related before. Therefore it is clear that from the year 1855 to 1866 A. D. it was the sadhana period of his life. Though this time was exclusively devoted by him to various kinds of spiritual practices, yet we shall see as we proceed with the narration, that even after that period, the Master engaged himself now and then in the sadhanas while he was on his pilgrimage or on his return therefrom.

Now we have divided these twelve years into three periods of four years each : as to the first of these periods, from the year 1855 to 1858, we have related all the main incidents that happened to him therein. During the next period from 1859 to 1862, the Master performed all the sadhanas enjoined in the sixty-four

principal Tantras under the direction of the Brahmin lady. "In the third period, from the year 1863 to 1866, he first got his initiation in the sacred Mantram of Rama from the Ramayit Sannyasin Jatadhari by name, and got the sacred Image of Rama called Ramalala. During that period, among other sadhanas according to the Vaishnava faith, he performed also the sadhana of *sakhi bhava* and remained for six months in the female attire for the purpose. Sometime later within the same period, he received initiation in the sacred Vedic Mantram and the order of Sannyas from Totapuri and thereafter remained in the *Nirvikalpa* state for six months continually. And at the end of this time he took the initiation in the religion of Islam from one Govinda. During those twelve years again, at different times he got himself acquainted with the sadhanas of other minor sects of Vaishnavism, like *Kartabhaja*, *navarasik* and such others. That he was well-acquainted with these minor sub-sects of Vaishnavism, is quite clear from the fact that devotees like Vaishnava Charan Goswami and others, belonging to such denominations used to come to him to get spiritual inspiration in their respective paths of devotion. From a close examination of the sadhanas during these twelve years and a classification of them into three periods in the aforesaid manner, we come to perceive a kind of generic connection existing among different kinds of sadhanas, thus allowing them to be grouped into several classes.

We have seen that at the commencement of the first period, he proceeded in his spiritual practices without much of any external aid except the nominal initiation from Kenaram Bhatta. During the whole of that period, the innate promptings of his heart and the mad yearning of his soul were his sole guidance and support. And that yearning, daily and rapidly gathering in volume, brought about in a short while, a complete remoulding and unexpectedly novel transfiguration of his body and mind. Moreover, that extreme God-love made him transcend all the external limitations and mandates of the *Vaidhi bhakti* and landed him far advanced in the path of the *Raja bhakti* which culminated in his getting the constant vision of the Divine Mother.

A question may be raised here that if the Master had attained God-realisation, even in that period, where could be the necessity for him for his subsequent sadhanas. The answer is found in one of the sayings of the Master himself. He used to say, "Though it is the general rule that there appears first the flower, and then the fruit, yet there are some species of plants and creepers in which fruits appear first and then the flowers. Similarly ordinary persons

have to go through the sadhanas before they can attain God-realisation. But there is a class of souls who attain first God-realisation and then perform the sadhanas." It so happened with the Master, also. Though it is true that he attained God-realisation and was blessed with the divine visions without the aid of any prescribed form of sadhana save that of his own intense longing of the heart, yet it was necessary for him to do the sadhanas as he did in the subsequent periods in order to verify his spiritual realisations in the light of devotional practices prescribed in the scriptures. So what he realised first by the sheer force of his inner devotion and through the grace of the Divine Mother, he wanted to re-realise by pursuing the prescribed courses of sadhana and be thus confirmed in his mind about their genuineness. It is also said in the holy books of the Hindus that so long as the devotee does not compare the findings of his own sadhana with those of the great saints and sages, as recorded in the scriptures and with those he had heard from his Guru, his doubts about his own realisation cannot be dispelled completely nor can he arrive at a positive certitude about them; and that when he sees that his own realisations are tallying absolutely with the descriptions of them as embodied in the shastras and as heard from the mouth of the Guru his mind feels at rest and all his doubts are dispelled.

As a testimony to the truth of the above remark we may cite here the instance of the great Paramahansa Sukadeva Goswami, the son of Vyasa. Being born in a state not tarnished by Maya, from the very time of his birth, he used to have high spiritual experiences; and in order to verify the veracity of those realisations, he studied the Vedas and other shastras from his father, the great sage Vyasa. But still his doubts were not cleared. One day he approached Vyasa and told him that though his experiences tallied exactly with what was described in the shastras, yet he was not feeling sure if those were the highest points of religious exaltation and spiritual realisation and that he was still doubtful about the final culmination of spiritual life; and so saying he asked his father to tell him of his own spiritual realisations. The sage understood the mind of the son and thinking that his own words might not be so effective in removing the mist of the mind of Sukadeva, as in fact he had told the boy all that he knew about the matter while teaching him the Shastras, he directed him to go to Janaka, the renowned king of Mithila, who was reputed to be one of the greatest *Brahma jnanis* of the time; and further told him that he could have all his doubts cleared from the royal sage. So Sukadeva, it is said in the Mahabharata, went next to Janaka and told him all

of his own realisations, as well as, what he had read of the spiritual life in the scriptures and requested him to give his opinion and final instruction about the same. The royal sage told him all about the highest spiritual truth and spiritual realisation and said that what Suka had realised, what the Shastras said of the matter and also what he spoke to him were all the same. And Suka also, finding this unity of his own experiences with the descriptions of the Shastras and again being corroborated by the words of his Guru, found an assurance in his mind and attained perfect peace, having all his doubts thus dispelled.

Besides, there were more important reasons for the Master's undergoing the arduous spiritual practices even after being enlightened with God-vision. To attain peace and final beatitude of mind was not the sole purpose of our Master's life. The great Divine Dispenser of the world sent him here in that embodied form to fulfil quite a different purpose of Hers—to show the path of redemption and blessedness to humanity. Therefore it was absolutely incumbent upon him to get himself acquainted with all the various kinds of spiritual realisations by pursuing the various paths of sadhana as observed in different sects and religions. In order to become the world-teacher of the present age, he had to perform all the spiritual practices as prescribed in different scriptures, that he might testify to the absolute veracity of these spiritual paths. Moreover, by making him attain the various spiritual states as described in the different religious scriptures by the mere help of Sadhana without the aid of any scholastic attainments, the Lord of the Universe, as if, wanted to prove once more in the modern time the great truths of spirituality as embodied in the Vedas, the Puranas, the Bible, the Koran and other holy books. So, though he was blessed with God-vision even at the very start of his spiritual career, there was no cessation of his spiritual practices. The more we shall proceed with this wonderful life, the more we shall find unfolded before us its great significance and we shall understand why the Divine Mother brought to him from time to time eminent teachers of different religious sects and spiritual paths and made him learn both in theory and practice the secrets of these paths.

We have already mentioned that in the first four years of the sadhana period of his life, the intense hankering of his heart was all that he had for the furtherance of his spiritual life. As yet, then, no one had come to him to teach him the spiritual practices as prescribed in the Shastras. But this spiritual hankering is the soul of all spiritual practices; he had it and with its aid alone, he attained

the vision of the Divine Mother. By that, it has been proved to the world that one can attain God-realisation even if he has no other sadhana except this true hankering of the heart for the same. But while taking this hankering alone as the means to God-realisation, we often forget to comprehend how deep should be that hankering,—how profound that stirring of emotions in the search after God! This particular period of the Master's life reveals that fact unmistakably to the world. We have seen how this hankering for God-realisation made him almost mad and forgetful even of the ordinary physical concerns of the body, robbed all his sleep and rest and like a tidal wave, swept away completely even all those habits and tendencies of his, which were deeply rooted in him from his infancy, and we have also seen how it made him absolutely unmindful even of the preservation of his body, what to speak of his health! The Master used to say, "As I was perfectly unmindful of cleansing the body at that time, the hairs grew long and got matted of themselves, being smeared with dirt and dust. When I used to sit in meditation, the body used to become stiff and motionless like a stock through intense concentration of mind, and birds, taking it to be an inert substance, came freely, perched on the head and pecked into the matted hairs in search of food. Sometimes I used to feel so intensely the pang of separation from God, that in its very bitterness I rubbed my face on earth and it used to get lacerated and blood oozed out! And in meditation, prayer and other devotional practices, the day used to fly away so quickly that I was not conscious of it. At dusk, when the approach of night used to be announced by the ringing of bells and the sound of conches from the temple, I used to be reminded that the day was passed and the night befell; and with this consciousness a frenzy of despair used to seize my soul; I used to throw myself on the ground and rub my face on it, crying loudly, "Mother, a day is passed, still Thou hast not appeared before me!" A gnawing anguish used to torment my soul? And those who saw me like that, writhing in agony, thought that I was suffering from some colic pain."

The Master used to relate such incidents to us in order to rouse intense yearning in our heart for God-realisation; and he used to say further, with a touch of pathos in his voice, "People weep a flood of tears for the sake of their wife and children and other worldly affairs, but Ah! who does the same for the realisation of God? But still they complain that they have prayed so much, and God did not appear to them." These words used to touch our heart to its very core and we felt that he could speak them so boldly

and with so much of certitude, because he had realised the truth in his own life.

In these first four years of his sadhana, the Master was not contented with mere devotion to and realisation of the Divine Mother, his heart flowed also towards the realisation of that particular aspect of the Deity, which was the chosen ideal of his family. Raghuvira or the Divine Incarnation as Rama was the *Ishiam* of his family and he wanted to have a vision of the Deity in that particular form. And thinking that a devotion like that of Hanuman would help him in getting the realisation, he thought himself a Hanuman and engaged his mind in *sadhana* after the great monkey-devotee of Rama of the Epic. The Master told us that during that time his mind got so much absorbed in the contemplation of Hanuman, while impersonating him, that he forgot completely for the time being his own separate identity and actually felt that his individuality was lost in that of Hanuman. He said, "At that time all my manners and behaviours used to be exactly like those of a monkey. Not that I did so intentionally, but it used to be so unconsciously, in spite of myself. I used to twist the wearing cloth into the shape of a tale and tie it round the waist; then I never walked but jumped and lived on fruits only, and that too without peeling off the skin. Major portion of the day I spent on the trees, and constantly cried out the name of the Lord,—“Raghuvira, Raghuvira.” The eyes then assumed the fickleness of look characteristic of monkeys, and the most wonderful of all is that the coccyx got enlarged to an inch.” When he mentioned of this enlargement of his coccyx, we asked him if that portion of his body was still in that elongated condition; he replied, “No, after sometime as the influence of the same idea of impersonation on the mind grew less and less, it also began to decrease and gradually assumed its normal shape.”

During that time when he was engaged in that particular kind of devotional practice known as *Dāsya Bhāva*, the Master had a wonderful vision, the like of which he had not had before. It appeared so novel to him then that it left an indelible impression upon his mind. Referring to this vision, he said, “During that time, I was one day sitting underneath the *Panchavati* trees,—I was not meditating, but was simply sitting there,—when I saw a vision of an exceedingly beautiful woman at a little distance from where I sat. I was perfectly awake and was conscious not only of that form but also of the whole of the surroundings as in the ordinary awakened state. And the form was purely human and had no

external signs of divinity on it; but she appeared as the very embodiment of the wonderful blending of love, patience, compassion and sufferings, and her countenance wore a light of serenity, the like of which cannot be found even in gods and goddesses. I saw the form approaching towards me with a gracious look. I was much surprised by the appearance and was trying to think who she could be, when a monkey came up there jumping, no one knew from where, and sat at the feet of the lady. And something told me from within me that she was Sita—Sita, the daughter of King Janaka,—Sita whose life was one of long sufferings,—Sita whose life was lived only for her lord, the Divine Rama. Then as I was about to throw myself at her feet, crying, ‘Mother’, ‘Mother’, she came quickly and entered into this (*i.e.*, his own body). I was so overwhelmed with the joy and wonderment of it that I lost all my external consciousness and fell down on the ground. This was the first vision of the kind; hitherto I never had any vision except in meditation and trance. Perhaps, because my first vision of the kind was of Sita, of life-long sufferings, my life too has become full of sufferings like hers.”

At that time, feeling the need of a convenient place for his spiritual practices, he expressed his desire to Hridaya to plant a group of five plants known as *Panchavati* for the purpose. Hitherto he used to meditate under the *Amalaka* tree near the old *Panchavati*, but now the whole of that portion of the land was levelled up and the said *Amalaka* tree was cut down, therefore, he wanted badly a convenient place for his meditation. And so, to the west of the small hut now known as *Sadhana Kutira*, he planted with his own hand a small plant of peepul tree, and he asked Hridaya to plant near it the four other plants *Beil*, *Asoka*, *Vata* and *Amalaka* and around all these five plants he put also a number of basil plants and *aparajita* creepers. Through the tender care of the Master, the plants thrived very well and the *Aparajita* creepers had a luxurious growth, so much so that they soon grew into thick bushes around and hid the spot completely from external view.

In this connection we must tell our readers an interesting event that happened then. While the plants were tender, the Master wanted to hedge them securely from cattle. But whence to get the materials of the fence? Just as he was thinking of it, came the high tide in the Ganges and on it came floating a bunch of bamboos, a roll of coir rope and all other materials including even a big knife for the purpose. And the float came and touched the bank near the *Panchavati*. The Master was glad

indeed to fish them up and had the hedge tied with the help of the gardener Bhartabhari.

When the news of the installation of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar was widely circulated in the country, hundreds of Sannyasins and anchorites belonging to various sects of Hinduism, began to pass that way every year on their pilgrimage either to the holy shrine of Jagannath or to the sacred confluence of the Ganges and the Ocean, and they often halted for a few days at the temple and partook of the generous charity of the Rani. We heard from the Master that thenceforward many saints and sages of high spiritual attainments came to the temple. It seems, being instructed by some such person, at that time he took to the practice of Pranayama and some other practices of Hatha Yoga. Having practised himself and gained the first-hand experience of the results of such Hatha Yoga practices, he used to warn us in his later life against them, and when some of us asked him to give instructions in those practices, they got this reply from him, "Those practices are not for this age. In this iron age of Kali, man has so short a life and is so much dependent upon food, that there is no time for him to practise the Hatha Yoga first to make his body firm, before he could practise Raja Yoga. Where is the time then left for the practice of devotion of God? Moreover, if one were to practise Hatha Yoga, one should constantly live with a teacher who is an adept in that kind of yoga and being instructed by him about the regulation of diet and other necessary observances, one must undergo a long and arduous course of it. He must be very strict in observing the rules, otherwise even the least deviation from them can bring on various kinds of diseases, and not unoften, it entails even death. Therefore it may be said that there is no necessity for doing all those practices. Further, the practice of Kumbhaka and Pranayama has no other purpose save the concentration of the mind, and that concentration of the mind as well as the control of breath easily come to one through devout meditation on God. In this iron age of Kali, the human beings are very feeble and short-lived, and therefore the Lord has made, out of his infinite grace, the path of God-realisation so easy. What pang and void one feels at the bereavement of one's wife and children! if one can only feel for God the same restlessness, the same pang, the same void in the heart, even for twenty-four hours in this age, he is sure to realise God."

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA,

BY

Prof K. Sundararama Iyer, M.A.

CHAPTER VII.

Is Isvara Finite or Infinite?

This question clearly arises in connection with the Personal God—not with the Atman as beyond all attributes. In the Vedanta we recognise Isvara (or *Saguna-Brahman*) as the originator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe and the guide and helper of all persons who are born into it. All religious faith and spiritual progress among Hindus, whatever their stage of development, hinges upon the recognition of Isvara as a Person with whom we stand in various relations and attitudes at different times. Patanjali's Yoga-Darsana has the following classic definition:—"Isvara is a particular person (पुरुषविशेषः) who is untouched by afflictions, activities, (their) fruits, and the mental tendencies (*Vasanas*) left behind by them." His "permanent excellence or superiority" to other persons is chiefly stated to consist in two attributes, *viz.*, Omniscience and Omnipotence. Sri Sankaracharya says:—"He from whom, as the omniscient and omnipotent cause, the origination, sustentation and destruction of the world proceed,—the world of whose evolution according to law it is not possible to form an adequate conception even by our minds." We shall attempt to explain the true significance of what is implied in the doctrine regarding Isvara put forth in the above quotations from Patanjali and Sankaracharya.

In the case of a Jiva, we have the idea of a conscious self which persists in spite of the changes undergone by the mind and body arising from constant contact of one kind or another with the external environment and the other living persons amid whom we find ourselves placed. This conscious persistence has been the underlying cause leading to all the speculations of inquirers and the conflicts of contending creeds in the world. The Vedantin holds that this persistence is purely phenomenal, transient and unreal, and is therefore bound to cease when we reach the realisation of the "One (Reality) only without a second." But, while this continuous flow of life and experience lasts, every person feels a sense of his separateness from the rest of life and from lifeless matter, a sense of his power to respond to stimulus from the world around him,—to gain

knowledge, to maintain favourable acquisitions of all kinds and discard all changes having a contrary tendency, — to assert ourselves, in fact, in all our freedom of action and to attain to the “conservation of value” within our own realm of life’s ends and aims, whether that value is understood as pleasure, moral approbation, or the highest good. This is, perhaps what Dr. Bosanquet has in view when he says that “the universe is concerned with finite beings as a place of soul-making.” So long as this process of “soul-making” goes on in the universe, each and every person has a consciousness of his individuality and distinctiveness from all others. Dr. Bosanquet speaks of it as “the formal distinctness of selves or souls,” and goes on to explain why the distinctiveness is “formal.” He says that it “consists in the impossibility that one finite centre of experience should possess, as its own immediate experience, the immediate experience of another.” Dr. Bosanquet further explains that our experience of the distinctness of souls “depends on unessential limitations, such as the fact of differences of vital feeling, depending as a rule on the belonging of different selves to different bodies”, — that “if the hindrance against two selves having the same immediate experience could be removed, the result would be coalescence of the two selves into one.” This means only that there are no *finite* individuals. But we know that such finiteness is the condition of individuality and of the consciousness of individuality, and that it is no abstraction, but a fact. We quite agree to Dr. Bosanquet’s idea that “there is something more real.” The Vedantin holds that this “something” is the “One (reality) only without a second,” — but that is a different story, and does not come in at the stage when we experience the “distinctness of souls,” and are still engaged in the process of “soul-making.” While this stage lasts, no “coalescence of two (or more ?) souls into one” can take place, though in sustaining the process of “soul-making,” various kinds of altruistic activities, the organisation of various institutions of a progressive and abiding kind, &c., may be developed and made to cast into the shadow or subordinate the thought of the “distinctness of souls.” Such a development of social or national life, however absorbing in its interest or productive of material values, can never result in an actual or felt “coalescence of souls” which are known as “distinct,” — even though there may arise moments when souls or selves participating in such social or national life, may develop a more or less conscious neglect or forgetfulness of the fact of distinctness or individuality. So long as the consciousness of space, time, and distinctness lasts, there must remain for all selves or souls the consciousness of finiteness and individuation.

Let us now turn to the inquiry, — Is God finite or infinite? The author of the Yoga-Darsana calls him a *Purusha-Visesha* (or particular soul), possessing all auspicious qualities such as omniscience, freedom from various imperfections and limitations leading to birth and

death, &c. The Vedantin of every school adds other qualities such as omnipotence, free-will, &c. In the Advaita-Vedanta, he is known as Saguna-Brahman, the Brahman associated with the material universe. But this association is not due to *Karma-bandha* arising from the ignorant identification of soul and matter, which is the cause of all the imperfection and misery of all ordinary living souls (*Jivas*). For Isvara has complete control over potential matter (*Mula-Prakriti*) and its transformations (*Vikriti*) constituting the manifested world. It is this *purposive* association with *Maya* that gives him the Personality which we assign to him and enables him to fulfil the functions which he has graciously assumed and is fulfilling in order to help the attainment of spiritual perfection by all living selves in the universe. The blessed Bhagavan explains his position towards *Prakriti* and *Vikriti* in the Gita (IX, 8, 9 and 10) :—“Holling under my sway my own *Prakriti*, do I again and again re-fashion (the forms and personalities of) this entire collection of born (and living) beings who are dependent and without a will of their own owing to their being subject to *Prakriti*. Nor do these activities, O Dhananjaya, bind me, for I abide as one indifferent and unattached to these works. By me as (its unattached) controller, *Prakriti* gives birth to all moving and unmoving things; and for this reason, O Son of Kunti, the world repeats its successive rounds of manifestation.” It is this relation of controller to the controlled world of matter that gives him his character as supreme Personal God and all the auspicious attributes above mentioned. It is this personality of his that makes him a finite being. Dr. Bradley well says:—“A person, I should add, to me must be finite, or cease to be personal.” God is a *person*, and therefore *finite*.* He is a “separate individual” (*Purusha-Visesha*), as Dr. Bradley calls him. It is this fact that renders possible the love which other finite selves feel for him, their trustful approach towards him according to the prescribed forms of ritual and devotion, and his gracious acceptance of them followed by meet recompense, according to gradations of merit. The blessed Bhagavan says (Gita, IX 26), “Whoever with

*The learned Professor has brought forward no logical arguments to prove that God is finite. “God is a person and therefore finite.” And he has come to this conclusion only on the authority of Dr. Bradley. Even taking for granted the infallibility of Dr. Bradley, does it prove that the Vedantic conception of God too is finite? Is the conception of God as *personal* is all the conception of God a Vedantin can give? Is He not personal and Impersonal both in one? Are there two distinct separate Gods—one Personal and the other Impersonal? On the other hand when viewed from the world of relativity, He is known as Personal and the same Being realised in highest Samadhi, is known as Impersonal. Impersonal includes Personal and God is Personal and Impersonal at the same time.

“A finite God is no God”—says Swami Vivekananda. The conception of Isvara in contradistinction to Brahman (the Absolute) is merely arbitrary, and a philosophy based on such fancied ground necessarily fails to represent the Truth.—Ed. V. K.

devotion offers a leaf, flower, a fruit, or (even) water—I accept that offering of devotion from him of pure mind.” Isvara here reveals how easy are his laws of service, how full of tenderness are his laws and methods of recompense, and how his yoke is light and his heart full of mercy. It is this personality of God that makes religion possible and natural to all. Of course, also, sin brings its own punishment according to divine law, but even when God smites, he does so not from wrath, but from love,—from the desire to reform and raise his creatures. Dr. Bradley says well, “I cannot deny, for one thing, the relation in religion between God and finite minds” He says that he “can accept the belief in God as a separate individual” only if it is “supplemented by other beliefs which really contradict it.” He exclaims,—“Unless the Maker and Sustainer becomes also the indwelling Life and Mind and the inspiring Love, how much of the universe is impoverished!” This is exactly the Vedic position regarding the Personal God, and there is no “contradiction” between the several attributes mentioned by Dr. Bradley. Even the Yoga-Siddhis give to those who develop them the possession of *seemingly* contradictory powers at the same time,—the power of simultaneously remaining both within and without a place, and in distant places also. Isvara can, therefore, certainly be at the same time both the extra-cosmic controller, maker, and sustainer of matter in its potential and kinetic forms, and also the all-pervading, “omnipenetrative,” indwelling, inspiring, loving witness and helper of all. The blessed Bhagavan says (Gita, IX. 18):—“I am the way, the supporter, the lord, the witness, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the abiding-place, the seed containing in itself the indwelling impulse to the progress of all.” The consistency of the two attributes is due to the fact that, in India, creation is understood as but the passage of the Universe from non-manifestation to manifestation through the exercise of but a *fraction* of Isvara’s power of will. (Gita, X. 42). That is enough for his extra-cosmic function of creating and sustaining the world, and the remainder is available for other functions.

The Personality of God, as above explained, is only *finite*, for, as already pointed out, he is a Person, and matter (with whom he places himself in a relation of limitation though by his own will) is finite. When the Veda calls Isvara omnipotent, omniscient, &c., it means that his knowledge and power as a Person extends to the *entire* material universe, which is *necessarily* a finite entity and cannot be further expanded for that very obvious reason. Only if we transcend the entire phenomenal universe, can we realise the Absolute, the *One* only without a *Second*, the undifferentiated Self.

