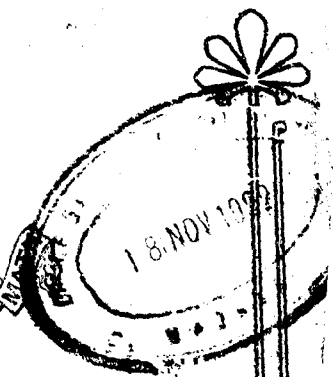


THE
Vedanta Kesari



"Let the lion of Vedanta roar"

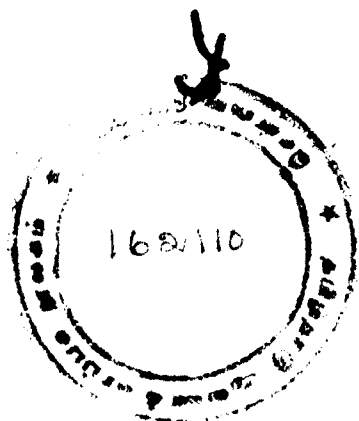
—Swami Vivekananda

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The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
 Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
 And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
 Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.' "

—Swami Vivekananda

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MAY, 1921.

[No. 1.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

SWAMI SARADANANDA

His Marriage and Return to Dakshineswar.

It caused not a little anxiety in the minds of his mother and brother when they got the news at Kamarpukur that the Master had given up his work of the priest. Not even two years had elapsed since the death of Ramkumar, when again the mother Chandramani and brother Rameswar received the heavy news that their beloved Gadai had an attack of insanity. There is the popular belief that misfortunes never come singly, but rather simultaneously attack from all sides and overcast life's horizon with their dark shadows. Such was indeed true in their case. Gadadhar was the child of Chandra's old age and her pet youngest son. She, therefore in her grief and eager solicitude sent for her boy and when he came to Kamarpukur about the end of the year 1858, she was sorely grieved to find that her son had developed symptoms of indifference, absent-mindedness, and restlessness and was giving out outbursts of piteous cries, "Mother, Mother." And in her anxiety she tried various cures. With the use of medicines, various spiritual and occult cures were also tried.

Here at home, he generally passed his times in normal moods; but there came occasions when he lost himself in spiritual exaltation, and then his manners and behaviour underwent a complete metamorphosis and from time to time again, he suffered the terrible agony of a burning sensation all over the body. These happenings

became responsible for creating a strange impression in his neighbours' minds, inducing them to believe that he was possessed by spirits; for they could not otherwise account for the irreconcilable moods that were manifest in him:—they found in him the same open and straightforward dealings, godly devotion, parental regard and friendship as before; and yet on occasions he exhibited total detachment for life's pursuits, a complete absence of the sense of social conventionalities, fear and hate, an uncontrollable yearning for the attainment of something unknown and indefinable, and a resolute perseverance in demolishing whatever barriers stood between himself and his desired goal!

Similar apprehensions arose in the mind of simple Chandra; and when she learnt that others also believed that the boy must have been possessed by some *Upadevata*, she sent for the *Ojha* (exorciser). We heard from the Master that one day one *Ojha* came and gave him to smell a burnt wick after having consecrated it by *mantrams*, and hoped that if it was a spirit that had possessed him, it would leave him free. But nothing of the kind happened. Then after some days with the help of specialists, worship was offered and *Chanda* was invoked at night. *Chanda* became pleased and accepted the offerings of worship and said to the *Ojha*, "He has not been possessed by any spirit, nor has he been suffering from any kind of malady", and then he, addressing the Master before all, said, "O Gadai, you want to become a *sadhu*. Why then do you chew so much betelnut? Betelnuts excite lust." The Master told us, "Really I liked then to take an enormous quantity of nut and that I used to take often. After the advice from *Chanda*, I gave up the practice altogether."

Sri Ramakrishna was then twenty-three years old. After he had stayed at Kamarpukur for some months, he regained his normal state of mind. There were no longer such outbursts of piteous cries for Mother. The reason certainly is that during this time he was pacified, having got wonderful visions of Mother often and often. We have heard many incidents of his life of this period from his relatives and we are going to present them to our readers.

At the solitary cremation-grounds of *Bhutir Khal* and *Budhui Morhal* situated on the western and north-eastern outskirts of the village Kamarpukur, the Master used to spend most of his time both by day and night; and his friends and relatives found wonderful manifestations of divine power in him from this time forward. From them we heard that during this time the Master would go out of his house gathering sweetmeats and other eatables in a new

earthen vessel for offering to the demi-gods and the jackals (*Bhutavali* and *Sivavali*) who would be living at the cremation-grounds. The Master had told them that as soon as he would give the offerings to the demi-gods, the earthen vessel would be lifted up in the air and would soon disappear and that many a time he had seen those demi-gods with his own eyes. When on some nights, his brother Rameswar found that though it was passed midnight, his brother had not yet returned home, he would approach the cremation-ground and shout out his name. Sri Ramakrishna, hearing his voice, would cry aloud, "Brother, I am coming. Please don't step forward this side; or these (demi-gods) may do you harm." On the cremation-ground of *Bhutir Khal*, the Master used to spend most of his time in prayer and meditation under a *Bilwa* tree which he had planted there with his own hands and also under a big, old *Aswattha* tree which was there.

These stories of the Master's people indicate that certain spiritual visions and realisations had by that time filled up the anguished void, he was feeling in his heart for the realisation of the Divine Mother, and we are led to believe from a consideration of his life in those days that he was now blessed with a continued vision of the Mother's spiritual form,—at once terrible with the sword and the severed head, and loving with the grant of boons and refuge,—and was guiding himself according to instructions received from Her divine lips. Henceforth, we think, he had the strongest conviction that an uninterrupted, full and continued vision of the Mother would very soon be his blessed lot!

Nor are these stories of *Bhutavali* and *Sivavali* the only stories we have heard of him at that time; we can further record an instance of his prophetic foresight, testifying to his *Yogic* powers, which was authenticated by Hriday and people of Kamarpukur and Jayaramvati, and which has the further benefit of the Master's own corroboration.

The normal life he was leading at that time encouraged his mother and relations to think that the sudden attack of insanity to which the Master had been unfortunately subjected, had by Divine favour subsided to a degree. They now found him free of those insane outbursts of crying, regularly attending to his daily physical needs, and conforming to the usual forms in all other respects; and they argued that the anomalies that still persisted in him e. g., his retirement into the cremation-ground at unusual hours and occasional shamelessness in throwing off clothes at the time of worship and meditation, an irritated defiance of any outside control in

misery and happiness, has been for ever merged in the feet of God. Where is there the possibility of any enjoyment at all? Neither is it possible that the body only enjoys the fruits. For only if he keeps up a little of his egoism with a view to do good to the world, then only he can have the consciousness of body and mind; and then and then only is it possible for him to enjoy the *Prarabdhas*. So a real knower, if he wills, either can enjoy or free himself from the *Prarabdhas* even. Such powers come to him and that is why he is designated as *Lokajit* (conqueror of the whole world), *Mrityunjaya* (conqueror of death), omniscient and so on.

Further, if we believe in the realisations of Sri Ramakrishna, we can no longer classify him merely as a *Knower*. For we have heard him say many a time and often, "He who was Rama, he who was Krishna, is now born as Ramakrishna." The same self that was born before as Rama and Krishna is in the present age born in the form of Sri Ramakrishna and is playing His wonderful *leela*. This was his own realisation and if we believe in his words, we have to admit him as the Incarnation of Lord, the Eternal, the Ever Free. And then it can no longer be said that he was bound by any *Karma*, *Prarabdha* or otherwise. Hence we conclude there must be some other reason for his marriage.

About the significance of marriage, the Master once told us, "Do you know why one should marry? A Brahman has to undergo ten kinds of *samskaras* (purifications) and marriage is one of them. One can really become an *Acharya*, when he has passed through all the *samskaras*." Again he would say, "He who is a *Paramahansa*, a perfect *Jnani*, must have experienced all the states of life, from the lowest scavenger to the greatest emperor; otherwise how can true *Vairagya* come? What the mind has not tasted, has not enjoyed, it will yearn for."

This is the significance of marriage in the case of ordinary *Acharyas*; but the reason of Sri Ramakrishna's marriage, as we have understood it, we shall try to explain.

That marriage is not meant for the gratification of the senses, the shastras try to explain at every step. The scriptures say that the sole object of the married life must be to perpetuate the race and to beget able, intelligent and talented sons who will prove blessings to the society.

The Rishis who are the authors of the scriptures knew full well that the natural impulse of man is to fuse round the ego and that at every step he tries to calculate the gain or loss in the scale of his own

self interests. But until and unless this centre of egoism is changed, unless all selfishness is gone, man has to go round and round this *samsara* and has to suffer incalculable miseries and can never be perfect. This the Rishis knew and hence they have put down injunctions and processes which help man to shift away from the centre of selfishness gradually and by degrees, until at last the high and lofty ideal of perfection is reached.

Forgetting the real, free, divine nature of his own self, man runs after the external world with the aim of enjoying its objects with his senses. He thinks all this is sweet and delighting. And very few can understand that each and every happiness is eternally mixed up with misery, and that if he desires to enjoy happiness, he must needs suffer misery too. Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Pleasure always comes with a crown of misery on its head":—but in his eagerness, to enjoy the pleasure, man forgets that if he accepts the pleasure, he will have to accept the misery also. If he likes to taste the sweets of life, he will have to taste the bitters of it too. Hence the shastras reminding him of this, say, "Oh man, why do you think enjoyment as the sole object to be gained? If you want the one you will have to take an equal dose of the other. Why not then set the ideal of life as something higher and think that both are but teachers on the way, and think that to be the real object and goal of life, by which you can get beyond the clutches of both pleasure and pain?" Thus the real object of the Shastras is to push man onward in such a way that he can ultimately realise that God is the only reality and to attain love for Him is the only goal of life; and this he learns when he experiences the transiency of all sense enjoyment in his married life, by using properly his faculty of discrimination between the real and the unreal, and by passing through the different states of life which give him alternately happiness and misery. If there is right discrimination always going on, the mind is sure to renounce all enjoyment of the world. That is why Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Well, you must have discrimination between the real and the unreal. Always discriminate within yourself, 'Oh mind you want to enjoy this or that; but know that all the things are made up of the five elements. The beautiful person of a charming woman is but the compound of these elements which again constitute your body, the bodies of all animals as well. Then why are you so eager to enjoy a cage of flesh and bones? And moreover, that will not help you to realise the Perfect Bliss. When even by this discrimination you cannot control yourself, then do enjoy a little, but with a strong determination to find out if there is any reality in such enjoyments. As for instance, the mind

desires eagerly to taste *Rasagolla* (a kind of sweetmeat); it cannot be kept under control. In that case, put as many *Rasagollas* as is possible inside your mouth and then thus reflect: how long are they sweet? As soon as they come down the throat, there is no more sweet taste and if you take more quantity, you will have to suffer. Then why so eager to enjoy them? Shame on thee!" Addressing now his young Sannyasin disciples, the Master said, "The little objects you can give up by enjoying them with discrimination; but you must not go to experiment like that upon all objects of enjoyment; for then there will be little chance of your coming out of them. Those objects must be left out with the mere help of the power of discrimination."

Though the Shastras teach such a high ideal to be attained in married life, in how many men's mind has this ideal a place? How many men practise Brahmacharyam or even struggle for its attainment in their married life, and thus get themselves blessed and prove a blessing to the society? How many women are there, who standing by their husbands, prove a real help-mate, urging them to practise self-sacrifice, not to mention of helping them in realising God! How many men are there, who, thinking that renunciation is the sole means of attaining the Ideal, have taught it to their wives? Just pause for a moment and see how the materialistic ideal of the life of enjoyment has entered every vein in our body and reduced us to the condition of brutes! Sri Ramakrishna used to point out the defects of modern married life to his Sannyasin disciples thus: "If to enjoy the senses is wrong then do you think that the defect is removed by simply throwing some flowers at the time of marriage and making it legal?" We doubt whether at any time in the history of India, sense-enjoyment became so prominent a feature of married life. We have almost forgotten that besides the gratification of the senses, there is another high and pure ideal to fulfil in married life, and that is why we have become worse than brutes. And the great world-teacher Sri Ramakrishna had married to teach humanity the highest ideal of life and to uplift India from her present state of degeneration. Every action of the Master was meant for the good of others and as an ideal to be followed by all. That is why he took the burden of a married life on his shoulders, and lived the life ideal before the eyes of all. Had he not married, others would have said, "He is not married, that is why he indulges in such tall talks about *Brahmacharya*. He never had the opportunity to live together with his wife, that is why he gives us such advice gratis." That is why the Master not only did marry but after he had the full realisation and had regained his normal mood after the divine

ecstasy, he brought his full grown wife to Dakshineswar, worshipped her as the veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother, lived together for full eight months and lived with her in the same bed having yet no physical attachment whatsoever. And after this, he would now and then go to Kamarpukur or to his father-in-law's to impart training to the young wife and to give her peace of mind and happiness. 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 enriched her worldly knowledge and taught her the human psychology, and even how to deal with men and money in accordance with the propriety of time, place and circumstances.

It is a pity that men seldom give such training to their wives. If the sex relation between the husband and wife should for some reason or other disappear from the married life, then how many among them can give to their wives this respect and unselfish love throughout their life? And hence do we say that the marriage of Sri Ramakrishna was meant as an ideal for the world to follow, that you may once more learn that there is an ideal higher than gratification of the senses, that you can once more fix this ideal before you, and practising *Brahmacharya* as far as is possible, both husband and wife may become blessed, that once more the society which is now bereft of talent and prowess and strength, may be revived by your begetting sons, talented, strong and endowed with all good qualities, and that the false glamour of romance, obscuring the solitary grandeur and freedom of soul, the ultimate aim of life, in the name of an interesting and absorbing companionship, might be utterly destroyed. It is for you that it was deemed necessary to show an ideal in the life of Sri Ramakrishna in this present age, which was not necessary to be shown in the lives of the great world teachers, such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and others in the previous ages. It is for the first time in the religious history of the world that a 'mould' as it were, has been prepared by the great Master by his life-long practice of strenuous sadhana. It is for you now, as the Master used to tell, to put your lives in the 'mould' and form your character accordingly.

To this many would say "But"; yes, they are quite right. As Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Do you think that every one of you can become a Ramakrishna Paramahansa? That is impossible! Only one Ramakrishna there can be in the world, just as one lion can become king of a forest." So to this 'but' also, we give the same reply. Sri Ramakrishna knew full well that it would be impossible for every body to live with his wife and at the same time

observe absolute Brahmacharya like himself ; yet he lived this ideal life with the hope that they should at least partially try to follow him, or at least that they should struggle, whether they fail or succeed, sincerely to attain to that state. But know for certain, that if you fail to welcome this high ideal of married life, if you do not see the image of the Divine Mother in all women and give them unselfish love, but on the other hand, continue to look upon them as dependent maids, meant only for satisfying your senses,—your fate is sealed. Your destruction is certain and at hand. Do you not know what happened to the *Yadavas* by discarding the words of Sri Krishna? Remember the suffering and misery of the Jews, when they refused to follow Jesus! So pause and consider well before you discard the warning of the Prophet of this age!

SOME ASPECTS OF THE VEDANTA.

BY

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

The Vedanta is both philosophy and religion. It gives us the key to all religions and the entirety of life. It is like the over-arching sky full of an all-embracing light and love, the background of all limited beauty, itself being of all-inclusive and illimitable beauty. To have given it to the world is by itself our eternal and indefeatable right to the love and gratitude and admiration of the world for all time.

It has perfectly realised and preached the unity of life. It is universal in scope and spirit and appeal. It is not built round any single historical personality, the disproof of whose existence can affect its validity or value. It gives satisfaction to all types and temperaments. It reconciles the doctrines of the personal God, of the immanent God, of the transcendental God, and of the Absolute. It does not merely give us a creed but it leads us into realisation. It is in perfect harmony with logic and science. It shows to us the real basis and sanction and value and purpose and fulfilment of the ethical life. It shows to us the real purpose and goal of cosmic evolution. It alone reveals to us the self-evolution of the divine causal energy. It alone shows to us the infinite play of the life divine.

Its symbols of the divine are innumerable. Its moods and methods of approach into the central shrine of Divine Glory are many and wonderful. Its harmonising of ritual and belief, of outer

prayer and inner meditation, of character and conduct, of work and vision is beyond all praise. Its inter-relations of the inner and the outer life, its revelations of the infinite in infinite things, its proclamation of the far-reaching consequences of thought and word and deed—are all equally wonderful and capable of arresting attention and exacting admiration.

Its special glories are however the doctrines of Incarnation and Reincarnation—which show to us the deepest truths in regard to life divine and human life. The doctrine of Incarnation shows to us how Grace is a vital fact vitally interwoven with universal life. The self-limitation of the Supreme in a passion of compassion is the cause of Incarnation. It was India that made this idea a living factor in the minds and hearts of men.

Coming to deal with Karma and Reincarnation, it is clear that this great Indian doctrine alone explains the inequalities of endowments and achievements in life and softens them and effectively vindicates and justifies the way of God to man. To believe in post-natal existence without believing in pre-natal existence is absurd, as this life is pre-natal to the next life. If life is not a mere span of being bounded by the body, how are we entitled to prolong the life in one direction and deny its prolongation in the other direction? The adjustments of action and reaction are undeniable and cannot exist without pre-natal and post-natal life. The fact that we do not remember our pre-natal lives is no argument against this view. Many are unable to recollect their childhood. Was childhood non-existent on that account? Some diseases bring on failure of memory. The shock of death brings on breaks in the chain of memory. The power of forgetfulness is to us a means of release from the thralldom of recollection of past sins and the fear of coming sorrows. If we attain Yogic realisation, it brings into existence clear reconstruction of memory. This Indian doctrine alone gives us the real key to life and enables us to combine patience and endeavour. Karma is not fatalism. It is the energy of clear vision. It is not only destiny but opportunity. It shows what has been and what will be and also what we might make of all that has been and will be, if we set in operation counter-currents of divine energy to overcome all worldly *Vasanas* or tendencies. It does not make us hate life. It makes us use life for attaining what is beyond life. It alone shows us the operations of cause and effect and the inter-actions of Law and Love.

This doctrine has got various and important practical applications. It shows the diversity of life embraced in an all-inclusive unity. It shows that birth is not an accident but a result. The

subtle body that is the transmigrating sheath of the soul attracts to itself a suitable gross body. The parents are a portion of the environment of the reincarnating soul. They can no more help being the parents than the child can help being the child. The soul seeks a suitable embodiment by processes of unseen natural selection guided by God. Science is unable to explain why the children of the same parents differ in character and in achievement. Weismannism shows that acquired characters are not transmitted and that differences are due to differences of germ-plasm. He says that the diversities of germ-plasm come "from the common stock." He is unable to tell us where is this common stock. The fact is that the diversities of life are due to the diversities of transmigrating sheaths of subtle bodies ensheathing the souls. The gross body is only the outermost instrument used by the reincarnating soul. Thus the doctrine shows to us what is the real significance of birth, what an impetus to the reincarnating souls will be given by universal individual and racial purity, and what are the inter-relations of the past, the present and the future.

No other doctrine can ever be accepted by thoughtful men. Nothing in nature is utterly destroyed. If so, what becomes of all that we think and say and do? How can all this cease to have any consequences? Our desires must and will materialise themselves. Science shows to us only the laws governing the play of life as we see. It shows to us the tendency to variation, natural selection, and struggle for existence. It does not explain why there has been the upward push all through life. The cosmic process is constantly checked and guided by the ethical process. It is only in the doctrine of reincarnation that we can realise how the reincarnating souls introduce the elements of diversity and change and how the soul is working through its summation of experiences to realise its eternal being, consciousness, and bliss.

THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION.

BY

Brahmachari Niranjanachaitanya.

By the term religion is generally meant belief in a god, or some supernatural being and communion with him through prayer, worship and such other means. Every new-born babe that is ushered in the world is born as a member of some religion. As he grows up he is taught to believe in certain dogmas and doctrines; he goes to his church or temple and looks upon some books as sacred. His education and environment too, instill some religious ideas in him. This belief in some supernatural being is prevalent amongst the advanced, civilized nations, as well as, among the aborigines of Australia who represent the human race at its earliest and lowest stage of development. Religion has been the greatest cementing factor in the history of nations and it is religion which has engendered the greatest disruptive forces in the history of the world.

There have been materialists and atheists in every country who hold that men need not worship any God and that there is no life beyond death. In our own country the Charvaks preached the philosophy of "Eat, drink and be merry." Such doctrines could not hold sway in India for a long time but in Europe they have appeared again and again. In ancient Greece, Democritus did away with the necessity of God and explained the whole universe by his atoms. The Roman poet, Lucretius, was the high priest of materialism in the palmy days of the Roman empire. In the eighteenth century Von Holback and La Mettrie preached materialism in France and they gained a large following. They substituted Nature for God. The marvellous achievement of science in the last century have given man more confidence in his power, and to-day the scientists are carrying on their investigations in fresh fields with renewed zeal. The modern man has more faith in the exact sciences than in Metaphysics or Theology; for the exact Sciences show direct tangible results in the physical world, while Theology talks of the unseen world.

But however much we may try to keep ourselves engrossed in the physical world, there are moments in the life of everyone amongst us when we feel the finite, relative world too narrow for us and we catch a glimpse of the Infinite. There are problems which the human mind cannot evade, which will haunt our mind until they are solved. The proper solution of such problems gives us a new perspective of life. Ratiocination is in the very constitution of the human mind. As rational beings, we are led to inquire after the causes of the phenomena of the world in which we live, move and have our being. An

infinite chain of causes and effects is unthinkable and the human mind must pause somewhere, must find out the first cause which is the ultimate explanation of the whole universe. The theists maintain that this first cause is God, who is the object of our love and reverence. He inspires the noblest sentiments of our heart and is the Ideal of goodness, truth and beauty. The Christian devotees worship him as God the Father.

It was the great German thinker, Fichte, who proclaimed the truth that man is a finite-infinite being. In him there is Infinite in the nascent form. A short story may be narrated here to illustrate the truth. The story is well-known of the fisherman who dragged on a precarious existence on the sea-side. The sea-god once appeared before him and granted him a boon. The man wanted a palace with hosts of servants and a beautiful garden on the sea-side. He got it and his joy knew no bounds. He enjoyed them for some time but could not remain satisfied with them for long. He prayed for more wealth and power and wanted to be the king of the land. His prayer was granted. He became a king and wielded the sceptre for some time, but he wanted more power and prayed to the god to make him an emperor. He became the emperor, but one day as he was sleeping late in the morning, the sun was peeping through the window and his sleep was disturbed. At once he woke up and went to the sea-god to give him the power of commanding the sun and the moon to rise at his word. Now, that was beyond the power of the sea-god to grant. This story reveals the truth that in every man there is the thirst which can be satisfied with nothing short of the Infinite. There cannot be unalloyed peace until the human soul is merged in the Infinite. The majority of men have forgotten their true nature and are playing with the finite things of the world but in their heart of hearts there is the unconscious yearning for the Infinite.

It will not be out of place here to discuss the merits of the utilitarian philosophy which have a large following among the educated section of every country. Mill and a whole host of utilitarian thinkers want us to give up the struggle for the Infinite as absurd and impracticable. Their gospel is "the greatest good of the greatest number" but at the same time they hold pleasure to be the aim of life. An action is good so far as it is conducive to pleasure. The fallacy of such a doctrine is abundantly clear. "If happiness is the goal of mankind, why should I not make myself happy and others unhappy? What prevents me? In the second place, the basis of utility is too narrow. All the current social forms and methods are derived from society as it exists, but what right has the utilitarian to assume that society is eternal? Society did not exist ages ago, will not possibly exist ages hence." In fact, the utilitarians forget that a true ethical code can be derived only from religion and spirit, and the search for the Infinite is the birth right of man.

There is another line of reasoning which forces the human mind to search for some abiding reality beyond this world. To the young man the world appears in enamelled colour and life seems to be abounding in pleasure. But this optimism of youth gives place to pessimism in old age. The transitoriness of all earthly things is quite patent to the thinking mind. The bottomless sea becomes desert and fair cities become heaps of ruins in course of time. Death stays our hurrying feet and snatches our near and dear ones in the very midst of glory and power. In the midst of this constant flux the human soul yearns for something which we can hold, which will not perish in time. To such inquiring souls sense-enjoyments cannot be the be-all and end-all of life. We discover in them the dawn of religious life and that divine discontent which raises man the brute to the level of man the god.

They have felt the necessity of the religious life, the life of the spirit, for the flesh has been crucified in them for ever. Their lives remind us of the Biblical truth 'Die to live.' They are the salt of the earth and blessing to mankind.

CONFESSIONS ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE.

BY

Le Frile

"The Dawn of Truth,"

God is one. He is being and His is power. There is no other but He and nothing but His. All beings proceed from His being and all else from His power. His law governs the universe and His purpose guides its course.

One being begot all beings. One power evolved all products. One law governs all movements and one purpose guides all courses.

Unity in variety is the secret of the universe. The vast diversity of phenomena presented in the universe have an underlying, guiding unity. There is nothing apart and independent in the universe. No being or body has a separate destiny. Every separate life lived and every selfish interest pursued really forms part of a common scheme and contributes towards the common interest. Every separate movement tends towards a common goal. The life of the universe is one complete drama enacted by a multitude of beings and forces, each apparently pursuing its own independent course, but, in reality forming one harmonious scheme and contributing towards one complete plot.

Viewed in parts, there is diversity, independence, competition, disharmony and incompleteness. Viewed as a whole, there is unity, interdependence, co-operation, a delicately adjusted harmony and completeness.

Harmony is the basis of creation, harmony runs through all creation and harmony crowns its top.

The knowledge of harmony is the final fruit of all knowledge. The state of harmony is the goal of all mental struggles. The enjoyment of harmony is the crown of all enjoyments.

The seers of the truth, the knowers of the self, the wise ones among men, climb to this height of harmony and undisturbedly enjoy its deep, rich, sonorous note, vibrating through the life-chords of creation.

* * * * *

"Know Thyself"—the crown of all knowledge. I have known myself,—my being and my destiny. My being is part of the universal being and my destiny part of the universal destiny.

The same being who made the universe with such inconceivable divine skill, did make me also as part of it with the same skill. His wisdom which planned in such nice harmony the order of the universe and guides its unerring course, did also plan the order of my life and guides my course in the same unerring path. His law which governs the motions of the universe, doth govern mine and His power which sustains it doth sustain me also.

For, what is the universe but a name for the conglomeration of diverse parts which alone are real and of which I am one. The perfection of the universe as a whole, denotes nothing but the perfection of its individual parts. The guidance of the universe by God's unerring wisdom can mean nothing but His wise guidance of every one of its individual parts. The assured stability of the universe is nothing but the stability of every one of its individual parts, each in its own place.

What need I doubt and fear? What need I care and plan and think? How foolish the rider on an animal who yet carries his burden on his own head! I am part of the universe. I am allied to the universe in its life and blood. If the universe fell, then only I fall, if the universe can go wrong, then only I go wrong. The mighty current of the Divine will, guiding the universal course carries me on in its concordant flow unerringly to my appointed goal. I float along, in rest and peace, without doubt or fear, without responsibility and care. The ignorant and the faithless cry, "What shall be done?" But, I have faith and sing "The good will be done", "Thy will be done".

* * * * *

The imperfections of individual beings are sustained by the perfection which pervades the universe. The ignorance and weakness of individual beings is sustained by the wisdom and strength which regulate the universe. The apparent evil and injustice marking

individual beings and their actions is prompted and sustained by the real goodness and justice which reign through the universe. The individual is sustained by the universal. There is nothing wrong with the individuals, no fear for the individuals.

* * * * *

I am perfect in my niche. No other niche will suit me, nor mine suit another person. Every entity is perfect in its own niche. Perfection is nothing else than harmony. The world is a harmonious whole. Every part of it is in harmony with every other and is perfect in its own place.

My life is in perfect harmony with its surroundings. Every event of my life, is perfect in its place—in its surroundings, as well as in the successive series of states which constitute my life. So is it with every other being.

I do not find imperfection anywhere. Imperfection is but a fancy in the human mind. Nor is the human mind imperfect to entertain such a fancy. It accords well with its perfection to believe in imperfection in its immature stages or moods. The human mind is perfect in each of its stages and in every one of its moods. The child is perfect in its childishness, the man in his manliness, the lover in his love, the hater in his hatred, the wise in his wisdom, the ignorant in his ignorance. The immature mind is perfect in fancying imperfection in God's arrangements, the world's state or man's progress. The mature mind is perfect in its faith in the perfection of one and all.

I see perfection everywhere. I see perfection in myself. I am always perfect. No evil, no wrong, no imperfection, no sin is possible in God's realm. Perfection reigns absolute. The mature mind climbs up to it and perceives it. The immature mind struggles lower and perceives it not.

* * * * *

The world can be looked at from two different points of view—the individual and the universal—the human and the divine. Seen from the human point of view, of human interests, which must necessarily be limited, narrow and one-sided, as the human race forms only a part of the world, it presents disorder—mixture of good and evil. Hence, man's struggles and reforms, his creeds and codes. Hence virtue and sin, judge and judgment, reward and punishment, and other worlds sweet and terrible in various forms as men conceive. But, seen from the divine point of view, the world presents one, well-ordered perfect organism. Issuing from one source, governed by one law, guided by one purpose; divided into a multitude of beings, causes, interests and activities, mutually co-operating and competing, yet, harmonising on the whole, and secretly making up a unity in life.

God is just, wise and powerful. His law is just, His plans are wise, His purposes firm. He is good. His creation and government is same.

There is no evil in the world. Every being, every object and every condition of life is good in itself, in its surroundings and in the general economy of life. No wrong ever happens in the world. God's law is supreme, stable and permits not of transgression by any creature. His purposes are firm. Who can oppose them?

Man is ever righteous. He cannot be otherwise. Every mood, motive and movement of his is determined by the unerring law which governs his life, in order that it may govern the whole universe and thus serve, guard and fulfill the purposes of God. Man has no freedom, no responsibility, no merit or demerit, neither deserves nor gets punishment or reward. Every man in every moment of time simply does his duty—what he ought to do in accordance with the law. All are alike good. There is nothing unholy in life, nothing irregular and nothing—superfluous.

And man is ever happy, i.e., agreeable with himself and his surroundings. Every state of mind is one of happiness. The mind by its inherent law adjusts itself to agreeability under every change. Doubt, fear, grief, hope, joy—every one of these states is agreeable in its own place and environment. Man is happy even in grief. He indulges in sorrow simply because it is conducive to his happiness for the time to do so, it relieves the prevailing tension of his mind. In the presence of disappointment, grief is the most agreeable and enjoyable state. To rejoice then, will be the real unhappiness, the most unbearable disagreeability. But, mind is endowed with a power to keep itself always agreeable, happy, in harmony with itself and surroundings.

The diversity of outward phenomena successively presented in life induces a corresponding diversity of mental states. Division is the law of creation and balance its secret bond. The infinite diversity of individual life exhibited in the world mutually contribute to sustain a united balance. No part can subsist by itself and every part has one or more counterparts to balance against. Life is an intricate network of balance.

Balance is the condition of life and loss of balance is immediate death. Every state of mind is necessary inasmuch as it balances every other. Balance is life—balance is happiness. The mind is kept in perpetual balance by the successive change of corresponding states. Man, though he knows it not, is perfectly happy under every change of state. For, states of mind change constantly in accordance with the law of balance to relieve him of oppression by counteracting each other's undue predominance. Any state of mind getting beyond its limits in time or intensity becomes an oppression, but its

reactionary opposite state succeeds in time to preserve balance and continue the flow of happiness in unbroken uniformity.

As in the inner, so in the outer. No state of mind can be said to be unhappy or undesirable. No object or condition of life can be said to be evil or unnecessary. Man, owing to his immature discernment wants all of one kind, thereby destroying the very foundations of life. The world is balanced and life is even. The world is good and life is happy. That philosophy which finds fault with the state of the world or the conditions of life, is a narrow, immature and incomplete philosophy. That religion which finds evil in the realm of God and sets up a law against God's established unwritten law is a false ungodly religion but not the true divine one.

The ungodly have degraded God to the level of man. They have grossly misconceived His attributes. They mock Him everywhere.

They proclaim evil and suffering in His realm and thus misrepresent His supreme goodness and love. They proclaim sin and events displeasing to Him—against His will and authority as happening in His realm and thus degrade His absolute power. They proclaim again, inharmony in his creation and thus bring low his wisdom. They put him to the necessity of recording offences, of appointing a judgment day and regions of reward and punishment. They make him exclusive by setting up a priesthood to worship Him and spread His name. They have narrowed His limits by shutting Him up within a scripture. They offer Him worship, praise Him and pray to Him and thus mock Him everywhere.

The true God is perfect. He is the wise creator; the absolute monarch, the loving father, the good being. His creation is perfect; there is no inharmony in it. His law is absolute; no offence is possible against it. His love is full and overflowing; his children are ever happy. He is goodness supreme; no evil can exist in his realm. He is all pervading; temples are a mockery to him. He is known by all; priests are a disgrace to Him. He is bliss eternal; man's praises and worship affect Him not. He is the all wise, almighty providence; man's prayers are superfluous and argue only faithlessness.

"All is well". This is the final truth. All that was, all that is and all that will be, is well, is right, is good. There is nothing ill in the whole universe. The law pervades everywhere. It operates everywhere. The law alone brings about every event. There is nothing in the universe beyond the pale of the law. This law is unerring. It is ever in the right, being the expression of the invariable will of God. This law regulates every movement, brings about event, and fulfills the purpose of the universe.

Every event which happens, happens as a necessity. Every event contributes to sustain the harmony of the universe. Every event happens in fulfilment of the purpose of the universe. Every event is right in its place.

"All is well". The knowledge of this truth solves all doubts. This satisfies all desires. This promotes peace. In the fulness of this conviction, there is no room for my cares, fears, doubts, hopes, plans or cogitations. There is no wrong that I may rectify. There is no hole that I may patch up. There is nothing that I may wish done and nothing that I may wish undone. "All is well".

VEDANTA AND INDIAN NATIONALISM.*

I

Today the whole of India is athrill with a new life and a new aspiration has filled her soul. Every thoughtful mind of the country is trying to contribute its quota to the upbuilding of a new Indian nation which will be at once a glory and benediction of humanity. This striving was going on for the whole of the last century since the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy but we must say that all these stalwart of the vanguard drew their inspiration from the Western ideal of national life and national institutions; and as a result, inspite of their unbounded Zeal and uncommon patriotism much of their attempts became abortive and could not touch the soul of the nation. One of the main reasons of this stupendous failure was the wrong premise with which they started in their noble work. All of them thought and many think even now that India was never a nation, and hence to rouse the consciousness of a collective life, it is imperative to adopt those western institutions by which the western nations have become great.

Of the several elements that go to the moulding of a nation the principal are five in number, namely, the race, culture, religion, political life and geographical position. Different nations of the world lay stress differently on any one or two of these factors: for instance some lay, greater emphasis upon the racial and cultural unity of the nation; some on religious faith and some again on common political interest determined by geographical position. Most of the western nations belong to this last kind: their consciousness of a collective life might have grown from their racial unity or common culture, yet there is no denying of the fact that at present they have all made the political interest the bed-rock of their national lives. It true that such a political national consciousness India never possessed before. History tells us that among all the ancient nations the force of the world that was most potent in building the

* Summary of a lecture delivered by Swami Sharvananda at the Theosophical Hall under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta.

communal life was not so much in the political institutions of the peoples as it was in the consciousness of their racial and cultural unity. The old Egyptians, the Persians, the Chinese, the Greeks, and even the Romans to a great extent, made racial and cultural unity the basic principle of their national life. And India was not an exception to this. Her whole nationalism was imbued with that one consciousness,—the common Aryan blood and the Aryan culture. Government played very little part in welding the units into a national whole, nor did even the political or economical interest; that is why we have seen in our history how many a sceptre was broken and thrown away, the ball of power tossed from hand to hand, throne rose and throne fell, but all these political cataclysms could never disturb or revolutionise the even tenor of the national life. Though the appalling catastrophe of the Mohamedan invasions produced some disturbances in the country and threatened to bring extinction to the national life, yet History testifies to the fact that these revolutions were only on the surface of the national life and could not impair or jeopardise the true soul of the nation; for do we not see in the darkest days of Mohamedan persecution the different parts of the country were being aglowed with the halo of the various saints and God-men of the very first magnitude? Immortal Nanak down to Guru Govinda Singha in the Punjab, the heavenly bard Tulasidas and Kavirdas of the United Provinces, the Divine Lord Gouranga and his blessed associates, the galaxy of Maharastra saints like Ramdas, Tukaram, Ram Deo, were all products of this period. This shows unerringly that the vigour of India's national life does not depend upon her political wholesomeness so much as it is in her cultural and religious consciousness. So, to suppose that India was never a nation is a misreading of her national life, and any endeavour that is based on this false premise is doomed to failure.

About a score of years ago, blessed Swami Vivekananda struck a note of warning to that effect to the then patriots of the country. But then the half-westernised so-called educated Indians could not understand the depth and significance of his prophetic utterances,—they still kept themselves deeply wedded to the western ways of thinking, and the glamour of the western ideals of national life still blurred their vision. But to day the scales have fallen from their eyes, visions have been clarified, and buffets of failure have opened the spiritual insight. They are all trying to turn their gaze towards the soul of the nation and rouse her soul consciousness.

Though like all the ancient nations of the world India has built up her nationalism on common culture, yet unlike them all she never stunted the cultural value of life to the civic efficiency alone. Her conception of culture soared high on the wings of the soul and touched the feet of Heaven; so with her true culture always meant the spiritual culture or the awakening of the soul. When in other coun-

tries the greatest geniuses of the land were engaged in divulging or depicting the glories of the broken images of God, the genius of India, even in those pre-historic dark ages of the world—found out the Lord Himself and boldly proclaimed in the trumpet voice of the Vedas:

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्राः आये दिव्यानि भ्रामानि तस्थु ।

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्यं तमसस्तु पारे ॥

तमेव विदिस्वा अतिमृत्यु मेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ॥

“Hear ye all children of immortality and those of ye also who reside in the heavenly spheres! I have seen the Supreme effulgent Being who exist beyond all darkness; by knowing Him alone one can transcend all death and there is no other path.” And since that day it has been the one quest of the soul of India—how to find that “Supreme Being beyond all darkness”. Hence we find through every institution of the country runs that one purpose, which is to help every individual to realise the Supreme Being or God. National efficiency through political or economical development was never considered as the summum bonum of life, if they do not be as stepping stones to the altar of God; nay, she deemed her national efficiency itself as wholly dependent upon the efflorescence of her spiritual soul.

According to Vedanta every individual soul is potentially divine and the whole of infinity of Life lies coiled up within him, and his progress or evolution means the uncoiling of this infinity of his soul. And this process of uncoiling or evolution ends only in the complete realisation of the Infinite within itself by the soul, or in other words, in reaching the consciousness of the Universal Life. This fact can be understood in another way. As it is the first instinct of every soul to desire for eternal life, infinite knowledge and infinite happiness, it must be acknowledged that the possibility of satisfaction of these instinctive cravings of the soul must be within itself and these cravings are satisfied only when that infinity is realised as transcendental, eternal existence, unconditioned bliss, and unfettered knowledge. So these three are the true nature of the soul—*sat*, *chit* and *ananda*. Now, this infinite life, *Bhuma*, is not an abstraction of thought or a logical necessity, but a matter of real consciousness realisable in actual life. And in this realisation consists the summum bonum *निःभयस्* of life. All progress or evolution of the soul culminates into that one glorious end and until that final beatitude of life is reached, the soul cannot stop short in its pilgrimage; consciously or unconsciously it must search on, goaded by its own native instinct through age after age, birth after birth, towards that one realisation. Hence, according to Vedanta the supreme value of life lies not in the acquisition of creature comforts or in the physical or intellectual efficiency for the mundane life, but in the development of the spiritual

consciousness and the approximation of the Universal Life. This realisation is also termed in Vedanta, *Mukti* or emancipation from the conditioned life.

Therefore the sages of ancient India held aloft this ideal of *Mukti* supremely before the people and taught mankind how to conduct the various activities of life in such a way as to help the soul in attaining this *Mukti* at the end. Although they laid so much stress on the spiritual life, yet they were not unmindful of the other legitimate desires and aspirations of the soul that naturally arise during its sojourn on this earth. Whatever was necessary for the sustenance of the society did not escape their notice,—they were all included within that capacious concept of *Dharma*.

Life is truly dynamic yet it holds within it a static soul that transcends all concept of motion, change or activity concomitant to the notion of time and space; so life is at once relative and absolute. These two self-contradictory elements of life wonderfully juxtaposed in a harmony has ever been an insoluble enigma to many a philosopher. Vedanta openly acknowledges its incapacity to speak of why or wherefore of it and calls it *Maya*, yet it is a stern fact of life. Any social philosophy that does not take account of these two contradictory natures of Life is sure to miss its mark. If life is taken only as a dynamic principle, an eternal flux through eternal time and space, as it is understood by many Western philosophers, life becomes meaningless and a logical absurdity, inasmuch as motion or change is not possible without something that is motionless,—even in consciousness the concept of motion cannot arise without its antithesis motionlessness. Moreover it is a fact of primary consciousness that in its inner core reposes the static calm, although a whirl of change sweeps its outer regions; this fact accounts for the perpetuity of the consciousness of individuality through all physical and mental changes even within the short span of a single life. As for example, the consciousness of the individuality of a boy remains unchanged and unimpaired even when he grows into a ripe old man. Here, the two elements of life, the dynamic as well as the static, are distinctly marked: the principle of consciousness which is called pure ego remains unchanged and unmodified, even though its physical and mental adjuncts (*Upadhis*), which enclothe it, undergo the infinite changes. This unchanging element is called the spiritual principle of life and the changing, the material.

Therefore the nationalism or the social philosophy which turns for its rationale to that view of life, which only asserts its dynamic aspect, is sure to miss the spiritual principle in its practical operation, and produce a lop-sided development of rank materialism in the nation.

So Vedanta tells us that the principle of life is both moving as well as without any motion at the same time,—*दतेजति तन्नैजति*.

RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME.

New Building.

(Opening Ceremony.)

On 11th May the auspicious Akshaya Tritiya day, were opened the new buildings of the Ramakrishna Students' Home a magnificent edifice erected on the Sullivan's Gardens Road, Mylapore. The Institution, which is a unique one in Southern India, has in the past played a very important part in the cause of the education of the poor, and of moulding the character of the youth in the right direction and has a prospect of still more useful work in the future. The function of the dedication was itself imposing and inspiring. The procession with the picture of Sri Ramakrishna and the Saligrama still used for worship in the Home started from the present habitation on the Cuttack Road, Mylapore, with the usual temple paraphernalia, music, chanting of the 'Vedas' and 'bhajana'. It passed through the principal streets of Mylapore round the temple and reached the new place at exactly 9 A.M. The procession was headed by Swami Sharvananda, the President of the Committee of the Home and the presiding member of the Ramakrishna Mission at Madras. His Serene Holiness Sri Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Mission and Sri Swami Shivananda, the Vice-President, joined the party very near the new buildings. Swami Nirmalananda of the Bangalore Mutt specially came for the function and accompanied the procession. Under shouts of "Sri Guru Maharajki Jai", Sri Swami Brahmananda first placed his foot in the buildings and blessed them. As soon as the whole party entered the library hall the Sanskrit verses in praise of Sri Ramakrishna composed by Swami Vivekananda were chanted in chorus by the sanyasins and Brahmacharis of the Mutt. Then followed 'puja' and 'homam' to purify the place performed by Swami Sharvananda. There was a large and respectable gathering. In the evening there was a Ramanam sankirtan party at which devotional songs were sung by the sanyasins. Mr. Visv. natha Aiyar of Kumbakonam contributed to the enjoyment of the party by singing some of the famous kirtanams of the devotees of Southern India.

History of the Home

A short history of the Home will be a useful adjunct to the report of these days' proceedings. The Home was started in 1905 by His Holiness Ramakrishnananda, one of the devout and direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who had been preaching the gospel of his master in this City incessantly for over nine years. Starting practically as an orphanage, the Home has grown into an institution giving help and lodging to the absolutely indigent but promising students studying in the colleges and schools in the City of Madras. It is open to all classes of Hindus. A prominent feature of the institution is the attention that is being paid to the development of character of the boys and their religious instruction in right lines with unusual opportunities for coming under the direct and sole influence of Sri Ramakrishna Mission. Marriage is a disqualification for admission and continuance in the Home. Quite satisfactory progress in studies of the student is an essential condition of his retention in it. The Home, during its progress, has been visited by many of the

prominent men of Southern India and its work has been uniformly applauded. The boys are trained in the actual management of the Home. Much of the correspondence and accounts of the Home are looked after by the boys themselves. Self-reliance and dignity of labour are prominently brought home to the students while they remain as inmates.

The New Buildings.

The old buildings of the Home have been located in a rented building which was obviously found unsuited to its growing needs. Impelled by the successful working of the past fourteen years, the authorities of the Home drew up a scheme of building a permanent habitation for the Home. In this way they were assisted at the initial stage by the substantial help of a friend who gave as a free gift 15 grounds of valuable land which forms now the major portion of the site on which the new buildings stand. The main structure is a two-storied building in the form of the letter 'E', the central arm forming the library and reading-room in the ground-floor and prayer hall in the first floor which is still in an unfinished condition, the floor alone remaining to be laid. The Hall is designed purposely on a grand scale to suit the purpose for which it is intended. The walls and ceiling are in perfect white with glossy appearance, the large doors and door-ways being highly carved. The western end of the hall carries a magnificent carved canopy to accommodate a marble statue of Saraswati which is being worked by Mr. Nagappan the Sculptor of Madras. The other portions of the main buildings are divided into a warden's room, an office and 36 rooms, each accommodating three students. Most of these rooms have been built by individual donors.

The kitchen block lies exactly west of the main buildings and is separated from the main buildings by a neatly laid-out flower garden. It consists of a central kitchen and store with large adjoining rooms on either side, one intended for Brahmins and the other for non-Brahmins. Behind the kitchen block is a cluster of small buildings which provide necessary bathing arrangements for the large number of boys that will be accommodated in the Home. For bathing and washing purposes, the water of the well, dug in the compound is utilized. The water from this well being pumped by means of electric motor, stored in two elevated large iron tanks and drawn for use therefrom by a system of pipes laid in the bathing place. This special arrangement has been designed with the sole object of effecting economy in recurring water charges, payable to the Municipality if the institution were to use municipal water for all its needs. The medical ward, stores and other out-houses have yet to be erected. The want of them at present did not stand in the way of the use of the mission buildings. The rooms are also furnished and the building has been fitted with electric lights. Each student has been provided with a stool, a small table and a shelf to keep his books. Each student is also provided with a small bedding consisting of a mat, a pillow and a bed-sheet. The estimate for the building scheme amounts to a lakh and eight thousand rupees. The Government have been graciously pleased to pay half the cost.

To the south of the site on which the buildings stand, a plot of two acres of land has been acquired at a cost of about Rs. 33,000 for providing a play-ground for the students.

Maintenance.

The Home is maintained by voluntary contributions and donations which amounted in 1920 to Rs. 6,012 and was contributed by 320 persons. The amount ranged from annas 4 to Rs. 204. It is the endeavour of the authorities of the Home, hereafter, to found the endowments necessary for the upkeep of the large number of the students that will eventually be accommodated in the new buildings. So far the Home has been able to secure endowments to the extent of Rs. 48,998.

The authorities of the Home are contemplating the early starting of a technical institute to be attached to the institution, so that the promising students who show a leaning towards the technical line may be given adequate training to fit them up as useful mechanics or future managers of industrial concerns.

NOTES AND NEWS.

On Friday evening, March 11th, Swami Abhedanandaji held a special service in Native Sons' Hall, San Francisco, in commemoration of the birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Prakashananda and Gurudasa were invited to be present and share in the service.

After a short meditation Swami gave a most inspiring sketch of the life of his Master. He described the spiritual practices, the intensity of His desire as voiced in the cry, "O Mother, another day has gone and I have not seen Thee; of how, when the Divine Mother finally appeared to Him, He still wanted to realize God through every form of religion and was not content until He found the unity and harmony of all.

Swami spoke of the three phases: life of the body, life of mind, and life of spirit. Sri Ramakrishna's manifestation was life of the spirit. He described the betrothal and spiritual relation with Sarada Devi—the "Holy Mother." Unique, as a true spiritual marriage, it is proof that such a marriage can exist even in this materialistic age. His purity saw in her the manifestation of the Divine Mother of the universe, Whom He constantly worshipped. And she, His first and nearest disciple, worshipped Him as her Lord; and when He left the body her cry to Him was, "O Mother, why hast Thou gone leaving me here!" But when, according to custom, she would have removed her ornaments and adopted the widow's garb He appeared to her bidding her not to do so and telling her that He was still the same as ever. And her life, so deeply a sharer of His consciousness, has also been a wonderful blessing to many.

The chronicle of these events—from the view-point of a direct eye-witness never fails to hold Swami's audience in sympathetic reverence for the ideal character of his Master,—the manifestation of Divinity in this age.

Swami Prakashananda spoke of the universality of religious ideals as manifested in Sri Ramakrishna, and referring to the symbols present, the altar, the flowers and fruit, said that the heart was the altar whereon the Lord was seated and all thoughts and deeds must be offered to Him.

Gurudasa then read an account of a celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth day as he witnessed it in India. He told of the thousands who come by boat, by carriage, and on foot, to share in this holy festival; of the chants, the joy, and of the multitudes of the poor that are fed in the Name of the Lord.

Several songs were interspersed, and the service was closed by meditation, after which Swami invited all those present to partake of the *prasad* saying that Sri Ramakrishna never liked anyone to go away from His Presence without being offered something.

A large altar was built for the occasion, in the center of which the picture of Sri Ramakrishna was placed while around and beneath it was massed a most beautiful garniture of flowers, tulips, lilies, carnations, fruit blossoms, ferns, smilax and other greens. Seven candles burned in a candle-stick on the left side of the altar, while incense sent its purifying fragrance from an incense-burner on the other side.

A large table at one side, near the altar, was filled with offerings: nuts, candies, cakes, dates, figs, and fruits of various kinds. These offerings, as also the flowers, were the loving gifts of students devoted to the work. A generous collection was also received to be sent to India for relief of the poor.

On Sunday morning, the 13th, in continuing the Birthday celebration, Swami Abhedananda's topic was "A Real Mahatma." His audience listened with rapt attention as he brought out point after point in his Master's teaching—a teaching demonstrated before him by his Master's life. A poem to "Sri Ramakrishna," offering the flowers and fruits of all virtues to Him, was read by one of the students, and the service was closed by the usual meditation and the benediction by Swami.

On Sunday evening a number of the students went to the Hindu Temple, where services of like nature were held during the day by Swami Prakashananda. Swami Abhedananda was the guest, by courtesy, and after an address by the former, was called upon to speak. With the directness and certitude of one who was not only witness but part of this remarkable drama, he recalled the wonderful events. He told of His great compassion: how during the final days when doctors had forbidden any exertion and given strict orders that no one was to be allowed to see Him, the Master could not bear that any who needed His words of inspiration should be turned away. He said that Sri Ramakrishna never tried to convert anyone, but urged each one to be sincere in his own path or religion. That he questioned, Why should Christians call themselves sinners? for "as one thinketh so he becomes;" and saying, that they should claim themselves children of God—which is the truth. Swami contrasted the Pauline teaching with that of Christ, and charged that those who call themselves Christians are not truly following Christ's teaching, which was the path of complete renunciation; but as very few can practise it in this age, a new ideal of harmonizing God and the world through the path of love and devotion was the great message of Sri Ramakrishna—the latest Divine Incarnation.

On Tuesday, March 8th, Swami Abhedananda was the guest of honor at the home of a prominent Episcopal minister of this city. The noted Bishop and his wife were invited to meet him, and in the course of his conversation Swamiji explained to them the relation between Christianity and religion of Vedanta.

On Saturday afternoon, March 26th, Swami Abhedananda spoke at the Paul Elder Galleay. His subject was Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem, "Brahma," which he traced to its real origin.

The Annual report of the Ramkrishna Mission charitable Dispensary, Belur, District Howrah for the year 1920.

The work of the dispensary has been steadily and rapidly growing. While in 1918 the total number of patients treated was only 1,000, in the year under report the number rose to 12514 of which 3872 represented new cases and the rest repeated ones, the careful treatment of the patients by the workers of the mission, supplemented, as it was by the expert advice of several experienced and skilful medical men in complicated cases, has made this charitable dispensary better known to the surrounding places than before. When necessary, patients, are treated in their homes and arrangements for proper diets as well as free distribution of diets to all from the Dispensary so far as possible are made.

The Bally Municipality have allowed a generous contribution of Rs. 120 - per annum since April 1917.

Our best thanks are also to the Bengal and Pharmaceutical works Ltd., Calcutta : the Indian Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works ; also to many chemists and Kavirajas who helped the institution with medicines etc.,

Our special thanks are due to Messrs. B. K. Paul and Co., whose generous assistance ungrudgingly given, has been of the utmost help to the dispensary ; they supplied the greater part of the annual stock of medicines free of cost and sometimes even articles of diet for poor patients also free of charge. It is needless to say that the help received from above firm was found doubly valuable in these hard times. May the lord bless them and other helpers for their disinterested charity.

As it is a philanthropic Institution and affords help to all alike without distinction of caste or creed, we expect with every assurance sympathetic response from every quarter of our country, so that, the Institution may prove a real refuge for the sick and the poor.

All contributions in the shape of money and Medical necessities are accepted and acknowledged most thankfully by (1) The President R. K. Mission, Belur P. O. HOWRAH. (2) The Secretary, R. K. Mission, Udbodhan Office, Bagbazar, CALCUTTA.

Sri Ramakrishna Girls' School which was established some fifteen years ago under the benign inspiration of His Holiness the late Swami Ramakrishnanandaji and which was hitherto under a private management, has now been handed over to the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras branch. Efforts are being made to develop it into an ideal institution.

As satisfaction in the rain:—as rain helps the production of crops and brings an appearance of freshness in nature by adorning it with green verdure, a feeling of satisfaction is always associated with rain in India, and that cheerfulness of these rains should be meditated upon as the expression of Brahman.

As fame in cattle:—In former times, cattle used to be considered as great wealth, being of supreme value to the agricultural life and so much fame is to be attached to their possession.

As procreation . . . organ:—i. e., the power of procreation which causes relative immortality by perpetuating the race and multiplying the species, and whose expression gives pleasurable sensation to man; according to the Upanishadic lore, the Ananda of procreation is one of the expressions of Brahman through the satisfaction of Its will to procreate, which is the rationale of Nature's evolution or creation.

As all in the sky :—As the sky or the ether pervades all objects so its all-pervasiveness should be contemplated upon as Brahman.

All objects of desire . . . to him :—i. e., all desirable objects will come to him at his will.

As the destructive aspect of Brahman:—It is said in the Chhandogya upanishad that in Vayu, all the other Devas such as Vidyut (lightning), Vristi (rain), Chandrama (the moon), Aditya (the sun) and Agni (fire) get their final dissolution. So vayu is the destructive aspect of Brahman ; as vayu is the same as ether in its higher aspect, the ether or the Akasha is the great destructive aspect of Brahman i. e., in which all other objects merge in final dissolution.

Note :—Beginning from 'Prana is the food and body is the consumer of food etc. of the seventh chapter of this valli up to here what has been spoken of, refers only to Karya Brahman or the Brahman in its aspect of creation and all the merits that are ascribed here to accrue from different meditation, also refer to persons who are still in ignorance about the permanence of Brahman. But these relations of consumer and the consumed, the enjoyer and the enjoyed etc. do not exist in any way in Brahman or at man itself, for they are mere superimpositive attributes of Brahman ; so a true seeker of final emancipation need not do such meditations. For him is the meditation of Brahman in supreme unity of life, as would be described hereafter.]

CHAPTER XI.

स यश्चायं पुरुषे । यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः । स य
एवंवित् । अस्माल्लोकात्प्रेत्य । एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं
प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं
विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य इमा-
ल्लोकान्कामाक्षी कामरूप्यनुसंचरन् । एतत्साम गायन्नास्ते ।

सः he यः who च again अयं this पुरुषे in man यः who च and
असौ in that आदित्ये in the sun. सः he एकः one सः he यः who
एवंवित् knows thus अस्मात् from this लोकात् world प्रेत्य having
departed एतम् this अन्नमयम् consisting of food आत्मानम् self
उपसंक्रम्य having attained एतं this प्राणमयम् consisting of Prana
आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रम्य having reached एतं this मनोमयम् consisting
of manas आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रम्य having attained एतं this विज्ञानमयम्
consisting of Buddhi आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रम्य having attained एतं
this आनन्दमयम् consisting of ananda or joy आत्मानम् self उपसंक्रम्य
having reached इमान् these लोकान् these worlds कामाक्षी enjoying food
according to his desires कामरूपी assuming forms according to
his wishes अनुसंचरन् traversing एतत् this साम the Sama song गायन्
singing आस्ते exists.

He who is in man and he who is in the sun, both
are the same. He who knows this after having departed
from this world and attaining the self consisted of food,
(next) attaining the self consisting of the Pranas, (again)
attaining the self consisted of the *Manas*, then attaining
the self consisted of *Buddhi* and lastly attaining the self
consisted of bliss, and enjoying food according to his
desires and assuming forms according to his wishes,
travels through these worlds, and sings the following
Sama song.

He who..... the self consisted of bliss—Vide note on Ananda
Valli. Chapter VIII.

Enjoying food according to his desires—i.e., enjoying whatever
objects he desires to enjoy, thereby the sruti is again emphasising
the same fact that the knower of Brahman by becoming one with
Brahman, the Universal Being enjoys all objects of desire at once.
Nothing in the universe exists by itself except in and through the
Supreme Brahman who is alone the one reality of life and existence,
the pure principle of consciousness, the Infinite Bliss.

Assuming forms according to his wishes.—It may mean either
that he assumes the various forms as he pleases, or by becoming
one with Brahman all the multiple aspects of the Supreme Being
as manifest within the fourteen worlds are felt to be as his, yet
they bind him not.

Travels through these worlds.—i.e., by realising the unity of all
these worlds with his own self, he feels himself like Brahman
pervading through them all, and as if he is travelling through them,
although in reality his inner consciousness reposes in the
transcendental region or the Absolute.

Sings the sama song—*Sama* is a particular set of *Mantras*
peculiarly adapted to singing. But here the word is used with a
special force indicative of sameness (*Samattwa*), so, according to
Sankara it indirectly refers to Brahman also inasmuch as He
pervades equally through all. And singing the *sama* song means
proclaiming to the world the unity of his being with the whole
universe and Brahman.

हा रेवु हा रेवु हा रेवु । अहमन्नमहमन्नमहमन्नम् । अहमन्नादो
३८हमन्नादो २८हमन्नादः । अहं श्लोककृदहंश्लोककृदहं श्लोककृत् ।
अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋता स्य । पूर्वं देवेभ्यो २मृतस्य नाहं भायि ।
यो मा ददाति स इदेव मा रेवाः अहमन्नमन्नमदन्तमा ३भि । अहं
विश्वं भुवनमभ्यनवां ३ । सुवर्णज्योतीः । य एवं वेद । इत्युपनिषत् ।

हा रेवु Oh. अहं I अन्नम् food. अहं I अन्नादः eater of food अहं
1 श्लोककृत् the combining agent. अहं I अस्मि am प्रथमजा the first
born अस्तस्य among the real objects. देवेभ्यः to gods पूर्वं prior,
(senior) अमृतस्य of the immortality नामाभि (नाभि) the centre, the
basis यः who मा me ददाति gives सः he इदेव thus. वरिष्य अन्नाः saves

अहं I अन्नम् food अन्नम् food अदन्तम् eater अग्नि eat. अहं I विश्व all
 भुवनम् creation अभ्यभवा destroy सुवर्णः the solar (Golden) उयोत्तीः
 radiance यः who एवं thus वेद knows इति so far उपनिषत् Upanishad.

Oh, I am the food, I am the food, I am the food ! I
 the food-eater, I the food-eater, I the food-eater ! I am the
 combining agent, I the combining agent, I the combining
 agent ! I am the first born of all real objects, (I am)
 senior to gods, the centre of all immortality. Whoever
 gives me does surely save thus. I the food eat him who
 eats food. I am all and destroy all beings. I am
 effulgent like the sun. He who knows thus (attains the
 aforesaid results). This is the Upanishad.

Oh—This is an expression of extreme wonder.

I am food etc.—i.e., though I am the Absolute, beyond all
 taint of duality, yet the wonder of it is that I am myself both the
 food and the food eater, the enjoyer and the object of enjoyment,
 the subject and the object. The whole universe is divided into
 these two aspects and they both belong to the same Brahman.
 The three-fold repetition of the assertions is meant to express
 extreme wonderment which implies that I who was thinking once
 prior to the dawn of knowledge that I was the enjoyer only now
 feel the unity of my being with Brahman and hence appearing in
 that dual aspect of the enjoyer and the enjoyed.

I am the combining agent—i.e., the principle of consciousness
 which brings about the union between the enjoyer and the objects
 of enjoyment.

First-born—the Hiranyagarbha.

Whoever gives... thus—i.e., whoever gives this wonderful
 knowledge of the unity of the Atman to others seeking the truth
 assuredly saves them from the miseries of life.

I the food.....eats food—i.e., I though am food in one aspect
 do still punish him who eats himself food without giving it to
 others. By his selfishness he loses all prospects of getting Self-
 knowledge.

Note—It is needless to point out here that these are the
utterances of the man who has realised the unity of his Atman
with the universal Being and lost all his little individuality
in Brahman. His consciousness has become one with that of the
Isvara or the Saguna Brahman.

The end of the Taittiriya Upanishad.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
 And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
 Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda.

His Marriage and return to Dakshineswar.

But to, return to our story, all the agents as were sent out in
 search of the bride, returned without the news of a desirable bride;
 and even in a few likely cases, the rate of dowry, demanded by the
 fathers, was so high, that Rameswar could not dare to aspire there
 for a happy settlement, being as he was further instructed by his
 neighbours not to venture into such a costly enterprise ! This indeed,
 much upset Chandradevi's mind and for her, there could not be
 any peace until the bride of the marriage was found,—a marriage
 which was not meant to compensate for happiness, emptied by
 the demise of her godly husband and her eldest son Ramkumar, but
 only as a check to any possible wrecking of her son's future prospects.
 So again the eager search went on for the bride till repeated failures
 in the attempt brought on the mother and brother a deep dejection
 and anxiety, when Sri Ramakrishna one day, in an inspired mood,
 said, "Vain is your search for the bride in promiscuous places.
 Go to S. Ramachandra Mukhopadhyaya's place at Jayramvati;
 there she waits marked for me !"

Relying little on those words, they however sent an agent to
 make enquiries in the prescribed house, who returned with the news
 that other considerations aside, the girl was however a mere infant,
 barely completing her fifth year. But in absence of a better bride,

and at the unexpected turning up of the present party, mother Chandra was at last constrained to give her permission to the wedding ; so that the preliminary negotiations being over in a few days, S]. Rameswar, on an auspicious day and in auspicious hour,—during the last part of Vaisakha of 1266 B. S. (1859 A. D.)—at the beginning of the Master's twenty-fourth year, took him to S]. Ramachandra Mukhopadhyaya's house at Jayramvati, situated four miles to the west and had him wedded with his daughter. A dowry of Rs. 300 was granted to the bride's party.

We may rightly conclude that Chandradevi was greatly consoled at Gadadhar's marriage being done, looking upon her son, extending the same respectful submission to her command in this matter as in others, as a mark of Divine favour returned to the family, without which, as she thought, the whole ceremony could not be performed so smoothly and successfully. Besides the facts that her son's restless spirit could be made to settle down to a homely life, a bride could be secured from a respectable house and the most difficult matter of the sinews of war could so unexpectedly be managed, led her irresistibly to ascribe them to the benign influence of Providence, and derive therefrom great accession of happiness. But undoubtedly this unalloyed happiness of hers was fated to be clouded in a measure, when in a few days, the jewels which she had borrowed from the neighbour Lahas in order to decorate the person of the bride on the wedding day, had to be returned to their owner, bringing thus into high relief the dire poverty of the family. Tears filled her eyes at the cruel thought of snatching the ornaments from the person of the new bride whom she had already given a most loving corner in her heart, as the beloved of her dear son. This anguished struggle of the mother, however, did not long evade the notice of the son, who in a few words, pacified her agonised regrets and carefully took off the ornaments from the sleeping and unconscious wife and sent them off to the Lahas. This did not end this painful episode ; for when on awaking, the girl enquired after the missing jewels, mother Chandra could only take her into her loving embrace and tearfully promise her that Gadadhar would present her with far precious jewelleries ; but the greatest affliction that pierced her loving heart, was when the bride's uncle on a visit to their home on the same day, came to know of the incident and showing the greatest displeasure at their conduct, carried back his niece to her father's home. But the Master laughed away the seriousness of the situation, arguing that the marriage could by no means be nullified now that it had been once celebrated ; and by the sunshine

of boyish jokes and funs, easily dispelled the darkly shadows of unhappiness that had overcast his mother's mind.

For nearly one year and seven months following his marriage, the Master remained at Kamarpukur, his mother refusing to deprive herself of the pleasure of his company, secured after such a long absence, apprehending probably a recurrence of his disease, in case he left for Calcutta before a full and complete recovery. In the month of Agrahayana of 1267 B. S. (1860 A. D.) the bride having attained her seventh year, the Master went to pass a few days at his father-in-law's in observance of the family tradition, and returned on a day of good omens, with his wife to Kamarpukur. Shortly after, he resolved on coming back to Calcutta, despite loving protestations from his mother and brother, his affectionate heart being painfully conscious of the dire wants that beset his family in everyday life ; and indeed very soon returned to Dakshineswar to resume the priest's service in the Mother's temple.

A few days of the priest's life, however, resulted in such an intense concentration of mind in the worship that all concerns of the family at Kamarpukur lay brushed aside to a forgotten corner of his heart, and there remained only the thought of how he would achieve the Mother's divine vision uninterrupted through day and night and in all whatever exist. Incessant recollectedness, contemplation, *japam* and meditation imparted a ruddy hue to his chest, an excruciating burning pain prevailed all over the body, sleep fled far off from his eyes, and the world and its affairs appeared to him as very poison ; and only a previous like experience saved him from being absolutely overwhelmed by them.

We have it on the authority of Hridoy that under the direction of Mathur Babu, the well-renowned Kaviraj Gangaprasad Sen of Calcutta treated the Master with various pills and medicated oils such as *Chaturmukha* and *Madhyamanarayana*, in order to cure the attack of insomnia and the burning sensation on the body ; and though showing little success, received from time to time, visits from him and Hridoy in his Calcutta home. There one day, so we were told by the Master, while receiving a fresh prescription from Kaviraj Sen, he attracted the attention of another Kaviraj* from Eastern Bengal, who was present there, and who after a careful diagnosis of his supposed disease, declared that it was beyond the curative powers of human medicine, being produced in fact by his intense spiritual exercises, bringing on him an apparent madness of Divine ecstasy ; and though his diagnosis was at that time little

* He is, according to another report, identified with Sriut Durgaprasad, brother of Kaviraj Sen.

respected, he was, according to the Master, the first man to make the true estimation of his state. Thus in the passing of days, his malady grew in intensity, defying as it were the various solicitous attempts on the part of Mathur Babu and other friends to effect a remedy of this uncommon ailment.

When Chandradevi was apprised of this calamitous news, she, as the last resource, resolved to secure Divine help for the deliverance of her son and accordingly lay prostrate in fast and prayer before 'Burho Siva', the well-known 'living' God of Kamarpukur, where she was blessed with Divine command to make her devotional supplications to the Siva at Mukundapur. Nothing undeterred by the unconventionality of the God's injunction inasmuch as the Mukundapur Siva had never been visited before with a similar prayer, the old lady made her eager way to Him, and after nearly three days' prayerful waiting, was vouchsafed in dream the divine vision of the white form of the Lord in tiger skin, crowned with effulgent matted locks, consoling her with the words: 'Fear not! thy son is not insane; it is Divine inspiration that has brought this condition on him!' This filled the devoted soul of Chandradevi with great peace and comfort; and after making worshipful offerings to the Lord, she returned home and passed her days in prayer and worship of the family deities Raghuvira and Sitala, for the attainment of her son's mental peace. Henceforth, we are told, Lord Siva of Mukundapur has been successfully visited by many a man and woman with similar prayers.

Alluding to this period of his life, the Master has often told us, "The ordinary man will die, would he suffer but a fourth of the spiritual metamorphosis which my body and mind underwent; and of this (*i. e.* his body) too, the same would have been the fate, only the major portion of my days was fortunately passed in the ecstatic oblivion of Mother's divine vision! Henceforth for six long years, not a wink of sleep ever visited my eyes and the eyelids would never close, try though I might. All sense of time vanished from me and the body idea was totally obliterated. A terrible fear would seize me at the slightest reversion of the mind from Mother to the body; and often the fear came if I had really run mad! I would stand before my image in a mirror, and when on poking my eyes, I would find them unresponsive, I would burst into tears in terror, and pray to the Mother, 'O Mother, is that the result of all my prayers and absolute reliance on Thee that Thou hast visited me with an incurable disease?' But next the alternating thought would come, 'O Mother, whatever fate may overtake my body, do Thou never forsake me! Vouchsafe me Thy vision and Thy mercy! O

Mother, have I not taken complete shelter in Thy lotus-feet? But Thee, O Mother, I have no other refuge! And thus praying tearfully, my mind would be filled with a strange enthusiasm, creating an unbounded disgust for the body, and would lose itself in the comfort of the Mother's divine vision and consoling words!"