The universe of matter is a universe of space, time, and circumstance, and all these three are, according to Veda, finite, not infinite. This Vedic doctrine is confirmed by the recent investigations and calculations of the eminent German physicist and mathematician

Prof. Einstein of Berlin University. We have already once referred (Chapter V) to his doctrine of the relativity of matter and to his explanations regarding the order of nature as one four-dimensional continuence consisting of “a single order of time and a three-fold order of space.” In his recent small work on “Relativity,” Prof. Einstein writes as follows on the nature of space and time, —“the results of calculation indicate that, if matter be distributed uniformly, the universe would necessarily be spherical (or elliptical). Since in reality the detailed distribution is not uniform, the real universe will deviate in individual parts from the spherical, *i.e.*, will be quasi-spherical. But it will be *necessarily finite*” (p. 114). For, barring these individual parts, the whole universe of observation extends over the surface of a sphere—and Prof. Einstein explains that the attempt to realise a straight line with measuring-rods on a spherical surface will only “obtain a curve, which we three-dimensional beings designate as a great circle, *i.e.*, a self-contained line of definite finite length, which can be measured up by means of a measuring-rod.” Prof. Einstein then proceeds:—

“Similarly, this universe has a finite area that can be compared with the area of a square constructed with rods. The great charm resulting from this consideration lies in the recognition of the fact that *the universe of these beings is finite and yet has no limits.*” (p. 109). If, on the other hand, we imagine an existence in two-dimensional space,” Prof. Einstein explains that “in their universe there is room for an infinite number of identical squares made up of rods, *i.e.*, its volume (surface) is infinite.” “But the spherical-surface beings do not need to go on a world-tour in order to perceive that they are not living in a Euclidean universe” of two dimensions. “They can convince themselves on every part of their world, provided they do not use too small a piece of it. Starting from a point, they draw ‘straight lines’ (arcs of circles as judged in three-dimensional space) of equal length in all directions. They will call the line joining the ends of these lines a circle.....But if this part taken for measurement is very small indeed, they will no longer be able to determine that they are on a spherical world and not on a Euclidean plane, for a small part of a spherical surface differs only slightly from a piece of a plane of the same size.” (pp. 109-110).

Similarly, as regards time, Prof. Einstein points out that “before the advent of the theory of relativity, it had always been tacitly assumed in physics that the statement of time had an absolute significance,—*i.e.*, that it is independent of the state of motion, *i.e.*, that it is independent of the state of motion of the body of reference” (p. 27). But Einstein explains, by taking an embankment and a train moving with a constant speed alongside of it in a particular direction. Two persons are seated, one on the train at a point M’, and the other just opposite at the point M on the embankment. Let us suppose

two lightning strokes, A and B, from two places A and B on the embankment, and that M is the mid-point between A and B, and that M' is just opposite to M on the train. Prof. Einstein explains:—"Just when the flashes of lighting occur, the point M' naturally coincides with the point M, but it moves (let us say) towards the right (B) with the velocity of the train. If an observer sitting in the position M' in the train did not possess this velocity, he would remain permanently at M, and the light rays emitted by the flashes of lighting, A and B, would reach him simultaneously, i.e., they would reach just where he is situated. Now, in reality, (considered with reference to the railway embankment) he is hastening towards the beam of light coming from B, while he is riding on ahead of the beam of light coming from A. Observers who take the railway train as their reference-body, must therefore come to the conclusion that the lightning-flash B took place earlier than the lightning-flash A. We thus arrive at the following result,—that events which are simultaneous with reference to the embankment are not simultaneous with reference to the train and *vice versa* (relativity of simultaneity). Every reference-body has its own particular time; unless we are told the reference-body to which the statement of time refers, there is no meaning in a statement of the time of an event." (p. 26).

• Having thus shown the finiteness (or relativity) of the Personal God by reference to his relation to the world of space and time, we may now make a brief reference to his attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, &c. Clearly, there cannot be an infinite (or countless) number of things to be known in a limited world of space and time. His knowledge will constantly embrace "all" the things which exist, but this does not mean an infinite number.† Similarly, the potency (or power) of God is limited by the entire number of the phenomena of the universe and of their relations to each other. Similarly, with regard to Isvara's attributes of mercy, forgiveness, &c. Everywhere we have only to deal with the conception of "all"—not with that of *infinity*: All means the whole of what exists as the universe, and this harmonises with the idea of finitude, not with that of *infinity*. Hence, we conclude that *Isvara is finite, not infinite.**

* Note.—In previous articles, the word "infinite" has been applied in one or two places with reference to Isvara's attributes, but only as they spring from his control over Maya, and so the word is used in its popular sense of what is beyond the present and possible attainments of the Jiva. The infinite is, properly, that which is beyond the finite, which, as above explained in the present article, includes the conception of All (*Sarva*) or the universe of Maya. Isvara is thus All-Knowing, Almighty, &c.—not infinite. The Noumenal Atman is alone infinite.

K. S.

† Does the Professor mean to say that God exhausts Himself in the universe? Cf. the Gita X, 42 पृकाशेन स्थितो जगत्—Ed. V. K.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

PART II.

Introduction.

In the first part of the discourse, attempts were made to discover the real form of the spirit of Indian culture, which resulted in pointing out a particular form of the spiritual life. Now we should try to show how this particular gift of the nation instead of dying out, can revive itself and the nation by being diffused into every branch of its life and culture. At the outset, we are not only to discover the creative mind of the nation, but at all costs we should stunt the growth of the heterogenous elements that clash with the free and indigenous development of the nation's life. Deep, anxious and careful considerations are required to organise a system of education and scheme of studies, following which our students may discover the centre of their life and develop the life-giving art, which is nothing but a creation from within. To realise this end, a syndicate of scholars is required to consider the problem and lay down the rules thought fit. Here, only a few ideas will be suggested to help the formulation of such rules and the proper handling of the practical side of the question.

A violent objection that has been raised against the construction of an All-India National University presupposes the racial differences between the Hindus and the Muhammedans. But after considering the problem more seriously and deeply, this distinction seems to be more apparent than real. Practically speaking, both the Hindus and the Muhammadans stand on the same platform, both of them are Vedantists in their practical life, one in thought, the other in action more or less. The Muhammadans have got the least hatred for their co-religionists, the whole community, so to speak, moves like one man. What the one conceives, the other practises. Swami Vivekananda says, "Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought.....we believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity..... yet practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, is yet to be developed among the Hindus universally. On the other hand, our experience is that if ever the followers of any religion approached to this equality in any appreciable degree in the plane of practical work-a-day life,.... it is those of Islam and Islam alone. There we are firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind..... For our own motherland a junction of the great

systems, Hinduism and Islam,—Vedantic brain and Islamic body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedantic brain and Islamic body."

The systems of education in India should be based on Vedanta, the outer aspect of which is equality, fraternity and liberty, while the inner aspect consists in being in touch, and gradually one with the universal soul. In a word, it requires man to be free, absolutely free,—free in and out. This is the ideal towards which every nation is striving, but the Indians, the Hindus and the Muhammadans have realised it most. If this doctrine of Vedanta is made the fundamental principle in guiding Indian education, the University need not split, and find shelter one in the city of temples, and the other in the city of mosques. The country as a whole, shall then be changed into a huge temple or a gigantic mosque.

Another graver objection that has been raised and will be raised from time to time is that attempts for making a national University a success are more emotional than national, for a University of this type runs in direct contradistinction to the policy of the ruling power. Every institution should have laws, and these laws must be enforced by some authority. Who is to give authority to the University laws? What is the sanction of these laws? A private body can, by no means, control the public mind, only a part of the community is brought under the personal influence of some popular leader. The Congress though it passes many resolutions vital to the interest of the country, cannot give effect to them, only because the vast majority is not prepared to accept it. Now, the whole question centres round the most important item of our national activities, namely mass education. When the masses will be enlightened, we shall find the authority or sanction of the laws in the moral principle or sentiment of the people. We should have recourse to the moral force, the force that controls our society, controls our religion, and controls our numerous private undertakings, e.g., trade, business, etc. Can't we add education to these and still more minimise the small sphere under the direct supervision of the Government? Government should then bless us for giving relief to its already over-burdened officers!

At present we require man-making education, institutions for making men, and men for making institutions. They presuppose each other, and though it looks like a fallacy of *petio principii*, these fallacies are the very soul of truth. Time is the best cure, evolution will bring reconciliation to these apparent contradictions, and we shall realise what we hanker after, provided we give a proper guidance to our natural activities.

• Step by step and stage by stage we are to prepare the country, before we can hope for any reform successfully gaining the ground.

The process open to us is slow but sure, and we should avoid all sorts of hasty conducts for watchful adaptation and gradual development.

Now, let us consider the systems of education to be introduced into the Indian Universities. The methods will be referred to later on. Here Japan will serve as a useful model. Let education, as usual, be Primary, Secondary and Higher. Primary education should be made compulsory, and the boys from 7 to 10 should be taught in their mother-tongue History of the nation, Geography of the peninsula, Arithmetic, Mensuration, etc., in their elementary forms and Religious practices should begin from the pre-school age. Secondary education should begin at the age of 11 and continue up to 15. At this stage various departments shall be opened to train the boys in the general as well as in the technical lines, e.g., Engineering, Agricultural, Commercial, etc. These lines should be quite independent of one another, and the boys will have their choice. Those who like to follow the general line, shall be taught the school subjects in their own vernacular, and English should be the second language. On the other hand, those who like to pursue technical line of any kind, should be in touch with their own language and literature (general), over and above their vocational acquisitions. In the higher education, one should continue some of the subjects already taken in the school, general or technical, specialise in one subject, and get the degree. These studies in higher branches of learning may be in a college for three years under the direct supervision of professors. Then the scholar, if proficient, may continue his research work to add to the knowledge of the world. The above programme shows that at the age of 18 or 19, i.e., when the boy is about to jump out of his teens or break down the bondage of minority, he may live and move as a free citizen seeking his fortune, and making his way in this wide world. Let our boys be men. How long, my countrymen, shall you make boys of our men? Let them come out, be men, and make men. India requires her young men no longer to be boyish or womanly!

Standard of action right or wrong, beneficial or harmful to every nation, is derived from the innumerable centuries that have rolled over it. The past is the determining factor of the actual and the ideal of the Individual and the Society. Viscount Bryce has rightly remarked: "What habits are to the individual man, that to a nation are its traditions. They are the memories of the past turned into the standard of the present." So the past history of India as judged by the 'Culture epoch theory' of Herbart whose tentative effort lies in the selection of materials for the course of study, to parallel the development of the individual with that of the race, should determine the course of studies for the Indian boys also.

In India we see three distinct stages coming one after another:
(1) The stage of Theocracy, (a state in which the Almighty is regard-

ed as the sole sovereign, and the laws of the realm as divine commands rather than human ordinances), combined with that of Theocracy, a mystic intimacy with deity reached through profound contemplation." (2) The stage of Philosophy, a direct vision of the truth from various standpoints, and a tracing out of the paths leading to realisation of the supreme knowledge and truth. (3) The stage of Science and Literature which have been more fully developed in western countries. In India, all these stages are concentrated in one ideal, namely the practical realisation of the higher self. Treatment of these subjects from the Vedic age downward, is often poetic, and this reflects the æsthetic sensibility of the race. So it should be noted that the Indian student should be appealed more through the feelings to the heart, and should be guided to pass through the distinct stages in which the race found its expression. But caution should be taken that the free growth of the child, and the forces in it may not be arrested and crushed by any formal or artificial means.

Now, Philosophy, Science and Literature may be taught to the boy by regular teaching in the class when his reason is developed enough to grasp the subjects. It should be noted here that Indian students should be taught Philosophy before they are given any lesson in higher branches of Science or Literature, for Indians are born philosophers, and the Indian philosophies in true sense, are not merely intellectual gymnastics, they should be and mostly are thoughts of every-day life in India. But the difficulty lies in introducing the boy or rather the child into the first stage. Having taken into consideration the psychological development of a child's mind, it becomes clear that the feelings accompanied by activity comes first, and then in course of time, thinking finds place, becomes associated with feeling and gets developed, until it takes the better of feeling, and becomes predominant, say from the age of 15 or 16. Activity is the common factor in both. So at the outset, the child should be taught to feel and to act. It should believe in the existence of the Divine Providence, and practise meditation and other processes as prescribed by the superiors. Music of Doric type should be attended by the students regularly. This will rouse their emotional nature, and establish a sort of harmony in a life of conflicting elements. Religious songs in unison with artistic music will help the child to feel, may be, vaguely the presence of the Infinite, whereby the child is introduced into Theocracy.

A young student is in direct touch with three things generally: the Teachers, the Text-books and the Surroundings. If these three centres of forces emit the Indian spirit, and mould the child silently, the child as a grown up man will feel no conflict of ideals. (1) The Teacher should be a living spirit, equipped with the traditional treasures of ancient India. He should bring himself to the centre of Indian life in thought and action, but at the same time he is required to be up-to-date, being in touch with the foreign cultural elements that he may

weave the new into the old. He must be purely Indian in the habits of life, dress, language, manners and so on. We should teach morality not by preaching of abstract principles, but by the doings of our own life. Morality is the expression of the active aspect of human mind. Intellect cannot satisfy will, it is rather will that can influence will. So examples and not precepts should be the lessons in a class-room of morality. Too much preaching makes the mind dull and dead to all stimuli, for, from our very faculty of habit, passive impressions by being repeated grow weaker, according to the law of 'diminishing returns.' (2) The Text-book. Student's text-books should be written in an Indian spirit. The glorious traditions of the past should supply the bulk of the matter. The method of teaching of the western people is more scientific and critical, their ways of looking at things can be profitably used to interpret what is beautiful and real in the Indian life. Take the case of History, now-a-days, students are to read the political history of India; kings and wars, as in the west, form the centre of historical interest, and the focus of the reader's attention. History of India, must be religious in its essence, mighty spiritual forces should make the main stream, whereas the political and social events should form the attractive eddies and whirlpools as created by the main current. Similarly the literary text-books should be full of characters bearing the stamp of the national culture. Dogs, cats and insects should not occupy the major portion of the text, as is the case with the current School books published by so and so.

Nature-Study is important, but it should not be materialistic. Nature is not a lump of matter evolved, students should know that 'there is a spirit in the wood'. The materialistic influence of the present-day education is so very great on the poor victims that one, to be a gentleman, must laugh at everything ancient, supernatural or spiritual. That fellow criticises everything without entering into reality, and adopts whatever is new and attractive at the cost of the old, or if he is conscientious enough, he tries to reconcile the new to the old by keeping a long tuft, worn in a knot on the Albert cut of the hair and a French cut of the beard. These show that these people have no stamina, no sign of life. They are the proud products of this costly education. (3) The surrounding is a matter of last importance for the moral, religious and æsthetic training of the child. Students should be surrounded with the beautiful paintings of the great religious teachers and heroes along with the striking scenes and events from the puranas and histories. Children, as a rule, should be kept in a place where the superiors pass their usual periods in divine contemplation, and other religious practices. These will give a definite conception of life to the children who will discover that for themselves. Schools and colleges of residential type are preferable, for they can create a favourable atmosphere. So it becomes clear that Religion should fill the child imperceptibly

through its feeling, as Morality should approach the child through its will. The abstract principles of religion which are nothing but philosophical theories, should not be taught in mere words. The conception that God or Soul pervades the whole universe, may be impressed upon the mind of a young student, even as Svetaketu was taught by his father in the Chhandogya Upanishad. The father told his son to get a glass of water, put some salt in it, taste the water from the various parts, up, middle and bottom. All the parts of the water would taste saline though salt is not seen. Similarly God or Soul pervades the whole universe though He is not seen. If the student comes to believe that an Omnipotent, Omniscient Being pervades the earth, fire, water, sky and everything of the universe, he will shirk from doing or thinking any evil. The idea of an extensive living God, will enable the student to drown his individual self in the Universal Self. This is the crown and glory of Indian life.

It may be objected that the student's mind should be left free, that it may grow from within. This is true. But unfortunately the mind of the child which we have got to handle, is not a *tabula rasa*, it has certain pre-conceptions beforehand, and it is very difficult, and rather impossible to keep the mind free from the external baneful influences of the day which stults the growth of the spiritual life of the child. It is better to infuse into the child a healthy tone, when we can't stop the undesirable influences. Further, the readers of Pestalozzy know that the great educationist instructs the teachers to take into consideration the mode of life and surrounding in which the child is born and which it has got to face when grown-up. But in this connection it should be remembered that the teacher should as far as possible give the spirit, while the particular form should be discovered by the student himself.

A few words are needed about food and dress. Food and clothing play a very important part in moulding spiritual life. They are all to Mr. James, so many selves. So we should see that these 'selves' are not adulterated. There are certain kinds of food which help the growth of spirituality, others stult it. Students should take *satvic* food untouched by evil hands, for evil persons transmit impurity through their touch, sight and company. India like a continent, represents various races with diverse languages and different dresses. So this is impossible and unnatural that they should have one dress, but there can be some uniformity in this variety of clothes. This uniform can mark out the Indian students from the students of other nations, and unify them to love and respect one another's person. That uniform may be a radiant white light pictured on a badge. This light will signify the illumination or spiritual insight of the Indian culture, and whiteness, the purity of the sacred East.

So far about the food and dress of the body, now what about the food and dress of the culture of the nation? We have already seen that the food of Indian life is spirituality. How to supply this food and save the nation? We find a suggestion answering the above question in a lecture of Swami Vivekananda. The Swami says: "We must have a temple, for with Hindus, religion must come first. Then you may say all sects will quarrel about it. But we will make it a non-sectarian temple, having only 'Om' as the symbol, the greatest symbol of any sect.....Here should be taught the common grounds of our different sects, and at the same time the different sects should have perfect liberty to come and teach their doctrines... Secondly in connection with this temple there should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people.....The work will extend through these bands of teachers and preachers and gradually we shall have similar temples in the centres, until we have covered the whole of India." This is about the Hindu community. In the like manner, the Muhammadans also will revive the spirit of Islam, and exchange their ideas with the Hindus only to discover that there is no real distinction between the fundamental principles of the Koran and the Hindu Sastras, for the Muhammadan Fakirs and the Hindu Sadhus, make very little distinction in their practical lives. The Sadhus and the Fakirs are all great devotees of the Great Lord of the universe, both are men of illumination, one saying 'Soham' the other, 'Anahak.' Mutual exchange of ideas is sure to put an end to the unhappy feelings produced by outward differences in ordinary life. What is, above all, needed is that the accumulated hidden treasure of our land should be made a commonwealth, and distributed among the down-trodden masses.

Every race is born with some peculiar culture and a particular language as a suitable vehicle to hold the cultural spirit of the race. Both grow side by side. Sanskrit is the language to hold the culture of the Hindus, while Arabic is that of the Muhammadans. Sanskrit is called Devabhasa, spiritual tongue. So to give permanence and life to the Indian culture, both Sanskrit and Arabic should be popularised along with the preaching and spreading of the spiritual ideas in the languages of the people. "Sanskrit education must go along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge, you can put a mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good. There must come culture into the blood.....knowledge is only skin-deep, and a little scratch brings out the old savage." So to retain the culture of the nation is to popularise both Sanskrit and Arabic among respective adherents. These classics are the shields not only to beautify, or magnify the warrior, but also to protect

him in the struggles of life and cultures. There is a class of tender-hearted optimists who often think that India is a happy home in which all the religions of the world are growing and will grow side by side, and the time is not far when all the religions will be reconciled to one another, not only in principles, but even in the behaviours of every day life. They may be pained to see the Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians and Christians excluded from the representation of Indian culture. Unfortunately I cannot agree with those thinkers. History asserts the truth most boldly. Up to the 12th century A. D. the Hindus were the representatives of the Indian culture; though Buddhism flourished for sometime, it was absorbed by Brahmanism which absorbed not only the Buddhists and Jains, but also the Sakas, Yuetchi, Huns, and many other alien tribes who kept pouring into India and mingling their blood with that of the dark inhabitants. Smith says: "The strongest fact in the story is that the most profound effect was wrought by the earliest known swarms of immigrants, the Vedic Aryans, who have stamped an indelible mark on institutions, and given the country as a whole its distinctive character." Since the 13th century a new synthetic culture called Indo-Islamic culture has been developing in India, and this is sure to control the country for many centuries to come. In the processes of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, this culture is sure to weed out the weak representatives of alien cultures and drive them from India unless they adopt the national culture in some form or other.

From the above considerations, it follows that at least three languages Sanskrit or Arabic, vernacular and English should form an essential part of the curriculum. The classics are meant for retaining the culture, vernacular is meant for expressing our thought, and English is meant for enriching our vernaculars and abolishing provincial narrowness. English may serve as an inter-provincial tongue as well, as this is one of the most cultured languages of the world, and it is to this tongue we owe most of our present thoughts and deeds. A thinker says: "Mastery of one's own language means entering in to the full inheritance of the spiritual path of his race or nation, and the mastery of another is annexing the like heritage of the stranger, the only annexation that does not leave any bitterness behind it."

In fine, this is a matter of first importance to infuse into our boys the spirit of renunciation, renunciation not of the world, but of the narrow worldliness. Renunciation is the marrow and pith of Indian life. It involves the sacrifice of the lower self for the higher self, passion for reason, me and mine for you and yours. The Hegelian paradox of 'die to live' should be driven home into the mind and life of every boy. Spirit of service presupposes the feeling of sympathy, so these should be cultivated when feelings are predominant in the boys, i. e. from 7 to 15. So school students

should be made 'Servants of the Society' or 'little Brothers of the poor.'

Teachers with students may organise some relief committee or open some night schools. Guardians also should spare no pains to co-operate with the teachers to encourage their boys. In this way, will be developed in the boys, the qualities of the head and heart, which will broaden their out-look and widen their sympathy. Here we should remember that real education consists in helping the boy's will to keep pace with his insight, a slight disparity is sure to augment the keenness of life's struggle and render life miserable. So the students should be forced to act up to what they consider to be right and reasonable.

At last, a word about provincial differences. Provincial differences in language and literature, food and dress, manners and customs, and innumerable behaviours should be allowed to remain as they are, and provision should be made to help the growth of each of them on its proper line. Any attempt to equalise or level the distinction of different provincial forms, would be simply obstructing the natural growth not only towards perfection but also towards unity which we aspire to. People who can meet on the same platform and shake hands, are not those who speak one language or inherit one custom, but those having one spirit, one aim and one intellectual or spiritual attainment, though they may be delegated one from China, and another from Peru. So we should not make a fuss over these outward forms. India, as she is, should seek her unity only in the realisation of her spirit, and not in the amalgamation of forms. So the spirit of Indian culture should be the watchword of the educationists.

THE VIVEKANANDA SPIRIT AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL,*

BY

Mr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar, M. A.

Introductory.—The subject of my address is, "The Vivekananda Spirit and the problem of evil". The natural question is, let me premise by saying, what is meant by the Vivekananda Spirit? Is it meant the spirit of renunciation, his sanyasa? Or is it the spirit of catholic love which he typified in its highest essence? Or is it the spirit of intensive study and of laborious research into men and things that marked his brilliant career? All these are of course aspects of his personality that deserve the attention of any speaker. But now I propose with your leave to refer only to his evangelistic work, his missionary spirit, his spirit of world propaganda. It is these that mark him off from the generality of his country-men. It is Vivekananda that first went out to the world and impressed it with a sense of India's religious greatness. Therefore it is that it is so often said that if Vivekananda had done nothing more than attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago and made that one soul-stirring, heart-moving speech, he would still be entitled to the fullest reverence and gratitude of the entire Hindu race. The refrain of my song to-day is, therefore, let us follow up that great work. Let us organise ourselves for it.

Present condition.—Now, what is the present condition of the world? It is in great pain; it is in great confusion. The world is yearning for truth, for freedom from evil. All the recipes have failed. Civilisation is even treated as a disease. War between nations, strife between classes in a nation, rivalry and distrust between man and woman both as individuals and as aggregates, have come to be looked upon as the order of the day. Although the air has no doubt been filled with programmes for the abolition of war between nations and strife between classes, there cannot be said to have been any great achievement so far. Hence the maintenance of trust and harmony between the sexes has become a problem. The woman has begun to feel that her sex has a separate interest to be safeguarded apart from that of man, and that that interest is not secure in his hands. Nor does she believe that in the economy of corporate life there need be any sharp division of labour between herself and the sterner sex. There is, no doubt, the League of Nations purporting to prevent, or at least to ease, conflict between country and country. There are the various philanthropic, economic, political and social reform institutions to secure concord and amity in the relations between class and class, man and woman, capital and labour etc. etc. But can it be said that any of the situations has appreciably improved with each succeeding year or with the increasing number and size of these institutions? The remedies, it is complained, are no remedies at all. They are struggles to escape from one set of difficulties only to tumble into another. Thus then, though the forms of discord and consequent unhappiness may vary from time to time,

their spirit persists in all the relationships of human life. With changes in the nature and degree of evil, changes in methods of dealing with it, there must necessarily be; and they may be euphemistically called, steps in progress. But as long as no attempt is made to trace the cause of evil, they are in truth only adjustments or changes of front, and not cures. And our highest diplomacy has therefore been merely to escape from the embarrassments of the hour. Mutual distrust is writ large on every attitude of man, and the world's activities are fashioned in that mould. In fact, human polity may be characterised as one elaborate system of organised distrust, be it the polity of the household, the polity of the class, the polity of the nation, or the polity of international existence. And man stands helpless to reconstruct unity in any quarter.

Some Reflections.—Now, what is cause of all this? Can it be ever remedied? Is the earth to remain another hell, though not called by that name? Is freedom from pain, physical and mental, only to be expected in a hypothetical world beyond this life? Is man born only to suffer and to die? Is life a mere race, the running of a maniac? Has it no purpose but the running? Speaking at the Peace Conference, Mr. Lloyd George said 'I saw acres of graves of the fallen. These are the results of the only organised method that civilized nations have ever established, or sought to establish, to settle disputes between each other.' But these are only the results of the direct war which the British Premier is alluding to. Is no account to be taken of the effects of the various indirect wars that have devastated the three continents and displaced their ancient populations through the process of what is mildly called, peaceful penetration? Is war direct or indirect to be the normal state of the world? And can the direct war of physical violence ever cease in the universe, as long as the indirect strife continues to hold ground?

These are the questions that press on the attention of the reflective mind to-day. In fact, it is the vexed question of evil which, from its oft-proclaimed insolubility or its unsolvedness so far, has been called an eternal problem. It may seem small as a word, but the issues the idea opens out are so many; they are of such deep and penetrating nature that it is not possible to attempt, in the course of a brief address, an exhaustive treatment, even if one should have the competency for such a task. But having neither of these justifications, I shall merely try to place before you the main facts relative to the enquiry. The subject is no doubt one that would call for hard thinking. But it is worth any amount of it.

Pain, the Starting points of all enquiries and desires for change.—My first proposition is, that pain or dissatisfaction through pain is the starting point of all enquiries and all thoughts of change. If man had been fully satisfied with his life in this universe, he would have surely gone on his daily round whatever that might be, and not cared a brass farthing to know anything about anything or to change anything for anything. For instance, as long as I am able to walk freely and painlessly, it does not occur to me to find out the anatomy or the physiology, the pathology or the medicament of either my locomotive machine or of the machinery of the Universe. I shall be in perpetual motion without even knowing that I am moving. But as soon as walking becomes a difficult and painful process, then alone do

* A lecture delivered at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in connection with the Swami Vivekananda Anniversary.

I recognise that I have even a pair of legs. It is therefore quite understandable that if man had all that he wanted or felt that he must have, no science, no philosophy, no religion, no theology would have been seen on this planet. It is only when he finds that he is *not* able to get what he wants, that he is *not* free to command what he wills—it is when he feels that he is a *limited* being, that he is not the master of himself, it is then that he begins to wish that he should be all that he is not. It is then that he sets about thinking what he is, whence he came, what is the Universe, whence it came, why he is not free in the power of commanding his own will, what he should do to get that freedom. Dissatisfaction or pain is the first motive power that impels man to philosophise.

The emergence of religion and of the idea of an external God.—He then looks about to seek a way out of the pain. He asks himself, what is the cause of all his troubles? There are only two things, himself and the Universe before him. One of these two must be the cause. Of course, he will not do anything to bring himself harm. And as besides himself, there is no other thing but the Universe, that Universe must bear the blame. But he feels at the same time that the Universe cannot do him anything. It is either inanimate or less animate than himself, and is or may be made to fall under his complete mastery. Yet, with all his past or prospective mastery over nature, it does not seem that his limited or dissatisfied state would ever be effaced. The result is that he gives up all hope or responsibility and becomes helpless and inert, so far as any direct action by him is concerned. Though he may writhe and show some consequent activity in his desperate, unconscious efforts to be relieved of a painful situation, he sees no cure. For when even the diagnosis is not made, how think of the cure? He then concludes that the world is not a place where he could ever expect to satisfy all his desires and live without fear, where he can freely will as he pleases; and he feels compelled to believe that there is an entity at the back of the universe and as its First Cause, through, or by absorption in whom, he can be, and remain, satisfied in every respect. This is probably the genesis of man's conception of an external God with infinite powers, on whose unfettered will and pleasure his weal and woe depends and to whom therefore he resigns himself in absolute dependence, or of an original entity with no attributes into which he can be absorb himself and be saved, corresponding thus to the life and matter aspects of man's personality. But anyhow he must have his goal of bliss if not here, at least elsewhere, as without such a conception his life becomes one intolerable round of weariness and gloom.

The Theory of External God Plus Power of Free-Willing to Man.—What was just stated is the ordinary type of religions that we see in the world. In most of these religions however, there is, along side the God idea, the belief that man has also the power to determine his destiny to some extent through his own activities. But with an All-powerful and All-knowing God on the top of him, he must entirely depend on him for everything. For, none knows what is good for him more than God; none has power to do more than He; and none loves man more than He. And having infinite knowledge, power, and goodness all combined, he would not let evil in any form to any one or at any time and would not wait for anybody's entreaty or reminder. The position of power to will to man therefore side by

side with a divine paramount entity above him is absurd. Such a power is no power at all and is of no use to him unless that paramount entity above him abolishes himself—furnishing an interesting parallel to native States whose independent power is, in effect though perhaps not *de jure* in all cases, subject to limitation by a paramount power, should that power choose to limit. As for science, finding that the problem of evil remains unsolved in spite of all the proudest achievements in invention and discovery, it attempts to trace the universe to its ultimate origin, expecting to meet with some remedy. The whole heterogeneous living universe is found to be the result of an evolution through successive stages and forms from homogeneous, primordial matter. It also finds that struggle for existence, the death of one form and the birth of another, with the pains and sufferings incidental thereto, are the methods of that evolution, and that evil in some shape or other, man must grin and bear, as the price of his progress. But this is more an explanation than an excuse that science tenders. Man is not going to be satisfied with this for all time. He wants to be cured, if not here, at least somewhere else. True, the life history of the universe from the original substance to its present diversified and elaborated form with man at the top is a series of eliminations and erasures, deaths and births, struggles and pains; and these must be expected in probably increasing degrees in such further stages of evolution as still remain in the womb of nature, and there is no purpose therefore gained in kicking against it. In fact, these phenomena may be brought under one phrase and dignified by the expression "the immutable law of nature." But in respect of its use to man in the matter of freeing him from evil, it is no improvement on the conception of an external God, either transcendental or immanent. Giving up God and taking up free will, the scientist has yet only to lie prostrate before relentless nature. And he recognises, as he must, that the goal of the universe is not a reabsorption into what it originally came from, that the heterogeneous living universe that he sees before him and for whose ailments he is on the search of a cure represents a higher stage than the primordial substance, and that the cure must be found, not by reversion, but by a further continuation of the existing process. Now, Prof. Bose has, in his great contribution to science, proclaimed the truth of our seers that all matter is living matter, that the universe is one vast sea of life. But that oneness of life has brought to bear on man's activities, if it should remove evil from the world and thus solve its greatest problem.

The Religion of Full Power to will through discriminate Karma or activity.—This must naturally make man fall back on himself and examine his own activity as the only alternative. He asks himself, "am I not the cause and the creator of my own evil, if the world is not the cause? If some other body or thing is the cause? why should I suffer? If, on the other hand, I am the creator of my own evil, is it not I that should uncreate it? And where am I to look for it except to my own activity or Karma? Is it not I that is creating all this evil?"

The answers to these questions are more or less suggested by the questions themselves. I am the creator of all the evils I endure; and all my activities are based on the idea that I am separate from the universe and that I may with impunity treat it in that light. The only way to cure is to reverse my whole line of activity. It is to act on the principle that I am not separate from the universe, that, on the

other hand, I am the universe itself, and that my destiny is in my hands, sole and entire. This is the religion of man's free power to will through karma and rebirth, in fact, the religion of our own ancient land. And it is the only religion left to man to consider, after all his searches and researches outside himself have been found to be vain. It may however seem to superficial students of our religion that the various forms of it, *viz.*, Adwaitism, Dwaitism, Vishishtadwaitism, are different from one another. But they are not. They all affirm the possibility of man to command his will through Karma and transmigration of life, and are all therefore one. Other religions, such as Christianity and Mahomedanism, do not so affirm, and by not doing so, render themselves liable to doubts and difficulties, such as in reconciling an All-powerful and All-just God with the persistence of evil in the world, with man's responsibility for sin, etc. etc.

As for the minor differences within the Hindu cult, these are really no differences at all. So long as the universe is conceived as a living whole, it can be conceived only as an organism with parts. As long as the several parts of the organism are not in conflicting relationship and are therefore free from death and rebirth—of course the universe as a whole never dies nor ever need to—the universe is one eternal harmonious whole. And it makes no difference whether one regards and speaks of the parts as separate existences like the Dwaites or Vishishtadwaites, or as itself like the Adwaites. The goal and the plan are the same in these three. In fact, conceptions of time and space on which the differences ultimately rest are mere postulates in the science of Indian religion.

Now, this religion may seem a Godless religion, a blasphemous contradiction in terms. But it is neither a blasphemy nor a contradiction. On the other hand, all that could be said only about the religions that assert a God outside the universe and conceive him only as a magnified edition of man, ignoring the God before their eyes. Atheism lies that way, not here. Here, every object is divine. All are so many Narayanas. Why did we go for religion and God? It is to attain a certain object. Now, whatever cannot help us to attain that object can be neither religion nor God. Further, if the world is to be a mere creature of God, His will is the only force to create, guide and destroy us. Neither scriptures nor rituals, neither temples nor incarnations, neither charities nor prayers will be needed. Prayer, as we understand, can then only be a veiled protest, and that, a protest against the will and ways of One who knows better about us than we know ourselves. It is only the religion that affirms freedom of will to man through Karma that can furnish the stimulus for man's activity and call to aid these various means in his attempt to make life sweet and beautiful. It is only such a religion that induces him to organise himself on the lines of the old Indian social polity, according to which the struggle for other's existence takes the place of struggle for one's own existence, selfishness is killed and wrong activity, of any kind that would obstruct him in the attainment of full power to will, which is man's goal, made altogether impossible. If, accepting any other cult, man is ever to live limited on this earth, if the world exists only to be renounced and exchanged for another, and if life here may be lived as best as one may according to his individual or collective power, why should man worry himself about obeying inconvenient moral laws if he can at all help it? Why should he be at any pains

to arrange society, and make moral laws work with efficiency and ease?

The two plans.—Now, for the purpose of man's goal to be happy and free, he has to know clearly, or rather recall to his mind in full detail, what the present condition of evil in the universe is, what activities or Karma he has been doing to which that condition may rationally be traced, what is the ideal condition he wants to get into, and what activities he should pursue to reach and retain it. Man's activity has therefore to be discriminated into two sorts, one, the constructive activity of harmony, of interdependence between nation and nation, class and class, sex and sex, and the other, the destructive activity of conflict, of rivalry and competition; one, the plan of organised life, labour, place, form, name, language, education and taste, with prescriptions and proscriptions indispensable to the maintenance of family and national continuity, and the other, the plan or the no-plan of unorganised life, labour, etc. The one leads us to the goal, and the other drags us away from it. The former should be rigorously followed, and the latter jealously avoided; and there should be no spinning of these two into one. The one is known as *Punyam*, the other is *Papam*. Help is *Punyam*. Harm is *Papam*. Harmonious interdependence is help. Unharmonious separation and rivalry is harm. But, if he does these *Punyams* and *Papams* indiscriminately, he would be, like the farmer sowing a mixture of seeds, good and bad, reaping a mixed crop of good and evil, pleasure and pain, birth and death, progress at one time, in one respect and in one quarter, and retrogression in another time and respect and in another quarter. And the problem of evil would remain unsolved. While religions that have no plan to offer would then proclaim in despair that the universe is essentially an abode of evil and no relief can be found here on earth, science, in the midst of its impotence to remedy evil now or at any future time—as long as this promiscuous activity goes on in the world—would vainly say that the world as a whole is progressing to the goal and that the remedy for evil will be found one day or other to guide mankind with mathematical precision. The one is impotent renunciation, the other, irrational optimism.

But when the plans are discriminated and their respective applications realised in reference to personal, domestic, national and international life, we can expect a continuous march to the goal. As we increase the right activity and lessen the activity of the wrong kind, we can begin to live without surprises and on an ascending scale of happiness and on a descending scale of misery. And when the removal of evil from the universe is complete, then would come the full power of will. Limited free will is man's present free will. With all limits removed, the state of divinity or absolute power is reached. This is the reward to man of discriminate activity. Else, the result of the acts that we may have interpolated in the midst of the right would act as so many handicaps on our exertion and obstruct us in various and unexpected ways. The power of will then becomes limited and unfree, and we say to ourselves when an undesirable situation arises, "it is the will of God. What is poor man to do", as if God, such as we conceive him to be, would over obstruct the doing of a good act or the enjoying of a good effect.

Conclusion.—Now, let us summarise and conclude. No knowledge has any value to man unless it bears on the meaning and purpose of life.

The knowledge of the plan that enslaves us to the wheel of birth and death, and of the plan that will free us from it, is all the knowledge that man wants. That knowledge is so patent, the power to apply it is so ready to hand. And if we agree that by its application we can make this universe and the human race that inhabits it happy and free, there is no need for awaiting the evolution of any future race or sub-race.

If, on the one hand, we, the component parts of this organised Universe, would collectively exert to establish and maintain unmistakable distinctiveness, irrefragable harmony and responsible interdependence in all the relations of life, personal, domestic, social, national, international, we are safe. If, on the other hand, we disregard that plan, keep up a campaign of encroachment, both direct and indirect, on each other's names, place, forms or functions and disregard the law of oneness on which that plan is based, shift the responsibility for our weal and woe on to some other Being or some other Thing, whatever be the conception of that Being or Thing, and merely struggle to live in the meanwhile by misreading nature, and regarding conflict as the lever to progress, and the destruction of some kind or thing as the necessary price that the Universe has to pay for becoming perfect, whatever that word "perfect" may mean, we must, with all the proudest inventions and discoveries that man now gloats over, steadily go from post to pillar, from theory to theory, from philosophy to philosophy, from religion to religion, from one God to another, and yet remain the same as ever, discontent and disconsolate. The idea of a centralised power above the Universe and the helplessness of the several units in it,—which is the conception of religion as now generally understood,—is comparable to the idea of an all-powerful Government and the dependence of all its people on that Government in a spirit of absolute helplessness. But given consciousness to each unit of the four kinds of knowledge man wants viz., knowledge of his present condition, how that condition is created, knowledge of the condition in which he wishes to be, and how that condition can be brought about and maintained, the man becomes the highest through his own activity. Here therefore is no question of abolishing God but of becoming God. This is decentralisation in religion. In the case of Government, it is not different. When people in a country get to know what they are, why they came to be what they are, where they would wish to be, and how, a centralised Government, which the people actually created in their ignorance and non-application of these four knowledges and consequent helplessness to look after their own interest, becomes a supererogation.

Let us, in conclusion, remind ourselves that India is an ancient country, that it has outlived all the contemporary nations of antiquity and may be presumed to have been the most moral, if morality has any relation to mortality, that it is the land of divine wisdom, the land that built up her society on the model of nature and thereby made its efficacy the marvel of ages and on the top of that taught the principle and practice of spirituality, and that it kept up all that position until it began its blind imitation of the West. Let the West therefore no more trouble herself to send us her missionaries or other teachers of religion to mis-interpret and disturb our faith and dislocate the fabric of our society. Let them direct all their time and energy to the understanding of India's real creed, to the correcting of

the challenging and competitive separateness of her own nations to the live and let-live co-operative oneness preached by our sages, and help to establish peace where discord now reigns supreme. Let us all help her to do it for India's sake as much as for the sake of Humankind. This is the Vivekananda Spirit, the duty of world propagandism, the duty of world-guidance. The universe is one, and no part of it can be happy or free when any other is not.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The fifty-ninth birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great *eclat* in all the centres of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad. The special feature of the programme everywhere was the feeding of the Poor Narayanas. Indeed, these ignorant masses form the majority of India's children and until and unless they are properly fed and educated, unless the sleeping lion in them is roused, there is no hope for the regeneration of our country. And that is possible when we, the educated minority feel one with them, feel that our fate is tied in one cord with theirs and that we must approach them with reverence and with the true spirit of service. These anniversaries remind us of the great ideals of renunciation and service for which the Swami stood and which form the very centre of India's culture. The most important feature this year in the two centres of Belur and Benares is that about a dozen noviciates took up the vow of Brahmacharya and about twenty five youths fired with the ideal of Vivekananda, got themselves initiated into the holiest of holy asramas, the Sannyas by the illustrious disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Swamis Brahmananda and Shivananda. The great Swami Vivekananda once said, "I want men who can stand on the street yonder and can boldly say, they possess nothing but God." During the short life time of the Swami there came but few such bold youths. But as days are rolling on, it seems the spirit of Vivekananda is working in the minds of our young men, and those who have eyes to see, feel it a living spirit. Swami Vivekananda in his inspired mood once said, "India has been already conquered by Ramakrishna." Yes, she has been conquered by the one spirit—the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, but like the gentle dew, that falls unseen and unheard and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, so, is the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda spirit gently and even unknowingly causing the greatness of India to blossom forth. Keep but your eyes open to see.

For want of space, we have been unable to publish the detail reports of the various centres.

Elsewhere we publish an article on the "Spirit of Indian culture and education". It has been contributed by an educationist of Bengal, and it is hoped, it throws light to a great extent on the most vital problem of Indian education. The writer has tried to give a constructive plan of universities and the methods of education to be imparted to our boys, keeping in tact the spirit of Indian culture and tradition. We may not agree with him in all his details, for they can be proved efficacious only after they have been experimented upon. But it is gratifying to note that the burden of his whole song is quite in accordance with the true Indian spirit.

The eighty-sixth anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna will be celebrated on Sunday, the 13th March. The Tithi Puja comes off on the 11th March.

We are very glad to go through the 12th annual report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bharukathi, Barisal. The report shows that the activities of the institution are increasing by leaps and bounds. Besides serving the depressed, destitute and suffering humanity, the Ashram is trying its best to impart free education to the poor Narayanas in the indigenous lines without any distinction of caste and creed. It is carrying on its works with perfect catholic spirit. The new responsibilities and duties are increasing the demand for pecuniary and other help from the generous public. This sort of institution is serving as a model for villages. We fervently hope, our kind-hearted countrymen will come forward to help it in every possible way.

Owing to unavoidable circumstances the four pages of Upanishads could not be published this month too.

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.

VOL. VII.]

MARCH, 1921.

[No. 11.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER.

More of the Sadhanas of the First four years.

The Hindu devotees of modern times in India even while professing the doctrines of the Smritis and Puranas, generally follow the Tantras in practical life of religious observances. And the Vaishnavas of Bengal not unoften take to the path of Parakiya Prema in their practice of devotion. We have said before that Haladhari was a strict orthodox and learned Vaishnava; when he became the priest of the Vishnu shrine of Dakshineswara temple, he also took to that path in secret. But soon the matter took air and people of the place began to talk ill of it; yet every one was afraid to make a mention of it before Haladhari himself as there was a belief current about him, that he was a *Vaksiddha*, that is, whatever he would say, whatever curse he would give—would become true. The master came to know gradually from others about this conduct of his cousin, and his fearless nature would not brook delay,—he told everything to Haladhari what others were thinking of him in regard to that particular conduct of his. But Haladhari was mad with rage to hear it and cursed him saying, "Though junior to me, you dare to insult me like this! Blood shall come out of your mouth!" Then the master tried to pacify him by telling him the reasons of his complaint, but Haladhari would not hear him any more.

A few days after that incident, one night at about 8 or 9 o'clock, the master felt a kind of itching sensation in his palate and a quantity of blood came out of his mouth. Referring to this incident the master once told us, "The blood was of jet black colour and it was so thick that some quantity of it came out of the mouth and some got thickened within the mouth itself. I tried to stop it by putting cloth into mouth, but couldn't succeed. I got nervous. Having heard of it many came to me running; Haladhari also came. Then I told him with tears, 'brother, see what sorrowful plight you have brought me to by your curse, ! Seeing my pitiable condition he too burst out into tears. Just on that day there came a good saint to the temple of Dakshineswara. Hearing the noise he came to the spot and having examined the colour of the blood as well as the place whence it oozed out, he declared that there was no fear, and that it was well that the blood came out. He further said, "I believe you are accustomed to the practice of Yoga. And by virtue of that practice your Sushumna Canal was opened and a quantity of blood was flowing through it towards the brain. But it has happened for good that the blood instead of going to the brain, has made of itself an opening and came out through the mouth. If that blood had gone to the brain it were sure to bring the *Jada Samadhi* which could not have been broken in any way. Probably a great purpose will be served by your body, so the Divine Dispenser has preserved it thus.' I was much relieved to hear the words of the Sadhu. And thus the curse of Haladhari became a boon in disguise through strange coincidence." There existed always a kind of funny feeling between the master and Haladhari. It has already been mentioned that Haladhari came to Dakshineswar probably in the year 1858 A.D., and remained there as a priest to the shrine of Radha-Govindaji till 1866, so he had ample opportunity to see the master during the second four years of his Sadhana and sometime more even, still he could not understand the high spiritual state of the master : To him every conduct of the master appeared deeply coloured and strangely out of joint. He was a thorough orthodox Brahmin, hence it was not at all after his liking that the master should allow his cloth or the sacred thread to slip off his person in his trances. Haladhari suspected that his cousin had either become insane or a self-willed renegade. We have heard from Hriday that Haladhari sometimes even told him "Hridu, I notice that he (the master) sometimes throws away his cloth, sometimes his sacred thread, it is very bad of him to do so ! It is through the good *Samskaras* of many lives that one can get the Brahmin birth, but he slights that Brahminhood taking it as of no consequence ! what exalted state (of spirituality) has he attained that he dares to do like that?

I see, Hridu, that he pays some heed to your words only, so it lies with you to see that he does not behave like that any more. Even if it is necessary to tie him with cords to restrain him you should not mind doing so."