It was during these times that an experience of a very startling nature, revealing Divine manifestation in Sri Ramakrishna, befell Mathuranath through the Divine grace. One day the Master, lost in the depth of his usually intense spiritual contemplations, was pacing the solitary north-eastern veranda of his apartment, which, being but at a little distance from a part of the bungalow or 'the Babus' Kuthi' as it is called, situated between the Panchavati and the Temple quadrangle, could be distinctly observed from that section of the Kuthi. There sat Mathur Babu in his drawing room, reflecting alternately on his worldly affairs and Sri Ramakrishna whose moving figure he was noticing from time to time. The Master was quite unconscious of being the object of Mathur Babu's attention; or the great disparity between their worldly position, as well as his consciousness of Mathur Babu's kindly protection alone saving him from being thrown out of the temple service, looked upon as he was as a crazy, impure fool, would have induced him to fight shy of his attentive notice. But strange! all on a sudden, Mathur Babu hurried up to where the Master was walking and humbly clasping his feet, began to shed tears!

"What are you doing?" said I, so the Master told us, "you are the master of the temple, the Rani's son-in-law. What would people say, if they see you like this? Be calm and get up!" Long he remained deaf to my protests, till at last, being calmed down, he told me the whole story,—he had a strange Divine vision! He said crying, 'Baba, as you were pacing up and down, I clearly saw that when you were coming forward this way, you were no longer yourself,—you were Mother Herself of the temple; and when you turned your back, you were Mahadeva Himself! At first I thought, it was a mere hallucination; but I rubbed well my eyes and looked, it was yet the same! And the more I observed, the more I found you the same!' And though I said, 'I did not know anything of it, he would not take my words; and I was afraid, if this affair reaches the ears of the Rani, she might think, I had charmed him! After a long attempt, I was able to pacify him. Do you think, it was for nothing, he did so much for me and loved me so dearly? Mother has many times revealed many things to him. But his horoscope you know, mentioned that his *Islam*, out of infinite mercy for him, would move with and protect him in an embodied form!'"

This wonderful revelation of the Master's divinity had the impelling effect of creating a greater depth of faith and devotion in his relation to the Master. Such supernatural incidents unmistakably indicate that the Divine Will forged these strong bonds of love between them, only that Mathur Babu might stand unflinching and serviceful during the strenuous days of the Master's Sadhana. And we stand awe-struck before the revelation of the Mother's inscrutable and loving ways in the building up of the Master's body and mind to a fit instrument for emanating spiritual powers, in order to revive true spirituality in this age of scepticism, materialism and atheism !

VEDANTA AND INDIAN NATIONALISM.

II.

BY

Swami Sharvananda.

This dual conception of the Life of Vedanta was sought to be realised in the work-a-day life through various social institutions in ancient India. As it has been said before, Mukti was emphasised as the परमपुरुषार्थ, the supreme goal of human life and this Mukti means nothing else but the attainment of the full consciousness of that absolute principle of life called the Atman. But much evolution of life and development of mind is necessary before one can realise that state. Hence society was conceived as the fit instrument to help each individual soul to realise that goal by quickening its evolution. Here it is necessary to state in clear terms that the leaders of thought in ancient India never considered for a single moment that an individual exists for the society ; so all those processes of ' pruning and curbing ' which are so glaringly manifest in the modern societies of the West, were completely absent in the scheme of life in ancient Indian societies. On the other hand they maintained that the society exists for the individual, —that it should be such as to be capable of taking every individual by the hand and raise him up to higher and higher rungs of the ladder of evolution. So the society in ancient India was more a form of collective life based upon mutual co-operation and good will than an organism possessing a distinct individuality of its own, formed by the collective consciousness of the people and which exists more to supersede the individual interest than to subserve it. And that is why we fail to find the organismal type of nationalism in the Aryavartta of yore. But there was a guiding principle that controlled

life—both communal and individual. This principle was not invented by the advanced thinkers of the age as the expedient means to the attainment of efficiency of mundane life through the affluence of the nation. The principle was no other than the law of Life itself which operates throughout the whole domain of the living. The Indian sages discovered it and called it Dharma inasmuch as ' it sustains life and helps its progress.' And this Dharma controlled and guided the king and the commoner alike. The royal potentate in his purple and gold, in spite of his absolute power, was as much bound to look up to this Dharma for his guidance as the poor peasant toiling and sweating in his field. And this Dharma like true law of nature was purely individualistic in its operation, i.e., it showed every individual the path of progress and bliss that lay before him and it took full cognizance of all the interests of life—collective as well as individual.

As it has been said before, Vedanta recognized but one life, the universal, the absolute ; though unitary and absolutely self-poised in its transcendental aspect, yet life is fragmented into infinite parts in its relative aspect. And true evolution of these fragments consists in their realisation of that absolute value of theirs. So Dharma urges each individual soul, a fragment of that universal life to purify its nature by adopting a certain course of conduct which would purge off all those impurities of consciousness, which petrify it into an individual being and thus, through a gradual process of elimination of these individualising factors to attain finally the absolute consciousness. This has been beautifully described in the Vedanta as soul's acquirement of its own lost kingdom,—स्वराज्यसिद्धि

Hence we see in the scheme of life based upon such lofty conception of soul and life as enunciated by Vedanta, there can be no room for that sort of nationalism, which evokes in the national mind an individualistic consciousness, which separates people from people and which is as much egoistic in the outlook of life and as much derogatory from the standpoint of the absolute value of life as the selfish individualism of a savage. But let it be made clear here that Dharma does recognize the society, social life and the social obligations and exhorts every individual to hold them in high esteem and discharge his social duties taking them as necessary steps to his self-emolument. So we see that the nationalism of India which was based upon Vedanta and nurtured by Dharma cannot but be one of cultural type where self-sacrifice and service formed the main plank and Government and political life played but little part.

When we close our eyes and try to think of our ancient India, the first vision that rises before our mind's eye is that of a sunny village, smiling with contentment and plenitude, yet wearing a robe of serenity indicative of its spiritual consciousness. It does not extend over miles for its expansion, nor can it boast of teeming millions for its population, yet it is well-spread over fields and dales and extends through shaded alleys and broad walks with plenty of gardens, ponds and meadows. In the centre of each village, as if constituting its very heart rises the dome of a temple, or a cluster of temples—may be of a humble structure. Just near the temple there are rows of lowly huts belonging to the Brahmins of the village. They constitute the priests and teachers of the village and are the custodians of both the secular and spiritual culture of the people. On the one hand by performing the priestly functions in the temple as well as in individual families, they minister to the spiritual wants of the village-community, on the other in their unpretentious village schools they teach from the primary three R's to the subtlest truths of philosophy and metaphysics. At times they are found to soar into such a giddy height of philosophical eminence or logical subtleties that even an well-accomplished modern mind will stagger to look up. At times the poetry of their soul will burst forth in the songs of a Kalidas or a Bhavabhuti and so much of a poetic soul they have that it expresses itself even in such prosaic subjects of thought as Mathematics, Science and Polity,—as if their mind is so much imbued with the beauty of the soul that they cannot help seeing it reflected on everything their eyes meet with. The divine alchemy transmutes even the baser metal into gold! Then, the simplicity and cheapness of their life! Their humble cottage devoid of all that comes in the train of mundane wealth, yet scrupulously clean and filled with an atmosphere of religious sanctity, amply testifies to the mode of life they live in it. Plain living and high thinking is writ large on their brow. Their wealth consists in their poverty and self-abnegation and that is why they have got the appellation of Tapodhana तपोधन.

Highest honour is accorded to this poor Brahmana of the village. Even though clothed in tattered rags, even the King will place his diadem at his feet and remain standing in humble submission. His character, his learning and above all his spiritual power are considered as the greatest asset of the nation. The King and commoner all in their moments of trials and tribulations repair to his lowly cottage and humbly seek his precious counsel; by his life he keeps the lamp of Dharma burning in the nation. In short the unambitious spiritual

Brahmin is to the nation what the head is to the body-politic. Next to Brahmin houses are situated more pretentious buildings, indicating power and wealth of the owners. They belong to Kshatriyas and Vaisyas of the village. The Kshatriyas are either landlords or soldiers in charge of maintaining peace and order in the village-community. The chief of them constitutes the village magnate who along with a few elders of the village forms the court of justice of the village called Panchayet and administers justice to all alike, being guided by the principles of Dharma. He also collects revenue for the King and recruits soldiers for the royal army. He should also see that every one of the village obeys the laws of Dharma and performs his duties allotted to him by his birth and position in the society, for the well-being of the village community. But as a Kshatriya, the chief duty of his is to protect the weak, to uphold the virtuous and punish the wicked, and thus he forms the pillar of the civic life of the village. For his guidance and control no law-codes are sent from the capital but the poor Brahmin neighbours of his tell him the code of moral and spiritual laws that Nature has framed for man and he obeys them to the best of his conscience and capacity.

So the Kshatriya stands to the village-community in the same relation as the hands do to the body-politic. The Vaisya is the most important factor of the economical life of the village. He tills the soil on whose harvest the life of the village depends and carries on the import and export trade of the village and he is also the banker of the place. It is he who by his commercial enterprises brings into contact the different parts of the world and opens for the village various channels of communication with the country at large. He further supplies the village with money and other necessities of life by supporting its various arts and crafts; yet all these occupations of his life are to be considered by him as Dharma, i.e., his general obligations and duties to the society. He is to the village-community what the trunk is to the body-politic, the main supporter and feeder of life.

Then there are the classes of artisans, craftsmen and others who live principally by manual labour. These have their dwellings at the outskirts of the village and complete the members of the village-family. Their manual labour furnishes vitality to the village life and without them the village-community would be but a crippled organism. So they are often compared to the feet of the body-politic not for their low position but more for their being the mainstay of the village-community, even as the feet are to the animal organism.

In fact, each village-community looks like a big family, self-contained and self-sufficient, bound together by a common tie of the spirit of love, self-sacrifice and co-operation, where each member is anxious to help others in gaining peace and comfort in this life and the heavenly beatitude in the other. All the four castes work in perfect harmony for the up-keep of the life of the village-community, minimise the struggle for existence to the lowest extent by blocking all scope of competition and afford ample opportunity and leisure through the most judicious method of distribution of labour as described above to each individual member of the village-family, to develop himself spiritually that he may progress towards the realisation of that ultimate goal of life, Mukti. Moreover, by being within the communal life of the village, every one of the village-community is forced to learn the salubrious lessons of contentment, simplicity, self-control, self-sacrifice and service.

And all these virtues naturally open for him the gate of spiritual culture and spiritual realisation. Further, from the chiming of the temple-bell to the slow rustling sound of the little rivulet, from the scarlet Dawn and the rosy-hued morning sun to the sombre sky of the dusk—all remind him of but one truth, the spiritual reality of life. His omnipresent God lives not only in his shrine room, but also in his markets and harvest field, on the hill-tops and wild groves, in the confluence of rivers and in fact in all those places where nature is sublime. And at every turn he is told by the elders of his duties, his Dharma and that his life is but an oblation on the altar of his Deity.

Thus the life of the entire village is deeply coloured with the golden hue of God-devotion and spirituality and it moves on consciously but to one goal, the realisation of the spiritual life. Though there existed four divisions of caste, or better, classes, their chief aim was more to facilitate the division of labour and smooth the course of life than to give scope for self-aggrandisement and scrambling for privilege. In fact, in the scheme of Varnashramadharma of ancient India, there was no question of privilege or prerogative of birth. The scheme was laid strictly in accordance with the individual capacity and virtues acquired by one's birth or earned in one's life.

It is the 'guna,' the qualities—the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic nature that counted foremost and not mere physical birth; and the most beautiful point of this caste system is in its spiritual estimate of life: the Brahmana devoid of all wealth and worldly possessions but rich in intellectual and spiritual knowledge stands at the head

of the whole community. Society gives no wealth, no power to the poor Brahman but accords the highest honour and its leadership to him. Truly, in the spiritual scheme of life he alone can be the leader, the guide of the society, whose glory is in his poverty and non-possession, whose pride is in his character and spirituality, who has no axe of his own to grind and whose vision is not blurred by passions and prejudices. So the Sattvic Brahmana sits at the helm of the social ship. The Rajasic Kshatriya full of wonderful energy and ambitions for worldly possession is the greatest spring of social activity and as his Rajasic nature is controlled 'by Sattva Guna', he is accorded the second place in the point of honour; but society gave him the power of rulership. He became the main disburser of the wealth of the people and protector of individual rights and properties. But if he was devoid of character and Dharma neither any power nor position was given to him. The wealthy Vaisya is relegated to the third place owing to his want of high spiritual culture or intellectual knowledge; his sole quest being earning of money and by the virtue of his nature, his ambition being of a lower order, his spiritual value is much less than even that of the Kshatriya. The Tamasic Sudra as a rule, devoid of all the graces of head and heart for the very reason of his Tamasic nature, oblivious of the spiritual truths of life, is given the fourth place. But one thing should be told here that this caste system by setting limitation of duties to each individual has barred on one hand the chance of rivalry and competition, but also thwarted to a great extent on the other the possibility of getting worldly prosperity and position. But it is true only in the case of worldly prosperity. But in spiritual matters the most fallen Sudra has the same chance of self-improvement as the exalted Brahmana. A little close study of this scheme of life as based upon this caste-system makes it clear that the spiritual culture of the soul used to be the standard of evaluation of the social unit in ancient India. And herein lay the secret of the continuance of the spiritual culture of India through so many thousands of years.

Before I proceed further, let me make it clear that when I speak of the four castes I never mean the fossilised caste system of the present day. The present caste system is but a ludicrous mockery of what obtained in ancient India. There has set in a veritable 'Varnasankara', an intermixture of castes, in the real sense of the term, and so we find to-day a son of a Brahman betraying tendencies worse than those of a Sudra and the so-called Sudra possessing all the noble qualities of a real Brahmana. The divisions of the Varnas which are really based upon the three 'gunas' and the

individual Samskaras (*Guna* and *Karma*) and are fostered by Dharma, have got fossilised into hide-bound castes of birth with no reference either to Guna or Dharma.

Though besides these villages there existed many cities sprinkled all over the ancient Aryavartta, where mighty monarchs and lesser potentates used to hold their court and wield their sceptres, yet these cities never formed a potent factor of the national life. Their virtues and vices made but little influence on the general trend of life of the country at large. The real nation lived in the villages and in the cottages. And these villages were the real home of the cultural nationalism we spoke of before. And as there existed no intimate relation between these villages and the royal cities, politics never made any inroad into the inner life of the *real* nation and political nationalism never appeared as a necessity before it. And that is also the very reason why we find that all political cataclysms and changes of rulers affected but little the even flow of the life of the Hindus.

The Kings and Emperors lived in the cities, collected revenues, fostered arts, science and religion of the country, encouraged learning by their patronage, opened gates of prosperity to the more ambitious, and led their standing army to the battle-field either for a conquest or for the protection of the country, but they never constituted the Master-Destiny of the nation.

AN EVALUATION OF SOME OF THE WESTERN CULTURAL CONCEPTS.

BY

Brahmachari Sharvachitanya.

Now-a-days the belief is prevalent amongst many of the Western people that the salvation of the world rests on the Western culture. The other countries are inhabited by pagans and heathens. This feeling is so prevalent in the West that they never hesitate to make most foolish and ungenerous remarks about India as "barbarous, barbarians and barbarism." It is nothing but a glaring display of their utter ignorance of the Eastern culture and civilisation.

It is more deplorable and piteous that some of the Indians have caught the frenzy that whatever is in the West, is to be adopted for the salvation of India. The craze of grafting Western culture on Indian soil travelled throughout the land through the people

whose imagination is captured and blinded by the specious and glittering, though ephemeral, appearance of the material prosperity of the West. The gaudy but temporal outlook of modern Eur-America is indeed attractive and fascinating. But the people of the age which is supposed to be the more critical and scientific, should not take up anything and every thing, without scrutinising the pros and cons of it. It is a pity that the eyes of the most of our leaders who have a glorious past, are dazzled by the scientific achievements of the West. So they try to mould our cultural activity according to the Western lines. They totally ignore the past history of India.

Since the dawn of civilisation that broke out first on the earth, not in any other country but in the spiritual soil of India, she was playing the most important part in the world's drama. The fountain spring of Indian civilisation is spirituality and spirituality alone. The Babylonian, the Assyrian and Greeko-Roman civilisations were purely intellectual. Now, let us see the bedrock on which the modern Western culture is constructed. It is based on Materialism, Darwinism, one necessary offshot of it and Hegelianism. These are the fountain springs of modern activities and "isms." If we analyse all the "isms" of the West, we can easily classify almost all of them under these two heads, though the latter is the philosophical basis of some of the Western churches and some of the religious societies of the East who try to transplant Western elements in quite a different atmosphere and soil.

We, as the seekers of truth shall consider the theory of materialism itself in different aspects.

At a survey of the history of philosophy it is evident that the great thinkers are busy to solve the riddle of the world;—the problem of being and thought, materialism and spiritualism are being handled by all the great thinkers that were ever born in this world. Many people tried to trace the origin of this world to Spirit. It cannot be gainsaid that the Hindus were mostly spiritualists. It is a tendency of great men to find out one principle to which we can reduce every phenomenon. The pluralistic theory, spiritual or material, wholly fails to solve the riddle. The tendency of science is to find out one underlying principle. The discovery of 'conservation of energy' greatly helps to come to the conclusion that everything of this world can be reduced to one principle.

While almost the whole civilised world of to-day was occupied by animals and various savage races steeped in complete darkness,

India was inhabited by the most cultured people. Before Europe and America saw the faint light of civilization, even in the spiritual soil of India there appeared a class of materialists, the Charvakas, who not only failed to found any sect, but was fortunately lost for ever in oblivion. They could not make much impression on the Hindu mind.

Empedocles and Anaxagoras paved the way for natural scientific theory of the world under the name of 'Atomism'. The first school of 'Atomists,' the static one, was quite unable to show how the atoms came to be connected as to make one whole. They were supplemented by another class of people with the dynamic theory. But that also proved to be a big failure. After the discovery of electron by J. J. Thompson it is proved that these so-called indivisible atoms can be sub-divided into electrons which are nothing but the force-centres of the Hindu scientists. If these are the force centres, then where do the atoms exist? They exist in the primordial ocean of energy, the Brahman of the Vedantists, which is the soul of all forces. So the theory that the material atoms are the ultimate principle of the universe cannot be accepted.

Descartes, the father of modern European philosophy could not help accepting three realities, God, the supreme and ultimate reality and matter and mind, the two relative, dependent realities. It was very difficult for him to explain the relation between body and mind. The Cartesian School could not successfully establish its own position. They were of opinion that the animals are but machines, though they gave a higher place to man.

After Descartes two distinct schools developed. Berkley the exponent of Subjective Idealism tried to explain every thing in the terms of spirit. He says, there exists only spirit and every thing owes its existence to the spirit. This theory is no doubt one-sided.

Another class of thinkers went to the other extreme, viz., materialists. The modern Scientists, Eastern or Western, after a diligent discovery, have made conquests in the realm of Nature. Although all the modern Scientists are materialists, they cannot clearly define the real nature of matter. Colour or sound, etc., which are defined by Locke as secondary qualities are but sensations caused by a certain order of vibrations coming in contact with our consciousness through the medium of the nerves. They do not exist in the thing, external to us. They depend for their existence upon the perceiver. They are the results of the blending of subjective and objective elements. Some think that impenetrability and extension

are the primary attributes of matter which are inherent in the thing external. John Stuart Mill defines matter as "permanent possibility of sensation" and mind as the "permanent possibility of feeling." The whole difficulty lies in the word "possibility". It means matter is that which permanently makes sensation possible. So they cannot be revealed by the senses which are no more than the doors for our sensations. All sensations direct or indirect are the results of our sense activity. Extension and impenetrability are also the results of our tactuo-muscular and other sense activities. Herbert Spencer says, "our conception of matter reduced to its simplest form is that of co-existent position that offers resistance as contrasted with our conception of space in which the co-existent positions offer no resistance." But in order to feel resistance there must be one who feels. Ernst defines matter as "infinitely extended substance."

Then again the doctrine of evolution of matter enunciated by Darwin and developed by Spencer and other followers failed to give satisfactory account of the phenomena of life and personality. Every scientific man allows that by its nature matter is inert. How can this passive thing become active? At a sudden crisis it became active. It is simply begging the question, '*petitio principii*.' The answer of the Evolutionists is tantamount to evasion of the issues to say that the circumstances make them active. The mere accident or chance cannot explain the transmission of inert matter into life movement. Martineau exposed the incapability of Darwinism in his teleological arguments (Study of Religion). This doctrine leaves many things unexplained. So it goes without saying that this theory is lame—not at all a working hypothesis.

After studying these various definitions we understand that matter is that substance of the universe which makes up the objective world or that can be perceived by the senses. Therefore, those who deny the existence of spirit are one-sided. The materialistic theory is a logical blunder, because it asserts that matter is objective but at the same time it is also the cause of the subject. It asserts that consciousness itself is matter or a product of matter and that thought is the function of the brain as digestion is the function of the stomach and the secretion of bile, the function of the liver. This theory begins with the idea that matter is objective and ends by maintaining that it has become the subjective mind. It gradually claims to show that matter produces mind which gives us the knowledge of matter,—a position which is manifestly absurd. Now we see that this theory is self contradictory and one-sided.

Goethe says : " Matter cannot exist and be operative without spirit or spirit without matter." Kant, a Copernicus in the realm of philosophy, assumes the existence of thing-in-itself which is the objective element of sensations and the knowledge of which is impossible. He could not realise that the thing-in-itself of the objective world and the Ding-an-sich of the mental world are the same although he tried to unify them by his schematism. But Post-Kantians tried to unify these two.

Fichte bases all reality on the Ego. Ego is every thing, so there can be nothing outside, no thing-in-itself in the sense of an independent extra-mental object. Nature is the phenomenal expression or reflection in the subject of universal spiritual principle. Universal life is the true reality and the individual selves are the products.

Schelling conceives existence as a dynamic process of evolution guided by a moral purpose—it cannot be grasped by the categories of science. The real and ideal being and thought are identical ; the same creative energy reveals itself in the self-conscious mind and operates in the Nature. It gradually evolves the so-called dead matter. Nature and mind, being and thought are not, however, as Spinoza thinks, two parallel aspects of the Absolute, but different steps or stages in the evolution of the absolute mind. The Absolute unfolds itself, and gradually reaches the highest stage which is self-consciousness.

Hegel builds his objective Idealism on the foundation laid by Fichte and Schelling. For him nature and mind are identical. The world is not static, it is dynamic; so thought is a process of evolution. In evolution something that is undeveloped, homogenous, develops, assumes many different opposing forms until at last we have a unity in diversity. This is his dialectic process. The opposites are opposites with respect to each other but not with respect to the unity. To Hegel the Absolute is essentially a result—the result is not the complete whole—together with the entire process of development. God is a living, moving reason of the world. He reveals himself in the world. The Divine Idea is enriched by its self-expressions in Nature just as our mind is enriched and enlarged by its experiences. Hegel, therefore, thinks that God cannot be conscious without a world and becomes fully conscious only in the minds of the human beings who make explicit the process which lies implicit in the universal absolute reason !!

Here Hegel is at his climax. There is no doubt that Hegelianism has failed to satisfy our demands for truth and religion, not to

speak of its serious philosophical absurdities. A sane man cannot but laugh at the Hegelian Absolute philosophy—a paradox. None but a Hegelian can understand the cumbrous Absolute. A Hegelian often criticises Spenser for his agnostic element showing the inconsistency and self-contradiction in his theory. But a Spencerian will blush at such wonderful Absolutism. To a Hegelian, man is greater than his God ! It is a pity that Hegel gets some votaries in India. The Neo-Hegelians, Western and Indian, are ardent advocates of Hegel, because he gives them a moral sanction to enjoy the world. He leads them to the path which is nothing but a compromise and gives consolation for their sense-enjoyment under the cloak of religion. But for this there would have been no followers or fanatic defenders.

The triple alliance of James, Bergson, and Eucken, gives a death blow to Hegelian philosophy. Schopenhauer was the first enemy of this school to expose its hollowness. He was greatly influenced by Vedanta. He says, " in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

Now, we see that both the theories of Materialism and Hegelianism are full of aberrations. They are full of contradictions, not to speak of their inability to satisfy any truth-seeker. These theories may be attractive but they cannot withstand critical analysis. So they are far below practical utility. We can vouch that they cannot ameliorate the lot of people. We shall see what mischief they have done in the economy of life in the proper sense of the term. The lion of Vedanta, the flower of Hindu philosophy, roared many centuries before Kant. It is more critical than the Kantian philosophy, as it recognises and proves the identity of the objective reality of the universe with the subjective reality of the Ego. The absolute substance is the eternal source of matter and mind and it is one. All the varieties of phenomena have come out of the one source, Brahman and into it everything will be reduced. It teaches that the eternal substance is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. Though it is one, it appears to be many by its unspeakable power (अनिर्वचनीय माया). This phenomenal world is true in the relative sense (व्यावहारिक सत्ता). The world exists only so long as there is superimposition (अव्यास) due to Avidya (अविद्या). It is the sacred person of Sankara that thundered forth the triumphant note of the Vedanta in order to save mankind from atheism and to restore purity and taught us the "infinite oneness of the soul which is the eternal sanction of all morality." Although some people

who have been deluded by their thirst after sense-enjoyment, do not clearly understand the Mayavada of Sankara and try to mislead us, the children of the sages cannot accept any coloured view. It is true that the ordinary people could not penetrate into the subtle and recondite reasonings of Sankara and were greatly influenced by the tide of atheistic propaganda of the degenerated Buddhists. The wave of Islamic invasion which began to surge on India, was stemmed by great spiritual heroes, Ramanuja, Nanak, Sri Chaitanya and others. Deathless she stood and will stand so long as spirituality remains the cultural background of her activities.

In the beginning of the first quarter of the nineteenth century Macaulay introduced his famous Minute on Indian education. The patronising organisations of the West, under the garb of bettering the condition of India, and the scions of undigested Western Culture, dazzled by the show of the West, threatened the spiritual background of Indian life by the introduction of Materialistic ideas. At this critical juncture there appeared a gigantic towering personality on the horizon of the East, whose spiritual force restored the wavering national mind to its true ideals. This is Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna whose life is itself a living contrast to the materialistic, demoralising civilisation of to-day. The advent of this sacred personality sounded the death-knell of materialistic refinement and Godless morality. The tidal wave of spirituality has dashed the distant shores of Europe and America. In his unsophisticated teachings, practical Vedanta expressed itself in homely illustrations. His spiritual experiences were the living examples of Advaita. He did not come alone; he brought with him the illustrious Swami Vivekananda and other spiritual giants of modern age. To borrow the words of Prof. James of Harvard University, "the paragon of Vedantins," the Swamiji thundered forth the universal Vedantic truths upon which the whole life of humanity is based. It is he who brought the Vedanta from the forest to the world. With the advent of Sri Ramakrishna a new era has been ushered in. It has heralded the dawn of a new Spiritual awakening and the lion of Vedanta is roaring with rejuvenated vigour.

THE UPWARD PATH OF SELF-REALISATION.

BY

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The convergence of all our scattered thoughts and activities in the direction of God-love and God-realisation is not only the true fulfilment, but the true joy, of life. Inner peace and outer renunciation are both the cause and the effect of love. They pre-suppose purity and discipline. Only then can meditative intensity be achieved, without which spiritual bliss is impossible to attain. Self-withdrawn into the recesses of meditation, we hear the voice of God, see His Eternal Form, and commune with Him.

This is the goal of life. But the process is not easy, as our lives full of desires have left upon our minds their impress in the course of many births. Without discipline and purity we cannot reverse the swollen currents of desire. Faith and the attainment of an illumined teacher are equally indispensable. We must be ever vigilant against the onslaughts of desire and pray to God for strength and aid. Only then does the Infinite love and power flow into our soul. When heroes give up lives for the motherland and the mother gives up her life for the sake of her child, how much cannot the soul give up for God? The beauty and bliss of God are eternal and perfect and hence the yearning for Him will and must be beyond all temporal motives and yearnings. When eternal love and power is by our side, why should we fear? When we can acquire the beauty and bliss of holiness, what do we care for the minor fleeting acquisitions of life? When we can have the eternal freedom of the life divine, what do we care for the half-bound freedoms of the highest worldly life?

Sorrow is proportioned to desire. Our attachments determine our self-limitation. Hence the discipline of *Nishkama Karma* is absolutely necessary. Only then we can get the immortal and unfailing weapon of detachment.

Through this discipline we rise to the discipline of Bhakti. It is the love of God, that is the secure basis of all the minor forms of love in the realm of human being. Love is the essence of our being. Hence we realise what is love without any one teaching it. In man love attains a deeper intensity because he is able to rise from the love of the body to the love of the soul. The mother's love kindles the love-power in the soul of the child. The love

power of God is both in the souls of men and in the universe. But the self-realisations of love are infinitely higher in the realm of mind than in the realm of matter and infinitely higher in the realm of the soul than in the realm of the mind. Love is the realisation of unity. It is imperfectly realised amidst the diversities and limitations of matter and is perfectly realised in the unity and freedom of the self. The lover blindly feels the unity of himself and his beloved in consequence of antenatal psychic kinship. Beauty is but the blossoming of love in the plane of vision. Hence it is that the beloved is beautiful in his eyes though not in the eyes of others. Beauty is but the objective aspect of love. Love is therefore the soul's desire for union with the soul. It is the joy of the Atman that kindles love in us, and even our blind love of the body is but a reaching out towards the soul. But if the love stops with the body, it turns into desire and brings sorrow. If it becomes the love of the soul it finally becomes the love of the Oversoul and the bliss of union with the Oversoul.

Hence it is that love is the supreme fact in life. It must discipline the soul into realisation. Let us think about it further. Heroism leads to the saving of another at the expense of our life because our love has forgotten the body. But murder kills another because the desire of the body has arrested the free flow of love towards the soul. Desire is a bargainer, and a selfish bargainer. Love is a giver, and a measuresless and unselfish giver. Hence the self-forgetting love alone becomes transformed into God-remembering Devotion (*Bhakti*).

Hence our little human loves which certainly are better than mere selfishness should not get lost in the desert sands of physical and animal life but should flow forward self-widening and self-purifying into the ambrosial ocean of Devotion. Let us realise the Divine Beauty and Bliss in each little and petty human love. Let us look through the body to the mind, through the mind to the soul, and through the soul to the Oversoul. The selfish body-loving animal love has to rise to the dignity of human love and the latter has to rise to the bliss of the Love Divine.

Cosmic consciousness (*Jnana*) is not the negation of love but the fulfilment and fruition of love. The Absolute is the Personal that has pushed aside the barriers of Personality. Love casts out selfishness and fear and the perfect and liberated soul attains cosmic consciousness. Indeed in such an exalted condition, love and realisation are interfused in bliss. Purity thus leads to Love, and Love to Truth, without cosmic love there does not arrive the cosmic vision of unity in God.

Such is the path of the spirit. Hence it behoves us who are aspirants and disciples to take particular care about purity and discipline which form the basement of this palace of God. Humility, unselfishness, self-regulatedness of life, and obedience to His commandments are our first steps in the path leading unto Him. It is here that Raja Yoga enables us to perfect our *Viveka* and *Vairagya* and leads us into *Prema bhakti* and *Jnana*. The service of all even to the extent of bearing their burdens and sufferings is absolutely necessary. Trust and faith in God and ceaseless worship of Him must be a portion of our daily life. Let us remember that only the pure in heart see God.

THE GOSPEL OF HOPE.

BY

Swami Suddhananda

From time to time God-men make their advent to give out their message of love and hope:

"Hear! Oh children of Immortal Bliss—Ye, that live in heavenly spheres!—all hear! I have known that Effulgent Supreme Being, beyond all darkness, all ignorance. Knowing Him the Jiva overcomes death. There is no other way for liberation."

Bhagavan Buddha, attaining Nirvana, proclaimed the message of *Abkaya* to a world writhing in sin and suffering, sickness and death. 'If you can cross over this ocean of *samsara* and attain Nirvana in this very life, then no more fright, no more restlessness for you.'

Addressing the Jiva thus, Bhagavan Shankara said: 'You are not Jiva, you are Shiva. Because of Avidya, of Maya, you have forgotten your real nature, and are in trouble. Gain the knowledge of your Self. Hear from the blessed lips of your Guru, the *Mahavakya* of the Vedanta "Tattvam Asi;" meditate on it; realise it. Then will you gain the vision universal; then will you attain *shanti*.'

A little over four hundred years back, Sri Krishna Chaitanya of Nadia proclaimed again to the Jiva the same message of transcending the sorrows and sufferings of life. Even now His Bhaktas and disciples overwhelmed with emotion in singing His

Sankeertanas (the holy names of the Lord) in the exultation of joy,—forget the travails of samsara at least for a moment.

Setting aside the story of a by-gone age, let us at present look at the present era. Only the other day we witnessed at Dakshineswar, on the banks of the Ganges, the extraordinary manifestation of a Divine *leela*. Let us examine the blessed lives of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, the very synthesis of Jnana and Prema, and that of his spiritual son and sannyasin disciple Swami Vivekananda. They have soothed many a weary soul and again they have proclaimed that immortality and bliss eternal are our birthright:

‘ You are the children of Mother.—Whom do you fear ? Lion that thou art, why bemean yourself and behave like a jackal ? This is their message of fearlessness, this is their gospel of life. Sri Swamiji says,

“ Sinners ? It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O Lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep ;—you are spirits free, blessed and immortal. Matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.”

Let us at present leave out of consideration the life of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. Any attempt to correctly estimate him always falls short of the mark ; we can almost say, it transcends all ordinary understanding. Swami Vivekananda we have seen, his holy contact we were privileged to share. We had the blessings of his advice, his chastisement and above all, his love. Only a short while back he gave up his body, after mixing freely with the joys and sufferings of life. Even amidst the stress and strain of difficulties, amidst duties and responsibilities of a myriad order, we have seen him as the very personification of Love and Hope. He taught us our Gita for only one day. I remember how his face glowed with inspiration and enthusiasm as he went on expounding the meaning of the verse, “ Yield not to unmanliness, O Son of Pritha ! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness, O Scorchers of thine enemies !”

“ You are a hero. This cowardliness does not befit you. *Abhi ! Abhi !* Away with fear. Fear not !” And as he said this, what a divine illumination settled down on his beautiful face ! “ Never hate them whom you call sinners,” he continued—and Oh the light of Love that flashed out of his face !

O Man ! will you not recognise yet your own men ? Whether you are rich or poor, learned or illiterate, exalted or fallen,

remember that each of you has a problem to solve, each of you harbours a restless soul. How long will you be camouflaged with the false pretences of social conventions ? Give up all theft in the chamber of your thought. Let your words tally with your convictions ; then, no more of sadhanas, no more penances. Then will you hear the inspired sayings of the Great Ones. That gospel was once uttered on the banks of the Saraswati ; has overflowed the four corners of the world surging out from Magadha ; was delivered at a crucial moment to Arjuna in the field of Kurukshetra ; has merged the whole of Bharata Varsha arising from Kerala ; has intoxicated India from its centre at Nadia ; was trumpeted again from Nazareth. The self-same Gospel has again been uttered. Again the door has been opened. Whoever wishes—come ! enter into the Kingdom of Light !

“ Arise, awake—stop not, till the goal is reached.” Social problems have only a two days’ existence. The din and turmoil of politics are fleeting. Bundle up your likes and dislikes, short-sightedness and lowliness and throw them overboard. This is the kingdom of heaven, the region of Love. Here only Anandam ! Anandam !

The Mahapurushas have come and the veil has been rent—the covering has been removed. If at this sacred moment, unblinded by the false glamour of learning or status, wealth or prosperity, you float along their divine current, then it will be smooth and easy for you to reach that haven of eternal peace and rest. The time is propitious, let no one delay any more.

Spoken in different tongues and different tones and expressed in different ways, the Gospel of the Mahapurushas breathe the same spirit. It is the scholars who find delight in the forms of expression and hair-splitting distinctions, but the Great Ones do not mind outward forms or symbols. Their words go direct and their communion is from heart to heart. They might have throughout their life time remained only in the solitude of mountain recesses, yet the hidden note of their golden teachings strike the gamut of our hearts and produce a silent symphony far more euphonious than the studied words of skilful orators or the facility and grace of elegant stylists. All our passions and attachments vanish for ever. Every body thinks them as his own. Man, immersed in worldly attachments cannot understand the truth they embody in their teachings. So we cannot grasp the full significance of their message which comes to us at times with the unexpected dart and pierciveness of a javelin, at other times with the sweet and tender touch of soft flower petals. But there is not the least shadow of doubt that under all

circumstances and moods their hearts throb only with idea of the welfare of humanity.

Why was Sri Ramanuja seized with restlessness and mounted the heights of a Gopuram to proclaim to the masses at large the holy mantram "Om Namo Narayanaya"? Why Jesus, the Christ, welcomed all: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"?

What again prompted Bhagavan Sri Krishna to declare:

"Relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not"? Why Lord Buddha willingly invoked on him all the sins and sufferings of humanity and in joyous rhapsody prayed out, "May the world be healthy, cured of all ailments, free from all sins!"

The Mahapurushas have one particular note in the music of their lives. If we cannot understand this, their lives appear as full of contradictions. Whoever that attempts to understand them, let him make an earnest endeavour to catch that particular burden of their song. Then the whole secret of their blessed lives would dawn upon him as clearly as pure day light. And what difficulty is there to recognise or understand them? What is the problem of *your* life? You are lost in confusion, you are a victim of unfortunate circumstances. In the words of the poet Wordsworth, you have forgotten your divine nature, you are enshrouded in sleep.

"Life is a sleep and a forgetting ;

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting

And cometh from afar."

The Mahapurushas come to cure you of your mad fit and you are awakened to life from deep sleep. Wherever you may go, the mist of confusion melts away. You are freed from the bondage of duality. You become a Mukta, transcend all obstacles and roam about in joy and peace. O Man! make an attempt, blessed as you are, being endowed with a human body. Shake off the grasp of desires, control your outgoing senses, and strive sincerely with all earnestness of heart to tread unswervingly along the path of Truth. Man practises japam, and meditation, severe austerities (Sadhanas) with great devotion and determination. Yet even in the midst of these observances he shrieks out in despair. It is then we hear the voice of the Great Ones. What are you after? Why do you roam about as a beggar for the hidden treasure? Leaving aside your own kingdom, why do you think

yourself an exile and create infinite miseries? You have nothing more to do—only to understand yourself, recognise your own self.

The moralist remains content with mending a fault or acquiring a virtue. But in his attempt at deliverance from one failing, hundred others crop up around him. If you go to react, if you war with them, you only become all the more helpless. If desires are surpassed, anger claims a part of your heart. If anger is done away with, avarice takes its place and if you are fortunate to evade its clutch then the vanity and the conceit 'I am a Sadhu,' 'I am a pious man' take possession of you. How far can you succeed in keeping these enemies within bounds? Therefore I say, recognising the sacred utterances of the Great Ones, elevate your heart to a higher plane. Then will you see your mean tendencies and passions are flying away from you once for all.

Realise that we have become blessed by getting this body, this instrument wherewith to realise Him. This is no poet's vision. It is a fact of experience.

That is why I appeal to you to have a blind faith in the Mahapurusha's words. Remember that they are the harbingers of Ananda to our mundane world. They are the embodiments of Divinity on earth. Iswara incarnated as Mahapurushas that mankind may come out of the darkness and seclusion of their limited selves. Away with doubts, fling to a distance all your ignorance and earn that knowledge with a living faith in their words.

Faith, Faith, burning faith! Never stray from this path although beset with many difficulties. It is truth that triumphs. This maxim is too true. If at any moment doubt arises over all the Sadhus, all Bhaktas, all Mahatmas, never lose confidence in the greatness of your own Self from whence proceeds all devotion, all greatness, all purity. When you move in the company of high souls, you yourself will be transformed into a blessed soul radiating peace and happiness around. Your life will be a beacon-light unto many a weary traveller on the self-same path to Truth!

REVIEWS.

The Avadhuta Gita of Dattatreya.—Translated with an exhaustive introduction by Kanno Mal M.A., S. R. Murthy & Co., Madras.

This is an excellent rendering into English of a well-known treatise on the Advaita Vedanta. It belongs to that division of monistic philosophy which propounds the doctrine of Ajatavada. Avadhuta is one who has reached the highest spiritual plane, who has rent asunder all the chains of birth and death, who is face to face with the truth divine. Words issuing from such a high and elevated spiritual man cannot but be illuminating. The treatise gives a very bold exposition of Vedanta, the national philosophy of India. The translator has really done an invaluable service to the world by bringing such an important book on the Vedanta philosophy within the easy reach of the English-knowing public. But for such lucid renderings, these important writings of the Sanskrit literature would have been a sealed book to the English-knowing world.

Josiah C. Wedgwood: The Man And His Work. Published by S. Ganesan & Co., Madras.

The enterprising firm of Ganesan & Co. has brought out another timely publication, the life of Colonel Wedgwood, than whom there is no truer friend of India in the British Isles. The book gives a short sketch of his early Parliamentary career and describes at length his activities in the House of Commons since the outbreak of the world-war. The Colonel is a hater of tyranny and oppression; it is humanitarianism that led him to support His Majesty's Government in declaring war upon Germany and always impels him to espouse the cause of India in the Parliament. He takes a keen interest in all debates regarding India and paid a visit to this country last year so that he might have a more intimate knowledge of India and her people and speak with greater authority in the Parliament on Indian questions. It is a pleasure to note that Col. Wedgwood is a genuine believer in soul force as opposed to brute force. The value of such a friend of India in the Parliament cannot be over-estimated, where the vast majority of members are in blissful ignorance of the state of affairs in India. We are confident educated Indians will welcome this publication.

Rabindranath Tagore: A study of his later works, by Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Shastri—Published by S. Ganesan & Co., Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 2/-

Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Shastri is widely known in Southern India as a student of poetry and literature, and in the present volume before us, he has made a critical study of some of Tagore's works. The book abounds with numerous quotations from Tagore's writings and we are sure, students of Rabindranath's school of thought would find the book a pleasant and profitable reading. The bard of Bolepur is now a poet of international fame. During his extensive travels in Europe and America he has delivered his message of Asiatic Civilization with special reference to Indian culture. He is a messenger of Indian culture to the West and is a potent factor in the world of thought of to-day. His conception of an Indian Ashrama will be read with great interest. The following observations of Tagore on the history of India are worth reproducing here:

"In fact, our history has not been of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of fights for political supremacy. If our country records of these days have been despised and forgotten, for they in no way represent the true history of our people. Our history is that of our social life and attainment of spiritual ideals. But we feel that our task is not yet done. The world flood has swept over our country, new elements have been introduced, and wider adjustments are waiting to be made."

Viveka-Chudamani of Sri Sankaracharya. Text with English translation, notes and an index by swami Madhavananda, the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Price Rs. Two.

This is an excellent rendering into English of the masterpiece of the great Sankara. The merits of the original need not be expatiated on, coming as it does from the pen of the greatest teacher of Monism that India has ever seen. Indeed, Sankaracharya is unanimously regarded as the brightest luminary in the firmament of India and the treatise before us is commonly believed to be his greatest work. The author has undoubtedly earned the gratitude of all English knowing men and women by making such a priceless book accessible to them. Vedanta has been brought from forest to society by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda and his influence is being felt by the foremost thinkers of every country to-day. We welcome the publication at such a time. The notes are valuable and have been added wherever there is any difficult word or idea to be explained. Many passages from the Upanishads and the Gita have been quoted to throw light on the abstruse philosophy of Advaita. We hope the author will translate other works of the Prince of Monists in course of time and thereby help the dissemination of Vedantic ideas in the English-knowing world.

The Leasts of God, by Zero : Published by the Panini Office, Bhuvanewari Ashram, Bahadurganj, Allahabad.

In the present volume before us we have got a series of reflections on the religious life of man. It is generally believed that science is antagonistic to religion, but the author teaches us how to realise God through marvels of science. For the special sciences reveal only different aspects of truth, it is in the light of religion that we find their true meaning. The author's knowledge of the modern sciences, as well as of Hindu Scriptures is deep and his interpretation of science in the light of religion and of religion in the light of science is simply illuminating.

Once a tigress attacked a flock of sheep. She was with child and so no sooner had she jumped, than she gave birth to a cub and died. But the cub somehow or other survived and began to grow among the flock of the sheep. The sheep grazed in the field and the cub too did accordingly. They bleated and it also imitated their sound. In course of time it became a full-grown tiger. By chance, one day, another tiger came and attacked the flock, but he was surprised to see the sheepish tiger within the flock. Then he chased it and caught it by the neck. But it began to bleat in fear like the sheep. Then the old tiger dragged it to a pond and showing it their images in the water, said, "Look, thy form is similar to mine. Thou art also a tiger like me. And eat this quantity of flesh," and so saying he forced the flesh into its throat. But at first the sheepish tiger would eat by no means. It bleated and said that it was a sheep. Next, as soon as it got a little taste of blood, its dormant instinct was quickened and it began to eat the flesh. Then the old tiger said, "Now have you understood that you are the same as myself? So come along with me to the forest." Just so if one has the grace of the Guru, there is no fear. The Guru will open your eyes and tell you who you are—what is your real self.

NOTES AND NEWS.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, Bhubaneswar.

From a perusal of the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary at Bhubaneswar from June 1919 to December 1920, we are glad to note that the Institution has become really a boon to the general public of the locality and to the poor pilgrims who come there in numbers from all parts of India, Bhubaneswar being an important sacred place of the Hindus. Besides these, villagers even from 15 to 16 miles off seek its aid, which unmistakably prove its great usefulness. It was started only a year and a half ago and during the short period under review it has served 19,191 patients of which 18,251 are new and 5,940 repeated cases. Daily average attendance in the year 1920 is 41.18. We are also glad to note that it has now got a separate habitation of its own which is nearing completion, mainly through the generous contribution of Rs. 1,500 by the wife of Kumar Manmatha Nath Mitra of Shyampukur, Calcutta, in memory of her late father.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. K. B. Sen & Co., Timber Merchants, Cuttack, who supplied most of the wooden materials necessary for the building at a nominal price of Rs. 40 only. The gratuitous supply of medicines from Messrs. B. K. Paul & Co., Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, Messrs. M. Bhattacharjee & Co., Messrs. Iswar Chandra Cundoo & Co. and others is the main stay of the institution. But unless help comes from the generous people of our country, it is too much to expect of some specified individuals to meet all the demands continuously of such a growing institution. Besides the above, for want of funds the institution is failing to furnish one of the rooms for operation for which it is intended and has to refuse simple surgical cases also, often most unwillingly to the discomfort of the poor sufferers. We appeal therefore to our generous countrymen to remove these crying needs of the institution.

In conclusion, we gladly announce the names of the contributors towards the Building Fund and maintenance of the Institution. The Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission from their Provident Fund Rs. 250; S. Amritananda, Rs. 2-0-9; Mr. Satyacharan Guha, Rs. 5; S. Turiyananda (in memory of S. Adbhutananda), Rs. 5; Mr. M. P. M. Pillai, Kyaiklas, Rs. 10; Rai Sukhia Chand Bahadur, Puri, Rs. 25; Mr. B. B. Bose, 0-12-0; S. Kuladananda Brahmachari, Rs. 100; Mr. S. C. Dutta, Calcutta, Rs. 25; Mr. N. Sirkar, Rangoon, Rs. 10; Mr. J. N. Bose, Calcutta, Rs. 2; Mr. K. C. Roy, Rs. 10; through S. B. K. Majumdar, Rs. 41; Assistant Station Master, Bhubaneswar, Re. 1; wife of Kumar M. N. Mitra (referred to above), Rs. 1,500; S.

Satish Ch. Bannerjee, Rs. 100. Price of empty phials sold, Rs. 21.
Grand Total, Rs. 2,107-12-9.

Total expenditure towards building, Rs. 1,865-3-1½, and maintenance, Rs. 124-5-4½; cash in hand is thus, Rs. 108-4-3.

All contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the (1) Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, Bhubaneswar P. O. (Orissa), (2) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, P. O. Dt. Howrah (Bengal).

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta, for the year 1920.

This useful institution was started in the year 1916 by Brahmachari Anadichaitanya with the avowed object of supplementing the education which the students receive from the University by a Home-training based on the best elements of Eastern and Western culture, a combination of which is essential for man-making by bringing about the harmonious development of head, hand and heart. Here special care is taken to create an environment favourable to the growth of the various faculties of human nature — moral, practical, intellectual and spiritual. The students are encouraged to know something of everything by making free use of the library, containing carefully selected books that are calculated to inspire them with noble ideas. A socio-religious class is held once a week, when the students are given the chance of giving expression to their studied thoughts. No servant is employed in the Home and the boarders themselves do all the household duties except cooking and are thus given an opportunity of learning the dignity of labour and self-help. The Home is a non-collegiate Hostel and maintains a number of indigent students going up for college education and also admits a minority of paying students who want to undergo the training without any distinction. At the end of the year under review, there were eight students, seven free and one paying.

The income, though very variable from a coaching class started for the benefit of College students by the worker in charge, has all along been the main stay of the institution. The total receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 3,936-7-0 and total disbursements to Rs. 2,568-15-6, leaving a balance of Rs. 1,367-7-6. The financial condition of the Home is far from satisfactory. It is situated in a rented house and a permanent fund is absolutely necessary for its consolidation and expansion. We sincerely hope that lovers of education will come forward with their help and sympathy which the Institution rightly deserves.

The value of such an institution in the city of Calcutta cannot be overestimated, where hundreds of poor students flock every year for university education. The Brahmachari in charge of the Home is a young man of remarkable ability and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of work (in the sphere of education) of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of New India. The noblest workers in every country come from the ranks of the middle class and it is to the young men of the middle class of Bengal that he looked forward to carry out his Mission. The Brahmachari is trying his utmost to carry out the charge left to the young men of Bengal in his humble way. It is a pity that the Home cannot admit more boys for want of funds.

The days of student life are the formative period of a man's life and it requires but little imagination to appreciate the value of passing one's College days in this Home.

Contributions however small, may be sent to any one of the following addresses and will be thankfully acknowledged:— (1) Swami Brahmananda, President, The Ramakrishna Math, Belur, District Howrah; (2) Swami Saradananda, Secretary, The Ramakrishna Math, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar Calcutta; (3) Brahmachari Anadi Chaitanya, 119/1, Corporation Street, Calcutta.

Sri Ramakrishna National Girls' School.

Sri Ramakrishna National Girls' School, situated at present in Krishnappa Naick Agraharam Street, George Town, Madras, was started some sixteen years ago to meet the crying need of the locality regarding the education of the Hindu girls. The whole quarter of the town where the school exists at present is inhabited by the most respectable Hindu families of Madras, and there is but another Girls' School in the locality, which belongs to the Christian Mission. The lowest computation of the school-going young girls of the locality is about seven hundred, and our Hindu girls cannot be expected to have an all round wholesome education, especially religious training, in a Christian institution. So the great need of an efficient Girls' School in the locality is more than self-evident. In fact, the continuance of this school for the last sixteen years bespeaks eloquently of its need and usefulness. But to make a school efficient, money is absolutely needed. The school was getting but scanty support in that matter from the public, and that was one of the reasons why the late management of the school found it difficult to conduct it, and handed it over quite recently to the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras. It is needless to tell our countrymen at this part of the day, when the whole of India is awaking to the sore need of educating our girls, the

mothers of future generations, that much of the fashioning of the future destiny of our mother-land, depends on our girls. So our neglect of girls is not only cruel and derogatory, but suicidal to our national life. If we can give for the education of our girls but half the attention we give to our boys' education, much of the present state of the country will be altered. And for that purpose, we require such an institution which will be *truly* national and seek to inculcate the ideal of Indian womanhood into the heart of our young children. Efforts are being made all over the country to start real national institutions for the education of the boys. And it is our earnest desire to develop Sri Ramakrishna National Girls' School into an ideal institution for the training of our girls. This is not possible unless our generous patriots and charitably disposed gentlemen of our country come forward to render us pecuniary help. We appeal to the generous public to help the institution, pecuniarily and otherwise, to make it possible for it to attain its required development. All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by the President, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

Visit not the miracle-mongers and the exhibitors of occult powers. These men are stragglers from the path of Truth; their minds have become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which come in the way of the pilgrim to Brahman. Beware of these powers and desire them not.

A man after fourteen years of hard penance in a solitary forest obtained at last the power of walking on water. Overjoyed at this acquisition he went to his Guru and said: "Master, master, I have acquired the power of walking on water." The master rebuked: "Fie, is this the result of thy fourteen years' labours? Verily thou hast obtained only a penny. That which thou canst accomplish only after fourteen years' labour, ordinary men can do by paying a penny to the boatman."

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[No. 3.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda.

His Meeting with the Bhairavi Brahmani

Towards the end of 1267 B. S., in 1861 A. D., after his post-nuptial return to Dakshineswar, two incidents happened to Sri Ramakrishna, which were destined to introduce important changes into his life; and to which, therefore, we shall devote some consideration. About the beginning of 1861 A.D., Rani Rasamani had an attack of dysentery, brought on, as some of us maintain to have heard from the Master's own lips, by an accidental slip, attended by sympathetic fever, aching of the limbs and dyspepsia, which at last developed to a fatal stage of dysentery.

We have heretofore informed our readers that the infinitely qualified Rani had celebrated the installation ceremony of the Dakshineswar temple on Thursday, 18th Jaistha, 1262 B.S., corresponding to the 31st May of 1855 A. D., and for the uninterrupted carrying on of the service of the deities, she had purchased three lots of zemindaries in district Dinajpur on the 14th Bhadra, 1262 B. S. being the 29th of August, 1855, for Rs. 2,26,000, *which in spite of earnest desire, she had hitherto failed to turn into a temple

* *Plaint in High Court Suit No 308 of 1872 Puddomoni Dasee vs. Jagadamba Dasee, recites the following from the Deed of Endowment executed by Rani Rasmoni:—"According to my late husband's desire * * * I on 18th. Jaistha 1262 B. S. (June 1855) established and consecrated the Thakurs * * * and for purpose of carrying on the Shoba purchased three lots of Zemindaries in District Dinajpur on 14th. Bhadra 1262 B. S. 29th. August (1855) for Rs 2,26,000,"*

(*Devottara*) property by regularly executed deeds of endowment. But now in her deathbed, apprehending the approaching end she is said to have called on her waiting daughters, Srimati Padmamani and Srimati Jagadamba Dasi—the other two daughters, Srimati Kumari and Srimati Karunamayi Dasi having been since deceased,—to affix their signatures to the drawn-up deed,—hoping thereby to permanently bar the way to any future contentions over the property amongst her inheritors. But though Sm. Jagadamba signed the document, Sm. Padmamani failed to comply with her dying requests, refusing thus any peace even to her mother's last moments. The Rani, however, throwing the future on the Mother's will, resolved to put her own name on the deed,* which she did on the 18th February, 1861, and the next night, she passed this life and was gathered into the bosom of the Mother.

We have it from the Master, that the last days of the Rani were passed in her Kalighat house on the Adi Ganga; so that when her last hours drew nigh, her people carried her down to the Ganges, and laid her on the sacred soil of the river-bed, resounding with the unearthly yells of the roving jackals and lit up with the innumerable lights her attendants had kindled near her death-bed. At this blazing illumination, she is said to have suddenly exclaimed in her last moments, "Off, off with the lights,—I don't want them! I now my Mother is coming, flooding all around with the effulgence of her Divine person!" Then after a short silence, she again said, "Mother, are you come? What is to be done, Mother,—Padma has refused her signature!"—and with this, she sank calmly into the peaceful depths of Mahasamadhi in the lap of the Mother!

And her dying fears about the future failure of the temple service being maintained up to the required standard, and her harrowing anxieties that paled into insignificance the sufferings of her fatal ailment, were not without grounds, justified as they are by the interminable quarrels and law-suits of her grandchildren over the properties of the temple. The papers of the court point out the property as already bound down by a debt of nearly a lac of rupees,† and who can tell that the unique spiritual memorial of the Rani will not be dwindled by these litigations down to a mere name, nay, to complete extinction?

* The Deed of Endowment dated 18th February 1861 was executed by Rani Rasmani; she acknowledged her execution of the same before G. F. Watkins, Solicitor, Calcutta. This dedication was accepted as valid by all parties in Alipore Suit No. 72 of 1867, Jadu Nath Chowdhury vs. Puddomoni, and in the High Court Suit No. 308 of 1872 Puddomoni vs. Jagadamba and also when that suit (No. 308) was revived after contest on 19th July 1886.

† Debt due on mortgage by the Estate is Rs. 50,000 interest payable quarterly is Rs. 876-0-0; Costs of the Referee already stated amount to Rs. 20,000, as yet untaxed.

The management of the temple continued to be vested in Babu Mathura Mohan Biswas who had been the Rani's right hand man in the transaction of her estates affairs, and had all along been superintending with considerable success the service of the temple, under her sanction; and we can justifiably infer his equal success in the discharge of the present duties, from the beneficial and holy influence of Sri Ramakrishna's pure life on his mind.

Nothing further in this stage of our narration, requires to be added to our previous record of the wonderful relations between the Master and Mathuranath than that this eventual assumption of full authority on the temple affairs by the faithful Mathur furnished him with unique opportunities of being of eminent help to the Master in the long-protracted *Tantric* Sadhanas, into which he was now to launch forth. This fact no doubt reveals the will of the Divine Mother in Mathur's providentially acquired prosperities; for do we not find him henceforth devoting himself ungrudgingly in faithful service to the Master to the last moment of his life?—and the Favour of Heaven alone can invest a mortal with the power of living up to a highly spiritual ideal continually for a space of more than eleven years with unbroken faith and devotion to a single being. Indeed it speaks of Mathur's great fortune that with the passing of days, he grew in the greater and greater faith in the Master, instead of straying into the path of dissipation and moral ruin,—the usual accompaniment of an unfettered mastery of such immense wealth!

Only to Sadhakas, the eminence of his spiritual achievements had hitherto been perceptible. The peculiar traits of his character—complete want of an understanding of his personal interests, absolute detachment from life's varied enjoyments, perfect harmlessness, a continual self-absorption breaking fitfully into exclamations of 'Rama!' 'Hari!' or 'Kali!'—had already persuaded the ordinary man to look upon him as a deranged-headed mad man;—they had found him carelessly let slip the supreme opportunity of converting the Rani and Mathur Babu's favour into pound, shilling, pence nor did he evince any future possibility of doing the same! But yet they could not deny that for all his worthlessness, there was this in the bright eyes of this mad man, his superhuman ways and manners, his extremely sweet voice, nobly executed speech and unparalleled ready wit, which attracted unsolicited, the loving notice of those rich and noble men whose very presence was sufficient to strike awe in their heart! This was however not the estimation of Mathur Babu, who had learnt by this time to take a deeper view of the man and is said by Hriday to have remarked, "It is the grace of Mother that has brought this apparent madness on him!"

However, the second important event of the period under revision, to which we have referred previously, came about one day shortly following the passing away of the Rani. The Master on that morning was gathering flowers in the garden, flourishing along the bank of the Ganges, to wreath garlands according to his daily custom, though no longer engaged in the regular service of the temple, in order to adorn the person of the Divine Mother. This garden, embellished with a luxuriant growth of blossoming creepers and plants of infinite varieties and emanating sweet fragrance into the air, was intercepted in the middle by a spacious ghaut, leading to the central porch of the temple quadrangle and bounded in the north by the *Nahavat* and another smaller bathing ghaut for the exclusive use of ladies,—styled *Bakultalar Ghaut* after the *Bakul* tree that stands there to this day.

It was then, he saw a boat touch at the latter ghaut, from which descended a beautiful woman with a bundle of books and things in her hand and walked towards the extensive terrace of the central ghaut. About two scores of years old at that time, as we have been assured by the Master, she was yet the mistress of personal charms coveted by a more youthful age; and was garbed in the traditional ochre robe of a *Bhairavi* and her loose locks of hair hung low down her back. The sight of the *Bhairavi* appears to have evoked in his mind a strong feeling of affinity for her, though it may not have been a revelation of their future intimacies: for immediately returning to his room, he commissioned his nephew Hriday to fetch her to him; and when he expostulated with him for his strange request to an unknown lady, he is said to have remarked, "Go, tell her in my name and she will obey!" and knowing, as he told us, that it was not for him to check the 'mad' impulses of his uncle, he repaired, wondering at this unprecedented eagerness for communication with an unknown woman, to where the Sannyasini was sitting on the terrace and told her the Master's wish; and she, to add to his surprise, rose up and followed him without any word or hesitation to the Master's room.

At the very first glance at the Master, however, the *Bhairavi* was overpowered with a sudden joy and wonder and shedding copious tears, she cried out, "*Baba*, are you here? I have been all these days searching for you along the banks of the Ganges, knowing you must be somewhere there:—and now my quest is fulfilled!" at which the Master enquired, "Mother, how could you know of me?" and she replied, "The divine behest was vouchsafed to me that I am to meet three of you; two of them I have already found out in Eastern Bengal and now in you, I realise the third."

At this, the Master sat close to the *Bhairavi* and in the child's joyful confidence to the mother, opened out to her the thousand doubts and questionings of his heart,—the story of his unheard-of visions, external un-consciousness at religious conversations, the *yogic* diseases of burning sensation, sleeplessness, and how these symptoms had led people to ascribe them to insanity,—punctuating the narration from time to time with the query, "What are these things happening to me? Am I really mad? Have all my heart's earnest prayers to the Mother resulted in this terrible malady?" And she too, moved alternately by the strange relation to agitation, exaltation and pity, repeatedly uttered these consoling words: "Who says, you are mad, *Baba*? It is not madness but the realisation of the highest spiritual ecstasy (*Mahabhava*) that has manifested the external symptoms. Scarcely any has the capacity to understand your state;—hence they speak so. Such have been the realisations of Srimatee Radharani and Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya, as is recorded in the Bhakti Shastra; I have got those books with me and I shall read them out to you and shew that whoever has sincerely called on God, has invariably attained to these states." And as Hriday watched these most confidential communications and behaviour between his uncle and the unknown *Bhairavi* Brahmani, inspired as it were by a long intimate acquaintance, his astonishment knew no bounds.

Thus their conversation went on till the day was far advanced, when Sri Ramakrishna placed before her the Mother's *prasadam* of fruits, roots, butter and sugarcandy; but knowing that her mother's heart would refuse to satisfy her own hunger before he, her son had been served, he himself first ate a little of them. She however first paid her visits to the temple before partaking of the repast, and then begging rice and wheat from the temple store, repaired to the *Panchavati*, where she prepared some offerings and dedicated to Raghuvira, whose image she carried hanging round her neck, and sat in meditation on her *Istam*. And as she dived deeper and deeper into meditation, there was revealed to her a supreme divine vision, which completely obliterated her sense of the external and plunged her into samadhi. In the meanwhile, the Master, filled with inspiration, went over to the *Panchavati* under the impulsion of a strong internal attraction, and scarcely conscious of what he was doing, began like a man influenced by hypnotic sleep, to eat of the offered food; so that when the Brahmani, regaining her consciousness in a short while, found him thus engaged, she was overwhelmed with a great joy at this strange coincidence between her vision and the reality. He however, on coming down to the normal plane of consciousness, was filled with remorse to learn of his unusual conduct

and said, "I do not know why I lose so much self-control as to do such things!" But the Brahmani most affectionately consoled him saying, "You have done right, *Baba*; it is not yourself, but He Who resides within you, is the author of these things; and Him I have clearly recognised from what has been revealed to me in my meditation. Now I see, I need no longer continue my daily worship, for it is now at last blessed with fruition!" And with this, she most unhesitatingly partook of the remains of Sri Ramakrishna's meal, as the very *prasadam* of Raghuvira; and shedding tears of love and ecstatic bliss, carried down the round stone image of Raghuvira and most devoutly immersed it in the holy waters of the Ganges:—for had she not now been blessed with the supreme felicity of realising her *Istam* as a living presence in Sri Ramakrishna?

And with the passing of days, grew in strength between them, the love and attraction of their first acquaintance, constraining the Brahmani to put off her departure indefinitely; and imperceptibly days glided away, in the joy of their mutual understanding and religious conversations in the Panchavati. Daily he plied her with questions about his deep spiritual realisations and moods with the confidence of a child, and she in her turn dispelled his doubts by bringing forward their solutions from many scriptural authorities and reading out to him passages from such devotional works as *Sri Chaitanya Bhagawata* and *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita*, to illustrate the various mental and physical symptoms that become manifest in the mind and physique of Divine Incarnations, as the effect of the tremendous impulses of their love towards God. And thus flowed unceasingly the stream of divine bliss in the Panchavati!

When, however, about a week was thus spent, Sri Ramakrishna hinted to the Brahmani his misgivings about worldly people's slanders—though no doubt absolutely unfounded—at the unconventionality of her present mode of life. She felt the truth of his fears and departed from the temple, hoping to find out a convenient place in its vicinity, from where she could easily manage to devote a portion of her day in the society of the Master.

We have heard from the Master that the Brahmani—her name was Srimati Yogeswari—came from a high family of the East Bengal; her very appearance struck even a casual observer with the refined graces of her noble birth. But we know next to nothing of her parents or the home she gladdened with the sunny days of her childhood, nor do we know if she ever graced the hearth of any fortunate husband; the reasons of her renunciation of the world and her embracing the nun's itinerant life in that age, and the

source of her stupendous scholarship as well as her high spiritual achievements are equally shrouded in mystery.

And her unique mental accomplishments were at least equalled by her uncommon physical beauty; this, coupled with her free and unconventional mode of life roused suspicion about her character even in the mind of Mathur Babu, who—so said the Master—one day even went to the length of putting this sarcastic question to her, "Bhairavi, where is your Bhairava?" She was then coming out of the Mother's temple; without being the least put out or enraged at this sudden and indecent question, she covered him for a time with her steady gaze and then pointed to the image of Mahadeva lying prostrate under the Mother's lotus-feet. This reply did not satisfy the sceptic Mathur who remarked that that Bhairava was after all motionless; and only when she made the grave and stern retort, "Why am I a Bhairavi, if I could not have animated the motionless?"—could he be shamed to silence and confusion! A deeper acquaintance, however, with her noble nature and infinite qualifications, afterwards purged his mind of this wicked suspicion.

Her spiritual greatness requires no corroborative remarks at our hands,—the position of a teacher of Sri Ramakrishna is sufficiently eloquent of one's depth of realisations,—especially when it is accentuated by such facts as her yogic prescience of her going out to help the Master and other two sadhakas in their spiritual struggle, and her instantaneous recognition of them, when she met them afterwards. Besides, did she not lead the Master through all the spiritual practices, as enjoined by the sixty-four principal Tantras?

Her acquaintance with the Vishnava Tantras appears to have been equally deep, as is evident from her occasional help to Sri Ramakrishna during his Sadhana of the *Sakhibhava*, as well as her own realisations in the same line, of which frequent instances occurred while she was staying in the Devamandal Ghaut at Ariadah. There she would sometimes lose herself in her affection for Sri Ramakrishna and with butter in her hand, she would shed torrents of tears and loudly call for him as 'Gopal,' 'Gopal,' which evoked in him at Dakshineswar a strange yearning for her, and he would run all the two miles' way from the temple to the Ghaut, panting like a child for its mother, and eat the butter, sitting close to her! Again, attired in costly scarlet silk of Benares and precious jewels, evidently borrowed from the ladies of the village, she would carry various dishes of delicacies, in the company of a few village women, singing all the way to Dakshineswar, and there feed him with them; and then to those who saw her, she was—so said the Master—with

her dishevelled hair and ecstatic appearance, the very picture of Nandarani agonising for her absent Gopala !

But we have reasons to believe that she had not yet attained to Perfection, the supreme state of the realisation of God as the Absolute. For when the naked Totapuri, having gained the *Nirvikalpa* or undifferentiated state of consciousness; which is the last word of the Vedanta, came wandering to the temple of Dakshineswar,—Sri Ramakrishna had by that time completed his various Tantrik Sadhanas—and perceiving in him a fittest soul for realising the Adwaita Ideal, went to initiate him into Sannyasa, the Brahmani was at great pains to dissuade him from the noble project, saying, “Baba,* don’t you so often go to him or mix with him, lest he despoils you of your Godly love and devotion ; for his is a dry mode of Sadhana.” This clearly indicates that she, though undoubtedly highly advanced in spirituality, had yet to learn that the *Nirvikalpa* state which she knew and spoke of as dry, was only a step towards the true and supreme love of God, that only souls, free and illumined, can offer unreasoned and pure love to God and that, as the Master said, pure devotion and pure knowledge were but different names of the same thing. Hence it was, we aver, that he hid himself away from the Brahmani as he did from his own mother, during those three days on which he attired himself in the traditional shaven head and ochre robe of the Vaidika Sannyasa.

From what we have been told by the Master, we are led to classify her as a sadhaka of the *Veerabhava* of the *Tantras* ; † and only the holy company of the Sri Ramakrishna and his inspiring example, it appears, fired her with the desire to uplift herself to the plane of *Divyabhava*, and ultimately precipitated her into a long and intense sadhana for the rest of her life, of which more later on.

* A Bengali term of affection.

† It is, according to the *Tantras*, one of the three *bhavas* or spiritual outlooks—*Pashu*, *Vera* and *Divya*, with either of which every sadhaka must proceed on his Godward path. The mind of the sadhaka of *Pashubhava* (animal outlook) has in it the predominance of lust, anger and other animal propensities :—he must therefore, keep himself carefully aloof from all objects of temptations and with special attention to all external forms of purification devote himself to the repetition of the Holy Name, and *Purascharana* and other spiritual practices. In a sadhaka of *Veerabhava* (heroic outlook), love of God is stronger than the animal passions : and the attractions of lust, gold, beauty and life’s enjoyments have only an emulating effect on his devotion ; and hence though surrounded by all these allurements, he should live unaffected by their actions and reactions, and make a complete surrender of his whole heart and soul at the feet of God. But only he belongs to the category of *Divyabhava* (Divine outlook), whose lust, anger and other animal passions have for ever been washed away by the sweep of his overflowing Divine love, and in whom, all the moral graces such as forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, contentment and truthfulness have become as natural as breathing. The above is however only a bare outline of the three *bhavas*.

BY THE WAY.

With the close of the Great War new social problems are cropping up and are menacing the stability of social order. The thinkers and statesmen of all the countries are trying utmost to grapple them but find no satisfactory solution. The old theories of State are no more naively believed and every member of the social organism is asserting its right. Socialism and its necessary off-shoots of Bolshevism, Communism, and other ‘isms’ are the watchwords of the masses in all the civilized countries of the world to-day.

The doctrine of liberty, equality and fraternity has been merely a name and the social inequalities are as much true to-day as they were before the doctrine was preached. The mediæval dispute between the landlord and the tenant has been replaced by the dispute between the capitalist and the labourer in the modern age. The clash of interests between one class and the other is as bitter as ever, rather, with the progress of civilization it has become more so and has assumed new proportions.

Idealists* like Dr. Wilson may sound from time to time a note of harmony in the midst of these jarring discords and clash of arms but their voice is heard no more than that of a man crying in the wilderness. The heart of humanity is throbbing with new aspirations and in their mad rush to reach the goal, men have no time to ponder over the meaning of life.

As in the case of an individual, his deeds follow as a corollary from the aim of life which he has in view, so is it true of a nation. The literature of a nation reveals the inner working of the mind of its thinking section, while the masses carry into practice the general principles laid down by these thinking men. The literature and different channels of activity in the West indicate clearly that the enjoyment of this life of three score-and-ten years has become the *summum bonum* of life of the Western nations.

But in India the aspirations of life have run along a different course. The superfine brain of the Hindu discovered the illusory character of phenomena and that is why the Hindus devoted their whole passion to the search of the Transcendental, the One, as idea and beatitude. They discovered the truth *बद् वै मूमा तदेव सुखं*

नास्ते सुखमस्ति and did not care to put forth all their energy to the acquisition of wealth and power, which is the sole aim of the advanced nations of the world to-day. The history of India differs in one fundamental aspect from that of other countries in that it does not give primary importance to recording the rise and fall of dynasties or the conquests and annexations made by her rulers. This charge has been brought by the modern historians against Indians but the Indians are not very solicitous to exonerate themselves from the above charge. As has been said before, they were not a nation of conquerors and exploiters but a peculiar people whose thinkers inculcated the value of conquering inner nature and showed the way of peace and blessedness. There was no fight for political rights and privileges and the history of India is astonishingly barren of battles and wars like the Peasant's War. The inequalities of life they accepted as a matter which is unavoidable in the world so long as there exists difference of merits, parts and capacity amongst individuals but it was not a stumbling block on their upward march towards the attainment of the goal of human life.

All the six schools of Indian philosophy unanimously point out the one goal of human life—it is the attainment of Mukti or liberation. The human soul goes through the cycle of births and deaths until it is freed from desires (वासना) and knows its true nature. The inner Self is pure, eternal, ever-free and all-blissful. It is by knowing his true nature that man can get rid of all miseries and pains. This doctrine is believed by all the people of India and this may be said to be the foundation on which the superstructure of their life is based. The masses of Western nations cannot like their Indian brothers reconcile their lot with such a view of life. They want to squeeze out the orange of this world but they have to meet many hindrances and obstacles; moreover it brings in its train pains and miseries which are unavoidable. The people of the West, so long as they are quite oblivious of the meaning of life cannot have peace and happiness in society. The doctrine of brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth finds no adherents in Christendom but the votaries of Science and Political Philosophy are increasing by thousands. It seems that the West has bartered the spirit with the flesh and is suffering its inevitable consequences. It is to these nations writhing in agony and suffering that the Swami Vivekananda delivered his message of peace and joy, like the Shepherd of Bethlehem who brought good news of great joy. Through him spoke the Rishis of ancient India, whose sublime philosophy is still the dominating factor in the Indian world of

thought. To the Americans, and through them to all the nations of the West he delivered the message of India and it is for them to accept or reject her message. Let them find out the meaning of life and realise the glory of the Atman. This is the only path open to them for the establishment of peace and social equilibrium. If the Western nations spurn away the message of India at this critical juncture of their history, they will inevitably fall into the abyss of materialism and atheism.

CONFESSIONS ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE

BY

Le Frile.

(Continued from Page 20.)

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. In truth necessity is the mother of every action of man. Every movement of his is prompted by necessity. Man does nothing but by the force of necessity.

He who feels in himself an excess of passion is by necessity prompted to indulgence. He who feels himself too weak is by necessity prompted to struggle for strength. He who finds nothing but evil and suffering on earth, is out of a necessity led to seek for remedies here or compensation beyond. He alone who feels himself too unstable or unworthy to rely upon and finds no better support without, is led to seek for support, the absolute stability and worth of God within.

Every saint, sage and true devotee is such by necessity. He who seeks not after God out of a true inward thirst cannot reach Him in truth nor can He be called a true devotee. True devotion is that alone which springs out of necessity. Every act of religion, to be true and effective, must be an act of necessity. Religion as a duty has no meaning and cannot produce any real benefit. The many who follow religion, do so not for its own sake, but, for duty or other motives. Their religion is but a meaningless and superfluous farce.

Religion, in essence, is nothing but a process by which the lifeless slowly attain to life; they, of less, low-coursing life attain to the fullness of life. Life is equivalent to faith, strength, hope, joy. The mere possession of life carries along with it faith, i.e., stability of mind, and strength, hope and joy, irrespective of the knowledge

of God or any other. Lifelessness is doubt, weakness, despair and misery. Want of faith is really nothing but a want of life. The life-ful have faith in themselves, in the world or in God. They are stable, calm and happy even in the absence of the knowledge of God or the law of life. The lifeless doubt and are weak, they despair and are miserable. With the acquisition of more life, doubt and misery vanish and faith and happiness fill their place. Virtue is the path of temperance by which life is gained and preserved. Vice is the path of indulgence by which life is dissipated and lost. True religion is the life-giver to the lifeless. It is life, more life, full life which is the real object of attainment in the path of religion, although that object is disguised under various names—faith, hope, love, spirit, heaven, God. Religion leads in the end neither to God nor to heaven in truth, but it only gives the fullness of life in which is contained the fullness of wisdom and strength, of faith and love and the bliss of peace.

Salvation is not a separate or separable object of life, but the mere fulfilment of the functions of life brings salvation in its train. Salvation is nothing else but the state of having fulfilled life. Every entity, in every moment of time is attaining its salvation, for, every entity is fulfilling the functions of its own existence in every moment of time. The child fulfills its existence like a child as it ought to do, the wise man in his wisdom, the ignorant in his immature ignorance and every being in its own appropriate, natural way. Life and salvation are identical. It is a foolish belief propagated by the ignorant, that salvation is a kind of superior existence, to be entered into by a few, through the sole virtue of having strictly followed certain set up, artificial rules. It is still more foolish of them, to affirm that those who do not follow the path prescribed by them shall be left out in the cold without their salvation, as if, the law of life will suspend or stop its operations with regard to any individual.

Every man really follows his own ideal which is ingrained in his nature. The genius which presides over his life guides him in the fulfilment of the functions of his life in the manner in which he ought to do it. No man can really go astray from the path prescribed by his nature which is the path leading to his salvation. The only visible and recognisable feature of life is evolution, and hence evolution can be rationally assumed as the object of life, if any there can be within man's knowledge. Every entity in every moment of time, is constrained by the laws which govern its existence to run its own course of evolution and hence we may conclude that every entity is attaining its salvation in every moment of time. The law which brings into existence diverse beings in

diverse forms, guides them unerringly through life in their diverse paths and fulfills them in diverse ways.

God is needed for him who feels troubled with a devil within.

Truth is sought after by him who feels lost in the labyrinth of illusions.

Wisdom is thirsted for by him who feels heavy under the weight of unwise deeds.

Renunciation is a relief for him who bore hard the burden of selfishness.

Peace is longed for by him who feels tossed by the whirlwind of his passions.

Everywhere around me and within me I see life, full to the brim and flowing perpetually. Everywhere around me and within me I see light, full, effulgent light burning perpetually. Everywhere around me and within me I see perfection, absolute perfection sustaining perpetually. Nowhere can I see hollow, inharmony or want. Hollow, inharmony and want are but fancies residing in the human mind. Even there, their presence contribute to make up a fullness and harmony. Everywhere around me and within me, I see gladness, full, over-flowing, perpetual gladness. Sorrow and discontent are states of mind which themselves contribute to the unbroken sustenance of gladness. *Man is content to be discontent. In the very act of discontent he feels a profound contentment. He is glad to indulge in sorrow. In the very act of grief he feels a profound gladness.*

Life is a joy, a fullness, perfection. Life stretches all around, above and below, unencompassed, infinite in duration and in space. This world and all possible worlds are life, one, undivided, unchanging, same.

Life is love and light, law and order, purity and peace. Every object is full of life, every change is wrought by the fullness of life. Law and order operate everywhere. Life and light pervade everywhere. Nowhere is there other than law; nowhere is there other than life. Purity and peace diffuse everywhere. No wrong, no evil, no darkness, no death. All is smooth, all is right, all is good, all is one, all is life.

My being is one, my belief is various. My being proceeds from God, my belief from my own mind. My being is ever the same and changeth not, but, my belief changes with every change of conditions. Conditions are as God makes them. They change as He chooses in His wisdom. They are ever good. But, to my

of individual self-consciousness is the Mukti of Adwaitins and Nirvana of the Bauddhas. The dissolution of individuality into the Absolute All, is the necessary result of the fulfilment of life.

* * *

Nature is the only moving force. Man, out of his ignorance believes himself an independent cause, whereas, his motive power is but a passion originating from nature. It is nature that moves. Every movement is hers. The pure spirit of nature and her pure motion are invisible. But she is visible in the variety of forms through which she manifests herself and of which man forms a class. It is her motion that is visible in individuals, her spirit visible in entities. She moves in individuals in conformity with the individual's state of evolution, universally, in conformity with the universal state of evolution. The individual and the universal do not contradict each other, but are in perfect harmony. The external conditions of man's life are brought about by nature in accordance with her plans and laws and the internal state of his mind is modified and made to course by the same nature in harmony with the same plan. But, man believes that external conditions are due to nature, while his inner state is due to himself, for he oftentimes finds a contradiction between the force beyond his control and that which he imagines which is within his control. The contradiction of individual forces is an illusion arising in the immature intellect when viewing things from the individual point of view. But, when the mature intellect looks upon the world from Nature's standpoint, then all contradictions vanish, the illusion of individuality becomes annihilated and one spirit, one motion, one law and one plan is found to pervade and guide the life of the diversified whole.

* * *

Nature is the only ideal. The spirit of nature is the only ideal for the spirit of man. Nature is one, universal and equal to herself. The perfect man feels himself identical in essence with every individual being. Every condition of life is produced and controlled by nature. The perfect man is equal to every condition of life. Every change of state contributes to sustain nature's harmony. The perfect man sustains his harmony under every change of state. The spirit of nature is supreme, unbending, unaffected. She is not crossed in her course by doubts or fears, she is not moved by desires or hopes, she is not stopped by satisfactions. She is never disconcerted, never ruffled, never taken by surprise. The perfect man feels supreme and equal to every occasion. He stands unbending and unaffected by sentiments which holds sway over

immature minds. Nature is supremely wise. Her judgments are correct, her prognostications are accurate and her efforts are successful. The perfect man imbibes the perfection of nature and feels what nature feels, thinks, expects and acts as she does and hence remains as serene and equable as nature herself. He sees nothing wrong happening anywhere and hence rests without thought or effort. He discovers the impossibility of anything happening wrong in the course of the operations of nature's law and hence remains free from doubts. He finds the fullness of nature's spirit pervading everywhere, in every object and in every condition of life and hence remains free from desires. He discovers that no better scheme of the Universe as a whole, as well as in every particular detail of it is possible of being framed by any intellect and brought about by any power and hence remains free from plans and schemes. He realises the perfection of all and hence remains himself perfect.

SISTER NIVEDITA'S SIVA AND BUDDHA.

BY

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

In this little book we have beautiful things attractively told by Sister Nivedita. The chapter about Siva or Mahadev is a talk about the beauty of the spiritual concepts about Siva. Though much of what is contained in it is pure speculation and even fanciful guess, it contains much that is suggestive. Naturally what seems to a Hindu to be Truth truly though beautifully described, will appear to an outsider—even to a sympathetic outsider like Sister Nivedita—as a concrete and poetic and even pictorial or symbolical presentation of Truth—a presentation that may or may not be fully true but is certainly beautiful and has got the relative truth of suggestiveness of what is perfectly and absolutely true. To us the full measure of the enjoyment of the Absolute as Siva lies not that way. To us He is not an idea but the Divine Ominpresence. His attributes and ornaments and weapons and acts are not romantic symbolism but real spiritual experiences. If I describe and discuss Sister Nivedita's interpretation in an appreciative way, it is subject to the aforesaid reservation and limitation.

Sister Nivedita says well, "As far as we can go however, Hindus have always believed that if a man wanted to be *religious* he must give his whole life up to that. A *good* man may manage a home and family and business, they say. But if a man wants to be

musical, he gives all his care and thought to music, if clever, to study. And is it easier to know Truth than to do these things ! So you see they have a very high ideal of what being religious means you see the idea is that a great part of religion exists in quieting the mind."

She thinks that man's ideas of ascetic life—living in a forest, living on roots and fruits, scanty clothing, begging alms, having unkempt hair, frequent bathing, etc., were transferred to the concept of Siva. She thinks that the idea of His being white may have been taken from the smearing of the body with ashes by ascetics. But to attribute the Siva concept to the instinct of personification is not only an outrage on Hindu sentiment but is also opposed to fact. She says : " This tendency to see a human being in everything is called the instinct of Personification and people and nations who love beautiful things have it very strongly." Siva is not a Himalayan peak given life by the instinct of Personification but is the Adorable Supreme realised in one of His eternal aspects and functions. To say that such a peak reminds us of Siva is, however, a true and beautiful idea. Sister Nivedita says well, " Those snowy heights became the central objects of their love. Look at them. Lifted above the world in silence, terrible in their cold and their distance, yet beautiful beyond all words, what are they like ? Why, they are like a great monk, clothed in ashes, lost in meditation, silent and alone ! They are like—like—the Great God Himself, Siva, Mahadev ! "

Sister Nivedita's study of Buddha is more full of insight than her study of Siva. Whatever be the limitations and deficiencies of Buddhism in respect of doctrine or discipline, its ethos is wonderful and the personality of its founder is even more wonderful still. Sister Nivedita says well, " For seven long years in the forest Gautama pursued his search. Then at last, meditating in the night, beneath a Bo-tree, he discovered the Great Secret and found all knowledge. From that time, other names dropped from him and he was known as the Buddha or Blessed One. In that moment of supreme illumination, he learnt that the thirst for life was the cause of all wretchedness. By ridding themselves of desire, men could attain to freedom. And he called Freedom by the name of Nirvana, and the life of struggle for it, he called the Way of Peace." Sister Nivedita's sketch of Buddha's life is full of imaginative vision and beauty of style. The closing portion of it is of memorable loveliness and recalls one of the noblest incidents in Buddha's noble life.

" But he did not stop till he had passed within the palace and stood in his own rooms before his wife and son. Yasodhara also

wore the yellow cloth ! Ever since the morning when she wakened to learn that the prince had abandoned the world and gone to dwell in the forests, ever since that morning, she had done what she could to share his life. She had eaten only of roots and fruits. She had slept always on the floor of some roof or verandah. She had put away all ornaments and the garments of a princess.

And now she knelt reverently and kissed the hem of the left side of his garment. They said but little. He blessed her and went. And then, she seemed to waken from a dream. Hurriedly she called her boy—" Go, ask your father for your inheritance," she said.

" Mother, which is my father ? " said the boy timidly, looking at the crowd of men with shaven heads wearing the sacred colour.

But she scorned to give any description. ' Your father,' she said, ' is the lion yonder, that passed to the gate ! '

And the boy went straight up to him. ' Father give me my patrimony,' he said. But he asked three times, before Ananda, chief of his disciples, said ' May I give ? ' And Buddha said : ' Give ! ' And the yellow cloth was thrown about the lad."*

THE KITE AND THE FISH : A PARABLE.

BY

Satyabrata.

THE PARABLE

Here is a parable from the wise lips of the Holy Man of Dakshineswar :

" A student seeth a kite sweep down, seize a fish and fly away with it in his talons.

And hundreds and hundreds of crows pursue him with great and ceaseless clamourings.

* In this book the Sister deals only with one aspect of the manifestation of the Divinity in the form of Siva. It is undoubtedly true that God has Eternal forms and each one of them is an actual object of experience of the devotees, and so, in that respect they are not mere concepts or symbolical presentations of some spiritual truths, born of the instinct of personification of man. But it is also true that all forms have some great ideas behind them whose concretisations are the forms themselves, even as this world is the concrete manifestation of the idea एकोऽहम्बहुस्याम्. In that sense Siva is the great concept of renunciation, knowledge, self-absorption and eternal joy ; so he ever stands as the supreme ideal of the ascetics.—Ed.

And the kite goeth north and east and west and south, and still the crows pursue him, cawing and clamouring :

And he knoweth not whither to turn for peace and safety, and, bewildered, he letteth the fish drop down :

And the crows at once leave him and go after the fish,

And the kite percheth on a tree-top and findeth rest and peace once more.

And the student taketh the lesson to heart :

Behold, sayeth he, my desires are the fish, and, while they are with me, a thousand cares and anxieties pursue me, like crows, with loud and ceaseless clamourings:

But if I cast my desires away, all cares and anxieties shall cease, and then shall be peace and rest again for me !

THE JANUS-FACE OF THE WORLD.

And never perhaps the world required the benefit of the story more than now. For the world has gone mad : everywhere, when the cry for peace is loudest, and an inconsolable regret and agonised yearning rises from the heart of humanity for a cup of that elixir of peace and harmony which alone can assuage its burning thirst, the world strangely is perhaps the most active, consciously and unconsciously, in disseminating the seeds of discord,—never more persistent in eternalising the maxims of *divide et impera* and inharmony and hatred amongst the different sections of humanity. Everywhere,—only here rampant and there dormant,—ideas are clashing ideas, ideals fighting ideals, greed for riches and earth battling with equally vigorous like greeds. The best powers of the human intellect are being prostituted for the furtherance and perpetuation of devilish projects on the whole surface of the earth. Man appears to have forgotten his Divine heritage : Only the devil's agent in him lives, and God as it were simply is not !

What is wrong with the world ? What madness has caught the human soul ? Is this all we see the intoxicated consequence of the just concluded world-war ? No ; for the war itself was the breaking forth of that same madness. What is then the cause ?

THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

The world-war came to a conclusion. The whole world heaved a sigh of relief and looked expectant towards the coterie of statesmen sitting in council at Versailles, for the formulation and realisation of the beautiful ideals that had been preached with all

the vehemence of sincerity during the prosecution of the war. The League of Nations came into being ; but alas ! it now transpires to be only an instrument in the hands of mighty powers that be, for a safe fulfilment of their avaricious programme for the sharing of the earth's loaves and fishes, under the cloak of a sage morality. This disappointment has let loose, as otherwise it would never have done, all the pent-up powers of destruction and disharmony on the face of the earth. The already instituted process of disintegration and disruption that was brought into being by the essentially negative propaganda of science culture, wielded its fell forces, till humanity has totally forgotten that there are considerations, moral and spiritual, for the sake of which man can sacrifice much and that in man live tendencies and forces which must be curbed and pruned, if humanity is to be saved from being steeped in complete savagery. And the tragedy of it all is that this wickedness of man is being consciously and philosophically maintained in its horrid onslaught on man's cherished ideals !

A BLIND ALLEY

To hope for a happy conclusion of this wicked process of man's brutal activities—for they are nothing else than that—by a natural evolution is despair itself. *A revolution is necessary !* The plane on which this battle of man's animal interests are being fought, will never reveal any Garden of Eden however long and far we may proceed. This is the plane of inharmony and destruction. *We must at once rise up to a superior plane ; we must transcend our animal nature, and by a supreme effort, rise up to the peaceful heights of moral beauty and love and harmony.* The animal will never grow into the moral man ; the animal must die before the man can be born. This fact is essential to a proper understanding of the great sorrow that rankles in the heart of humanity and for its healing up. A complete and sudden sacrifice is thus an absolute necessity. The 'Kite' must renounce 'the fish' !

THE STRONG PHYSIC

This physic we prescribe for the suffering humanity is not a mere sentimental consideration, prompted solely by the urgency and the hopelessness of the situation. It is because man is so constituted that we say, he cannot do otherwise than welcome this self-sacrifice, he has absolutely no other way out of this terrible fix. To those who have yet been able to retain their moral sanity amidst the terrific orgies that to-day surround them, will readily respond to our noble call ! Indeed many of them have already

raised their protestant voices, though they are necessarily drowned by the mad shrieks of the revelling hordes. To sacrifice the lower nature for the realization and development of the higher aspects of the soul, is only the natural impulse of man ; and without any demonstrative philosophy or rationale of conduct, men have so long lived, holding up this self-abnegating ideal. The ideal atmosphere of a beautiful sentimental harmony has been enough stimulant for man's striving up towards this spiritual goal. But the perversities of the times, aggravated naturally by the foolish and interested actions of those who are in power, have completely blinded the majority of men towards that noble dream of their ultimate destiny.

A 'METHODICAL' MADNESS : THE CULT OF THE 'NATURAL MAN'

There is a method in humanity's madness. Its actions have after all a *raison d'être* : it is to-day the glorification of the 'natural man !' Ideals which alone can make the brute-man a God-man, though till realised, they are mere ideals, count only in the cherished dreams of man. They are so elusive that if you want to grasp them with the cold hand of discursive reason, they will appear as airy nothings ; and only in the secret recesses of our heart, do they reflect themselves on the calm and transparent waters of our soul. Now science, which by her incredible progress in mechanical developments, has feasted highly the animal-soul of man, through industrial, economical, and consequently political gains of the Western nations, had appeared too tempting not to become indispensable and welcome into the very heart of cultural life. And thus resulted the negation and disintegration of the older ideals, individual and social, found invalid before the bar of scientific reason ; and they were sent out of life with all their controlling and moulding powers, without being substituted by other ideals 'to take up their noble and necessary functions. Thus survived only 'the natural man' with his greed, his limitations of 'the flesh, his petty likes and dislikes, his animal desires, his love of pleasure and of earthly gains : and the few moral elements that humanity in its progress through ages, had already incorporated into its self, lay withered up by the sap of the higher life drawn out by this disintegrating work. And machines were being multiplied *ad infinitum*, earth-hunger raged higher and higher, Society's only ideal became the acquisition of the power of exploiting the earth's spoils and enjoyment thereof ; and man's relation with man, of society with society, and nation with nation, turned out to be only a matter of convenience and expedience, shorn as they were of

their moral and spiritual inspiration ! Family life, conjugal relation become more a subject of mere economic or eugenic consideration ; different sections of society evaluated their rights and obligations with the standard of money value ; and nations vied with each other in the sharpening of their teeth and nails, till the judgment of Fate overtook them and their meanness and futility became revealed before the over-confident eye of man in all their hideousness and danger ; and they cried louder than ever welcoming truth and justice and democracy and freedom and other such fine things !

THE RESCUE

But let not the volume of the mischief frighten us by its mere vastness ! If this has been created by the denial of the higher life of man, surely then by welcoming it back into our life, we can set ourselves right ;—in the disease itself lies the remedy !

CONDITION OF EXISTENCE

A consideration of man as he is, in all his aspects will thoroughly convince us of the inevitability of the need.

Action is the invariable condition of life. Life sustains itself only by going through incessant change. But in order that action may be ultimately valid, this dynamic force should not only be utilised on the horizontal plane but it must tend upwards ; that is to say, progress of life should not limit itself in the already attained plane of soul-development, by a mere multiplication of natural desires ; achievement and realisation of higher and newer realities should be the principal aim. This is the one essential or more truly, absolute condition of existence, failing which, individuals as well as nations must go down the path of decay to complete extinction. This is the question Nature puts to every one : 'What glory of new achievement crown your noble brow ? Have you scaled any higher regions of life, or have you exhausted yourself only in horizontal flights in concentric circles ?' And woe to him who has been weighed in the balance and found wanting !—for man can deceive himself, but who the eternal verities ?

THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF MAN : THE ETERNAL VERITIES

Hindu philosophy speaks of the soul being encased in a fivefold sheath, of which the outermost is the body and its relative, the physical world ; and the inmost, bliss spiritual, and its concomittant, unbroken peace and harmony. Between the extremes, lie the worlds and planes

of forces, ideas, reason, angels, gods and all other diverse phenomena. This unitary scheme of the life of man is instinct with an upward *élan*, raising the man from lower to higher and yet higher planes of Reality, till the highest be achieved. And in this *élan*, lies the value of life, ideas, ideals, our knowing, our struggles, our morals and religion. Thus this fundamental principle is actualised, when we proceed by making newer achievements and denying those already gained. By renouncing the previous acquisitions as deficient and hollow, does the discontented soul yearn for higher and yet higher things, till they are realised, only to be abandoned in its attempt to make room for the fulfilment of a still nobler desire and subtler aspect of life !

Nor is this conception of life peculiarly Hinduistic. Every ethical and religious system has recognised this factor of renunciation as essential to the growth of the soul. This 'activism,' this perpetual struggle for defeating the already achieved possessions, which ultimately have proved to be a dead weight crushing the spirit, is considered to be an absolute need for the evolution of life.

MAN'S THREE WORLDS

(i) *Physical.*

But activism, this combative spirit of man, to be wholesome, must exercise wisdom in choosing the plane of life wherein to fructify itself. In this choice, as we have alluded to above, lies the ultimate destiny of man. If we classify the different motives or outlooks of life that inspire these activities of man, we come to three distinct divisions or rather worlds, in either of which every individual or nation is realising itself,—namely, (I) Physical, (II) Intellectual and (III) Spiritual.

As to 'physical,'—So long as man is rich only in his physical gains, and is essentially concentrated thereon, the full and whole stress of his life and being is on mundane things; and as he has circumscribed himself with things that have end and limit, he naturally comes in collision with others of that ilk; and only the social and political legislations of the country can maintain an average harmony between these clashing interests. Such is the nature of the ordinary and normal man; and of a nation too, when it centralises its life on the attainments of territorial or industrial gains. We witness in the present day situation of the world an apt instance of this principle. It is because nations have forgotten to strive for any higher interests, intellectual or moral, that

the world could witness a war which in its dimensions and ugliness, is unquestionably unrivalled by any war in the past history of man.

(ii) *Intellectual.*

In the cultural disintegration and conflict of to-day, we witness a true illustration and materialisation of the second principle, namely, intellectual. When the soul of an individual or nation finds in the creation and regulation of intellectual ideas, its centre of gravity, it clashes against and strives to destroy rival systems of ideas. Thus the aggressive scientific culture of the West, has naturally destroyed the previous systems of thought with what consequence, does not require any dilation at our hands. History of Philosophy or other systems of thought, in fact the very history of man is a clear testimony of this battle of ideas and ideals. For even in the world of ideas, there is not the fundamental unity. There is certainly in the Reality, deep in the heart of things, a Fundamental Entity on and in which all the diversities of phenomena rest in harmony; but the mind of man has not yet been able or rather is constitutionally unfit, to conceive it in its fulness. It has utmost synthesised a part of it, to find the other parts antithetically disposed. Yet this intellectual outlook of life is decidedly a higher achievement; for now, the individual in its pursuit of ideas and ideals, has forgotten or rather transcended the grossnesses of the 'physical' life; 'loaves and fishes' have been thrown aside in utter contempt, and there is consequently a lesser clash of interests with the surrounding life; it is content only in fighting rival thoughts and scholars. Similarly a nation also, when it is elevated to this higher plane, ceases to aggrandise itself economically or politically and a purer ideal guides its working system. Instances of this nobler ideal practically worked out by nations, are not absolutely wanting. Britain's noble attempt for eradicating the Slave Trade, America's neighbourly assistance to raise up Japan, and recently President Wilson's endeavours, though futile, to create a moral nucleus for international relations in the form of a 'league of nations,' may be cited as instances to the point. To add more and more to the knowledge and enjoyment of the higher life and any necessary adjustment of economical, industrial or political life of man, in order to create favourable circumstances for the fulfilment of the noble intellectual programme, comes to be the motif of national activities. When the West talks big of the 'white man's burden' when one nation offers to help up another nation such as England's Protectorate in Egypt or the now abortive Anglo-Persian Alliance or the League of Nations' mandate system,—it is only this same

noble ideal which is professed, although as the actual results shew, these tall-talking nations are yet far behindhand in mental development to really live up to their professions.

(iii) *Spiritual.*

Thus then, it is only spiritually that we can reach the plane which will subsume all the aspects of life, and be the surest and fundamental basis of all *true and real* endeavours towards the establishment of peace and harmony in the world. Then one no longer fights for pieces of earth or gold or silver, nor for political power; then one no more spins out theories and doctrines to rival other theories and doctrines. Now it is all peace and harmony; for the secret of life and the world has been revealed. One has become identified with the Real, in Whom everything lives, moves and has its being. Who will exclude whom? Who will fight whom? Only love infinite reigns in and out. Man has become God, and even as God has no reason to clash or hate or fight, even so he; he the man-God has transcended in the attainment of Love and Bliss Divine, all those planes of existence, where rage perpetually the storms of discord and hatred and self-aggrandisement. He, having achieved this, has achieved all, and has become the friend and lover of the whole creation! And when a nation is enthroned on this spiritual glory,—as India is,—it never goes out to conquer land or fight ideas or ideals. Every one is welcome to its loving heart; there is no refusal. Has not the mother-heart of India harboured all the different races that ever existed, within the peaceful regions of her ample boundaries?—and have not after all, all the known thought-systems of the world been given a place and absorbed into the heart of her own culture? Verily the cultural history of India is only a continued attempt at Aryanising all the non-Aryan cultures of the world; and from within her boundaries, go surely, though may be silently, beneficent and life-giving streams of spiritual culture, civilising, and opening newer vistas of the soul's life even to peoples that inhabit the distantest corners of the earth.

THE 'FATAL CHOICE'

Again the fatal 'judgment of Paris' is being enacted on the earth's stage! Again Satan is tempting the Christ! What will be our choice? These are the three worlds where we may work and thrive according to our merit; and as will be our choice, so the future allotted by Fate! An individual or nation lives by incessant struggle and fight. But he who will give the 'golden apple' to the 'physical' world, will fall before the sweeping scythe of Time, even as others have gone down with their mushroom growths

into the womb of oblivion. We may hoodwink ourselves; but the ingrained nature is too immortal to die. A fight for the flesh-pots will only lead you to death. Even in the 'intellectual' world, there is little surety of national immortality. Where are Babylon, Assyria, Egypt and other ancients now? Where Greece and Rome? But India lives, China lives and Phoenix-like, rise rejuvenated with the inception of every new cultural epoch! It is for us now to elect our destiny. We need not fear that the spiritual ideal, if accepted as national or individual policy, will plunge the nation into a philosophical inertia. There is too much suffering, too much ignorance in the world for us to fear any cessation of activity, if we turn our energy-currents to that fairer field!

RENUNCIATION, THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY

Yes, the world indeed needs the benefit of the 'Kite's Parable'! For only by making this spirit of renunciation aggressive, can we find a true and permanent solution of the life and death problem that faces humanity. A denial of the comforts of the lower life, for the sake of the spirit,—that is what the world wants to-day! The God of man demands this sacrifice; not until this has been offered at the altar of Man, can we hope for salvation! Let us turn our face in utter contempt of these patch-works of false peace-making; let not the slightest gleam of hope tempt our confiding steps towards those dangerous pitfalls! Much of the world's best blood has been shed at the feet of this hideous Goddess of political peace-making. Let us all who are for truth and love and harmony, stand for real peace; let all those that sleep in far-off lands, shake off their comfortable slumbers, and stand out for that battle which is to bring on earth 'the Kingdom of Heaven'!

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco.

On Sunday, 13th of March, the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated in the Hindu Temple at San Francisco, California.

A short time before, the interior of the Auditorium had been redecorated in a very artistic manner, new modern indirect lights installed and the outside of the Temple finished with a new coat of paint, so that within and without was auspicious for the celebration.

Generous contributions provided funds for flowers in quantity—the choicest of the season.

Loving hands garlanded them around the pictures and placed everywhere that a place could be found. Especially beautiful were the flowers around the altar at the foot of the almost lifesize picture of Sri Ramakrishna.

Their sweet smiling faces looked up in love and adoration to Him whose beauty and wisdom they reflected.

Lovers of Truth came from far and near to attend the celebration, members of many faiths and sects, Hindus, Christians, white and colored, all alike came to worship at the feet of the Incarnation of this age.

The atmosphere was surcharged by His grace and all were uplifted by the inspired utterances of Swami Prakashananda through whom radiated the power and gracious presence of the Divine Mother as he spoke on the life and message of this greatest of all God-manifestations.

Organ music and devotional hymns were a special part of each service during the day and those present listened with deep interest to Sanskrit chants rendered with great feeling by a Western devotee.

A. M.

Swami Prakashananda, speaking on "Sri Ramakrishna, The Great World Teacher" at 11 A.M., said in part:

"To-day is a day of great rejoicing, a day of new hope, new enthusiasm, new light.

Many God-intoxicated souls and sages came to bless us with their message and presence, but none was greater in Divine manifestation than He who came as Sri Ramakrishna.

He came to India, but no country can say, He is ours.

The Divine Life cannot be limited in any way by claims of sect or country.

We must study this great life, universal in its aspect. From such a study every denomination or sect can turn to study their own from a broader standpoint.

In order to understand such a messenger of light we have to stop all the ordinary ideas and activities of our mind that the Divine in us may take control, and in that high state of serenity we can better understand such a life.

Some may ask, why this celebration? Why not seek the Truth or worship Him in our own home?

No, that is not sufficient. It is in such celebrations that our hearts and minds get necessary expansion, fresh stimulus, fresh awakening, with which to work out our life problems.

There are times in life when progress seems to have come to an end. Then we need such inspirations from such a life to renew our failing strength and aspiration.

These great lives are productive of the greatest good in all ages—their divine power lifts us out of all worldly conditions.

Such blessed occasions as these, make us feel brother and sister to all humanity and awakens true love for every living being.

At periods in the world's history the material side of life gains the ascendancy—business and social activities—attention to the necessities of life—all engross the mind and plunge it deeper and deeper into the darkness of materialism.

Gradually then religion sinks into a name, a mere discussion—sinks to a low ebb. When it is at the lowest—a tidal wave is seen and on its crest appears a shining messenger of light.

In this way—out of an humble wayside village of Bengal—came such a messenger of light to bless the world, in the person of Sri Ramakrishna.

What wonder our hearts flow in gratitude to this messenger who came to unite all the warring sects in one great wave of devotion, in whom all—Mohammedans and Christians alike—could see their ideal?

There must be some form of manifestation to prove any truth.

Humanity can only understand that which it sees in concrete form, especially so in Divine manifestation.

That is the greatness of these messengers of light manifesting before humanity—their greatest power—to show their Divinity—to remain in that state of God-consciousness.

The purpose of life is to become Divine and when we see a Divine life concretized, manifesting the most sublime Divine power, our soul is translated, we become transformed.

Their mere touch gives God-consciousness to the soul.

The great message of all the Divine teachers and prophets is—you are Divine and you can become Divine in consciousness.

From childhood Sri Ramakrishna knew His mission, but as a God-Man and a world teacher, He had to go through all phases of religion.

He took up all faiths and practised them to the end to show to every sincere soul that the end of all was the same Truth.

So our hearts' gratitude and that of all humanity should go out to such a great soul.

This great life should inspire us to live the Divine life and stand before others as living examples.

His message comes to us like a tonic, to see God in all and then we shall surely find Him in ourselves.

So, on this blessed occasion let us forget all our little differences and troubles and, sitting before this altar, may we consecrate the altar of our heart and like the beautiful flowers at His feet, open up and shed its love to all the world."

P. M.

In the evening Swami Prakashananda spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna, His Universal Message".

"It is not possible in the compass of a lecture to more than briefly touch upon the outlines of His message.

His life was a concentrated book which would take an eternity to unfold and tell.

If only we can catch a glimpse, we shall be blessed.

He lived for humanity. As has been said before, no community or country can lay special claim upon that life.

As God is universal, His manifestation is also universal. His teachings reach all corners of the globe.

In an age of materialism so full of different faiths it is wonderful to study His life. His life was the manifestation of the essential Truth and harmony of all faiths.

Men in business, householders, men of different ideas of God, saints and sages, all could get a message from His teachings.

He looked on all as the children of the Divine Mother, so all had an equal right and chance for illumination.

With His penetrating vision He pierced the veil and saw the Divine Mother sitting in the heart of even the so-called lowest sinner.

He lived one with God constantly and His life was a life of constant God-consciousness—the only reality in the fleeting shadows of life.

He realized that and stands before us as the great manifestation of Divine life and power in this age of atheism and speculation.

He showed us that even in this life the ideal can be lived and realized.

In this age, material education has covered up the spiritual side of life and now He showed us that true education is the One Truth and Knowledge by which all the different aspects of life are understood.

It was revealed that His life was the summation of great knowledge, wonderful devotion and great activity. It was hard for Him to stay on the material plane because His natural plane was Samadhi.

Hundreds came from morning to night but He was never tired of giving out spiritual truth and consolation to every hungry soul who came to Him.

Some of the great lives of great souls expressed one phase of Divinity especially, some knowledge, some devotion, but His life was all-sided. In His life all could take refuge.

He showed that all phases of faith have a place, from the strongest to the faintest aspiration. God is infinite and He turns none away.

Living in the realm of nature and forms, many of us cannot reach the highest. What shall we do? Each one follows his conception of God. Each has a way that appeals to him, or he may have no special way, he may worship no form, but the formless. He, the God-Man, stands on that peak from which He sees all the different paths and calls us all to come. We travel by different paths but each will reach the goal.

It is a question of time but all must come in the end, from the highest saint to the lowest form of image-worshipper.

He was the ideal Bhakta, Yogi, Jnani, Karmi.

One of the great purposes of His life was to bring harmony between all faiths, to show that all ended in the One Truth.

Out of the necessities of time different religions have arisen and humanity needs them all as an expression for even the faintest religious impulse.

All who came to Him saw in Him all the tenets and teachings of their faith fully embodied and exemplified beyond their power of conception.

True philosophy accepts all scriptures, all religions but takes you far beyond all scriptures and teachers.

‘All those who travel by any road really worship me.’

‘As all rivers empty their waters into the sea, so, O Lord, all the paths, crooked or straight, followed by persons of diverse faiths, ultimately lead unto Thee.’

My greatest prayer is that we should constantly study to come to an understanding of the harmony and universal aspect of this great life.

Let the Light which came to the world, come to illumine our heart, so that we may see all religions by that light illumined and transfigured.”

After lecture, Swami Prakashananda called upon Swami Abhedananda, who was present, to say a few words, to which he responded in a way suited to the occasion.

Report of Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, for the year 1920-21.

The Home was started originally in a rented house in 1919 with the object of giving free boarding and lodging to deserving poor students under competent supervision, imparting to them instruction on the practice and principles of Hindu religion. The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Ashrama exercise close supervision on the Home and influence and shape the conduct of the boarders. The boys of the Home regularly attend the morning and evening *Sandhya* and the worship at the Ashrama. Swami Nirmalanandaji, President of the Ashrama, gives them religious instructions at the Mutt on Sunday evenings.

Admission is restricted to unmarried students of the Entrance and College classes. At the beginning of the year under report three out of the first year's boarders who were eligible to continue in the Home were retained and out of 25 new applicants 9 were selected. The number of boarders at the end of the year was 18 of whom 7 were in the Entrance class, 4 in the First year B. A., one who was already a B.A., was in the second year B. Sc., and one in the First year Engineering class. The boarders helped in the collection of monthly subscriptions and were responsible by turns for the purchases needed for the Home and other sundry domestic work. Four of the Entrance students passed in the University Examination; one of the First year B.A. students discontinued his studies, and the rest have been promoted to their respectively higher classes. The total receipts including interest from deposits was Rs. 2,525-10-9 as against Rs. 2,630-6-4 in 1919-20, and the total charges amounted to Rs. 1,285-8-6 as against Rs. 1,090-13-11 in 1919-20. The closing balance including a sum of Rs. 150 advanced for house rent and Rs. 18-8-0 as examination fees to some of the students, is Rs. 2,779-15-8 as against Rs. 1,539-9-8 in the previous year.

The authorities of the Home have recently issued an appeal for funds which we publish below, in order that a permanent house may be provided for the growing institution. That this appeal deserves generous response, goes without saying, when we take into consideration the important function, it fulfils.

Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City.

This Home started in August 1919 under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission provides free boarding and lodging to destitute students whose number in Bangalore, as every one knows, is not small. Through the ready and generous support of the public, it has been run successfully for the past two years with ten students in the first, and thirteen in the second year; it is now entering on its third year and the management proposes to increase the strength to fifteen. The encouragement the Home has received so far, indicates how keen the need is for an institution of its kind.

The Home originally commenced in a rented house opposite to the Ramakrishna Ashrama, is now located at No. 8, Bull Temple Road, Basavangudi, at some distance from the Mutt. This house is too small for even the proposed strength of fifteen, is too far from the Ashrama to be efficiently under the supervision of the Swamis and has, besides, many other inconveniences. Lastly the pressing need of the day is not mere academical education but technical education. Neither the present house nor any in the vicinity can offer any facility for a beginning in this direction, however humble it may be.

His Holiness Swami Brahmananda, President of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, who is now in our midst, has graciously been pleased to allot a portion of the Ashrama lands facing the Gavipur extension for a building for the Home. The management is anxious to avail itself of the holy presence of the President of the Mission and the Vice-President Swami Sivananda to place the Home on a permanent basis. The offer of a few friends to give a donation of about Rs. 500 each for rooms to be constructed after their desire coupled with the success with which the Ramakrishna Mission centres at Madras, Benares and elsewhere have been able to conduct expensive charities through the munificence of the public and the local administrations, induces the management of the local Students' Home to appeal for a fund for a building.

A building to accommodate about 25 boarders in the first instance is estimated to cost Rs. 15,000. The management has every confidence that with the kind co-operation of the generous public of the State, the proposed building will soon be an accomplished fact and it earnestly appeals to all to contribute liberally and help in the uplifting of the needy.

All contributions may kindly be marked "Building Fund" and remitted to the undersigned for to Mr. B. Venkatanaranappa, M.A., Treasurer.

BASAVANGUDI,
BANGALORE CITY,
1st July, 1921.

NIRMALANANDA.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[No. 4.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda.

But to resume our narration, the Brahmani established herself in the Devamandal Ghaut * on the Ganges, quite close to the north of the temple, and by repeated excursions into the village, became soon intimate with the village women; thus she had no longer to suffer for want of accommodation or food, or from the deprivation of Sri Ramakrishna's society for fear of people's slander. Daily she came to spend a few hours with him in religious talks, and often entertained him with various delicacies, she had begged of the ladies of the village.

The story of the Master's spiritual realisations, visions and moods created in the Brahmani a clearest conviction that these were nothing else than the consequences of his superhuman love of God; and this her high estimation of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual attainments was further accentuated by the instances of his repeated *Bhava samadhi* during religious conversation, and overflowing manifestation of bliss in *Keertanam*. All these perforce brought to her recollection the various passages in *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita*

Hriday says, It was the Master himself who advised her to stay in the Devamandal Ghaut and sent her for that purpose to the place of the Mandale, where she was most respectfully welcomed by the pious wife of late Navinchandra Neogy; and was not only permitted to live in the Ghaut for any length of time but was most considerately provided with a bedstead, a mound of rice, pulse, ghee and other articles of food.

and *Sri Chaitanya Bhagawata*, which suggest a future incarnation of Sri Chaitanya for the salvation of man; and at last led her to discover a closest similarity between the ways and experiences of these two great souls,—even to the point of their capacity to communicate spiritual powers to others by their inspired touch.

That this was not a mere idle conclusion of the Brahmani, was proved by the remedial tests, she applied to Sri Ramakrishna, which the above-mentioned Vaishnava works prescribe to have cured Sri Chaitanya of the self-same painful symptoms. We have already mentioned how Kaviraj Gangaprasad Sen, the greatest man of the then Ayurvedic world had failed to bring about any relief of the terrible burning sensation that prevailed on his body. We have it from the Master's own lips that this painful sensation had a proportionate increase with the advance of the day, till it reached the unendurable climax at noon and he had no other means but to remain immersed for two or three hours in the waters of the Ganges with a wet towel covering the head; and then fearing that too long immersion in water might bring on an attack of cold, he would reluctantly return to the 'Babu's Kuthi' and roll on the wet marble floor of a closely shut up room.

The mere statement of the case however was enough to lead her to the right diagnosis that those symptoms were not indicative of any physical malady, but only external manifestation of a highly developed spirituality,—the same that visited Srimati Radharani and Sri Chaitanyadeva on various occasions under the impulsion of their mad yearning for God-realisation,—and that they were curable simply by wearing sweet flower garlands and anointing the whole body with fragrant sandal paste;—a strange remedy indeed, which might well provoke, as it most certainly did, only a derisive smile in the lips of Mathur Babu and other friends whose most costly and well thought-out prescriptions had hitherto failed to produce any appreciable result. She was however allowed to try her cheap remedy and strange! in three days, the Master was completely freed from the terrible agonies of the burning sensation!

A few days after, the Brahmani again proved the skill of her simple remedies, when the Master developed another peculiar symptom. To put it in his own words: "An unnatural hunger seized me then, refusing to be appeased by any amount of food I took. Perhaps I had just finished my meal, lo! there was again the same terrible appetite; and throughout day and night, it was always 'hunger' 'hunger';—so quite at a loss to make any head or tail of this disease, I approached the Brahmani who said, 'Never fear, my child;—this is a state, which the shastras say, the devotee

has sometimes to pass through on his way towards God. I shall just cure it!' She then ordered Mathur to fill my room with myriad sorts of preparations of food and told me to remain shut up all day in the room and eat as I wanted. Thus I passed three days, following her prescription, roaming about the chamber, sometimes eating from one plate, again touching or simply gazing at another, till I was cured of that unnatural hunger and appetite for food."

All these therefore, re-inforced by her divine vision about Sri Ramakrishna on her first day at Dakshineswar, consequently drove her to the conclusion that both Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda have again incarnated themselves in the Master for the gracious dispensation of Divine love for the salvation of men; and this her belief received a further corroboration in the story of the Master's vision of two young boys coming out of his own person, to which we have previously referred, and she unhesitatingly declared, 'Sri Chaitanya has incarnated again in the form of Nityananda!'

And the Brahmani, the woman of great renunciation, for whom the world held no expectations nor people's ridicule or slander had any meaning, did not fear to voice forth her opinion, which she therefore at first spoke out to the Master and Hriday and then to whoever would approach her on the point. We have been told that as the Master was one day during those times sitting in the Panchavati with Mathur and Hriday, he communicated to the former the judgment of the Brahmani, saying, "She says this body and mind contain all the different signs of an Avatara;—and she has studied many shastras, and many of them are still with her;" at which Mathur laughed and remarked, 'Whatever she may say, is it not a fact that there are no more than the ten Avatars? How can she be true then? But yes, Mother has no doubt vouchsafed much of Her grace unto you.'

As they were thus carrying on their conversation, they found a Sannyasini—whom Mathur now learnt to be the same Brahmani, the subject of their talk,—approaching towards them with a dish of sweets in her hand, filled with that rapturous love which is said to have inspired Nandarani Yashoda of Sri Brindavan when she went to feed her Gopala. But as on drawing near she noticed the presence of Mathur Babu, she controlled her emotions and handed over the plate to Hriday. Then said the Master, pointing to Mathur, "Do you know, I told him to-day your opinion about me, but he says there are no more than the ten Avatars." In the meanwhile, Mathur saluted the Brahmani, so blessing him, she replied, "Why? Does not Srimad Bhagawatam speak of the twenty-

four principal Incarnations and infinite other Incarnations again? Besides there is a clear mention in the Vaishnava Scriptures of the re-incarnation of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya, and I have discovered a close similarity of essentials between him and Sri Ramakrishna"; and she continued that her assertion was sure to be borne out by any one who was properly versed in the works of the Bengal Vaishnava authorities, and that she was ready to defend herself before any of those scholars. To this Mathur could only acknowledge his defeat by silence.

This opinion of the Brahmani about Sri Ramakrishna gradually came to the knowledge of one and all of the temple and created thus a whirl-wind of discussion amongst them. But this movement would have come to nothing, had it not been for the Master himself who eagerly insisted on Mathur Babu that the contentions of the Brahmani should be tested by the scholarly opinions of approved authorities, so that Mathuranath, inspired no doubt partly by curiosity and partly good will towards Sri Ramakrishna, agreed to send invitations to some well-known Pandits of Bengal, who would, he hoped, be quite a match for the Brahmani, and thus free the Master's affected mind,—so he thought—from these strange conceptions about those morbid symptoms being indicative of his spiritual greatness.

During those times, Vaishnava Charan had already established his reputation amongst the Pandits of Calcutta, and had been well-known even to the common people for his beautiful and lucid expositions of Srimad Bhagavatam. He was thus a familiar personage to the Brahmani and Mathur Babu* who selected him and Gouri Pandit of Indesh in Birbhum, famous for his uncommon powers and scholarship, to deliver their judgment of the case. The following account of their advent and proceedings at Dakshineswar is summarised from what we have heard from the Master himself on various occasions.

Now Vaishnava Charan was not a mere scholar but was reputed to be a devotee and a Sadhaka as well, which, together with his clear insight into matters philosophical and especially into the Bhakti-shastra, had already elevated him to the position of the leader of the Vaishnavas. The Vaishnava Society always sent him most respectful invitations on all occasions, and looked up to him for proper solution of knotty religious problems; and he was often approached by many a Sadhaka for guidance and light in the lonely and difficult path of sadhana; it was thus no wonder that

* Some maintain that it was Brahmani who first spoke of Vaishnava Charan to Mathur Babu.

he would be approached as fit to properly evaluate the uncommon symptoms that had become manifest in the Master. So a day was fixed upon, and the meeting was held in the Dakshineswar temple.

We may well imagine that on that day, the little assembly must have contained not only Vaishnava Charan and the Brahmani, but some other scholars and devotees who had accompanied the former, and the members of Mathur Babu's own party. The Brahmani first began the discussion by a narration of what she had learnt from hear-say about the Master and her personal observations; and then referring to the experiences of the Great Ones, which have been duly recorded in the shastras, she declared their complete identity with those of Sri Ramakrishna and challenged Vaishnava Charan to adduce his own reasons, if he held any contrary view. This was indeed a bold challenge, quite befitting a heroic mother defending her helpless son! And the vision rises almost vivid before our eyes of how the Master, the occasion of this fiery contest, sits smiling and self-absorbed in joy, helping himself from time to time to a few grains of spice from his spice-bag, and accords a dispassionate attention to the discussion as to alien interests, only sometimes bringing to the notice of the Pandit, by touching his body, the exact nature of his experiences.

Some of us hold that the deep spiritual insight of the Pandit, acquired no doubt by his own spiritual strivings, enabled him to recognise at the very first sight a great spiritual personality in Sri Ramakrishna. But whatever might be the fact, we have it from the Master himself that Vaishnava Charan heartily endorsed all the assertions of the Brahmani; and further maintained that all the nineteen principal aspects, recorded in the Bhakti-shastra of *Mahabhava*, were manifest in Sri Ramakrishna; that this had been realised only twice in the past in Srimati Radharani and Bhagawan Sri Chaitanya, it is not being possible for the ordinary individual to experience it in all its aspects, though a few of them may be vouchsafed to his blessed lot. Well might the magnitude of his judgment plunge Mathur and others into silent amazement! But the Master's remarks at this conclusion was quite characteristic of him; for he said to Mathur in joy and wonder, "Do you see what he says! I am indeed delighted to hear it was not my insanity!"

That this high appreciation of Vaishnava Charan was not mere polite effusions on his part, is evidenced by his henceforth daily growing regard and love for the Master. Though a Vaishnava, he

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belonged in practical religion to the sect of the *Karta-bhajas*.* This sect had its centre at Kachhi Bagan, a few miles to the north of Calcutta, where lived many sadhakas of both sexes, devoting their time to the practice of the particular sadhanas enjoined by their sect. After Vaishnava Charan had come to be intimately related with the Master, he would not only pay frequent visits to him in the temple garden and receive instructions on all doubts and problems that assailed him in course of his spiritual practices, but would sometimes invite him to the places of his brother sadhakas in order that they might equally share the rare blessing and opportunity of his holy acquaintance. Sri Ramakrishna appears thus to have paid several visits to the afore-said *Karta-bhaja* Centre, and is said on the last of those occasions to have been subjected to spiritual tests by the lady inmates of the place; he of course came out triumphant from the ordeal, evidencing a complete control over his senses and became the recipient of the highest honours of an *Atula Sahaja*. Sri Ramakrishna in his child-like innocence was quite unapprehensive of any such project on the part of the inmates, and he never again went to their place. But his strength of character, purity and God-absorption only enhanced Vaishnava Charan's high regard for him, and in course of time emboldened him to openly proclaim the Divinity of the Master.

Some time following the acquaintance of Vaishnava Charan with the Master, came to Dakshineswar Gouri Pandit of Indesh, a much advanced Tantiik Sadhaka. A very amusing story has been narrated to us by the Master of his first arrival at the temple. It seems the hard penances of the Pandit had brought him a peculiar miraculous power of attaining victory over his rival scholars in any debating assembly, by overwhelming their minds with an indescribable terror. He would achieve this desired effect in a very strange manner. The Master told us that whenever he would make

* This is one of the minor Tantrik sects prevalent in Bengal and largely influenced by the ideas and ideals of Vaishnavism. They term God *Alek-lata*, evidently derived from classical *Atakshya* i.e., Indeterminable. This *Alek*, they hold, becomes tangible as *Karta* or Guru, by His manifestation through the completely purified mind of man who is then called *Sahaja*. Hence the designation of the sect, *Karta-bhaja* ('worshipper of the Karta'), for although their Ideal is the Formless One, and they do not hold any antagonistic view towards the gods and goddesses of Hinduism, their main object of worship is the *Sahaja*, the Guru in and through whom, the Formless God is making His clearest revelation. The *Sahaja* must be *Atula*, that is to say, he must remain unaffected by any lust or attachment, though in the constant company of women. This internal detachment is one of the principal aims of their spiritual struggle. They try various means to completely eradicate the dual consciousness of good and evil, purity and impurity and other such pairs, and according as the sadhaka reaches higher and higher stages of success, he gradually gains the titles of *Aul*, *Baul*, *Darvesh* and *Jai*, the last being the highest round of the ladder. This sect has got many quaint rhymes to couify poetically its tenets; and we were often regaled by the Master with their quotation and explanation and many a beautiful song withal.

his entrance into the place of debate, he would very gravely and loudly recite several times the first line of a certain *Devi-Stotram* (Invocation to the Goddess) of Sri Sankaracharya, and striking his arms in the way of the Indian Palwans, enter and seat himself in the assembly in the fashion of the Moghul courtier. Then, it is said, he was absolutely invincible.

The Master of course, was totally unaware of these ways of the Pandit, but the moment, on his entrance into the temple garden, he began his loud recitation, something from within himself incited the Master to make a louder response to the challenge. The Pandit then made a still louder attempt only to be defeated by the Master's still greater sound; thus the competition went on till Gouri, in sheer inability, acknowledged defeat and sadly entered into the temple. This unnatural fight of yelling, the Master would laughingly tell us, produced such a fearful effect on the inmates of the temple that apprehending an assault of robbers, the gate-keepers ran to the place of occurrence with all their arms in hand. The Master said, "Mother revealed to me afterwards that this supernatural power of Gouri, having sustained defeat to me, had been taken away from him, and absorbed into this (i.e., his own self) for his good." And indeed with the passing of days Gouri evinced a growing spirit of appreciation of and submission to the ideas and the ideals of the Master.

Nor was this the only peculiar aspect of the Pandit's character. We have it on the authority of the Master that, in pursuance of the instructions of the Tantras, he would offer worship to his own wife in the very same way as we do to the image of the Mother, on the three days of the Durga Puja;—not a single detail of the worship would be omitted; and he would beautifully decorate his wife's person with jewels and ornaments and seat her on a nicely painted altar. Again, often whenever he would perform the *Homa* ceremony, he would, instead of building the altar with earth or sand in the customary fashion, arrange the wood to the amount of a maund's weight on the stretched palm of his unsupported left hand, and there kindle the sacrificial fire and offer oblations. The whole affair certainly lasted through a long hour; and when we considered the stupendousness of the feat of bearing such a heavy weight for such a long time, and the extraordinary enduring power of unflinchingly sustaining the blistering heat of the sacrificial fire and above all, the almost superhuman mental control, steadiness and devotion which alone could make such an attempt a success,—the whole proceeding appeared so incogruous and impossible to us, that we could not easily bring ourselves to believe the truth of the story.

But the Master himself told us, "I have seen him do it with my own eyes. This also was one of his miracles."

A few days after the arrival of the Pandit to Dakshineswar, Mathur Babu sent invitations to Vaishnava Charan and other sadhaka scholars and arranged for their meeting with Gouri, for a proper discussion and estimation of the spiritual experiences of the Master. They very soon assembled one morning in the Drama Hall before the Mother's temple. But something happened even before the beginning of the proceedings, which was calculated to create a very deep impression on the minds of all present. It appears Vaishnava Charan was a little late in his arrival, so the Master went with Gouri towards the Hall, and entered into the Mother's temple. In the meanwhile Vaishnava Charan had arrived, so that when the Master came out intoxicated as it were by his visit to the Mother, he bowed down at his holy feet. This at once overwhelmed him with love and inspiration and plunged him into Samadhi and he sat down on the shoulders of Vaishnava Charan who thus feeling himself blessed and overflowing with joy, began to invoke him with a Sanskrit *stotram* of his extempore composition; and all stood around in mute wonder and devotion feasting themselves on the heavenly vision of the Master's ecstatic and illumined countenance, and the sweet and beautiful invocation of the Pandit.

When after a time the Master came down to normal consciousness, the actual proceedings of the meeting began. But at the outset, Gouri Pandit rose up to say, "I am not going to-day to engage in any discussion with Panditji, blessed as he is by him (i.e. Sri Ramakrishna) and though I try, I am sure to be defeated; for to-day he is strong with the strength of God! Besides, I find him holding the same opinions about the Master as mine. Any debate on the point is therefore superfluous." So the meeting ended only in friendly scriptural talks.

To fear of his rival's learning, we cannot certainly ascribe Gouri's desistance. He indeed possessed the spiritual insight to recognise in the Master a Great One, even after his short observation of the Master's ways and manners and other signs and significances. The following record of a dialogue that took place between them a few days after, will bear out the truth of our remarks.

The Master said, "Well, Vaishnava Charan says that this (i.e. himself) is an Avatara. Can it be so? what is your own opinion?" To which Gouri gravely replied, "Does he call you an Incarnation of God?—he minimises your glory! It is my belief that He from

Whom even the Avataras receive their being and their power for doing good to the world,—even He you are!" The Master laughed out to hear this and remarked, "By God, you seem to overtop even him! why do you think so? Have you seen anything in me?" "Yes, on the authority of the shastras", replied Gouri, "and the inspiration of my own heart, do I base my opinion; and I am ready to defend myself against any rival argument on the point." But the Master only said like a simple child, "You say so many things, but I myself do not know anything!" "You are quite right in not knowing yourself", said Gouri, "that is just what the shastras hold. How then can others recognise you unless it be through your own mercy?" At this confession, of faith, the Master began to laugh.

Day by day, Gouri began to feel a stronger attraction for the Master whose holy society now brought into fruition all his scriptural knowledge and Sadhana, in the form of a strong dispassion for the world. Daily his mind divested itself of its desires for learning, fame, occult powers and was devoted to the lotus feet of God; pride of scholarship had vanished, and love of scholarly debate was now lost in a contemplative silence; now he understood that he had wasted his past in searching after the vanities of the world; and he resolved to devote the remaining days of his life and his energies in devout worship and search of the Lord in complete self-surrender, hoping thereby to deserve His grace and blessed vision.

Thus he passed days and months in the blessed society of the Master and contemplation of God, absolutely unmoved by repeated earnest calls from home to return, till one day, apprehending from one of those letters, that his people might come over to him and drag him again to the world, he formed a strong resolution to extricate himself from the critical situation, and in an auspicious hour came to the Master and tearfully begged leave of him. The Master wonderingly asked, "What is this, Gouri? What do you mean by taking this sudden leave? Where are you going?" Gouri humbly replied, "Bless me, sire, that my desire may be fulfilled,—may I never return to the world without realising God!" And henceforth, no amount of search has been able to discover his whereabouts.

BY THE WAY.

The problem of education is one of paramount importance and has always engaged the attention of the best minds of every country. Amongst the ancient Greeks education meant preparation for philosophy and aesthetics and among the Romans it meant preparation for Government. Since the inauguration of the universities in our own country, education has advanced on purely Western lines. The education of the head has been given the primary, nay, the sole importance; the heart and the hand have been left out of consideration.

In the West education enables a man to earn a decent livelihood and attain social status; education may be said there to be the passport to refined society. It also enables a man to be acquainted with the history and literature of his own country and other countries of the world and stimulates a desire in him to emulate the examples of eminent men of the past. Education widens the horizon of his mind, his imagination finds a free play and the outlook upon life and the world is changed. The stalwarts of the Victorian age in India held such a view of education and wanted to mould the lives of the rising generation on this model. This theoretical education in India had its baneful effect in producing a generation of men who are puffed up with a wrong ideal of education and are utterly incapable to hold their own in the field of competition with the other nations. The educated Indian differs in one fundamental aspect from the educated Western who has paid more attention to technical and mechanical education and in whose country manual labour is not looked down upon.

A reaction has set in and there is now a cry for technical education; and the educationists have discovered the folly of introducing in India a purely theoretical system of education. As a result, the premier university of India felt the necessity of inviting a Commission from England to adapt its system of education to the needs of the Modern age. It remains to be seen how far their scheme will improve the educational system and will be successful in turning out men who can hold their own with the other nations of the world. India has to look to the advanced nations of the world for her educational system and must adopt their system, if

she wants a place in the community of nations. The United States of America, the most go-a-head nation in the world, have developed the most perfect system of education. Their system is the ideal one,—this is the solid conviction of the advanced thinkers of the age.

The problem of education ultimately rests on the proper solution of the problem of the value and destiny of the individual. In a country where hedonistic view of life holds sway and the success of life is gauged by the amount of creature comforts, education means equipping a man with those capacities which will enable him to enjoy the maximum amount of pleasure in this world. The result is clearly discernible in Western countries. But in India the aim of education was quite different. Education has been defined by the Swami Vivekananda, the greatest exponent of Vedanta in the Modern age as the manifestation of perfection already in man. There is a world of truth in this short pithy utterance, which educationists are apt to forget. There are powers lying dormant in every man, which will bring out the gradual unfoldment of the inner perfection, if they find free scope and are steadily developed. Education helps to remove the obstacles and to create a healthy atmosphere for the normal growth of the human mind. The point will be more clear if we take the analogy of the growth of a seed. There is potentiality in the acorn for growing into a big oak tree. We have only to remove the thorny plants that may grow by its side and let in light and air; and when it grows into a sapling, we have to protect it by putting a hedge round it so that the cows or other animals may not eat it up. Similar is the case with the education of child-mind. The obstacles on the way of its progress are to be removed and a healthy atmosphere is to be created in which it can find free play.

The Indian boy, with the accumulated tendencies of the past generations in his blood is saddled with the system of education of an alien country, which is quite foreign to his nature. The result has been abnormal growth of the mind. The educated moderner, in spite of his pride of Western education, is an anomaly; for his mind is divorced from the culture of his own country and bereft of the best elements of the Western culture. It is a happy sign of the time that the best minds of the present generation are convinced of the futility of this system of purely theoretical education which brings no substantial benefit in this life or in the after-life. It is high time that we should revise our theory of education. There is now a

great upheaval in the country and the leaders of thought should find out the proper course of education of the young hopefuls of the country. Let there be no recurrence of mistakes and blunders.

It is refreshing to remember the system of education that obtained in ancient India. Immediately after the investiture with the sacred thread, the boy went to his Guru's house for the attainment of knowledge. He had to implicitly obey his orders and follow the injunctions of the Shastras. The President of the Calcutta University Commission did not fail to notice the missing of this spirit of devotion in the modern Indian student. Far away from the 'maddening crowd's ignoble strife' in city life, his mind grew and developed along the tracks left by a long line of predecessors and preceptors. His devotion and service for his Guru, the life of self-restraint and self-abnegation that he had to lead, helped to bring about the dawn of the higher life of the spirit and open the vistas of eternal life. The conditions of life are altered and India is now in the midst of the world-vortex. She cannot go back to the Vedic age and must adapt herself to the modern conditions of life. But the aim of education should not be lost sight of. It would be a very poor conception of education if the worth of an educated man is to be judged by the number of silver coins he earns a month. As it has been said,—man should not live upon bread alone. Let not the learning and education of a man be converted into rupees, annas and pies.

* * *

The panacea of all the present anomalies in our educational system is to combine the best elements of the Western system of education with those of our own. An Indian graduate under the present system knows more of the history and literature of other countries than of his own and when he comes out of the university, leaving behind a brilliant career, he is a hybrid who has not been able to assimilate the best elements of Western system of education and in whom the traits of character of his own nation are hardly discernible. Let him learn to appreciate the arts, science and literature of his own country, for it is through them that the genius of India has travelled and is still travelling across the world, not to speak of religion in which she occupies the pre-eminent position. Let him draw his inspiration from the literature of his own country, which will provide for him perennial source of inspiration. Let India assimilate the useful and essential elements of Western culture and look back to ancient Aryavartta for her ideas and ideals, then a new era will dawn and the greater India will be built up.

THE SOUL'S THREE VISIONS,

BEING A PAGE FROM THE LIFE OF AN UNKNOWN.

[This is, Mr. Editor, how I am able to present the following interesting pages from an Unknown's life to the kind notice of your readers.

During the last decade, a man might often be found lounging about the streets of S——, a veritable philosopher with all his natural paraphernalia. I do not know if he was ever marked by any one, for by the grace of *Shah Jalal*, scores of these half lunatic half metaphysical gentlemen fill the neighbourhood, and he might easily be mistaken as one of them. Yet there was something remarkable about him by which an eye that could see, might with a little exertion distinguish him from the common herd of men. With untrimmed hair, unshaved face, uncut nails and unwashed skin, he had still a manly voice, a firm step, flashing eyes, a prominent brow, a straight keen nose which all betokened the man in him,—thoughtful, strong and virile. It was by a mere chance that I formed his acquaintance one spring morning, and this marked the very turning point of my life. I was taking my usual morning walk in a rather absent-minded way, when suddenly by the bend of the solitary path bordering the northern part of the Town Park, I chanced upon him, standing under a mango tree, indistinctly speaking to himself with hands outstretched as in ecstasy and a far-away look in his face. I addressed him, but he went away, smiling on me. And what a smile it was! I understood nothing, but it went into my very heart;—the morning was exceedingly charming, the sunshine, warm and crisp, and the atmosphere heavily laden with the sweet fragrance of mango blossoms. The whole day passed in an intoxication revealing in thousand lights the sweet sublimity of that smile; and for days afterwards it kept my mind following the man in imagination until one solitary noon, I made him speak to me. It was all a revelation to me too dazzling to be ever given out, only the white shining clouds in the azure above joined their glory to it, and the whole universe was as it were hushed by its grandeur. I persuaded him to come over to my place and live with me; I gave him his choice of rooms. He took his residence in an apartment in the upper story of the house overlooking the interminable undulations of the dark blue hills,—an impersonal and misty silence brooding over them. Day after day, I have seen him, sitting for hours outside, immersed in deep silence, 'forgetting the world, by the world forgot,'—a strange inner light illumined his countenance, his eyes wore a sublime and yet wistful look and a half manifested sweet smile unconsciously curled his chiselled rose-coloured lips. Thus I have seen him passing days,

months and years until he passed away. Yet there was not the faintest cry of anguish in the world that did not find a sympathetic reverberation in his heart's chords; there was not the slightest injustice done to the people, which narrated did not evoke in his eyes a look of indignation, pang and suffering; and often his thoughtful cheeks have been furrowed with the tricklings of tears as I told him the story of misery and distress of our people. He was always persistently silent about his own life, but on those rare occasions when carried away by emotion he allowed the curtain rise a little, entrancing glimpses were vouchsafed to me of his wondrous personality, and I knew that he had a history. Often I would sit by him subdued by an awful silence, yet with a strange sense of security until in the passing of days, strange and undreamt-of thoughts began to germinate in my heart; and I was surprised to find that my whole being was being remoulded in a new cast, revealing new vistas of the vision of life. One evening, he smiled on me and said that he felt that much had been left undone, yet he hoped and blessed me with a silent blessing and passed away with the birth of the new day. Yes, he could hope, for as my life progresses, I find that he has become a part of myself and his hopes have become intermixed with mine. Of the end he alone knows!

Long after his decease, I once made an inventory of his belongings consisting mainly of rags,—when from within the careful wrappings of a rag, came out these papers which appeared to disclose a strange tale of a life which to me has never ceased to be an eternal wonder.

SATYABRATA.]

"To them that will one day open this page of my life, it is my humble prayer, may they look upon these confessions as but a feeble attempt at representing the reality: it is too deep even for thought! Mine has been a chequered existence, light and shadow have equally mixed their colours to paint the web of my life:—and if when the call will come, the coloring is yet unfinished, may this be not charged at my doors! For I have unsparingly given myself into the hands of Fate: it is her finger that wove the scarf that garbs the unseen in me! Let now the curtain be up!