Thus Haladhari's mind being always mystified with suspicions, could not understand properly the master's spiritual condition. Sometimes when he would see the master in temple engaged in worship, or shedding tears of devotion in a mood of ecstasy the like of which he never beheld before in any one, he used to cry out "Gadai, now I have understood you; no mistaking any more; in you there surely exists the spirit of God." But then again, at other times, when he used to engage himself in the study of Bhagavata or other religious books, sniffing a pinch of snuff, his vanity got the better of him. All his sober understandings about the master used to get upset, and he used to look upon the latter as no better than an unlettered youth with unhinged mind. Later conviction grew in him that the master was possessed by ghost.

We have already mentioned of the incident connected with the death of the infant son of Haladhari, and also how from that day forwards he began to look upon the Divine Mother Kali as *Tamasic Sakti* personified. One day he even told the master, that nothing could come of the worship of a tamasic deity, and so he should not be devoted so much in the worship of Kali. The master did not give any reply to Haladhari at that time but it pained him to hear the aspersive epithet used against his *Ishtam*. After a while he went to the Kali temple and with tears piteously appealed to the Deity before the image, "Mother, Haladhari is a scholar, well versed in the scriptures but he calls you *tamasic*. Are you truly so?" Then the revelation came to him,—the Mother told him the truth, and all his doubts were dispelled like mist before the rays of the blazing sun. He ran to Haladhari—he was then engaged in worship—and at once jumped over shoulder, crying repeatedly "Call you my Mother Tamasic ! Is She so? Lo ! my Mother is all,—She is the three Gunas,—and again She is of pure Sattva guna !" The master was, not in his ordinary consciousness then, and so his sanctifying touch and fiery words opened a new vision in Haladhari and he accepted the assertion of the master with all his heart, moreover, having perceived something supernatural and divine in his cousin, he instinctively poured out his heart's tributes at his feet in the form of a handful of flowers from the flower-tray kept near him for the divine worship. Subsequently when Hriday turned up to the spot and came to know what happened, he asked Haladhari how he could worship the

master while he often said that the latter was possessed by a ghost. Haladhari replied, "I myself do not know, Hridu, the reason of it; when he came to me from the Kali temple my mind was completely overpowered by him,—I felt a strange feeling sweeping over me and witnessed a divine manifestation in Gadai! Whenever I go to him in the Kali temple, he does bring the same change in me. It is awfully strange and I do not understand the why and wherefore of it!"

Though Haladhari beheld repeatedly all these wonderful manifestations in the master, yet more often than not he used to forget the spiritual greatness of the master in the egotism of his own scholarship. It becomes quite clear from the above fact of Haladhari's life, that unless the heart be free from all taints of lust and greed, no amount of observances of external purity and possession of scriptural knowledge can be of any avail for the proper comprehension of the Truth. We have already told our readers how one day the master in order to practise to see Divinity in all, ate from the refuse of food left behind by the poor after they were fed in the temple, taking it to be as *Prasada* of Lord Narayana. When Haladhari saw it, he felt a disgust and told the master in rage "I shall see how you can marry your children," meaning thereby that the master had got himself outcasted by that particular conduct of his, and so no body would enter into any social relationship with him. But the words of Haladhari were too much for the master to bear, and he retorted with equal vehement indignation, "Sirrah, don't you say that our scriptures assert that the world is false and enjoins upon us to look upon all souls as the veritable Brahman? Do you think, you fool, that like you I shall proclaim the falsity of the world, at the same time beget children? Fie on your learning!"

The mind of the Master was as simple and unsophisticated as that of a child, so it used to get at times disturbed by the ratiocination and pretentious learning of Haladhari, and he would appeal to the Divine Mother for Her solutions of the disputed points. Once Haladhari asserted before the Master with vehement argumentation and much quotation from the scriptures, that all divine visions observed in trances and such other states were mere hallucinations, and that God was beyond all perception and conception,—beyond the pale of mind and mood, so no vision of His was possible in any way. This evoked a great doubt in the master's mind; he told us, "Then I thought, all the divine visions I saw of the Mother,—all what I heard from Her must have been false then—creation of my own mind; oh, how I have been deceived! My mind tore itself in

anguish to think of it. I told the Mother with bitter tears of sorrow, 'Shame Mother, because I am an unlettered man so You have deceived me like this! Shame!' my eyes began to shed torrent of tears. Sitting then in one of the rooms of the bungalow (within the temple compound) I suddenly saw before me a kind of mist rising from the floor of the rooms, and slowly in the midst of the mist there developed a beautiful live face with long beard. The face then fixed his gaze upon me and told in distinct voice, "Remain thou in *Bhava Mukha*" and having repeated the words three times, he dissolved in the mist and the mist also disappeared afterwards. When I saw that vision, all my doubts were dispelled and I got peace of mind." The late Swami Premanandaji heard the above relation of the incident from the master's own mouth. The master told us of another occasion when his faith was again disturbed by the words of Haladhari; he said, "That day during the time of worship, I prayed to the Mother with tears for the solution of that doubt of mine; and the Mother appeared before me in the form of 'Rati's mother', (a particular woman of the neighbourhood) near the altar of the shrine and told me "Remain in *Bhava Mukha*."

The same divine command the master once again heard from a supernatural voice, when he was in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi continually for six months, after having been initiated into the sacred doctrines of Vedanta by the sannyasin Totapuri. We shall hear of it later on.

Here a few words are necessary in the way of explanation of what is meant by *Bhava-Mukha*, as it is hardly translatable in English in one word. It is a matter of common experience that man is essentially a colony of ideas which constitute his real personality, and his physical life including his activities is merely the concrete expressions of those ideas, so behind every creation of man we notice a motive, a purpose, an idea; and the proper understanding of a particular creation of his consists in catching the idea which is the real source or inspiration of his creation. And therefore, these ideas are more real than his physical life itself, if really is only a matter of consciousness. As it is true with the microcosmic creation, so also is it with the macrocosmic. Beginning from the subtlest ions and electrons up to the great comet, its stars and their systems, the whole of this physical universe is but a concrete expression of the ideas of the Universal Mind which is the fountain-head of all ideas and emotions of the individual beings also; moreover, therein lies the great purposiveness of the universal

creative will. This thought world or the universal mind is called Hiranyagarbha in Vedanta.

Now, as in the physical plane of consciousness, the reality of physical existence with all its multiplicity is a matter of actual experience, so when the human mind is attuned with Hiranyagarbha and his consciousness awakens in the plane of the universal consciousness, the reality of this thought world becomes also a matter of actual experience, that is, man actually perceives how the emanation of the gross physical world takes place from this world of Ideas. But when the consciousness is in the physical plane, we perceive only the gross, and the idea behind it becomes at best a matter of conjecture, but when the mind emerges into this mystic psychical plane of consciousness, the Idea is no more a conjecture, but a matter of actual experience itself, and in that state it understands with the precision of an unerring perception all the moods and modes of lives of others as well as the purposes which form the spring of action or the motive power in them.

And the 'Bhava-Mukha' of the Divine behest to the master means that World of Ideas from whence originate all the various forms of life and matter, and the diverse expressions of the individual thoughts and emotions.

Beyond this plane of Universal Consciousness, is the plane of Absolute Consciousness where all relativity is completely negated, and the principle of consciousness becomes contentless and remains in its own pure, simple and transcendental nature. In the Absolute Consciousness even the universal mind with all its modes of ideas and visions of Time, Space and Causation is annihilated.

So when the Divine command came upon the master, it meant that he should not remain in that Absolute consciousness or Nirvikalpa State* as that would only defeat the very purpose of his advent—he having come to teach the world the truths of spirituality, which could be done only by his remaining in the world of relativity,—on the other hand he could remain constantly attuned with the Universal Mind that he might understand the inner Idea behind each life and help it in evolving towards God-realisation. We shall have occasion to deal with the subject more fully when we shall describe the teacher aspect of his life.

* The last few paragraphs do not occur in the original Bengali work, but the subject is fully dealt with in the parts known as "Guru Bhava" and we have given here the substance of the 1st chapter with the heading "Bhava Mukhe".

THE DEVOTIONAL ASPECT OF THE VEDANTA.

BY

Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M.A.

CHAPTER VIII.

Is Isvara merely a "Society of Selves"?

In modern thought in the West, God is not only conceived as a particular person (*Purusha-Vishesh*)—as one of the selves in a pluralistic universe and yet supreme over them all and the material world in which they live,—but he is also regarded as a society, college, or community of selves. There is, however, a difference of opinion as regards the relation of God to the persons forming the "Society." Dr. Rashdall holds that "all the conclusions which are applicable to each particular self in his relation to another, seems to be equally applicable to the relations between God and any other spirit." Here it is difficult to understand the true nature of the relation between the *individuality* of God and his *compounded nature* as a collocation (or society) of selves. In the Vedanta, when Isvara is spoken of as *Antaryamin* (the internal pervader of all other selves), his command over them is such that he can make use of the organs of any individual self for his purpose (and therefore all the separate persons too) in all cases where the fruits of the latter's karma are in harmony with such command or use. With regard to this view, there cannot apply such an objection as is involved in the argument that the *social* (or collective) mind of the selves is conceived on the analogy of a collection of objects occupying space and therefore contradictory of the purely psychical conception of an individualised consciousness which never is bereft of its attributes of identity and unity.—On the other hand, Dr. Mc. Taggart speaks of a society or college of selves as a "spiritual unity," but not an individual or person, and holds that God is *that spiritual unity*. He says:—"Each self can only exist in virtue of its connection with all the others and of the Absolute which is their unity. But this is a relation, not of subordination, but of reciprocal dependence." These two views are held by others along with minor variations as to the special nature of the relation in which God, as creator and ruler of the universe, stands to the living selves who form the "society" above spoken of.

Before taking up the Vedanta doctrine on the subject, we wish to state how Dr. Hoffding explains the fundamental difference in the evolution of the two Western conceptions or speculations above

referred to. He refers both of them to a *purely analogical origin*. In one case, the analogy which forms the basis of the doctrine, is either the purely inner unity subsisting between the individual ego and its various conscious states or elements, or the relation subsisting between the physical life as the central fact and all sensuous or outer experience as its effect and manifestation. The inner unity first mentioned, suggests the conception of God as an all-pervading mind or person, controlling all the multiplicity of persons and objects in the universe. The other analogy suggests that as we have an inner self of our own, open to direct observation and giving an unity to all our activities and states, so all others have an inner self, too, which unifies their activities and states of all kinds, though it is clear that, in this latter case, our conclusion is based only on inference, and not on immediate observation and experience. As Indian writers put it,—“न हि दृष्टेऽनुपपन्नं नाम” “Where there is direct experience, no mere inference can avail to overthrow our knowledge.” Moreover, Dr. Hoffding points out that “the dichotomy of psychical and material is purely empirical. No proof can be adduced that being must necessarily come under one or other of these two forms Being is not exhausted in these two forms of existence ; on the contrary there are many—not to say with Spinoza infinitely many—other forms of existence. It may be that the relation between the two forms of existence known to us, will only become comprehensible, when we know other forms of existence.” The permanent contention of the Veda and other Indian sacred authorities is that there are such other forms of existence and that no theories or speculations founded on a limited experience of the two forms of existence known to the common run of mankind, can be relied on as satisfactory. That analogies have only a limited amount of cogency and a limited sphere of observation within which its cogency may be accepted as reliable, are matters which do not need to be insisted on at the present stage of human advance in knowledge. Moreover, mere speculation with or without a basis in analogy is always dangerous as furnishing a basis for human conduct or aspiration. In Europe, the inquiry into reality or existence is entirely undertaken as a matter of intellectual training and discipline, and has therefore to justify itself before the judgment seat not only of human reasoning, but of human spiritual insight, imagination and experience.

In India, on the other hand, the inquiry into reality is always preceded by the knowledge of the source from which we are to gain help in our attempt. Each source has its own special sphere or province of truth, and does not encroach upon another ! Sankaracharya says:—“स्वविषयशूराणि हि प्रमाणानि श्रोत्रादिवत्.” “The sources of correct knowledge are each—like the ear, &c.—competent to deal with its own proper objects”; and again,—“न च प्रमाणं

प्रमाणान्तरेण विरुध्यते । प्रमाणान्तराविषयमेव हि प्रमाणान्तरं ज्ञापयति ।” “One source of true knowledge does not come into conflict with another. Each such source gives knowledge only regarding what another does not treat about.” In India, the three accepted sources of true knowledge, are sense-perception, ratiocination, and the words and sentences of the Veda. Each has its own special province of truth, and we go to each for its special teaching concerning it. If it refers to any of the objects included in another's province, it only does so with a subsidiary object, not as its chief or only purport and province.

The Veda-Shastra (the teaching of the Veda) is intended to convey knowledge of the means appropriate for obtaining what is most desirable for men. Sankaracharya says:—

शास्त्रादेतावदेव भवतीदमिष्टसाधनमिदमनिष्टसाधनमिति साध्यसाधनसं-
बन्धविशेषाभिप्रेक्ष्यति । प्रदीपादिवत्तमसि रूपादिज्ञानम् । ननु शास्त्रं भूत्यानिव
बलान्निवर्तयति नियोजयति वा । दृश्यन्ते हि पुरुषा रागादिगोराच्छास्त्रमप्यति-
क्रामन्तः ।

“From the Shastra we obtain only this,—viz., the proclaiming of the special connection between means and end,—that such and such are the means for what is desired and such and such are the means for what is not,—even as a lamp gives the knowledge of objects in darkness. The Shastra does not, like one's friends, forcibly draw one away from, or take one towards, an object sought. We see men violating (the precepts of) the Shastra owing to excess of desire and aversion, &c.” Hence in India we resort to the Veda for the true doctrine concerning God, the Absolute, &c., which are all altogether beyond sense-perception and the processes of reasoning. The Veda is no mere speculation, but the truth regarding the super-sensuous reality in order that a person may know how to act in order to attain to it. It is altogether a mistake to regard the Veda and the Vedanta as the fruits of the reflection of mere thinkers into the problems of speculative philosophy. No doubt we too speak of *Vichara* (inquiry),—but this means only the investigation by the disciple with the aid of a Guru (who has a realised knowledge) into the true import of the sentences of the Veda, in order to dispel all doubts and difficulties. The Veda itself allows such inquiry, while chiefly imparting its revelations (*upadesa*) regarding the truth.

We now turn to the teaching contained in the Veda regarding the present topic of inquiry,—viz., God as a college or society of selves. The Upanishads often define *Ishvara* as a collection or “Society” of all the particular individual souls in the universe. A well-known verse of Sankaracharya also says:—(*Vedanta-Dindima*, sloka 6)

समष्टिर्यद्विरूपौ द्वौ पदार्थौ सर्वसमतौ।

समष्टिरीश्वरोऽयद्विर्जावो वेदान्तद्विणिद्धमः ॥

"All allow that objects fall into two categories, collective and particular. The collective is known as Isvara, the particular as Jiva. Such is the trumpet-voice of the Veda."

It is clear that the objects referred to by Sankaracharya in the above verse, are not purely material objects, but intelligent persons,—for he speaks therein only of the distinction between Isvara and Jiva, both of whom belong to the latter class. The Mandukya Upanishad speaks of the distinction between the *Samashli* (Collective) and the *Vyashli* (particular) personalities of Isvara and Jiva as related to three different stages or spheres of creation,—the *Sthula* (the world of gross external manifestation of matter), the *Sukshma* (the internal world of subtle matter), and the *Karana* (the causal world of matter in its potential condition, known to the Vedanta as *Ajnana*, *Avidya*, *Maya sakti*, &c). As related to the gross world of sense-manifestation, the particular and collective personalities are known as *Visva* and *Vaisvanara*; as related to the world of mind, we have the distinction of *Taijasa* and *Hiranyagarbha*; lastly we have in the causal state of Prakriti the distinction of *Prajna* and *Isvara*. It must be pointed out that, in the Vedanta, the collective personality of God in all the stages, is not inconsistent with his retaining his own separate or individual personality as distinguished from the jivas. For the Veda speaks of him as "एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः" "the one God who is hidden in the hearts of all living objects." It is this fact or attribute of the all-pervasive power, that renders God omnipotent, omniscient, and the centre from which universal love, grace and mercy emanates and spreads over all like a protecting aegis or shadow, and distinguishes him from all other living and intelligent personalities, having only limited capabilities and spheres of activity. In the Purusha-Sukta, the Virat-purusha (or Vaisvanara) aspect of Isvara is dwelt upon at length. In the Brihad-Aranyaka-Upanishad, Hiranyagarbha (also called *Prana* or even *Agni*) is spoken of as having been first brought into existence as a person or ego (*अहम्*). The Upanishad explains this Sanskrit word, 'aham', as follows:— "आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत्पुरुषविधः सोऽनुवीक्ष्य नान्यदात्मनोऽपश्यत्सोऽहमस्मीत्यग्रे व्याहरत्ततोऽहं नामाभवत्," "At the beginning there was the Atman only with the form of a Purusha. He thought ('who am I, of what nature, &c.); he saw not any one but himself; he exclaimed first, 'he am I (the ego)'; and so his name was *Aham* (the ego)." Sankara explains "पुरुषविधः" in the abovequoted passage to mean "पुरुषप्रकीरः शिरः पाण्यादिलक्षणे," "having the form of a person with head, hands &c." The Upanishad further says:— "स यत्पूर्वोऽस्मात्सर्वस्मात्सर्वान्पामन

औपत्तस्मात्पुरुषः", "As he burned all his sins before all these (other competitors for the office of the creator), hence he is called Purusha." Sankara here gives the following explanations:—

"All this official position and function (as Creator) is the fruit of (Vedic) meditation and ritual and (therefore) within the sphere of the life, of rebirths (Samsara), as the Sruti speaks (later) of Prajapati as having fear (भय) and the absence of satisfaction (अरति), as having body and senses, and as having objects of enjoyment of a material, sensible and transient quality." Hence, as we shall see later, Prajapati (or Hiranyagarbha), though having creative functions and the power and knowledge required to pervade all souls, is still described only as the first-born of all living selves (Jivas)—as "प्रथमशरीरी". Sankara further explains:—"Atma is called Prajapati (the lord of creation), and he is the first person with a body born from the *andu* (or egg) from which the universe came out; he is the fruit of the Vedic worship and ritual, performed by him in his previous birth in order to obtain his present position as Creator." Also, in his Bhashya on the Brahma-Sutras (I. 2—23), Sankara says:—"In Sruti and Smriti, we see birth, &c., ascribed to Prajapati who has the three worlds as his body." He there quotes the following passages: "हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत्" "स वै शरीरी प्रथमः, स वै पुरुषः उच्यते। आदिकर्ता स भूतानां ब्रह्माग्रे समवर्तते" इति च।

"Hiranyagarbha was born before the entire body of living beings and he was the one lord of them;" "He is the first embodied person, and he is called Purusha, the first creator of all beings, Brahma, born before all others." Hiranyagarbha, Purusha, Prajapati are all different names of the first of all Jivas" (*Prathama-sariri*, as he is called in the Sruti). He was a functionary invested with the function of creation under the authority of Isvara who is the one supreme lord of the unmanifested (and, therefore, also of the manifested) universe, and therefore having precedence of Hiranyagarbha, Prajapati, &c., who, under his supreme control and direction, exercise the function of creating the world of matter in manifestation. Sankara says:—"Even for the effected Purusha, the power to pervade, and to exist within all other living beings is possible, as he exists in the form of breath (*prana*) in the body of them all." At the same time, the Vedanta has no objection to regard this "effected Purusha" as Isvara himself, considering his dignity, functions, and characteristics as creator. Sankara points out this fact in the following passage of his Bhashya on the Upanishad:—"His limitation of powers is due to (the nature of) his physical body, not to his real nature (as Atman). In his true self, he is under no limitation. It is thus that there is both unity and diversity for Hiranyagarbha. The same is true for all living selves. But, in the case of Hiranyagarbha, owing to the extraordinary purity of his physical vesture, the Sruti and Smriti describe him

not as one of the Jivas or living selfs, but as higher,—as, in fact, no other than the Supreme Isvara or almost himself. Ordinary living selves, owing to the predominance of 'impurity in their limiting physical sheaths, are mostly spoken of as possessing only limited powers of knowledge and action. As compared with them, therefore, Prajapati is spoken of as the supreme (पर).

In the Brihad-Aranayaka Upanishad, it is pointed out that "सोऽबिभेत्तस्मादेकाकी बिभेति," "He (Prajapati) was in fear, therefore he who is alone has fear." Further, the Upanishad goes on to say :—"स वै नैव रेमे तस्मादेकाकी न रमते स द्वितीयमैच्छत् । स हैतावानास यथा स्त्रीपुमांसौ संपरिष्वक्तौ स इममेवाऽऽत्मानं द्वेधाऽपातयत्ततः पत्निश्च पत्नीचाभवतां तस्मादिदमर्धवृत्तगलमिव स्व.....तस्मादयमाकाशः स्तिया पूर्यत एव तां समभवत्ततो मनुष्या अजायन्त," "He (Prajapati) did not feel pleasure (*rati*). Hence, whoever is alone does not feel pleasure. He desired (to have) a second (or partner), to be, like male and female, united in each other's arms. He divided himself into two—and became husband and wife. So this (female) is a half part of the self which is incomplete (before marriage) and is therefore completed by the female. By this joining together, the human community was formed.' The Upanishad later goes on to point out that by this process of sex-differentiation, all other classes and varieties of animals—cows, horses, &c. down to ants and other minute forms were *created* in the world. Thus the differentiation of life with name and form in the world, is due to love (*rati*)—to Divine Love. Eternal and Divine Love can alone remove the fear and pain (*bhaya* and *arati*) which association with the material body is apt to cause. Hiranyagarbha and Vaisvanara or Virat-purusha—who are in fact only forms of Isvara, as exercising the function of creation at various stages—are not only thus distinct personalities, but are, as already seen, also stated to have a collective or communal personality pervading all particular selves,—viz., what is known as *Sarvatmabhava*,—and to be in touch with their personalities. Hence we can easily explain their attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, universal mercy and love, and so on.

The world has known rare instances of men who have had in abundance measure what a great living writer—Professor Bertrand Russell—calls the *creative*, as distinguished from the *possessive*, impulse in man. Russell explains the distinction as follows :—"Possession means taking or keeping some good thing which another is prevented from enjoying ; creation means putting into the world a good thing which otherwise, no one would be able to enjoy." The possessive impulses "aim at acquiring or retaining something that cannot be shared"; the creative impulses "aim at bringing into the world some valuable thing or art or good-will, in which there is no private property." Spinoza, too, spoke of the highest good as that which all may enjoy in common. The *truly creative impulse* is that which

originates in the passion of love—what the Vedic religion calls *Prema* (प्रेम) or *Rati* (रति). Professor Russell speaks with marvellous insight when he remarks that "in order to promote life, it is necessary to value something other than life." Those who value life more than the person who lives, are necessarily led to place a higher value on the accumulation of resources which help to add strength or pleasure to life than the effort to develop the individuality in man so as to make it wise, honest, fearless, helpful and hopeful in its relations with fellow-men. There have been men in the past who have exhibited an individuality of this higher kind in their relations to the world,—men who have never been self-assertive, but aimed at living a life of self-denial and sympathy which comprehends within its sweep, wide ranges of life,—some rare souls, too, whose hearts have gone out towards the world in the spirit of an all-embracing love which can know no differences of time and circumstances and can only recognise its essential unity and harmony with all forms of life, thought, and aspiration. If such an attitude and activity are possible, however rarely, for men, there can be no difficulty in conceiving how personality of the eternal creator and sustainer of the universe is one which loves, sustains, and nourishes the entire cosmos of selves ; and seems, as it were, to form a "society" of them all whose relations are for ever co-ordinated and integrated into a living whole and made to march on towards the attainment of the goal of perfection which his own cosmic purpose has fixed as their supreme and final destiny.