* * * *

"It was a beautiful morning; I was rambling along a rural street in a passive and vacant mood: the soul's tavern door was open, smiling a silent welcome to all that be: and leaves and flowers and trees, birds and beasts and men and things, and light and shade, hope and despair, battle and peace,—all came and held their merry carouse at my heart's hospitable board. I was hovering like an idle cloud over the life's firmament, self-absorbed and still and peaceful: a deep content pervaded the mind, and I scarcely

breathed and had almost forgotten my individual existence,—when suddenly from the road side, came a child's plaintive cry and pierced through the soul's passive crust into its very core. I awoke with a start and found that a mother was dragging her child from the open road into the door, and the child protested and cried and received admonishing slaps from its vexed dame. "What is this, mother, why does the child cry?" I ask. "Don't you see, fellow,—the mother was angry, and I was in rags,—how the child is naughty? He must come and run into the street, and shall one day meet his death under carriage wheels!"

"I looked into the child's eyes—now silent and watching with a child's wonder the proceedings of the stranger, and deep there, I found as clear as day-light, the silent and voiceless sufferings, stored up untold through ages, all the despairs and disappointments of humanity, all the trappings over the heart's tenderest desires, all the flowers that fate's cruel hands had crushed and mutilated! Oh what is a depth in a child's eye and what revelation! Crest-fallen I retired!

"A deep sorrow, too deep even for tears, is every minute consuming my soul. What has become of me? Has the silent appeal of the child's eye destroyed the cosiness of my spirit? for henceforth, I have not known a single moment of peace; who knew there were so many sufferings in the world,—that every moment of life was a heart-rending tragedy? That mother beating her child only because he won't shut himself up in the stinky darkness of the prisoning walls,—this picture has scalded my heart, it has burnt into it! How callous even the loving ones are to the deep tender instincts of our soul! Nor is this a solitary instance of this unconscious cruelty. I thought, 'The child is the child of Light, it has not forgotten its Divine Heritage. To it, life is open, unbounded by self-interest or fear! Why should it shut itself up within the prison walls of a home? The Light calls, the open calls, there is a charming lure in the vanishing continuum of the open road! And if the child has come abroad, who is this woman, may be a mother, I say, who is she to come between a soul and its mate? She is old, her soul is scarred and cramped, her vision is dim; her contact is hard and defiling; how can she know what glory of heaven yet lingers in her child's bosom? Yet she loves;—it is for the child's good, she drags it indoors. O blind love! O fatal unconscious cruelty! To protect its life, she is killing the child's soul! To love it, she is trampling on tenderest instincts of its heart! Oh Fate, cruel Fate!

"And thus I thought, and I was worried in the spirit and sorely sick of heart! For I looked around, and everywhere I found the same unconscious, cruel massacre of souls going on through ages! What is family life? Is it not the Chinese lady's iron shoe? Where are the parents whose vision is illumined with wisdom? The child is born—a flower from heaven, fragrant with aroma divine; but the moment it opens its eyes to the earth's light, it breaks into an inconsolable lamentation! What a fatal pre-saging of the future miseries of life! Yet God has not forsaken it! It sees the light of heaven and the freedom thereof, it tries to follow it, but out come the staying and the binding hands of the parents, rebuking, beating, trampling, crushing, till the soul's tender fillers are crushed out of existence, there is left behind only a cold mass of flesh. Thus the loving parents murder their child. And he grows up and fits himself with the fixed bounds of the worldly life, and thrives and marries and begets and dies! He has faithfully run the race, and panting there he lies out of breath, at the gate of heaven or hell? What is this blindness? In the name of good, they destroy, and by loving, they condemn. Then there is the society again with its more often than not, wicked traditions and conventions, kicking, beating, crushing, till men and women's souls have been cramped and contracted hopelessly out of shape, and like the magician's dolls they play their part and make their exit out of the stage!

"Yet they profess they are the loving nurse of man: They declare they will guide the stray tender soul, scatheless through the life's battle to the door of Heaven, its home! and for that they are every day curbing and pruning me and crushing me out of existence!

"Thus I thought and was sorely sick of life! The world's miseries burned unquenched within my heart and my brains! and I knew no peace. I could not look at a man without bursting into tears,—even the happiest smile appeared to me fraught with the deepest miseries! Children were a still more torturing sight; I found heaven and hell fighting over their fate, the flowers yet emanated their ambrosial fragrance, but the petals were stained and crushed!

"And as I say, all these I thought and mused upon, and lamented in solitude; and a deep dejection possessed my soul! A long wail used day and night to resound in my ears; and this deprived me of my hunger and sleep and rest, and I roamed more doleful and melancholy than ever! Oh the torture of those days!

* * *

"Then one day I found the healing balm! And it came about thus! One night, rambling restlessly across the country, I came to the border of a forest and tired of body and soul, lay down sleeping under a tree. This was the first sleep I ever knew for so many days, and as I slept, I dreamt a strange dream!

"I was going down a deep forest glade, beautiful with the luxuriant growth of trees and creepers, where sang birds so sweetly as I have never heard, and the sun's golden rays penetrated through the arch of foliage and painted the ground with the stripes of light and shade, fitfully shaken to variegated forms by the sweet-blowing breeze! A deep coolness and refreshment bathed my body and soul, and a new vigor and hope stimulated my dejected spirits. It was morning, the light 'muslin' mist was not yet lifted and a cosy coolness produced a pleasurable sensation as I passed on. The trees seemed to look at me with a loving benediction on their light-glanced oily leaves; the flowers opened their merry lips to welcome me, and the sun's rays and the breeze gave me a consoling embrace and something unseen seemed to clasp my hand in a comrade's faithfulness. The sense of an expectation was in the air, and an unconscious hope and longing impelled my hurrying steps.

"Thus I went on till by noon, I came deep into the interior of a circling range of hills, and my distant vision rested on the sheen of a beautiful large lake. Here the scenery was yet more beautiful, and something unearthly surcharged the whole atmosphere; I felt my soul lifted up in high hopes and an unwonted lightness pervaded my being, and a strange attraction drew me on towards the lake, and as I approached it, an astounding vision burst into my sight!

"It was the same black child as has been the cause of my misery!

"The lake rested like a bowl of blue fluid amidst the circular borders of the hills. Not a single ripple ever ruffled its placid waters! The sun shone brightly in the deep blue sky, but I scarcely felt its mid-day blaze; and the hills looked like ever youthful Rishis rapt in the meditation of an everlasting joy! A silence full of meaning and life reigned all around,—and there, closely by the side of the lake where I now stood in mute ecstasy, a resplendent white lotus opened its thousand petals, and in its heart, the same black boy,—the same and yet how different,—stood dancing, poising himself on the rhythmical waving of his hands and beckoning and calling me, "come!" "come!" But did I say it was the same boy? if so, he was now a transfigured vision! Of a deep blue complexion, about the same as the sky above and the lake below, his person seemed to concentrate in itself all the beauties of the earth, and

of heaven. His eyes shone with a light not of this earth, and it formerly they have revealed to me the infinite miseries of human life, they now revealed a vista of blissful eternity; they were still bathed in tears; but they now sparkled pearl-like in the light of an indefinably sweet smile, that played about his delicately chiselled lips. There he danced smiling and calling me and his smile wiped off all the sorrows that lay deadlike on my soul and an ineffable sweetness of peace enveloped my heart! I seemed to be in a trance, and to reach him I jumped into the waters, and as I seemed to approach him, he receded further and further, till I was in the middle of the lake. And yet I followed, for I had no more fear or sorrow, and my soul said, it had found its quest, till the lotus began to sink in the water, and the lure of the child's smile was yet stronger than ever, and I followed it and I dived. And as I dived, a chord of my heart seemed to snap off and a great shock convulsed my being, and with a start,—I woke, and there I lay stretched under the tree lying on my tattered rags! Oh the cruel, cruel awakening!*

* * *

"A change has come on me; the scales have fallen off my eyes; and a new angle of vision has been vouchsafed to me! The dream was no dream; it has been literally an eye-opener, and the cosmic veil as it were has been lifted off. The world of men no longer appears to me a mere aggregate of blind warring elements, men are no longer shapeless lumps of flesh. Family, society, race, nation, these are not mere dead conventions, the mother's admonishing is not a cruel fatality, nor society a soul-killing monster! Through all the dust and smoke of the battlefield, I found the figures of real men taking form, and a great sorrow and despair was taken off my spirits. I was no longer a sick soul; hope and strength encouraged me; and I started on the 'pilgrimage.' For I now saw that every individual was a 'pilgrim' on earth, every man, woman, child, each pursuing his own quest, and every one of them an original. I looked into their eyes, and they revealed to me original contents, rich with the realisation and potentiality of a new creation. There was no anomaly or disharmony. Each followed his own path, as sure as fate and as true as eternity, and the whole earth was one unbroken Harmony,—'God's in His heaven, All's right with the world!'

* Of this dream he once spoke to me: The child is the soul of humanity, the lotus, mankind and each petal, an individual member. This dream evidently left a deep impression on his mind, for as he spoke of it, his emotion choked his voice, and his whole countenance was suffused with an ecstatic delight!—S.

"Then my soul discovered a new game! A strange sweet peaceful restlessness infused itself into my being and it thirsted to merge itself into each individual and drink of the nectar that dwelt in the core of each flowering life. I became transparent as a crystal, ready to reflect on my soul the colour of any approaching soul, and mobile and pliant enough to remould myself in any individual's personality.

"Every one that saw me then, marvelled at the strange transformation that had come on me. No longer that lunatic like, fragile, disorderly form;—I was now strong in movement, like, fragile, disorderly form;—I was now strong in movement, agile and free, my body became fuller in figure, and the eyes shone with a strange mixed light of acuteness and sweet sympathy. Thus I roamed all over India from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, ever athrill with the variegated joy of newer and newer discoveries of the contents of Life. I lived in palaces, enjoying of king's sumptuous boards, and again in the poor but hospitable cottages of the lowest pariah; and every one of them I found best in his own way. The deep, uncanny silence of the Himalayan cave and the burning furnace of the Rajputana desert, the busiest thoroughfares of the crowdiest cities, everywhere I frequented and enjoyed thereof. I drank of the poison of the wicked and sinful, and of the bliss of the godly and noble; I have been at the agonies of the last moment's struggle and at the festivities of a new birth. I have roamed freely in the earth's spacious garden and drunk of the honey-cup of each flower that bloomed.

"Tibetan snows lying tossed about in fiercely raging storms, I have trodden alone, undaunted;—the Siberian forests have seen me wandering madlike, communing with their unvoiced vegetable life. The floating mountains of the Arctic ocean have frowned in vain on me with their accustomed coldness and the Eskimos have shared their meat of the seal fish with a dusky stranger from nowhere. I have seen in Alaska that mad rush of men for gold, and how man meets man and is always the same even in the deepest recesses of hell! Bear-hunts have I enjoyed in the solitary heights of the Rocky mountains, and have seen volcanoes spouting forth their liquid death. And all these and many things more of city and country, prairie and forest, of hill and dale and of white and black and red men,—of all, I have tasted, and everywhere I have found every one best and nothing to cavil at; for every one was a pilgrim, and none stood still. And thus all over the world, Asia, Europe, Africa and America, on land and sea and on plane and mountain, in mellow and fierce aspects of Nature, everywhere I moved and knocked at the secret door and never was I turned back!

"Nor was this alone; I sat at the feet of the Physicist to learn of the deep mysteries of creation; the Astronomer told me of how the starry heaven came into being, how the sun was born and how our dear earth flourished. Then the Geologist, the Biologist, the Botanist and the Zoologist, and the Anthropologist and the Ethnologist, and the Sociologist and the Historian,—they all spoke to me: and alternately I felt my soul swinging on the magic cradle they each wove for me; and from that deep, deep, mystical 'nothingness', I gradually flourished into the infinitude of joyful creations. And then the Philosopher also told me his grave tale and my mind became more and more ethereal, till the sight of the Saint's unclouded peaceful brow innundated my spirits with an elusive and ineffable delight.

"Thus for fifteen long years I roamed alone, but befriended, receiving always a warm welcome from each heart. But at last a weariness seized me. This ceaseless going on was no longer what my soul sought for. This pilgrimage—has it no end? Where is the end they all ran after? The one eternal gulf received them all into its undiscovered bourne,—I mean death. Is there yet a quest beyond death? If so, who has reached it, and how to reach it? So the flowering life is to be laid at the altar of ultimate Annihilation? This eternal pilgrimage, not for me! Rest, Rest, unbroken, eternal Peace even unto death, that's what the soul thirsts after!

"Then again, the vision of that Divine Child ever haunted my memory. Suddenly, the glance of an eye, the movement of a hand, the roseate hue of dawn or the smile of blossoming flower had rent the veil, and out flashed the vision of the dancing child and the thousand-petalled lotus and the lake and the meditative hills! Ah! that elusive smile was never to be forgotten, somewhere deep, deeper than the delight of soul's communion with soul, reigned the glorious peace of that entrancing revelation. And I knocked at the door and it opened not!

"This discontent grew daily, taking away from the joy of the pilgrim's life, till in the passing of days, men and birds and beasts and trees appeared as mere shadows and held no interest for my hungry soul. And I shunned society as poison, man's sound appeared bitter and the very world as gall and wormwood. Therefore I retired into the amiable dark of a mountain cave, washed below by a murmuring streamlet; and there passed my sick days in sore trouble and melancholy.

"This misery is unnameable; it rankles in the heart like a deep-thrust thorn and embitters every moment of life with the sense of

despair and annihilation. The soul finds no stay where to rest on, and you feel as if you will be choked out of being. This horror grew apace in intensity, so much so that it became impossible for me to live even a day more, unless the dead wall to which I had been thrust, miraculously opened out to release me. I was like a deer surrounded from behind by a fast spreading forest fire and in front by the deadly aim of a hunter; and the miraculous aid from above alone could save me! Will it never come?

"Yes, it came: there is God watching over every one: He comes last, but comes surest. And He came.

"That day I sat almost senseless in the intensity of my suffering, outside the cave on the streamlet. My breath could scarcely blow in and out, and I felt as if I should die. Then suddenly a dazzling and yet strangely soothing light broke out before my sight and startled me with an electric shock. There stood amidst the effulgence an angelic figure, immeasurably sweet and calm, looking with the same eyes, as I have seen in the child, infinite affection at me. Slowly he approached and touched me in the heart; and at once.....

"A third transformation has come upon me. The divine touch has rent asunder the chords that bound my soul, and has revealed to me the Truth and the Reality Ultimate! Now there is no more multiplicity nor even duality for me; now I see the innumerable individual beings merged into the One Infinite Being! They have found their quest in Him and they are no more. Only He is, my Beloved, my Joy, my Solace! The scales now indeed have fallen from my eyes. There is no more sorrow, nor misery, nor suffering,—these varieties of existence were a delusion. My ceaseless wanderings were a chasing of the will-o'-the-wisp. He, my All, was all along silently watching in the inmost recess of my heart; and now in His infinite grace, He has taken up His servant by the hand. No more good, no more evil, no more sorrow, no more joy, neither life nor death,—for it is only He, He and He alone!"

THE ROOT-PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION.

BY

Brahmachari Yogesh.

'Do not seek for Him, just see Him '*—thus said the Swami Vivekananda ! And what he meant is that the Truth, the Reality, the All and the Whole, which is the eternal and infinite satisfaction of our soul, is existent just here and now ; It is not to be invented or produced in any future, nor is It achievable under certain prescribed conditions or as a culmination of a certain process. It just *is*, and we are only to open our eyes !

Yet it is undeniable that for all Its obviousness, That which we seek, is not being realised by us ;—our very miseries and struggles are a sufficient proof of Its negation in our life. These our anguished strifes and struggles would be void of reality, had the Reality been as real to us as the Swami indicated. Something has intervened which like a mist has hidden the Light from our eyes, and a blind groping in the dark has been our fate.

Thus it is that from our childhood onwards,—why, every day, every moment of our life, it is through an incessant change that our soul is running its interminable course. A deep-seated discontent pervades all our movements. Our knowing, our enjoyment, our action, in fact everything concerning us, is cankered by an imperfection, which in spite of our unsparing attempt, persists in destroying the equilibrium of our being, the aim and end of our activities. We philosophise,—we try to systematise the contents of our knowledge, our inner and outer experiences ; but our generalisations, our laws always fall short of the full facts, there are some percepts which must obstinately refuse to come under any of our prescribed categories ! Our joy is based on misery, and our action is constantly harrassed by an inevitable consciousness of clash and conflict. What is this subtle thing that is every moment dogging our steps ?—It is *the Problem of Life*.

There are problems and problems and thousands of them are momentarily pricking their thorns into our consciousness. They are physical, mental and spiritual ; and man cannot advance a step further without every instant finding an at least pragmatic solution of them. And behind them and substantiating them, there is one

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Primal Problem,—the Problem of the philosophy of life and reality, nestled in the innermost interest of man. Of course very few of us ever consciously face our foes, but that is because the co-operative method of society has greatly eased the situation. Long before the baby comes into the world, a routine and a programme with aims and methods, have been tabulated for it ; it is only to come and give itself into its hands ; and as sure as fate, it will run its race. This accumulated culture and experience of the race is a great force that interpenetrate our thoughts and problems and we are thus saved the trouble of thinking for ourselves.

But a moment comes, when we are compelled to think for ourselves. Then come before our vision, vivid with their clash and conflict, all the divergent elements of our life and knowledge. A sense of waste and futility and blind groping painfully projects itself into our consciousness, and we do not know how to read meaning and order into these anomalous debris. *

Life's progress may be fitly pictured as a never-ending attempt to tread on the head of one's own shadow. You try to place your step on the head, and as a result you go one step further. We, who are conscious of our life-process, act exactly in the similar fashion. We attempt to find a generalising principle to subsume the full contents of our knowledge and experience ; and by this very attempt, we make a forward movement in the discovery of the Reality :—newer and vaster and subtler aspects of life come within our experience, and again the same need of generalisation and systematisation become evident ; and thus and thus, till we stand under the meridian sun and the shadow becomes one with the Reality.

If we thus take the whole life of man in one swift glance, we find him at the first stage, that is to say, in the normal condition, as meeting life and reality as a conglomeration of warring elements, devoid of any underlying purpose or principle. To him comes the question of why there is evil and death, and injustice and suffering in the world, and why it is not one continued peace and sweetness. Ugliness dogs the step of beauty, life is engulfed by death, and love wears itself out in futile laments, and hope loses itself in despair. To many a thinker, these problems have appeared as veritable lions and no amount of arguments to explain them, have as yet been properly successful. Evil there is ; to say that it will in one uncertain future, prove a great source of good, does not make it good. The idea of a benign and just God can under the circumstances be tenable only as an article of faith, and not based on rational conviction.

But never can these anomalies be explained as systematic, by assuming the individual ego, *i.e.*, the subject as *static*. I fear it is here that many philosophers have hopelessly stumbled down. So long as we look upon man as a *qualitatively unchanging factor*, we cannot hope to eliminate these contradictions of life. The one sure way, as is also verified by experience, is to look upon the individual as a *changing quantity*. It is by recognising the fact of man's ability to transcend by a self-mutation, the contradictions of consciousness, that we can find a true solution of the life-problems. Our consciousness and knowledge it is, which ensures existence to the evils of life : and simply by ignoring, we get rid of them. Not that they become annihilated ; but they change nature and assume different meanings and proportions in the scheme of life.

We cannot easily forego the charm of any life : this charm binds us down to its pleasant ugliness, alternately flattering and thrashing us with its joys and sorrows, till the soul becomes sick of these constant changes, and at last breaks itself off. Then at once, the whole outlook undergoes a change. He no longer finds life meaningless ; his unprejudiced mind, no longer blinded by self-interest, can view circumstances in their natural relations and proportions ; and out of the chaos, comes a beautiful system of world, instinct with significance and purpose.

This renunciation is a predominant factor in the proper understanding of reality. When man has been able in a certain degree to divest himself of his desires, he finds the world as full of meaning. Every individual is a purposive creation, with a conscious aim and active motive : and good and evil proportionately mix their colours to make him what he is and will be ; and neither of them is better or worse than the other. Whatever have appeared before as clashing and wasteful, now reveal themselves as constituent elements, amicably adjusted, in the building up of the individual lives.

Thus we see that in the solution of the Problem of Life, it is not only the objective world which has undergone change, but a subjective change has been a more essential requirement. And this process of elimination is but rational. The Reality is to most of us, an unknown quantity ; and yet we have ascribed nature and meanings to it, which are unwarranted either by reason or experience. It is a simple case of *petitio principii*, if we may say so.

• The third stage in the solution of the Problem comes, when the individual has learnt to directly realise not only the underlying unity of the infinite number of individuals, but also find them lost in the One Undivided Consciousness. For until this vision of the Reality

is achieved, there is still the problem of the 'One becoming Many,' remaining, and the mind is alternately torn into thousand bits to realise variety in the unity. Not yet the consciousness of the One is so strong as that of the Many, and the contemplating mind hungers for the ultimate oneness and the peace thereof, till the struggle rages stronger and stronger and it loses itself in the joy of the supreme realisation of the oneness of the Reality ; and his Problem is solved for ever and ever !

This is what the Swami means then, when he insists on our 'seeing' Him and not 'seeking' Him ;—that because all that stands between the seer and the Reality proves ultimately to be non-existent, then to eliminate, to ignore it by a supreme effort, is what is necessary. It is *not*, and yet we think it is. To get rid of this illusion and open our eyes to the Truth, this is what he insists on.

SISTER NIVEDITA'S HINTS ON EDUCATION.

BY

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

Education is the expression of the national culture through the vital elements of the race. Sister Nivedita well says : "The education that we give our children inevitably expresses our own conception of that synthesis of which our lives form a part." It is the means of attainment of mental and social dignity. The Hindu laid more stress on the mind than on the method. This is the great idea that Nivedita brings home to our hearts in this small but precious book. "Just so long as the Brahminic system of directly training the minds of the young to concentration persists, will the Indian people remain potentially equal to the conquest of any difficulty, that the changing ages may bring them. But once let this training be neglected or lost, and in spite of purity of race, the vigour of the Indian mind would probably fall to a level with that of the modern peoples in general, waxing and waning with the degree and freedom of self-expression that the passing period might permit them. At present owing largely to the peculiar psychological discipline, received by girls as well as boys, along with their devotional training—the most salient characteristic of the Hindu intellect is its reserve of strength, its conservation of power. India has shown herself potent to add to knowledge itself."

The power of the West to-day is in its organisation and its bringing the national mind to bear on the problems of the day. India also must consecrate and dedicate learning to the service of the country. The earning of a livelihood is only a by-product. But learning for service will "give him wings." "It adds freedom, not bondage. It becomes an achievement not a limitation."

This outlook is not new but a new application of the old outlook. Renunciation has ever been the breath of the Hindu's being. "The will of the hero is ever an impulse to self-sacrifice." We have only to give the old power a new application. Education means an intensive development of mental powers. Further, the society must impart to each youth the essence of its culture to be transmitted to the future. The most important element is the goal of such culture. India has laid more stress on this aspect than Europe. Emancipation through service to a *guru* and through discipline is the real summation of culture. The *guru* is the sanctuary whence comes the student's power. "For the greatest energy is imparted by the sense of working for the glory of another." Intellect must lead to character and character to self-realisation. The great poets and saints of the world are the results of the intensive self-surrender of the soul. "Our whole character is bathed in the river of this intellectual passion, to emerge new, radiant, self-restrained, and self-directed." "Common education must be revered as a sacrament, making the opportunity for this exaltation and consecration."

Education must appeal to, and organise and train and develop, the whole nature of the child. We must train not only the mind but also the *feelings* and the *choice*. The boy must be helped up the steep ascent to manhood; he should not be carried up. Only then he will have self-reliance and self-reverence. The teachers of each race must come from within the race. Sister Nivedita well says: "It is the immense moral genius of the Indian people as a whole that has really formed so many fine men out of the students of the past two or three generations. And it is the crucial importance of this element that makes the foreign educator so undesirable." The teacher must awaken the great formative influences of life. The home must see that "the school builds up the child." "Even an ignorant mother, by teaching her boy to love, and to act on his love, can be the finest of educators. It is this that makes so many of our great men of to-day attribute so much to their mothers." The old education of the girl, by the *brata*, is full of this appeal to the heart, as the only sound basis of education. But modern

education, in its first inception, ignored this factor altogether, and thus produced faculty out of relation to its environment. Henceforth the Indian people will not repeat this error."

Then follows a fine chapter on *Suggestions for the Indian Vivekananda Societies*. The Western forms of works of mercy entrusted to the church have in India been assimilated into the natural course of social life. Roadside mercies, charity, and hospitality are met with everywhere. We want societies to equalise conditions, to revive and extend arts and crafts, to universalize athletics, to spread technical industries and to promote social love. Swami Vivekananda was both a patriot and a prophet. He was full of "fearlessness and hope and national *shraddha* and devotion to the people." Vivekananda societies "should devote themselves heart and soul to the creating of a great love of the people." They must attend to sanitation and nursing. They must not only read Vivekananda's works but acquire "his ringing cheer of hope and defiance." "The Swami himself was a great incarnation of freedom. To sit in his presence was to experience an emancipation." "He saw before him a great Indian nationality—conscious of its own powers, and forcing their recognition on others, moving freely forward to its own goal in all worlds, intellectual, material, social, occupational,—whose goal was that 'firm establishment of the national righteousness (dharma)' for which those who love him believe undoubtingly he was born." Vivekananda societies should further revive enthusiasm for pilgrimages. Only then can Indian unity and spirituality be realised. "All great ages dawn with a mighty wave of hero-worship." The reverence for Vivekananda should become a passion of work for his ideals.

The book closes with a picture of the future education of the Indian woman. "Here in India the woman of the future haunts us. Her beauty rises in our vision perpetually." But "an education of the brain that uprooted humility and took away tenderness, would be no true education at all." "She (India) is, above all others, the land of great women." We adore "their holiness, simplicity, sincerity, in a word, their character." "There can never be any sound education of the Indian woman, which does not begin and end in exaltation of the national ideals of womanhood, as embodied in her own history and heroic literature." Make the woman efficient but let her be spiritual. Science, geography and history should not displace, but should supplement the old learnedness. Make the new learning available to them in the beautiful vernaculars of the land. "Life in India is socially sound. Civilisation is organic, spiritual, altruistic." The priesthood of learning must

know the sacredness of its work. "Only he who sees the noblest thing in the taught can be an effective teacher. Only by the greatness of Indian life can we give a sense of the greatness of the world outside India. Only by the love of our own people can we learn the love of humanity and only by a profound belief in the future of the Indian woman, can any man be made worthy to help in bringing that future about. Let the preacher of the new learning be consecrated to the vision of one who resumes into herself the greatness of the whole Indian past.....Let every Indian woman incarnate for us the whole spirit of the Mother and the culture and protection of the Homeland."

REVIEWS.

The Eastern Buddhist, Vol. I, No. I.

Published for the Eastern Buddhist Society, Koyoto, Japan. Price, single copy, one yen ; yearly, six yen.

We have received a copy of *The Eastern Buddhist*, a bi-monthly magazine devoted to the study of Mahayana Buddhism. It is the organ of the Eastern Buddhist Society which has for its object the study of Buddhism, the publication of the results of such study, and the propagation of the true spirit of Buddhism. This Buddhist Society has recently been founded at Kyoto with the avowed object of translating the original texts of Buddhism into Japanese and translating the Buddhist texts, now existing only in Eastern languages other than Sanskrit and Pali, into European languages. We wish the organisers of the Society all success in their noble work.

The founder of Buddhism was born in India. His renunciation, sadhana, and enlightenment are all matters of common knowledge in India. As a matter of fact, he is regarded as one of the incarnations of God. It is a pity that his sublime religion has almost been banished from India. His religion is not at all new to the people of India and his message will be always welcome by them. The world has advanced to such a stage that nobody can claim his religion to be the only true religion of the world. As the Swami Vivekananda expressed it,—All men have five fingers in each hand; and if any one having six fingers maintains that his is the right number of fingers, everybody would laugh at him and say it is abnormal growth. If the Christian thinks that his religion is the only true religion in the world, he is in the position of the man, having six fingers. Let all the religions of the world have the tolerance to accept other religions as true. Moreover, the time has come when nations

should exchange their religious ideals, just as they are exchanging commodities in the markets of the world.

The dictum, "East is East and West is West", was enunciated by a man who was deeply ignorant of Eastern religions, customs and institutions. There are many obstacles which stand in the way of the Westerner to appreciate the East. The Eastern Buddhist Society has the noble ideal of clearing up those obstacles, lying between the East and West, so that each may profit by the other.

Studies in Universal Religion,—Ramakrishna.

Compiled by Manmatha Nath Chatterji. Published by the Oriental Publishing House, Baranagore, Calcutta.

In this book the compiler has set forth the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in a simple and impressive style. Swami Vivekananda was the first Indian in the modern age to assert boldly that Indians are not to sit always at the feet of the Westerns but they have to teach them something, it is the religion and spirituality of India. How the world-renowned Swami went to represent Hindu religion at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and how he proved the supremacy of Hinduism in the Western world, by showing that Vedanta can be the only universal religion in the world,—all these are now matters of history. It was at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, the holy man of Dakshineswar that he learned the secrets of spiritual life. Two of his cardinal doctrines are,—Religion is not assent to certain dogmas but realizing God, feeling God, seeing God and talking to God, and that all religions are true. The author has done a distinct service to the country by publishing the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna who is the embodiment of Sanatana Dharma. It does not matter who preaches Sri Ramakrishna. In this age of atheism and materialism, when there are so many creeds and so many gods, the world badly needs his universal catholic teachings, so that each can follow his religion without prejudice against the faith of his neighbour. The book is written in the Biblical style, which makes it more attractive. We hope the book will have a wide circulation.

Manusamhita (Sanskrit)—with a commentary by the late Pandit Kasichandra Vidyaratna, containing an introduction by Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramathanath Tarkabhusan. Published by Sri Herambanath Bhattacharya, 13B, Lakshmi Dutt Lane, Calcutta. Price Rs. 6-8.

The Hindus are guided in the performance of all their duties and ceremonies, including the pre-natal and post-mortem rites, by the injunctions of the Smritis. The authors of these Smritis were not like modern professors of sociology, but Rishis who out of their solicitude for the welfare of society, laid down the laws which were to be observed in the society. Their injunctions cover a wide range, and the stability of the Hindu society is to a great extent due to the implicit obedience of these laws. Scopenhauer, the great German

philosopher, was an ardent student of the Institutes of Manu and was highly impressed with its lofty ethical standard. It is highly desirable that the reformed Hindus of modern times who are guided neither by the canons of their own society nor of any Western country, should look forward to this code of Manu, which is being appreciated by foreigners for its ethical value.

Besides the Manusamhita, there are the Mitakshara, Raghunandan's Smriti, that are followed in different parts of India. But Manusamhita occupies the foremost place among them. We, therefore, welcome this posthumous edition of the famous Samhita, containing the commentary 'Chira Prabha' from the pen of the erudite Sanskrit scholar, the late Pandit Kasichandra Vidyaratna. The learned author's exposition is characterised by originality, lucidity of expression and elegance of style. We are confident that this edition will be welcome by the learned Pandits of the country, in spite of the famous commentary of Kullukabhata. The original Sanskrit Slokas have been translated into Bengali which will make the book all the more welcome to Bengali readers. The printing and paper are excellent.

* NOTES AND NEWS.

Report of the Sree Ramakrishna Sevashram, Rangoon.

We have received a copy of the First Report of the Sree Ramakrishna Sevashram, Rangoon, from January to June, 1921. The object of the Sevashram has always been to give asylum to those who are helpless, when dark days of starvation, old age, disease and death overtake them and make them feel the want of a helping hand. The Sevashram owes its origin mainly to the efforts of Swami Shyamananda and Swami Dhyanananda, who went to Burma in connection with famine relief there. The sight of the disabled and poor sufferers lying in the streets of the cosmopolitan city of Rangoon, attracted their notice. A few of them were picked up and nursed by them in the small premises of the Sree Ramakrishna Society, but for want of sufficient accommodation they had to be sent to the Government Hospitals. Thus they felt the necessity of a charitable hospital on the same lines as the Ramakrishna Mission has got at Benares, Kankhal, and Brindaban and other places, where the patients could not only be treated irrespective of caste and creed, but might get moral and spiritual help and receive instructions for proper hygienic arrangements.

With this object in view the organisers approached the generous public who kindly showed their whole-hearted sympathy for such a noble institution and responded to their appeal with donations and subscriptions. The Local Government and the Municipality are appreciating the noble and selfless work undertaken solely to ameliorate the lot of the suffering humanity; and have lent the hospital sheds for the Sevashram. Sir A. K. A. S. Jamal, the merchant-prince of Rangoon has voluntarily come forward with a handsome monthly subscription and donation and persuaded his friends to help this noble cause.

There are 24 beds in the In-door Ward No. 1. The total number of patients admitted for the five months was 252 out of this 214 were

discharged cured, 12 died, 2 sent to Government Hospitals and 20 were still under treatment. 18940 patients were treated at the Out-door Dispensary of the Sevashram, of which 5,688 were new cases and 8,802 old ones. The increase in the number of patients who daily come to the Sevashram for relief, unmistakably prove the amount of service the Sevashram is doing to humanity. The financial strength has not been in proportion to its manifold activities. The Sevashram is urgently in need of another ward of 24 beds to meet the growing demands of patients. Any voluntary contribution, however small will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Shyamananda.

Swami Abhedananda, the leader of the Vedanta Ashrama of San Francisco, is returning to India in next September. He is a direct disciple of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna and was preaching the gospel of his Master for nearly twenty-five years in the Far West.

He closed his Sunday morning services on June 26th at Los Angeles Hall, in Native Sons' Building, by giving a comprehensive discourse on the Spiritual Evolution of the Soul. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity by an appreciative audience.

The Swami dwelt at first on the evolution of the conception of God, beginning with ancestor worship and passing through Polytheism, Monotheism, Dualism, qualified non-Dualism and ending in Advaita Vedanta (Monism). In conclusion the Swami showed in a masterly manner how the soul rising from the animal plane evolves into human and develops mentally, morally and spiritually until it reaches perfection and becomes divine. The large audience was held spell-bound by the eloquence and inspiring words of the Swami.

When Swami Abhedananda announced that at the call of his beloved Motherland, which has been with him for some time, he was returning to India during his vacation, every person in the audience felt deeply that the absence of the Swami would be a great loss to all who have been studying with him and attending his lectures and instructions.

On Monday evening, June 27th, the Swami gave his closing lecture on the Bhagavat Gita before a large audience and showed that the teachings of Sri Krishna contained the fundamental principles underlying the teachings of Jesus the Christ.

At the close of the lecture the members of the Vedanta Ashrama presented him with a farewell address. Miss A. M. Witman, the secretary of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles founded by Swami Abhedananda, spoke as a representative of the students from that Center and expressed how deeply all the students in Los Angeles will miss the Swami and his teachings during his absence.

Mr. C. Brown, president of the Hindu Temple of San Francisco gave an impressive address describing the good pioneering work that has been done so splendidly by Swami Abhedananda during his stay in America for the past twenty-five years. He also emphasized the value of the prolific published works of the Swami, which contain the masterly interpretation of abstruse philosophical subjects in the truths taught in Vedanta.

In response, the Swami spoke about the difficulties he had to overcome in his pioneering work of spreading the truth of Vedanta as a successor of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda, and

belonged in practical religion to the sect of the *Karta-bhajas*.* This sect had its centre at Kachhi Bagan, a few miles to the north of Calcutta, where lived many sadhakas of both sexes, devoting their time to the practice of the particular sadhanas enjoined by their sect. After Vaishnava Charan had come to be intimately related with the Master, he would not only pay frequent visits to him in the temple garden and receive instructions on all doubts and problems that assailed him in course of his spiritual practices, but would sometimes invite him to the places of his brother sadhakas in order that they might equally share the rare blessing and opportunity of his holy acquaintance. Sri Ramakrishna appears thus to have paid several visits to the afore-said *Karta-bhaja* Centre, and is said on the last of those occasions to have been subjected to spiritual tests by the lady inmates of the place; he of course came out triumphant from the ordeal, evidencing a complete control over his senses and became the recipient of the highest honours of an *Atula Sahaja*. Sri Ramakrishna in his child-like innocence was quite unapprehensive of any such project on the part of the inmates, and he never again went to their place. But his strength of character, purity and God-absorption only enhanced Vaishnava Charan's high regard for him, and in course of time emboldened him to openly proclaim the Divinity of the Master.

Some time following the acquaintance of Vaishnava Charan with the Master, came to Dakshineswar Gouri Pandit of Indesh, a much advanced Tantiik Sadhaka. A very amusing story has been narrated to us by the Master of his first arrival at the temple. It seems the hard penances of the Pandit had brought him a peculiar miraculous power of attaining victory over his rival scholars in any debating assembly, by overwhelming their minds with an indescribable terror. He would achieve this desired effect in a very strange manner. The Master told us that whenever he would make

* This is one of the minor Tantrik sects prevalent in Bengal and largely influenced by the ideas and ideals of Vaishnavism. They term God *Alek-lata*, evidently derived from classical *Atakshya* i.e., Indeterminable. This *Alek*, they hold, becomes tangible as *Karta* or Guru, by His manifestation through the completely purified mind of man who is then called *Sahaja*. Hence the designation of the sect, *Karta-bhaja* ('worshipper of the Karta'), for although their Ideal is the Formless One, and they do not hold any antagonistic view towards the gods and goddesses of Hinduism, their main object of worship is the *Sahaja*, the Guru in and through whom, the Formless God is making His clearest revelation. The *Sahaja* must be *Atula*, that is to say, he must remain unaffected by any lust or attachment, though in the constant company of women. This internal detachment is one of the principal aims of their spiritual struggle. They try various means to completely eradicate the dual consciousness of good and evil, purity and impurity and other such pairs, and according as the sadhaka reaches higher and higher stages of success, he gradually gains the titles of *Aul*, *Baul*, *Darvesh* and *Jai*, the last being the highest round of the ladder. This sect has got many quaint rhymes to couify poetically its tenets; and we were often regaled by the Master with their quotation and explanation and many a beautiful song withal.

his entrance into the place of debate, he would very gravely and loudly recite several times the first line of a certain *Devi-Stotram* (Invocation to the Goddess) of Sri Sankaracharya, and striking his arms in the way of the Indian Palwans, enter and seat himself in the assembly in the fashion of the Moghul courtier. Then, it is said, he was absolutely invincible.

The Master of course, was totally unaware of these ways of the Pandit, but the moment, on his entrance into the temple garden, he began his loud recitation, something from within himself incited the Master to make a louder response to the challenge. The Pandit then made a still louder attempt only to be defeated by the Master's still greater sound; thus the competition went on till Gouri, in sheer inability, acknowledged defeat and sadly entered into the temple. This unnatural fight of yelling, the Master would laughingly tell us, produced such a fearful effect on the inmates of the temple that apprehending an assault of robbers, the gate-keepers ran to the place of occurrence with all their arms in hand. The Master said, "Mother revealed to me afterwards that this supernatural power of Gouri, having sustained defeat to me, had been taken away from him, and absorbed into this (i.e., his own self) for his good." And indeed with the passing of days Gouri evinced a growing spirit of appreciation of and submission to the ideas and the ideals of the Master.

Nor was this the only peculiar aspect of the Pandit's character. We have it on the authority of the Master that, in pursuance of the instructions of the Tantras, he would offer worship to his own wife in the very same way as we do to the image of the Mother, on the three days of the Durga Puja;—not a single detail of the worship would be omitted; and he would beautifully decorate his wife's person with jewels and ornaments and seat her on a nicely painted altar. Again, often whenever he would perform the *Homa* ceremony, he would, instead of building the altar with earth or sand in the customary fashion, arrange the wood to the amount of a maund's weight on the stretched palm of his unsupported left hand, and there kindle the sacrificial fire and offer oblations. The whole affair certainly lasted through a long hour; and when we considered the stupendousness of the feat of bearing such a heavy weight for such a long time, and the extraordinary enduring power of unflinchingly sustaining the blistering heat of the sacrificial fire and above all, the almost superhuman mental control, steadiness and devotion which alone could make such an attempt a success,—the whole proceeding appeared so incogruous and impossible to us, that we could not easily bring ourselves to believe the truth of the story.

his uncommon mental and physical symptoms as a terrible malady. So, hoping that a discovered similarity between his experience and those of his predecessors in the traditional paths of Sadhana, would prevent him from ascribing them to any morbidity and that finding the result of his performance of the prescribed sadhanas exactly tallying with what had been already recorded in the Shastras, he would be convinced that the extraordinary spiritual phenomena observed by him were but natural experiences of all who ever soared high into the spiritual firmament, and the mental and physical transformations the natural consequences of those experiences, she now incited him into the sadhana of the Tantras. This, she expected, would further strengthen him with a calm assurance of the truth of all, even the strangest experiences, enabling him thus to proceed unflinchingly along his Godward way. For did she not know that the Shastras for the very same reason required the Sadhaka to compare his own realisations with the instructions of the Guru and the findings of the Scriptures?

But it may be asked what were the justifications of Brahmani's engaging him in Sadhana, even after recognising him as the Incarnation of God?—For, is not the perfection of an Avatara a clear contradiction of the necessity of his Sadhana? True, we say in reply, a continued consciousness of his divinity would certainly have restrained her from behaving herself in the way she did towards the Master. But such was not the fact; for as we have said previously their very first acquaintance inspired her with the mother's love towards him; and there is nothing more potent than love to obliterate from the consciousness all feelings of grandeur of the beloved, as the sense of greatness excites only awe and fear, and accentuates the difference between lover and the object of love, whereas love unifies and wipes away all such differences; further it actuates one with goodwill and devoted service towards him, one loves; this pure love then became the motive power behind her present action. This our interpretation we find verified in the various instances of those who had evinced exactly similar spirit in their relation to the Divine Incarnations in former ages,—we mark their general forgetfulness of His Divine Glory, though it might occasionally overwhelm them,—under the sway of the pure and unmixed love they bore towards Him. No wonder then that except for her occasional consciousness of his astounding greatness, she was always immersed in a loving oblivion under the softening influence of the Master's filial affection, absolute reliance and trust, which ever inspired her mother's heart to undertake untold troubles to add to his happiness ever so slight and to protect and help him in his spiritual strivings!

A great joy and satisfaction suffuses the mind of the Guru when he is offered the opportunity of guiding the spiritual potentialities of a worthy disciple to their full manifestation. It must have been with the same joyful elation of heart that the Brahmani now welcomed the opportunity of teaching the Master, the like of whom she could not even dream to exist in the present-day world,—so worthy and so vast in potentialities! And being already affectionately disposed towards him, she naturally became very eager to place him shortly in the full possession of the spiritual treasures she had accumulated by her long and arduous studies and Tapasya.

We have occasionally heard from the Master that before he engaged himself in the Tantrik sadhanas, he had approached the Mother and secured Her approval: the Brahmani's eagerness and incitement alone thus were not the determining factor in his taking this forward step in the Tantrik Sadhana; it must have been his developed spiritual intuition which revealed to him the advent of the fittest occasion for practising the prescribed processes of sadhana for a full realisation of the Mother. So with an onward sweep, rushed the full force of his mind's current along the course as directed by the Brahmani. It is not for an ordinary mortal to gauge properly the profundity of that concentrated eagerness, for where is that power of detachment and concentration of our mind, torn as it is into thousand bits by the various attractions of the sense-world? Where is that bold resignation in us to dive deep without the least struggle into the calm and silent depths of the ocean, far down below its ever-ruffled surface? "Dive deep! Dive deep into thy self!" was the fiery behest of the Master to us, but alas, where have we the power of detachment to cut asunder the binding chords of the attractions of the world and of the body and immerse ourselves likewise into the depth of our inner being! And thus when we are told, how in the unabated agony of his writhing heart, the Master would day by day rub his face on the pavement of the Panchavati in piteous appeal to the Mother for Her blessed vision, the words only enter our hearing, they do not awake a sympathetic reverberation in our heart's chord. And it must be naturally so; for do we like him sincerely believe that She, the Mother, does exist and does vouchsafe Her Divine vision to whoever pray to Her with a wholehearted renunciation and devotion?

Once during his stay at the Cossipore garden he revealed to us only a glimpse of his tremendous agony and eagerness for God-vision. We shall present our readers with its narration, though we can scarcely reproduce even the shadow of the stupendous effect it produced on us when we heard "

We were then daily watching Swami Vivekananda's unbounded enthusiasm for God-vision at Cossipore; and we were struck with awe as we witnessed the wonderful drama of his life gradually unfold before our eyes. He had gone to deposit the fees for his Law Examination, when suddenly came to him the awareness of the higher life and, under its tremendous impulse he ran mad-like along the streets of Calcutta, barefooted and undressed, to where Sri Ramakrishna was staying at the Cossipore garden and opened out the agonised supplications of his heart and received his blessed grace. And then, enlivened by the power of his gracious benediction, he dived deep into meditation, *japam*, prayer and other spiritual practices; days and nights passed unnoticed, without the least thought of physical needs, of food or sleep; and his naturally tender heart now concentrated on Sadhana, stiffened itself even against the extreme sufferings of his mother and brothers! And thus traversing the various stages of the spiritual path as indicated by the Master, in the incredibly short period of nearly four months, he realised for the first time, the supreme beatitude of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. These stupendous efforts of the Swamiji daily evoked the unstinted admiration of the Master, and thus one day he made a comparison of his own enthusiasm for God-vision with that of the Swamiji, saying, "Amazing indeed is Narendra's love and zeal, but compared with the tremendous influx of yearning and enthusiasm that came here (*i.e.*, himself), it is nothing, not even a quarter!" We leave to our readers to imagine the astonishing effect of this revelation on our mind!

Before we enter into the Tantrik Sadhana of the Master, it will be well to say a few words here about the Tantra in general, as various misconceptions exist in the popular mind about Tantra. It has its origin in the Vedic age itself, yet it developed subsequently a special feature of its own, quite different from the elaborate rituals and sacrifices of the Vedas. The main purpose of the Vedas (*Karmakanda*) was to combine the life of high spiritual practices (*Yoga*) with a legitimate amount of controlled sense-enjoyment (*bhoga*);—they preached to their votaries that all enjoyments of life should be had through the worship of the deities, and that the enjoyments thus obtained would be of more abiding value and greatly conducive to the higher evolutions of the soul; further, enjoyments got otherwise than through the grace of gods, bring only more misery and bondage in their train and retard the evolution of soul. And thus in the Vedic ages, people pursuing this path of spirituality-cum-enjoyment used to get themselves gradually purged of their animal tendencies and physical desires, and having their mind thus purified they were enabled to take up the higher spiritual

path of pure Bhakti and Jnanam, as enunciated in the Upanishads. But with the efflux of time, a great change occurred among the people in regard to the spiritual outlook of life and the spiritual practices. In the Buddhistic age, the austere religious practices that were originally meant only for the recluse and the Sannyasins who were bereft of all worldly taints and desires, were now held up indiscriminately before all members of the society. The then rule of the princes also helped the Buddhist sunnyasins in their such endeavours. As a natural consequence of such de-centralisation of the old Vedic scheme of life, it so happened that all those rituals, sacrifices and devotional practices which were helping men to develop their spiritual life first by giving them a legitimate scope for sense-enjoyments and then by gradual elimination of those desires and attachments for the sense-life through satiety and experience, and thus bringing up to the path of renunciation and higher spirituality, became extinct in their manifest form in the society. But none can defeat the instincts of human nature! Though externally those Vedic modes of worship were suppressed, yet there cropped up similar practices in secret, which began to be observed either in the secrecy of night or in forlorn cremation grounds or deserted places in the form of Tantric worships. It is also stated in the Tantras that the great God Mahadeva, seeing the decaying condition of the ancient Vedic rituals, revived them again in the new form of Tantric devotional practices. There is a very great historical truth in this statement. For, we see in the Tantric sadhanas there is not only that happy blending of spirituality with enjoyment like the Vedic rituals but also unlike the Vedic rituals which were kept far away from the highest spiritual knowledge (*Jnanam*) of the forest recluse, every devotional practice of Tantra is intimately associated with the higher monistic consciousness, inculcated by the Upanishads. For instance, if one is to worship any God, one has to meditate at the very start upon the awakening of the *Kundalini* and her creeping up to the cerebral centre, *Sahasrara* and then think himself as one with the Deity, and subsequently one has to think himself again as emerging in the form of an individualised being (*Jiva*) and the light of the deity getting itself concretised in the form of the chosen personal aspect of God (*Ishtam*), next the devotee has to externalise in thought the light-form of the deity and perform the external worship. What an excellent process of getting oneself lost through intense God-devotion in the self of the Lord! It is true that perhaps one blessed devotee among thousands can do it successfully, yet all make an attempt more or less to approximate the reality, and that is not a small gain,—because that very endeavour of theirs will gradually raise them up and bring about higher spiritual awakening. Thus

the intimate association of the high Adwaita knowledge with every practice of Tantra reminds the devotee in every step of his final goal. Herein lies the speciality and difference of the Tantric spiritual practices from the rituals of the Vedas; and for this reason alone, the Tantric Sadhanas have established their suzerain hold upon the popular mind of India.

BY THE WAY.

Of all countries of the modern world the United States of America is given the palm by many for its system of education. The education of the children is managed there in a way which has evoked the admiration of all other nations. The primary object of the system of education in the West is to instil into the mind of the growing boy the ideas of freedom and democracy and to create a passionate love for them. The boy grows a citizen, conscious of the traditions of patriotism of the heroes in the past history of his country and the responsibility he owes to the state. To him the honour and prestige of his country is dearer than his God of Heaven.

How to equip the citizens of a country in the struggle of life and help them to chalk out a career for themselves and create a taste for appreciating arts, sciences and the progress of civilization, are the widely accepted views of education of those who are moulding the educational destinies of the people in all the countries. Since the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, the thinkers and philosophers of Europe have been insisting on studying external nature and discovering new laws and truths. In the Middle Ages the thinkers and scholars were more busy to solve theological problems and religion played an important part in a man's life. Monasticism was extolled and the monks imparted education to the masses. It is not probably known to many that some abbeys were the nucleus of the modern English University of Oxford. With the dawn of the new era the spirit of other-worldliness was depreciated and men began to love the world where he had to live his life. As a consequence, external nature began to attract the attention of man and impelled him to find out and utilise the powers of Nature. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you"—this prophetic utterance of the Messiah of Christendom is true not only in the spiritual world but holds equally good in the material world and the advancement of physics, chemistry, zoology, geology and other sciences has been the result. The discoveries

of new truths of the physical world were fascinating for man and gave the votaries of science fresh stimulus to follow up the success.

These successes in discovering the new secrets of physical nature created a zest for further study of nature and the students began to carry on their work with peculiar gusto. The United States of America, inhabited by the descendants of the Europeans, who are the newest of the nations of the world, thoroughly imbibed the spirit of modern Europe and are now out-stripping the nations of Europe in the conquest of external nature. To-day her people are the strongest, the greatest and the most progressive nation of the world. When Swami Vivekananda was preaching Vedanta in America, one of the foremost thinkers made the following observation to him, "Swami! You are talking of a world which has been buried three thousand years ago."

In spite of tremendous upheavals and catastrophes in the different periods of her history, the inner life of India has been running along smoothly on the same course. To the progressive nations of the West, intoxicated with their achievements in the material world, India appears as the unmoving East! But to the deep thinkers her civilization and even her existence has been an enigma. What power is there lying dormant in the Hindu race which has withstood the shock of foreign invasions and onslaughts centuries after centuries? There must be something in the mild Hindu which baffles all material power and defies the sword which has tried, not once or twice, to crush him to death. There were nations which appeared on the earth, displayed their glory for a time and have passed into oblivion. To-day only the antiquarians care to know their history and civilization! But India has within her four corners the same Hindu race, following the Vedic religion and chanting the Vedic hymns as their forefathers were doing four thousand years ago. The Hindu life has been portrayed beautifully by the greatest of India's poets, Kalidasha, in his famous epic Raghuvamsham, where he describes the life, the princes of the royal house led.

शैशवेऽम्यस्तविषानां यौवने वैषयिषिणां ।

वार्धक्ये मुनिवृत्तिनां योगेनान्ते तनुयुजाम् ॥

Religion has always been the backbone, the foundation on which the edifice of national life was built in India. Politics and social reform were subordinated to that higher ideal of life, which has always been the realisation of the divinity of man. It does not follow accordingly that the mundane affairs were altogether

neglected and social duties totally ignored. There are abundant evidences which can be adduced to prove that the genius of India found its way also in the physical realm. The Indian Bhaskaracharya and Lilavati who made their mark in Astronomy and Algebra are examples of the inventive genius of India. That the Indians built ships and carried on extensive foreign trade and even colonised in some of the far-off islands, even before the discovery of steam-engine are now matters of common knowledge. That the Hindu race has not lost its virility and inventive genius is proved too conclusively by the recent successes of eminent scientists of modern India. The Bengal School of Chemistry is making its influence felt in the academic circles of Europe and America, and the inventions of some of the young brilliant sons of Bengal have evoked unstinted admiration of veteran professors of Europe, who have spent all their life in carrying on researches in the exact science of chemistry and who find themselves at the end of their career outstripped by those young Indians, throwing new light in their departments. The epoch-making discoveries of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose have revolutionised the confirmed beliefs and accepted theories of the foremost thinkers of the Western world and the sharp line of demarcation between organic life and plant life is to-day wiped away. These facts prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Hindu race, in spite of the foreign rule of a thousand years and consequent degeneracy, is as virile to-day as ever and retains its inherent capacity to adapt to the altered condition of life.

* * * *

The above facts will go a long way to refute the baseless charge which has often been levelled against the Hindus that they are a race of dreamers and philosophers. But in spite of their brilliant achievements in the domain of the exact sciences and external nature, the Hindus have always relegated them to an inferior position in comparison with their success in the realm of mind and spirit and search for realising the Absolute and Infinite! A scheme of education for India which tends to uproot from the mind of her sons this belief in the superiority of the higher life of the spirit and love for the glowing traditions of the past, is not worth experimenting on Indian soil. In the reconstruction of the world, India must play her part and the system of education should be adapted in such a way as to renovate this love for the spiritual legacy of the motherland and cultivate the liberality to assimilate the best elements of Western culture.

* * * *

The American system of education with all its concomitant good advantage for that republican country may not be

equally beneficial for India. As the common proverb says, "What is good for the gander may not be good for the goose."

The present system of education in India helps the vast majority merely to earn their bread but does not foster a love for the indigenous culture and civilization of their own country. In formulating a scheme of education for India the national ideals should always be kept in view, which are, in the words of the great Swami Vivekananda, "Renunciation and Service, these are the two national flags of India. Intensify her in these two channels and the rest will take care of itself." A system of education which alienates the Indian boy from these ideals does more harm than good. "I see every nation, like every individual has some aim. With some it is Politics or Sociology. With us it is religion. Religion is the only ground along which we can move." Let not the leaders of the country forget the message of the Prophet of the age in their feverish excitement to imitate the grandeur and power of the West.

WHAT IS YOGA ?

BY

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

Yoga is the attainment of union with the Supreme by the process of mental concentration and purification. Before dealing with various important aspects of it, I must point out that we must carefully attend to the training and purification of the body and the senses and the mind, the control of Prana being only a great means to a greater end. The manifestation of divine *shakti* in us depends on our mental illumination and dispassion (*Viveka* and *Vairagya*). We must never forget that Indian psychology, subtler than its Western counterpart, recognises gradations in the mind. We have *manas*, *chitta*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkara* (sensation, emotion, will and egoism.) We have to overcome the impure *vasanas* (tendencies) carried by us from birth to birth with the help of higher and purer tendencies made dynamic by the force of will.

Indian philosophy shows how we have not only the outer world (*sthula*) but also *sukshma* and *karana*. *Karana* is the causal and least imperfect condition of consciousness. It is the meeting point, the centre whence proceed all the radii of life and of consciousness. Science observes the outside of things and catalogues the outer conditions and characteristics. The yogi is master also of the *sukshma* and *karana* bodies and gets into the deepest relations with other things and knows all about everything by spiritual realisation, because in the innermost plane, all are one.

not the product of the brain but a power or force using the brain as the organ. If you want to render dynamic the higher powers of the mind, the field of the mind should not be full of mere sensations and perceptions. Hence it is that so much importance is attached to *Samadhi*.

The treatises on Yoga give us an elaborate description of the *Shatchakras* and the awakening of the *Kundalini Shakti*. Though there are nerve plexuses corresponding to the *Chakras*, yet the lotuses referred to are seats of mental concentration which are the places for certain realisations. In all these realisations, purity, dispassion, meditation, and concentration are absolutely necessary. The bad desires have to be driven out by good desires and these by the supreme desire of God-realisation. *Vairagya* is mentioned by Sri Krishna in the Gita along with *abhyasa* as the means of *yogic* attainment. In regard to desire we have a stage of attachment, a stage of yearning and a stage of active seeking. These have all to be overcome. This of course does not mean that physical asceticism or the life of a recluse is the only means to such self-conquest. Various are the roads to perfect *samadhi* and among them Raja yoga occupies a supreme place.

One further general feature of yoga must be mentioned at the very outset. Many persons are sceptical about *yogic siddhis* as these are not postulated by modern science. But science deals with the realm of the senses while *yoga* is the superscience dealing with realms and planes of being, higher than the realms of the senses. The achievements of the *Yogins* strike us with surprise in the same way in which realised predictions by astronomers strike with surprise the ordinary men. But the *siddhis* are only baubles on the way to perfect God-realisation. The highest *Yogis* do not care to pick them up. Their life is one of frequent or uninterrupted divine communion and ecstasy.

It is not my purpose here to go into a description of the *Yogasutras*. I propose to refer to a few simple directions, the following of which is necessary to fit us for *Yoga*. We must observe moderation in regard to food and clothing, rest and exercise, waking and sleep. The Lord says in chapter vi of the *Gita*.

मात्स्यभक्षस्तु योगोऽस्ति न वैकान्तमनसतः ।

न चातिव्याधीकृत्य ज्ञातव्यं नैव पातुम् ॥

दुष्प्राहारविहारस्य दुष्प्रवेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

दुष्कल्पव्यामयोक्त्यो योगो भवति दुःसहा ॥

Animal diet is an obstacle to *yogic* practice and perfection. The very first *Anga* or essential of *Yoga* is *Yama* which includes

Maithri or love for all creatures. Liquor ought to be avoided like poison. Early rising and bath in cold water are also declared to be quite essential. Comparatively quiet spots in home or outside are necessary for the attainment of the joys of contemplation. We must form good habits in these respects early in life because the body and the mind become inelastic after youth and early manhood.

Side by side with these physical basis of *Yoga*, the mental basis of *Yoga* also should be attended to. *Vairagya* (dispassion) should be slowly cultivated. Nothing secures this better than devotion to God. Thus *Bhakti* is the most powerful of all aids to *Yoga*. Mental concentration, *Maithri* (love for all), control of breath, the attention on a luminous object, contemplation of holy lives, and other means lead to the attainment of *Yogic* vision. *Tapas*, *Swadhyaya*, and *Iswara Pranidhana* are all potent means of *Yogic* realisation.

The eight *Angas* of *Yoga* are said to be *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, and *Prathyahara* (forming the *Bahiranga* or external aspect) and *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* (forming the *Antaranga* or internal aspect). *Yama* consists of *Ahimsa* (not killing), *Satya* (truth), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (continence) and *Aparigraha* (non-covetousness). Each of these has to be perfected into a state far transcending its ordinary counterpart in life which is often only that measure of it which will enable a man to go into the clutches of the criminal law. When a *Yogi* becomes master of *Ahimsa*, natural enemies have their antagonistic wills curbed and controlled and sweetened by his love and become friends. When he becomes a master of truthfulness, his utterances have immediate effect. As Bhavabhuthi says, *प्रवीणं पुनरावाप्तं वाचमर्थोऽनुवाचति*. Every one of these qualities must be practised and perfected as a *Mahāvratā* (supreme vow.)

Niyama consists of *Shaucha* (purity), *Santosha* (contentment), *Tapas* (austerity), *Swadhyaya* (Scriptural Study) and *Iswara Pranidhana* (devotion to God). These can be perfected only after the elements of *Yama* are perfected. Hence if a man is given to killing, untruth, incontinence, or covetous ways and yet pretends to have purity, austerity, contentment, and devotion, he is only a despicable pretender. The combination of all is required to fit us for the realisation of the soul after turning away from the distractions of sense. Purity of body and mind is of great importance; equally indispensable is *Santosha* which reduces our wants and multiplies our joys. *Tapas* or discipline perfects our nature as indulgence weakens it. Scriptural study confirms our faith and

perfects our powers. The most potent means however is of course selfless devotion to the Lord.

Asana also is mentioned as an essential, because posture is an essential feature and basis of the higher life of the spirit. Only the man who is pure and good can attain mastery of the helpful posture. Such proper and helpful posture is of great assistance in controlling breath (*Prāṇdyāma*). *Pranayama* regulates and even suspends physical energising for the purpose of freeing the spirit. It also cures various physical and nervous ailments and perfects the physical basis of the higher psychic life. *Pratyahara* is the perfection of self-withdrawal of the soul from the senses for the sake of the full visioning of itself. It is then that *Dharana* (fixity of mind in realisation) and *Dhyana* (perfect contemplation) result; and these in their turn lead to *samadhi* (the fulness of self-realisation).

Yoga is thus union with God. It is the self-transcendence of the mind into God-realisation. It is cosmic consciousness. It is a means by which we cease to be the slaves of Prakriti and become one with God and realise our essential Self. It is a process of self-universalisation by self-liberation. It is ceasing to be slave of *Avidya* and Desire and becoming the Lord of Light and Love.

We see the term applied in Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. In Karma Yoga we have the transmutation of work into purity; in Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga we see the transmutation of the life force and the mind force into the state of super-vital power and supramental cosmic vision; in Bhakti Yoga we have the transmutation of love into bliss; and in Jnana Yoga we have the transmutation of knowledge into cosmic consciousness.

Yoga implies the realisation by the mind of something higher than the mind. The Self is self-existent, infinite, eternal perfection. The mind when it is ceaselessly agitated, clouds and refracts the self. When it is at rest and cognises the self, it realises the nature of the self. *Samadhi* is the self-transcendence of the mind into the plane of the soul.

This concentration of mind has results not only in the mental world but in the supramental planes of spiritual realisation. It is a conscious self-directed evolution towards a fulfilment, an ascent up the ladder of self-transcendence. *Samadhi* is the integral, luminous, cosmic consciousness which is all-inclusive and perfect. Thus the purification, concentration and elevation of the mind lead to its perfection of realisation of the Self which is the supreme goal and bliss of life.

AN EVALUATION OF SOME OF THE WESTERN CULTURAL CONCEPTS—II.

BY

Brahmachari Sharvachaitanya.

The last two centuries are pre-eminently the most important period in the annals of the history of the world, especially of the West. It may serve as a stimulant to a Westerner to consider the output of mental energy in different spheres of activity and at different stations of life. There was no other so enterprising and interesting a period previous to it in the western world. Was there ever so fertile a period which produced the evolution theory of Darwin in Biology and the revolutionary achievements of Bunsen and Kirchhoffs with the Spectroscope?

The marvellous acquirements of scientific activity revolutionised the thought-current of the age in multifarious ways. The scientific people concentrated their whole energy on improving the material prosperity of mankind. They were, as it were seized with a frenzy to utilise, nay, to possess all the forces of Nature as servants. It is true that their efforts were crowned with success in the realm of electricity, steam etc. for 'two days' pleasure. It cannot be gainsaid that the western civilisation—materialistic cultural activity—is at its zenith in this age. This period is pre-eminently a scientific age—the palmy days of materialism.

Now, let us see the effect of accumulated wisdom and experience of the day. The results of scientific discoveries constructive or destructive, are determined by the motives which actuated the people to these enterprises, humane or otherwise. If the fruits are such as to increase the diabolical instincts of human nature, instead of the betterment of mankind, by the evolution of higher instincts, their discoveries will surely be detrimental,—the hydra-headed lower desires will consequently crop up. They can never help the people to attain higher quality of "Universal brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God."

Coming to the material achievements of the period, we find that with the scientific improvements, industry and commerce made a headway in the west. Accordingly there arose a class of people, captains of industry and the capitalists. In course of time they formed trusts and syndicates for the improvements of trade and commerce. The productions of huge modern machines

necessitated a large number of consumers. The result was that the people went out in exploring expeditions. This is the origin of naval force of the West. In course of time, there grew a keen competition not only amongst the people of different countries but also amongst the people of the same nation. The spirit of rivalry was so prevalent that nation rose against nation, society against society, capitalist against labourers and so on. International jealousies and fierce animosity developed to such an extent that the Western nations had to build strong naval forces and colossal armaments. Instead of cultivating the art of peace they were engaged in encroaching upon the possessions of other people. They were maddened by the mania of territorial improvement. So, they wasted not only hoarded-up, fabulous wealth but also their own friends and relatives during those brutish enterprises. Napoleon flooded the whole of Europe with his surging tidal forces. Rousseau and Voltaire belched out the melting lava of the great volcanic irruption which changed the thought-current of the West. But the result was the destruction of mankind at large. The effects of such activities were the Franko-Prussian war and the last great all-destructive war. We find even now the 'airy nothingness' of the great ideas of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" which are supposed to be the guiding principles of the determination of the nations' destiny. However may this ephemeral material prosperity be glittering and tempting to the common run of man, according to the standard of utility, the events of the last few years are sufficient to convince the thinking section of humanity of the failure of the doctrines of the materialistic thinkers. Instead of bridging the gulf between nation and nation, man and man, and increasing love and sympathy amongst men, the materialistic cultural activity has separated man from man, nation from nation so much so as to bring the whole world into a chaotic condition.

The Hedonistic philosophers preached the doctrine of 'eat drink and be merry.' The summum bonum of life is the maximum of pleasure in minimum of time,—it is purely egoistic. It is true that Mill and others, the utilitarians, brought forward a more refined maxim,—the greatest pleasure of the greatest number. The standard of action is to be judged according to the utility, pleasure of the greatest number. The same savants preached the ideals of liberty and individuality, permitting every individual man to follow his own turn of mind, provided thereby he does not trespass into the liberty of other people.

It is apparent these thinkers did not allow their imagination to penetrate into the problem of 'pleasure.' It is limited to the sense-

enjoyment and, too narrow for a rational man. Suffice it to say, a man can not enjoy the sense pleasure with the same gusto as a lower animal. The lower is the organisation, the greater is the sense pleasure. It is too temporal for an intellectual and cultured man. It is true that pleasure helps onward movement and pain thwarts it. But every human being has an ideal of infinite pleasure. Most of the works around us are due to the struggle for that infinite pleasure.

At an analysis of the mental states of man, it is evident that he wants, consciously or unconsciously to raise himself from nature, external and internal. The vain individualism of the utilitarians, to which man clings to get pleasure, must be given up for the infinite pleasure. The man brute must die, to live the man God. The real pleasure cannot be had by the exercise of sham individuality which is the infinitesimal part of the whole universe. Moreover the utilitarians could not give us any strong reason why man should not be egoistic. However defective these theories may be, it is true that these thinkers felt for mankind and were the well-wishers of the society. But it must be confessed that the fanatic individualistic thinkers preached the cult of brutish physical force and distorted the whole theory. It is needless to go into details of the horror and tremendous suffering brought about by them in the whole world during the last few years. Rivalry and cold and heartless competition became the order of the day. Socialism and Bolshevism are the unavoidable results of the materialistic cultural activity. Now we see that the utilitarian gospel of "survival of the fittest" and of 'pleasure' is far from being the panacea and can hardly touch the root of evils existing in the world; moreover, it is maddenning as it were, the whole lot of people with the mania of possession of power and wealth. However may Mr. Wilson try to bring into existence the League of Nations, the art of peace, love and sympathy can never exist until and unless the angle of vision is changed. Materialism must have its own necessary conclusion.

Now, the question is, is the world lost for ever? Is it doomed? No, let us see what role India played in the past and still is destined to play in the world-drama. It is true that the present material condition of the country is not so good. But it cannot be gainsaid that she is the mother of the oriental cultural activity and stands as the embodiment of patient force and inspiration. No educated man can deny that India has always been the fountain-head of all philosophy. Prof. E. W. Hopkin says that before the 6th century B. C. all the religio-philosophical ideas of Pythagoras were current in India. The Hindus made a remarkable progress in

every science, practical or theoretical. Megasthenes, Nearchus speak highly of the wonderful healing power of the Hindu physicians. And Dr. Royle admits, "We owe our first system of medicine to the Hindus." But every thing of the Hindus was subservient to religion. The fountain-spring of all activity of the Hindus was spirituality. And it was the quintessence of Indian culture. But for this, India would have followed the fate of Rome, Greece, Assyria and Babylon. She stood deathless in order to fulfil her mission and to give the Gospel of Hope to the world abroad. It is the Vedantic doctrine of universal principle that can harmonise the discordant elements of the world and lead us to infinite pleasure, the *summum bonum* of life. Now we see that the Western Ideals can never ameliorate the present condition of mankind and cannot act as beacon lights at this stormy season. It is true that the West is enjoying a full run of temporal supremacy in the world. History shows that the Romans had the temporary superiority of physical force over the Greeks but they owed their cultural greatness to the latter. So, India is not to imitate the West, however it may look gaudy at the first sight. The failure of materialistic movement is an undeniable fact. And still some people are eager to inculcate western elements in the East.

At this critical period of the nineteenth century there arose a sun on the Eastern horizon that removes the materialistic darkness of the age. He is the personified ideal of the East, nay of the whole world,—practical Vedantic ideal of sacrifice and service—which can also help the progressive march of the universe towards its perfect manifestation. The great hero offers the panacea which can remove misery and suffering and can conduce infinite pleasure to which man clings. And all his actions are consciously or unconsciously towards it. He voiced forth through his illustrious disciple, the Swami Vivekananda the message of the ancient Rishis to the mankind. Swamiji says "Let the Persian or the Greek, the Roman, the Arab or the Englishman march his battalions, conquer the world, the philosophy and spirituality of India is ever ready to flow along the new made channels into the veins of the nations of the world. The Hindu's calm brain must pour out its own quota to give to the sumtotal of human progress."

CONFESSIONS ON THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE.

L. F. M.

(Continued from Page 81.)