A SCENE AT DAKSHINESWAR.*

On Sunday, the 11th March of 1883, being the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Phalguna*, the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna are celebrating his birthday with his holy presence living amongst them.

It is the spring season: trees and creepers have put forth new leaves. The holy *Aratrikam* is just done in the temples and now the minstrels are playing their sweet morning tunes in the *Nahabat*. The thought of the Master's holy nativity has set aflutter the hearts of the devotees; and the very air seems to be surcharged with bliss!

The devotees are assembling in the temple by parties; when M. arrives, though it is yet early morning, he finds the Master smilingly conversing with Rakhal, Bhavanath and his friend Kali Krishna in the eastern corridor; M. makes his obeisance bowing to the ground.

Sri Ramakrishna : (to M.) So you are come! (to the devotees) There can be no spiritual realisation so long as shyness, hate, and fear persist. Immense will be the joy to-day; but those fellows who will not sing and dance in the intoxication of the Lord's name, they will never do. What fear, and what shyness is there in the Lord's name? Now sing ye.

Bhavanath and his friend begin:

"Blessed, Oh thrice blessed is the day blissful! unite we to spread Thy true religion all over Ind, O Lord!"

Every heart Thou hast made Thy abode and every corner Thy holy name hath filled, lo! the devotees assembled sing Thy holy praise!

Wealth, progeny and fame, we seek not of Thee, nor aught else do we desire! Thee only Thy eager people seek, O Lord!

We take refuge in Thy blessed feet, O Lord! and no more fear of danger or death have we; and the perennial fount of immortality is found now,—Oh blessed, blessed be Thy name!"

The Master intently listens to the song and his mind is at once lifted to the region of the Divine and long he remains immersed in meditation!

* Adapted from the Bengali of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, Part II.

A while after, Kalikrishna whispers something to Bhavanath and stands up, saluting the Master. Sri Ramakrishna wonderingly inquires, "Where are you going?" Bhavanath : (to Sri Ramakrishna) Sir, he is going on a little business. Sri Ramakrishna : What business? Bhavanath : He is going to attend the Baranagore Working Men's Institution. [Kalikrishna departs.] Sri Ramakrishna : How unlucky! He could enjoy so much to-day the bliss of the Lord's name; but it is not in his lot!

It is now nearly nine in the morning. A slight indisposition preventing Sri Ramakrishna from his usual ablution in the Ganges, the devotees have drawn a few jars of water to the above-mentioned corridor and are now bathing him. He wants a little pot of water to be set aside, which he afterwards pours on the head,—very carefully avoiding any excess.

At the end of the bath, Sri Ramakrishna sweetly recites the Divine names and having put on a pure garment, walks across the metalled quadrangle towards the Mother's Temple. The Lord's names cease not on his divine lips and his eyes wear an aimless look, even like that of a bird when it hatches its eggs! At the temple, the Master salutes and worships the Mother, but his worship has no regularity: now he offers scent and flowers at Her feet and now on his own head. At last he holds the blessed offered flowers on the head and wants Bhavanath to follow him with an offered green cocoanut.

On his way back to his room, the Master visits the Radhakanta's temple or 'Vishnugar' to use his own words, which stands on his right and bows to the ground at the sight of the divine images of the Blessed Lovers. On his left, stand the twelve temples of Siva;—Him too, he salutes from a distance.

When the Master reaches his chamber, he finds Ram, Nityagopal, Kedar Chatterjee and other devotees already assembled. They make their obeisance to him and are welcomed by queries about their welfare. To one of them, twenty-three or twenty-four years old, and yet unmarried, the Master says, "Will you have anything?" "Yes," he replies in the very tones of a child: for he always lives in the region of divine moods, visiting Sri Ramakrishna alone or in the company of Ram, and is much beloved of the Bhagawan, on account of his exalted spiritual condition which the Master often designates as the state of the Paramahansa.

After the devotee has taken something, Sri Ramakrishna leads him to the western porch beside the Ganges and talks to him.

Sri Ramakrishna : Do you go there ?

The devotee : Yes, I do. She takes me.

Sri Ramakrishna : Beware, O Sadhu ! visit her scarcely, and never often, lest you fall ! The woman and gold,—even these are Maya and a Sadhu has to be far off from the woman : for there all lose themselves and even Brahma and Vishnu are struggling in that disastrous ocean !

The devotee listens all attention.

The talk alludes to a lady devotee of twenty-two or twenty-three, who is much attached to the Master and often visits him. She often invites the aforesaid devotee to her place, being very much affectionately disposed towards him for his inspired moods.

Sri Ramakrishna then comes to the northeastern corridor of his apartment. Amongst the devotees, there is a resident of Dakshineswar who studies the Vedanta at home. He is now discussing the doctrine of the Logos with S. J. Kedar Chatterjee.

Resident : The Word unvibrated is eternally existing inside and outside.

Sri Ramakrishna : But the Word alone won't do, there must be a substance correspondent to it. Can your name alone give me pleasure ? Only at your sight is the full measure thereof.

Resident : That Word, the unvibrated Word itself is Brahman.

Sri Ramakrishna : (to Kedar) Oh ! Do you see ? His is the doctrine of the Rishis : they said to Sri Ramachandra, 'We look on you, O Rama, as the son of Dasaratha. Bharadwaja and other Rishis may worship you as the Divine Incarnation ; but we do seek the Absolute, the Undivided-Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.' At this Ramachandra smiled and passed on.

Kedar : These Rishis,—they could not recognise him as Avatara,—they were fools !

Sri Ramakrishna : (Solemnly) Don't you say so ! People take to things according to their tastes and the capacity of their stomach. The mother prepares the same fish differently for different children : to one she prepares polao of it ; but the polao may not agree with others, so she prepares a fish soup. There are again different likings. Some relish fried fish, and others acid prepara-

tions. (all laugh) The Rishis were philosophical, hence they sought God as the Absolute, the Undivided-Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. But the Bhaktas want the Divine Incarnation that they may enjoy the bliss of devotion. The sight of Him dispels the darkness of the mind, as is written in the Puranas that when Sri Rama entered the assembly hall, a hundred suns, as it were, shone out. Then why did that not scorch the courtiers, do you say ? The reply is : His lustre is not a material light, it brought into bloom the lotus hearts of all who were there, even as the lotus blossoms when the sun rises !

All along Sri Ramakrishna has been standing and with the progress of the conversation his mind has been gradually receding upwards so that the last words are scarcely out of his blessed lips when he at once plunges into Samadhi !

Has his lotus heart then opened its petals to the divine vision of the Lord ? He stands motionless completely lost to the external, even as a figure on the canvass. But his divine countenance is a-light and smiling ! And the devotees—some seated, others standing—in speechless wonder feast their eyes with this divine vision of the Kingdom of Love, this unforeseen state of Samadhi !

A long hour after, he comes down from the superconscious plane. He heaves a deep breath and repeats the holy name of Rama and every word rains nectar ! He then sits down surrounded by devotees intently looking at him.

Sri R : (to the devotees) When an Avatar comes, the average people cannot know him. He comes in secret and only a few of the most intimate disciples recognise him. That Sri Rama was the Brahman Itself and the very perfection of the Divine Incarnation, was known only to twelve Rishis ; others said that they looked upon him only as the son of Dasaratha. Can every one realise the Absolute ? But his is the perfect devotion who having realised God as the Absolute, remain on the relative plane to enjoy the Divine Leela. Only after visiting the Queen in England, can you properly talk of her ways and manners ; then alone your narrations will be correct. Bharadwaja and other Rishis prayed to Sri Rama, 'Thou art, O Rama, verily the Absolute Brahman incarnating Thyself to us as man ; and Thou appearest as human because Thou hast shrouded Thyself with Thy Maya.' These Rishis

were extremely devoted to Rama and theirs was the perfect devotion.

In speechless wonder, the devotees listen to the revelation of the mystery of Divine Incarnation ! and some of them think, 'Strange ! the Absolute Brahman, whom the Vedas declare as transcending speech and mind,—even He appears before us as a man, three and half cubits high ! But it must be so, since Sri Ramakrishna himself says it !—for, had it been otherwise, why should the very repetition of the name of Rama plunge this great soul into Samadhi ? Verily he was seeing the divine beauty of Rama in the lotus of his heart !'

In a short while, Manomohan, Navai and party from Konnagore enter the Temple-garden, chanting the Lord's praise ; and when they come to the north-eastern corridor, the Master himself joins them, and in the intoxication of divine love, sings and dances.

And as in the joy of the singing, his mind fleets into Samadhi, the devotees decorate him, standing motionless like a painted image, with large flower garlands ; and then to them who see, he is the very person of Sri Gauranga lost in the depths of Samadhi !—for, like him, our Lord too manifest the three different states of consciousness : sometimes he is in the *internal mood*,—he is then dead to the external world, appearing like stock or stone ; sometimes again, he is in the *semi-external mood*, when, filled with divine love, he dances ; and at other times, he has the *external mood*, then he sings the Lord's glory with the devotees.

And lo ! there the Master stands facing the west, adorned with flower-garlands, but his mind is uplifted to the super-conscious plane ! One devotee is supporting him, lest he should fall, and others, surrounding him, sing the glory of God with the play of cymbals and *mridangams*. His eyes see not ; but his countenance,—the very image of the moon,—is suffused with love divine, and the devotees look on unsatiated, drinking in the celestial beauty of that Image of Bliss !

The day has advanced ; the Master has come down to the plane of normal consciousness ; and the holy chant also has ceased. After a short rest, Sri Ramakrishna has put on a new yellow-coloured cloth and is now sitting on his small cot. Verily the devotees find no end to the heart-gladdening, lustrous and sublime beauty of this blissful great soul,—a beauty which is pure and rare even amongst gods and yet fascinating ! Verily there is no end ! and fain would we lose ourselves in it !

Noon-day meal over, Sri Ramakrishna is taking rest on the small cot. The crowd in his room is gradually growing and has overflowed the verandas. Kedar, Suresh, Ram, Manomohan, Girindra, Bhavanath, M., Rakhal and many other devotees are seated on the floor, and among them, a Vaishnava Goswami to whom the Master is addressing his words. Our Master would always bow down before the Goswamis and sometimes even prostrate himself.

Sri R : Well, what do you say is the way ?

Goswami : Please, His name alone will do : the Holy Name is very effective in the Kaliyuga.

Sri R : Yes, no doubt the holy name is much glorified ; but will it do without love ?—the soul must hunger for God ! Or what will it avail that I repeat His name, if my mind remains attached to the woman and gold ? *Mantrams* alone will not heal up a scorpion or spider bite ; you must also apply the vapour of the burning cow-dung.*

Goswami : What do you say of Ajamil, then ? for Ajamil was a great sinner, and there is no sin, he did not commit ; but only because, while dying, he called his son by his name of 'Narayana,' he had salvation !

Sri R : Perchance, he had accumulated many virtues in his previous birth ; besides it is said he practised great austerities afterwards.

You may also explain it thus : those were Ajamil's last moments when he took the Lord's name ; and although an elephant will usually cover himself with dust and mud even after his bath, yet he may remain clean, if he is bathed before he is taken to the stable !

The Name may purify a man for once, but the next moment, he takes to various sinful acts,—he has not enough strength of mind to vow that he will never more commit any sin ! Ablution in the Ganges takes away all sins but little does it avail ! The story goes that the sins lie in ambush on the trees on the bank, so that when the man returns from his bath they leap down on his neck. (all laugh). So you see, they are again on him ;—they have possessed him even before he has proceeded a few steps !

* The Master here mentions a simple recipe of the village house-wife for scorpion bite.

Therefore take His name, but pray to Him at the same time that you may have love for Him, and that your attachment for money, fame and bodily comforts,—those things of 'two days', may grow less and less !

Provided you are sincere, all religions can take you to God. The Vaishnavas, the Shaktas, the Vedantins, and the Brahmajnanis, all will equally attain to God ; and so again the Mussalmans and the Christians ! Yes, every one will have the Lord, if he is sincere. Some there are who quarrel, saying, 'It won't at all do, unless you worship our Sri Krishna, or Mother Kali, or unless you take to Christianity !'

But such ideas, that is to say, that one's religion alone is true and others are false, are dogmatical. And it is a bad attitude, for various are the ways that lead to the Lord !

Some again, maintain that God has form and He is not formless ; and thus they quarrel on it !—A Vaishnava will quarrel with an Advaitin !

You can speak truly of Him, only if you are vouchsafed the Divine Vision ! And he who has seen Him, well knows that He is both with and without form, and many more besides, defying description !

Once some blind people happened to come upon what they were told was an elephant. They were asked what they thought it was like ; so they began to feel the animal with their hands and one of them said, it was like a pillow,—he had felt only its leg. 'It is like a winnowing fan, said another, for he had felt one of its ears only ! and others again who had felt its trunk or stomach, spoke of it in like manners. Even so of God ;—as is your realisation, so is your idea of Him !

Once a man came to his friends and said, 'Hallo ! I have seen a beautiful red chameleon under yonder tree !' 'Why red ?'—exclaimed one of them, 'I myself have been there before you ; I have found it green !' Then rejoins another, 'I know full well, it is neither red nor green ; I was there before you, both, and, saw with my own eyes that it is blue !' At that, two others declared it was yellow and brown, and so on till they fell out, when some one came by and enquired what the matter was ; and when the cause of their quarrel was told him, he said, 'Lo ! I myself live under the selfsame tree and

know the animal too ! All of you are true ;—it is indeed sometimes red, sometimes green, at other times blue and so on ; and this too I have found that it is sometimes of no colour !'

(*To the Goswami*) So how will it do to speak of him as with form only ? True, He incarnates in the human form as Sri Krishna and appears before his devotees in various different forms ; but this also is true that He is formless, Absolute ! The Vedas have declared Him as both with and without form, with and without attributes !

Do you know how it is like ? The Absolute is as it were an infinite ocean ; and as extreme cold freezes the waters of the ocean into ice and sets it afloat in masses of various forms, so under the cooling influence, so to say, of Bhakti, the Infinite reduces Himself into the finite and appears before His devotee as a Being with form !—for the Lord assumes forms for his devotees ! Again, the sun of knowledge shining out, they melt away into the selfsame 'water,' filling up and down, 'water' and nothing else ! Hence there is this prayer, in the Srimad Bhagavatam,—'Thou art, O Lord, both with form and formless ! Thou appearest before us as man ; but even thee, the Vedas have declared as transcending speech and mind !'

But then, you may truly say, that for some, He is eternally with form :—there are places where the ice never melts, it has become crystal there !

Kedar : In the Bhagavatam, Vyasa has sought forgiveness of God for three faults ; in one passage, he says, 'O Lord, Thou art beyond speech and mind ; but I have narrated Thy *leela*, Thy forms only ;—for this, forgive me !'

Sri R. : Yes, God is both with and without form, of Him none can find any end !

It is nearly six in the evening. The Master is seated in the southeastern corridor, with the devotees attending to him.

Sri R. : (*to Kedar and devotees*) A sadhu, one who has renounced the world, must needs take the name of the Lord, for naught else has he to do ! It will be surprising indeed if he fails to think of God and will be rather

looked down upon, if he does not take the Lord's name and think of Him !

But it will be a great credit if a worldly man takes the Lord's name. King Janaka, mark you, was very clever, he played two swords simultaneously,—of Jnana and Karma : he had the fullness of the Knowledge of God on the one hand and on the other hand, attended to his worldly duties !

A corrupt woman attends to her household duties with all her mind ; but at heart, she always thinks of her lover !

You must always keep the company of the religious ; for they can introduce you to God !

Kedar : Yes, Sir, the Great Ones come for the salvation of *jivas* ; even as a railway engine pulls forward the carriages behind or as a lake or river quenches the thirst of countless animals !

* * * *

The devotees are now preparing to leave for home ; and are, one by one, saluting Sri Ramakrishna, bowing to the ground and taking the dust of his holy feet. When Bhavanath approaches, he says, " Don't you go today ! The very sight of you is inspiring ! "

And Bhavanath of a fair-complexioned, beautiful physique, nearly twenty years old, has not entered the world : the very name of the Lord brings tears in his eyes, and Sri Ramakrishna looks upon him as the very embodiment of Narayana !

MUKUNDAMALA.

BY

N. Venkataranga Iyer.

The author of Mukundamala is Kulasekhara Alwar who was a prince saint of Southern India with an ideal soul force and an inimitable purity of heart. He is one of those Alwar Bhagavatas who said that he wanted neither wealth, nor power, nor knowledge nor heaven but an unalterable love of God, though he may be born hundreds of times in this world. Swami Vivekananda most aptly described a saint of this type in the following language : " At a stage when man sees God in everything and everything in God, he may be said to have attained perfect Bhakti. It is then that he sees Vishnu incarnated in everything from the microbe to the Brahma, and it is then that he sees God manifesting himself in everything, it is then that he feels that there is nothing without God, and it is then and then alone, that thinking himself the most insignificant of all beings, he worships God with the true spirit of a Bhakta. To such a being God is love personified. He is apparent in everything. He is love incarnate. Seeing Him in all things and all things in Him, he attains supreme Bhakti." Kulasekhara was a Bhakta of the true type depicted above. The life of this holy saint is teeming with marvellous incidents. His inordinate and mad love for God knew no bounds. His supreme love for Ranganatha of Sri Rangan, his daily Kaleshapam of Valmiki Ramayana due to an inordinate love for Sri Rama, his devoted attachment to Vishnu Bhaktas, his miraculous identification with the events of Ramayana as though they were physically taking place before his mind's eye, the incident of his taking hold of a cobra in his hand to prove the innocence of Vishnu Bhaktas when they were accused of stealing God's diamond necklace from the puja box, the incident of his renouncing throne and going away to the Holy shrine of Ranganatha declaring it intolerable for him to live amidst his people whom he styled as "human reptiles", are all incidents in the life of this holy saint with which every Guruparampara Vaishnavite is familiar. The concentrated essence of his Bhakti found an outlet in "Mukundamala" in which he profusely poured out his heart in ecstasies of joy and trances of Bhakti. A brief abstract of it, though untranslatable and inexpressible, is summarised hereunder and begins thus : "Blessed be that Kulasekhara in whose kingdom the pilgrimage to

Srirangam is daily proclaimed by beat of tom-tom. Oh Salvation-giving Vishnu! Thou art the life's help-mate of Mahalakshmi; bestower of blessings, lover of Bhaktas, destroyer of worldly desires and supporter of all worlds. Oh son of Devaki, hail to thee! Oh light of Yadava family, hail to thee! Oh the cloud-hued and soft-bodied Lord, hail to thee! Oh the destroyer of all worldly cares, hail to thee! Thanks to thee my Lord, my head touching thy lotus feet! Free me, my Lord, from all births and deaths, pleasures and pains and horrors of hell. From birth to birth may you bless me, my Lord, with that frame of mind coveting not for all the glories of heaven, but for love for thee for love's sake, with my mind wedded to thy lotus feet! My Lord, I do not desire for heavenly gifts, worldly enjoyments and pleasures of senses, for these are the outcome of past Karma, but I do desire that in heaven or hell or here at the parting hour of my life, my mind should think of thee and thee alone! Thenceforth may my mind take shelter in thy lotus-feet, for at the moment of death while suffering deathly pangs, my mind will not think of thee, My Lord! Oh mind, think of that smiling-faced Lord, the darling of Devaki who is worshipped by sages like Narada. Oh mind, disgusted art thou with roaming in this dreary waste of samsara, but fortunate art thou in discovering a perennial spring in which to quench thy thirst in this dreary waste and that spring is the spring of Bhakti for the Lord! Oh mind! woo the lotus-eyed Vishnu bearing conch and disc. You need then fear not hell and can safely defy thy enemies. Make haste and meditate upon the Lord. Surely the Lord will cure His Bhaktas' sorrow, when He is the world's doctor curing all human sorrows! Oh mind, immersed art thou in the ocean of Samsara, tossed to and fro by the wind of pleasure and pain, crushed beneath the weight of family life and sunk deep in the pleasures of senses. Oh mind, take the float of Vishnu's feet and steer clear of all family woes. Mind you this ocean of "Samsara" is made up of the waters of desire, the cool wind of Manmatha always blowing over it, the waves of passion always moving up and down and the whales of family and children always living in it. Attempt to cross this unfathomable sea only with the float of Vishnu's feet. Oh men! eschew all mortals devoid of Bhakti for the Lord, allow no sounds to enter thy ears except those ringing with the praise of the Lord and take no service except that consecrated to the Lord. Oh tongue, be always engaged in praising Kesava, Oh mind think no thought except that of Muraripu, Oh hands, use not your organs for any purpose other than making offerings to the Lord, Oh ears, lend not yourselves for any purpose other than hearing the praises of the Lord, Oh eyes feast not yourselves on any other object except on Lord's beauty, Oh legs, use

not thy organs for any purpose other than walking to the temple of the Lord. Oh nose, use not thy organ for any other purpose except that of smelling the sweet-scented flowers placed at the feet of the Lord! Oh my brethren, there is only one sure remedy for this disease of family life, recommended by sages like Yagnavalkya and that is the constant utterance of the holy prayer of "Narayana mantram." My Lord! before thy omnipotence, this universe is an atom, oceans are mere drops of water, Agni is but a spark of fire, Vayu is but a breath, Akasa is but a small hole, Brahma Rudra and Devas are but worms. Such is thy glory! When we pray to thee with folded hands, bent head, trembling body, failing voice, and tears of joy, we feel we are drinking sweet nectar from thy Holy feet. Oh my Lord, Shepherd of Brindavan art thou, Ocean of mercy art thou, Husband of Lakshmi art thou, destroyer of Kamsa art thou, heaven giver to Gajendra art thou, protector of three worlds art thou, brother of Balaram art thou, the beloved of the Gopis art thou, Garuda art thou to the serpent of sorrows of thy Bhaktas, the be-all and end-all of all the three worlds art thou, beauty personified art thou, a precious jewel to Rukminidevi art thou, the helmet to the Devas art thou, and Chieftain to the shepherds art thou! May you, mighty Lord, protect me! Oh tongue, whisper thou the Mantram of Narayana, the annihilator of all thy foes, the most sacred of all sacred Mantrams of Upanishads, a guiding star to cross the sea of life, the dispeller of all human ignorance and securer of all earthly glory, the wonderful cure to the cobra poison of human sorrow and the emancipator from the cycle of births and deaths! Oh Lord, the surest panacea art thou to all diseases of worldly attachment, a powerful tonic to the minds of sages, the extirpator of all demons, elixir of all the worlds and the saviour of all thy Bhaktas. Giver of bliss art thou! May my mind always drink the cup of thy bliss! Without real Bhakti for thee, My Lord, chanting of Vedic hymns will be nothing more than crying in the wilderness, the practice of penance will be nothing more than a mere wastage of body, the building of temples and the digging of tanks will be nothing more than mere pastimes, bathing in holy waters will be nothing more than an animal function. My Lord, most awful sinners have been purged of their sins by the utterance of thy name! Surely my tongue must have failed to utter thy name, else why this misery of births and deaths to me! Consider me, my Lord, as thy servant of servants! What a wonder is it that when we cringe and beg of a mortal master of a few villages for small favours, we do not think of praying and begging our Lord who is the Master of all the worlds and who is able to give even salvation!

O Mind ! evidently art thou conquered by Manmatha ! O Manmatha, clear out from my mind, knowing it to be the seat of the Lord. for when you were consumed to ashes by the fierce looks of Rudra, how can you stand the wrath of Mighty Narayana ? O tongue, fail not to taste the sweetest honey of the Lord's cup of bliss, for knowest thou not that this little brittle human frame of thine will break and perish ere long ? My Lord, even the Vedas fail to praise thee fully, the whole creation is thine and salvation is thy gift ! Devas are thy servants, Devaki Devi is thy mother, Arjuna is thy friend. Thou art the cause of all cosmos and the ocean of mercy, such is thy omnipotence ! Shower down thy mercy on us, my Lord, and free us from this bondage of Maya ! Saviour of all in times of pralaya, art Thou, omnipresent art Thou, the Ruler of Vaikunta art Thou Mukunda, Damodara and Madhava art Thou ! Woe be to my tongue, if it does not always utter thy name ! Enshrined art Thou in my heart of hearts, giving me the light of thy protection ! Bless me, bless me, my Lord, from that ocean of milk re-ting on the soft cushioned Adishesha !"

In winding up our prayers and in bringing to a close the garlanding function of Lord Sri Krishna, it will not be out of place to state that Lord Chaitanya of Bengal is said to have drawn the car of Jagannath citing Mukundamala and also to have danced before Sri Venkatesh repeating Mukundamala with "sensation, soul and form all melted unto Him."

THE SANNYASIN AND THE HOUSEHOLDER.

BY

Swami Vireswarananda.

From time immemorial Sannyasa has been extolled. If we go through the Srutis, Smritis or Puranas, this fact strikes us most. According to the Varnashrama Dharma, Sannyasa is the highest and final ashrama. The first three are meant as a training for the last ashrama. But Sri Ramakrishna used to say that those who can practise Sadhanas being in the family, are really heroes amongst the devotees of God. This was not meant as a mere encouragement for the householders. The difficulties that a householder has to overcome are very many. The circumstances in which he is placed are such as would drag down any one trying to push Godward. If in spite of all these difficulties, he should really progress Godward, then he is really a hero.

The Sannyasin renounces everything at the very outset. He finds himself alone in the world with only the Lord as his friend, protector and everything. He realises that he has none on whom he can depend except the Lord. Being protected from difficulties many a time, he finds that the Lord is ever behind him, be it in the pathless forests or in the sandy deserts. It is the Lord again that every day gives him his daily bread. He always says, "O Lord, I am helpless, You are my protector. Where are You now?" This dependence on the Lord, this self-surrender is a great step in the field of Religion. To realise this high ideal of self-surrender in the family life, is very difficult. Never had the householder been to places uninhabited by men. Neither had he received food unexpectedly from unknown hands, when he was in a helpless condition. Everyday he is having delicious dishes by means of the wealth that he has accumulated by his own labour. Never had he been to pathless forests nor does he know whether there is any Being protecting man even in those forests. He is accustomed only to go along royal roads in motor cars. When he gets ill, be it even a slight headache, the doctor is ready to attend him. He has never realised the meaning of the statement "श्रीपथं जाह्नवीतीर्थं वैद्यो नारायणो हरिः". He is always engaged in acquiring wealth and the All-Gracious Lord has given him plenty of it. Therefore it is very difficult for him to realise that he is helpless (निराश्रयः).

But if he realises in the midst of all his opulence that he is helpless like a ship on the sea in a storm, that He Who gives the Sannyasin his daily bread also gives him his food ; that his wealth is nothing but His gift and that it may be taken away from him this very moment, that he

may die at any moment, that all round him there is danger and he has nobody to protect him except the Lord, then he is in no way inferior to the Sannyasin. But the mind is so very deceptive that it never allows him to consider himself helpless (निराश्रयः).

The ego is so strong that it does not yield and surrender easily at the feet of the Divine.

This fact is repeatedly brought before us, yet we do not accept it. Friends whom we see to-day, are not to be seen to-morrow; the cold hand of death has taken them away. Today we see one a prince and to-morrow that very man is in the street a beggar. We are very rich and hence surrounded by many relations, attendants and servants. Naturally we think that if we fall ill, these people would attend us. But what is it, we find? We may be on our death bed yet there is none to nurse us. Everybody is busy locking chests and boxes. We get no relief. In the midst of these scenes of death and misery do we realise now and then, though for a moment, that we are without refuge, that God alone is our protector. But the moment again we find ourselves in better circumstances, we forget everything, there is no longer any God existing, Who is our protector!

But then, is it possible for a householder to fully surrender himself to the will of the Lord? Sri Ramakrishna used to say that it is possible, though the chances are very few indeed. Even amongst the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, there was one like this. His name is Durga Charan Nag. He was a Homoeopathic doctor. Instead of taking fees from his patient, he used many a time to give the patient money for his diet and comforts. One day, he heard Sri Ramakrishna say that doctors, vakils and brokers cannot realise God. That very day he threw his medicine boxes, books, etc. into the Ganges. When he used to go to any shop, he would address the shop-keeper, "Sir, please give me such and such things for one rupee," and would take whatever the shop-keeper gave. For, he could see the *leela*, the play of Lord everywhere through every being. Once he and his wife passed one whole night standing in the eaves of their house on a stormy night so that they might make room for some guests in it. At another time a fire broke out near their house. The wife was busy removing all valuable things. But Nag Mahashoy rebuked her, saying, "For shame! what are you doing? If the God of fire means to destroy us, nobody can protect us, come, let us pray to Him and everything will be alright." They prayed to the God of fire and strange, the house was not destroyed. This man had a wife, he had a house, he was a गृही (a householder), yet in no way was he different from a Sannyasin.

In this connection naturally a question arises, whether it is good to be inactive, depending for everything on Lord. Certainly not. To be inactive owing to laziness, is very bad. It is *tamas*. We will find that if from laziness we try to keep ourselves inactive, we cannot

be perfectly so. Our desires and *samskaras* will make us do actions. As Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "Your Prakriti will make you fight." To attain to inactivity we will have to do good actions. We have to engage ourself always in action. Action is the way to inaction. When a man really attains to the state of inaction he becomes *sattvic* in nature; but one who forces inaction on himself is a *tamasic* man. Such people are easily upset by reverses. Their nature will be always to provide for the future. They are the worst of men. A man of real inaction is not at all upset by reverses. He never thinks of providing for the future. The Goddess Lakshmi herself goes behind him carrying him food even if he should go to the forest.

The next question then is why should we become sannyasins if we can realise God even in our family life? The answer is, though God can be realised, being in the world (*samsara*), yet how many have been able to do so? The cases are very few indeed; so few that we can almost say nil. No doubt we may accuse the Sannyasins that they are great shirkers, that they have run away from the world being afraid of facing it. We are very clever and dutiful, we want to face the difficulties of the world. What are the results that we find? The Sannyasins, the shirkers, the undutiful realise God and attain Mukti. But those who have been too clever, find themselves engrossed in this world and fall into the trap laid by Maya. Why is it so? It is their attachment for the things of the world that makes them often select the so-called path meant for heroes. They do not catch this defeat in them but try their best to cover it up with flowers. They try to satisfy themselves by saying that they are heroes, that they have not run away from their duties and so on; they cavil at the Sannyasins, who in their eyes are burdens upon society. The poor sannyasin only laughs at their heroism and sense of duty and stands at a reverential distance from them, lest life should defile them and proceeds in his onward march towards Godrealisation. This is my sincere prayer to the Lord, "Oh Lord, let me not be too wise or clever but let me learn to realise that I am helpless and that you are the only protector,—in whatever condition I may be placed, let me not forget Thy Name!"

SRI RAMAKRISHNA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.

At the Belur Math.

The Eighty-sixth birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, the headquarters of the Mission, with great solemnity and with the usual zeal. From the early morning of the 13th March, people began to pour in and about a lakh of people gathered to pay their homage to the Great Master. The Math premises wore a gala appearance and under a huge canopy a life size portrait of the Bhagawan was placed on a throne exquisitely decorated with leaves, ferns and flowers.

There were numerous musical parties in different parts of the Math ground, singing praises of the Lord that filled the heart of the devotees with love and devotion. Prasadam was distributed throughout the day.

At Madras.

There was bhajan in the morning after which a number of poor Narayanas were fed. In the evening there was Harikatha Kalakshepam followed by a public meeting which was addressed by M. R. Ry. S. Varadachariar, B.A., B.L. A full report of the lecture will be published in the subsequent issues of our journal. Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M.A., presided. He spoke fervently about the greatness of India and of Sri Ramakrishna saying that at a critical time when India and the world needed Him most, He came to fulfil the words of Bhagawan Sri Krishna in the Gita. With a vote of thanks to the chair and the lecturer by M.R.Ry. Alaḍi Krishnaswami Iyer, High Court Vakil, the function came to a close.

At Bangalore.

The Eighty-sixth Birthday anniversary of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated with the usual devotion and ardour at the Sree Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City, on Friday the 11th and Sunday the 13th instants. The former, the *thithi puja* day was observed by the worship of Sri Gurumaharaj all through the day, by *Bhajana* in the evening and the customary children's treat. The observances of the latter day commenced with the arrival of *Bhajana* parties from the Cantonment and the City at about noon. Next came the feeding of the poor in Tumkur Thimmaiya's Chatram at Gavipur (just behind the Ashrama) which was over at about 5 P.M. At about 3 P.M. Sriman Jayaramachar began a *kalakshepam*, specially prepared for the occasion, on the life and teachings of Sri Gurumaharaj and kept the audience spell bound till 6.15 P.M. It should be acknowledged that Sriman Jayaramachar contributed largely to the success of both the celebrations this year by his original compositions.

The evening's functions commenced immediately after; a thoughtful lecture on the life and teachings of the *avatar* was delivered by Rao Saheb H. Chennaiya, Retired Sub Judge of Coorg. Next followed Prof. S. K. Yegnanarayana Iyer, M.A., Principal of the Salem College, who read an erudite paper on "Ramakrishna and the higher religious synthesis." The theme of his paper was that Gurumaharaj stood for a high order of religious synthesis (rather than any low analysis) pointing out as indeed he did in actual practice that all religions have only one goal in view and the world religion talked of in several quarters, could easily be rendered possible on this basis.

At the desire of Swami Nirmalanandaji, President of the local branch, Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar thanked the *Bhagavata* and the lecturers and in particular Mr. S. K. Yegnanarayana Iyer who had come all the way from Salem for the occasion.

The proceedings terminated at a little before 8 P.M. with *arathrikam* and distribution of *prasad*.

We have not yet received reports of celebrations in various other centres, which we shall include in the subsequent issues of the journal.

CHAPTER X. (Continued)

(Brahman exists) as well-being in speech, as acquisition and preservation in the Prana and Apana, as activity in the hands and as movement in the feet, as evacuation in the anus,—thus is the meditation (of Brahman) in reference to man.

[As well-being in speech :—the word *Kshema* of the text means both the preservation or safety of a thing already in the possession and also the general well-being of life. It is enjoined here to contemplate upon Brahman as existing in the form of 'well-being' in speech, inasmuch as when one meets his friend, the first thing one enquires is about his well-being, and it is by speech that one wishes well-being of another.

As acquisition and preservation etc. :—i.e., Brahman should be meditated upon as the power of acquisition and preservation of things; which exists in the vital energies of the Prana and the Apana. Without the Prana and the Apana, and for the matter of that all the other aspects of the vital energy, life is impossible, i.e., it is not possible to acquire and preserve anything in life; and this power of acquisition and preservation of the Prana etc., is derived from Brahman; hence is the injunction of the meditation.

Similarly the power of activity which is possessed by the hands and of motion existing in the legs, are also due to Brahman. Even the power of the excretory organs which by their proper function maintain the health of the body, is also due to the, Brahman. Hence He should be meditated upon as such; thus is the meditation etc. :—i.e., these meditations of Brahman are to be made in reference to the physical life of man.]

अथ देवीः । तृप्तिरिति वृष्टौ । वलमिति विद्युति ॥ यश इति पशुषु । ज्योतिरिति नक्षत्रेषु ॥ प्रजातिरमृतमातन्द इत्युपस्थे । सर्वमित्याकाशे ॥

तत्प्रतिष्ठेत्युपासीत । प्रतिष्ठावान् भवति । तन्मरु इत्युपासीत । महान् भवति । तन्मन इत्युपासीत । मानवान् भवति । तन्म इत्युपासीत । नम्यन्तेऽस्मै कामाः । ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत । ब्रह्मवान् भवति । तद्ब्रह्मणः परिमर इत्युपासीत । पर्येण म्रियन्ते द्विपन्तः

सपत्ना ॥ परि येऽप्रिया भ्रातृव्याः ॥

अथ next दवीः in reference to the celestial वृष्टिः satisfaction इति thus वृष्टौ in the rain. बलम् power इति thus विद्युति in the lightning यशः fame इति thus पशुषु in cattle ज्योतिः light इति thus नक्षत्रेषु in the stars प्रजातिः procreation अमृतम् immortality आनन्दः joy उपस्थे in the generative organ सर्वम् all इति thus आकाशे in the sky.

तत् that प्रतिष्ठा support इति thus उपासीत meditate प्रतिष्ठावान् endowed with support भवति becomes तत् that मह great इति thus उपासीत meditate महान् greatness भवति becomes तत् that मन mind इति thus उपासीत meditate मानवान् endowed with mental vigour भवति becomes. तत् that नमः obeisance इति thus उपासीत meditate नम्यन्ते will do obeisance अस्मै unto him कामाः all objects of desire तत् that ब्रह्म Supreme Lord इति thus उपासीत meditate ब्रह्मवान् endowed with supremacy भवति becomes. तत् that ब्रह्मणः of Brahman परिमरः destructive aspect इति thus उपासीत meditate पर्येण around त्रियन्ते will die द्विपन्तः haters सपत्नाः enemies परि around ये those अप्रियाः not dear भ्रातृव्याः foes.

Now follows (the contemplation) in reference to the celestial; as satisfaction in the rain; as power in the lightning; as fame in cattle; as light in the stars; as procreation, immortality and joy in the generative organ; as all in the sky.

Let him meditate upon that as the support and he will be endowed with support; let him meditate upon that as the great, and he will be possessed with greatness; let him meditate upon that as mind, and he will be endowed with mental vigour; let him meditate upon that as obeisance and all objects of desire will do obeisance to him; let him meditate upon that as the Supreme Lord and he will be endowed with supremacy; let him meditate upon that as the destructive aspect of Brahman and all those enemies who hate him will die around him, and around him will die also those foes whom he likes not.

[Contemplation . . . celestial:—i. e., the contemplation of Brahman as existing in the aspects of nature and the external world.

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.

VOL. VII.]

APRIL, 1921.

[No. 12.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER."

BY

SWAMI SARADANANDA

More of the Sadhanas of the First four years.

Now to our narration. Haladhari lived at Dakshineswar for about seven years. So he had the opportunity to see the great saint who apparently behaved like the *Pishacha*, the Brahmani, Jatadhari of the Ramayet sect and Totapuri, who all came to Dakshineswar one after another. We know from Sri Ramakrishna that Haladhari had even the fortune to read the scriptures with Totapuri. All the aforesaid incidents relating to the life of Haladhari happened at different periods while he was at Dakshineswar; but we have narrated them all here for the convenience of our readers.

From what we have seen about the sadhaka aspect of the life of the Master, it will be plain beyond any doubt that though to the ordinary eye, he appeared to be mad, his mind was in reality free from any abnormal condition usually associated with the malady. The fact was that there arose an intense hankering within his heart to have the vision of God, and the intensity was so great that he could not contain himself. Having had that intensity of feeling, having had that burning thirst for the realisation of God in his heart, he could not behave like a sane man with ordinary people

about ordinary affairs; and so was he regarded mad. And who can behave properly at such a state of mind? When the suffering for anything becomes intense, so intense that it transcends all limits of endurance, it is quite impossible to behave amidst the ordinary circumstances of the world, feeling one thing and acting the other thing. It might be said that the powers of endurance are not the same in all persons. Some people get unbalanced even with a little amount of pleasure and pain, while others retain a perfect equanimity even while being subjected to violent emotions. How can we fathom the depths of the Master's powers of endurance?

In reply it might be said that it will be evident to those who will carefully study the other incidents of his life, that his range of feeling was something super-human. It is well-known how for a long period of twelve years he remained with no sleep and with little food or no food at all, but retained his normal spirit; how he threw away as obstacles to his God-realisation, untold wealth that were almost surrendered at his feet. Instances of this kind are too numerous to be mentioned here. It goes without saying that his powers of body and mind were something far beyond the normal.

It is not surprising that this extraordinary phenomenon appeared as madness to men, immersed in sense-enjoyment. Excepting Mathuranath, there was none in *Kalibati* during that time, who could in any degree get an accurate idea of the state of his mind. Nobody could tell the whereabouts of Sriji Kenaram Bhatta after he had initiated the Master; not even Hriday or anybody in the *Kalibati* could tell anything about him. It seems to be the fact that nobody except the foolish and greedy servants of the temple came near the Master to see and understand his actions and the state of his mind at that period; and their accounts cannot of course be relied upon. We are left only with the report of the sadhus and sadhakas who came to him, for all informations about this period. From the talks of the Master with the disciples and other devotees, on various occasions, we are able to gather that far from considering him mad, the sadhus and sadhakas had formed a very high idea of the exalted state of his mind.

In the light of subsequent events, we are able to gather that so long as he did not in his intense longing for God-realisation, attain to that state of mind, where the consciousness of self and even the desire to preserve the body is lost, he would usually do what other people would suggest to him for the good of his body, but never seemed to exhibit any insane persistence in his own opinions.

For instance, we see that when some people suggested some medical treatment, he consented; and when some people suggested his removal to Kamarpukur, he yielded. How can such actions be consistent with the explanation of madness?

We also notice, that whenever there was any worship and singing about God, the Master would readily and with eagerness join such parties, while he always kept himself aloof from all company of worldly-minded men and their worldly talk. This is evident from his going to Dasamahavidya at Baranagore, his occasional visits to Kalighat and his regular attendance at the annual festival at Panihati. At all these places, sometimes he would meet sadhakas and others versed in the shastras, and from what little we are able to gather about this period of his life, it appears that these sadhakas held him in high respect.

As an instance, we can point to his visit to Panihati in the year 1858 A. D. He saw Vaishnavacharan, son of Sji. U savananda Goswami, there for the first time. We have heard from Hriday and also from the Master himself that while seated at the temple of Sji. Mani Mohan Sen at Panihati, Vaishnavacharan came to see him and was convinced without any shadow of doubt that he saw before him a unique and exalted spiritual personality. Vaishnavacharan spent many long hours with him there and feasted him with special preparation of *Malsabhoga*, at his own expense. And further, when he returned to Calcutta, he got down at Dakshineswar ghaut to have a sight of the Master, but was sorely grieved to learn that the Master had not returned from the Utsava. How after, some years, Vaishnavacharan came to visit him and came into intimate relation with him and all the circumstances connected with it, will be described later on.

Within this period of four years, the Master engaged himself upon a reflection of the Real and the Unreal; and in order to free himself from the attachment to gold, he would think, thus, taking clay and gold in the same hand: To a man bent upon realising God, as Satchidananda, gold will be of as much use as the clay; having convinced himself of the truth of this reasoning, he would repeat 'clay is gold' and 'gold is clay', and finally throw both of them into the Ganges. To realise that, from Buddha to amoeba, all are but manifestations of the Divine Mother, he would take the remains of the beggars' plates and would also clean the place where they had taken their meals;—in order to drive away from his mind all ideas of egoism and pride, and to realise that he was no more superior to the lowliest, like a scavenger he would sweep the dirtiest

place ;—in order to drive away all idea of contempt and to realise that the sweet smelling sandal and the foul ordure are but compounds of the five elements and therefore in essence the same, he would, in a most unaffected way, touch with his tongue the excreta of others. These and many other such unheard-of sadhanas of his life, were practised during this period. If we consider the nature of the sadhanas and the divine visions which he had during this period of four years, we shall be enabled to get some idea of the over-powering intensity of his longing for God-realisation and of the eminence in the sadhanas, he had reached with the help of his extraordinary faith. It is plain that without much help from external sources, the Master obtained the full glorious vision of the Mother ; and having thus realised the goal of all sadhanas, he satisfied himself by comparing notes, as it were, with the teachings of the shastras and the Gurus.

The Master used to say that when a sadhaka becomes pure and holy, having controlled his mind and the senses by means of *tyaga* and *samyama*, his mind becomes his own teacher, and the thought-waves that arise in this purified state of his mind, far from leading him astray, take him straight to the goal. During these first four years of sadhana, his mind did not simply become the teacher and show him what to do and what not to do, but on various occasions, the mind would take concrete form and would appear before him as an individual, sometimes spurring him on in the path of sadhana, sometimes making him merged by threats, in some particular sadhana and sometimes explaining to him the reason and the ends and benefits of the sadhanas. Accordingly the Master had seen, while in meditation, a Sannyasin with a sharp trident coming out of his body and threatening him that he would pierce him with the trident, if he did not always meditate upon his *Ishtam*, leaving all other thoughts ; and when the tendencies (*Vasanas*) for enjoyment came out of his body in the form of a person, the same Sannyasin form also came out along with it and destroyed it. Again when the Master desired to see the various gods and goddesses and hear the singing of their names in far away places, he would see from out of his body, issuing forth a lustrous form similar to his own self, visit the respective shrines and hear the songs, moving along a lustrous line and come back and merge again into his own body. Such and similar stories we have heard from the lips of the Master himself.

From about the beginning of the Sadhana period, the Master used to have the vision of the young Sannyasin lodged in his body, and he got used to consult with this Sannyasin as to all that he

should do and avoid. Speaking of all these unique experiences of his sadhana period, the Master one day told us : " Whenever necessity arose, a young sannyasin from inside my body, in appearance exactly like myself, will come out and teach me everything ; when he came out in this way, sometimes I would retain little consciousness of external objects and at other times I would lose all consciousness of the outside except for the awareness of his presence and doings ; and when he re-entered the body, I would regain my external consciousness. What I had heard from him before, the same teachings I heard from Brahmani, Totapuri etc ; what I learnt from him before, the same I learnt from these teachers later. It appears from these that these teachers came simply to fulfil the Vedic and Shastric rules ; otherwise there was no special purpose in the teachership of Totapuri and others."

When the Master had gone to Kamarpukur about the end of this period of sadhana, he had another unique experience, and that occurred to him while he was going in a palanquin to Hriday's house at Shihor. The scene through which he was passing, was an attractive blue sky above, a vast meadow of cornfields and shady trees below ; delighted with the charm of the scenery as he was proceeding onward, there came from out of his body two angelic youngsters, sometimes walking slowly, sometimes playing about, sometimes running far into the fields in search of wild flowers and again coming near the palanquin, smiling, prattling and cutting jokes after the manner of children. This play continued for a long time and at last the boys entered into his own body again. After nearly a year and a half the Master met the Brahmani at the Kali temple ; and when she was told of this vision, she did not express the least surprise but simply said : " You have had the right vision : this time Sri Chaitanya has come in the form of Nityananda ; both Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda have come together and they reside within you." Hriday says that the Brahmani, giving this explanation, quoted a verse from *Sri Chaitanya Bhagavata* for her support, which reads as follows :

" The Lord, putting his hand around the neck of Adwaitacharya, said again and again, ' I will have a wonderful *leela* once more,—I will assume a blissful form in *Keertanam*. ' Even to-day Lord Gour plays the *Gourleela*, and it is given to the privileged few alone to see it."

When we used to go to the Master, we one day heard him speaking thus, " It is true I have seen these forms ; that the Brahmani gave this explanation is also true ; it is difficult however, to

determine the exact meaning of all these." From all these, it appears to us that the Master had on this occasion extraordinary glimpses of a soul familiar with the world from the beginning of time and using his body as his own for some particular mission. We believe that what originally were mere glimpses, later on became a realisation of the fact that He Who for the establishment of Dharma, incarnated as Ramachandra in Ayodhya, and subsequently as Sri Krishna in Brindavan, took the body of Sri Ramakrishna, for the giving of a new ideal of *Dharma* to India and the world at large. Our reason is that we have heard from him often and often, both when he was suffering and when he was well, that He Who was Rama and Krishna, He Himself is within this cover (*i.e.*, his body), only in a concealed manner.