Human ideals attain perfection only in so far as they follow nature's pattern. Human wisdom attains perfection only in so far as it realises the absolute perfection of nature and ceases to invent and prescribe any ideals. Human knowledge attains perfection only in so far as it studies nature and sets itself to comprehend her not only in this nook and that corner, but, in her totality. Human life attains perfection only in so far as it courses in conformity with nature, bereft of all narrow, limited, set-up forms.

Nature is my standpoint. When I view things from nature's standpoint, with nature's eyes, then, I see them in their true aspect. Women may be strange to me. But are they strange to nature? When I view them from nature's standpoint, they become as familiar to me as they are to nature. Millions may be strange to me. But, when I view millions from nature's standpoint, the secret of their virtue opens wide for me to look upon and then I no more desire for millions. High position, fame and enjoyment of luxury may be strange to me and attract me. But, when I view them from nature's standpoint their mysterious charm appears naked and unattractive to my eyes. Every mystery is open to nature. Every mystery is open to him who views things from nature's standpoint. Attraction and repulsion are for him who views things superficially from the narrow standpoint of individuality. But he who stands behind and views the broad view of nature, becomes free from the sway of the opposites. For, he sees the same in everything.

There is nothing desirable in life nor undesirable. Nature is present everywhere and in every thing and there is nothing but nature. Nowhere is there less than nature, nowhere more than nature and nowhere, other than, nature. The same spirit upholds every form, the same spirit expresses every form and the same spirit is concealed under every form. The intrinsic value of every form, every object and every condition of life is the same. The wise man of mature experience has no desires; for, he sees in every

thing the same that is in himself. He hates not anything for the same reason.

However far I may stray, however high I may soar, however deep I may dive, I am again and again brought back to the normal plane of my existence, there to lay my tired head on my mother's lap, who will rock me to the blissful sleep with the rhythmic tune, "All is well", "all is one," "all is I".

I have been seeking after the one. I sought for it far and wide. At last, I find it in myself. *I myself am the one I have been seeking.*

All faces in the universe are affixed to me. All minds contained in the universe are mine own. All forms, all beauty, all harmony of the universe proceed from me. Why need I go here and there to seek for the one?

I need not think to reach at the one. I need not prepare myself. That one is nearer to me than the stretch of my arm, nearer than the breath of a word, nearer than my own thought. For, I myself am the one and no other.

Thoughts take me beyond myself. The path of thought is the path of outgoings. The path of thought leads to fancies—to forms and names. The path of thought is the path of bondage.

Thoughtlessness is the path of return of liberation. Thoughtlessness alone shows the truth, the one which is myself.

I am derailed. I oftentimes become derailed. On the rails of spirit, one goes on straight, grave, normal, unaffected, unconcerned, wise, happy. On the plains of thought, one loses his gravity and is tossed lightly by fancies. I am aimlessly wandering about on the plains of thought. Thoughts of diverse shapes and spirits appear. Thoughts which now appear bright soon assume a cloudy aspect. They now attract me, now drag me, then deter me. They terrify me and paralyse me. Then again they console me and quicken me. In this way thoughts play upon me and make me a fool. How long shall I thus remain bound by fancy?

I do not want thoughts—not fancies. All thoughts are fancies. All fancies are lies. Fancy is mind-made, is self-made. There is

no fancy made by nature. Fancy has only an individual validity, or, some of them have a human validity, or, finally they have only a relative validity.

What is fancy? Fancy is a mental representation, true or false or both in parts. An expression in thought of a doubt, a fear, a grief. A representation is only a representation and not the reality. And no reality can ever be represented in its completeness in all its aspects and with all its relations by the mind.

I want to reach at the reality. I want to reach at the one. That one solves all doubts. That satisfies all desires.

What have I to do with fancies? Fancy is an attribute of imperfection. It is an enemy to truth and rest. It is the complement of ignorance and weakness.

Fancy induces many states of mind. Truth induces the uniform state of equanimity. Fancy creates doubts and fears. Truth creates stability of mind. Fancy gives hopes and pleasures. Truth gives contentment. Fancy weaves plans and schemes. Truth gives rest in peace. Fancy is an infirmity. Truth is health and life. Fancy is agreeable to the immature; disgusting to the mature. When fancy dies, truth is born.

Wisdom helps not in time of need, wisdom is needed for him who feels heavy under the weight of unwise deeds. But when heaviness comes, wisdom stands not near. When passions predominate, wisdom flies farthest. Wisdom comes when the hour of struggle is past. It consoles when all is over. Of what use then is wisdom?

To the wise man, wisdom as such is not needed, for he is established in wisdom. He acts wisely without the aid of wise counsels. He decides wisely without the need of wise deliberations. His state of mind is itself wisdom and hence he feels not the need for it.

Words, thoughts and the remembrance of wise resolutions do not help in time of need. But one's mind must be slowly tanned and tempered into a state of wisdom, by experience gradual and otherwise, bitter and otherwise.

Wisdom is not words, nor thoughts nor deeds. Wisdom is a state. Wisdom is rest ; contentment and happiness.

Wisdom is not learnt nor thought out. It cometh not by calculation, but it evolves out of one's own experiences. Experience is alone the true nourisher of wisdom. The fullness of experience begets the fullness of wisdom which alone is wisdom. Wisdom cometh of itself after the full experience of that which is not wisdom.

Why does not truth appear to me vividly ? Why does not truth appear vividly to me and fill all through me and quicken me with its fullness ?

Truth is far off from me. I have no truth at all. I have only an intellectual representation of it, with which I play setting it in many postures. Of what use ? I am munching an empty mouth.

Truth is not intellectual ; it is spiritual. It is not relative but absolute. Not forms and names but substance. It is not learnt nor thought out, but realised. I want realisation, I do not want representation. I do not want to think of truth. But I want to possess it, be filled with it and wholly influenced by it. When will thought go ? When will truth come ? Oh ! When ?

When will fancy cease ? When it has finished its reign and has danced its dance. When it is worn out and has lost its power of attraction. Till then fancy reigns supreme in man's mind and it cannot be helped. But, when it has constantly attracted and as constantly deceived, when its solidity is dissolved into vapour and finally, when it has reduced one to despair, then fancy ceases. Then alone the thirst for truth arises.

When will truth come ? When it becomes a necessity, one's meat and drink, one's breath of life, when fancy dies utterly. Then alone truth can be realised.

Troubles are looming on the horizon. Troubles gather thick around me. It behooves me to keep myself in balance. Balance is my only defence. And balance is the best defence.

He who is established in balance is equal to nature. He is equal to any condition of life. He is not attracted by the attractive nor repulsed by the repulsive. He goes not out of himself, but all things come unto him.

Balance is the seat of sovereignty from whence one can command all things. Balance is the wing on height from whence one can see all things true. Balance is the rock-castle in which alone one can live unassailed. Balance is wisdom and power, peace and bliss. Balance is my goal, my salvation. When shall I attain my balance ?

Thoughts shall not be my guide. Thoughts are unreliable. They are false, various and vacillating. Thoughts proceed from narrow, one-sided, unbalanced individuality. Thoughts are not truths.

Thoughts are always imperfect. They have their root in the human mind. Objects and conditions are rooted in nature. Thought can apprehend only in parts. Objects and conditions are never apart by themselves. How then can it teach fully anything ? How then can it advise wisely ?

Yet, thought constitutes the drama of human life. Thought divides, conjoins and assumes various shapes. Thought wounds and soothes. It creates all mischief. Thought constitutes all the pleasures of life and all its reverses. Thought leads astray and constitutes all error. Thought grows and decays. It is born and it dies. It is ever false and never true. It is ever fickle and never firm. It is ever half and never full. Thought shall not be my guide.

What I know without the aid of thought is alone the true knowledge. What I decide without the aid of thought is alone the wise decision. What I act without previous thought is alone the right action. What I am without thought is alone my true being.

My outlook is hopeless. Is nature's outlook also hopeless ? My range of vision into the future is limited and incomplete. Does the future on that account become limited in conditions incomplete ? My productive power of hopeful fancies is exhausted. Is nature's productive power of hopeful conditions also exhausted ?

To be hopeless is to be faithless. Recognise that ever productive, inexhaustible all-pervading power everywhere. Relying on lame fancies which are false and fluctuating, my outlook must necessarily be likewise. But, if I relied on nature's truth, which is ever-full and uniform, my outlook shall necessarily become likewise. Truth is nature's ; fancy is man's. Nature's reasonings and her proceedings are ever perfect. But man's are incomplete, inaccurate and doubtfully right. I will abandon myself and take

refuge with nature. Her plans and her hopes shall be mine and her fullness shall consequently be ever mine.

The highest, best, most pleasing perfect form of satisfaction is contentment. There is no other higher pleasure than contentment. The pleasure of contentment is uniform and ever abiding. It is superior to the pleasure of the realisation of the grandest desire. The state of contentment is that of the perpetual enjoyment of the highest degree of pleasure. It is the state of supreme sovereignty and perfect wisdom. For, contentment is attained only after a perfect knowledge of the law of life and complete conquest over desire. The path leading to contentment is the gradual realisation of the truth "All is well."

Common pleasure is nothing but a temporary state of contentment. He who depends upon particular objects or conditions for his pleasure can be pleased only on particular times. But, he who becomes uniformly pleased with all that there is, enjoys contentment, which alone is pleasure full and uniform.

I am content. I am content, to remain as I am, to have lived as I have done and to proceed as I do. I am content with men as they are and the world as it is. I am content with all.

My burden is relieved. Contentment confers the highest freedom. I am free. He alone is free who dispenses, diffuses freedom around. I give free scope to every man and every event to express themselves as they please. I humour every one in his own humour. Thus conferring freedom on all my surroundings, I indirectly confer the highest freedom upon myself.

What is there strange or worth knowing outside myself? What is there strange in other countries, in other planets, in far off suns and systems? There is nothing new anywhere. The same spirit of nature pervades everywhere and lo! she is within me entire.

I know her oneness of spirit and variety of form. I know her pranks, her changing moods and withal, her absolute perfection. I know her plots, her contrivances and the drama she plays. Over and over again, here, there and everywhere, now and for ever she plays the same drama. Seen in essence, there is nothing new anywhere. All is one.

I am all nature and no man. I am but nature in man's shape.

THE DURGA PUJA.

BY

Sister Nivedita.

"And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in Heaven." Archaic sentences here and there in the world's scriptures tell us of the wars that were waged in Heaven before the beginning of time, and of the heritage—dim, prehistoric, supernatural in the natural—that was left from them to men and gods.

What is it that makes this element of mythology so clear, what force has raised it in this one case to the significance which it attains in the *Chandi* portion of the *Markandeya Purana*? This is, above all others the *Purana* of Bengal. But here the central figure of the drama is no archangel, mighty in power and beauty; but the Mother herself, personification of the creative energy, focus and centre of the visible Universe. Back and forth amidst the applause of Heaven does She pursue the ever-changing demons, and at the moment of her triumph, when, ten-armed, pedestaled on the living lion and sword in hand, She subjugates her foe for ever, She is portrayed as the image of Durga. Such is the story told by the scripture—half-epic, half-literary,—from which are taken the texts that are recited over and over again from one end of Bengal to the other, with worship and fasting, throughout the great nine days, from the new moon of *Aswin*, until *Dussehra* or tenth day. Here and there are those—monks in their monasteries or perhaps Brahmins in their homes—who recite the whole of the *Chandi* again and again. But for all alike, whether they do this or not, there is but one object of contemplation—the wars that were in Heaven; one hope, and one alone—the conquest of the demons by the gods.

Everywhere in India the feast that corresponds to the *Durga Puja* is military in character. Perhaps fundamentally in consequence of the fact that, in the North at least, the rains are just over, the first seven days are spent in the cleaning and display of weapons; and on the tenth occurs the prostration and exhibition of skill in arms. Very curious is it at Nagpur on this day to see the last action of the *Bhonslas* set out on the stately promenade that was, to his fathers, the beginning of a freebooting expedition, and long long before that, a hunting party.

But domestically, in Bengal, it is a very different element in the festival that determines the feeling of the home with regard to it. The child to whose after life each flash of a waterfall is to carry its remainder, more or less vivid, of Durga with crown and sword, does not in its childhood itself conceive of Her, as the cosmic energy, appearing from amidst the ten points of the compass. For the Mother of the Universe shines forth in the life of humanity as a woman, as family life. Here she is maiden, perfect in beauty, nun-like in holiness, whose past and future are a glorified wifehood, on whose rapture of devotion the eye of the Great God Himself has fallen, and who enters the Indian household, Goddess and Queen notwithstanding, as, after all, the little wedded daughter, returning for a ten-days' visit to her father's house.

True, as the lad draws nearer to manhood, he must realise that the father of the guest is no less than Himalayas, and his daughter, therefore, the spouse of God—according to the legend, Mother India herself. But this only gives continuity and ductility to his idea of the myth. First Durga, the ten-days' visitant; secondly, India, as Uma Haimavati; and lastly, Maha-Sakti, the Infinite Force: but always and increasingly as his power of recognition grows, that ceaseless energy which works without and around him towards the due subordination, by the forces of life and nature, of all that is vicious and unjust and out of place.

With what tenderness and intimacy, then, does the Bengali child learn to conceive of his country and of God! It is a tenderness and intimacy which beginning with the use of images, may become inherent in a language and characteristic of old races. The Mohammedan boatman of Eastern Bengal is not in his own person a worshipper of Durga, and yet the words "with folded hands before the Mother" may carry as much to him as to the Hindu heart. Beyond a doubt, however, it is its higher theological meaning which lends to the Durga Puja its over-whelming elements of civic pageantry and national comprehensiveness.

Aman, the Mother, guards every village of the South. It was Bhowani, the terrible Mother, who led the Marhattas to victory. The Mother, again, was worshipped by the Sikh, using sword as her image. Kali was the patron goddess of Chitore. To this day the great birthday is marked, in the Punjab and throughout the North-West Provinces, by the Ram-Lilla, or miracle play of the Ramayana. To this day, in Mysore and all over the Deccan, Dussera Puja is the chief festival of the year. To this day, in every part of India, the nine-days' fast is performed by some member of every high-caste household. To this day in Madras, in

Behar, and among families of military tradition everywhere, is Virastamy, the solemn eighth day, the occasion of the worship and the tribute of the sword.

In Bengal, however, all these elements—social, military, and theological—are combined and rationalised in the characteristic conception of the Divine Mother as Durga-Kali-Jagaddhatri: Durga, the divine energy, making and destroying, defeated and again conquering, impersonal and indifferent to personal desires; Kali, mother of darkness, wielder of destruction, receiver of sacrifice, whose benediction is death; and, finally, Jagaddhatri, the tenderness of the heart of God, who shines in good women and from whom came forth the Madonnas of the world. It is in Bengal too, when the image of the Mother has left her children for a space, when the nine days of worship and of charity are ended, it is in Bengal that the great tenth day is kept as that of the reknitting of human ties, and the *bijoya* greetings of the timely reunion go out throughout the length and breadth of the land. For are not all bonds of kindred indeed sanctified and renewed year by year at the feet of the Divine Visitant? Is not the whole of the country at one in the presence of the Mother?—*Studies from an Eastern Home*.

REVIEWS

The Heart of the Bhagavad Gita:—By Pandit Lingesh Mahabagavat, of Kurtkot, Ph. D. now His Holiness Sri Vidya Shankar Bharati Swami. Published by A. G. Widgery, The College, Baroda. Price Rs. 3.4-0.

In the treatise before us, the author does not write a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita which occupies the foremost place, next to the Vedas, amongst the scriptures of the Hindus, but tries to bring out the principal doctrines propounded therein. There is divergence of opinion among the various Acharyas who have written commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita with regard to the ideal of the Gita preached by Sri Krishna. There are some who maintain that Karma is the Great Ideal preached in the Gita, while others say it is Jnanam. The cardinal doctrines of the Gita can be classified under four heads, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Dhyana Yoga and Jnana Yoga, each of which can be supported by referring exclusively to some passages of Bhagavad Gita. We are at one with the learned author when he says, "Taken as a whole, the Gita can never be made to support any one of the theories exclusively. It supports

all ideals or none. No one sectarian can claim the special sanction of the Gita in his favour. Knowledge, work, love, concentration are all here commended but none at the expense of the others." The Gita takes a broad outlook of human nature, and recognizes the varieties of minds and inclinations. The psychologists of the modern age have arrived at three fundamental aspects of human mind after careful and thorough analysis—Emotion, Volition and Intellection and the Bhagavad Gita takes full cognizance of these three aspects. Every man is free to choose his ideal according to the preponderance of one of these in his nature. The man of emotion would prefer Bhakti Yoga, the man of volition Karma Yoga and the man of intellect Dhyana Yoga or Jnana Yoga. It is the Yoga which is the point of convergence amongst the apparently clashing ideals.

The author discusses fully the four Ideals of the Gita and shows the different steps of each of the Ideals which will ultimately lead to Yoga. His defence of "work without attachment" against the charge of the Rev. T. Lazarus is admirable. The Gita opens with the words of Lord Sri Krishna, "Yield not to unmanliness, O Son of Kunti! It does it befit thee"; and so far as Arjuna is concerned, special emphasis has been laid on Karma Yoga. That is why the opinion prevails in some quarters that Karma Yoga is the theme of the Gita. The Gita concludes with the following Slokas:—

मन्मना भव मद्रक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामैवेक्ष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिज्ञाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

indicating clearly that the consummation of all spiritual practices consists in complete self-surrender to the Lord. Indeed the Bhagavad Gita is the fountain from which the Jnani, Bhakta, Yogi and Karmi, all draw their inspiration and find the culmination of their Sadhanas in attaining the stages preached so luminously throughout the pages of the Gita. We cannot but congratulate the author and the publisher for bringing out this valuable book, setting forth the principal doctrines of the Gita in clear and forcible language and with apt quotation of slokas to support his views.

*Goods and Bads, Outlines of a Philosophy of Life:—*By Alban G. Widgery, Professor of Philosophy, Baroda.

The present book is the outcome of a series of discussions between the author and His Highness the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda on some philosophical topics. The author has treated the 'Physical Values', 'Intellectual Values', 'Aesthetic Values', 'Moral Values' and

'Religious Values' successively and adds a chapter at the end on 'the Good Life.' The author defines 'Goods' as "those experiences which attract, which we would undoubtedly preserve, repeat or continue" and 'Bads' as "those experiences which we would undoubtedly get rid of and not repeat." The different kinds of Goods and Bads which the human mind experiences have been discussed in *extenso*. The author does not propound any system of his own in this book nor does he support any particular school of philosophy. He does not follow the method of beginning like many others with some ultimate principles and deducing conclusions from them, but starts with the particulars of experience, the facts of individual experience, and points out the Goods and Bads which every thoughtful man feels in different planes of consciousness. The book has been written with the practical utility in view and not merely as a series of discussions; for example, in treating of 'Physical Values' the author discusses fully the physical goods and bads in relation with birth, food, clothing, dwelling, physical exercise with special reference to India. In the chapter on 'Intellectual Values', Materialism as an ultimate explanation of the universe is proved conclusively to be futile from the psychological and epistemological standpoint and unable to give any satisfactory account of the fundamentals of moral, aesthetic and religious experiences. The origin of aesthetic consciousness has been treated admirably in some detail from the Psychological, the Biological and the Idealistic standpoint.

In the treatment of 'Religious Values' the author rightly observes that the tyro in religion as in music, painting, sculpture and other spheres of life, must look for help from his superiors and geniuses; and the greatest among many losses and evils which Protestantism has incurred for the Christian heritage, has been due to the neglect of the saints. As a consequence, we find to-day in Protestantism more of intellectuality than of spirituality. As one occupying the chair for the comparative study of religions, the author points out in clear and unmistakable language the abhorrence of the idea common amongst many Christian Missionaries, of absorbing all other religions by their own. Time has come when the religions of the world should exchange their ideals and not fight with one another for supremacy.

*The Future of the Indo-British Commonwealth:—*By Joshia C. Wedgwood, D.S.O., M.P., with a preface by Viscount Haldane, F.R.S., K.T., O.M.. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. xvii+251. Price Rs. 3-8.

This is the first of a series of books on Asian culture called "the Asian Library," which will include Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Science, Education, Social Polity, Art, Handicrafts, and History. We are told in the prospectus that several other volumes are already in preparation and will be regularly brought out in bi-monthly instalments.

The present work opens with an appropriate quotation from General Smuts, which admirably sets the tone of the author's thesis which, as he tells us in the Introduction, "is to show how England can ensure peace by fitting the Empire to become the nucleus of World-Union, by becoming herself the centre of a Commonwealth of free peoples enjoying equal rights. The good-will, possibly even the direct co-operation, of America is needed. That can only be obtained by fundamentally reforming the Empire, and by freely extending to America those equal rights within the new commonwealth that British citizens will enjoy." And in his own way, Col. Wedgwood has fairly well accomplished this task. He has given us a bird's eye view of the whole situation, dwelling gradually on the abundant increase of the British credit after the war and the growing amity between the British and the American peoples,—the index perchance of a prospective Anglo-American Union; on the improbability of the League of Nations with its inherent defects, being ever constituted as a really such league; on the obstacles to the commonwealth,—race-hatred, color-bar, clash of vested interests, unjust restrictions on Indian emigrants and settlers in the Dominions and Crown-colonies; and then on the difficulties and dangers in Ireland and India, and of the Moslem situation all over the Hemisphere; and has concluded that if India, an Asiatic and coloured race, be granted equal partnership in the British commonwealth along with the Dominions and the Colonies, it will not only solve all the present imperial problems, but will further act as a demonstration before the Moslem peoples of the Far and the Middle East, of the security and the wisdom of joining on the honourable terms of equal citizen-rights in the great British commonwealth, which then might well be considered as fairly on the way towards the realisation of the beautiful dream of the World Federation.

How far the writer's arguments bear out this happy inference, we shall not judge here. Whether the first chapter with its glorification of the British prestige is a fit beginning of an argument which ends with this pious declaration,—"With malice towards none, with charity for all, it is for us to resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish

from the earth" (for to our minds, the world unity to be realised in however partial a form, must be organised on the truth of a common spiritual consciousness, which the insular British with his narrow outlook of life, scarcely ensures), we shall not consider. Nor should we quarrel with him if he be found not as yet freed from the vitiating taint of the pre-war outlook, and not as deep and ideal in his forecast of the world's future as, say, Mr. Wells in his *Outline of History*. We thank him and congratulate him on what he has done; for few indeed are those who have as yet raised their protestant voice against the tumultuous disharmony of the conflicting nations, claiming a better and saner view of things! And to the Theosophical Publishing House also, our congratulations for having conceived the happy idea of prefacing their series on Asian culture with a noble plea for a united world and universal brotherhood: for has not Asia always stood for unity amidst the diversities of life, and for peace and harmony?

NOTES AND NEWS.

Report of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta, for the year, 1920.

We have received a copy of the report of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society for the year, 1920. The motto of the Society is, "First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods," "Be and Make", and its objects are (1) to study and realise the principles of the Vedanta in its universal aspect as set forth in the lives and teachings of Swami Vivekananda and his Master Sri Ramakrishna, (2) to spread the above principles and teachings among the people at large, (3) to serve humanity as veritable manifestations of God by ministering to their physical needs, and helping them in their intellectual, moral and spiritual development. The society organised lectures on Vedanta by eminent scholars in order to popularise the highest truths of the Hindu scriptures amongst the masses and to create a taste for the study of the Upanishads and the Vedanta. It was the earnest desire of the illustrious Swami to bring the Vedanta from the forest and make it accessible to all men in whatever walk of life they may be. His lectures on practical Vedanta were delivered with this object in view and his writings and letters make it abundantly clear that he was not for making the study of Vedanta the close preserve of a certain section of society.

The Vivekananda Society of Calcutta is trying to carry into practice this earnest desire of the great Swami by organising popular lectures in Vedanta. In the year under review the society organis-

ed 38 such lectures. Three Special Meetings were held during the year. The 58th Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 25th January, in the University Institute Hall under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sir Ashutosh Choudhury. Many prominent men of the city attended the meeting and spoke on the life and teachings of the great Swami from different stand-points. In connection with the Birthday Anniversary, a religious gathering of members was arranged, in which the interested public were also invited to join. His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, R. K. Math, was in the chair. The third Special Meeting was held on the occasion of the Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan-Buddha Deva. The society celebrated the Thrice Blessed Day of the life of Lord Buddha by offering 'Puja' with prayers and 'payasa bhoga'. Some Buddhist monks participated in the celebration of the Day. The meeting opened with the recitation of the 'Jaya Mangala Gatha' by the Bauddha Shramanas and Bhikshus headed by Maha Sthavira Kripasharan, president of the Buddhist Temple.

Twelve monthly and one special conversazioni were held in different parts of the city. The revered Swamis of the Belur Math, the Head Quarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, presided in these meetings. Religious classes were held on Thursday and Sunday evenings every week, in which the Gita, Jnana Yoga and Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna were read and explained to the students. The society helped 23 students with monthly stipends, and special donations were paid for purchase of books and examination fees. In the year under review the society sent 6 volunteers to Dakshin Baraset in 24 Parganas on hearing the report of a cholera epidemic there. The society had 478 members on its roll as against 461 in the previous year. The total receipts during the year were Rs. 3286-0-3 against Rs. 3171-15-6 of the previous year. The total disbursements of the year were Rs. 2760-14-7, against Rs. 3259-0-9 of the previous year, leaving a balance of Rs. 1572; of this balance Rs. 1099/- is on Building Fund account.

The society is making an attempt for the first time towards raising donations for Swami Vivekananda Memorial Hall and appeals to the generous countrymen to help freely in this noble undertaking. Kind contributions should be sent either to the Hon. Secretary S. J. Kiran Chunder Dutt, I, Lakshmi Dutt Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; or, to the Treasurer S. J. Rabindra Krishna Mitra, B. A., 19, Nilmani Mitra street, Beadon Square, Calcutta.

His Holiness Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, president of the Ramakrishna Mission, is returning to Madras soon from Bangalore, where he had been for the last three months. The Durga Pujahs will be performed and celebrated here in the premises of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, during the Navaratri days on the 8th, 9th and 10th of October. It is His Holiness's desire to perform the Pujahs in Southern India, as it is performed on Saptami, Ashtami and Navami, during the lunar bright fortnight in Bengal in the month of Aswin. Elsewhere we publish an article on the Durga Puja from the pen of the late Sister Nivedita.

Our readers may be interested to note that the British aerial party, now engaged in attempting to reach the top of Mt. Everest, the highest peak of the Himalayas, discovered on their way a hermitage, at an altitude of 16,500 feet from the sea-level. The scenery of the place is, they say, exceedingly charming and there live about three or four hundred hermits in the caves. Nature seems to have lavished all her wealth of beauty in the neighbouring hills and there the birds and beasts roam about, without giving rise to the least cause of fear to the hermits. There are such monasteries on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas but they all belong to the Buddhist Orders.

His Holiness Swami Sharvanandaji has recently returned to Madras after a month's tour in Ceylon. At Jaffna and Colombo, the Swami was accorded a grand reception by the Hindu public. His lectures on 'Re-incarnation and Karma' and 'The Spiritual Value of Life' drew large audiences in the Tower Hall of Colombo and were highly appreciated by the educated public. The Swami spent a month in the island visiting different places; and his lectures and discourses turned many Hindus and Sinhalese from atheism and materialism to the study and appreciation of the truths of Sanatana Dharma.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF
WORK, KHULNA.

The Mission has already informed the public that besides cloth distress and starvation, malaria has broken out in the affected area of Khulna. It is a heart-breaking sight to see that men and women having no rags even to cover their loins, cannot come out of their houses to receive rice. Most of our recipients are half naked. The distress of cloth is growing very acute and will be more so, unless the generous public lend their helping hands to their brothers and sisters. The Mission has already sent 220 pairs of pants and some old cloths, but this is too insignificant in quantity to cope with the present condition of the people. Owing to the want of funds it has been dissuaded from sending more for their relief. It has sent two dozen bottles of 'Edwards Tonic' and other medicines for the prevention of malaria, and has distributed on the 31st August 85 maunds and 30 seers of rice among 1,728 recipients. As the area of the work is gradually extending, it ardently hopes that the public will never remain silent to its repeated appeals.

Contributions will be thankfully received in the following addresses :—

1. Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji's Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
2. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah, (Bengal).

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) Saradananda.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman'!"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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THE SONG OF THE FREE.

BY

Swami Vivekananda.

The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
The flame stirred up doth blaze,
The desert air resounds the calls
Of heart-struck lion's rage—

The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast;
When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
Great ones unfold their best!

Let eyes grow dim and heart grow faint
And friendship fail and love betray,
Let Fate its hundred horrors send
And clotted darkness block the way—

All nature wear one angry frown
To crush you out—still know, my soul,
You are Divine—march on and on
Nor right nor left but to the goal!

Nor angel I, nor man nor brute,
Nor body, mind, nor he nor she,
The books do stop in wonder mute
To tell my nature ;—I am He !

Before the sun, the moon, the earth,
Before the stars or comets free,
Before e'en Time has had its birth
I was, I am and I will be !

The beauteous earth, the glorious sun,
The calm sweet moon, the spangled sky,
Causation's laws do make them run,
They live in bonds, in bonds they die—

And mind its mantle, dreamy net,
Casts o'er them all and holds them fast,
In warp and woof of thought are set
Earth, hells and heavens, or worst or best.

Know these are but the outer crust—
All space and time, all effect, cause,
I am he beyond all sense, all thought,
The Witness of the Universe !

Not two or many, 'tis but one,
And thus in me all one's I have
I cannot hate, I cannot shun
Myself from me—I can but love !

From dreams awake, from bonds be free
Be not afraid—this mystery,
My shadow, cannot frighten me !
Know once for all that I am He !

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER.

BY

Swami Saradananda.

To resume our narration, the Master now under the direction of the Mother, absolutely lost himself in the sadhanas with the help of the intelligent and deft Brahmani who now spared no pains to collect all the rare ingredients that were required for the successful performance of the different rites and gave instructions for their prescribed use. Thus were gathered from lands, unhallowed by the stream of the holy Ganges, 'five skulls,'* one human and four of other animals, and were buried one set under the Bilwa tree standing in the northern limit of the temple garden and another under the Master's own Panchavati, over which two altars† were made as the most auspicious places for Tantric sadhana.

And for months, he was scarcely conscious of the passing of days and nights, so much absorbed was he in his *japam*, and meditation and other spiritual exercises. Said the Master, "By day, the Brahmani would wander far into the country, in search of the necessary but rare ingredients and at night she would lead me either to the *Bellala*, or *Panchavati* where I would perform the Mother's worship with them under her direction, and then used to be absorbed in *japam* and meditation ; but before I have scarcely gone one round in the telling of beads, I would be plunged into Samadhi and attain to the prescribed spiritual realisations and benefits ; and I cannot tell you how innumerable and strange were then those realisations and visions ! She led me through all the

* The *Yogini Tantra* in the fifth chapter mentions different kinds of *asanams* (altars) peculiarly auspicious for Tantric sadhanas. The altar may be built on three skulls of man, buffalo and cat respectively, or on three human skulls only, or on the skulls of jackal, snake, dog and bull with that of man in the centre, or on five human skulls, or hundred, or thousand, or million.

† The usual practice is to build an altar on five skulls. But we have been told of distinctly two such altars in his own sadhana. The one was under the *bel* tree with three human skulls and the other in the *Panchavati* with skulls of five different animals. After he had finished his sadhana, he took out all those skulls and threw them in the waters of the Ganges. The cause of this double arrangement may be either that an altar with three skulls was particularly auspicious or that the *bel* tree being particularly solitary was extremely advantageous for practising sadhana ; or it may be that the Government magazine being too near the *bel* tree, all the homa ceremonies had to be performed elsewhere. Hence the necessity of a separate arrangement in the *Panchavati*.

spiritual practices mentioned in the principal sixty-four Tantras, and though the difficulty of their performance was enormous,—so much so that most Sadhakas often lose their way in their sadhana—yet the grace of the Mother helped me to go through them successfully." We were further told by the Master that he had to perform under the guidance of the Brahman some of the most difficult and secret sadhanas of the *Veerachara* of the Tantras.* But although he was engaged for a long time in the practices of the Tantrik Sadhanas, yet not for a single moment it aroused in his mind, any other feeling towards the woman-kind except that of child. Nor could he take even a drop of wine. The very name of wine which is technically known in the Tantras as *Karana* (cause) would evoke in him the thought of the *Jagalkarana* the Great First Cause, and would throw him into a trance.

We shall here present our readers with a beautiful legend of the god Ganapati, which tells how he came to attain the permanent realisation of the Mother's presence in every being of the feminine kind. This was narrated by the Master one day at Dakshinewar and to us, his hearers, who could never boast of any excessive regard or faith in that elephant-headed god, the story was indeed a revelation of his supreme greatness and of why he, in every worship, always occupies the premier position.

It is said that while yet a boy, Ganesha one day came across a cat in course of his play and out of child's thoughtlessness teased it much and scratched it. But when after this cruel play, Ganesha came back to his mother, the Goddess Parvati, he was much pained to find on her divine person diverse signs of beatings and wounds, of which the cause, he was told, was he himself. Sorely aggrieved and surprised beyond himself at this strange imputation, he cried out, "How could I, mother, ever strike at you? Nor do I remember that I have ever done any such mischief as could bring on you this insult from others." At that, said the Goddess, "Consider, my child, if you have not beaten any creature;" "Yes, mother, that I have done," replied Ganesha, "I have, a short while ago, struck a cat", and so saying, began to weep bitterly at the thought of subjecting by his wilful pranks his own mother to this painful treatment at the hands of the cat's owner. This touched the heart of the Mother and holding him in her fond embrace, she said, "My child, grieve not; none has struck at my body. But you must

* The main ingredients of worship in the *Veerachara* of the Tantras are five in number, namely, *Madya*, *Mamsa*, *Matsya*, *Mudra*, and *Maithuna*. As all these names begin with *M*, so they are called by the common appellation, *Panchamakara*, five *M's*. So in this process of worship, wine and woman play a very important part.

know, it is I myself, who in another form is the cat; hence these signs of your beatings on the cat's body are repeated on my own person. Do not lament what you have done in your ignorance. But henceforth, remember that all creatures of the feminine kind are parts of my own self and those of the masculine class are created from the self of your own father: Nothing exists in the universe as is not either Siva or Sakti!". These exhortations of his Mother, Ganesha ever remembered in his heart so that when he attained the marriageable age, he refused to wed any one, as that would have been marrying his own mother! Thus he lived a lifelong celibate and was counted the foremost of the Wise Ones, inasmuch as he was firmly established in the knowledge that the universe was nothing else than the self of Siva and Sakti.

This story was followed by another in testimony of the supreme wisdom of the God Ganapati. Once, the Goddess Parvati declared that whoever between her sons Ganesha and Kartika, would return first from a perambulation around the 'fourteen worlds', would be the recipient of a precious necklace she wore on her person. Anon went Kartika abroad seated on the swift wings of his peacock, ridiculing as it were by his swift speed, the rather corpulent body of his elder brother and the insignificance of his carrier, the rat. But the wise Ganesha, long after his brother's departure, left his seat and having visualised by his spiritual vision the whole universe as constituted of Siva and Sakti, slowly went round and saluted them and resumed his seat. And when Kartika returned from his journey, it was Ganesha who received the gracious gift of the jewel necklace from the Mother; his wisdom and devotion had won Her heart!

And then said the Master in concluding the narration, "Mine is also the same attitude towards the woman-kind; and hence it is that I offered worship at the feet of my own wedded wife; for I saw the Mother Herself in her!"

We possess no record indeed of any other Sadhaka in any age, taking to the *Veerabhava* sadhanas of the Tantra and successfully going through them, maintaining at the same time the son's attitude intact towards all woman-kind. It has been hitherto the invariable custom of such *Veerachara* Sadhakas to associate themselves with Sakti, that is to say, woman; and as there has been no deviation of the observance in any Sadhaka of the kind, it has been responsible for creating the popular belief that the forementioned practice was inevitable for a successful performance of the Sadhanas and the attainment of the Mother's divine grace. And we may safely infer that it is this belief which inspired most of the hostile criticisms we hear of the Tantrik practices.

It was indeed the unique achievement of the Master alone, the Prophet of the Age, that he never knew a woman even in dream—which fact has been times and often asserted by the Master himself. In this then, that the Master has already been fully confirmed in his filial attitude towards woman before he took to *Veera-bhava* Sadhana, is clearly indicated the fulfilment of a deep design of the Mother.

We have been told by the Master that no single practice ever required from him more than three days to reach its culmination. "Whenever I began" he said, "a new sadhana, I earnestly prayed to the Mother to vouchsafe me its fruit; and in three days my prayer was answered!" Such rapid fruition of Sadhana even though unaccompanied by the traditional observance of the acceptance of *Sakti* (woman) conclusively proves that the congress with a woman is not a necessary condition of the Sadhana, and that it is the weak and unrestrained character of the Sadhaka which is at the root of the observance. And it only reveals the infinite liberality of the Scriptures that the Tantras have recognised the fallibility of human nature and yet given him assurance that repeated and earnest practice would at last lead him higher up to the Divine outlook of life, *Divyabhava*.

Hence it follows that the essential motive of the Tantrik practices is to lead the Sadhaka on, through self-control and repeated persevering attempts, till he is firmly established on the realisation as so many expressions of the Divine, of all those objects which by their temptations of beauty and joy, lead man from life to death and from death to life and stand as adamant barriers between him and Self-realisation. Assuredly from a consideration of the self-control of the Sadhaka and the above-mentioned reasons, the Tantras have instituted the three grades of the *Pashu*, *Veera* and *Divya Bhava* and have required him to choose either of these paths towards God-realisation. But it was almost forgotten, no doubt through the prevailing influence of the age, that the Tantrik practices can be fruitful only when firmly grounded on complete self-control; and the horrid practices of characterless men had thus naturally resulted in a wholesale condemnation of the Tantras. Therefore the immense success of the Master, in his ever child-like simplicity and lustless disposition, which he achieved in his Tantrik Sadhana, is on the one hand, a clear indication to the Sadhakas of their aim and end, and on the other, a vindication and glorification of the Tantra Shastra.

It does not appear that, though he pursued the Tantrik practices for a continuous period of three or four years, he had ever

given any detailed or chronological account of them to any one. Only to rouse up our enthusiasm in Sadhana, did he sometimes disclose some of those details, or perhaps a few might have received instructions on certain of those practices from him. It is however quite evident that this his acquaintance with the diverse ways of Sadhana, was designed by the Mother only that a direct experience of the innumerable and extraordinary realisations of the Tantrik Sadhana might help him in his after-life in guiding his own disciples in the path of spirituality by a proper understanding of their individual spiritual potentialities.

Besides the above-mentioned informations, we have been oftentimes told by the Master of some of his realisations in this period, which we shall narrate here for the edification of our readers.

He said that during the Tantrik Sadhana, his temperament underwent a complete transformation, so much so that learning that the Mother sometimes takes the form of a she-jackal and that the dog was the blessed vehicle of the Bhairava, he would partake of the remnant of their food as sacramental, without even a shade of repugnance.

After he had made a mental offering of his body, mind, soul—his all at the lotus-feet of the Divine Mother, he used actually to see himself, in and out, enflamed by the fire of knowledge.

It was during these times that the Master realised the awakening of the *Kundalini* and her wending up towards the cerebral centre: He saw an effulgent divine person coursing up through the *Sushumna* canal from *Muladhara* upwards, and touching each drooping lotus of the six *chakras** with his tongue, which at once raised itself up and blossomed out, and anon with each blooming, came to him the realisation of various supernatural phenomena.

Once it happened to Swami Vivekananda that whenever he would sit at his meditation, a very large shining triangular figure apparently instinct with life, would appear before him. The Master,

* The six *chakras* or centres are thus described by the Yogis. The *Sushumna* Canal (or the canal centralis, as the Western Physiology would call it) runs through the middle of the spinal chord from the *Muladhara*, the basic lotus through the middle of the spinal chord from the *Muladhara*, the basic lotus (the sacral plexus), the first and the lowest of the six centres, to *Sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain, with other four centres namely *Swadhishthana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata* and *Agna*, between them. In the *Muladhara*, sleeps the *Kundalini* (coiled-up power), which when roused up by spiritual efforts, forces its way through the *Sushumna* canal upwards, first to *Swadhishthana*, then to *Manipura* and so on till it reaches the *Sahasrara*: and as it rises higher step by step, layer after layer of mind becomes open, and wonderful powers and visions come to the Yogi; and when it reaches the brain, the Yogi becomes perfectly free from his body and mind and achieves the Highest Realisation of Truth.

when he was told of it, said, "All right! you have attained the vision of the *Brahmayoni*. I too had a similar vision while practising under the Bilwa tree; and I saw it giving birth to innumerable worlds every moment."

It was then again that he had the supernatural perception of the perpetual Pranavadhvani (the sound *Om*) of an infinite volume, as constituted by the combination of all the different individual sounds of the universe. Some of us hold that they have heard the Master himself declare that in those times he could correctly read the meaning of the languages of birds, and other animals.

Towards the end of this period of his sadhana, came to the Master the eightfold occult powers, well-known as *Astasiddhi*.* It is said that his nephew Hriday advised him to make their use, and when for a final decision of his duty therein, one day he approached the Mother, he was given the vision to look upon them as the veritable ordure of a fallen woman. "Henceforth", said the Master, "the very name of occult power appears nauseating to me!"

This reminds us of a beautiful episode of Swami Vivekananda's early life. He was one day taken to the solitary Panchavati by the Master and was told, "You know, I have attained the *Astasiddhis*, which I want to transfer to you now, as I myself have long ago made up my mind not to make any application of them." At that Swamiji asked, "Will they help me in realising God?" and when he was told in reply that these powers, though they might be of some help in religious propaganda work, were absolutely of no value in the realisation of Truth, he flatly refused to have any of them. Said Swamiji that this his refusal still more incensed the love of the Master towards him.

Once during that period, a desire arose in his mind to visualise the Divine Maya of the Mother, which was thus fulfilled: He saw one day an infinitely beautiful lady rising out of the waters of the Ganges and approach with solemn steps the grounds of the Panchavati. By and by, the Master found that she was with child which she presently brought forth and suckled with infinite affection; but next moment she assumed a terrific appearance, threw the beautiful child into her jaws and crushed and swallowed it and then vanished into the river-water.

Besides the above, he had numerous other realisations of the Mother in Her various Divine forms. Some of them would sometimes talk to him and instruct him in many ways. Though all of

* These are the powers of (1) becoming as small as atom, (2) assuming extreme lightness of body, (3) obtaining anything, (4) irresistible will, (5) increasing bodily size, (6) supreme mastery over everything, (7) controlling all, and (8) complete suppression of passion or desire.

them were of a surpassing beauty, yet, we have been told by the Master, they could hold no comparison with the personal beauty of the Goddess Sri Sri Rajarajeswari or Shorashi. He said, "I saw Her beauty as if really dripping from Her person and scatter all around!" The visions of Bhairava and other semi-divine beings were also among his experiences during this time.

In short, so many and various were the daily visions and realisations of the Master during his Tantrik Sadhana, that it is to our belief a humanly impossible task to attempt any exhaustive treatment thereof.

From the time of his Tantrik Sadhana onward, when the mouth of his Sushumna canal was fully opened, his nature, so we were told by the Master himself, became completely changed into that of a child; and from towards the end of this period he could not in spite of himself hold all day on his person either garment or holy thread which would imperceptibly slip off. The reason was undoubtedly his absolute absence of the body-consciousness owing to his mind being for ever engaged in the lotus-feet of the Divine Mother. For he has himself told us often that he never consciously or intentionally divested himself of his garments or sacred thread, nor did he ever set to practising such nakedness after the example of the ordinary Paramahansas. We have it from him that at the conclusion of these Sadhanas, his monistic consciousness was so highly developed that even such things as had formerly appeared to him as insignificant or detestable, appeared now equal in value to the most holy objects. Said he, "The *tulasi* plant and the *sajne* sticks appeared one to me!"

Henceforth again, for some years his personal beauty was so much enhanced that it attracted the wondering notice of people at large. The complexion became regularly golden and was scarcely distinguishable from the gold amulet he wore on his person. The Master said, "Then such was the attraction of my physical beauty that people would gaze unsatiated. The chest and the face wore a perpetual blush and the whole body emanated a spiritual lustre. So to avoid public notice, I would cover myself with a thick wrapper and often pray to the Mother 'O Mother, take away this physical beauty; grant me instead the beauty of holiness and spirituality.' And I would pass my hand over and strike the body, crying, 'Go in!' 'Go in!' till in course of time, my outside became as dark as you see now!"

An incident in this connection may be narrated here. During that period of his life, the Master used to pass annually some three

or four months of the rainy season in his own native place of Kamarpukur, and then he would naturally pay visits to his nephew Hridoy's home at Shihor, and incidently to his father-in-law's as well, for Jayrambati is on the way to Shihor. At that time Hridoy used to accompany him always and serve him very devotedly.

His life at Kamarpukur was a very busy one indeed. From morning to evening there used to gather at his house a concourse of ladies and gentlemen who came even from distant villages to hear a few words from his hallowed lips. The ladies of the village would often visit him in the mornings and afternoons, taking advantage of the opportunity of coming out to take water from the well-known tank *Haldarpukur* which was situated quite close to the Master's house. The gentlemen of the neighbourhood used to come mostly during the noon when the ladies were engaged in their house-hold duties at home, and thus it used to look like some festive occasion at the Master's place.

Once, during one of such sojourns at his native place, it was settled that he should go to Jayrambati and Shihor. A palanquin was called for, for the Master to travel in; for, at that time owing to his continuous Bhava Samadhi and the necessary strain upon his nerves, his physical frame became as delicate as that of any woman or child. The Master dressed himself in a scarlet silk and put on the golden *Ishta Kavacha* (amulet) on his arm and came out to mount the vehicle; but there at his door, he was surprised to find a regular crowd of men and women waiting by the roadside. The Master inquired of Hridoy who was accompanying him, the reason of this unusual assembly. The latter told him that it was only to have a parting look of him who would be absent for some days, that the people had come there. The Master asked, "What is the novelty in to-day's sight? They have been seeing me daily!" "But you look most beautiful," replied Hridoy, "when you put on silk and your lips become ruddy with the juice of betel-leaves, and they have come to enjoy that sight." This explanation produced a strange impression on the Master's mind. He thought, 'Alas! the world is mad after only the transient physical beauty, and cares not to see the infinitely more glorious One Who is inside!' He had always an absolute dislike for physical beauty; now the sight of people specially assembled for enjoying such a physical beauty, filled him with great anguish and utter disgust. He exclaimed with agony of heart, "What! such a crowd to see only a human body! Shame! No, I shall not go anywhere; for wherever I shall go, there will be the same crowd!" So saying he went back into his room and throwing off his dress, sat down on the floor plunged in

sad thoughts; and no amount of arguments or persuasions could prevail against the Master's strong resolve.

In concluding our narration of the Master's Tantric sadhana, let us note down that if the Brahmani was his principal help and guide in his sadhanas, she herself in her own turn was much influenced and benefitted spiritually afterwards by the Master's life, which we shall relate in its proper place. The name of Brahmani was Yogeswari and the Master used to say of her that she was a part of the Divine Yoga Maya.

Being endowed with supernatural powers by his Tantra sadhana he came to know through the grace of the Mother that in the later period of his life, many people would come to him to receive his spiritual help. He spoke of this to Mathur, Hridoy and others also. At that, Mathur is said to have remarked, "They are welcome, Baba, we shall all enjoy together the bliss of your company."

BY THE WAY.

Whosoever has cared to study the working of Nature and the infinite variety of objects of the universe, has marvelled at the vastness of the universe and the littleness of man. The rising and the setting sun, the seasons of the year following one another in turn, the appearance of the silvery moon in its different phases in the most uniform order, the motion of the planets and indeed hundreds of other similar phenomena bespeak eloquently to the thinking man the working of infinite energy behind the universe. These phenomena of nature coupled with the marvellous adaptation of means to ends so clearly manifest even to a casual observer, force him to believe that this infinite energy is working intelligently. The natural philosopher may doubt the design and intelligence in the cosmic process but he cannot deny the existence of infinite energy working behind the universe. The theist maintains that this infinite energy working with design and intelligence is the glory of his God, the First Cause and the ultimate explanatory principle of the universe and its on-goings. We are not going here to refute the position of the natural philosopher who stubbornly refuses to posit any intelligent Being behind the universe but candidly acknowledges the existence of infinite energy, for it is also his ultimate explanatory principle.

This aspect of the Divine Being as the first cause of this boundless universe inspires awe in our hearts and we stand before the Creator of the universe in mute reverence. The feeling of man to such a God finds expression in the hymn of the Hebrew psalmist, "When I think of this limitless universe, and look upon the sun and the stars, Thy handiwork, what is man that Thou shouldst care for him?" But man as he is cannot be satisfied with such a conception of God and anthropomorphism, which is in the very constitution of human mind leads him to throw the impersonal aspect in the background and worship a Personal God and ascribe human feelings and emotions to Him. This is the philosophy of the origin of the conception of a Personal God.

All the religions of the world believe in a Personal God, except Buddhism; but with the Buddhists the founder of their religion has become the God. This personal aspect of God enables man to establish a relation between him and the Creator and the different religions of the world adore the Supreme Being in different relations and enjoin upon their followers to worship Him in their own particular relation. The founder of Christianity looked upon God as his Father and the Fatherhood of God is the predominant note of Christianity. It is in Hinduism alone that we find that the devotees have worshipped the Most High, attributing to Him all the human relations and have realised Him in all those ways. The conception of the motherhood of God is peculiar to Hinduism alone and does not appeal to worshippers of other religions. It should be noted here that Hinduism does not depend on the authenticity of one man, but upon the Rishis or *mantradrastas* whose personal experiences and realisations are the firm ground on which it stands.

The philosophical conception of the Absolute, as unconditioned and undifferentiated finds its adherents in the Upanishads which record the spiritual realisations of the sages of ancient India in ages, where the light of modern history cannot penetrate.

This is the Vedic age in the history of Hinduism. It is only when we come to the Pauranic age that we meet with the names of gods and goddesses. The earliest mention of the name of Uma we find in Kenopanishad, where She points out to the gods Indra, Agni and others the true source of their power and energy, without whom they cannot even remove a straw from its place. Until we come to Markandeyapurana, we are not able to discover the time which marks the beginning of the introduction of the worship of the ten-armed goddess Durga in this world below. The story is

told of a king named Suratha and a Vaisya known by the name Samadhi, who were both driven from home and were roving in a forest. When they met, they began to speak to each other about the circumstances which led to their present homelessness and the pang and anguish they were suffering on account of absence from home and the near and dear ones. They were spending their time in utter desolation and extreme anguish of mind on account of separation from their relatives and kinsmen who were the instruments in driving them away from their hearth and home. This attraction for those kinsmen who were the causes of their present miserable lot and indescribable sorrow appeared to them mysterious and inexplicable. At last they chanced to meet a sage named Medhas, who explained to them the mystery of the whole thing. The sage said, "It is the inscrutable power of Mahamaya, which knits the human souls together by the bond of love and brings about attachment between each other. She is the creative energy of the universe and is the cause of its preservation. Go, worship and propitiate Her." And the story is told that the king and the Vaisya worshipped Her and the Goddess appeared before them and granted them boons.

The king prayed for his lost kingdom and got it back; and the Vaisya besought for Moksha and he got it. The king invoked and worshipped the Goddess, according to the instructions of the sage in spring and since that time She was worshipped in the spring season. It was Ramachandra, the prince of Ayodhya, who invoked the Goddess in autumn on the eve of his expedition for the conquest of Lanka. The Goddess is worshipped both in autumn and spring in Bengal for three days; but it is the worship during the autumn, which has now got precedence over that of the spring.

The heroic deeds of the Goddess who saved the gods of heaven on several occasions from the hands of their invincible enemies, the Asuras, have been described most poetically in the *Chandi*, which, is recited during the three days of the Puja throughout the length and breadth of Bengal by pious Brahmins and devotees. To see hundreds of Brahmins reciting the *Chandi* and the sonorous hymns in the most melodious voice at Durgabadi, in Benares, the citadel of Hinduism, is a sight for the gods. The worship of the Divine Mother is performed most elaborately in Bengal in the lunar fortnight of the month of Aswin. The Durga Puja is the Christmas of Bengal and is marked by universal rejoicings when even paupers and the

penniless will put on gala dress and will go from house to house to see the worship of the Mother.

In Bengal She is looked upon not only as the Mother of the Universe, but there have been devotees who regard Her as the loving daughter, visiting the mother every year for three days with her two sons (Karticka and Ganapati) and two daughters (Lakshmi and Saraswati). The poet-devotees of mediæval Bengal have composed innumerable songs, welcoming the goddess to Her mother's abode after one year (called *Agamani* songs), which are sung during Durga Pujas and bring rapturous joys of the devotees. These *Agamani* songs are full of the tenderness of a loving mother whose heart overflows with joy at the sight of her daughter after the lapse of one long year. It is this human aspect in the worship of the Goddess, which makes the devotees forget momentarily Her eternal and transcendental aspect, and the unbounded bliss felt in Her presence makes everything appear in golden hue.

"The calm autumn air, the green fields and meadows with paddies waving their laden heads, the shining rivers and the bedewed trees herald the coming of the Mother. Presents are exchanged among friends and relations, boys and girls are given nice dresses, food and clothes are distributed to the poor and to the servants of the household, and friends and acquaintances are invited to join in the Puja. The houses in which the Puja is celebrated are done up, the entrance door is decorated with water-filled earthen jars with cocoanuts at the tops and plantain trees on both sides, and a string of mango leaves over the door post; and from day previous songs are sung thrilling with the deepest love and affection for the Mother in joyous anticipation of Her coming or in sending out a welcome to Her. And the beautifully decorated image of the Mother, with one foot on the lion and the other on the shoulder of the demon of evil, Mahishasura, in his death struggle against Her, and the Mother Herself surrounded by Her celestial sons—Kartick, the warrior-god, and Ganesh, the giver of success,—and her daughters,—Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, and Sarswati, the goddess of learning,—is an actual living Presence to Her devout worshippers. She is looked upon as the destroyer of distress and difficulty and is treated with all the sweet relationship of Mother, or as the young daughter Uma and the *Vijaya Dashami* day in Bengal is a day of universal rejoicings, of exchange of greetings and salutations, of good-will and fellow-feeling, when the high and the low, forgetting their differences of social position and caste, and even enemies forgetting their animosities, clasp each other in warm embrace."

We give below some hymns from the *Chandi*, which, in spite of repetitions, are exquisitely beautiful. The Divine Mother pervades the universe with Her presence. Good and bad are manifestations of Her glory; and in whatever aspect She appears, always is She to be worshipped as the loving Mother.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु चेतनेत्यभिधीयते ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of consciousness,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु बुद्धिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of intellect,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु निद्रारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of sleep,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु भुधारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of hunger,

We bow to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु छाया रूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of shadow,

We bow to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of power,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु तृणारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of thirst,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु क्षान्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of forgiveness,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु लज्जारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of shyness,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शान्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of peace,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु श्रद्धारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of faith,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु कान्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of beauty,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु वृत्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of all tendencies,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु स्मृतिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of memory,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु दयारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all beings in the form of kindness,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु तुष्टिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of contentment,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of Mother,

We bow down to that Divine Mother again and again and again.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु भ्रान्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of mistakes,

We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

सर्वमङ्गलमङ्गले शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके ।

शरण्ये त्रयम्बके गौरी नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशानां शक्तिभूते सनातनि ।

गुणाश्रये गुणमये नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

शरणागतदीनार्तपरित्राणपरायणे ।

सर्वस्यातिहरे देवि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

ISLAM*

BY

*Hazrat Malang Ahmed Batcha Saib, B.A.**Ash-hadu An La Ilaha Illallahu Wahdahu La Sharika Lahu
Wa Ash hadu Anna Muhammadan Abduhu Warasuluhu.**"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. He is one and there is no associate with him. And I bear witness that verily Muhammad is his servant and apostle."*

This is the truth of which I have stood up to bear the testimony. This is the light with which Muhammad came to illumine the world 1,300 years ago. In approaching this question I could not but approach it standing as I do, in the midst of my Hindu audience, without this Prayer

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds :
The Beneficent, the Merciful,
Master of the day of requital ;
Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help !
Guide us on the right path
The path of those upon whom thou hast bestowed favours,
Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray."

Here Allah, the Sustainer, Cherisher and Creator of all the worlds, the beneficent, the merciful being invoked, I seek guidance from Him. As Him alone I worship, I crave that He might show me the straight path—the path of those on whom His blessings have been bestowed—not the path of those that have gone astray—not the path of those that have incurred His wrath. No prayer can be more sublime and no prayer can be more fitting to an occasion like this. The very spirit with which we have to approach the mighty question of to-night's discourse is indicated in the very words of this prayer. In similar spirit, Gentlemen, I would beseech you to approach the same question. Myself in the same spirit have approached my religion and several other religions in the world, and the net result of my deliberations I am here to put forward. Starting with this spirit of mind, in the gathering that has assembled to-day, in the enthusiasm that is being displayed, and in the extraordinary liberality of mind

* Lecture delivered in the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Mylapore.

with which a Moslem has been tolerated to speak in the midst of the votaries of a different faith, I could see nothing but the purpose of God being fulfilled in accordance with the onward march of time. The Holy Khoran says that all men are a single people and that they are the one family of God. This indicates the goal towards which earthly existence is being led by the hand of destiny from time to time. Watching the course of civilisation itself, no longer do we see the world existing in the very same primitive form of isolated humanity, separated by geographical, class, caste, and creed distinctions. In the same manner as in the physical world, distance is being annihilated by all modern forms and methods of communication, and in the same manner as in the political and the economic world, national and selfish distinctions are being effaced, so also in the mental and moral plane the world is verging to meet on a common ground. How ennobling and how edifying an idea that we should all unite together to emphasise the essence of our own beliefs and faiths and thus come together within the vast fold of brotherhood as large as humanity itself ! In such converging of ideas in a world happily freed from all shackles and differences that rend human society into pieces, it is here our immediate purpose to find out, what part Islam has played in contributing its own quota to this mighty consummation. Therefore, I now come to the question of the attitude of Islam towards the other religions of the world.

In the first instance what I like you to do is to dispel the idea that Islam has no toleration. I do not say this to please the audience. I am not constructing this out of my own mind but I say this on the authority of the Holy Khoran. Anything I might put forth will be drawn from the Holy Book. I do not only put forward my statement from the book, but support it also from arguments drawn from the same book. So far as I know, if there is any book that speaks of other books and talks highly of other religions, it is the Khoran. In this book as a general principle it is enunciated that "there is not a people to whom we have not sent a guide." "To every people we have sent a warner." This is a plain statement. In addition to this I might read to you another verse in which the same fact is more emphatically said :

"The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from His Lord, and so do the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles. We make no difference between any of His apostles and they say; we hear and obey, Thy forgiveness (do we crave) and to Thee is the eventual course." In these unmistakable words emphasis is laid on the universality

of religion. It is no monopoly of caste or creed but common heritage of all mankind. In addition to this, similar words can be read from the Holy Khoran.

"Surely we have revealed to you as revealed to Noah and the prophets after him and we revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and we gave to David a Scripture.

"And (we sent) apostles we have mentioned to you before and apostles we have not mentioned to you: and to Moses Allah addressed his word, speaking to him." With what breadth of view, open-heartedness, a Moslem approaches other prophets and he sends his blessings upon them! Now coming to the cardinal principle of Islam I should like you to be attentive to this essential point of religion.

People say to Muhammad that he should call himself a Jew or a Christian or a Sabian to gain the exclusive monopoly of paradise; but to them the Holy Khoran says: "Yea, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and be the doer of good he has his reward from his Lord and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve." This grand conception of religion has risen above caste and even above religious distinction. The word "Aslama" is derived from Islam which means self-annihilation of his person. In ordinary human experience pain and happiness are found to exist side by side. Life has been found full with pain and pleasure. This has been the cause of the first consciousness of religion. There has been a desire to flee from grief. This has awakened in man a desire for religion. Islam has also contributed its quota. If you have entirely submitted yourself, in it is the life in which you have no fear. These are the words which show the state of mind a Moslem has. You may call this Nirvana or Mukti but the state of mind is the same. The same doctrine was preached from Adam down to the present day—the doctrine of Allegiance or absolute submission to God. This truth has not only been preached in simple abstraction but also been worked out in regular practice. Belief is the counterpart of action. When the goal of Islam is held as self-annihilation, it demands renunciation so absolute, that all polytheism has been rejected. The nature-worshipper must realise that the sun, the moon and the stars are themselves subject to laws. Our goal has been to find out a deity above these laws—himself the fountainhead of all laws. It might be argued these various creations manifest the glory of God, and as manifestations, why not they be worshipped? The Khoran says: Man! should he worship any one other than God? Does he not know that he himself has been creat-

ed out of the best fabric and that he has been called the vicegerent of God upon earth? To man all other things shall be subservient and man is subservient only to God. So absolute is his resignation to God, whatever magnificence might be possessed by the creations of nature, more magnificent of all is man, the most magnificent of all is God. Next coming to other men whom man venerates as divine persons partaking of God in them,—should he worship them? Such conception is foreign to Islam. Very pithily Muhammad answers this: People asked him, shall not God send down Angels direct to us to solve the whole problem? He gives a short answer which confounds his adversaries. "If you were angels, angels shall be sent down to you; but you are men and therefore, man has been sent unto you." The following words from the Holy Khoran strike at the very root of superstition and open up immense possibilities for the success of man, "Say I am but a man like unto you but to me is revealed that your Lord and mine is one." This was said to a people prone to worship even the draught of a wind and a chip of the rock. Knowing that only six hundred years ago a Prophet was deified, he was there to lay an axe at the root of superstition and cast it into the fire. Now reiterating the point of superiority of man in connection with the exclusive excellence of God, the Holy Khoran even goes so far as to say that God said unto the Angels, "Make obeisance to man." In an allegory it is set out that God first proposed to make man vicegerent on earth and thus supreme. To this the angels say, "Would it not lead to feud and bloodshed?" God says, "I know you do not know." You have often heard of the story of Adam and Eve. In Christianity the doctrine of the original sin is based on this story. To redeem humanity from this, Jesus was to offer himself on the cross. In examining the basis of this belief you find nothing but the story of Adam.

In the beginning God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden of Eden, and said to them that they might eat of the fruits of any tree but not that of knowledge. What a triumph of priestcraft that their authority should not be examined by the search-light of reason! In this story it is inculcated, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge." If we had not eaten what would we have been? This theory has been put forward to simple credulous people. Does any religion lay a bar on human understanding, which, in fact, has been the keystone of every other religion? The present case of the priestcraft as set out in the story of Adam and Eve is a simple instance of *petitio principii*. It is alleged that God forbade Adam and Eve from eating of the fruit of

the tree of Knowledge. If of the fruit of the tree of Knowledge they did not eat, how could the burden of observance or otherwise of law be laid upon their head? Does it not mean that obedience to an injunction implies knowledge? But knowledge itself could not be vouchsafed to the helpless inmates of paradise themselves until they violated the divine behest that they shall not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. It is after eating of the fruit that any understanding should have dawned. The very same story, though narrated in the Holy Khoran, is treated in a different light. God says clearly, "And when your Lord said to one, who shall rule (in it)? they said: What wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood? and we celebrate thy praise and extol holiness? He said, Surely I know what you do not know. And he gave Adam knowledge of all the things, then presented them to the Angels; then he said, Tell me the names of those if you are right. They said, Glory be to thee! We have no knowledge but that which thou hast taught us, surely thou art the Knowing, the Wise. He said: O Adam! inform them of their names. Then when he had informed them of their names, He said, Did I not say to you that I surely know what is unseen in the heavens and the earth and that I know what you manifest and what you did hide? And when we said to the Angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance, but Iblis (did it not) he refused and he was proud and he was one of the unbelievers." I do not here propose to enter into what the rulership of man means. Suffice it to say that God has clearly said that there is a speciality on account of which man has precedence even over angels, who are subordinate to man. This speciality is his knowledge.

Dealing with the text, what is meant by pointing of names and Adam himself being taught the names of all things? Names are brief concepts which in turn are ideas solidified. The name of a thing is only a convenient sound which has come to gather import by convention, experience and knowledge. Thus 'being given the names of things' implies, 'being given the knowledge of things'. Next considering the contention of the angels that how supremacy could be given to man, the answer is very dramatically given, when God says to the angels asking them to show the names of all things, and on their expressing inability, a contrast is drawn, thus establishing the superiority of man owing to his special prerogative of knowledge. The purpose of this allegory is to set out in clear words the vast capabilities of man and the status he occupies in creation. This status has been designated as the representation of God himself upon earth. In other words he has become his vicegerent, his shadow, his Khalifa upon the earth. What is it that a representative,

that the shadow of his original, is intended to achieve, being placed on earth as its ruler and master? He is to convey and faithfully execute all the commands and behests of his master. The knowledge of what his behests and commandments are, is gained through the knowledge of the attributes of God, which man, during all the hours of his life, during the morning and the evening, during night and day, adores, and invokes God's guidance and support. Thus in other words every man comes with vast potentialities to bring the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. Jesus, no doubt, when he preached the kingdom of heaven, preached it as a perfected man, and as a true servant and shadow of his Lord in Heaven. In miniature thus every man has to work out this kingdom of heaven and establish it upon the earth. All these great men Jesus, Moses, Krishna and Muhammad are those that have worked up this potentiality which, as men, they have been gifted to achieve.

To work out these potentialities is the object of religion. Man has been made on the best of models—with the best of faculties. The developed condition of his faculties is called in the Holy Khoran as "Falah." The nearest translation of which is the word 'felicity' though in no satisfactory manner it conveys the idea of the original. The literal translation of "Falah" is to furrow,—drag out what is latent in you. All potentialities converted into actualities is "Falah."

A man with his potentialities might be compared to a seed and his developed condition might be compared to its grown up form—when it is capable of realising things unrealised before. In addition to this aspect of development the word 'Falah' also conveys with it the manner of development which is calculated to secure happiness, bliss, as a resultant of a balanced growth. This state of mind which has thus attained to its full development with all its faculties, passions, emotions balanced to symphonise, giving out the music of bliss, has been described in the Holy Khoran also in the following words:

"O Soul which art at rest, return unto your Lord. He being pleased with thee and you being pleased with Him, enter among his servants, enter into his Paradise."

Here it is the soul at rest to which servanthip of the Lord and his paradise is promised. The condition under which such a soul attains the promised felicity is the one in which God is pleased with the soul and the soul is pleased with God. God's being pleased with man we can all understand: but man being pleased with God is somewhat perplexing. Nay, this is a true aspect of servanthip without which one cannot call himself truly submitted, self-effaced or

Moslem. Is God in need of your pleasure? Glory be to him, he is above all such needs. If all the world in gigantic chorus prays his glory to him, nothing is gained, and if all the world denounces him, nothing is lost. But still, the soul itself being pleased with God, has its import. It is this aspect that is generally ignored in these days of materialism. Is not this world an admixture of suffering and joy and interchangeable experience of success and failures? In life, it is quite common and very easy for one to become the truly devoted of God in prosperity. The building of temples, constructing roads, erecting public inns and constructing huge tanks as acts of public charity to please God and offer one's wealth is a comparatively easy idea. In the spending of such wealth, many a time it is thought that it would bring more to the devotee. It is very often the desire of accumulating more, that prompts the charitable spirit rather than a pure selfless act of piety. In times of trial, however, it is hard to find one having made peace with his God. Very often misfortunes in life make one despondent, desperate, and even revolting against God. Very easily in these days you see people coming round to argue that if there was God or if he was merciful, whether such a misfortune would occur. I am not here prone to enter into the morality of this question; but it is my purpose here to emphasise that even under such trials the Moslem is expected to show patience and forbearance. His submission, his self-annihilation has been so complete that it is the will of God and his will alone, that completely envelopes his whole being, irrespective, no doubt, of what the nature of that will is. It is this state of mind that experiences God's pleasure in it, and it is itself pleased in turn with God, that has the right to be called the soul-at-rest. The same truth has been emphasised in another passage quoted already that it is he that has submitted himself entirely and he that has done good, that has the reward from his Lord, namely, that no fear or grief can touch him. It is this thoroughly submissive self—a self thoroughly subordinated and thus effaced, of which it can be said that the Lord is pleased with it and it is pleased with the Lord. It has thus under all circumstances of subordination to the divine will, in fact, enabled itself to rise beyond the distinctions of suffering or joy. So thoroughly reconciled and so thoroughly in peace, he is with his God, that all his experiences so long as they are from his Lord are dear unto his heart. In the word "Islam," therefore, in addition to the import of absolute submission, of absolute self-effacement, the other aspect of "Falah," felicity, or of the soul-at-rest or peace is also incorporated,—thus this condition of mind being pre-eminently held as the ideal of the Moslem, in which, as has been said already, he has no fear nor grief to touch him.