To ascertain the truth of this statement, there is no other means except faith in the words of the Master, which have been given out to his intimate disciples on various occasions. Leaving this out of our consideration, we can realise with certainty the truth of his other visions at this period of his life, the reason being the fact that even at the time when we, the English-educated and naturally sceptical disciples used to go to him, similar visions were often manifested; and when we went to test the reality of these, we were forced to believe in them in spite of ourselves. Though it will be out of place to mention here any such instance, we take leave to describe one, for the satisfaction of our readers.

At the close of the year 1885 A. D., during the festival of Goddess Sarada, the whole of Calcutta was in the same holiday spirit or joyous mood, as is usual with all men, women and children in this particular season of the year. Though this wave of ecstasy particularly affected the disciples, there were some impediments in the way of its full and proper expression, the reason being that the Master who was the fountainhead of all their joy, was himself suffering from a serious cancer in the throat. Nearly more than a month before this occasion, the disciples had taken their Master to a rented two-storied building at Shyampukur in Calcutta and the well-known physician, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar was trying his best to get this malady cured, putting him on proper diet and medicine. Up to this time, there was not even the slightest sign of cure, but on the other hand, it showed symptoms of gradual increase. The lay disciples used to come daily in the mornings and evenings to enquire and make proper arrangements for the nursing, and of his young disciples, many, except at the time of meals, would spend the whole day

attending upon the Master, while some others, realising the need, would not go home even for their meals but spend the whole day and night with him.

Realising that if the Master spoke too much or if he would fall into samadhi often and often, blood would rush upwards to the affected part, and disturb the healing up of the cancer, the physician had advised perfect silence. But though the Master tried to follow this advice, he was frequently violating it. For, the Master who had learnt for a long time to despise the body, as merely a cage of flesh and bones, and had detached his mind altogether from it, could not bring himself down to consider the body as of any great value, as is the case with the ordinary people of the world. The moment the talk turned upon God, the Master would forget everything about his body, and the need to take care of it, and would take part in the talk, as of old and frequently enter into samadhi. New visitors, thirsting for religion, increasing in numbers, and seeing their earnestness, the Master would gently talk to them and direct them in the path of sadhana. Seeing the Master's perennial delight and enthusiasm on such subjects, many of the devotees had the idea that the malady was but of an ordinary type. Others again were of opinion that the Master of his own free will, had brought on himself this malady, simply to spread his religious ideas broadcast in the world, and to bless his new disciples, thereby only showing their proneness to interpret everything in a spiritualistic sense.

The doctor would come daily, some days in the morning and sometimes in the evening also, and having prescribed suitable remedies for the patient, would sit listening to the talk about God from the lips of the Master, and get so engrossed in the conversation that for hours he would forget all his business and could not bring himself to take leave from his presence. Again the doctor would put question after question, and delighted with the wonderful solutions, when long hours would pass away, he would say with a feeling of repentance, "I am sorry, I have made you talk too much to-day. But however, if you do not speak any more for the rest of the day, there will be no harm. Your talk is so attractive that I forget all my business, though I am sitting here for the last two or three hours. I have not been able to leave you. I can't even realise how the time has passed away. However, don't talk for such a long time with anybody." The doctor said this in fun and added, "With me alone you can talk in this way and it will do you no harm."

One of the devoted disciples of the Master by name Sures Mitra, was worshipping the Mother this year at his Simla house. There used to be regular puja every year in his house before, but it had been discontinued, owing to some great misfortune during a particular year. Nobody in the house dared to celebrate the puja and even if anybody thought of it, the others persuaded it to be abandoned. Owing to the Master's assurance that no mishap (due to the displeasure of God) could ever happen to Sures Babu, and because he would never give up any idea if once he had taken it into his head, the members of his family could not bring forward any amount of objection to dissuade him from celebrating the puja that year. Sures Babu having informed the Master, took all the responsibility on himself and brought the image of Mother in his house. The fact that the Master could not come to his house owing to illness, was the only shadow in his happiness. Moreover, Sures Babu's action caused much dissatisfaction and was believed to be responsible for many members of his family being attacked with severe illness just before the Puja. But Sures Babu, unmoved by all these, began the worship of the Mother with great devotion and had invited all his brother-disciples.

The *Saptami puja* was over and the day was *Mahastami*. At the Shyampukur house, near the Master, a large number of devotees had gathered and sang songs and held talks about God. A little while after the doctor had come, Narendra Nath (Swami Vivekananda) began the *bhajana*. Enchanted by the unique, fervent and divine flood of music, all lost themselves in the rapture. The Master occasionally entered into *samadhi* and regaining his consciousness, spoke gently a few words to the doctor, sitting near him, and explained to him the meaning of the songs. Some of the devotees had even lost their external consciousness. The house seemed to vibrate with a divine ecstasy. Slowly it was night 7-30. At that time the doctor recollected his senses. He affectionately embraced Swamiji as if he were his own son, and got up, taking leave of the Master, who standing up, was lost in *samadhi*. The disciples began to whisper among themselves and said, "As it is the time of *Sandhi puja*, so the Master is in *samadhi*." That he fell into *samadhi* without knowing that it was the *Sandhi puja* time, caused no little wonder to the disciples. After nearly half an hour the *samadhi* was broken and the doctor took leave.

The Master began now to talk to the disciples about his vision during the *samadhi*. "I saw a lustrous pathway opening and leading to Sures's house. The devotion of Sures I saw, has evoked

divine presence of Mother in the image. From her third eye rays of effulgence were coming out. In the front hall lamps were lit, and Sures, sitting in front of Mother, began to weep bitterly in sorrow. All of you go to his house and seeing you, he will be much pacified."

All bowed to the Master and with Swami Vivekananda leading them, went to Sures Babu's house and learnt on enquiry that as the Master had said, it was true that lights were lit in the hall and even at the very time the Master went into *samadhi*, Sures Babu, overcome by his emotion, was weeping like a child, crying out, 'Mother, Mother' for nearly an hour. The disciples, having had the privilege of witnessing the Master's *samadhi* with such wonderful external counter-parts, were lost in ecstasy.

During the first four years of his sadhana, Rani Rasamani and her son-in-law Mathur Babu thought at one time that his brain was affected on account of his unbroken celibacy, and had taken the form of spiritual hankering. Thinking that if his celibacy was broken, his body will become normal, and with the sole idea of his good in view, they attempted to seduce him once at Kalibati and another time at Mechuabazar through the help of professional courtezans like Lachmi Bai and her following. The Master told us that he saw in these women nothing but the presence of Mother, and crying out 'Mother,' 'Mother', entered into *Samadhi*; and he said that even his body and sense organs underwent a corresponding change in harmony with his mental condition. We have heard that even the women witnessing the Master's change and seeing his child-like behaviour, their heart was filled with a motherly love for him. Feeling that they had sinned in attempting to seduce him to break his celibacy, they, shedding tears of repentance again and again, begged his pardon and took leave with an uneasy mind.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA AND THE HIGHER RELIGIOUS SYNTHESIS.*

BY

S. K. Yegnanarayana Aiyar, M.A., Principal, Salem College.

The subject I have chosen for to-night's address is "*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the Higher Religious Synthesis*", and my observations will be based entirely upon such of the teachings and sayings of the great man as are available.

But it is well-known that the materials at the disposal of a student who wants to study critically the teachings of Paramahansa, are scanty indeed and especially so to those who are ignorant of Bengali. Like all the great men of our country, he seems to have sown broadcast the spiritual truths that revealed themselves to him in his *स्वानुभूति* and taken precious little care to have them codified or systematised, much less to have them committed to writing; but thanks to the devotion of a few Bhaktas, we have those two books rendered available, i.e., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* according to 'M,' and his "Sayings."

Prose as a medium of literary expression, is of comparatively recent origin in our country, and a method of expressing profound ideas in a simple and easily rememberable manner, was a question of necessity with our ancestors who lived in days prior to the introduction of printing; and this national tendency is still seen at its best in the sayings of persons, uncontaminated with the Western civilization. Further, those who know a subject thoroughly well and that at first hand, have got a knack of putting things in an abnormally easy form which is sublime in its simplicity. Both these causes of terseness and simplicity are found united in Sri Ramakrishna. Hence the tiny volume containing his sayings are crammed with statements, each of which can be expanded into pages, just as the tiny fruit of a banyan tree is crammed with seeds each of which is capable of growing in good time into a huge tree, capable of sheltering even big armies in its shade.

There is no department of spiritual activity which is not touched upon in this book (*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*) and nothing touched upon that has not been further illumined. I take, however

* An address delivered at the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore on the 13th March, 1921, the 86th Anniversary of the Birth of Sri Gurumaharaj.

for study to-night only one string of truths, those that have been brought under the significant heading of the "Harmony of Religions."

With each new mind, says Emerson, a new secret of nature transpires and it is my humble opinion that this truth that all religions are equally true and that any one properly followed, is as efficacious a medicine of the soul as any other, and that therefore there need be no quarrel among the religions of the world, which has been taught by Ramakrishna, is an advance upon the teachings of his predecessors.

It is a common psychological fact that when a person is obsessed by a great thought and wants to express it so as to be understood by all, he uses different similes and hammers it into the mind of his hearers in all possible ways. The illustrious author of *Sri Lalitha Thiruvethi* (ललितात्रिशी) who wants to express the idea that the great Mother is the very essence of the mystic syllable *ह्रीम्*, the gifted poet Shelley who is in raptures on listening to the divine melody of the lark whose form he sees not, the great philosopher-poet, Thayumanavar who after experiencing the inexpressible Ananda of God-realisation, tries to exhaust the vocabulary of sweet things in attempting to give us an idea of the bliss he experiences, are some instances which prove the truth of my statement. Similarly Ramakrishna also harps upon this great theme of harmony of religions and impresses that upon us by no less than ten different examples and similes as may be seen from his "Sayings."

And it is interesting to note that Vivekananda lays special emphasis upon this lesson he learnt from his Guru. In his well-known lecture on "*My Master*", he says he learned two truths from his teacher, one that Religion is not mere talk or formal observances, but realisation, and the second that all religions are equally true and effective as means of salvation.

It would be a very fascinating subject for the student of evolution of religious thought in India to trace the attempts that have been made from time to time to make religion less and less exclusive:—how, for example, people realised that not only by the proper performance of certain rites, enjoined upon them by a particular portion of the Vedas, do we get salvation, but by other methods also, by Yoga, by Bhakti and above all by Gñana; how later on, when Islam came to stay in the land, some great ones like

Nanak and Kabir saw that ultimately both Hinduism and Mahomedanism taught the same truths and hence preached union, peace and good will among the followers of both; and how later on Ramakrishna went one step further and taught that all religions are true, because he knew it to be a fact by direct personal experience. This historical development of the doctrine of "Harmony of Religions" I leave to be done by abler hands. My task to-night is much simpler.

The great American Pragmatic philosopher, William James said of philosophical truths that existential judgment or pronouncing an opinion upon it regarding its origin, development or its indebtedness to others, does not estop us from forming another estimate about it, what he calls the spiritual judgment, and suggests three tests for arriving at such an estimate, namely, immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness and moral helpfulness.

• That this doctrine of Harmony of Religions strikes us at first sight as good and convincing, and that it does not clash with any well-recognised body of truths, goes without saying. It would be a very dull world indeed, if all of us are to think alike in matters religious. On the other hand, if each religion were to cry out that Truth is its own monopoly and belongs to none else, that salvation is to be got only if persons go through this gate and through none else, it leads to bad blood among people who were intended by our Divine Father to live as brothers upon this beautiful earth of His. Therefore the best way to fulfil His purpose, is to see the underlying unity in all these various paths which ultimately lead on to Him. In these days when Historical Criticism has undermined the old world notions of exclusive Revelations, it would be absurd for any sect or religion to claim monopoly of spiritual truth.

But more important than these is the practical value of this truth of the Harmony of all Religions. How far is this useful to us as human beings that happen to inhabit this "troublesome little planet of ours", at this juncture in the history of our race, and more especially, how far is this useful to us, Indians of the present day? It is this aspect of the question that I should like to emphasise upon to-night.

To any student who has studied the world problems of to-day, the most striking post-war social change would appear to be the great interest that man has begun to evince in matters religious. When the stream of life runs smooth, men easily fall victims to a

hedonistic philosophy; but when by some cause, the scales fall off their eyes, they are confronted with the eternal verities, and the old questions force themselves upon them with redoubled vigour and demand solution. "Whence?" "Whither?" "Wherefore all these?" are questions that engage the serious attention of people. The recent war has been such an eye-opener. It has not merely revolutionised the European politics and economics, but it has brought about a silent though none the less effective a revolution in European religion. The men who march forward to certain death at cannon's mouth, want better consolation than mere sects or creeds can offer, and they will not be satisfied with superficialities but want real truths to be taught to them by persons who know them at first hand and have realised them in their own lives.

It is an object lesson for persons of narrow views to see the pious Catholic, the bigoted Calvinist, the gentle Hindu and the brave Muslim, all cheerfully marching together to their doom each thinking of his God who is the God of all, and each singing his own divine song which he sees, is as good as another's to brace him up to his task. The Christian soldier, dying in the battlefield of Flanders, will never for a moment believe that his Hindu brother, dying by his side and thinking in his last moments of his sacred Ganga and the mighty Himalayas, his Great Shiva and All-pervading Narayana, is doomed to eternal perdition, simply because he does not believe in Christ. Nor would the pious Hindu regard his Christian or Mahomedan brother, all starting with him on the long journey, from which there will be no return, as a Mleccha with no possibility of getting salvation. They all instinctively realise the grand truth that all religions are equally true and such world-cataclysms as the recent war, offer unparalleled facilities for verifying this truth.

Neither the soldier who, surviving bombs and machine guns, returns home maimed or whole, nor the civilian, staying at home but who has been following the march of events, can ever be forced back to the old narrow grooves and exclusive creeds; and this mighty truth of Harmony of all Religions comes to them like refreshing showers in summer and cements further the bond of friendship, formed in the face of common danger.

And what about the much-talked-of League of Nations, which is as near an approach as possible to the realisation of the poet's dream, who sang of the Parliament of Man and Federation of the World? Because the organisation has no spiritual basis, the only basis of union, if there be any, being one of common worldly

interests and common opportunities of exploitation, it is lacking in the real bond of union. If all the members of the League, who follow one or the other of the great religions of the world, realise in full the potency and significance of the doctrine or truth of the Harmony of all Religions, this union which has been brought about by selfish motives and temporal considerations, would develop itself into a true League of Nations. It is religion and God's words misinterpreted, that have kept man-kind apart hitherto, and it is the same religion and true word of God, that must bring us all together.

In this connection, it may not be out of place, if I refer to the view of one of the most advanced thinkers of the West of the present time. Mr. H. G. Wells writes in his famous "Outlines of History" that the future world state which is his ideal, will be based upon a common world religion very much simplified, universalised and better understood. How shall we bring about this consummation of a world-religion which according to the author, will be neither Christianity nor Mahomedanism, nor Buddhism, but religion itself, pure and undefiled? Do you think we can bring about that consummation by allowing each religion to proclaim, "Come to me, I alone know the truth; all others are imposters", and thus encourage a sort of competition in matters spiritual? Shall we not, on the other hand, run the business on well recognised principles of co-operation, allowing each religion to have its own way, being assured that the gain of one is the gain of all? How can we have this attitude of the mind, unless we imbibe fully the teachings of Paramahansa and realise the grand truth? I say realise and not merely subscribe to the truth in an academic manner, that all religions are equally true, they being different paths leading to the same goal. So if the world at the present time is a-thirst for one truth more than another, if there be one truth more than another, which will heal up the wounds of the sore-afflicted mankind and help them to knit themselves closer in bonds of affection and brotherhood, it is this grand truth of the Harmony of Religions, taught by this so-called illiterate Brahmin priest of Dakshineswar.

If the world at large needs this truth to save itself, what about us in India? Our Motherland has aptly been termed an epitome of the world; and this is true of her religions more even than of her physical features or climatic conditions, her flora and fauna or her ethnic, linguistic and cultural varieties. The vision of a united India is dawning upon us all, Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsees. What chance there is, I ask you in all earnestness, of this vision being realised and the feeling of brotherhood to be firmly

established on a stable foundation, if the Hindu in his heart of hearts, were to believe that his patriotic Muslim brother who shares with him all the burdens and anxieties, incidental to the arduous task of national regeneration and uplift, is after all a Mleccha, a Veda Bahya, one not entitled to salvation till at least he is born as a Brahmin after a long chain of lives? How unstable the foundation of the Indian nationalism will be, if the Indian Christian were to sincerely believe that all of us, his idolatrous brothers, are doomed for ever to dwell in purgatory, if not already destined for the hotter regions below, because we do not place faith in the great Jesus as the only saviour of mankind to the extent he does?

Unfortunately or fortunately for us, we cannot assign to religion a secondary place in the scheme of our life, and unite together merely for temporal purposes, as the Westerner does and can. We are made of different stuff. Whether for good or bad, religion has always remained with us as the first and last concern of life. The separation between civilization or culture and religion, which was almost complete in the West and which many a profound thinker of the West* deplored as tending to the weakening of both, has scarcely been possible in the country. Our finest pieces of architecture and sculpture, are in our temples; and our best musicians have been great saints like Thyagaiyar. Like the blue sky above, below and around us, Religion has ever been our sustaining element. It is almost impossible for us Indians to forget our religion, much less so for political and other worldly purposes. That being our national temperament, a United India is an impossibility unless it has a broader basis than mere political expediency.

Then it might be proposed as an alternative, why not give up all points of difference and all of us observe that religion which contains the common point of all. This solution is not as easy as it might first appear. Who is to judge which are essential, which are non-essential in particular religions; and what after all will be left if all these differences be dropped? Some abstractions will perhaps be acceptable to the philosopher in his study; but the man in the street will no more care to have that lifeless, formless religion as the stay of his soul than he would care to have as his food a few molecules of Nitrogen, Oxygen and other elements that constitute the basis of all human food. The only way therefore to provide us all, the followers of different religions that form the population of this country, with a common platform, is, to follow the

* Eucken's Collected Essays.

teachings of this Dakshineswar Brahmin and really and sincerely feel and believe that all religions are true, and everyone rightly observed, leads us on to Him, the goal of all.

It was a fancy of mine in my younger days to look upon the Brahmo Samaj and other movements that try from a rationalistic point of view to arrive at some common basis of all religions, as those who were looking for the meeting point of all petals in a lotus bud at its bottom, whereas Ramakrishna who taught us the Harmony of Religion, was compared by me to one who sought for the meeting point of the lotus petals at the top of the bud. By the former, one sees the meeting point no doubt, but he misses the beauty of the petals that branch gracefully on all sides to meet again at the top; whereas the one who looked at the higher point, did not miss the unity, but had the further advantage of not losing sight of petals. It is this that I mean by the Higher Synthesis of Religion, as contrasted with the Lower Analysis of Religion; and it is my sincere conviction that this great truth alone will bring about the peace of the world and the prosperity of mankind. वन्देमातरं

PREPARE YE FOR 'THE INEVITABLE HOUR!'

Lost in Samadhi, Sri Ramakrishna is seated on the small cot, surrounded by devotees, and amongst them, S. J. Adhar Sen and a few of his friends. Adhar is a Deputy Magistrate, nearly 30 years old, and has for the first time come to visit the Master; while his friend, Saradacharan, a pensioned officer of the Government, and lately a Deputy Inspector of Schools, is finding no consolation at the passing away of his eldest son; so that Adhar, who had himself a long-cherished desire of seeing Sri Ramakrishna, has brought the bereaved father to Dakshineswar;—Saradacharan however, has been practising sadhana for a long time.

Samadhi has broken; Sri Ramakrishna finds that the whole house is expectantly looking at him; so he says to himself:

"The spiritual awareness of the worldly shines out only on occasions,—and they are very few indeed!—like the flame of a lamp, nay, a ray of the sun penetrating through a chink in the wall. They take the name of the Lord,—but their heart is not in it, just as children utter oaths in God's name, which they have learnt from the quarrels of their aunts!

"They have not any go either: they do not mind if they fail or succeed. Suppose they are sinking a well for water; the moment they come upon a layer of stone, they leave it off; or perhaps they find a thick stratum of sand,—there they stop! But must not they dig on where they have begun? only then can they hope to get water!

"As is man's work, so is the fruit: so goes the song:—

"O Shyama, Mother mine! to none be the blame;—myself have sunk the well, and therein I drowning die."

"My passions' spades have hollowed the well in the holy land; and now Destruction's darkly waters have invaded it, O Mother, Joy or Death!

I tremble at my fate, O Mother, Deliverer! my nature has turned my foe; lo! Dasarathi is lost in despair, helpless to stem the tide!

The water of death rises, rises from waist to breast; and knowing no way out, for thee, O Mother, I wait;—save me by thy gracious look!

"I' and 'mine'—this verily is ignorance. If you reason, you will find that what you call 'I,' is nothing else but the Atman. Reflect whether you are body—this bone and flesh, or anything?

else ; and you will see, you are neither ;—you have no determining attributes !

“ This is gold, that is brass,—this discrimination is ignorance ; when all is gold,—then it is knowledge ! ”

“ When God is realised, discrimination ceases ; it may however continue in some cases inspite of God-vision, as also one may take to Bhakti, and sing His blessed names and attributes ! ”

“ How long does the child cry ?—so long as it is not suckled ; then it instantly stops in unalloyed joy, and in joy, it drinks its mother's milk. But this is also a fact that in course of suckling, it sometimes sports and smiles ! ”

“ It is He Who has become all this ! But in man, he manifests himself the most ; and whoever has the nature of a pure-souled child, and laughs and cries and dances and sings,—in him the Lord is present in very person ! ”

Now the Master forms the acquaintance of Adhar who speaks to him of his friend's bereavement ; at that the Master sings to himself :—

“ To arms ! to arms ! O man,—Death doth enter thy hold in battle-array ! ”

O mount thy devotion's car, with wisdom's quiver strapped ; and stringing thy tongue with love's mighty string, aim, O aim the shaft divine of Mother's holy name !

Away with cars and fighters ! O I'll tell thee the unfailing fatal skill,—O make thy battle-field on Ganga's holy bank !

“ What can you do ? Prepare for this Death ! It has penetrated into your household ; you will have to fight it with the weapon of His holy name ! Even He is the doer ! ‘ Mother, say I, as you actuate me, so I do ; and as you make me speak, so I say ; you are the mechanic, I am your tool ; You are the mistress, I am the house ; you are the engineer, I am the carriage ! ’ ”

“ Give Her the power of attorney, and no mishap need you fear, if you rely on a good man ! Let Her will be done ! ”

“ And won't there be grief !—born of his own self ! When Ravana fell in the battle, Lakshmana ran to him to find that every bone had been pierced through and through ! And he said, ‘ O Rama, how effective is your aim ! there is no part of his body, as has not been perforated by your arrows ! ’ But Rama replied, ‘ Brother, these holes you find in his bones, are not made by my arrows ! Grief has pierced them ; these holes testify to his heavy afflictions ! ’ ”

“ But all these are transient ! home and wife and children,—all these last only a few days ! The palm-tree alone is true,—and why lament if one or two fruits drop down ? ”

“ God is functioning in three ways : creation, maintenance and destruction. Death there does exist ; and in the hour of Dissolution, all will be destroyed,—nothing will survive !—Only the seeds thereof, will the Mother gather up, and bring out again at the next creation,—even as the house-wife has her pot of miscellanies, where she deposits various grain-seeds in bags ! ”

In the north-eastern corridor of his room, stands Sri Ramakrishna, talking to Adhar. He is saying,

“ You are a Deputy Magistrate ; but this position too, is owing to the Divine favour,—do not forget Him ! ”

“ And know all will walk down the same path one day ! * it is only a ‘ two days ’ existence in this world ! ”

“ The world is the place of action, where you have been brought to work, even as one comes on business from his country, home to Calcutta ! ”

“ You must take some pains by way of Sadhana ; the *karmas* must be speedily worked out. When the smiths melt gold, they begin to blow with bellows, fan and pipe all together to make the fire burn ablaze ; and only when the gold has been dissolved, they ask for a smoke ;—all this time, they have been sweating in the brow, but they can smoke only after they have done ! ”

“ You must have tremendous determination ; then only can you practise Sadhana,—you must make a strong resolve ! ”

“ Very powerful indeed is the seed of his holy name,—it destroys Ignorance ! The seed is so soft, and so soft is its offshoot, yet it pierces its way through earth ! ”

“ The mind is dragged low down, if you live among women and gold ! You must be very careful. Those who have renounced the world, have not so much to fear ! they, if they have truly given up, always live off from the woman and gold, so that if they practise Sadhana, they can continually fix their mind in God. ”

* Adhar Sen passed this life eighteen months after this conversation. When Sri Ramakrishna received this ill news, he wept bitterly and long to the Mother ; for, Adhar was extremely devoted to the Master, and he also looked upon him as his own.