In dealing with this soul-at-rest, I am reminded of the other two stages as well. The other two are the bestial self, and the repentant self. In the first, it is merely the physical cravings that are predominant and in trying to rise higher than this stage the other self becomes visible. This second self is characterised by successes and failures, by spiritual flights and ill-fortune, but still it is a higher endeavour to aim at the yet higher self. In the course of this traversing of the road to spiritual salvation, mention is made metaphorically of two drinks in the Holy Khoran. The drink of Camphor or "Kafoor", the drink of Ginger or "Zangibil." The first drink, as indicated by the properties of camphor itself, has the effect of thoroughly destroying their rotting faculties and boisterous passions with a view to secure calmness necessary for healthy growth. At this stage it is that the other drink which enlivens all the healthy faculties, as its very properties indicate, that endeavours to achieve high successes otherwise unattainable by the repentant soul. Thus this soul that has attained this rest and this felicity, can be likened to a musical instrument for purposes of illustration. In a harmonium, for instance, the various notes though placed within the same instrument, sound different and discordant notes. If they are touched irregularly, carelessly, and ignorantly, they produce discordant notes only capable of jarring a ear trained for music. Now supposing the various notes in a harmonium occupy the places of various passions and emotions of which man in the primitive stage is but unorganisedly possessed, if they are given vent to, the resultant of such ventilation would only be called bestial life. But if the various notes of a harmonium are dexterously played by a thorough musician, the resultant will be divine music, even as this is the life of man in whom the various faculties and emotions when dexterously played and developed, the resultant music of his experience comes to be called the spiritual life. It cannot now be said that any one note in the musical instrument is bad or good; even so can it not be said that this particular emotion or that particular quality in man is good or bad. It is such classification of moral qualities that has led to the misconception of ethical idea. The fact is that those passions and emotions are neither good nor bad but it is their use that make them such. In the Islamic conception of moral life, therefore, no passion or no faculty in man can be destroyed or thoroughly rooted out of his nature. But all of them are to be so subordinated and so balanced as to a harmonious and felicitous life. In such harmonising it is knowledge that leads one to the goal of subordination to the divine will. Such subordination leads to so complete an effacement of this

self that it has led to such a resignation that you say, so long as it is from God, I have to submit. The same thing has been reiterated in a different form. When people came to Muhammad and asked him to call himself a Jew or a Christian, he is asked to say "I follow the religion of Abraham, the Haneef." Who is called Haneef? One, who has absolutely cut himself from all relations and submitted himself absolutely to One, is called a Haneef. To the Jews and the Christians it is told that Abraham himself, who is their common patriarch, has been great in the eyes of God not because he had called himself by one name or the other but because he had cut himself away from all varieties and kinds of relationship and had made his religion one of absolute submission to the divine will. This submission is the essence of Muhammad's faith—in fact, the essence of true religion itself. So Muhammad was a Haneef and it is his religion. Under his guidance has a Moslem learnt to subordinate himself so thoroughly to God that he has effaced himself in Him. Under his guidance again a Moslem is asked to accept this truth wherever it is preached whether by Moses or Noah, whether by Krishna or Buddha, whether in the east or west, whether in the north nor south.

Unfortunately the word Moslem has in this age degenerated. By a Moslem you understand one who performs ablution, wears a beard, and carries "Punjas" in the month of Muharram. Islam has no tolerance for such people. Very often the Israelites have been condemned in the Holy Khoran with the behest, "Thou shalt not worship a calf". They say the God of Israel is a jealous God and hence he forbade the worship of the golden calf. In these days Moslems having degenerated represent in their carrying of the "Punjas" the same spirit as represented by the Israelites when they carried the Golden Image. Shiah friends say they carry it as a mark. Such an apology is always tended by all lovers of idol worship. Khoran asks me to rise above all forms of nature worship, man worship, and idol worship. God is above being symbolised. The Holy Khoran says "Nothing is like unto him." The very purpose of religion is to attain to a knowledge of the divine who cannot be qualified by any conditions of time, space or form. Such he being in essence, to symbolise him by some mark chosen out of his creations, is to subordinate human faculties to a slavery which must perpetually continue to keep in him a low, dormant, and undeveloped mentality. It might lead to superstitions and to a deceased mind the very deliverance from which, is to be the purpose of religion. When he is incomparable, to suggest a symbol is absurd. The object of worship is not to render tithes or taxation but self-edification.

In the previous part of my lecture I have dealt with all the various aspects of subordination and self-annihilation, and said that subordination is our goal. But the question might be asked whether it is mere submission amounting to mere self-effacement or self-annihilation: nay, here and there in the course of my discourse the positive aspect of this edification has also been suggested in the manipulation and subordination of various notes of the musical instrument to eke out celestial music, in the designation of man as the vicegerent of God and as his shadow upon earth, and in the goal of man as self-effacement in God, is contained the answer to this side of the question. Submit we should, but why? "To gain the colour of Allah. For what is there better than Allah in giving you colour?" So says the Holy Khoran. Believing as we do that man is the shadow or the vicegerent of God upon earth, we develop the high potentialities placed in us by the guiding star of our conception, perception and realisation of God. Faculties are so plentifully planted in us that our conception and realization of God as our ideal, serves to bring out all these faculties in a perfectly developed form. By destroying ourselves in Him we live again. This potent factor namely the very realization of God and thus our own self-realisation attained through self-subordination, that has been held out in the Khoran when it says "Gain the colour of Allah for what can be better than Allah in giving you colour." The term 'colour' may even secondarily be construed as baptism, a word of which many of you must be aware. Whatever literally the word baptism may convey, it stands in religious experience for purification and edification. Symbolically John the Baptist said that he baptised his disciples with water, indicating thereby, that the sins of man would be cleansed. Jesus said that he would baptise with fire and Holy Ghost, thus indicating the same idea in a more thorough spirit even as dross is being burnt by fire. Here the Khoran says, above all such baptism, you shall receive the baptism of Allah himself, as who can be better than Allah in baptising?—thus indicating that in his love and in resignation to his will lies the life eternal.

(To be continued.)

IN QUEST OF HIM.

(From the Bengali of a Song.)

In vain is my birth, in vain is my life, if
I cannot see the Life of my life.
I search for him everywhere, but nowhere do I find Him,
Where has He hidden Himself away?
O bird, sitting happily on the branch of a tree, art
Thou calling on the Lord of all worlds?
In what tongue dost thou call? Tell me, that I too may
Call and perchance obtain him.
O bee, art thou humming the glory of the glorious one?
Teach me, who am devoid of all merit, that I too
May sing His glory.
O flower, why art thou smiling? Hast thou
• Obtained that all-merciful one?
I bow before thee and implore thee, tell me by
What merit hast thou pleased Him!
O Meru and immovable Vindhya, loftiest of mountains,
What do you behold as you lift your towering peaks?
Have you fulfilled the aim of existence and
Seen the all pervading Lord of the Universe?
O beautiful blue sky, is it thou who art hiding the
Life of my life behind thy soft azure veil?
Draw back that veil for one blessed moment,
That I may behold Him and soothe the mad
Yearning of my mind and heart.

The Message of the East.

REVIEWS.

Dozen Weapons by K. S. Seshagiri Iyer.—The book contains twelve essays on the different qualities of mind such as Kshama, Ahimsa, Dhairya, Satya, etc., which are compared to weapons for winning victory in the battle of spiritual life. The author appeals to the patriotic feelings of his countrymen for the regeneration of the Motherland by speaking of selfishness, inertia, prejudices and dissensions and reminds them the glory of ancient India. In course of reading the book, one frequently comes across the names of heroes, sages and Bhaktas who have shed imperishable lustre in the past history of India. The book has been written on Vedantic principles and ends with the famous 'Song of the Sannyasin' by Swami Vivekananda.

Sanmarga Dipika by S. K. Rangasami Dikshitar.—We have received a copy of the above booklet, containing Gītartha-Samgraha of Jamuna Muni, Gadyatroya of Sri Ramanuja, and Vairagya Pauchakam.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We had published an advertisement in the January and July issues this year stating that the Mysore Government Security Life and Marriage Assurance Co. Ltd., Mysore, intended to establish certain charities under the guidance of Sri Ramakrishna Mission. We are asked to announce on reliable authority for the information of our numerous readers that there is no connection whatsoever between the Mission and the company, although the latter still proposes to carry on its charities in the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

The Durga Puja in Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

The Durga Pujas were performed and celebrated in the premises of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, on the 8th, 9th and 10th of October with elaborate rites and ceremonies. His Holiness Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj had timely arrived with His Holiness Swami Shivanandaji to grace the occasion with their presence. The image of the goddess was brought all the way from Calcutta to Madras by Sriji Ram Lal Chattopadhyaya, (nephew of Sri Ramakrishna) who had been for a long time in charge of the worship of Mother Kali in the temple of Dakshineswar. The spacious hall of the Math where the image of the Mother was placed

for pujas was tastefully decorated and brilliantly lighted. People came from different parts of the city to see the Puja of the ten-armed goddess, which was quite novel to them and could be seen sitting for long hours. The Brahman boys of the Ramakrishna Student's Home here chanted the sonorous Vedic hymns during the three days of the Puja before the goddess and produced a thrill of emotion in the heart of the devotees. On the 9th, the most important day of the Pujas, Tamil and Marhatta Bhajan parties sang devotional songs and were highly appreciated by the local people. The Bhaktas and admirers of the Mission were all invited to see the Pujas and on the Mahashtami day about 400 bhaktas took prasadam with great joy. His Holiness Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj attended every day the Aratrikam. The presence of His Holiness and the singing of the devotional songs by Swami Baradanandaji in his melodious voice and Srijut Ram Lal Chattopadhyay (who sang some of the songs sung by Sri Ramakrishna on these occasions) brought about an atmosphere of divine ecstasy and made many a devotee feel the presence of the Divine Spirit in the earthen image!

On the 11th, the day of Bejaya, the image of the Divine Mother was carried in a procession with the music of band around the temple of Kapaliswar. As the procession was nearing the sea-shore, it swelled in strength and about five hundred people gathered on the beach to catch the last glimpse of the Mother, whose earthen image would be drowned in the bottomless sea within a few minutes!

The Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Math all returned to the Math with dejected hearts, where a void was temporarily created by the desertion of the Mother. In the evening *shanti-jal* was sprinkled over the heads of the devotees who had gathered in the hall and then followed Pronams and exchange of loving embraces, for on this day even the enemies clasp their hands in love, not to speak of friends. Loving greetings of Bejaya to all our readers!

A Correspondent writes from Singapore, dated 27th September 1921 :—

Saturday, the day on which Swami Abhedananda, of the Ramakrishna Mission preaching in America, set foot in Singapore, was a red letter day for the Hindus of this Colony. From very early in the morning, representatives of the various local Hindu communities, deputations from Kuala Lumpur and Seremban, waited at the wharf, anxious to catch the first glimpse of him, but it proved to be a long wait, as the Tanda, on which he was travelling from Hongkong on his way home from America, came alongside about 8 p. m. after quarantine examination. On landing the Swami was garlanded by the respective deputations, after which he motored to No. 213, Orchard Road, where he is residing.

Unprecedented in the history of the Hindus of Singapore were the scenes witnessed in the evening in connection with the reception accorded to him. Thousands joined in the procession, in which he was taken to the Subramanian Temple, Tank-road, where an address of welcome was read to him. Hindus of all classes, the wealthy by the side of the poor, walked behind the decorated car, in which drove the Swami, accompanied by his junior, the Swami Videhananda, of Kuala Lumpur, preceded by torch bearers, temple musicians, silk umbrellas, and all the other paraphernalia usually attendant on Hindu religious processions.

Meanwhile the temple grounds became a mass of compact humanity, and when the procession arrived, there was an impasse through the crowds from outside trying to gain admission. With some difficulty the Swami was taken to a raised dais, but the proceedings could not be begun for some time owing to the crowds incessantly shouting for joy "Swami Abhedananda ki-Jai."

After the Swami was garlanded by the temple authorities, Rai Sabib Ishwar Das, who was in the chair, introduced the Swami in a few words. This was followed by the reading of a Sanskrit poem, specially composed in Swami's honour by Mr. Chukrabarty Iyer. A free rendering of it reads as follows :—"Sriman Swami Abhedananda shines forth triumphant as the foremost among the interpreters of Brahman, who by his long residence in America has hallowed that great continent by his personality. The Swami shines triumphant as one whose message of Vedanta, wisdom, and devotion leads to the termination of worldly existence, the destruction of ignorance and the acquisition of dispassion. Welcome to Yogi Abhedananda, who is nourished by the qualities of peace and dispassion, who is distinguished by righteous conduct, and who is the embodiment of divine wisdom! The great Aryan truths proclaimed in the Upanishads, set out by Vyasa and Shankara, illumined by the commentaries of Ramanuja and Madhwa and preached with spirited eloquence by the Swami Vivekananda, have been spread broadcast in the world by your holiness. As a result of your teachings of the Arya doctrine, other faiths have been dried up and devitalised. It is the rare and unique good fortune of us, residents of Malaya, to have had the privilege of seeing, touching, and adoring the Swami Abhedananda, co-disciple with the Swami Vivekananda of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who has carried his message across many an ocean. We offer you our salutations and the heartiest good wishes!"

An illuminated address printed on silk and executed artistically, welcoming the Swami to Singapore was read by Mr. Kuppasami Iyer. It was enclosed in a beautiful and massive silver casket and presented to the Swami, who rose to reply amidst deafening applause.

In thanking them for the honour done to him that evening, the Swami said he was given to understand that the reception accorded to him was a landmark in the history of the local Hindus. He took that honour not upon himself but in the name of the religion to which they were all proud to belong. He recalled that when he went home about 15 years ago, similar receptions were accorded him right up from Colombo to Calcutta. In Madras triumphal arches were built him and his carriage was unhorsed, and thousands of students dragged it for miles. That showed that spirituality with the Hindus was much more to them than to any other people in the world. They lived religion, they spoke religion, they were religion, they walked religion, and moved in religion.

After referring to his work in Europe and America, he said that the West wanted him very much, and that he was under a promise to return to the American continent. There was a great need for Hindu teachers in the West, where it has been established that the Vedanta doctrine alone satisfied the highest demands of logic and science. He referred in point to the Hindu law of Karma, which explained that one's own thoughts and actions placed him in a position of misery or otherwise. It also held out the chance of retrieval in a future life. Wasn't it a grander ideal for humanity than that of an eternal hell-fire? This was only one of the eternal truths discovered by the great seers of truth in the very morn of the world.

He concluded by saying that more missionaries were wanted to make known to the world those eternal truths, and he urged his audience to study their own religion more intuitively and impart their knowledge to others, who came within their daily sphere of life.

Before the Swami left the temple, several prostrated themselves before him and kissed his feet.

Last night the Swami delivered a lecture on Progressive Hinduism at the Victoria Theatre.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda.

His Sadhana Of Vatsalyabhava.

A little after the passing away of the pious Rani Rasamani towards the end of 1267 B.S. (1860 A.D.), came to Dakshineswar the Bhairavi Brahmani, Yogeswari. Henceforth till 1269 B. S. the Master was fully engaged in the practice of his Tantra Sadhanas; and Mathuranath was very fortunate indeed to get the opportunity of serving him during that time. Mathuranath who by this time had been fully convinced, after subjecting the Master's character to many a crucial test, of his unparalleled God-devotion, self-control and fiery renunciation, was now doubly assured, as he daily watched the various supernatural manifestations in the Master during the days of his Tantra Sadhana that it was his own *Istadevi* who was most graciously accepting his devoted services in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, and was protecting him in every way, being his constant companion, and maintaining his worldly powers and prosperities. He now found that whatever he undertook was crowned with success; and in his heart of hearts, he felt himself, due to the grace of the Master, ever protected and supported by a power divine. It is no wonder then that he did not

hesitate to go into huge expenditures to procure any rare thing for the Master's Sadhana, or for the worship of any god or performance of any pious deed according to the wish of the Master.

More the Master's spiritual powers manifested through the aid of the Tantrik Sadhanas, the more grew the enthusiasm, courage and strength of Mathur in serving him. The present feeling of Mathur was exactly like that of the devotee who has gained an unwonted power and zeal through the consciousness of having been blessed with God's grace and protection. But the Rajasic nature of Mathur found its satisfaction in the devoted service of the Master and the performance of some pious deeds only, and never attempted to soar into higher regions of spirituality. Whatever that may be, it was his firmest conviction that Sri Ramakrishna was the hope, strength and courage of his life, that he was his only refuge of here and hereafter, and whatever worldly prosperity or fame he had attained, was all due to the Master alone and none else.

Mathur found now in the Master that anchor which holds, and it was fully borne out by his own actions in subsequent life. We are told by the author of the "Life of Rani Rasamani" that in 1270 B. S. Mathurnath celebrated the *Annameru* festival at Dakshineswar—a function which meant an expenditure of immense money. We have it from Hriday that on that occasion, Mathur gave away in alms to the Brahmana Pandits, not only a considerable amount of gold and silver, but also a thousand maunds of rice and an equal quantity of sesamum grains; and the festivity continued for some days in the temple garden. Many renowned songsters and songstresses were engaged for the entertainment of the gathering. We are further told that finding the Master continually falling into *Samadhi* on hearing their devotional songs, Mathur judged the respective merits of their music by the Master's satisfaction and rewarded the singers accordingly with the gifts of costly shawls, silk clothes and considerable amounts of money.

It was shortly before the celebration of the *Annameru* festival, that Sri Ramakrishna paid his first visit to Padmalochan, the famous pandit of the court of the Burdwan Raj. He studied Vedanta for several years at Benares and when he returned home with the well-earned renown of a proficient Vedantic scholar, he was accorded the honourable position of the Court Pandit in the Burdwan Court. But scholarship alone was not the main inspirer of his fame; in him was manifest the rare combination of scholarship and God-devotion; and his many graces of head and

heart, his pure orthodox mode of life, strong faith in God, penance, liberal views and his attitude of non-attachment towards worldly affairs, naturally drew the respectful homage of the public. An anecdote beautifully characteristic of the Pandit may be noted here. It is said that the Pandits of the Burdwan Court were one day divided on the question of the probable superiority of Siva or Vishnu, till the arguments raged high and there became distinctly two parties of Vaishnava and Shaiva, each contending vehemently for the superiority of its own object of worship. So when Padmalochan, who had been absent during the debate, was sent for, for his learned decision, he came and heard the contending sides, and then he coolly replied: "Neither I nor even my forefathers had ever seen either Siva or Vishnu; how can I then decide on the superiority of either? But if you want to have the Scriptural conclusion on the point, I may tell you that the Shaiva Shastras have given the supreme place to Siva and the Vaishnava scriptures to Vishnu; and indeed, one's own *Istam* is certainly the supreme to himself!" This story of course, we heard from the lips of the Master himself.

The fame of the Pandit attracted the notice of the Master, and he became very eager to see him. Just then the word was brought to him that Padmalochan, now well advanced in age, had come from Burdwan to Ariadah, a neighbouring suburb to Dakshineswar for a change and was now feeling much better for having come there through the pure air of the Ganges. Hriday was sent to verify the report. Hriday met the Pandit and when the latter was told about the Master's intention to see him, he said that he would be only too glad to meet Sri Ramakrishna. So a day was fixed, and the visit was paid by the Master, accompanied by Hriday.

We have been assured by Hriday that at the very first visit both parties felt attracted towards each other. The Master indeed found the Pandit just the man reported,—a great scholar, sincere, generous and a Sadhaka; and the Pandit in his turn at once conceived him to be a *Mahapurusha*—a highly advanced spiritual man. We are told that the sweet devotional songs from the hallowed lips of the Master drew ecstatic tears from the eyes of the Pandit and that his repeated Bhava *Samadhi* and the concomitant spiritual expressions on his body proved a regular puzzle even to the acute intellect of the Pandit, and appeared rather too deep even for his deep scholarship.

This visit however was followed by several others, and with each visit, the Pandit's high regard for Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual

greatness increased, till a certain incident at once convinced him of the Divinity of the Master.

Though a Vedantin, Padmalochan was a Tantrik in practical religion, and his life-long Sadhana appears to have brought him certain occult powers, one of which was his invincibility in scholarly debates. He would always have a pitcherful of water and a towel by him and whenever he was put any question, he would pace a few steps up and down with those paraphernalia in hand, and then having washed his face with the water, he would take his seat and enter into the discussion. It is said that the process would at once rouse his scriptural knowledge, furnish him with ready wit and subtle arguments and make him absolutely unvanquishable. But this secret none was ever allowed to be acquainted with, not even his wife; only himself, and the gracious Goddess, the giver of the power, were alone cognisant of the mystery.

We may only imagine the surprise of the Pandit, when, during a visit of Sri Ramakrishna to him, he found the inevitable pitcher and towel missing from his side, as he went to strengthen himself with the needed occult power, in order that he might be enabled to make a proper response to a rather complex question that had been raised. With great anxiety and perturbation, he began to search for them and lo! it was Sri Ramakrishna himself who had intentionally concealed them! The Pandit was plunged in boundless wonder to learn that his mystery was no mystery to the Master, who to be the owner of this knowledge, must be at one with his *Ishtadevi*. This was a revelation to him about the Master's Divinity and he at once began to pray to him with litanies, and tears of devotion began to roll down his cheeks. Thenceforward, we are told, he looked upon the Master as the Divine Incarnation and as such, offered him his heartfelt devotion. Said the Master, "Though so great a scholar, he was extremely devoted to me; and he told me that on coming round, he would call a meeting of all the great scholars and declare my Divinity and challenge their rival opinion."

On the occasion of the Annameru festival, we have been told by the Master, Mathur was very eager to have the Pandit accept his invitation to the ceremony, and accordingly he sent it to him through Hriday. Though there was the attraction of large rewards and valuable gifts, the noble Pandit would have, in the ordinary course, refused to accept anything from the hands of a Sudra; but in the present case, he declared he could go anywhere in the company of Sri Ramakrishna. He was however prevented from sacrificing his usual principle by his illness which increased, and with heavy heart

he very soon took leave of the Master, and went to Benares where he passed away shortly after.

To resume our narration, after finishing his Tantra Sadhanas, the Master devoted himself to those, enjoined by the Vaishnava scriptures. Several reasons can be adduced to the adoption of this particular course of procedure. Firstly, the probable influence of the devout Brahmani. She as we have previously recorded, was herself proficient in the Sadhanas in the lines of all the five *bhavas* prescribed by the Vaishnava scriptures; and used to pass her time in any one of those spiritual moods. An indication of it has already been given in our narration of her behaviour towards Sri Ramakrishna and how she used to be filled with the feelings of Yashoda, the mother of Krishna, and fed the Master with sweets and butter even as Yashoda did her Divine child, Gopala. Secondly, the Master's mind had a natural bent towards these Vaishnava *bhavas*, being as he was born of a Vaishnava family, and was certainly saturated from the very childhood with all the tendencies of Vaishnava religion, so predominantly prevalent in Kamarpukur and its vicinity. And the third reason, the most important of all, was his own nature in which there was a unique synthesis of both the masculine and the feminine temperaments. With the assertion of the one, sometimes he appeared before us as the sternest type of manhood—a lion in courage and prowess, unflinching in devotion to truth, adamant in resolve and ever ready to probe deep into the very root of things. Then again when asserted the feminine in him, he appeared as the very embodiment of softness and gentility, and with the characteristic trait of the womankind he used to feel strong likes and dislikes for things. And he could bear all sufferings with a cheerful face, when they were associated with some spiritual ideas without which he never could do anything.

BY THE WAY.

Marvellous have been the achievements of man in the physical world but his achievements in the realm of spirit have been more marvellous and glorious. The discoveries of man in the spiritual world have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt the existence of a world which is *terra incognita* to the vast majority, but nevertheless which is real, nay more real than the external world. Since man began to reason and solve the ultimate problems of human life, he got glimpses of supersensuous reality and the truth dawned upon him that this visible and perishable world is not all that human mind is capable of knowing, but there are powers latent in it, which if properly developed, can give him knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven and everlasting Life. It has been a problem for thinkers and philosophers in all countries to prove the validity of the search for the spiritual world and they have arrived at quite different conclusions. Some have maintained that the knowledge of the supersensuous reality is not attainable by human mind, others say that they cannot predicate either existence or non-existence of such a supersensuous reality, while others affirm with greater strength and confidence that man can attain the knowledge of the spiritual and the supersensuous world.

* * *

Religion puts forward the claim that man can attain the knowledge of the supersensuous reality, nay all human knowledge finds consummation in that higher knowledge! Since the Renaissance in the fifteenth century in Europe, philosophy has parted company with religion and has given its own solution of the ultimate problems of human life. All the religions of the world enjoin upon their followers to believe in the higher destiny of man and insist on not centering the goal of all human activity in the material world. Positivist thinkers have doubted the utility of striving for a thing which is not perceptible to the senses, but history records the lives of hundreds of men and women who have sacrificed the pleasures of flesh for the higher life of the spirit. And the truth cannot be denied that they have done the greatest good to humanity, if by good is meant permanent and abiding peace and happiness of mankind. Humanity would have been poorer to-day but for the lives and teachings of these men. No unbiassed historian can pass over in utter disregard the lives of hundreds of saints and mystics, whose lives have been potent factors in moulding the course of history.

* * *

The idealism of man has found its unfettered scope in the domain of religion and different religions of the world have been the fountainheads from which men and women of purest character have drawn their inspiration. No serious thinker can impugn the benefit which the saints and sages in different ages have done to mankind and the message of hope and joy of a Buddha and a Christ has saved countless men and women from sorrow and despair to whom the utilitarian philosophy would be giving stone to one, crying for bread.

Image-worship has been prevalent amongst men of all the religions in some form or other; for, so long as man does not transcend his finite and conditioned nature, he cannot realise the Deity in His absolute and unconditioned aspect and the majority of men are far from attaining that exalted state. This fact accounts for the inevitable tendency of human mind to clutch to image-worship in some form or other throughout the ages. Sometimes reformers arise who condemn image-worship in scathing terms but hardly a generation passes when the followers of these reformers adopt image-worship in another form.

* * *

Hinduism gives the greatest freedom to every individual to choose his own image for worship; for the Rishis or seers who realised the Supreme Being like an Amalaki fruit in one's hand and have handed down their spiritual experiences as legacy of mankind, found out the fundamental truth of human nature that individuals differ in their temperament and capacities. Hence we find in the fold of Hinduism worshippers whose ideas and deeds may appear quite conflicting to men belonging to other religions. This freedom to choose one's own ideal of worship, which is the birthright of every Hindu has produced its wholesome effect in helping the spiritual progress of everyone without thrusting upon him an ideal which may not be quite akin to his nature.

Individualism of this type in the spiritual world may appear as preposterous to those to whom religion means assent to certain dogmas binding on all the members of the particular religion. But, if they Hindus have been thoroughly democratic in any sphere of life, it is in the sphere of spiritual life. Hinduism makes room for all sorts of views of Godhead from the purest monism down to polytheism.

* * *

The Hindu is an image-worshipper but he is not an idolator, as Christian missionaries have understood him. Perhaps no other religion has suffered more at the hands of foreign interpreters as

Hinduism. The Christian, and especially the Protestant Christian born and brought up in an atmosphere of church doctrines and articles of faith, with the firm conviction that Christ is the only Saviour of the world and that God cannot be worshipped in any finite object is apt to shudder in horror to see the image of Hindu gods and goddesses and hastily he rushes to the conclusion that the Hindus are an idolatrous people. The Moslem shudders equally to think that Christ is the only Saviour of humanity and all men must look upto Christ for their redemption. The Hindu affirms that he is not worshipping an image of earth or stone but the Omnipotent and Infinite Lord in and through it. Every time he worships an image, he apologises to the Lord for worshipping Him in a finite object on account of his inability to conceive Him in His absolute and infinite aspect.

Ratiocinations and discussions are futile if they do not help a man to realise the truth and can satisfy only those who are not sincere in their search of truth. However a man try to think of God he cannot think of Him except through some image, for it is too true that it is no more possible for a man to think of a thing without some material image than it would be possible for him to live without breathing. The rationalist may condemn image worship but he himself, with the limitations of human nature, cannot go beyond it and talks like an irresponsible man.

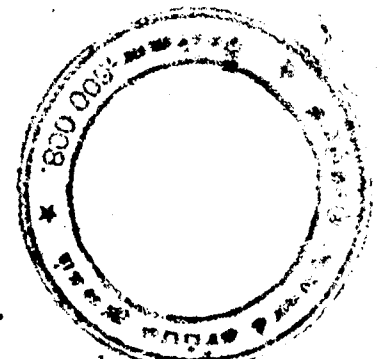
The Hindus discovered these theological truths long before Jesus preached his sermon on the Mount and have paved the path of spiritual progress smooth for all. The God-man who has realised the Supreme Being and sees the presence of the Deity in all, does not denounce image-worship for he knows fully well that it is indispensable for the beginner and he himself has passed through it. To quote the words of the Swami Vivekananda, "If one were to take a hundred photographs of the sun from hundred positions, each of them would be a correct photograph of the sun." Similar is the case with our conceptions of the Deity. Two classes of men do not require image-worship; the God-man, who has transcended the limitations of human nature and the human-brute who does not care for religion; the rest are bound to have recourse to some image if they want to worship God.

Protestantism which grew in revolt against Roman Catholicism has dispensed with image-worship and it is for the impartial student to judge whether the result has been beneficial from the spiritual point of view. The history of Protestant Europe is quite barren of a St. Theresa or a St. Francis of Assisi. The piety, devotion and self-abnegation of the Saints who were brought up in Catholic homes are not to be met with now-a-days in Christendom and yet the reformers denounce image-worship as horrible idolatry. Image-worship has helped the growth of spiritual life of the beginner and as such, is indispensable.

WISDOM

BY

Meredith Starr.



Virginal above the crescent moon she stands,
The Lady of those fair Elysian lands
That lie beyond the margent of the world.
The scroll of Wisdom in her hand unfurled
She offers all who win to her abode :
On all who come is this white boon bestowed,
(For Wisdom hides no secrets from the wise
But shines transparent to all seeing eyes).

She is a spirit garmented in light,
And fair beyond all dreams of man's delight,
Transcending in her loveliness sublime
All utmost marvels wrought in Space and Time.
She stands above the moon, whose changing life
Mirrors all transient pleasures, all vain strife,
The symbol of desire that turns to woe,—
An unsubstantial ocean's ebb and flow.

She is an Empress in her own pure right ;
Her lands shine lustrous in the Eternal Light,
And only they who dwell within them know
The rapturous springs and streams that there do flow:
These are the waters of Eternal Truth
Which whoso drinks, attains Immortal Youth.

All they who come to read the Virgin's Scroll
Must travel through the dark night of the soul ;
In sacrifice their heart's-blood must be poured,
And all their speech be burnt up in One Word.
Much dolour and much toil befall the saint,
Yet he must on, and falter not, nor faint.
Great agony of body, soul, and mind,
Besets the pilgrim who fares forth to find

Those lovely lands which lie beyond the Veil,
Great hosts of demons such an one assail ;
Insidious serpents nestle to his heart
And seek to lure him from the Quest apart.
All he holds dear is cast upon the pyre,
Possessions, fame, whatever he desire.
Friendless, alone, he journeys on that Way
Which leads beyond the common light of day,
Through awful darkness and most gaunt despair,
Until he reach the shrine of the All-Fair.

Yet all his sorrows are soon washed away
Once he attains the Light beyond the day,
For where it shineth, healing springs abound
And marvellous lore and secret herbs are found ;
And every letter of that mystic Scroll
Is henceforth burnt and branded in his soul.
And henceforth he may have for company
That Brotherhood whose sweet Society
Inhabits the fair realm which owns the sway
Of Her who stands above the lunar ray.

The Wheel of Birth and Death for him is still,
For he hath left the sphere of good and ill ;
Pleasure and pain, all opposites, for him
Are phantom figures on life's outer rim ;—
They touch him not, for he abides above
The sea of change, in the deep heart of Love.
Timeless, immortal, he has found release
In the Eternal—that Transcendent Peace.

A PROPHET AND HIS PROPHECY.

BY

Eric Hammond.

A medal, wrought skilfully in silver by an eminent French artist, carries two portraits excellent in delineation. On one side are shown the features of "Sri Ramakrishna, February 20, 1833—August 11, 1886." On the other side Swami Vivekananda is pictured, with the dates "January 12, 1862" and "July 4, 1902." Here then, in miniature, appear the graven likenesses of two of India's most remarkable men of modern times. Two persons, yet indeed scarcely more than one personality; since the aspiration sustaining each was merged in two bodies. "My Master", a vivid and vibrant appreciation, written in 1901, was dedicated, by its author, Swami Vivekananda, in these memorable words "Salutation to Blessed Ramakrishna". On page 27 of that work Swamiji said, "He remembered his past from his birth and was conscious for what purpose he came into the world, and his every power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose." Later in the book we note this very pregnant and outstanding pronouncement, "If there has ever been a word of truth, a word of spirituality, that I have spoken anywhere in the world, I owe it to my Master; only the mistakes are mine."

In that statement we are supplied with positive proof of the fact that one and the same spirit animated preceptor and pupil.

The Mission and the Message which each of these was embodied in order to deliver, were, with the informing spirit, identical.

When uttering the substance of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, his renowned disciple and exponent, Vivekananda, declared, "This was His gospel. Do not care for doctrines or sects, or churches or temples, they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality; and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, nor names nor sects; but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt, only those that have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light."

nate, he made obeisance, worshipping each because in each he beheld, symbolised, some phase of the Infinite One. In a very practical, yet reverent, way, he gained knowledge of the great creeds of the world; by acquiring and assimilating the good in each; by actively fulfilling the law of each. Placing himself in bondage to each law, he found the freedom of that greater law which is the centre and core of all creeds, whether embroidered by modern theology or revealed in Sanskrit or in Hebrew. He recognised the essential Divinity in the New Testament, in the Talmud, in the Koran. He asserted, "God, His word and His devotees are all one and the same." He spoke frequently and fearlessly of the union between the individualised soul and the Universal Soul. "I look", he would say, "upon all human beings, in fact all creatures, as the incarnation of the Deity. I see God involved into all things; God manifest in everything, in man and nature. In a potter's shop there are vessels of different shapes—pots, pans, dishes, etc., but all are made of one clay. So God is one, and is worshipped in different ages and claims, under different names and aspects."

Concerning his works and ways many high estimates have appeared including Professor Max Muller's, but we turn to Swami Vivekananda for the following luminous utterance, "The time was ripe for one to be who in one body would have the brilliant intellect and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart, one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, the mean, the outcast, for every one in this world, and at the same time would harmonise all conflicting sects. The time was ripe. It was necessary that such a man should be born; and he came. Without any book-learning whatever—he never could write his own name,—the wisest graduates of our universities found in him an intellectual giant, and,—mark the Divine power working behind this man,—the unknown and unthought-of is worshipped literally by thousands to-day and to-morrow will be worshipped by thousands more. For years I lived with this man, but never did I hear him utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all of them; he had found the harmony between them; the good in all." [Written on August 11th at the date of the "passing" of Sri Ramkrishna.]

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

Our readers are aware that Swami Abhedananda landed at Singapore by the end of September. From Singapore he proceeded to Kuala Lumpur and after a brief sojourn in the Federated Malay States, he sailed for Calcutta *via* Rangoon and landed on the soil of his Motherland on the 10th of November. We give here a brief sketch of the career of the great Swami, whose influence in the American continent has been profound and wide-spread for quarter of a century.

Srimat Swami Abhedananda, the great scholar and philosopher is a direct disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It was during the eighties of the last century that the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda, Swami Abhedananda and their four fellow-disciples came in contact with the great Saint, who is being literally worshipped to-day by hundreds in the Christendom. He sat at his holy feet for some years and was initiated into Sannyasa with Swami Vivekananda and others. After the passing of their Guru, these youngmen, most of whom had a promising career before them, renounced the world and formed themselves into a brotherhood of monks at Baranagore, near Calcutta. They practised severe austerities, and began to wander over the land, visiting the holy places of India. For about ten years they were living unknown and uncared for by anybody and it seemed as if the mission of the great Saint would have no place in the historical evolution of the country.

Swami Vivekananda was sent to America in 1893 to represent Indian philosophy at the World's Fair at Chicago, where what was styled a Parliament of Religions was being held. Then, three years later, he passed on to London where he created a sensation by his discourses, and where he was very kindly received by the most highly educated men of the day. And it was to London that in the same year, 1896, he summoned his old co-disciple, Swami Abhedananda; and on the arrival of the latter, he returned to India.

Swami Abhedananda remained in England for a year, after which, at the request of Swami Vivekananda's friends, he passed over to New York, where he made his headquarters, going backwards and forwards to lecture in London and Paris almost every year. During this period, also, he established a Vedanta society in

London. Some idea of his activities may be gleaned when it is mentioned that during this time he crossed the Atlantic no fewer than seventeen times, and travelled throughout France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy and Switzerland, where he indulged in some mountaineering. Likewise in America he was constantly on the move, passing through the country from Alaska to Mexico and from Quebec to Vancouver. There, again, he obtained some mountain-climbing, chiefly, in the Rockies, and on one occasion he traversed in one day 45 miles of the Zoho Valley, along a track so difficult that it usually takes three days to negotiate. On this occasion he had as his companion Professor Herschell C. Parker of Columbia University, who is the only human being so far to climb Mt. McKinley in Alaska.

When in London the Swami met the celebrated Professor Max Muller, and carried on a conversation with him in Sanskrit, though the Professor was not so thoroughly proficient in the language as to be able to dispense with writing as an aid. But this Professor Paul Duessen, professor of Sanskrit at Kiel University, was able to do, being the only European to speak the language fluently—so much so in fact that he was able to lecture in that tongue in Bombay.

In America the Swami met many whose names stood at the fore-front in the world of education, and he numbered amongst his friends Professor William James of Harvard, the great psychologist, Professor Royce, Professor Lanman and Professor Jackson. During this period he on several occasions lectured before American universities, including Columbia, Cornell and the University of California, where it so happened that he was due to deliver his discourse on the evening of the day when President McKinley was shot. The Swami says that he remembers this occasion well because the point arose as to whether, in view of the calamity which had befallen the nation, he should deliver his lecture or not. This it was decided by the head of the University that he should do, on the ground that those attending would not be participating in an amusement, but would be listening to an exposition of the philosophy of life and death.

Again on numerous occasions the Swami lectured in churches, where he often numbered bishops among his audience, including the late well-known Bishop Votter of New York. On these occasions his theme was the Hindu idea of Christ. Once he, by special request, lectured before forty of the chief ministers of the various denominations in New York while later he delivered a discourse at

King's College, London. Further he expounded his doctrines before the Parliament of Religion held at New York and Boston.

In 1906 he returned to India, where once again he travelled extensively, delivering lectures all over the country. In the following year he was again in London, which once more he left for New York, passing on for a year and a half to San Francisco. During this period he several times lectured in Los Angeles. The Swami considers that his sojourn in San Francisco was a most successful one, for there a Hindu temple was founded, making the third of the kind in America. The other two are at Boston and New York. This number, the Swami is of opinion, could be considerably increased if they could get the right stamp of young men to go there as disciples from India.

The main doctrine he preached in the West is that all religions have been harmonised, like so many paths all leading to the same goal. They call this the "Universal Religion," and it contains no special *dogmas*, being the result of the selection of the best points of all religions. They have no quarrel with any sect. Also the idea of harmony is carried still further, for the scheme embraces the ideas of the latest science and the highest philosophy. Thus, then, this Vedic religion—which is called "Sanatana Dharma," "Spiritual Law"—appeals to reason, being a Rational Religion which shows the relation of soul to God. It teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you. In fact the highest teachings of Christ are in perfect harmony with its ideas.

The "Universal Religion" teaches that there is one spirit, one life, one mind, manifesting through various forms. Unity and variety are the plan of Nature. The same one spirit is worshipped under different names, such as "Father in Heaven," "Ahura Mazda," of the Zoroastrian faith, and corresponding to "Brahma" of the Vedas. This Vedic religion teaches that there is only one God. Dualism, qualified non-dualism and monism represent different stages of spiritual evolution of the soul towards the attainment of God-consciousness.

THE CONCEPTION OF TRUE PROGRESS.

By

Brahmachari Visuddhachaitanya.

The new era that has dawned over the world since the conclusion of the Peace undoubtedly heralds a brighter epoch for the future; for the great thinkers of the West have, after all, begun to think seriously over vital problems of life. The terrible and unnecessary war seemed to many an absolutely convincing refutation of the theory of progress in human thought and action. There is an innate prompting in every one at present to ask in a mood of despair, "Has humanity been a whit better for all these centuries of so-called progress and civilisation? Is there really anything in human nature that makes for progress?"

This conception of the idea of progress has dominated the minds of many a modern thinker. In fact, we find them holding three different schools of opinion as regards this conception. Firstly, we note a coterie of them who are purely pessimistic in their outlook. These are those who expected a rich harvest of realised ideals and have been at last sorely disappointed by the results, and very sensitive as they are, they have lost all faith in the efficacy of any higher ideal operating in the everyday-life of nations. Secondly, there are those, who in spite of all that have happened, take a historical outlook of events and believe that from age to age there has been some development or other in the physical and mental outlook of man. These expect the millennium some day or other. They think that the bad elements in society are decreasing day after day and they hope to realise the golden age of peace and goodwill ere long. Thirdly, we find another school of thought to whom the perfection of social institutions conveys nothing more than the reality of a dream. For it any perfect realisation of the ideal of progress has to be worked out through individuals and not through any social groups.

The pessimist who doubts the efficacy of high ideals, does so at present, because of the enormous loss of credit the civilisation of the West has sustained during the past few years. In the Great War just over, progress along scientific lines showed signs of great triumph, but instead of freeing man from his limitations which scientific achievements profess to do, man's animal instincts got power-

fully concentrated, in a deadly conflict of mutual self-destruction. For one to whom altruistic ideals conveyed a deeper meaning beyond the bare spelling of them, the present day happenings make him dumbfounded. Has so many centuries of so-called progress, contributed nothing substantially to make life smooth and pleasant? If man's control over physical nature has not made his life comfortable, which is the goal to which he has to move, to get remedy for the many ills of life? In such a mood, we note, our pessimist friend recognises that it is by an appeal to the humane virtues in man, that the goal towards which he fondly looks up, can be realised.

Our second class of thinkers are more hopeful in their outlook. The war has not made them desperate. On the other hand they find that war is a biological necessity for man to progress. They point out that society is evolving towards a stage of perfection from that period when man hardly put on a dress, went about naked, using flint implements, hunting wild animals and eating their raw flesh. Society has advanced from the stage of savagery when selfishness and animal passions guided the action of men rather than cool and staid judgment. In man's relationship with man, ethical and moral considerations began to work. If at all, at times abnormal conditions as warfare prevailed, it should be taken only as a necessary consequence of evolution when ideals and ideas, once dim, stand out, after the clash and conflict is over, in broader and clearer relief. They noted that our moral consciousness was developing. At one time, to trade in slaves, or to keep them, was never thought of to be something inhuman; but after a time this was recognised as a heinous sin. Liberty for women was never within the purview of our old ethical codes. But now women claim equal rights with men and we have extended our ethical consciousness to recognise this. We have begun to feel that better treatment should be accorded to labourers. Thus they say that newer and newer ideals will be discovered and the Golden Age will be a realised epoch, in the history of the world, sooner or later, as our vision of life becomes broader and more catholic.

The third school does not take into account the society as the unit to progress. At least they say society can give the proper environment only, amidst which individuals have to work out their destinies and realise the ideal of progress in themselves. The savants of this school have modelled their opinion mostly influenced by the currents of Indian philosophical thought. They have no faith in a social millennium, since society is an institution, the basis of whose working ideals are always changing. From the condition of Europe

of the past so many centuries they have seen that their society had no *Ultimate Ideal* to look up to. If we notice at all any ethical standards and codes of morality, they are but barely accepted precepts of social etiquette and these are nothing but the conventions of society which by general acceptance got the dignity of social laws. That European society had no ultimate ideal can be easily known by turning over the pages of European history. In the Feudal age we find great sanctity attached to the ideas of honour, chivalry and just warfare. If we question why these ideals were respected, we cannot get a definite answer. In the Renaissance period, the ideal of Beauty was much respected. In all the different departments of life the attempt of man was to realise the fulfilment of Beauty. In the Reformation period we find a religious revival and an attempt to build social institutions on a theocratic basis. The Presbyterians, Puritans, Quakers were trying to realise the high code of life preached in the Bible. The voyage of the Mayflower and establishment of a Puritan colony in America were but the attempts of building up of a new society on the new ideals of life. Here we find religion acting as a powerful lever to raise up the moral status of man. Europe could have solved the problem now; but the religion of the church and strict conformation to it rather than the individual perfection by observing in private life the true tenets of Christianity, was more in vogue. Emphasis was laid on the opinion one held rather than on the life he led. So we find associations of particular belief and the collective attempts of individuals in maintaining them. That social institutions are ephemeral they did not understand, and pinning their faith to such, we find the natural results of schisms and quarrels and society again breaking under new and haphazard influences. Such a thing would not have happened, had there been a permanent ideal to look up to. Then all movements of society will be guided by that Pole Star of real progress. This the West could not grasp. During the period of the Restoration we find moral life at a very low ebb everywhere and the fashion and the manners of the court guided the life of men. Then came the French Revolution with its magic cry for "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." People felt for a time that the promised millenium was realised in England, the Romantic writers and poets, from Wordsworth, Shelly, and Byron down to Edmund Burke, fired the enthusiasm of the public to realise those ideals. But the hopes and aspirations of all were raised to the ground when during the Reign of Terror people found out the illusiveness of these ideals as working factors. Yet these ideals had gone so deep into the consciousness of the public that many still fondled them. The Industrial Revolution totally changed the aspect of society. As a result of centralisation in towns of seething multitudes of humanity, the economic outlook of society changed. On the one hand, we find wealth increasing and concentrating in a few lands while the evils of the factory system brought forth new questions for solution. The pauper problem, the problem of unemployment, all these engaged the attention of men. Together with this, Darwin's theory of evolution was given a practical application in society. 'The theory of survival of the fittest'

engaged the attention of many and the worst evils of industrialism crept in and too late it was discovered that motives other than self-preservation and selfishness are influencing the conduct of man. So we find a reaction towards bare utilitarian ideals of life and the result was the birth of socialism. We find thinkers suggesting to build up society on a communal basis, giving up all private property and the members living on terms of equality. At such a time came the Catastrophe of 1914. The lack of an *Ultimate Ideal* was perceptibly felt now. The greed and rapacity of the nations spent itself during the five years of war and in the convenient expression of Bolshevism we find the exasperated attempts of society to realise another social ideal. This trend of events has seriously engaged the attention of thinkers and they have found out that the recognition of an *Ultimate Ideal* of Life towards which all our actions and movements, individual or collective, should be correlated, is an imperative necessity if the West has to save itself from the mad and unrestrained career of life it was all along having.

The stability which that Ideal ensures for progress can be understood if we turn our eyes to India. Here we find the recognition of the *Ultimate Ideal* from the very dawn of her history. She had realised the true goal of all her strivings. This was attainment of True Knowledge. She found out the eternal religion, Sanatana Dharma. It was for the individual to realise that *Ultimate Ideal*. Realising that the knowledge of the Self should be the end and aim of all, social life in India so adjusted itself as to give the greatest encouragement and proper environment for the soul of man to manifest its greatness. Even though social standards and social conventions varied, as in the West, from age to age, it never went antagonistic to the Sanatana Dharma. On the other hand, these social laws and conventions were as closely approximated to the spiritual standard as possible. We never aimed at perfecting society. "Society is one of the passing stages through which we are going towards a higher evolution and any law that is derived from society cannot cover the whole ground of man's nature." Hence in India society was so organised that it would be as if a fence round the tender soul that is discovering its true nature. The West would get a satisfactory solution to their problems of social reconstruction if only this *Ultimate Ideal* of life is fully recognised, their society would then automatically find its own way of expression which would be in harmony with its Eternal Ideal. The thinkers of the West will then realise that a social millennium is only a dream. They will then understand that the Golden Age can only be enjoyed by individuals who would transcend all sense of relativity and lose themselves in unconditioned bliss. This is the attainment of Real Progress and towards such a desired consummation we must pray and wish for devoutly.

ISLAM

BY

Hazrat Malang Ahmed Batcha Sahib, B.A.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 187)

Islam is not merely an abstract metaphysical speculation but a practical code of life. This aspect of this divine system has been most emphatically described in the Holy Khoran almost at every point of its exposition. Belief and good action have always been connected together as inseparable parts of a single whole. In fact the one cannot exist without the other. Action without right understanding and belief becomes a dull meaningless ritual, and a belief without action becomes a mere shadow. The importance of this is borne out by the very description of paradise itself wherein gardens are always defined with the rivers flowing beneath. Belief and action are likened to the trees and the rivers. Now the question is, what is that tree and the river? Belief and action are so intrinsically connected as tree and river are connected with each other for a fruitful garden. Islam teaches that belief and action are inseparable. You have not fully set yourself on the road of salvation if you ignore action. In emphasising the practical aspect of religion the Khoran says "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the way-farer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives and keep up prayer and pay the poor rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil)". Islam, I have said, implies peace through submission—submission to the divine will. But the divine will is to be expounded in the light of good action and such exponents are called prophets.

Here comes the other part of Islam, namely, the prophethood of all great men like Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha and Muhammad (May the peace of Allah be upon them). Apart from being the exponents of divine will, apart from having developed the faculty to commune with the divine soul of the universe, they all have contributed as models for mankind. We Moslems follow the model of

Muhammad, the prophet of Allah and the last exponent of that divine system—Islam, which has been preached to mankind at various times in various strains. But with all, in essence, it has been the same throughout. For historical purposes, however, Muhammad has been the founder of Islam—through Islam—the religion of peace through submission has been called the true religion with God in the Holy Khoran. In this connection I might say, in passing, a few words about my great Lord and Master—Muhammad (May the blessings of Allah be upon him). I use 'Master' in a cautious manner and restricted sense. Because Islam is self-renunciation to divine will, the ultimate goal of all being God, Muhammad has been the ideal exponent of that goal. It is to be borne in mind that Muhammad brought nor claimed ever to have brought a new religion into the world but to the world the only religion that was preached from the beginning of times to the present day is the religion of peace through submission, of which, Muhammad was the latest exponent. His great work was that he brought no new religion but the only religion that was revealed to the world he expounded and developed. And in the course of such development he has served as a model to all Moslems. Such service to humanity must be rendered by men alone. The practical aspect of religion might be summarised as this: Given certain potentialities as man, how should man develop? In order to serve as a model it is one with the same potentialities as man, that can be of use in drawing out the latent faculties amongst mankind. Jesus the prophet who in his potentialities has been adored as divine can serve as no model to mankind. In essence the teaching of Christ almost amounted to submission to the divine will and thus we say he was also a Moslem. This submission he taught must be so vigorously adhered and preached even to the bearing of the Cross. He bore his Cross and likewise did he exhort his disciples to bear the cross. If his exhortation came to me as from a man like unto me, I see in him an exemplar and a model for me to follow. If gifted with the divine faculties he exhorts me to bear the cross likewise I have the least to do with him. As a divine being gifted with the power of rising even after death the bearing of the cross was nothing but a farce played on a scene at Calvary. What is the difference between sleep and death? In sleep there is the hope of our rising again and in death such there is not. Similarly in Christ there was a consciousness even after death he could rise; if with such consciousness one could embrace death a hundred times in life, the moral efficacy of Christ's teachings must certainly be lost. On the same lines now the reference to the people's objection and Muhammad's reply as to why angels should not be sent into them without a perfect human model is to be

understood. Muhammad says on the contrary "I am but a man like unto you." This is a potent force to draw from you potent faculties and a man with such moral precept as inculcated by the prophet carries conviction and infuses strength in to the minds of the devotees. The Khoran therefore aims to remove the hallow of romance and exaggeration and set them out in real perspective.

In serving as a model there are two aspects in the life of Muhammad representing the two aspects of any man or nation's life—suffering and success. In accordance with this, his life has been—divided into two periods—the Meccan and the Medinite period. There was a great divine purpose in having divided his life into two periods. The first period is marked by the life of suffering and patience and in the second period he had conquered his enemies and was the President of a common—wealth and a master of the situation. Every moral character to be worked out requires particular circumstances and conditions to come into predominance. The various moral qualities, meekness, self sacrifice—can come into prominence only under suffering. Jesus, they say, had forgiven the whole world although he was raised on the Cross. But we can pertinently put the question, what else could he have done? Forgiveness is a moral quality which has certainly value when one is in power and above those that have wronged him. Jesus, on the contrary, no doubt under circumstances of suffering has exhibited the excellent qualities of patience, suffering, and meekness. Hence his teaching of turning the other cheek would have been an impossibility but for the life of his suffering and circumstances. In fact the Jewish nation degenerated as it was morally, and to the extreme as had been carried the precept of the retribution of the Mosaic Law and placed as they were under the control of Roman Government, no better teaching than that of Christ would have suited the Israelites of the times. Likewise Muhammad was subjected to a period of suffering when we all look to him as model of patience, meekness, and such other qualities. The other qualities, generosity, mercy, mildness and tolerance could not have gained moral value, unless one was in power—unless one was in a position to have done otherwise. The incident of the conquest of Mecca and thus of the whole of Arabia, is a standing monument of a "Bloodless Revolution" and the forgiveness of the Prophet. One who for over thirteen years with his most devoted followers and his dearest kith and kin had been subjected to the severest of persecution and torture, should certainly have been a dreaded person with ten thousand chosen followers marching with him in the midst of a people who only a short time ago had been his bloodthirsty foes and most cruel

persecutors. With all this, what does he say to the trembling people of Mecca? They ask of him "What shall you do unto us?" He says, "What do you expect of me?" They answer, "We expect what one would expect of his brother's son." "Likewise is given to you forgiveness of all your past," said the glorious one. They were rebels against him. They destroyed his property, persecuted his faithful followers, his friends, his family, subjected them to the most cruel of tortures and punishment aimed at extirpating him and all those that were his. Do you not see in such a proclamation of forgiveness, there is real value rather than a man being tied to the Cross and saying "I have forgiven the world"?

In closing this discourse tonight, I would be called unfaithful if I made no reference finally to my more immediate master—my master to whom I owe allegiance as a pupil to his teacher. This was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a man who rose but only thirty years ago in an unknown village at Qadian in the Punjab. His name Ghulam-i-Ahmed is significant of his worth.

It is a historical fact also borne out by the text of the Holy Khoran that the Holy Prophet has been called both as Muhammad and Ahmad. Even as it has been said already that the two aspects of life namely suffering and success, are common to the experience of man, so also two aspects of his moral faculty are required to enable him to pass through all circumstances untarnished.

Both these names carry the same import but still there is a difference. An observation of nature indicates that both the important luminaries of heavenly bodies give light to the world, namely, the sun and the moon. But still there is a difference, the one being marked with scorching radiance and power, the other with coolness and beauty. Amongst the Moslem theologians, the former has been called 'Jalali' and the latter "Jamali" aspect of light, "Jalali" being interpreted as power and "Jamali" as grace and beauty. In the spiritual enlightenment of the world, similar phenomenon has been given expression to by all the great teachers of the world; but yet either the one or the other was more emphasised in them all. But in the case of Muhammad both these aspects having been equally and prominently emphasised, he has gloriously been held as a model by the Moslem people to whom either as an individual or as a nation, he serves as an ideal both in prosperity and in adversity. Following closely the ebb and flow of Moslem history, one is to-day struck by the strange anomaly that a people who should have been ushered into this world by virtue of that great faith of that great idea which found its vindication through the holy

prophet should now have fallen the lowliest of the low. Whatever Muhammad was, whether a philosopher, moralist, or a ruler, he was preeminently a prophet. The grand idea that took hold of him in an age of darkness and decay went forth as a spark of fire to set fire to the sandy magazine of all Arabia to set it up with spiritual flames rising high into the heaven and spreading broad on the one side to Delhi and on the other to Granada. This spiritual flame followed by worldly glory in its wake dazzled the eye of the nations of the world. Alas! what a contrast to-day! To think of this my heart is rent in twain. But going into this the answer is very easy. All great movements and evolutions in the world are being started by universal ideas conceived within the mind of a genius, which have produced in History great movements like the French Revolution, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and many others in various parts of the world. One such grand truth was the initiating force in the spiritualisation of the world which saw the new birth of Islam in Arabia. This religion, as I said many a time before, has risen above not merely caste and creed distinction but even above "Religious" distinctions; so also it has risen above even natural and geographical limitations. With no boundaries to earmark its spiritualising faculty, with no limitations of caste, creed, colour, country, language, nationality, and even religion (in a narrow sense), what is the factor that with all this has contributed to bring about a brotherhood of an unprecedented type? Emphatically it is his religion, it is his faith. Those great ideas so long as they were kept in the forefront of the Moslem people they carried them far to advancement and progress. But with these ideas having dwindled owing to degeneracy of the people the present condition of slothfulness and stagnation has been the result. The spiritual aspect of the people having died out to a considerable extent, and the reasoning faculty having been abandoned to a deplorable degree, the present degeneracy has been the result.

Gentlemen, a reflection of the system of my faith now profounded by me, you will admit, reveals no spot, no mark of any inherent weakness or defect. In fact by our faith we have not lived. To all diverging factors of reaction and degeneracy we have easily submitted. But with faith we came to this world and with it we shall live and live we must.

Under such conditions of Moslem life, what is the characteristic of reformation that is to be introduced? As I have already said the spiritual degeneracy has led to all other degeneracy amongst us. On mere forms and rituals, on mere authority and traditions handed down from generations, emphasis has been laid and consequently

what is needed is a spiritual revival. That would make the form meaningful without which men must be called living corpses. It is this circumstance, the circumstance of spiritual depression and lack of spiritual force and beauty that one has to look to a light like that of the moon, a light which has been shed by the Holy Prophet through his aspect of Ahmadhood. One great servant of his in this age was Ghulam-i-Ahmad. This Ghulam or servant of that Ahmad borrowing the light even as the moon borrows it from the sun has taught to the world that the elevation of this age and specially of the Moslem people rested upon their spiritual edification and moral force. Teaching as he did this gospel of spiritual beauty, this Gospel of Ahmadhood, he has claimed to have been the image of Ahmad himself and in the spirit and power he spoke even as the Jesus of Nazareth.

Amongst Moslems, amongst Christians, amongst Hindus, the second advent of the Holy One in this age is looked after. Moslems are looking for a Mahdi, Christians for a Christ, and Hindus for a Krishna. If we see in the person of Mirza the fulfilment of the advent of Mahdi and the second advent of Christ, are we mad? Are we advancing untenable theories and doctrines? In his appearance the second advent of Christ has been fulfilled even as the second advent of Elijah has been fulfilled in the appearance of John the Baptist. While to establish the Messiahship of Christ the second advent of Elias implies some one else coming in his spirit and power, our Christian brethren have no argument to deny the same truth of reasoning to another regarding the second advent of Christ himself. Mirza claimed himself to have been the promised Messiah, and the spirit and temperament of the people, among whom he appeared required it. The present degenerate condition of the Moslem people is a repetition of history in which the condition of the Israelites during the time of Christ at once strikes the imagination. Analogies can be multiplied drawn from the Holy Khoran which so dramatically paints the degeneracy of the Jews to reclaim whom a great prophet like Jesus appeared. But Alas! him they forsook, him they reviled, and him they crucified. The Moslems of to-day following the footsteps of the Jews or by following such life as they did, have developed in them the same traits and characteristics that would make the advent of one in the spirit and power of the Messiah, a necessity. The demand arose and the supply was made. This supply came to the Moslems in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Quadian. But as it is wont with a boisterous and unruly world, his was the voice in the wilderness and he was jeered at, laughed at, and called as mad. To a sane world, no doubt, such men are mad; and to this Mirza has been no exception!

Now coming to the close of my discourse I might say that the Mirza claims his Messiahship on the basis of the death of Christ. It has been echoed and reechoed by foes and friends alike that Jesus died on the Cross. Foes have said that on account of his death on the Cross he had been condemned as the accursed and friends have acclaimed that by his death he had redeemed humanity from its lasting sins. But strange to say that a factor so doubtful of which neither the Christian nor the Jew can claim certain knowledge, the death of Christ on the Cross is universally accepted as true though for divergent purposes. To the one, on account of it, Christ has become accursed, and to the other, he has become the Redeemer and the Divine. The assumption of both is baseless and on a matter about which they have no sure knowledge. This I say on the strength of the Holy Khoran and I can challenge any Jew or a Christian to prove from the facts whether the death of Christ on the Cross can be taken as a fact. In reality as the Mirza points out there has been a juggling of facts in narrating the story of the Cross. True that he was arrested, true that he was sentenced, true that he was raised on the Cross; but a complete analysis of facts reveals that death could not necessarily have been the result. Pilate who sat on the judgement-seat found him sinless, washed his hands indicating his irresponsibility for the sentence passed on Christ. The mode of his crucifixion, the gushing out of blood by the touch of a spear, the handing over of the body to a rich disciple of his, his rising from the grave, all indicate that there has been a plan engineered by Pilate himself to let this sinless man the "king of the Jews" to escape from the wrath of his people. If he died and was buried as the Jews say, how could he ever have disappeared the next day? Not on account of his divine faculty for such he had not, accursed as he was according to them. If he rose from the dead, as the Christians say, how could his body have bled when pierced by a spear for no dead man bleeds. Further more, if really after death he rose, why should Jesus have disguised and designed to flee for life as death itself he had conquered, having risen from the dead? The fact, however, is as set out by Mirza on the authority of the Holy Khoran that Pilate himself, convinced as he was of his sinlessness and of his holiness as well, seems to have designed for the enactment of a drama apparently to quell down public indignation which had not only grown up against Jesus but against Pilate as well, for he found him guiltless. Satisfied that the sentence was passed and that Christ was taken along with two other criminals for being crucified, they all returned home to make preparation for their Sabbath. Only three nails seem to have

been driven into his body, two in the two palms, and one in his feet and the bleeding of his body when brought down must necessarily mean that he had swooned but that he was not dead. After his wound was healed and he recovered from his unconscious state, he departed from Jerusalem stealthily only giving his last advice to his disciples that were collected in a garden. Leaving the Town he had to cross a hill and in the dewy morning of a cold country while reaching the summit of a hill he was perceived to have been lost in the clouds. Strangely enough when the Jews discovered Jesus as having disappeared naturally their enquiring minds had to be silenced. The communication of truth would again throw the master into the danger zone, as it would not only set them once again on his track but would bring all the officers of state into serious trouble. From the political authorities of the land down to the humblest disciple in the remotest period of time all persons were interested in presenting a garbled version of his story calculated to save themselves and the master. But some explanation had to be given, an explanation which would save the master, the follower, and the sympathiser. Many have been witnessing his ascent on the hill and many had seen his disappearance at the summit in the dew and very easily the expedient of his ascension into heaven was given credit to. It was concluded that he ascended the heavens where the wrathful Jews could not hope to follow him. By it an impending calamity was not only averted but the halo of romance was given to one whom they so dearly loved.

Such, in brief, is the outline of the study of my master regarding the life of Christ in whose spirit and power he claims to have appeared into this world. Not only has the story of the Cross been disillusionised but the subsequent story of Christ has also been followed by the genius of this personality. He has asserted Jesus to have crossed the boundaries of Palestine and travelling across the east, reached into the heart of Kashmere, where his remains lie buried in peace at Srinagar, the capital of Kashmere. There is an epitaph on it and historical references which show that he gave up his ghost and died a natural death.

The great services of Mirza has been the founding of his movement which may be called the Renaissance of Islam. This apostle of reason and of spiritual force has been the master who had inspired many in this present age and this was the master at whose feet we have sat humbly and imbibed this knowledge and this religion.

(Concluded.)

NOTES AND NEWS.

His Holiness Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj left Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, for Bhuvaneshwar on the 19th November. The Kali Puja was performed here on the 30th October.

Swami Abhedananda left Kuala Lumpur for Rangoon on the 15th of October. The citizens of Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon gave him rousing receptions. The Swami delivered lectures at the Town Hall of the former town and his stay, though brief, has roused the enthusiasm of the Hindus of the Federated Malay States. As a matter of fact, people of all religions and creeds welcomed the Swami as one of their own.

An esteemed correspondent writes from San Francisco, U. S. A. :—

Dear Sir,

Swami Prakashananda spent the month of June at the Shanti Ashrama (in St. Antoine Valley, Calif.) with some twenty students who were privileged to join the Yoga classes held there this year.

The weather was generally favorable for the classes to be held in the open throughout the month.

The large spreading oak tree carved with the symbol of Shiva afforded us a wonderful protection during our meditations.

The day commenced at 6 A. M. with chanting and meditation, readings from "the Crest Jewel of Wisdom" and hymns.

Upanishads at noon. And reading from the Unpublished Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in the evening.

During the meal hours our Swami always instructed us by reading from the Works of Swami Vivekananda, then was allowed a few moments for questions and discussions on various subjects.

The all night Dhooni Service was held on June 15th. The night was beautiful. The Huh Fire on the triangle altar sent sparks heavenwards and we were reminded of what the Sages taught in ancient times, of how the Absolute was symbolized by a Great Fire and we, the tiny sparks thrown out into Maya to wander like lost sheep over the world seeking knowledge of our true natures until at last a little awakening comes, and like the Prodigal Son in the Bible we

arise and go to the Father. Then do we conclusively take up our cross and by hard and repeated stumblings do we undo the Karma of countless lives.

Some were given Sanskrit names, and the Swami invoked the blessings of the Masters upon them. The whole night was made holy by the chanting, prayers and readings from Sanskrit sacred literature and hymns.

Our environment was full of opportunities for spiritual unfoldment.

To one living in India all this might not seem strange, but to us in the West—it is a most rare and wonderful thing and considered a great blessing to be able to get away from the marts of trade and for a while forget the eternal striving for worldly possession and enjoyments and turn our thoughts exclusively to things spiritual with a blessed Acharya to help and guide.

To most of us going yearly to the Ashrama it has been a veritable pilgrimage. Blessed are those of us who have found in our Swami a rather, mother, friend combined, one who with infinite patience and love helps us over all our difficulties and ever encourages us with such words as these:

"You are a child of God, no harm can reach you."

"Child of Immortal Bliss" "Cast off this faint-heartedness, Yield not to impotence, It doth not befit thee" (Gita Chapter 2, Verse 3).

The Public lectures at the Temple have a steady increase in attendance and the lecture hall will barely seat the people, such is the encouraging news we have to send to India. For it must give pleasure to know that your Master speaks here through the Swami Prakashananda and he is heard with great interest and joy.

DURGA DEVI,

(Clara M. Pithi),

SECRETARY.

The Secretary of the Mission has sent us the following for publication. Our readers have heard the harrowing tales of distress in Khulna (Bengal). The Mission is carrying on relief-work there, but the people want further relief in food and clothing.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S FAMINE RELIEF,
KHULNA (BENGAL).

Since June the Mission is informing the public about the relief work which is still going on in the affected area of Shamnagar. The people of that place are greatly emaciated by the stern buffets of starvation and are placed in absolute nakedness. As they have not single pieces of cloth to cover their bodies they will be liable to all sorts of disease that may arise from the exposure to the pinching cold. The Mission has helped these poor distressed men and women by giving both new and old clothes and medicine. At present the Mission is distributing rice and clothes amongst 2749 recipients within 76 villages at the rate of two seers per head per week without any distinction of age and sex. As the area of its work is gradually extending, it hopes that the generous public will also help these poor sufferers by contributing both money and cloth. It is not desirable that our brothers and sisters will die of cold on account of the sheer want of clothes and food while we shall cover ourselves with warm clothes during the coming winter. The public have all along been contributing for these philanthropic works and will do more, the Mission thinks, for these famine-stricken people.

Contributions will be thankfully received in the following addresses.

- (1) Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjea Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
- (2) Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah (Bengal).

Yours faithfully,

1st November, 1921.

SARADANANDA,

Secretary.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda.

During the first four years of his Sadhana life, the Master of his own accord had engaged in the Vaishnava Sadhana of *Shanta* and *Dasya bhava* and sometimes also of the *Sakhya bhava*, in the spirit of Sridam and Sudam and other cowherd friends of Sri Krishna, of Brindavan. We had told our readers in preceding pages how he strove hard to realise the servant-ideal of Mahavira and actually lived and acted like him, and was blessed with the Divine vision of Sitadevi. So he specially devoted himself now to the realisation of the other two principal bhavas namely, the *Vatsalya* and the *Madhura*.

Perhaps it was during this period, that Sri Ramakrishna spent some time in the Janbazar house of Mathur Babu. An incident of the time which we shall relate to our readers, will strikingly bear out our contentions of how the Master could easily remould his whole being in any particular *bhava*, for the time being annihilating, as it were, the other aspects of his nature.

It was the beautiful autumn season of Bengal, when a strangely sweet calmness pervades the whole atmosphere and an almost palpable sense of something divine fills the mind with a keen expectation! Mathuranath was celebrating as usual the autumn festival of the worship of the Divine Mother and had brought the Master a

few days ago from the Dakshineswar temple to his place at Janbazar, which naturally had added infinitely to the usual immensity of the joy of the occasion. For the very presence of the Master, ever absorbed in the supreme bliss of Divine Consciousness, had affected everything around him with a touch of something transcendental. The whole place had assumed an aspect of ethereal beauty; the image of the Mother appeared instinct with life, and a tense atmosphere of the Divine Presence filled the shrine and was aggressively tangible even to the obtusest mind. No effort or expense had been spared to make the occasion an all-round perfection; thus there was an abundance of everything, and the image of the Mother was also sumptuously decorated with ornaments; and if there was anything wanting in the spirit, that was now more than enough compensated for by the blissful and spiritually vitalising presence of the Master; and we may safely conclude that the sense of an indescribable heavenly beauty which pervaded the whole place, must have inspired the heart of Mathur and his wife with an ineffable joy.

The *Saptami* day came; Mother's day-time worship was done, the day slowly passed into night and it was now time for the vesper service of the Divine Mother, during which lights and other articles were to be offered to the Deity. Here, in the inner apartments of Mathur's house, the Master wore a different appearance altogether. He had dressed himself like a woman, and thereby obliterated from his mind all consciousness of his masculinity; every word or gesture expressed the consciousness of his being an eternal handmaid of the Mother, and his whole soul was now lost in a perpetual dedication of his body, mind and self at Her lotus-feet! His face shone with a super-natural lustre; a smile not of this world, flickered around the corners of the mouth, and his whole look and movements expressed only the woman that now took possession of him! The change was so complete and thorough that it was absolutely impossible to recognise him as one belonging to the sterner sex.

The service (*Aratrikam*) was about to begin, but since the Master's bhava did not evince any sign of abatement, Sm. Jagadamba, wife of Mathur Babu, was in a fix as to her duty. She wished very much to have the Master's presence on the occasion at the shrine, but that of course appeared to her improbable under his present almost unconscious state; nor could she leave him in charge of anybody else, lest the music of the *Aratrikam* might draw him away, and any harm might come to the Master's person in this his semiconscious condition. Sorely troubled at the situation, she suddenly hit upon an idea which yielded an easy solution to her

difficulties. She hurriedly got out some of her precious jewelleryes; and while putting them on the person of the Master, she repeatedly whispered into his ears, "Come, father, come, let us go to the *Aratrikam* of the Mother; won't you go there to fan Her?"

Now, it was always true of the Master that whenever his mind used to get lost in the contemplation of any particular aspect of Divinity, however wholly his soul might be absorbed in it, and his mind be perfectly unconscious of everything else, he used to be always susceptible and responsive to the mentioning of the Name of that particular aspect or words relating to that Deity. Hence the words of Jagadamba produced the desired effect on the Master; for he presently came down to a semi-conscious state and gladly followed her to the shrine. The *Aratrikam* immediately began, and the Master stood amongst the assembled women and began to fan the Mother with *chamara*. Just then, from the other side, Mathur Babu chanced to look at the ladies and his eyes fell upon that unknown 'lady,' dazzling in personal beauty and adorned with silk and jewels, standing by the side of his wife. He took her to be one of his wife's friends and kept quiet.

The service being over, the Master returned along with the ladies into the inner apartments and when he came down to his normal consciousness, he divested himself of the female attire, came out to the men's assembly in the outer apartments of the house and engaged himself in religious conversation.

When however, Mathur went inside, he enquired of his wife about the strange lady he had seen beside her at the time of *Aratrikam*. She laughed out at her husband's confusion, and said, "Didn't you indeed recognise him? It was our *Baba*! He was in *bhava* and was fanning the Mother. But it is no wonder that you failed to know him; if he puts on a female dress, he never looks a man!" and then described the whole affair to him. Mathur was plunged in profound wonder at this disclosure and said, "Indeed, it is impossible to catch him even in little things! Don't you see how even with such intimate knowledge of him, I failed to recognise him?"

But this was not a solitary instance of his power of remoulding his personality into the feminine being. Even at Dakshineswar, we have personally seen him manifesting the *Prakritibhava* (i. e., feminine personality), though there it did not last long at a time; for obviously he had by that time transcended all those particularities of *bhavas* and had as well experienced the *Adwaita*—the transcendental unitary consciousness of the self; and if he now

manifested any particular *bhava*, it was only for the good of the devotees that came to him.

Indeed, in order to understand the full significance of the Master's Sadhanas, it is absolutely necessary to appreciate first the unique constitution of his mind, and the tremendous changes that were brought into it by the last eight years of his strenuous Sadhanas. We had it from his own lips, that even till the year 1262 B.S., when he had first visited the Dakshineswar temple, and some time following as well, he sincerely believed in the prospect of his living the life of an honest house-holder, following the footsteps of his fore-fathers; and never for a moment imagined the existence of any superior mentality in him, distinguishing him from the common run of men. But when the actual life began, his extraordinary nature became revealed at every step and he felt a power Divine behind him, unmasking the sordid insignificance of the sense objects in which the ordinary life revelled, and impelling him along a way, contrary to what is trodden by the common people; and he soon accustomed himself to faithfully resign himself to the guidance of that Divine Power, with an easiness which is possible only for a mind, that is at once truthful, self-less, and free from all worldly proclivities.

Illustrations of the above statement abound the Master's life, even from his childhood. We know how he refused to have anything to do with an education which, as he graphically described, could bring only 'rice and plaintain'; and how, though accepting the priest's post in the Kali temple in order to improve the financial condition of his family, he shortly came to look at his duties in a different light and devoted his whole soul to God-realisation. Again, though married yet knowing that complete sense-control was an absolute condition of the realisation of God, he did not know his wedded wife either in word, thought or action. And he once for all eradicated the tendency of storing up things—so common to the prudent man of the world,—even trifles, what to speak of money, having known it to be a great obstruction to the spirit of absolute resignation to God. A reflection on the above facts clearly shows how little indeed was the influence, the seductions of the world had on his mind even from his childhood, and how everything gave way before his strong will and infinite perseverance. Not even his former *Samskaras* and habits could ever thwart him in his realisation of the chosen ideal.

Even as a child, we find him evincing great powers of memory,—never forgetting what he once heard and able to reproduce it verbatim. We have told our readers how he would

reproduce *in toto* before his cowherd friends, all the Ramayana recitation, song or *Jatra*, which he had but attended for once. Thus we find him equipped fully with the qualifications of absolute truthfulness, unfailing memory and strong retentive powers, even before he entered into his Sadhana life; and hence, it is no wonder that he, being master of these mental graces, which themselves required a life-long Sadhna for an ordinary Sadhaka, should make such rapid advance in spiritual life, in such a short period of time. Often we were struck dumb with surprise to learn from him that he went through the most difficult Sadhanas and realised the goal of each within the incredibly short period of only three days; but that was because, we were not then aware of this, superhuman constitution of his mentality.

BY THE WAY.

Never before in the history of modern India has the question of national education been discussed more seriously than at the present moment when new ideals and aspirations are surging in the hearts of the young men of the land for the building up of Greater India. The hearts of the youths are throbbing with new aspirations for re-adjusting the system of education and the social and economic life and they want to see their country running parallel with the most progressive nations of the world. Young India is attracting the attention of the cultured minds of all the advanced nations of the world, nay, compelling their admiration and respect by their achievements. 'To-day India has succeeded in exposing itself to the whirlpool of international currents.' The time has come when we should look back to the past history of the country and look abroad to see how nations are marching, in order that we may chalk out the line of future progress of our country.

The convocation address of Dr. B. N. Seal, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore, sounds the key-note of Indian ideal of national education. He points out in clear and convincing language the true source of national pride and patriotism which should inspire Indians, and it differs fundamentally from that of other nations of the world, whose highest ideal of patriotism cannot go beyond the boundaries of their own territories. His address is simply illuminating and will be read with great interest by all lovers of the country who ponder seriously over the welfare of the country. In these days of patriotic fervour for political emanci-

pation of the country, many are apt to lose sight of the ideal which should impel the youths of the country for higher education. We quote below some passages from the concluding portion of his address.

* * *

"Your country is Bharata, but Bharata is not, has never been, confined within territorial bounds. Brahma is the true country of the spirit : that has been India's claim through the ages ! And Brahmavarta, Aryavarta, Bharatavarsha, Jambudwipa,—in extending circles, the country of the spirit has ever moved forward : it has had territorial embodiments, but no territorial limits. The visible country is but a symbol of the cosmos, the visible history is but a moment in Eternity. You cannot be true to your country if your vision should be so blurred as to barter the cosmic and eternal for a place in or out of the British Empire, or for that matter, for the dominion of the Earth. You belong to a tradition and a race that carried with it the original home, Brahma or Brahmavarta, in its march, its migrations, its settlements. Do not sell that birthright for a mess of pottage. Claim the entire world as your own. Wherever the Atman reveals itself, you have your country and countrymen ; wherever the Atman is dishonoured, you are ousted and dishonoured. Correct therefore your passion for territorial nationality from your country's true standpoint. Political, national, territorial organisations, and delimitations, the historic passion and patriotism, are all very necessary, all very real, and must be accepted as a working arrangement, but not unto blindness and obsession, unto hate or fury, unto the self-alienation of the spirit. India, this greater India, which has no bounds or confines, calls to you as your *patria eterna*. May this Sanatana Bharata, your Eternal country, represent, through you her sons, in the Leagues and Councils of the world, the idea of this extra-territorial sovereignty, which the creed of Buddha, the Enlightened and the Enlightener, first preached to the world."

* * *

India is now in the melting pot and in this supreme moment of her history, it is highly desirable that an ideal of education should be propounded which is in consonance with the spirit of national ideal. We have repeatedly pointed out that the leaders of the country should not lose sight of the nation's past glory and the foundation on which the national edifice has been built in India. It is a happy sign of the time that Dr. Seal should impress upon the mind of the graduates of Mysore the lofty ideal of life which they should always keep before their mind's eye.

Youth is the seed-time of a man's life and the ideals which a young man imbibes at this period, guide him throughout his life. Let the young men of the country look up to the Upanishads and the Vedanta, the storehouse of Indian wisdom, for the ideals of human life which should guide and inspire them in all their activities. The Upanishads do not enjoin upon all to renounce the world and retire to the forest, but one can live according to that ideal even in different spheres of active social life, as has been pointed out by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda in his famous lectures on Practical Vedanta. Let the lawyer, professor and teacher live the life with the Vedantic ideal as his goal, and he will be a better lawyer, professor and teacher. The student of to-day is a citizen of to-morrow and if the students coming out of the university start in their career with the lofty ideal of Vedanta, they can leave their mark in the different walks of life and thereby help the progress and diffusion of spiritual ideal among the masses and bring out the gradual evolution of their country by producing a new type of men, to whom material grandeur and prosperity are paltry and insignificant and the realisation of the eternal, all-blissful Atman, the real nature of man, is the primary spring of all activities.

* * *

The following are the concluding words of Dr. Seal's address in which we find an echo of the highest ideal preached by the Rishis, the Fathers of our race.

"And seek not the lesser Freedom, but first the greater Freedom which embraces all lesser privileges and franchises. Be free of the commonwealth, not merely of the Federation of the British Empire or of the World-Federation when it comes, but also of this your true country, the country of the spirit. Remember you are citizens of no mean city, not of Benares, not of Delhi, not of Rome, those eternal cities of the East or the West that come on the tidal waves of History and are borne away by that tide, but of the Eternal City that sits enthroned in the Brahman above the uproar and the tumult of Man in his generations."

ADMONITION.

BY

Meredith Starr.

Forget not thy high purposes, O my soul !
How thou would'st gain control
Of all those wayward elements within
The circle of thy being, and so win
That perfect peace which only they may know
Who rise above the flow
And ebb of transient dreams. And this being done,
Having found the secret sun
That solaces the heart with tenderest light,
Forget not the sad plight
Of those who stagger blindly in life's way,
For thou art now as they.

Lo ! thou hast breathed the bright enchanted air
Of realms divinely fair,
And then, O hapless soul, thou hast been hurled
Back to this bitter world,
All bruised and battered by thy headlong fall !
O Folly past recall,
To come so near the long-desired goal,
And then to fail, O Soul !

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

BY

Manoranjan Choudhury.

I. The Indian Ideal.

" Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man."

" The ideal man is he who in the midst of greatest silence finds the-intensest activity and in the midst of intensest activity finds the silence of the desert."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

A system of National Education evolves in full consonance with the peculiar cultural genius of a people. It has a distinct, well-marked historical evolution of its own inasmuch as it expresses the particular trend of thoughts of a particular period and moulds itself according to the synthesis that is prominent in an epoch in the process of the gradual evolution of the nation. A nation placed under peculiar circumstances and environment, has to adapt itself for survival; and its inner and outer activities, conception of life, and outlook over the world develop as the result of the type of essential need and purpose that the nation feels at the core of its heart. Thus, various types of civilisation with diverse types of organisation and cultural genius have evolved in suitable places under agreeable conditions, both outer and inner. The ideal and genius of India have been manifested out of the distinct need and purpose of her own, and a system of education to be really national in character, must proceed hand in hand in full conformity with the ideal and genius that she has chosen for good or evil.

The question of educational reconstruction on a sound national basis looms large on the horizon to-day. The foreign system of education under which our thoughts and sentiments are fed, does not convey anything Indian. The system is broadening the yawning gulf between the classes and the masses, the educated and the uneducated, and being fundamentally foreign in character, always stands against the spiritual aims and aspirations of India. The great Swami Vivekananda remarked long ago—" In the first place, it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or anything is worse than death. The child is taken to school and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing is that his grand-father is a lunatic, the third thing that his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth thing that all the sacred books are lies. By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation. " 1

1—Lectures from Colombo to Almora—Swami Vivekananda.

Fortunately at last the conviction has come that the people must take both the secular and spiritual education in their own hands for the salvation of Indian culture. Many thinkers of the country have been tackling with the problem for decades with solemn seriousness and many have advanced further from patriotic and cosmopolitan zeal to take active steps in promulgating educational institutions agreeable to their own chosen ideal. The above institutions have been trying in their own way, to contribute their quota of service for the solution of the vast problem of education. But in spite of the high, noble intention and sacrifice at their back, many have become denominational and sectarian, while others are directly or indirectly controlled by outer forces and consequently divested of all free initiatives and creativeness. The problem still more urges immediate solution, and the above institutions have not, except by their total failure, succeeded to contribute anything substantial towards the solution of the problem.

Clear, definite thought and conception are the *sine qua non* of successful achievements on healthy lines, and the solution of our educational problem presupposes a comprehensive ideal of education that must venture to widen and expand the denominational, sectarian ideas and outlooks to inspire the whole educational movement of the land with pure, noble, India-wide inspirations and conception. One of the fundamental principles of education, is to work from near to far, from that which is to that which will be. So our very first step of educational reconstruction should be to make education firmly established on our own national thoughts and sentiments, actuated by the ideal that the culture of India makes bold to assert and commands us to accept.

Nation-building in India means the growth of collective life on a spiritual basis and the progressive organisation of Indian thoughts and activities according to it. The process has been evolving for centuries, and the country, as it has been passing through the intermediate stages of experiences, is becoming more and more deep, sober and self-conscious day by day. Now that India is disintegrated, disorganised and lacks the real conception and significance of her national solidarity, vigorous instruments and agents are essential for the spiritual consolidation of Indian Nation-hood. Here the task and responsibility of national education lies in bringing into one focus the scattered thoughts and energies of the country by remoulding, transfiguring and directing them in new, renovated channel with spirituality as the fundamental basis and underlying unity.

But in these days of world-culture, India cannot live in aloofness and contraction. On the one hand she must contribute her own gifts to the world-culture for her expansion and good of the world; on the other hand, she must assimilate according to her own need and purpose the special contributions of other nations. A purely

oriental type of education is not at all sufficient at this stage of world-culture, and a harmonious assimilation and combination of the best elements of the East and the West are needed for the salvation of India and humanity. Indian culture has produced great towering personalities in a scattered manner—it gives prominence to perfect, all-round growth of the individual but lacks the efficiency of the collective national uplift. But “the superiority of the West lies in her realisation of the value of great united efforts in any given direction, even that of self-education, and in the particular synthesis in which as she may think it necessary for the Educational process to reflect.”² It is this conception of the elevation of the collective life that India must borrow and assimilate from the West. This is the grandest fruitage and product of the western civilisation and truly, “in concentrating the individual mind in the national problem the west makes a hero out of many a common man. This is also a form of realisation”³

The conflict of cultures has been playing prominent roles in the process of world-history from the dim morning hours of pre-historic age. It was the main feature of the ancient Romans to spread broad-cast their culture over the conquered races. This process of Romanisation completely suppressed the racial potentialities and degenerated the whole mental make-up of the races by the cultural conquest. To remodel education, India is confronted with two types of cultural ideals, and the harmonious assimilation of the two is infeasible, unless, and until India recovers herself and rises to self-conscious activity with her own national ideal. Now that we are under the magic-spell of western culture, self-hypnotised and unconscious of our own national vitality, we are unable to assimilate anything from other nations. Any further progress towards assimilation of the west—which means nothing but imitation, would be disastrous inasmuch as in lieu of assimilating, we shall be assimilated as we are going to be, and commit our cultural suicide. Therefore we are to determine first our own national system and then assimilate what other nations can bestow upon us. “The secret of the true Hindu’s character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European Sciences and learning, of his wealth, position and name to that one principal theme, which is inborn in every Hindu-child—the spirituality and purity of the race.”⁴

A true type of education cannot but consult the mind in its own growth. Happily for India, our ancient Educationists,—the Rishis of our forest-schools always perceived the mind as the principal factor with which Education has to play its prominent part, and rejected all mechanical methods of training. While in the west,

2. Hints on Education—Sister Nivedita.

3. Hints on Education—Sister Nivedita.

4. Lectures from Colombo to Almora—Swami Vivekananda.

education has been spread for national efficiency by the entrance of huge mass of facts, informations and 'ism's in the brain, the Indian system has tried to manifest the dormant puissance of the mind. From a psychological view of the mind-stuff, will it be ascertained with the greatest assurance that man, as ordinarily he is, has got no independant status of its own. Man's so-called individuality is drifting hither and thither "with restless flood of thought sensations rising of its own momentum from the passive memory indepentant of our will and control." It is only when the balancing power of the mind is developed and its linkless tendencies are subdued that a man can stand on a calm, sober, independant disposition of his own, and his mind thus purified evolves its latent potency that makes possible the harmonious development of intellect, feeling and will.

Indian Education has perceived the mind, and in this process of controlling the mind, it has given the peculiar moulding to Indian history. Indian geniuses have flourished without any historic traces of what they did venture to do or discover, in the centuries preceding them. India has embraced and assimilated diverse races, manners and customs to herself and even in this imitative period of Western Cultural domination, this mother-land of ours can rightly boast of augmenting the knowledge of humanity in Religion, in Science, in Literature and in what not. "We owe this underlying vitality to the fact that whatever may have been the characteristic expression most prized in any moment, our forefathers never neglected the culture of the mind itself. The training of the attention, rather than learning of any special subject or the development of any particular faculty, has always been—as the Swami Vivekananda claimed for it—the chosen goal of Hindu Education. Great men have been only as incidents in the tale of this national effort to achieve control and self-direction of the mind itself." 6

The preliminary condition of Education is the primary discipline of the mind to make it capable of receiving suggestions for the development in its own line. Secondly, no education can become efficient in this age by despising the gifts which the very age contributes. It must equip itself with History, Geography, Science and Literature what humanity has acquired during its life-history of ages and what are the "Franchise of modern consciousness." But kept to themselves, they are too superficial and gross. They are only the means to an end—a preparatory stage to the manifestation of some hidden truth from inside the man. In the last stage, the tasks of preparation being over, a new ideal message reveals itself, and all intellection, emotion and volition merge and consecrate themselves to that revealed ideal-consciousness. "The idea before

6. Hints on Education—Sister Nivedita.

which we are passive that we may absorb it, the idea that fills our life henceforth, the idea to which all our Education has been preparatory, this is the idea that is spirituality itself. Our self-subordination here is renunciation." 6

"Life", says the Swami Vivekananda, "is the tendency of unfolding and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down." A man's character and manhood are nothing but the sum-total of accumulated impressions in the illusive substance called mind. A great life or character is built when the impressions and suggestions from inside and outside him, act as so many blows and rend asunder the covering that hides the Inner Man in the effulgence of knowledge and power. Strictly from psychological standpoint, Education is never any augmentation from outside to the brain but the gradual manifestation of knowledge that is already within. "What a man learns, is really what a man discovers, the word discover meaning, he takes the covering from his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge." 7

Real Education has, therefore, to deal with the training of the mind, to control it and eliminate the rising and falling of accumulated tendencies so as to bring about a perfectly balanced temperament. Character of an individual is established, when he is no longer a slave to the inconsistent thought-sensations of mind. The strength of character hinges on his capacity for attachment and detachment of mind at his own sweet will. When the balance and calmness of mind is established, the Inner Man gradually manifests in all human aspects with both the mental and physical activities completely metamorphosed. When that power wakes up, man is never swept away by the recklessness of imperfect intellect or the whims of egotism. He is no longer a slave to circumstances but the master of the situation. His activities in all their phases increase thousand times while he is detached from their success or failure, resting in the snow-white purity and absolute calmness of his Inner Self. The avowed object of Education is man-making and "the ideal man", says the great Swami, "is he, who in the midst of greatest silence finds the intensest activity and in the midst of intensest activity finds the silence of the desert."

This is the message that our National Education must tell—the message of man-making—the perfection of man. India, in that glorious age of her national life where even traditions dare not peep, ushered into being her unique culture and civilisation unknown to the civilised world. Now, in this psychological moment of her life-history, when ignorance and selfishness have pervaded all around her, she demands enlightenment, renunciation and service for emancipation.

6. Hints on Education—Sister Nivedita.

7 Karma Yuga—Swami Vivekananda.

The reconstruction and spread of real National Education are the chief instruments to awaken her Aryan self-consciousness and fulfil what she has to bestow on the assembly of nations.

The history of the world furnishes us with instances how politics has built up nations. But from careful study of Indian history from cultural standpoint, we can realise how spirituality has already built up a nation in India and how the Indian nation after many stages of historical evolution for thousands of years, has at last entered into a New Age of Renaissance before our very eyes. It is an open secret that the spiritual Ideal-Consciousness of this Motherland of ours has again become revealed, manifested and concretised and has been moulding the destiny of the holy land rather partially. Only the blind cannot see and the perverted cannot realise the solemn seriousness of the occasion. This revealed spirit for His Self-fulfilment thrusts upon us a trust, a responsibility that is the basis of real national type of patriotism. The system of our National Education must realise this preter-natural phenomena and stimulate in the minds of the people a compelling duty or Swadharma for the spiritual solidarity of our Motherland.

This message of duty or Swadharma as the fire-ordeal leading to man's redemption or Moksha, is the key-note of the teachings of Sri Krishna in the Geeta. This message, we Indians have long, long, forgotten and our National Education must revive it for the spiritual remoulding of our Nation. "The thirst of knowledge, the self-devotion, the purity, the renunciation of the Brahmin ; the courage, ardour, honour, nobility, chivalry and patriotism of the Kshatriya ; the beneficence, skill, industry, generous enterprise and large openhandedness of the Vaisya ; the self-effacement and loving service of the Sudra,—these are the qualities of the Aryan. They constitute the moral temper we desire in our young men in the whole nation."

The Real Man abides in absolute knowledge, existence and bliss. Only a veil of ignorance, superstition and faithlessness has, as it were, covered this real nature of the individual, degenerating him into cowardice and utter helplessness. Self-forgetfulness and faithlessness in our own potentialities are the fundamental causes of the degeneration of India. What India wants are adamant strength and faith or Shraddha in herself ; yet these are the very things so mercilessly unheeded. The illustrious Swami Vivekananda has delivered his message of Vedanta to the world because the world wants strength, and spared no pains to stimulate in the depressed, self-hypnotised minds of his countrymen the Vedantic conceptions of gigantic strength and tremendous faith awakened from illumined self-knowledge. The patriotic sentiment of modern India says— "The Shraddha, which is the key-note of the Veda and the Vedanta, the Shraddha which emboldened Nachiketa to face Yama and ques-

tion him, through which Shraddha the world moves—the annihilation of that Shraddha ! Therefore we are so near destruction. The remedy now is the spread of Education. Education is the knowledge I do not mean the mere material knowledge, but the knowledge of the caves which the word suggest. What is the knowledge? Is it the knowledge by which is attained even freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary material prosperity? Certainly it can.....Whatever sects have arisen in India are all one in this respect that infinite power is latent in this Jivatman (the individual soul).....The power manifests as soon as it gets the opportunity and the right place and time. From the highest god to the meanest grass, the same power is present—whether manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door."

THE IDEAL BEFORE US.

BY

Brahmachari Nagendranath.

As the poet sings "Trailing clouds of glory do we come, from God, who is our home." So we are like, the fabled son of the emperor who, travelling in disguise throughout the empire to observe and enjoy the splendour and prosperity of his mighty father, in the long run forgot his true origin and mixed himself up with the common men, making his permanent habitation there, reaping the sweet and bitter fruits of hard labour with them, and had to be reclaimed by his emperor-father through a special messenger deputed for the purpose. As man, we do not know what we are, whence we come and whither will we go, groping in eternal darkness and forced eventually into the jaws of death, dragged as it were by the inevitable Fate. And it has been truly said: "Unless above himself he can raise, how poor a thing is man." We pride ourselves as the highest apex of creation and lord of all we see around, but as intelligent beings we should be, above all, conscious of our glaring defects and frailty of our limited nature. The animals are slave to one sense, each of them, but we are subjected to the five senses—to birth, old age, disease, death and thousand other bondages. Can our sciences, arts and all-sided knowledge, high-sounding, though it is, deliver us from this abject slavery? And the poet cannot be blamed when he sings: "The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

But are we really the play-toys in the hand of Nature, even consciously running towards destruction? Yes, we are the master and creator of Nature, come into the fold of Nature, to play various parts in its several stages. If the theory of evolution be true of all things, so the theory of involution must be true of them. The very same sciences which help to invent terrible instruments of death and augment the measure of human miseries in geometrical progression, though they produce human comforts in arithmetical progression only, can help us to be out of the reach of Maya if properly handled and studied in the pursuit of Truth, and Truth alone. Do not we find that Physics is gradually melting into Metaphysics and tending towards the one Universal Cause from which all things and forces have come out? Had we been absolutely limited in our nature, it would have been impossible for the Evolution Theory to raise us by and by into higher grades of being. And, moreover, when we analyse all our actions, motives, character, etc., we find that our

cravings cannot be satisfied until and unless we attain to Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Happiness. So, it naturally stands to reason that we must be the Infinite itself, realising our own Divine Nature through the various processes of nature. Perfection must be already within us, for only nothing can come out of nothing. When we can be conscious of our Divine Immortal Nature and be one with the Infinite, we have reached perfection. Standing on the glory of the Self, the Atman, we will then look down upon our past lives and actions as mere children's play. Imperfection or want compels us to work; but when we realise our own Divine perfection, we will then no more struggle for little enjoyments of the world.

But how are we to reach this perfection? Are we to go infinitely through the cycle of existence and gather experience and knowledge bit by bit? Can there be a motion in the straight line up to infinity? And this is impossible in Nature. No perfection is to be gained from the outside. We have simply to give up this little self, this little ego, which stands in the way of our realising oneness with the Absolute, the Brahman. All our actions, all our thoughts, all endeavours must be a process of purification. What we have to do is not to give up all things and doings and go into the jungle, but to carry out all acts in the pursuit of Absolute Truth. Shadows of the same Divine Being are being manifested through arts, sciences, history, in short through the world-process. We have to study all these simply for the sake of truth; we must rise from Nature up to Nature's God. Enjoyment or satisfaction of the self is not our goal. This false notion of personality must go away altogether. Our true self is in the Universal Self, the Absolute Perfection. So whatever takes us away from our God-ward journey must be done away with. As one rises in realisation, all senses of differentiation fall off from him. And there have been men on earth who were thoroughly purified and completely Divine in human form. No earthly pleasure or happiness can compare with the Divine bliss. So intense, so perfect is the enjoyment of God, that those perfected persons totally forgot this world, nay even their own body which is the dearest of all. But to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and to drink deep the nectar of immortality, we must forsake all ideas of lust and name and fame and must be thorough students of Truth. No one can serve God and Mammon at the same time. And this state of Divinity, of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss can be consciously felt and reached through renunciation and service. We are the Absolute soul, only ignorance, illusion or Maya has concealed our true nature from ourselves. Because of this Nescience we have forgotten

what we truly are. True this impurity of Maya can be washed off by Brahmacharya, and the practice of Truth and self-discrimination. By no other means can we recover our former glory. We should look upon the universe as the shadowing manifestation of the Lord; so instead of being mad after its enjoyment, we should enter heart and soul into the task of removing this veil from the face of the All-pervading Soul by the practices of truth, purity, charity and total effacement of self. The Lord is there in all the beings of the universe and we can serve Him by serving His suffering children on earth. And when we can change our angle of vision on the universe and adapt our lives to the Life Universal, we may think we are moving in the right direction. Men like Buddha, Christ may serve as beacon-lights to our path. Why should we be ignorant, miserable and be afraid of death, when we see the perfect lives of these God-men before us, who, after attaining perfection are calling us again and again to follow them to the same state by giving up our little weaknesses and selves? Only we have to adopt the same means as they had taken. Materialism can never destroy the spirit, Infinite and Immortal. When the spirit revolts against its self-imposed bondage, no power can check its up-rise. Infinite strength, infinite knowledge, infinite purity, all these are innate in every soul. We have not to beg these from any outside power, but we must be up and doing in seeking the Absolute Truth, immanent in the world and at the same time transcendent. God is not to be looked after in some region beyond the clouds, we constantly move and have our being in Him. By knowing Him we know all things, otherwise we can know but a very few things and that imperfectly. A thing as this can only be known from the Absolute. The oldest scriptures of the world, the Vedas, declare that we can cross this samsara of ignorance, death, disease and imperfection only by knowing Him who is beyond all darkness. We are loving all things and persons around because He is shining through them all. The practical lives of great souls like Sri Ramakrishna teach us how to realise the Lord in all things. He could not see any evil or imperfection in the world, but saw only the Lord in them all. By a life of service, renunciation, purity and truth, he touched the Divine Being and became himself Divine. He was full of love and sympathy and reverence for all, because he saw in them but the Lord in disguise. His life was so sweet, so purifying and elevating that those who came out of sincerity and earnestness in contact with him felt themselves totally transformed beings in the kingdom of Heaven as it were. He was, as it were, the Truth embodied in flesh and blood. Even in jest he would not tell a lie. His touch, even his look could transform the most ordinary man into one of great spirituality.

THOUGHTS FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

BY

R. Sivaramakrishna Aiyar, B.A.

The Bhagavad Gita opens with an account of Kurukshetra on the eve of the great war. We see the opposing armies arrayed for battle and hear the sound of conches, drums and tabors; and we see the chariot of Arjuna stationed in the middle of the rival armies and Arjuna surveying the scene before him before commencing the fight. And the great heart of the noble warrior is moved to compassion at the sight of so many kinsmen and friends assembled on either side and at the thought of the great havoc that would soon be wrought in their ranks. Doubt seizes him and like all great souls he is confronted with a conflict of duties with the eternal question 'which shall I choose.' This doubt of Arjuna in an hour of supreme crisis in his life is symbolic of the doubt that arises in the bosom of every man and woman endowed with the higher nature. In the case of the lowest of men there is no conflict at all. They gravitate towards carnal pleasure and sin just as naturally as objects gravitate to the earth. But in the case of men endowed with the higher nature there is a conflict between desire and duty or between one duty and another. It is easy to say that when the higher duties clash with the lower these last must go; but often the difficulty is to find out which is the higher and which the lower. Even the greatest men do not make the choice without a struggle. Pralhad could not have chosen between his duty to an unbelieving father and his duty to God, nor Vibhishana between loyalty to a wicked brother and duty to a wronged hero, nor Buddha between his duty to wife and child and his duty to mankind—no, none of these could have made the choice without doubt, conflict, and much aching of the heart. And so we see Arjuna on the field of battle torn by this conflict, his limbs failing, his mouth parched up, his body shivering all over, his hair standing on end, his skin burning and his bow Gandiva slipping from his hand.

I doubt whether in the whole range of literature there is any scene more pathetic, more truly poetic, than that of the great warrior whose heart knew no fear, unnerved not by the prospect of death, but by moral doubt as to how far he would be justified in sacrificing one duty to another. 'What shall it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world and lose his own soul' is in effect the question that Arjuna asks. "Of what use are kingdoms and earthly possessions if they are blood-stained? Of what use are thrones if they have to be waded to through slaughter? No I had rather that the sons of Dhritarashtra came to me sword in hand and slew me than that I should enjoy the kingdom after slaying them." Having spoken thus, Arjuna cast away his bow and arrows and sank down in his chariot seat with a heart full of sorrow. The Lord was moved to compassion on hearing these words of the brave warrior and to nerve him in this hour of supreme crisis and teach him his duty, expounded to him a philosophy of conduct which is one of the richest legacies of Hindu thought to the world. In acuteness of reasoning, universality of appeal and splendour of diction the Bhagavad Gita occupies a unique position in the ethical literature of the world; and to one who reads

it every day as part of his religious devotion, the high claim made for it in the Gita Mahatmyam is by no means extravagant.

To Arjuna thus overpowered with weak commiseration the first advice of the Lord is (II. 3)....."Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha. Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies." This advice like so many others strewn over the pages of the Gita, was never more needed in our country than at the present day. Manliness is the one thing needed, a thing which the educated classes more even than the uneducated are lacking in. Centuries of foreign domination and wrong systems of education have bent our backs and as Gokhale once remarked even the tallest of us have to bend. Well might Swami Vivekananda call upon the young men of the country to pray day and night "O Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me; take away my unmanliness and make me a man." Sri Krishna characterises Arjuna's dejection in the hour of crisis as un-Arya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven. He then expounds to him the nature of the soul, pointing out how it is changeless, indestructible, illimitable, without birth and without death, how it can neither slay nor be slain, how death is no more an interruption in the continuity of the soul than are childhood, youth and old age, how pain and pleasure, heat and cold are born only of the contact of the senses with their objects and do not affect the soul, and how consequently in killing his enemies in the field of battle from a sense of duty, he could not look upon himself as the slayer nor them as the slain. (II. 23-25)....."This (Self) weapons cut not; this, fire burns not; this, water wets not; and this, wind dries not.

"This Self cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor wetted, nor dried, changeless, all-pervading, unmoving, unmovable, the Self is Eternal.

"This (Self) is said to be unmanifested, unthinkable, and unchangeable. Therefore, knowing this to be such, thou oughtest not to mourn."

The Lord then expounds the philosophy of Karma yoga which is the keynote of the Bhagavad Gita. Indeed such is the emphasis laid on karma that Tilak has given the Gita the alternative title of Karma yoga Shastra. I will therefore here attempt a brief summary of this central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.

Besides the ordinary meaning of action or work the word karma has a subtler meaning. It is used to denote the aggregate of tendencies, and habits which are stored up in an organism as a result of repeated action, and which determine its future birth and embodiment. This store of tendencies and habits is a sort of chain forged round the Jiva and it compels it to be born again and perform actions in the direction determined by it. The effect of karma is thus to enchain the soul and enmesh it in Samsara. How to liberate the soul thus enchained is thus the most urgent of enquiries. Now to liberate the prisoner we must first break his chain; i. e., in the case of the Jiva the stored-up Karma must be consumed. To this end a two-fold path is indicated, the path of knowledge for the meditative and the path of work for the active. The former path is chosen by highly evolved beings. They realise the true nature of the self, its identity with the other Jivas and with the Paramatma or Cosmic Soul by withdrawing the senses from their objects and concentrating in the Self. The Yogi who has thus learnt to control his senses

and concentrate on the Self is known as the Sthithaprajna and his characteristics are described in the Slokas given below (II. 55 to 58, 64, 65 and 66)..... "He casts away all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the self alone by the self. He is not shaken by adversity, does not hanker after happiness, and is free from fear, affection, and wrath. When he wants he can completely withdraw the senses from their objects like the tortoise its limbs. The Yogi who thus follows the path of knowledge and practises concentration, beholds the self in all beings and all beings in the self" (VI 29).....He does not go in quest of objects for the satisfaction of his desires; but the objects of enjoyment enter him in the same way as the waters enter the ocean without the latter being affected in any way by them. Being free from attraction and aversion he attains to tranquillity and in tranquillity all sorrow is destroyed.

Now it must have become clear from the foregoing account of the man of steady wisdom that the control of the senses and the mind forms an essential part of his training; and the life of a Brahmin in ancient India was organised to the minutest detail to secure this end; but now all is changed. Self-indulgence as opposed to self-control, rights as opposed to duties—these form the new gospel. In individual as well as social and national life Bolshevism is the order of the day. Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die. Discipline as an aid to human perfection is either not recognised or where recognised not practised seriously. I have sometimes watched the sight of Brahmins of the old orthodox type seated in hundreds for meals. As dish after dish and delicacy after delicacy is served making the mouth water, they sit unmoved till finally water is served in their hands and the eating begins simultaneously. Indeed I can conceive of no other better discipline for the palate which according to Mahatma Gandhi is the worst enemy of man and must be controlled first. Compare this with the Bolshevik feast of the new dispensation. To me nothing is more loathsome than the men laying violent hands on dishes the moment they are served and cramming them into their mouths. This is the only one instance, perhaps a typical one, of our new-fangled ways. This utter absence of discipline in individual and national life and the free rein that has been given to the senses is a phenomenon that must fill the minds of all thoughtful men with despair for the future of our society and our country. For my own part I see no prospect of salvation for us except through rigorous discipline in individual life. For want of this the west is fast drifting into Bolshevism which is the very negation of discipline and the saddest confession of human imbecility. Discipline abolished, desire and the senses enthroned, and their gratification made the be-all and end-all of life, it is no wonder that we witness in modern society many strange diseases which are proposed to be cured by still stranger remedies. The latest of them all is the nationalisation of everything including women. Let iron, coal, railways and women be nationalised and held in common and we shall be nearer the millenium.

I told you of the two-fold path to perfection and described the first of them, viz., the path of knowledge. The other is the path of action or Karma-marga. If salvation consists in exhausting past karma and thus making the Self free, how, it may be asked, can the performance of new karma help the process? Will it not on the

other hand help to accumulate the store of already existing Karma and thus tighten the bonds of the Self? Sri Krishna's answer to this question is that Karma will lose its binding nature if it is performed without regard for results. If a man performs Karma out of a sense of duty, without caring for results, indifferent to success and failure, pleasure and pain, censure and praise, a double purpose is served, viz., the old Karma is worked out and no new Karma is accumulated. Thus at the allotted time when all the past Karma has been completely exhausted, the Self is released from its bondage and realises its oneness with the Supreme Spirit. Karma performed in this spirit is called Nishkama Karma, and even from the point of view of material efficiency is far more effective than work performed with the mind disturbed by thoughts of results. Besides it stands to reason and common sense that man should not trouble himself with the fruits of action, since these do not depend upon the actor alone, but upon a number of external circumstances over which he has no control. When man acts with ulterior motives of self-interest, he forms elaborate plans, and when as not seldom happens, these are upset, misery is the result. Actions must therefore be devoid of Sankalpa and be burnt in the fire of knowledge. The three-fold fruit of action, agreeable, disagreeable, and mixed, accrues only to those who do not relinquish the fruit of action; but the relinquishers are not thus tainted. Even good action binds if it was performed with a view to its result, and the man will have to be born again to enjoy the fruit of the action which in this case will be agreeable. These ideas regarding Karma-Yoga are elaborated over a number of chapters with remarkable lucidity and great logical skill. I give below a few typical Slokas (II 47, 48; IV 22). "Thy right is to work only; but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of thy actions; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction."

"Content with what comes to him without effort, unaffected by the pairs of opposites, free from envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound."

The question is sometimes asked 'which of these two paths of knowledge is the better? and to which is preference given in the Gita?' Sankaracharya is of opinion that preference is given to the path of knowledge while Tilak is of the opposite opinion; and the difference of opinion in the two cases is due in no small measure to the difference in temperament. The great Acharya, devotional and contemplative by nature, reads into the text his preference for the Gnana-Marga, while Tilak a born worker and fighter, reads into the work his own preference for the life of active and disinterested work; but Sri Krishna has made it sufficiently clear that both the paths lead to the same goal and that it is not possible to adopt the one to the total exclusion of the other. Even the greatest Yogi cannot give up all action. Even the bare maintenance of the body would be impossible without action of some kind. Besides none can ever rest even for an instant without performing action; for all are made to act, helplessly indeed by the Gunas born of Prakriti. Besides even if a man were wise and had no need to perform action, he should refrain from giving it up at least in the interests of the less enlightened members of society whose understanding a wise man has no right to unsettle. This obligation to the world was recognised by great Sages like Janaka who having attained perfection along the path of knowledge, had no need to perform action and who

yet did perform it for the sake of the world; because whatsoever the superior person does, that is followed by others. Besides, the Lord asks "Look at me; I have nothing to gain and yet I work without relaxation, because if I did not, the worlds would perish." (III 20-23; 25 and 26; XVIII 11). Therefore the wise should perform work along with the unwise with this difference that while the latter act with attachment, the former should act without attachment. As thus it is impossible to give up all action even for the man of knowledge, so also is it impossible to engage in Karma yoga without knowledge; for it will be readily admitted that right action is impossible without right knowledge and particularly the performance of work in the spirit of Yajna or sacrifice is impossible without knowledge of the true nature of Self, of its identity with the Supreme Spirit. He who realises his Self as the Self in all beings, can alone not be tempted by work. This independence of knowledge and performance of action is acknowledged in the Gita in the following verses (V 4 and 5).

"Children, not the wise, speak of knowledge and performance of action as distinct. He who truly lives in one, gains the fruits of both." Lest however the ordinary man should run away with the notion that a life of inaction and laziness is a life of renunciation and a consummation devoutly to be wished, Sri Krishna has made it abundantly clear that there is no virtue in inaction, that performance of action is superior to renunciation of action, and that the latter stage is hard to attain without the former being passed through.

I hope I have made it clear that the Gita nowhere lays that man must give up all activity and become an inert clod. On the other hand it makes it clear that absolute inaction is impossible. It however says that merely self-regarding activities must be reduced to a minimum, and most of a man's time and energy must be spent in disinterested work, work intended to make other people happy; and this is possible only for the man who has realised in his own life by meditation and austerity the truth that the individual soul is in essence the same as the universal or the cosmic soul. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' says Christianity. 'Love thy neighbour because he is thyself' is the eloquent teaching of the Gita writ large in every page of it.

I cannot however omit a reference to the Slokas where it is laid down that every soul must work out its own salvation. (VI 5). "A man should uplift himself by his own self. For this self is the friend of oneself and this self is the enemy of oneself." This is a manly and bracing philosophy and there is no place in it for a saviour. There is thus no royal road to salvation and one's Karma good or bad must be worked out by oneself. I must also refer to the Sloka where every man is advised to follow his own Dharma in preference to that of another. (III 25).

"Better is one's own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma, the Dharma of another is fraught with fear."

I take this to mean that every man must follow the Dharma or course of action to which he feels himself called by birth and natural

aptitude rather than flit like a bee from Dharma to Dharma following the course dictated by the senses. Doing the duty ordained by his own nature, he is least likely to feel attachment to its fruit and thus he will incur no evil.

I would also draw your attention to the broad catholicism and tolerance indicated in the following Slokas (IX 23, 29 and 31)......
 "Even those who worship other gods worship me. I am the same to all beings; to me there is none hateful nor dear. Even if the wicked worship me with devotion, he will be saved;" and contrast this rational cosmopolitanism with the irrational bigotry of certain other religions which insist upon all passage to heaven being booked in one railway station and no other.

The Lord winds up his teaching, with the following peroration (XVII 59, 61 and 66)......
 "If filled with self-conceit thou thinkest 'I will not fight,' vain in this thy resolve; thy Prakriti will constrain thee; for the Lord who dwells in the hearts of all beings causes them by his Maya to resolve as if mounted on a machine. Therefore relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not," and to the question of the Lord whether his delusion has been destroyed, Arjuna answers with becoming humility (XVIII 73).
 "Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace, O Achyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will do Thy word."

The Gita ends as it began with the note of Dharma or righteousness (XVIII 78).
 "Wherever is Krishna the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha the wielder of the bow, there prosperity, victory, expansion, and sound polity; such is my conviction."

Now looking round, what do we see in the world? Do we see prosperity, victory, expansion and sound polity? Prosperity, where on earth is it? Is prosperity to be measured by export and import figures, by the size of a Landsowne's Castle or a Rockefeller's mansion? Can we honestly say that there is prosperity in the world when the whole of Russia and middle Europe is a weltering mass of poverty, starvation and anarchy, when in England almost every class of labourers is on strike, when in India the majority of her teeming millions do not know what it is to have a full meal? Coming next to victory and expansion, it may be said that the allies have won victory in the war and that they are adding to their dominions. Has the victory been won? What of Bolshevism which is spreading like wild fire all over the world making the statesmen of every country tremble with fear? Has the victory been won in all these cases? Can the allies be sure of their expansion? Granting that there is expansion, is it not the abnormal growth of parts of the organism, more like elephantiasis or dropsy than a healthy growth? As for a sound or just polity the absence of it is implied by the absence of the other three; and why is it that there are none of these things in the world? Because the world has lost its bearings, as altogether on a wrong scent. Instead of conquering desire the world has enthroned her and offers incense at her altar, by enormously multiplying wants and making life from beginning to end an affair of the senses; but it is the nature of desire to grow by what it feeds on. It is not in its nature to be ever satisfied, but one desire leads to another; and desire when obstructed gives rise to anger; anger throws the

mind into confusion and the lessons of experience are forgotten. From this again results loss of discrimination, of the capacity to distinguish between moral values, between good and evil; and when man acts without discrimination, without regard to the difference between good and evil, his moral and spiritual death is the inevitable result. (II 62 and 63). This is the teaching of the Gita and we see it clearly illustrated in the world more than ever in her history. Says Rabindranath Tagore, "But those who gain wealth are as miserable as ever. They vie with one another in the huge wealth of their summer palaces, the cost of their motor hires, and the high prices of their wines. The scramble for the good things of the world may go on till the crack of doom, but the soul will not be satisfied. Peace and quiet will be still distant, the bliss of repose unknown, the vexations of the spirit unquenched. Man has aims which do not perish at death. Were he completely material, he could be satisfied by matter; but in man there is the undying essence of spirit that triumphs over time and is and will be, when time shall be no more. His soul cannot be satisfied by matter. The tragedy of human life consists in our vain attempts to stretch the limits of things which can never become unlimited, to reach the infinite by absurdly adding to the rungs of the ladder of the finite."

And again: the European nations have got all that they wanted; all the good things of the earth, trade ports, etc., are theirs. They have lived unto themselves, grown rich beyond their dreams at other people's cost and lacked nothing, and still worry. There is no end to their ambition. We find them burning with the fever of acquiring new possessions, rushing to and fro like maddened animals. It is an endlessly wearisome task, this continual adding to our stores. Satisfaction of the infinite cannot be reached by the summation of the finite. The larger the outward acquisition the greater the inner discontent. In the sea they feel thirst. There is water everywhere but not a drop to drink."

Never did materialism, commercialism, greed, and naked selfishness flaunt themselves so shamelessly before the world. Never was statesmanship so bankrupt, never were great problems so hopelessly tinkered with and never was there such a total absence of the sound polity. The world therefore wants a great teacher, one who will demonstrate by his life the great truths of the Gita and teach men once more how to live. The Lord himself has said (IV 7 and 8).
 "Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, there is decline of Dharma, and rise of Adharma, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age!" Let us hope that the Lord will come in the person of a great teacher and that the world will listen to him and follow him and that Dharma or righteousness will once more be established in the world.

REVIEWS.

The Principles of Hindu Ethics, By Maganlal A. Buch, M.A.
Published by M. A. Buch, Hathi Pole, Baroda. Price Rs. 6-4-0.

The scientific study of Ethics and Sociology has almost reached perfection in the West but it is comparatively new in India. The present book is an attempt to give a clear conception of the system of ethical life of the ancient Hindus in its diverse aspects. Ethics is a normative science and lays down rules for the regulation of human life; but the ethical ideal depends ultimately on the metaphysical view of life. The book opens quite fittingly with the philosophical outlook on human life, which the ancient Hindus entertained, and here the author incidentally compares the Hindu view of life with the Greek and Christian view. This chapter is simply illuminating and gives the true perspective of Hindu ideal of life. We quote a few passages which may interest our readers. "Buddhism is not so favourable to active virtues; Islam and Parsism are not so favourable to the self-denying virtues of a Sannyasin. We believe it is the singular excellence of Hinduism that it is the most comprehensive faith, doing justice to life in all its phases and aspects." "Very few religions are so capable of appreciating the ideas that God is the same in all faiths, and that all its prophets are correct prophets more or less, that all beings embody the same Atman, as Hindu faith. Hence the Hindu is full of forbearance for all possible varieties in creed and practice."

The author keeps his own personality entirely in the background without giving any interpretation of his own and traces down the course of ethical thought from the early Rig-Veda period down to the age of Mahabharata and the Dharma-shastras. The present book will prove very useful also to many educated Indians who are not well versed in Sanskrit learning. The whole world is waiting to-day to listen to the right word from the Hindus and the advanced thinkers of the West are all appreciating the lofty ethical ideal which has inspired the Hindu race since the dawn of civilization. The book exhibits vast study and wide reading of the author. We are confident the book will have a wide circulation among the educated men of the country.

Swami Rama Tirtha, The Poet Apostle of Practical Vedanta, By Sripad Rama Sharma, Karnatak Tilak Maha Vidyalaya, Mangalore.
Price Re. 1-4-0.

Swami Rama Tirtha is a patriot-saint of modern India and his name is well-known all over the country. Born in a village, in the district of Gujranwala, Punjab, the Swami lost his mother when he was on the threshold of life. The path of his life was not strewn

with roses and he had to struggle through insurmountable difficulties. In spite of great hardships and 'chill penury', Rama took his M.A. degree with distinction and became a professor in the very college where he had studied. But Swami Rama was unworldly even from his boyhood and renounced the world at the age of twenty-four and embraced the life of a sannyasin. The author describes the gradual unfoldment of the saintly life of the Swami. He was a great Vedantist and went to America to preach the highest truths discovered by Rishis. He stayed in America for more than two years, visiting places, delivering speeches, holding classes and opening Vedantic associations. In 1904, Swami Rama left the shores of America for India and two years later, passed into eternal samadhi. The book opens with a Foreword from the pen of Swami Shradhdhananda. The present volume is the first of its kind published in English, giving out the interesting details of this extraordinary life. We hope that the book will have a large sale, since it removes a long-felt want.

The Twentieth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

The Sevashram is primarily a hospital where diseased persons are treated and attended to. But its scheme is far larger than that—for it is also a Home of Service in a wide humanitarian sense inasmuch as it includes under its activities different forms of social service. There are seven departments under which the Home carries on its work. They are:—(A) Indoor General Hospital, (B) Refuge for aged invalids and widows and other helpless women, (C) Home for paralytic patients, (D) Out-door Medical Relief, (E) Out-door help to aged invalids and poor respectable ladies in money or kind, (F) Special Relief, (G) Boys' Home.

A. Indoor General Hospital:—The total number of patients admitted and treated in the Home during the year under review was 1119 of whom 75 were found lying in pitiable condition, either in the streets or on the ghats, and were picked up and conveyed to the Home by the workers. Out of the total number of indoor patients 418 were women, mostly orthodox Hindu widows, who would not, even on pain of death, cross the threshold of any other hospital. Consequently three wards had to be kept reserved for their exclusive use and no sweepers were allowed to enter therein. The patients got the best medical aid available in the city, as many of the local physicians offered their services most willingly and gladly whenever approached.

B. Refuge for aged invalids, widows and other helpless women:—During the year under review, 25 destitute women were sheltered and maintained, of whom 17 were quite helpless invalids. The rest of the widows belonging to respectable families were taken in and

placed under the charge of an accomplished Lady Superintendent to receive moral and religious instructions as well as regular training in several home-industries and in reading and writing with a view to enable them to earn an independent living.

C. Home for paralytic patients:—A fund has been made over to the Home by Babu Radha Charan Saheb, Dy. Collector, Benares, for the maintenance of some paralytic beds in the Home. Eight such cases were admitted and treated during the year.

D. Out-door Medical Relief:—The total number of patients treated at the out-door Dispensary during the year was 16,670, out of which 171 persons were supplied with diet as well. The Home always takes special care of the *Vidyarthi*s who flock from all parts of India to the metropolis of Hindu India. During the year under report 2057 *Vidyarthi*s and 2568 pilgrims received medical aid at the out-door Dispensary.

E. Out-door help to aged invalids and poor respectable ladies in money or kind:—Weekly doles of rice and money or monthly allowances were given to 214 indigent persons most of whom were in a helpless condition owing to old age or disease. Many coming from respectable families, would prefer even death to out-door begging; so most of the allowances had to be sent privately to their respective homes.

F. Special Relief:—Occasional relief in the shape of money, food, clothing, etc., were given to 803 helpless persons. Blankets and warm clothing were given to 52 persons driven to the verge of death through exposure to severe cold.

G. Boys' Home:—The Sevashram has started a Boys' Home, where poor and indigent boys are receiving general, technical and agricultural education together with the fundamental elements of moral and religious training under a qualified Sannyasin Teacher.

The Twentieth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar.

The total number of persons who obtained relief during the year from January to December, 1920, was 20,860 of whom 12,367 were males and 7,963 females, coming from all classes and quarters of India. Among those relieved, 16,319 were Hindus, 1942 Mahomedans, 42 Christians, 1165 Chammars, 138 Kanjer and Domes and 754 sweepers. People from every part of British India and the Native states found an asylum in the Sevashram, and the workers of the Sevashram served them to their best in the spirit of worship, which has always been their ideal of work. A comparative survey shows the progress of the work, from 112 indoor and 178 out-door patients from the first year of its existence to 315 indoor and 20,045 out-door patients during the year under review. A free night school, attached to the Sevashram is being maintained with a view to spread

primary education among the children of the local depressed classes. The year under review had 35 boys on the roll. Besides, there is also a small Library attached to the Sevashram, for the benefit of the voluntary workers and other Sadhu Mahatmas, as well as the *Vidyarthi*s who live at Kankhal and Hardwar.

The present Dispensary Building is too incommodious for the growing number of patients. The authorities of the Sevashram are contemplating an up-to-date outdoor Dispensary Building consisting of ten rooms, the total cost of the building being estimated at Rs. 17,000. Any contribution however small will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) Swami Kalyanananda, Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Dist. Saharanpur, U. P.; (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; or (3) The President, Ramkrishna Mission, The Math, P. O. Belur, Dist. Howrah, Bengal.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We have received the annual reports of the Ramkrishna Home of Service, Benares and the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar. The educated public of India know full well the philanthropic and humanitarian work which the Mission is carrying on for the last twenty-five years, but there are many who do not probably fully appreciate the significance of these noble works. We have repeatedly pointed out in our paper that the foundation on which the national edifice has been built in India is religion. Religion is the backbone of Indian Life and all other duties of life are subordinated to that higher ideal. In the words of the Swami Vivekananda, "The national ideals of India are Renunciation and Service. Intensify her in these two channels and the rest will take care of itself." The traditional view of monastic life in India has been to run away from the world to forest or cave and cut off all connection with human society. The heart of the great Swami bled at the sight of the suffering of the poor and the distressed and it was he who made the departure from the time-honoured system and urged upon the band of young men, who responded to his call after his return from the West, to worship the poor and the sick as living Narayanas. The Sevashramas at Benares and Kankhal sprang into life as the concrete fulfilment of the aspirations of the young men who were determined to follow the noble and lofty ideal of Karma yoga preached by Swamiji; and they stand to-day as the monument to their service and self-sacrifice. But this service and humanitarian work which the workers of the Sevashramas are doing indefatigably, is not an end in itself but only a means to a higher spiritual end. It is their aim through humanitarian service to realise the essential unity of life, that

oneness of life which the Vedanta preaches, by looking upon the poor, the sick, the miserable and the down-trodden as veritable manifestations of the Lord.

Swami Paramananda conducted the two Sunday Services and the Tuesday evening class at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, U.S.A. during the last summer. The attendance at these meetings has been so large as to demonstrate conclusively the need of the greater seating capacity which the chapel will have, when the alterations and additions are completed. The number of strangers from every part of the country has been unusually large, and there have been many indications that the Centre's radius of fellowship and helpfulness is lengthening. The various opportunities the Centre had to entertain distinguished visitors from India, have created new links between Occident and Orient.

In August on the invitation of Rev. Wm. Norman Guthrie, New York, Swami Paramananda spoke at Oteora Park before a representative group of the more thoughtful men and women prominent in New York's public life. They all expressed deep interest in what the Swami had to tell them of Vedanta.

Sri Satchidananda Sangha, Tiruvateeswaranpet, Madras—Under the auspices of the above Sangha a series of weekly discourses on Jnana Yoga of Swami Vivekananda is being held in English (commenced from 6th November, 21) by His Holiness Swami Sharvanandaji, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, from 8 to 10 A. M. every Sunday at the Triplicane Annadanasamajam's Hall, Pilliar Koil Street, Tiruvateeswaranpet. The above series of discourses will last for not less than six months.

The Ramakrishna Mission's Famine Relief Work, Khulna, Bengal.

The saying that misfortune never comes alone is true to the letter in the case of the inhabitants of Khulna. The people of this place are not only starving but are also suffering from extreme cold on account of the want of clothes. We have heard that there has been a good harvest in some of the villages of the said district, but we cannot therefore expect that the condition of the people will be much improved; because the rent collectors of the local Zemindars are ready to take away the crops from the tenants for the arrears of rents, and the Amins have swooped down on the place in due time—which is an ominous sign of the increment of taxes of the

rate payers. What the Mission apprehended before, is happening at the present time. It is a pitious sight to see that the people having nothing to cover their bodies are shivering from cold. As a remedy for these the Mission has distributed shirts and clothes as far as practicable for it and has given 113 mds. and 6 seers of rice among 2263 recipients. The weekly expense of the Mission is six hundred rupees. It hopes that the generous public will lend their helping hands to the rescue of these poor brothers and sisters from this peril.

Contributions will be thankfully received in the following addresses:

- (1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur P. O. Howrah Dt. Bengal.
- (2) The Secretary, Udbodhan Office, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd). SARADANANDA,

Secretary.

N.B.—The Mission thankfully acknowledges the following contributions:

			Rs.	A.
June 1921.				
1st	Babu Manindra Bhusan Datta	... Rangamati	... 20	0
20th	" Sarat Chandra Bose	... Calcutta	... 20	0
21st	" Kali Pada Banerjee	... do.	... 6	0
"	" Rajendra Nath Sarker	... Naihati	... 5	0
"	Secretary, Poor Brothers Club.	Baghbazar	... 22	0
"	From Friends	Sealdaha	... 11	0
22nd	" Kali Pada Banerjee	... Calcutta	... 5	0
"	Sect., Bengal Poor Relief Fund.	Burma	... 23	0
24th	" Manindra Bhusan Datta	... Rangamati	... 20	0
25th	" Patit Paban Paul	... Calcutta	... 75	0
27th	" Trailakya Nath Dey	... Mymensingh	... 8	0
29th	Bagura Public	...	30	0
July 1921.				
1st	A Servant	...	1	5½
2nd	Babu M. L. Gossain Pegu	...	5	0
4th	Bagura Public	...	5	0
"	Tarak Nath Bose	... Diamond Harbour.	5	0
7th	" Krishna Chandra Nandi	... Calcutta	... 5	0
"	Bagura Public	...	8	0
"	D. Auddy	... Alipore	... 10	0
9th	" Bagura Public	...	15	0
10th	" Manindra Bhusan Datta	... Rangamati	... 20	0
11th	" T. Das	... Rampur	... 10	0

			Rs. A.
11th	Babu D. Paul	... Calcutta	... 5 0
"	" Behari Lal Bose	... do.	... 0 12
"	" Svaraj Sahay Samiti	... do.	... 6 0
"	" Dharam Das Sukkar	...	50 0
12th	" Krishnapada Datta	... Burma Co.,	
		Howrah	34 3
13th	" Nagendra Nath Das Gupta	...	15 0
18th	" K. Mukherjee	... Port Blair	... 10 0
"	" Dinesh Ganguli	... Dacca	... 1 0
"	" N. K. Sen Gupta	...	50 0
"	" Bagura Public	...	10 0
20th	" Surendra Nath Chatterjee	... Manbhum	... 14 0
"	" Bhuban Mohan Bose	... Bardwan	... 30 0
21st	" Bagura Public	...	10 0
"	" U. K. Mitra	... Calcutta	... 2 0
22nd	" Shibnandan Laholi	... Shahabad	... 2 0
25th	" Bagura Public	...	10 0
"	" P. N. Roy	... Murshidabab	... 2 0
27th	" Pankaj Kumar Aich	...	2 0
"	" Bagura Public	...	7 0
29th	" A. C. Datta	... Krishnagore	... 30 0
1st	" Surabala Devi	... Rajshahi	... 5 0

August 1921.

1st	Babu Hari Das Mallick	... Calcutta	... 5 0
"	" M. L. Gossain	... Pegu	... 10 0
"	" Shibnandan Laholi	... Shahabad	... 3 0
"	" A Servant	...	25 0
4th	" Durga Pada Banerjee	... Bowbazer	... 3 0
"	" Manoranjan Tagore	... Mymensingh	... 1 0
"	" Sajibendra Bhushan Mukherjee	... Calcutta	... 5 0
"	" Chandir Das Mukerjee	... do.	... 4 0
5th	" Ashutosh Ghosh	... Bagura	... 60 0
"	" A. C. Lahiri	... Kalighat	... 89 0
6th	" Krishna Chandra Ghosh	...	5 0
"	" Hrishikesh Ghosh	... Shambazer	... 20 0
"	" Hemanta Kumar Majoomder	...	20 0

Total Rs ... 870 4½

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want,
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[No. 9.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda

His Sadhana of Yatsalyabhava

(Continued from Page 229)

A reference to some episodes of his life will clearly bring out our point. Towards the beginning of his Sadhana, he took a few pieces of silver and a lump of earth in each hand and intently reasoning on the evanescent character of both, he several times repeated the words 'money is earth, earth is money' and threw them together into the waters of the Ganges; and with them was thrown out from his mind, for ever into the water, that instinctive attachment for money, which is so deep-rooted in the ordinary man! He cleaned such places with his own hands, as a man never treads without afterwards purifying himself by a bath; and at once his mind became permanently freed from the instinctive feeling of the superiority of his high birth, and conceived it as in no way higher than that of even the untouchables of the society! Having realised himself as the child of the Divine Mother, he could never live with his wife in any conjugal relation; for have not the scriptures declared, "all beings of the feminine kind are but different forms of the Divine Mother?" We cannot properly evaluate these

events without being conscious of the extraordinary power of application of the Master's mind ; and if, in our wonder and incredulity, we fail to properly appreciate these incidents, it is because we know that though we may a thousand times imitate the Master's action in throwing off money and earth as equally useless, yet the attachment would still linger in us as persistently as ever. We know that like him, we may time and again wash dirty places, and yet that would not wash off the foul egotism of our soul ; and that though from a child, it has been dinned into our ears that every woman is in fact a personification of the Divine Mother Herself, yet in moments of weakness, this knowledge appears scarcely potent, to help us. Our minds in fact are so hopelessly fettered with the bonds of our previous *Karmas* that in spite of our persistent endeavours, we fail to achieve any tangible result. As we proceed in our *sadhanas*, with a mind that is devoid of similar self-control and power of application, and is overridden with the *Samskaras* of the previous life, the result also becomes equally poor. Rare indeed is the appearance of such a powerful mind as the Master's in human society,—it is doubtful if it comes even once in four or five hundred years. Unshakable self-control, adamant persistence in application, perfect freedom from the grasp of previous *samskaras* which are ordinarily so relentless,—dowered with all these uncommon graces, how his mind engaged itself, being driven mad, as it were, by that wonderful thirst for God-realisation, in the spiritual *sadhanas*, and ultimately was blessed with the perfect God-vision,—is a thing we cannot conceive even with the highest flight of our imagination.]

It has been already mentioned that the death of Rani Rasamani brought no change in the mode of worship of the Divine Mother. Mathura Mohan who was so devoted to the Master, instead of stinting in any way the usual expenditure of the worship, used to spend much more at the indications of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides the worship of gods and goddesses, he felt a great delight in serving religious personages. All godly persons are veritable images of the Lord,—this was one of the great lessons he learnt at the feet of his divine Master. So when Sri Ramakrishna asked him to provide the religious mendicants with the necessities of life like clothings, blankets, and vessels for carrying water (*Kamandalu*), besides the distribution of food, Mathura Mohan opened a big store for the purpose, in one of the rooms of the temple, and stocked there all these things in great abundance for distribution. Probably it was in the year 1263-70 B. S., that Mathura Mohan made such elaborate arrangements for

distribution of alms of the kind ; and we can imagine how this act of charity of his, spread the name of the temple far and wide in the country. We have already said that even during the life-time of Rani Rasamani, Dakshineswar temple had become an important halting-place for all itinerant mendicants and devout pilgrims, and religious persons belonging to various sects of Hinduism repaired there and partook of the charity of the devout Rani. But now Mathura Mohan's beneficence heightened still more the prestige of the temple, and all kinds of religious people began to flock to it in large numbers.

We have heard from the Master that through some unscrutable will of Providence, there used to come then, at one time, only one class of religious persons, and then the other; such as when the *sannyasins* belonging to the Vedantic order began to come to the temple, then great *Paramahamsas* and *Sannyasins* belonging to that class alone flocked to the temple; then after a time, when religious mendicants of the *Bhakti* school came there, the influx of the former type ceased. And so it happened with the religious persons of other sects also. Probably it was in the year 1170 B. S. (1863-64 A. D.) that there came the time when the mendicants and other religious persons belonging particularly to the *Ramayet* sect began to visit the temple of Dakshineswar, and it was from one of these, mendicants, Jatadhari by name, that the Master took initiation in the sacred mantram of Rama and got also the image of Ramalala. This initiation gave a new turn to the spiritual *sadhana* of the Master in the line of *Vatsalya Bhava* as prescribed in the *Vaishnava* scriptures.

We heard many a time from the Master himself all about the wonderful devotion that Jatadhari had for his deity, Sri Rama. The special object of his devotion and worship was particularly the boy-aspect of Sri Ramachandra, and owing to that long and continuous flow of his intense devotion towards that chosen aspect of his deity, he had developed within him such a state of self-absorption and exalted types of spiritual mood, that even before he came to the Dakshineswar temple, he used to actually perceive through the inner sense of spiritual perception the spiritual, luminous form of 'Boy-Rama' appearing before him and playing with him, or accepting his worship and devotional services. At first these visions used to come to him now and then, and used to overwhelm him with a flood of intense bliss ; but in course of time, as he advanced in the *sadhanas*, the vision got more and more intensified and prolonged in duration ; at last, it became a

constant factor of his conscious experience like any object of perception of the external world. Thus having attained that spiritual exaltation in life and having got his beloved Lord, Sri Ramachandra, as his constant companion, Jatadhari kept himself always engaged in the worship and devotional services of that little image of 'Boy-Rama' which had been the chief means of his developing that wonderful spiritual mood and being blessed with that God-vision. Thus he wandered from place to place all over the land with the sacred image of his Ramalala, (the Boy-Rama), and in one of these wanderings he happened to come to Dakshineswar.

This fact of his getting constant visions of his object of devotion, 'Boy-Rama', he had never disclosed to any one. People knew him to be only an ardent devotee and marked him engaged simply in the fervent worship of a small brass image, and nothing more. But when he came to Dakshineswar the connoisseur's eye of Sri Ramakrishna could unravel this secret of Jatadhari's spiritual life at a glance, and the Master was more attracted towards him and made arrangements to provide him with all the articles he required for the worship of his deity. Further, the Master used to spend much of his time with Jatadhari and observe with keen interest his devotional services. While sitting near Jatadhari and observing his worship, the Master's mind used to transcend all limitations of this gross world and come face to face with that spiritual realm where the visions of Jatadhari were realities; and he too, like Jatadhari, although the latter never made any mention of it to him, used to observe that a young boy of bewitching beauty and lustrous eyes was playing with Jatadhari. We give below a description of it in the Master's own words as we heard from him.

(To be continued)

BY THE WAY

Even the most superficial student of the contemporary events of the world, cannot fail to discern that there reigns a feeling of discontent and uneasiness in all the nations of the world. The more powerful nations are still dominated by commercial ambitions and the lessons of the world-war seem to have made no permanent change in their out-look. This inordinate ambition for self-aggrandisement and world-domination must necessarily lead to clash and conflict amongst them, and the more sober section of the statesmen of the world, who are not blind to this simple truth, are making an attempt to arrive at an understanding so that each of them can follow its own line of development without detriment to the others. The Disarmament Conference which has recently finished its deliberations at Washington testifies eloquently to this growing desire of the better and saner minds of all the countries to curtail the expenditure for army and navy and thereby preclude the possibility of another catastrophe in the near future.

While some of the nations involved in the Great War are still reeling from the economic and financial loss sustained in the last War, the more fortunate amongst them are busy in taking advantage of the situation and accumulating wealth. The selfishness and jealousy of the nations may not be seen on the surface, but they are assuredly operating in guiding their foreign policy to one another. It seems that the task of establishing peace in this world below is an impracticable one, and will for ever remain an ideal which is beyond the scope of practical politics.

At such a juncture of the history of the world, it is the culture and civilization of Asia, specially of India, which can save the materialistic world from the inevitable and interminable frictions and conflicts, and bring about true and lasting peace. The vision spiritual has been the source of the greatness of India, and it is this vision which the individualistic and materialistic West so woefully lacks in. The West knows only one ideal, it is the ideal of the State. The integrity and efficiency of the State must be maintained at any cost, and if possible, expansion is desirable.

The individual is sacrificed and his value is entirely ignored in the pursuit of the realisation of the political ideal of the State.

* * *

In the West, the individual is a thing of matter, a fortuitous concourse of atoms, which must perish after the allotted span of three score years and ten is over ; but in the evaluation of the Eastern culture, this is too poor a conception of the individual. In the hoary culture of India, the individual is always a spiritual entity who, with a value and destiny of his own, is born here to work out his own karma and thus attain salvation. The psychologists are partly responsible for this physical conception of man and materialistic view of life. In Carlyle's contemptuous words, what the psychologists declared is that "Soul is synonymous with Stomach" and the result has been disastrous.

* * *

The West must look at the individual and the State from a new angle of vision, if it wants to get rid of the endless political and social disturbances and struggles, the inevitable friction between one party and another, and preclude the possibility of another world-war, threatening the very existence of nations. The physical view of the individual must give way to the super-physical, and the doctrine of "Might is Right" must give way to some higher and nobler ideal in guiding the destiny of nations. India is the home of the hoary culture of the East, which has always stood for this lofty and sublime ideal, and from India will go forth the thought-movement which only can bring true and lasting peace and happiness for mankind. In the language of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, like the dew, which falls unnoticed by anybody and yet brings into being the fairest of roses, the Indian thought has permeated the whole world and produced beneficial results. India alone can do it again and give the life-giving truths to the thirsting nations !

THE PLACE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN THE WORLD-SCHEME

BY

B. A. C.

My only excuse for allowing this private letter of a friend to become the property of the public, is that in these days of confusion of ideas and ideals, it may furnish the reader with hints and suggestions, and an outline at least, of the World-unity, without a clear conception of which, any re-organisation of life, individual or collective, would be futile. Personally, I have been largely benefited by its perusal ; and hence the attempt at a partial repayment of the debt of gratitude by being instrumental in bringing the same benefit within the reach of those who might be in like need.

SATYABRATA.