"The real 'tyagin,' who can for ever hold his mind in God, is of the type of the bee; he sits on flowers alone and sip their honey! But one who lives in the world, among women and gold, may think of God, but his mind would sometimes incline to the woman and gold, even as an ordinary fly that sits on sweetmeats, turns again to sore or dirt!

"Keep your mind ever fixed in God! At first you must struggle a bit; but you will enjoy pension afterwards!"

CONFESSIONS ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE.

BY

Le Frile.

(Continued from page 182.)

I have become disillusioned. I have discovered the central truth at last—the truth about God, the secret of devotion. I am enlightened. I feel free, strong, courageous and light-hearted. The vapoury web of illusion which hitherto obstructed my vision is evaporated. I am alright.

God is divine in His attributes, not human. Man is subject to affection. The heart-strings of man perpetually play music of various notes. Affection or the swaying of the heart is due to ignorance and weakness. God exists unaffected, for he exists in absolute peace. Peace is propped by knowledge and strength and God is the absolute source of these. It is foolish to expect God to tune himself with the varying tunes of man's heart.

The Government of God is based on law. The Law is the loom of life. The law pervades and operates everywhere, in all planes—spirit as well as nature. The law is the only visible power of God known to man. This law alone can ensure peace. Affection cannot sustain peace. Affectionlessness is peace—unswayability of heart.

Man is bound with the law. He must rise or sink, live or die with the law. There is no way of escape for man from the bonds of the law.

I expected a love-gift of God to change me as I wished,—to provide me with all I needed. A divine interference in the course of nature to set aside nature's sentence and to substitute a divine charter; a supernatural mercy in place of natural justice; a miracle in place of a common event.

But no such miracle will happen, no divine gifts are ever made. I was not born by a miracle. I did not descend to this state by supernatural agencies. The laws of nature operated usually and produced me and my present state. I must change likewise by the operation of the same law.

Man is rooted in God but he grows in nature. Man is upheld by God within, but he lives with nature without. The law is the only medium of intercourse between man and God within as between him

and nature without. Nature is reached through knowledge and external activity. God is reached through knowledge and internal activity—prayer, concentration, communion.

The internal realm—that of spirit—is as much governed by law as that of the external nature. Prayer is nothing but law in disguise. Prayer to be operative, demands specific conditions. The fulfilment of such conditions exactly corresponds to so much labour on the plane of external nature. Mercy and goodness, faith and prayer, repentance and forgiveness and salvation through these means, although most consoling to man in his hour of despondency, are not true as such. These are but laws in disguise. These envelop within their kind looking folds, laws, solid, straight, unbending, unmerciful and as rigorously exacting as any of the laws of external nature.

I must give up my vain hopes. I must realise I have to do solely with law in the fulfilment of my life. Neither God nor nature will give response to my sentiments. The path of sentiment is not the path of salvation. The path of the law, the fulfilment of the law is the only path to man's salvation. The study of the law of life constitutes the true study of salvation rather than of emotions.

Here is the secret. My destiny lies in my own hands. It shapes itself as I will make myself. I am free to choose my path and I alone am responsible for my choice. I must work. In work consists my salvation. The law is impartial and is ever ready to reward the worker. No one can cheat me of my due rewards. But again no one can give me undue ones. There is no provision for favouritism or the reverse made in the arrangement of life. Sentiment is a foolery between man and man. But such foolery is of no avail with God or with Nature.

Knowledge is power. Conviction is strength. Knowledge is the real breaker of bondages, for, ignorance is the only real bondage. Conviction is the true begetter of strength. True knowledge is the turning point in one's life—the starting point towards one's goal. It is the beacon which illumines one's path and which ensures no more deviation.

Outward greatness without inner worth is not desirable. When inner worth is possessed, outward forms of greatness need not be desired for. For, inner worth is recognised under every condition and it always produces its equivalent degree of happiness. A king without a kingly spirit cannot be happy. But, a subject man with the spirit of a king exercises that command of surroundings and necessarily enjoys that degree of happiness although without a kingdom. A wealthy

man with an empty spirit has no joy. But a poor man with the fullness of spirit enjoys the fullness of happiness. Inner worth is alone the real condition of happiness and it is that alone which must be sought for. Inner worth is *always* productive of its equivalent degree of happiness, whereas outward conditions solely depend upon inner worth for their productive power.

What does man enjoy on earth? Man enjoys not the world, but he enjoys himself. The world, *i. e.* external conditions supply only the occasion for enjoyment, but the real enjoyment proceeds from his own mind. Man in reality enjoys the modifications of his own mind. The nature or abundance of his enjoyable possessions can influence him only in so far as he has capacity of mind for modifications. The measure of one's enjoyment is his own mind, but not his enjoyable possessions.

I have no earthly treasures. I have not got health, strength, nor beauty, wealth, position nor useful knowledge. Yet, I will bravely cope with and triumph over this world by soul. What is equal in power to soul? What treasure more precious? What instrument more potent? One's own being, self-possessed, self-contained, eternal, unchanging, ever-productive, ever full, a mere invisible germ, yet all diffused, the absolute source of life and power, of law and order, purity and peace, goodness and harmony; such a sovereign substance is mine—is myself.

Soul is being, thought is power: that is eternity, this is time; that is the one, this is the all; soul is the absolute, thought is the relative; I have known soul and the other. I have known myself and all the cosmos.

Where be my doubts? I am knowledge absolute. Where be my death? I am life absolute. Where be my cares, fears, my struggle, evil and enemies? I am goodness, power, triumph and peace absolute.

Selfishness creates all evil in thought. Self-knowledge annihilates them all by truth.

Self-knowledge has annihilated selfishness in me. The flood of self-enlightenment has drowned and dispersed all darkness in me. Seated on the supreme seat of the soul, allied to the sovereign divine, clothed in state of purity and peace, with harmony and happiness diffused within, what wrong can I do? What evil can upset me?

Ever full, ever content, ever victorious, my path is plain and smooth, broad and straight, happy and peaceful. I am blessed.

Theory and practice, there is a wide gulf between. How to span it? Theory cannot reach there by itself. Strength is needed. But, my strength must come out of the very practice of the theory.

The strength of conviction is no doubt great. But, far greater is the strength of Karma. The former shrinks into littleness before the irresistible might of the latter.

Being in soul is no doubt the highest of being. The exercise of thought is no doubt the greatest of the exercise of powers. Yet soul and thought of to-day bend under the accumulated weight of the same soul and thought of all the past.

My struggles are not yet at an end. The law of Karma holds me in bondage. I have attained to new truths, but new truths are of no use to me till old Karmas have released me from their sway. What is the use of seeing bright visions in one moment and become blinded by one's Karma in the next? Making grand resolutions in one mood and be crushed by Karma in the next? My mood must be uniformly bright and brave. But, that will be only when Karma is made so, when the past dark deeds are expiated for by suffering and only bright ones are made to continue. So, I must suffer patiently and wait till the clouds are past, meanwhile exerting wherever may be found a way.

Nothing can be done in life on a sudden. The law regulates life and it abhors violence. The law however devoid of mercy, yet always operates in harmony—harmony with the past and the future and with every surrounding relation.

I am impatient to realise my new-found treasure, but the law which must aid me is not. It courses on in its normal flow. And what can be possible for me without the help of the law? I must submit to, conform with the normal course of the law, slow, yet sure, that is my only path to success.

THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.

The Vedanta centre of Boston celebrated its twelfth anniversary on the evening of January 6th. An exceptionally large number of friends attended, the chapel and entrance hall being crowded and the occasion was one peculiarly full of interest and goodwill. The house was decorated with flowers and evergreen boughs in profusion. About the altars were palms and blooming plants and at the windows hung a number of glowing red vigi lights. The first part of the evening was devoted to religious exercises, after which an informal reception was held with refreshments and music. The exercises began with an organ prelude. Swami Paramananda of the Ramakrishna Mission then welcomed the guests saying in part: We have gathered here to-night to ask the blessings of the Supreme One, through Whom it has been possible for us to carry on our work and convey our message to others. For, this centre does not rest merely for the benefit of a few. Its influence is more far reaching than we realize and brings us in contact with many places and peoples. It unites our hearts with other hearts, not only in this country but in distant lands. In order that you may gain some idea of its activities during 1920, I will ask Sister Devamata to give a brief outline of the work through the past year.

The Sister Devamata then said: The results of spiritual work are so subtle and evasive, it is not easy to tabulate them. They take place first in the individual heart, and perhaps long after, do they become visible in life. It is like casting seed on the wind. One knows not where it may fall and spring up. I once knew a simple man who made it his custom in his long spring walks to fill his pockets with flower seeds and strew them along the country lanes and hill sides as he went. Frequently he did not go that way again to see whether the seed had sprouted, but he liked to think as the summer went by, that flowers were blooming where he had passed. So it is with us, we hope. There can be no doubt that during last twelve months the work has made a marked advance. The period of misunderstanding appears to be definitely over. People no longer feel the need to offer explanations to their friends when they choose the centre as their church, and a convincing sign that the clergy are arriving at the same attitude of mind, came recently in the form of an invitation to the Swami to join the Federation of Ministers in Boston.

Many new connections have been made with the outside world also. This has been due to the Swami's frequent journeys. Aristotle's School

of philosophy, you remember, received the name peripatetic because of the master's habit of walking up and down his garden paths as he taught; but I am sure that no philosophy was ever expounded on longer walks than the Swami has taken during the past year. In the twelve months just ended he covered twenty-two thousand miles, teaching as he went. He began his wanderings in January by accepting an invitation to speak before the Philadelphia Art Alliance on "The Spirit of Indian Drama." As a result of this lecture, requests from various dramatic leagues for similar lectures has reached the Swami, but he was not able to consider them owing to lack of time.

On his return journey from Philadelphia he stopped in New York, at Dr. Wm. Norman Guthries' request, to speak at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie on "The Unseen as the Creative Force in Indian Life." At the close of February he started on his first long western tour of the year. Following his usual custom, he broke his travels at Cincinnati, where in four days he delivered six lectures. The cumulative enthusiasm aroused during this and previous visits culminated in the formation of a definite study group, which has continued to meet regularly ever since. At present it holds a devotional service on Sunday morning and a class on Tuesday evening.

After spending four days at Louisville, the Swami proceeded to Los Angeles, arriving on March 11th and remaining until May. Besides his regular programme of a devotional service, and a public lecture every Sunday and two week-day classes at the Los Angeles Vedanta Centre, established by the Swami in 1916, he gave four lectures at the Metaphysical Library and one at Krotona. Before the middle of May he was again in Boston and, with the exception of a few days spent at Cincinnati, he carried on his regular work at the Boston Centre for three months without interruption. The attendance during this interval grew steadily larger and the teaching gained many new adherents.

The Swami began his second long western tour on August 18th. This time his plan of travel included a visit to the northwest. After a few days in Cincinnati, he continued his journey to Seattle and Tacoma. He gave six lectures at the New Thought Temple of Seattle, and another course of equal length at Dr. Henry Victor Morgan's Church in Tacoma. His reception in Tacoma was especially warm and large numbers attended all the lectures. At the closing one, aisles, gallery, every available space was filled. He also addressed the Seattle Theosophical Lodge and several other meetings. An invitation to lecture in Victoria, B. C., came to him, but he was unable to accept it. Brief visits to friends in Portland and San Francisco consumed several days before he opened another season of lectures and classes at the Centre in Los Angeles. Lectures at Long Beach and another one on Sunday afternoon at Krotona were

added to his usual schedule. So eager was the public to hear him speak on "The Science and Practice of Yoga" at Krotona that even the platform of the lecture hall had to be filled with chairs. He was asked also to speak at the Women's Suffrage Victory celebration, given by the Friday Morning Club. He chose as his subject, "The Ideal of Womanhood in India." Two special lectures—one at the Hotel Darby and (as the result of this) another in one of the most beautiful homes in Los Angeles—brought him in touch with a new group of people.

In October he returned to Boston, but in November he was absent again for three weeks, which he devoted to the Branch Centres in Cincinnati and Louisville, with two days in Buffalo. This visit to Buffalo proved of unexpected interest. Its original purpose was to lecture before the Larkin Men's Club, an invitation which he had held over for two years, but an enthusiastic Mason carried him on his arrival to a Lodge luncheon, where he was seated at the table of the Grand Commander. Previous to this meeting the Commander had refused to consider having an outsider address them, but after some conversation with the Swami, entirely on his own initiative he rose suddenly and announced that he was convinced the world needed the message the Swami had to give, therefore he had requested him to speak for them that evening. Eight or nine hundred Masons were present and the sympathetic response given to the Swami's words was evidenced at the close of his address, by the long line of men who waited patiently to shake his hand and urge him to speak again on some occasion when their families also might be present to hear him. While repeating the same circuit in December, the Swami spoke at the Sunday evening Service of the Calvary Presbyterian Church of Buffalo.

Merely covering so large an area, however, would count very little. Lecturers are going back and forth over the country, now in throngs, but where the Swami has passed, lives have been vitally touched. We know it from the increasing calls for lectures everywhere and even more from the growing demand for the literature. During the past year over 6000 books and pamphlets have gone out from the Centre through orders received. These have been sent not only throughout the United States and to Canada, but also to Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, India, Cuba, England, etc. Nearly half of this amount was due to the Swami's tours. Our monthly publication, "The Message of the East," has also linked us with many new places and groups. Its circle of influence is rapidly widening and no source of encouragement in the work is greater than that which comes through the many appreciative, general letters received from its readers.

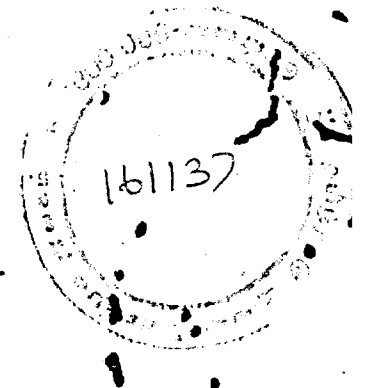
The general publication department has not been very active during the year. In all, we have brought out 11,000 books or

pamphlets, two new titles and several reprints. It has been gratifying also to receive translations of several of our publications. The Swami's "Path of Devotion" has appeared in Hindustani and German. Several of his shorter works have been translated into various languages and his other volumes are in process of translation. It is not in the printed page however that the Centre's greatest strength must lie, but in the living book of each life which comes in contact with it. On each one of us rests the responsibility of expounding the teachings by the way we live it. This Centre, as the Swami conceives it, is not merely a place, or an organized work, but a Centre of spiritual influence purifying and strengthening and sweetening hearts and lives wherever there is a channel through which that influence may flow.

At the close of the report the Swami again spoke, saying : The Sister's account of the work has brought to my mind afresh the many happenings of the year. I did not start out to travel twenty-two thousand miles. Requests came from here and there and I responded to them. But there is one thing I would impress upon your minds, that all these connections with other places and Centres do not in any way lessen my interest in the Boston work. On the contrary, it increases it. My interest grows deeper all the time. What is our work? It is not a new sect; it is not a creed. It has a name, but that name stands for all inclusiveness. At first ministers and the public were suspicious of us; but the more they know of us, the less suspicious they are. We have waited a long time for recognition, but it is nothing when we compare it with eternity. We are willing to wait and we shall wait patiently until our great Ideals are achieved. Our motto has always been unity, not exclusiveness. We have never asked any one to abandon his church, because that would be going against the very foundations of this religion and philosophy.

We try to offer an inclusive, unifying teaching, without label, creed or dogma. Accepting it entails no obligation of any kind. It is a question of living the life; upon that, we lay all emphasis. We want nothing. We do not set a price on the teaching. It is sacred and only can be given freely. We have something which the world has need of. There is so much dissention and antagonism abroad to-day, what is needed is unity and love, not denunciation. We need true understanding, true fellowship, true brotherhood. That is why people are beginning to turn eagerly to this teaching. Our creed is living the life, living our ideals daily. Who will pay heed to what we believe unless we live it? All this talk of universal love and brotherhood falls to the ground unless each man proves it by his life. To this we have consecrated our lives; for this this work exists and you who come here, all we ask of you is that you live according to your conviction. In that way we become better Christians, better Buddhists, better Hindus, better followers of every faith.

This Chapel may seem very insignificant in comparison with the big churches, and cathedrals, about us. It is because I have no ambition for ostentation. God forbid. So many religious organisations are ruined by growing too ostentatious. What we stand for is simplicity. We wish to have the spirit, the dominant factor. Though this chapel may appear very small, yet the spirit of it is universal and unbounded. Let us to night as we take another step forward in a new year's work, all ask together the blessing of the Supreme Being, that the work may be still stronger, more efficient, and more extended in its usefulness and blessing. May the all-pervading Spirit of the universe bestow upon us His loving protection. May He give us new inspiration, that our life and activity may be full of spiritual fruition through His grace. May we remember at every step to invoke the blessing of the Supreme Deity. May we learn that our strength is never sufficient but that our strength lies in His strength. May we, through His Grace, so consecrate our hearts that all our thoughts, words and actions may ever rest in Him. May His peace be upon us all.—*The Message of the East.*



GREATNESS OF MAN.

BY

Brahmachari Niranjanchaitanya.

The visible universe presents infinite variety of objects—snow-capped hills, rushing torrents, boundless seas, vast stretches of land. Besides these there is another class of objects—objects endowed with life, which make up the animate world. An ant is crawling along the rail road and a huge locomotive rushes along; the ant gets out of its way and saves its life. The animate world with man at the zenith thus stands sharply demarcated from the inanimate world. The animate world too, presents infinite variety. Whence this universe and these diverse objects?

The old Biblical theory of creation has fallen into disrepute among the scientists. Geologists maintain that millions of years must have passed before the earth could have arrived at its present stage. They base their theory on the observation of the strata of the earth. Then, there are evolutionists like Darwin and Wallace who maintain without fear of contradiction that man was not made in the image of God but is only a highly complex animal and is the result of an infinite process of variation. This process beginning with protoplasmic cells has been going on fortuitously for thousands of years. The giraffe and the horse come from the same stock but the giraffe being placed in an environment different from that of the horse developed a longer neck and leg; for the animal has the power to adapt itself to environment and it must do so if it desires to exist. In course of time as this process of evolution was going on, different species of animals came into existence and there ensued a struggle for life. All were not fit to live, only the strongest amongst them survived and the weak ones are extinct to-day. The evolutionists maintain that among the fossils found embedded in the strata of the earth's crust there are remains of animals which are not to be met with on the earth to-day. These are the remains of animals which were not fit to survive in the struggle for existence. At last appeared man, the most complex animal and the fairest fruit of this process of evolution.

The Apes are the ancestors of human beings and the cannibals of the Pacific islands are the predecessors of the civilized men of Germany, America and Britain of to-day. Of course, man has passed through several stages before he could attain the present stage of civilization, with his taste for arts and sciences. It is not within the scope of this article to question the validity of the arguments on which the theory of evolution has been based but the staunchest advocate of the theory will admit that there is a gulf between man and his ancestor according to Darwin.

Wherein lies the difference? The student of anatomy dissecting a human body finds very little to differentiate it from other animal bodies; the same cerebrum, cerebellum, medulla oblongata, spinal cord; and other organs are also the same. But there is one remarkable difference, the difference in weight of a human skull and the skull of other animals. The evolutionist may explain this on the ground that man is the most complex animal and his skull is more developed than that of other animals. The instincts of self-preservation and preservation of the species are common to both man and other animals. If we hold that man looks before and looks after, the evolutionists will promptly reply that many animals do so. In fact some birds and animals evince remarkable intelligence in this respect.

The above theory of evolution has been accepted by the biologists and physiologists of the age. But there are overwhelming evidences (and these the biologist cannot deny) which prove conclusively that man is a rational and ethical being. He has moral consciousness; his reason and intuition place him far high above all animals. The African lion may forget its ferocious nature and save the life of an Androcles out of gratitude but no lion has been known to enshrine the love for its dead friend in a poem like *Lycidas* or *In Memoriam*. The glory and grandeur of man are to be found in his moral and spiritual consciousness. In him there are infinite potentialities. The objects of sense may bind him down to the sense-level but he has the power to transcend it and rise to the super-sensuous. It is true that his achievements in the domain of arts and sciences bespeak his high intelligence but it is search after life eternal which persuades the philosopher to believe in his Divine Origin. How could an animal dream of immortality?

Man has brought thunder from heaven to earth, his ships are sailing over the trackless sea, he has learned to dive deep into the sea and fly in the air, though he is not endowed with wings but all these achievements eclipse into nothing in comparison with his achievements in the realm of spirit; for all material achievements are after all evanescent. It is only in the spiritual world that his greatness finds its full manifestation. It is given to him to transcend the sensuous and realise his eternal, all-knowing and all-blissful nature. The Rishis of ancient India had realised this truth long, long before civilisation dawned in the land of the upholders of the theory of evolution and have bequeathed it as a legacy to posterity.

May we all fully attain our greatness and realise our Divine nature. May the true greatness of man find its full manifestation in and through all of us.

161137

NOTES AND NEWS.

An esteemed correspondent from America writes :—

The birthday anniversary of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on January thirteenth at the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California, with unusual devotion and enthusiasm. The temple auditorium was tastefully decorated with fragrant yellow acacias, beautiful pink roses and choicest greens. The soft coloring of the walls and the artistic inverted lights, recently installed, harmonized wonderfully with the pictures, decorations and the ochre colored robe of Swami Prakashananda.

The Swami chose for his morning topic "Swami Vivekananda ; His contribution to the World Thought". He emphasized Swamiji's teaching *Shraddha* as being absolutely vital and necessary in all fields of activity of individuals as well as nations. He touched upon the versatile genius of the world-renowned Swami and laid special stress on the "Spiritualization of the human race" as being one of the great messages of the broad and universal teachings of the Vedant to the world.

The topic for the evening service was "Swami Vivekananda's Ideal of the Harmony of Religions." The Swami spoke at length of Swamiji's ideal of a universal religion as revealed to him by the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. It was an illuminating exposition of the broad and universal ideas, suited to this age, which is so given to the narrow and sectarian view points of different religions.

Swami Abhedananda sat on the platform with Swami Prakashananda at the evening service. Asked by our Swami he cited a few interesting reminiscences and spoke of the greatness of the founder of the world wide Vedanta movements.

The sweet and melodious chanting of our Swami at both the services, the inspiration of his words and the favorite songs of Swamiji, beautifully sung by Mrs. Edith Allen, carried the audience far beyond their ordinary and commonplace thoughts and ideas of life, and made each one feel the blessed presence of this great *Acharya*, the greatest and ablest apostle of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, the benign and uplifting influence of which is undoubtedly working towards bringing out the higher civilization and evolution of humanity.