J.....,

15th June, '21,

MY HOPE

Dear S.,

Your letter has raised a host of questions. You say that the Mission has failed to fulfil the expectations it inspired at its inception. This your pessimistic version of a thing which is—as far as I can see beyond the veil of the present,—full of a profound promise, has come like a shock to my heart. You do not know with what wistful hope, I am watching the gradual progress of the movement : an awe and deep love ever pervade my spirit, as I perceive before my inner vision, a new Revelation taking form, even as the birth of the World-God ; and I know that the throes of the soul, through which humanity is passing now, are only the thrills of an impatient eagerness for the coming of man to the foot of the God's altar. But time alone, the only perfect arbiter, can show the truth of my heart's hope !

THE CRIME

So you say your expectations have remained unfulfilled ! What were your expectations, pray ? Why do they remain unrealised ? Supposing that your despair is well-grounded, may I ask to know, at whose door the fault lies ? Why did not you join by thousands the Mission from which you derived so much hope ? Why does the 'profuse harvest' remain yet unreaped ? Why has the piteous appeal,—should I say, challenging roar ?—of that lion amongst men, Swami Vivekananda, remained yet a crying in the wilderness ? Where have you been all along, silently and slowly allowing yourselves to be

ground under the heels of the ever multiplying pestilential hosts of famine, disease, death and ignorance, till you are scarcely distinguishable from so many lumps of flesh? If then, you have lacked in spirit, do not, I warn you, visit your own crime,—yes, I say, *crime*, on others! They at least have held the banner high; they at least are wending, though may be slowly, their way towards the goal!

THE SECRET COMMUNION

But my friend, let me tell you, you yourself do not know what you expect or expected. A strange thing, is it not? Yes, I tell you, you do not know what you want, nor do they who are to-day loudest in their clamours. If you will excuse my egoism, may I say that the heart of humanity has spoken to me? Here in this closet of mine, which has been lighted so often by your loving presence,—here, now lonely, except for my crowding thoughts, as I pen this letter, the low muffled moans of the sea reach my prone ears; the whole city sleeps her mid-night slumbers around, watched over, let us hope, by the ever-awake affection of a St. Genevieve; and only the fitful sighs of the restless wind and the plaintive murmurs of the distant sea tell me of the thousand painful dreams that beset the peace of the million reposing souls! And never am I nearer to the secret heart of man! My life, you know, has been one ceaseless search after the elusive unity of humanity's infinite activities. Long have I walked among the networks of man's feelings and emotions, till I know them better than perhaps he knows himself. I have been a wide awake witness of the panorama of Life, and I will point my finger to the exact spot of the hidden sore that rankles in the heart of humanity!

A CONFUSION

Far be it from me if I look upon India's problems as something quite of her own; I know she never looked upon her quest as a thing apart from the world's needs! As I will shew you later on, it will be a misreading of her history to evaluate her activities from only her narrowly individual view-point. Here then, I say, your expectations were wrongly inspired. I fear you expected something absolutely 'national' (in the narrow sense) from the M., that is to say, pre-eminently political. You will excuse me if I speak of politics with a suspicion of sneer. But I cannot help it. Ethics I understand well and so also open warfare. But that certainly is a very obnoxious and pernicious practice, to employ one's all for the furtherance of objects which are lasting only in their evil effects. If politics were all right, then, in and out, it would have been pure morality, national and international. There must be, therefore, something rotten in the whole affair, when I find individual and national morality to exist only by mutual contradiction.

Nor can you say that my estimation of your country's expectation as being politically colored, is wrong. The successive national

movements of Swadeshism, Home Rule and Non-Co-operation are the most precise weather-cock,—they tell me which way the wind blows. The country has times and often been warned that they can expect nothing political from the M. and yet with an amazing assiduity people have proved themselves wiser about Vivekananda's mission than Vivekananda himself!

A MISUNDERSTANDING

The fact is, there have been erroneous conceptions engendered in the public mind about Swamiji and his Mission;—hence the despair. It must be clearly understood that the Swamiji was out and out a Vedic Sannyasin, belonging to and believing with equal faithfulness in the same ancient fold of monks as Sri Sankaracharya, the author of the famous *Kaupina-Panchakam*,—a staunch Mayavadin, theory and practice. To him, if the country and its interests were real, they were so only in a sublimated sense, and not in our ordinary hot-blooded, impatient, frog-in-the-well fashion. Whoever would read his life between the lines, will have this conviction. The man who spent the very first night of his triumph, weeping bitter tears of painful love and writhing in sleepless agony for the starving millions of India, was after all the out-growth of the boy who expostulated with his Master at the Cossipore Gardens that he would for ever remain immersed in the deepest depth of Samadhi. I cannot believe that it was by denying the 'boy' that the 'man' came into being. My friend, I know your leanings towards politics, your essentially active temperament inclines to whatever is spectacularly gigantic and heroic, and it is but natural that a man of heroic fibres should always look for an occasion to fight and struggle to raise his powers to the utmost height he can. But there is a might and a heroism, yet greater and deeper. Only we are deceived by its mild and simple exterior. In that fairer field, may you next try your strength!

So I say, you expected India to follow in the foot-steps of Japan, Italy, and Russia, working out her salvation in the mysterious ways of diplomacy and politics; and you thought that in the strength of Swami Vivekananda, you have found the requisite impulse. I do not blame those who allowed themselves to be thus misled. You know how the Bengal anarchists used to claim Swamiji's utterances as sanctioning their inhuman procedure in bringing about India's freedom. Why this confusion? I fear it is the virile and militant aspect of Swamiji's nature, which, misconstrued, lent itself to these sordid interpretations. We read ourselves in our neighbours; and because the galling sense of political subjection that ever infests our consciousness, can, we think, be destroyed only by the destruction of the apparent cause that produces it, we interpreted Swamiji's fiery patriotism and his warring spirit as a call to a political strife and such other allied destructions. But enough of

this.—Let us now look deeper into the life and the message that are so long awaiting our acceptance.

M., A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT OF 'MAN-MAKING'

What is it then that Mission stands for? *It is an absolutely spiritual movement trying to uplift humanity, individually and collectively to higher and higher spiritual realisations.* I donot call it 'religious' for you are apt to conceive it at once as antithetical to 'secular' and thereby narrow it down to only a fractional function of individuals and nations. So when I say 'spiritual', I emphasise on the fact that the M. looks upon life in all its aspects as entirely spiritual: for it, there is nothing that is secular. Hence it is that it is *man-making*, as the Swamiji said, which the M. aims at.

My friend, do you know what Sri Ramakrishna used to say of the Swamiji? He said, Naren was the incarnation of Nara Rishi; and nothing could be more truly descriptive of him! For have we not seen him,—master of the highest realisation of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi which is the culmination of the whole process of spiritual progress,—yet roaming about mad-like from one limit of India to another, mixing and living with prince and pariah alike, for eight long years, in search of what? What is it that thrust him out of the deeps of meditation into the *Sturm und Drang* of life? What is it that still remained unrealised? It is the *vision of 'Man'*, he was yearning for; and only when at the close of his long wanderings, he sat on the last stones of India at Kanyakumari, did this final 'truth come to him, the truth and the needs of humainty, the way and the goal. And then and only then, resplendent with the greatest of his life's triumphs, he came back to tell men of things which they were all along feeling for, but remained yet unformulated to their blinded vision, and they acclaimed him as leader and master!

This fire of his soul, the Swamiji has incarnated in the form of the M., and the M. too is walking faithfully behind the Master, trying to concretise the revelations that graced the Master's prophetic vision.

THE WORLD'S NEED—THE DEFINITION OF THE 'PERFECT MAN'

And what the world wants to-day is neither political nor industrial salvation, nor yet the triumphs of science. It is crying for a definition of 'Man',—the man who will stand in his full spiritual height, and at the same time accept and realise in himself even the faintest hopes of mankind,—in short, for a synthesis of all our experiences and aspirations, a harmony which no onslaught of truth can ever destroy. All the contents of life and existence shall be given their legitimate place in that synthetic scheme, and there shall be no clash or conflict of details.

Behind all the problems that to-day are trying the powers of men and crying for immediate solution, there is this one fundamental need which is manifesting itself in the different departments of life, in various and complex forms. And if we can safely tackle it there, all these ramifications will at once cease to trouble. And I affirm with the utmost emphasis I can command, that the M. contains that sovereign remedy and can and shall cure this fundamental ill of life. I will tell you how.

THE WORLD,—A SYSTEM

Humainty is a system; it is an organic whole, and the wave that rises in one shore, breaks itself on the other. The history of man is thus a connected story, though the subtle links of this great story may not always be apparent. That it is so, is evident from the present unification of the world of men, which is after all but the consummation and the emergence of a structure that has been growing in the subliminal culture-consciousness of humainty. What is the principle then, that is working this system? *This, I say, is the Aryanisation of the world.*

TWO VIEWS OF LIFE, (i) 'PHENOMENAL' AND (ii) 'NOUMENAL'

Now, what is Aryanisation? To explain: The Reality has two aspects, (i) noumenal and (ii) phenomenal. Each of these aspects, ontologically speaking, is the Reality. Our life, however, individual or collective, cannot accept these two aspects at the sametime, and it has to make a choice between them. But the very fact of this different 'election' of the Being, ascribes different values to them. For, to those who have elected the Phenomenal Reality, the multifarious details of phenomena are its ultimate truth, and life for them consists in ever seeking and enjoying the contents of these particulars rather than their unity-aspect. The mind of man, however, constituted as it is, cannot sustain its internal balance, unless and until it can *systematise* all the various items of its experience and thought; and hence the consciousness of unity, in however tentative a form, is forced on it in spite of its contrary inclination.

But what is this unity? Is it the same as the noumenal aspect of the Reality? No. Since the mind in the 'phenomenal life' constantly insists on the infinite varieties of things and their novelties, the sense of unity that is thrust upon the soul, is only *an abstract idea*, a mere intellectual creation, which may or may not agree with the truth, and serves only to rationalise the ever-accumulating experiences, and is thus at the mercy of other more convenient conceptions of experiential unity. Such unity thus is diametrically opposed to the noumenal unity, which is oneness pure and simple, real all through, and *transcending* and negating all visions of variety: the phenomena simply are not. Our mind, in fact, is so constituted that it cannot

simultaneously conceive both the Phenomenon and the Noumenon as True ; the one to be realised, the other must cease to exist.

Hence 'the eternal certitude of consciousness', which to attain, is the aim of life, cannot be gained by following the 'path of phenomena'; and only by a complete renunciation and breaking off from this path, can you find your ultimate quest.

Add this is exactly what the other path has succeeded to accomplish. For he whose life inclines towards the Noumenon, proceeds not by enjoying phenomena, but by renouncing them, and generates thus a momentum which when sufficiently accelerated, naturally accomplishes that ultimate act of renunciation of life, which we have found to be the absolute need for the attainment of the Ultimate Peace. The process along this path is a constant examination of phenomena as to their capacity to open out a way to the ultimate renunciation. Here too, one accepts all variety and multiplicity as true—for they are facts,—but they are evaluated not as they apparently are, but as to their capacity to tend towards the Ultimate Renunciation. The distinction can be clearly brought out by an illustration ; take the family life. It can be viewed from two different standpoints: (i) though we know, all the individuals are manifestations of the same Ultimate Being, yet we look upon the family life as a new creation not existing before: here is a conjunction of individuals who are each different from the others, and have by their inter-relations created a beautiful harmony. Thus it is not so much the 'sameness' of being, that underlies the 'family unit' that we emphasise on, in this view of things, as its aspect of 'variety.' This is what one who walks the 'path of phenomena,' does; (ii) whereas he of the 'path of noumenon' holds the quite contrary view. He also accepts the fact of family ; but to him it is more the 'sameness' than the 'variety' that appeals: he looks upon each individual member of the family as an incarnation of the One Ultimate Being,—the son, as, say, child Krishna, the daughter as Uma, the wife, the very personification of the Primal Energy, the parents as images of God Himself. The whole life is a continuous meditation of the Being Ultimate, the details of variety are left totally ignored.

WHAT IS ARYANISATION

These two out-looks thus, though apparently related to the same details of life, are completely antagonistic: the one for enjoyment, the other for renunciation ; the one for aggrandisement, the other for self-abnegation ; the one accepting all that is, as whole and good the other scorning it to total annihilation. And when I speak of Aryanisation, I mean their harmonisation or rather the absorption of the one into the other. This supreme process has its source in India ; and in fact her whole cultural history from top to bottom is one continued attempt at Aryanising the non-Aryan creeds and cultures.

THE 'PHENOMENAL' OUTLOOK OF THE WEST

The philosophy I have expatiated on above, may appear to you a mere verbal disquisition, far off from the world of realities, and the distinction I have drawn between the two paths as rather too nice. But come with me to your 'real' world, and you will see how this distinction has fructified itself in widely divergent ways and actions. One cannot say whether it is Divine economy or a mere historical accident, but the people of the West generally have elected the path of Phenomena, whereas those of the East, essentially that of the Noumenon. The consequence of this different election has been that the Occidentals look upon the phenomenal world as the Reality and the noumenon as but its corollary. This life is the firmest ground ; it may occasionally give way, but that is an accident to be fought against and overcome ; all conclusions of life and reality are to be drawn from the consciousness and experience of this life ; philosophical investigation must begin with and centralise round this life, and our morals and religion must justify themselves only by ensuring the validity of this life,—this is the burden of their life's song. Their ideals, their society, their economic life, everywhere it is this one theme that is being pre-eminently maintained. In individual, racial or national life, it is this outlook of phenomenal varieties as the eternally true, that is emphasised ; and it is this peculiar accentuation of the differences rather than the unity that exists in things, that is continually creating new social, political and ethical problems ; and any partial success at their solution is again and again breaking out into thousand other newer crises.

The second consequence has been that the idea of the inevitability of Law has achieved an undue importance as the guiding principle of life. The abnormal prevalence of this idea in the life of the Romans, and the overshadowing concept of the inscrutable Fate in the Greek life, are but two glaring instances of the same motive principle, being the direct outcome of the 'phenomenal outlook' of life.

ARYANISATION AT WORK

If Aryanisation then, is the actuating principle behind the development of the human race, how has it been working itself out ? A short resume of the history of the different cultures of the world will convince us how surely, though slowly, the Arya Dharma of India has penetrated into and remoulded them ! The very first appreciable fruit of this silent aggression is Christianity. For, the religion of the Christ who declared that he and His Father were one, and was so uncompromisingly insistent on Renunciation as the very first step towards God-realisation, is an Aryan religion. It is after all the Jewish, Babylonian, Aegian and Egyptian cults, combined and transformed into the beautiful religion of the Christ, under the direct

idealising influence of the Arya Dharma of the Buddha. Then arose Muhammadanism, coming out of the same Semitic source. But here too the Aryan religion has its due share inasmuch as Christianity to which Islam owes not a little of its strength and philosophy, is the child of Buddhism; but a yet deeper influence has been exerted on Islam through its contact with Hinduism in India, of which, as is well-known, Sufism has been the product; and we can without going beyond the legitimate, say that in future, Islam is destined to be yet more thoroughly tinged and moulded by Arya Dharma becoming aggressive and proselytising.

Thus the silent and the long-winding process of Aryanisation has reduced most of the different cults and creeds of the world (for we can omit Confucianism and Taoism of China as essentially identical with Arya Dharma) to these two mighty religions, of which one at least is, as we find, essentially Aryan; and there remain only the Greek and Roman cultures to be organised; and that is problem of the present age. These cultures are already fairly purged and remoulded, through the chastening influences of Christianity and Islam, and only the final stage remains to be reached before almost three fourths of the world are Aryanised.

THE PROCESS IN EUROPE

I shall show you how Europe could reach the present ripe stage of progress, by drawing your attention to the motive powers behind the different epochs of the European history. I have already referred to the vigor of the concept of law in Roman life;—in the next epoch it is the Divine Grace-concept of Christianity that swung the pendulum of life to the opposite extreme. You see, it is the image of the crucified Christ that won the Roman heart of Europe. Hitherto none could ever conceive the possibility of ever evading the power of law, either externally and internally; now the ideal of salvation as an act of Divine Grace, which was held before the people, by one powerful sweep tore off that shackle. It was no more an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth;—but it was now turning the other cheek, if you are hit on the one. It is service and forgiveness that now related man to man, for did not one hope to be forgiven in Heaven, even as he had forgiven his enemy on earth? It is interesting to note how Christianity was a direct challenge against the Roman ideal in every respect: If the Romans rose to the loftiest height of earthly glory and enjoyment, the call of Christianity was for an absolute rejection and condemnation of the mundane life: if the emperors rode roughshod over the heads of people, they now had to lay in extreme humility their sceptres at the feet of the Christ's representative on earth. Evidently this was a re-action against the former life and was therefore foredoomed to give way to another re-action. But it brought about a deep change in the outlook of life:—the iron grasp of law had been slackened, the grim shadow of the inevitable law had been withdrawn.

Yet however, one was a born sinner and he hoped to be forgiven and let into heaven, because for him the Christ had shed His blood! Not yet, could man stand on his own worth,—not yet, could he look around and trust his own inherent powers. This was the next step in the evolution of Europe—and this was mainly accelerated by the influence of Islam. A sense of unassailable dignity and self-respect, a spirit of chivalry,—the exaltation of a spirited soldier of God,—this was the consciousness that now filled the bosom of every noble youth. The atmosphere of an eternally sinful life, and its consequent humbleness of spirit, was now filled with the aroma of a self-reliant and confident life, and a sense of indomitable courage and strength fired up the imagination of people. The communal soul slowly reverted to the beauty and glory of the Greek and Roman life. Man behaved with man neither in the strict legal terms, nor in the humble Christian spirit, but with *courtesy*, even as when a strong man meets a strong man! The conception of man as neither the subject of law, nor an object of Divine mercy, but an intrinsically powerful unit, is a contribution of Islam to Europe; and this gave back to her her lost self-confidence, and arrogance of strength, only chastened by her intermediate experience. Now came the age of the Knight errants, and of the Crusades. Europe grew bold and enterprising, and slowly the fetters fell off her legs, and she went out to the sea, seeking and conquering foreign lands and treasures; and not only these earthly things she coveted and conquered, but also in the realm of knowledge and truth, she evinced an equal courage; and hence came Protestantism, and the birth of science, and what is known as the Renaissance. Henceforth two forces have been at work behind European life,—arrogance of power, and disintegration of Ideals. The intoxication of power that resulted from their release from the thralldom of Christian ideal of life, has not yet left the European people; and the work of destruction that was initiated at the beginning of Renaissance, has not yet been completed. How many times, has not the West thought that she has found an Ideal and systematised her experiences and hopes,—yet every time, she has been found wanting! In the meantime the work of destruction has been going on apace, revolutionising theological, philosophical, social ideas and ideals.

But one thing has been accomplished by the last war:—the arrogance of power has been broken or at least on the point of being so. It is now found that power—in whatever form it may be conceived, whether military or industrial, is sure to bring on its nemesis,—war and consequent disruption of world-system.

THE CULMINATION

What is the new concept of life, then, that must be propounded before the West to just fit her situation? It is another interpretation of man,—that is what is wanted. The finding of the West that man

is neither a helpless pawn in the hands of a super-imposed Law, nor an eternal sinner dependent on the secession of a Christ, but a self-contained unit, endowed with the actuality and the potentiality of infinite powers,—man, by nature good and pure and strong, and made otherwise only by *controllable* circumstances of life, is true and correct. But yet one step she must go forward, namely, she must learn by an act of free choice, to refuse to *utilise* these powers. “I know I am strong—so strong and so perfect that I fear nothing, and I desire nothing to fulfil me”—this is the ideal that must motivate behind the European mind now. That is to say, she must be taught the Supreme Truth of Vedanta, that *अयमात्मा ब्रह्म*—that the individual soul is Brahman Himself,—ever perfect, ever good, ever beautiful. This ideal, if accepted, will furnish the necessary power and stimulus to Europe to withdraw and concentrate her hydra-headed desire for more and more power. This infinite hankering for the outside should be restrained and turned to the inside. In other words, the present-day Western cult of the ‘organisation of energy’, has to be Aryanised, *i.e.*, interpreted in the terms of Renunciation. If this is done, other problems will of themselves vanish away, for they are only the symptoms of the main disease. When the philosophy of life has once been propounded, our society, our state, our family life, our education, our knowledge—all take their proper place in the central scheme and cease to raise any difficulty any more.

HISTORY OF INDIA

Here in India, the problem has all along been quite a different one. Even at the beginning of history,—none can certainly say when,—the Plan of the National and Individual life, the Arya Dharma, was designed once for all :—the truth that life, to be ultimately fruitful, must be conceived as an attempt at greater and greater renunciation, as a tendency towards the final realisation of the Noumenal aspect of Reality, was propounded in the clearest terms ; a scheme of social life was accordingly deduced,—for it followed as a corollary to the previously admitted truth of the Life's Ideal ; and the Problem that India continually from age to age has been facing and solving is how to absorb any new cult or culture that may chance to travel to her regions, or the changing circumstances of the times might give birth to. So to her, the difficulty has always been not how to preserve her ancient culture intact in a spirit of narrow conservatism, as is generally but erroneously believed, but how to Aryanise the new-comers, to find out a possible interpretation by which the newly proposed ideal might be utilised as a fresh stimulus to and a spiritual mould for the actualisation of the Supreme act of Renunciation. Hence it is we find, that at the beginning of each new epoch of her history, the transitional

period has always been marked by a keen struggle between the conservative Brahmanism and the reformed ideal. It is the period of experiment, when the proposed ideal is as it were allowed a tentative scope in the national life, that it might demonstrate its capability to immolate the supreme Ideal of the Nation, the Arya Dharma. Often we find the new life manifesting itself in very many different but partial forms, each claiming to be accepted into the fold of the Mother Society ; and though they are apparently rejected, yet by their merits and demerits, they demonstrate the extent and depth of their capacity to be interpreted as a fit vehicle of the National Ideal. If they are found short of the required standard, they are left alone, dying of inanition, or waiting for a future opportunity to put forth their claims before the Society. If, however, the soul of the Nation is satisfied of their worth and possibilities, she at once gives birth to a spiritual hero from within her own orthodox fold, who in his personality and teaching reveals the ideal as the realised actuality, and thus opens out the way for the people to reach the goal, and furnishes the theory and the philosophy of life, thereby connecting the new epoch as a natural outgrowth, to the past history of the nation. From Buddha downwards, we find this very principle repeatedly illustrated ;—Sankara, Nanak, Sri Chaitanya, Kavir, Dadu,—they have all fulfilled the same national function of furnishing the connecting link between the old and the new. And with the advent of the Western civilisation, it is the same activity that has been in evidence again. Raja Rammohan and Dayananda Saraswati are the pioneers of the same national movement, which after vacillations, doubts and waverings, has at last found its fulfilment in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna—the soul and messenger of the orthodox Hinduism.

INDIA SOLVES THE WORLD'S PROBLEM

India thus has the peculiar fortune of being the nucleus around which the future world is to be crystallised. And she by her culture and her history, is eminently fit for that exalted position. Perhaps all the various races of the world have contributed their blood and their genius in the constitution and development of the Modern India, and no culture has been excluded :—the East (for Asia is one and her soul is India) and the West have joined hands in India. It is natural then, that the rallying call should go out from India ; and it has indeed been trumpeted forth ;—let them who have ears, hear !

We have seen how the Aryan Ideal of Renunciation is the supreme need of the Western life, and how again the assimilation of the occidental culture is the crying need in our own land. It is *one* message then, which will supplement both the Western and the Eastern Ideals and make of them a complete whole.

THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE NEW PHILOSOPHY :

(i) NEUTRALISATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL AND POLITICAL STRUGGLES

Perhaps you are tired of my philosophical disquisitions. I shall put forward my conclusion in concrete terms then. What India and consequently the other oriental countries require is the organisation of life and power, and what the West needs is the renunciation of the same. 'Renounce!'—this is the call, which positively interpreted is, 'Look upon all men as Divine!' This philosophy applied to life, shall like a magic wand, delegate into nothingness all the evil shadows that now overwhelm life! The very first effect of it will be to cut away the ground from underneath the feet of the present ugly industrial struggle; for this with all its ugly ramifications of war, diplomacy, crimes of factory life, labour-capital struggle, draws its strength and life-blood only from the extremely mundane conception of life that now guides the various nations of the earth, and it is this ideal which will be supplanted as we propose, by a supremely spiritual ideal, which when worked out, will transform economic competition to selfless mutual aid,—the fight for right and power to a spirit of loving worship.

(ii) SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF INDIA'S PROGRAMME

Here in India, the organisation of our social, political and economical life, which has turned out to be an unavoidable necessity, can be safely accomplished, without any impairment of the Ancient Ideal, only by conceiving these activities as only another mode of worshipping the Divinity that is the people! Therefore says Swami Vivekananda, Look upon the poor, the diseased, the ignorant, as veritable Gods! For only by so doing, can we find the necessary spiritual sanction for the tremendous work of regeneration that lies ahead; and only thus our public life, which otherwise becomes an extraneous consideration to our subjective life, becomes reconciled to it as a way to that Holy of Holies wherein abides the Divine Presence.

(iii) HARMONISATION OF LIFE

But the corollary that follows from this doctrine of the Divinity of man, is yet far reaching and deeper in its influence on the future of humanity. You must know that this conception of your own self as Divine, not only provides you with a new angle of vision, from where you find the aim and motive and the method of your individual life changed from an unseemly hurry and bustle for the flesh pots to a quest for the realisation of your inherent Divinity and action and life on this noble spiritual principle, but you begin at the same time to read a different meaning in the actions and motives of others, knowing as you do that they too are parts or rather embodiments of the same Divinity! In fact, you are now prepared to look

upon your neighbours' ways and actions as manifestations of their in-dwelling Divine personality! This transfigured outlook, reflected on social and national life, is bound to produce a corresponding change in the methods and ideals of our educational, social, political and industrial life. Respect for the infinite inherent potentialities of the individuals, an humble and worshipful regard for the evolving Divinity in each man, and consequently a solicitous watchfulness for an unimpaired maintenance of individual freedom in every sphere of its activity, and an earnest effort to be of ever so light assistance to our neighbours, as a veritable act of worship,—that is the attitude that man now will take towards man. All the troubles and difficulties of our individual and national life, are really the outcome of a distorted and partial vision of the human personality; this is at the root of all clash and conflict. Therefore a perfected vision necessarily neutralises these struggles inasmuch as the exaltation of the flesh being no longer the guiding force of life, they cease to interest us any more and die of inanition. And a perfect harmony and unbroken peace will surcharge the atmosphere of life, and humanity will thrive as it has never thrived before.

(iv) THE FUTURE WORK OF MAN-KIND

You may rightly argue that this absolute cessation of struggle may result in a complete collapse of life itself. To which I reply that it need not necessarily be so. It is indeed true that without action life is impossible, but this activity may be realised as much in the spiritual world as in the physical or intellectual. The whole energy that is now being devoted to the building up of gigantic military or industrial organisations may equally be utilised in the work of uplifting humanity. Individuals will find vast fields of activity in the conquest of their lower selves and realisation of their true nature,—sufficient struggle indeed to last through ages. Collectively, the education and elevation of the backward races all over the world will provide unlimited scope for the civilised peoples to work for centuries, before the whole race of men can be brought upto the same level.

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

This is the Ideal then, that Sri Ramakrishna Mission stands for. And this is the Message it proclaims to the world: "Know, O man, that you are Divine, and know that all are Divine! How can a God run for a piece of gold or a piece of earth? That does not befit you, O God! Realise your true, Divine nature and cease to struggle for earthly things! Love and harmony be your watchwords, and let them inspire and pervade all your thoughts and actions! Look upon each individual as ever manifesting or realising its own Divinity and dare not in your ignorance interfere with its evolution, for it is God's work

itself ! Only love and serve if you can, but do not obstruct !” And this indeed is the vision of the Perfect Man!—a vision which the world thirsts after ! And we have seen how this Perfect Man is the Man of Renunciation, of love and harmony infinite !

THE CRUCIAL TEST OF HISTORY

But an Ideal so long as it is only an ideal, fails to take its proper place in the working system of humanity. It must be realised, it must be concretised, indeed it must be born as a son of man ;—only then the heart of humanity can be assured of its reality : for it dares not advance a single step in the dark unknown of futurity. Thus we see that many are the voices that speak and formulate the gospel of hope, but none to prove it in their life. This fact you must carefully note. Every national regeneration, or evolution must realise itself around a living man who in his life and consciousness concretises our hopes and aspirations, and in his own personality furnishes the mould in which we must recast ourselves before we can inherit the promised future. Especially so is the case when the reform desired is deep and subtle and of far-reaching effects.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE PROPHET OF THE AGE

This truth of historical evolution has attached an unique significance to the Ramakrishna Mission. For Sri Ramakrishna is the ‘Man of the Time’,—the personality which history needs to forecast its future development. Nowhere in the world has there been born a man who in his own life has practised and realised all the different ideals and hopes of all the different races of the world ! You hear of many sects rising up to declare the Divinity of man and spiritualisation of life, and the need of love and harmony in collective life ; but none has yet been able to back up the message with the Personality, which is the crucial need ! But the Mission has done it : it has given the Man as well as the Message ! And you may rest assured that the soul of humanity has accepted him as her lord and his words as her life ! For has he not passed the required test of history ?

You may look upon all these as an utopian scheme,—this dream of the Divine Man and the world of harmony: But it is such dreams that create the realities, and one need not despair of man from his present depression ! The agony of despair and uncertainty, that is to-day convulsing the souls of nations all over the earth, can be allayed and consoled only by an equally strong promise of hope and reality. The densest gloom of degeneration that to-day envelops the whole globe, can be uplifted and destroyed only by a proportionately strong light of purity and spirituality ! And as has been the fall, so will be the rise !—does not a deep hollow crest a mighty wave?

PLACE OF MISSION IN THE WORLD-SCHEME 277

THE PLACE OF M. IN THE SCHEME

This is the place, my friend, I allocate to the Mission in the scheme of world-reconstruction ! Can I then calmly endure all these sceptical and short-sighted views that you indicate in your letter ? Don’t you see how the M. is not any elaborate product of the erring man ? It has indeed blossomed forth spontaneously like a thousand-petalled lotus from the Heart of Humanity, and its very existence is thus the proof of its supreme efficacy !

I do not know, if I have been able to convince you of my hopes and reasons. I fear, I have not succeeded to fully speak out my mind ! But perchance, I may have myself misunderstood ; may be, I too have been vouchsafed only a partial vision ! Whatever that might be, the world has not yet given me a better message of hope than the Mission !

THE WORLD IS COMING TO ITS OWN

As I look around, from my conning tower, I scan no sign of a holier or a more perfect realisation of man. True indeed, this mighty work of regeneration and reconstitution can and will but be slow ; but let that not impair our patience, for nothing good is done in a hurry. I see everywhere the sign of new life: even these darkest days of our world have not been able to completely submerge those immortal signs ; rather with the passing of days, they are growing in dimension and reality. I see the world is slowly coming to the true path. The collapse of the material civilization of the West, the stirring of new life amongst the lower strata of humanity in every nation and land, and these struggles for political and economical emancipation from the thralldom of organised brute-force,—these all clearly point out only the glorious prospects, it is trying to realise.

ADIEU

My friend, I have talked long, and dreamt longer ; for this my confession to you of my ideas and ideals, has been repeatedly interrupted by the rising visions of the glorious future of India and the world ! When indeed the man of my dream will walk this living earth ? But let me now take my leave. The hours have all struck, and the silent stars are slowly paling away before the invading rays of day-light: the eastern sky is already suffused with the roseate hues of dawn ! When, Oh when will the new day dawn on my life ?

Yours affly,

B. A. C.

THE GOLDEN LINK TO GOD

BY

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

The modern mind is becoming more and more averse to prayer. It makes a parade of its scientific and rationalistic temper of mind and sacrifices at that altar the great joy-giver and purifier of life. One modern man asks what is the use of prayer in a world full of misery? Another asks how prayer is compatible with universal law? A third man asks how it is compatible with omniscience which knows our needs better than we with our limited knowledge and purblind vision can know the same? Some men think that prayer is mere sentimental moonshine and not a practical means (*sadhana*).

All these questions are put not so much because men are averse to prayer but because men are engrossed in fleeting outer events and objects and are avid of pleasure. Prayer implies a mental falling back upon the contemplation of the eternal elements in life and the realisation of God's power and mercy and love. It is not a selfish appeal to the God of Battles, but an unselfish trust in the God of Love.

The fact is that though the law of conservation of energy is in operation in the material world, there is not only a law of conservation of value but also a law of augmentation of value in the spiritual world. The soul of man is eternal and its ascent of self-realisation implies an ascending scale of values. This does not mean that the soul acquires a new value or a new bliss but that the soul realises its infinite value and bliss more and more and in an ever-increasing measure. The self-risen Phoenix is only in the realm of the soul and does not exist in the realm of matter.

It is by prayer that this increasing self-realisation of the soul is attained. Nay, it is by prayer that we are put into moods of rhythmical adjustments with others. Anti-social endeavour is a moral disease. Moral health depends on love. He who does not love God, is not likely to love man with a full and unselfish love. Why should he do so? Why should he not use others as mere instruments of his pleasure? It is only he who wants to go through love of man to love of God—God who is in himself and his

neighbour and in all—that will have a pure and disinterested loving moral relation towards others.

It is impossible to understand why the existence of suffering should be incompatible with prayer-fulness. Suffering is a purgation for evil done. Prayer is a mood of love for God, which purifies our sins and prevents future sins. If suffering is only sin in effect, why should it prevent prayer which is the only means of triumph over sin?

Further, the appeal to God in prayer is not like a humble petition to an autocratic emperor. It is a child's raising of trustful and loving eyes to its father or its mother. The answer to it is not a capricious giving or withholding of bounties, but the removal of the inner hindrance, caused by sin, to the flow of His Love and Grace. The answer to prayer is thus primarily in the soul. Prayer is hence a knocking at the door of the house of Light. The opening of the door takes place inside the heart. When the Light of His Love streams out, the darkness of sin which cannot abide the Light of His Love, flees away.

Hence it is that the highest prayer is not a clamour for outer benefits. The noblest prayers leave the results in His hands:

"O God of gods, O Madhava, command for me what is beneficial unto me."

"O Mahadevi, there is no sinner like unto me, there is no purifier like unto you; realising this, do unto me as you think proper."

He knows what is best for us and others. It is for us to pray for more light, more love, more fitness for His grace.

But the highest use and justification of prayer are elsewhere. It will have an eternal place and a perennial value in life as the supreme means of God-realisation in the dark chamber of the heart. Inner experience of the Invisible Presence is what is called mystic vision. Such vision will cease to be phrase and become a fact, only if we have the elevating bliss of prayer. Maeterlinck says well, "There is in us, above the reasoning portion of our reason, a whole region answering to something different, which is preparing for the surprises of the future, and which goes on ahead of our imperfect attainments and enables us to live on a level very much superior to that of those attainments." We have unknown higher energies in us, which, if unlocked and directed, will lead us

on to the highest of realisations. The key by which we can unlock such energies is prayer and prayer alone. As has been well said : "Such experiences minister to life, construct personality, equip for a mission, fuse men into more dynamic groups, conduce to the increased power of the race. Energy to live by has actually come to these persons from somewhere." This mystical experience which is an inward intensity and bliss, is aided and enriched by prayer. Religion is but a myth if present experience of God is not to be ; and present experience of God will be for ever a myth if the aid of prayer is not sought and won.

Nay, prayer is its own final proof. Hunger implies previous taste. The hunger for prayer will not be in us if we had not tasted God's love before. Prayer is the real proof of the essential divineness of the soul. It is the God-given means of finding our real self and God. "God comes in when man goes out". Tennyson has sung in well-known lines about the bond of God and man in prayer :

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Prayer is for the purpose of enabling us to realise God's love and to love Him as well as for the purpose of enabling us to undergo self-chastisement and self-humiliation for sins already committed. It is thus not a mere working backward but a looking forward as well. We are the servants of the Prince of Love—not mere outcasts or exiles self-banished from Him by our moods of sin. Thus repentance must blossom into hope and hope must bear the fruitage of love. A new chiming and attunement of the soul with God must come into existence. There must be a new vision, a new desire, a new effort, a new upspringing of love in the heart. Prayer brings as its highest gift a new worshipfulness, a new adoration, a new blessedness.

Prayer and moral life are not only compatible with each other but must go together. No honest man can love God and yet hate man. Truth and Beauty and Goodness are three rays from the

Sun of God. The blossom of the religious nature is devotion, but its fruit is morality. He who sings and shouts and dances uttering the name of God, but breaks His commandments, can never win the esteem of man or grace of God. The Lord says : "The scriptures are My commands ; he who disobeys them and breaks My commandments is My enemy and is not dear to Me, though he is devoted to Me".

Thus prayer is a self-consecration in love and self-dedication in sacrifice. In such moods,

"In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God",

not only is there forgiveness of sin ; not only are new trustfulness and loveliness born in us ; but new powers are generated in us—powers over nature and over disease. Even modern science, which is oblivious and even disdainful of spiritual science, admits the potentialities and possibilities of mental control over physical states. The new "Christian Science" movement in America proceeds upon this basis of faith-healing and its potencies of transformation. Our Yoga systems and Mantra systems tell us how by God's grace, quickened in us by meditation and concentration, we can make our mind and our body veritable dynamos of purifying and healing power. Prayer cannot merely better us within and without, but, if it is true and deep, it can help others as well. It is a channel by which grace abounding descends in an unstinted measure. The fact is that causation is finally and ultimately spiritual in its origin. Law is but the outer vesture of love. A new energy of love can set a new law in operation and modify existing law not by caprice but by a new and commanding law. The existing laws are but a manifestation of His Love and who is there to set a limit to the further and higher manifestations of His Love ? The supernatural is the battery, the power-station of the natural. A new electrical self-charge of the power of love will display temporary new manifestations of a new law. Man is not a mere insignificant animal hustled by nature through life into death. He is a spiritual dynamo whereby he can recreate himself and the world.

But the daily miracles of renewal and rebirth are in the soul and not in the outside world. Is not the rekindling of the light of the soul as wonderful an event in the cosmos as the birth of a new star ? The temporary suspensions and modifications of the world-order by the operation and energy of a new law are but few and

far between, and come into existence when urgent cosmic needs imperatively demand the same. But the re-creations of the spirit are a daily possibility—nay, a daily fact. Obedience to God is freedom in man. His Love brings cessation of desire; His light brings cessation of ignorance. A newer and higher world-order comes but seldom; a newer and higher individual life can be born every hour. The expectation of frequent suspensions of natural laws for satisfying individual needs or averting individual calamities or conferring individual benefits, is a sign of inner weakness and puerility. Not only would such interventions at the instance of this or that petitioner be subversive of law altogether, but also there would be diverse and mutually incompatible petitionings by diverse men with different and often irreconcilable needs. As stated above there is the further fact that, after all, the granting of our requests so glibly proffered and persistently urged, has no certainty of real and ultimate benefit to us at all. Though thus the suspensions and modifications and reversals of the world-order in response to prayer are so infrequent and rare and so dependent on extraordinary situations as to be negligible, the miracles of new creations of power and love in our own natures can be very frequent and very fruitful. We must know in what way power is inherent in us and waiting to be applied to the manifold needs of life and how prayer can transform such power from a potential to a kinetic condition.

The fact is that we know little as yet about the unknown sources of power within ourselves. We are likely to generalise from what we know of ordinary physical and mental states that expenditure of energy must cause fatigue. But there is a supply in us that is more than the demand, did we but know where to find it. Fatigue is caused by mental restlessness; strength is attained by mental quietude, "the central peace in the heart of endless agitation". Man is not a receptacle of energy but a channel of energy. Energy is not contained in us but courses through us. If only we know how we can attain to moods of wise passiveness wherein a new and higher power is generated in us for our own elevation and the elevation through us of the world, we would yearn for such dynamic passiveness. Such a state is not a negation of activity but is a fulfilment and perfection of activity; it is not a flying away from life but is a seeking of the superlife. The Infinite is potential in us; and life becomes richer, fuller, and more glorious when the Infinite is more and more realised in and through the finite, and when we batter down the thick dark coverings of hatred and the opaque coverings

of worldliness, and allow the inner light to stream forth bearing radiance and warmth in abundance to the world.

Prayer is not the mere sealing of a contract between God and man. Man does not say to God: "I shall pray to you and praise you. Give me riches and power and fame". Love scorns and transcends the contractual basis of life. Contract gives the economic man, but the spiritual man gives without any *quid pro quo*. The contracts of the spirit are unsupported by consideration. The history of human progress is summed up by the philosophic historian in the phrase, from status to contract. The history of psychic progress will be summed up by the future historian of a higher and nobler humanity in the phrase, from contract to status. Only the word *status* will have to be understood in a newer and higher sense. It would mean our relation to God. The relation would be not one of contract but of self-surrender. By status in the primitive ages was implied a sacrifice of personality by subservience to another erring human being. By status in the Kingdom of God is implied an enrichment of personality by glad and voluntary self-surrender of it to Divine Perfection. When prayer by the very force of its intensity and purity attains such a height, it becomes raised from its lower to its higher manifestations. Then and then only will all arguments against prayer—which are due to a non-perception of its real nature—stand hushed in the presence of a richness and fulness of life, which was unknown before. Then only will it be realised that piety is not a malady, and prayer is not a waste of breath or thought. Prayer is not mere emotional thrill, a tingling of the nerves, a tickling of the mind. It is the surge of spirit to spirit.

REVIEWS

Sri Narada Pancharatnam.—Translated by Swami Vijnanananda. Published by Sudhindra Nath Vasu, at the Panini Office, Bahadurganj, Allahabad. Price Rs. 6.

This is the twenty-third volume of the Sacred Books of the Hindus, which are being published by the Panini Office of Allahabad. It is one of the oldest specimens of Vaishnava literature in Sanskrit and deals with Sri Krishna, Sri Gopala and Sri Radha cult. The leading theme of the book is devotion and love towards Sri Krishna, who is verily God Himself, and the glories of boy Krishna are sung in the treatise. The servitude of Hari through devotion is the means of getting rid of all mundane troubles and getting Mukti. We do not find the mention of the three higher Bhavas (adoring God in a particular human relation) in this treatise *viz.* Sakhya (thinking God as the devotee's friend), Vatsalya (thinking God as Gopala), and Madhurya (looking God as the Husband) which find their consummation in the Navadwip School of Vaishnavism. The translation is very lucid and quite in keeping with the spirit of the original. We congratulate the Publishers on their securing the services of such a learned man in translating this valuable book of Vaishnava theology into English, which will undoubtedly make the book accessible to a wider circle.

The Meeting of the East and the West.—By C. Jinarajadasa, M. A. (Cantab). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 120. Price Rs. 2.

This is the third of the series of books on Asian culture called "the Asian Library," which will include Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Science, Education, Social Polity, and History.

The book opens with the two famous lines of Kipling, "O, East is East, and West is West, And never the twain shall meet," which according to the author are *misquoted* a thousand times. This is the sentiment of the blind observer of men, but his own true sentiment comes in the next lines of the poem :

"But there is neither East nor West, border, breed or birth, When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth !"

The East and the West have misunderstood each other for generations, but now the time has come when the two are approaching each other for the world's welfare.

The author surveys in a critical manner how the desire of each of the nations of the West for a "place in the sun" has resulted in a keen competition and hard conception of life, and the best minds, tired of experimenting with political institutions, based on rights, are attempting a revision of the theories of the state and looking forward to a great Reconstruction. It is here that the East with the higher conception of rights and duties can help the West, and slowly they are meeting on a common platform. The learned author points out very clearly how the East and West differ fundamentally in the measuring of 'Man' and this difference in the measuring of 'Man' accounts for their differences in statecraft, in economics, in the problem of labour, in class distinctions and in religion ; in short, in their outlook on life and the world. "There is a marked contrast in the conception of the individual by Eastern culture and by Western culture. In the hoary culture of India, the individual is always a spiritual entity; in the prevalent culture of the West, the individual is a thing of matter, a "fortuitous concourse of atoms," which exists for a time and then disperses. For India, the individual is a Dehin, the possessor of, or a dweller in, a body ; for the West, he is a Deha, the body itself..... This conception of the West of the individual as merely a bubble on the sea of existence—a bubble which is bound to burst after the "allotted span of life" of some three score years and ten is over—is at the root of all Western civilization, whether in education, economics, politics, hygiene or "efficiency." Every scheme of legislation or education visualises the citizen as the material man, who begins at birth, and who ends at death. Once the body is dead, there is no citizen to help, or to be helped by, the state. The East has ever held the individual to be a super-physical man." Indeed India and the West are poles asunder in their conception of the value and destiny of the individual. But it is a hopeful sign of the time that materialism, which has been the gospel of the educated men of the West for the last three quarters of a century, has been undergoing very remarkable changes. The old idea of mind and thought as originated by the brain is no more believed seriously, and the psychologists of to-day are throwing new light on the subliminal self *i.e.*, the states of the mind "below the threshold." The chapter on "The Value of the Indian Temperament to Civilization" will be read with interest by all and will go a long way to make the Englishman understand the Indian outlook on the problems of life. There are many, even amongst advanced thinkers, in the West, who think that Indians were never a nation and it is by coming in contact with the Western nations that the Indian nation has been born and is growing. They have shown a thousand

times the differences in language, manners, customs and institutions of the people living in different parts of India, and some have gone so far as to maintain that an Englishman and a Frenchman are more akin than a Bengali and a Tamil. In Europe the sense of Nationality goes hand in hand with a common language and they take it for granted that everywhere the two must be co-existent. "Certainly India has not a common language. But, nevertheless, Indians have had for thousands of years a national sense and a national unity. But it is a type of nationality which finds no parallel in Europe." The author proceeds to show that the aim of modern India to give an objective expression to its nationality, is realisable, only because there has been for thousands of years a subjective nationality. "The elements which have gone to make up this hidden nationality, are: (1) a common worship; (2) a set of mental images common to all, expressed sometimes through a common language and sometimes through different dialects; (3) the thought of a common homeland of culture." We heartily congratulate the author Mr. C. Jinarajadasa for setting forth admirably the true conception of Indian nationality which is unique of its kind, and the Theosophical Publishing House for publishing this series of books of Asian Library, which will go a long way to make the Occidental nations appreciate the value of Asiatic culture and civilization for the uplift and betterment of humanity.

The Full Moon : a Play Offering for Children.—By Vyasa Ram, Adyar, Madras Price as. 8 annas eight.

This is a playlet intended for children to fit in with a scheme of religious education in which a study of God's work and life through objects in Nature, forms an important part. The moon, stars, clouds, trees and flowers are the characters of the play.

NOTES AND NEWS

His Holiness Srimat Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj is now staying at Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. Two welcome-addresses were given to him in Calcutta : one, by the public of the city and the other by the students of the several Arts, Science and Medical Colleges of the University. In course of his reply to the first address, the revered Swami narrated his own work and experiences during his long stay abroad. It was in the year 1896 that he left the shores of his motherland at the call of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda and went to England. He had been preaching the message of Sanatana Dharma—the message of the Harmony of Religions of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in the West for the last twenty-five years, crossing the Atlantic seventeen times *en route* Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Great Britain and United States. He said, he was successful among those who were associated with him—especially the highly educated ladies of America—in preaching the Universal Motherhood of God as was realised by his Master. He deeply regretted the down-trodden condition of his motherland, and said that the condition of our country cannot be changed unless we understand the situation which is simply a degeneration of our moral, mental and physical strength. Compared with the industry of China, the patriotism of Japan, the sincerity and business capacity of the Western people, we are nothing but a group of parrots who can only chatter ! We should really quit the university—said he—if it allows to produce a good many gramophones for reproducing a few chapters from Shelly and Byron and a few thousands of clerks and pleaders ! He said that, here in India, the land of the Upanishadas, the holy land of the Rishis, we should understand the truths of Sanatana Dharma, which teaches that humanity is one mass. In humanity there is no division. Fear is the greatest evil and the whole world is becoming burdened with fear. No fear—but love. Love means the expression of oneness. In conclusion he said that every man may be a Mahatma in a day, if he can sacrifice himself for some good cause ; and India, the land of renunciation, produced good many Mahatmas such as Shankara, Ramanuja, Sri Chaitanya, Kavir, Nanak, who were the glory, not only of this land, but of the world. He emphasised that we should get such education as can really make us free—can give us delight of freedom, not only in political sphere but also in spiritual, otherwise it would be simply a copy of the democratic countries where there is an endless friction and struggle. They do not know the philosophy of Self but the dangerous doctrine of ' Might is Right,' which is putting the West in a roadway of rapid destruction.

The following is the report of the Allahabad Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram for the month of November, 1921.

There were 1222 cases of which 460 were new and 762 repeated numbers.

Summary of accounts during the month of November, 1921.

... by November, 1921.

RECEIPT.			EXPENDITURE.		
	Rs.	A. P.		Rs.	A. P.
Subscriptions ...	40	12 0	Medicines ...	265	7 0
Donations and other collections ...	124	4 0	Other Expenditures ...	176	14 6
			Total ...	442	5 6
Received by selling Key Notes of Twelve Remedies ...	3	8 0			
Withdrawn from Bank of Bengal ...	70	0 0			
Loan taken for Medicines without interest ...	200	0 0			
Balance of October ...	6	13 0			
Total ...	445	5 0			
Balance ...	2	15 6			

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by Brahmachari Panchanan, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Muthi-gunj, Allahabad.

The following is the account of the contributions received at the Math, Madras, during the year 1921 for charitable purposes.

RECEIPTS.			DISBURSEMENTS.		
	Rs.	A. P.		Rs.	A. P.
January, 1921.					
Dr. M. S. N. Pillay, Kyklat	10	0 0	Transferred to the Famine Relief Fund, Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters at Belur ...	10	0 0
March 1921.			To Swami Sahajananda, Chidambaram, for Panchama education ...	25	0 0
Mr. A. Venkata Rao, Basrah	25	0 0	To Sri Ramakrishna Mission Girls' School, Madras ...	103	0 0
Dr. M. S. N. Pillay, Kyklat	15	0 0			
May 1921.					
M. V. Swamy, Taluk Auson, F. M. S.	88	0 0			
June 1921.					
Dr. M. S. N. Pillay	25	0 0			
October 1921.					
Dr. M. S. N. Pillay	15	0 0			
November 1921.					
G. Vydyanathan, Basrah	50	0 0			
Total Cr.	Rs. 228	0 0	Total Dr.	Rs. 188	0 0
			Balance in Hand	Rs. 90	0 0
				Rs. 228	0 0

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
 "Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
 And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[No. 10.]

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

'Swami Saradananda

(Continued from Page 260)

"Jatadhari had had that sacred image of Ramlala for a long time with him and kept himself ever engaged in the devotional services of the deity. Wherever he went, he carried the image with him and whatever he got by begging he offered with all the devotion of his heart to Him. No, not only that—he used to see actually that his beloved Ramlala was eating what he offered or begging of him with the importunity of a pet child to give him particular articles of food or asking him to go for a stroll with Him, or urging him for sundry other things. And Jatadhari used to remain ever absorbed, incbrated with the very ecstatic joy of these visions! I too used to see that Ramlala was doing such things! And I used to remain with Jatadhari all the twenty-four hours of the day—and behold ceaselessly the visions of Ramlala.

"As days rolled on, the affection of Ramlala grew more and more for me. As long as I used to remain near Jatadhari, He played with us both and remained there, but no sooner I came to my own

room, He used to come away with me leaving His devoted Jatadhari behind. In spite of my repeated prohibition to do the same, He would never remain with Jatadhari after I left him. First I thought all these were mere hallucinations—aberrations of my own brain. Otherwise how could it be possible that the deity who had been worshipped continually for such a long time by Jatadhari and with so much intensity of devout love and services, would be attached to me more than him? It could not be! But of what avail were such thoughts of mine? I used to see,—yes, I used to see actually as I am now seeing you all here—that Ramlala used to come along with me dancing and jumping, sometimes ahead of me and sometimes behind. Sometimes I used to see Him hugging me to take Him up into my lap, sometimes again, I used to see that while I was carrying Him on my lap, He was struggling to come down and when I put Him down, He would run hither and thither in the sun. Sometimes, He used to run into the thorny bushes to pluck wild flowers and again sometimes He used to jump into the Ganges and swim on its waters! Oh, how I used to feel for such childish pranks of Ramlala! I used to cry to Him not to run about in the sun lest His tender feet might be scorched, nor to remain much in water, lest He might catch cold; but He never paid any heed to my warnings. Sometimes He would look at me with those two big lustrous eyes and put on bewitching smiles on His face and play all sorts of frolicsome pranks. Sometimes He would make faces at me like a naughty child and I too used to frown at him for such naughtiness of His. Sometimes being teased by His pranks, I used to go even to the extent of giving some mild chastisement to Him, and He used to cry for that; then, again, I had to console Him! All these I used to actually see like any other real object of this world."

We have already related before that the Master used to spend at that time much of his time in the *Prakriti Bhava*, thinking himself as the eternal handmaid of the Divine Mother and while in this mood sometimes he used to prepare garlands of flowers with his own hand, and decorate the Mother with them; he would spend some time again, in fanning the Divine Image with the *chamara*. He found much pleasure then in decorating the Mother with all kinds of ornaments which he had newly made for the purpose, and dressing himself in the garb of a woman he used to spend much of his time in singing and dancing before the image as if to entertain the Divine Mother. It is needless to say that the Master did all these out of the spontaneous impulse of his heart, which must have been roused very strongly in him at that time. So

when Jatadhari came there, his association with the Master must have given a fresh impetus to the latter to kindle in him the motherly love for the child Rama as described here-to-before. And under the inspiration of that feeling, the Master was blessed with the vision of the 'child Rama'—nay, with his actual living presence! Therefore, there is no wonder that his heart was filled with a mother's affection for that Divine Child, under the inspiration of that *Prakriti Bhava*. What strong attachment and tender affection a loving mother feels for her little child, he felt at that time for that Divine Child in his heart. And we can well imagine how that attraction of love kept him tied to that little image belonging to Jatadhari and drowned him in the ocean of ecstasy which robbed him of all his consciousness of the external work-a-day world.

The virile mind of the Master could not be satisfied with any half-way measure. As it was true with him in ordinary physical actions, it was also true with his subtle spiritual attainments. It was noticed that whenever any spiritual Bhava took possession of his heart, he could never remain contented until he reached its extreme culmination. Perhaps some of our readers may contend here that such rule of conduct is not safe for others to follow, as no good can ever come to man through the mad pursuit of an uncontrolled emotion. The human mind is ever agitated by both good and evil tendencies, so, although such uncontrolled pursuit of his own inclinations never led Sri Ramakrishna astray, yet such conduct cannot safely be imitated by others. Further, it is hazardous to foster such confidence in one's own self as to imagine that nothing but good impulses alone can arise in him. Therefore, it is the duty of man to keep his emotions and impulses under strict control that they may not run into excesses.

(To be continued)

BY THE WAY

During the last month was celebrated the Sixtieth Birthday of the Great Man whose advent in the latter part of the nineteenth century, remarkable for its marvellous discoveries in the physical world and revolution in human thought by the welding together of the masses of humanity, inhabiting different parts of the globe,—had been equally remarkable in teaching the Religion of Harmony of this land of the Vedic Rishis to the nations of the East and the West and the gospel of the One, All-Pervading, Blissful, Immortal Atman, which is the real nature of every man, be he white, black or yellow. It is only twenty years that he has given up the body of flesh and blood at his sweet will, but the working of his spirit is patent to all except the blind and the perverted. The amazingly rapid transformations which are taking place in the country and the tremendous stir of life manifest all around us, point unmistakably to the death-knell of all time-worn ideals and the rebuilding of the national edifice on a newer and safer foundation. For it was he who enunciated the truth: "The old tree dies, but out of the seed of the dead tree is born another, which is perhaps bigger and grander than the former!"

In order to fully appreciate the grandeur and sublimity of his life, it is necessary that we should know the *Zeitgeist* of the age in which he was born. It was an age of imitation and hypnotism, when the advanced thinkers of India were captivated by the glamour of Western life and civilization. The school of Free Thinking inaugurated by Raja Rammohan Roy and the Neo-Theistic Movement of Keshub Chunder Sen were shaking the faith of the youths of Bengal in the traditional Hinduism. The agonism of Spencer and the materialism of Huxley and Tyndall were swaying the best minds of Europe, and the infection spread to India; and thus the forces which were operating in those days were so potent that the inheritors of the most ancient civilization of the world began to seriously question the authenticity and validity of their scriptures and religion. It is now a matter of common knowledge, how the sham religion of the world disgusted Norendra Nath (as Swami Vivekananda was then called) and drove the future Swami Vivekananda to the position of a sceptic. It was the magical touch of his Master, the Prophet of Dakshineswar, which

brought about the marvellous transformation in his life by helping the actual realisation of all his dormant potentialities.

His success in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago marks a new era in the history of Hinduism, and the unique receptions and ovations, accorded to him from Colombo to Almora after his return from the West was one more conclusive demonstration of the truth that religion is the keynote of the national life in India. He was the carrier of the message of love and toleration and the spiritual wisdom of the ancient Rishis, which India has preserved in spite of vicissitudes and catastrophes in the different periods of her history. And he believed that the life-giving truths of Sanatana Dharma are to be given to the thirsting nations of the West, in whom a feeling of satiety is growing, inspite of the material comforts and luxuries which the modern science has provided for them.

In one of his famous Madras lectures, he says, "Thoughts, like merchandise, can run through channels made by somebody. Roads have to be made before even thought can travel from one place to another, and whenever in the history of the world a great conquering nation has arisen, linking the different parts of the world together, there has poured forth through these channels the thought of India, and thus entered into the veins of every race. Before even the Buddhists were born, there are evidences accumulating everyday that Indian thought penetrated the world. Before Buddhism, Vedanta had penetrated into China, into Persia, and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Again, when the mighty mind of the Greek had linked the different parts of the eastern world together, there came Indian thought; and Christianity with all its boasted civilization is but a collection of little bits of Indian thought. Ours is the religion of which Buddhism, with all its greatness, is a rebel child, and of which Christianity is a very patchy imitation. One of these cycles has again arrived. There is the tremendous power of England which has linked the different parts of the world together. English roads no more are content like Roman roads to run over lands, but they have also ploughed the deep in all directions. From ocean to ocean run the roads of England. Every part of the world has been linked to every other part, and electricity plays a most marvellous part as the messenger. Under all these circumstances we find again India reviving, and ready to give her own quota to the progress and civilization of the world.

And that I have been forced, as it were, by nature to go over to America and England, is the result. Every one of us ought to have seen that the time had arrived. Everything looked propitious, and Indian thought, philosophical and spiritual, must once more go over and conquer the world."

* * * *

Indeed, it was one of his principal aims to convert all the different forces at work in India with one great idea and directing it towards the achievement of the redemption of India and the Spiritualisation of Humanity. "Up India! Conquer the world with your spirituality" that was the prophetic utterance addressed to his countrymen after his return, with the intimate knowledge of the powerful and luxurious West. This cultural conquest of the West by India which the great Swami dreamt of, has a parallel in the history of Greece in that the conquered Greece conquered Rome. The Romans had to accept the culture and civilization of a race who were politically subjugated by them. And signs are not wanting to-day to indicate that the best thinkers of Europe and America, tired of interminable strife and conflict between nations and nations, between the capitalist and the labourer, between the classes and the masses, which are invariable concomitants of their materialistic and individualistic civilization, are now turning to Indian culture for the establishment of order, peace and stability of society.

* * * *

May the Lord of all nations so guide their course that the new era that is dawning all over the world may witness the exchange of ideals amongst them, the cessation of all jealousy and strife, and the reign of peace and harmony! "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Peace and Harmony and not Dissension!"

ISVARA AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY

Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M.A.

1. The modern mind has become so much affected by the doctrine of Evolution as to study even religion from its new standpoint and wishes to have it modified in the light afforded by it. But, as different minds hold different views regarding the conditions, past and present, which constitute the world's growth, we find that we have only a Babel of conflicting views. No certainty and no guidance can be had from any quarter. On the most fundamental points, differences of principle, of method, of aim distract the attention. Hence many men regard religion as more and more a distracting, disturbing and disintegrating influence, and so only worthy to be discredited and disregarded by all.

The Veda, on the other hand, has laid down definite and unerring methods for the gaining by man of the eternal and unvarying final goal of liberation from Samsara, but declared that the methods and stages of spiritual growth are different for different minds according to their present status in their march towards that goal. Hence, even though we have different interpretations of the Vedic religion, each interpretation has to represent itself as a final and settled fact. Moreover, all interpreters of the Veda are agreed on certain fundamental points, even though they disagree on others. For instance, all agree that the Veda has paramount authority and value for all searchers after liberation, that the final goal is the same for all, and that we cannot modify or discard the methods prescribed by the Veda for regulating our lives on earth.

2. We find at the present day a great deal of controversy in regard to the problem of evil in the world and its bearing on man's conceptions regarding the nature of God and his relation to man here and hereafter. What present-day controversies are like, may, in some measure, be judged if we pass in review some of the opinions advanced in regard to this problem. First, some hold that, so long as wickedness and suffering exist on earth it is impossible to hold that God is good and benevolent and wishes—or works for—the happiness and well-being of his creatures on earth or even of the human race or any part of it. But, if there is (let us

suppose) no evil and no sorrow anywhere, how can there be good or happiness? The world we live in is one in which we have both, for each implies the other. Nothing can be more opposed to facts than to define Christianity as Goethe did, as "the worship of sorrow," simply because Christ suffered on the Cross. If he avowed his pain and suffering and appealed to God not to forsake him, while resigning himself to His will, he also taught his followers that "the Kingdom of God is within you"—that the Kingdom could only be realised when they "loved each other even as I have loved you," and that only then he would rule over their hearts' Kingdom. Where love reigns in human hearts, only joy and strength will prevail, not the reverse. It is the presence and promise of love that constitutes goodness in God or man, and not the alleged—but unproved—presence of evil in creation, which is surely due to the development of human sensitiveness in his passage through this world of matter and cannot be said to be *inherent* in matter.

3. Many hold that God is a mysterious kind of ruler, so much above all law and morality and so omnipotent that he can somehow convert the evil that in fact exists into good, sorrow into joy, and loss into gain,—that he can abolish fundamental distinctions existing in the world, though the world is of his own making, and in fact because it is of his making. But we have no reason to suppose that the world is a vain freak, not a designed fabric,—a phantom, not a hard fact. Further, we have no right to suppose that, though God is omniscient and omnipotent, he must necessarily be inclined—or feel himself called upon—to contradict and frustrate the practical order of the universe and his purpose in creating it. Nor is any such inclination or invitation logically involved in the conception and working of God's will as omnipotent. If God "makes all things new," it only means that, even as good may follow evil, evil not unoften follows good, in a world compounded and recompounded to the utmost extent conceivable. We have yet not known an individual, community, nation or race which, whatever its ideals, has undergone a spiritual transformation which has resulted in the overthrow of all evil and misery. In a world of struggle, forces of both kinds—good and evil—exist; and, while there can be no stagnation, the change is quite as often in one direction as in the other. Höffding's idea of Conservation of Value is a truly rational idea with which we need not quarrel. The principle of utility is quite consistent with—is founded on the unquestionable fact of the conservation of matter (or energy). It is the change of form occurring in the course of nature or purposively introduced by man that helps to confer utility (value).

Some hold that evil exists in the world, its authors—both individuals and communities—are invariably and in the long run punished for it, and that is due to God's righteousness as ruler and judge. But really there is no good and no evil,—for what is good for one is often known to be evil for another, and *vice versa*; and what is good at one place or time is evil at another. The seeming exceptions to this idea of relativity are due to want of sufficient knowledge of the world among us, and not to any possibility that exceptions may exist to the conception and idea that we live in a world of mere phenomena where the relativity of all material objects to place and time reigns supreme. It is this fact also that accounts for the change that is taking place in the forms of all material objects, and that all civilisations and nationalities, and all the states and empires, which have existed in the world have undergone various transformations or even disappeared altogether in the revolutions recorded by history. We have no reason to believe that the nature and destiny of man or the world will be different in the future from what we have seen them to be in the past.

4. Some take a bolder stand and point out that war, pestilence, famine, and many another evil in the world occur irrespectively of man's deserts,—that a living, righteous and discriminating Providence cannot be said to have sent them as a punishment for the sins of his creatures and that they are, therefore, in reality the productions and works of Satan, *i.e.*, of the *Asuric element*—which undoubtedly exists in nature and acts in opposition to the divine (or Daivic) element therein. If this view is only intended to convey the idea—the Vedic conception—that the cosmic principle of matter resolves itself, in the course of evolution, into the duality of good and evil under the stress of the process of sense-perception in the Jiva, we can certainly accede to it as having a basis of reason and a sanction behind it which we regard as authoritative and binding as founded on supersensuous processes of mental concentration resulting ultimately in the innermost bliss of Self-Realisation. But we cannot believe in the rationality of those Christian sectaries who accept it as a mystery or dogma which lays down that Satan is God's constant enemy, persisting in evil only to thwart his purposes, *endowed by God himself* with an intelligent personality and *created by God himself* for fulfilling a necessary function in the providential order of the world. For, matter is in itself neither evil nor good, if we do *not* take into account the Jiva's purely phenomenal states of conscious sense-perception. We know, from the memories which arise after we

have risen to the state of waking consciousness, that all conscious sense-perceptions and all the baseless fabrics of our dream-creation entirely cease in the Jiva's state of sleep or in his fits of swooning and fainting. Hence, they do not belong to the essential or fundamental nature of the Jiva, but can be recognised and accepted as his accidental or temporary adjuncts and accessories and certain to pass away for ever after the attainment of lasting *Mukti* through Self-realisation (*Sakshatkara*).

5. If sin and suffering exist for us only as consequences of our own acts of disobedience of the divine dispensations and purposes, and if both cease when self-realisation is attained after self-purification as a result of obedience to the divine laws and mandates, it cannot be properly said that any responsibility attaches to God for the commission of sins by the Jiva or for the infliction of punishment according to God's eternal will working in harmony with his pre-determined purposes and the permanent order of the universe. There is no higher being than God and the very idea of responsibility for evil detracts from his super-eminent attributes of justice, mercy, authority, and wisdom. Evil exists for man owing to his ignorance, self-will, and perverse self-indulgence bringing about his downfall from the state of absolute purity inherent to the true and innermost Self (*Pratyagatman*) of all living beings. The Vedanta Sutra (II. 1—34) insists that God only confers good and evil according to the Jiva's Karma—i.e., to his deserts—and so he has no partiality for any one, nor is he destitute of sympathy. Sri Sankaracharya says:—“Isvara must be regarded as having a nature like that of the clouds. As clouds are the *general cause* of the production of rice, barley, &c., and the respective seeds (sown in the soil) are the *special causes* of the different quality and quantity of those grains raised as produce from the soil, so Isvara is the universal common cause in the creation of all Jivas, gods, men, &c., and the inequalities we find in their status and experiences—are due to the different Karmas (which have become mature and given rise to their present bodies and the fruits and enjoyments which are associated with them). As Isvara thus requires Karma as a co-operating agency, he is not chargeable with the faults of partiality (*vaishamya*) and heartlessness (*nairghranya*).” A living writer says:—“God is able to bring good out of evil, but to see the hand of God in the evil itself is an error which is only the more dangerous because it has been shared by many of the great religious leaders of the past. If men see the hand of God, when they ought to see the power of Satan, they inevitably form a false conception of the nature and character of God—

and to worship God under a false conception is the same thing as to worship a false God.” At the same time, it is an error to hold that God does not judge men, simply because Jesus said that “he makes his sun to rise upon the evil and the good.” The saying only means that “the rising” of the sun is common to all, but that it affects men of different (*Karmic*) tendencies—the sinful and the virtuous—differently and leads to their many differing kinds of activities and their fruits of all sorts and amounts.

We hold, also, that it is equally wrong to hold that we suffer as much and as often for others' faults and sins as for our own. In the former case,—i. e., where the suffering results from the doings of others, and we are unaware of the same, for some reason or other—it is certain that such doings of others and the dispositions and tendencies from which they spring have got related, in some manner or measure, to our own life and destiny here. Hence we see how erroneous is the view of the writer above-quoted that “it is precisely the fact that no kind of equitable proportion is traceable in this world between men's sufferings and their deserts which precludes us from regarding them as a direct Divine punishment or judgment.” This is to deny that God is the source both of law and love and that justice is not one of the divine attributes characterising his relations to his creatures, simply because we cannot fully comprehend or measure their workings or effects. It is, indeed, easy to escape, as this same writer does, from the recoil of one's faulty reasonings by holding that we are here “at the heart of the mystery of life,”—and that “no final solution to the problem has yet been found.” The Vedanta disdains this cowardly procedure and offers its own final solution—that above given—as the only one possible and satisfactory way of settling the problem of life. And the world must rejoice that it has at last also entered upon its task of enlightening and elevating it.

6. Evil, sorrow, repentance, recovery from sin, faith, devotion, self-realisation, and redemption from Samsaric wandering,—these form the successive stages of spiritual progress towards perfection of soul for all who follow the path sketched out by the sages of Aryavarta for attaining the goal of life. Some or most—or even all—of these stages may exist in other religions, or may be discovered in them by modern interpreters of them. But the speciality of the Vedic doctrine lies in the fact already pointed out that there is but One Existence only without a second,—the *Noumenal* Innermost Intelligent Bliss of the Atman; and that the superimposed reality (so-called) of matter is purely *phenomenal*

(*vyavaharic*) and a practical help to the realisation of the former in due course of soul-evolution and perfection. This latter "reality" has no reality apart from the *substantial reality* on which it is superposed when the mind of the Jiva is formed and at work after its development through Karma in its passage through various incarnations. Matter is in its essential nature *jada* (non-intelligent) and so incapable of feeling and perception. Its evolution as mind is therefore subsequent to the superposition (and the consequent identification) of the Noumenal Self with the phenomenal matter (already mentioned) and takes place during its subsequent journeys in the world of matter. Before such evolution there can be no feeling, willing, or desiring, and hence no experiences of joy and sorrow. The Jiva's ignorance of the Supreme Innermost Self and its course of rebirths are each the cause and effect of the other, and we cannot say or determine which is prior and which is posterior even as we cannot say or determine whether the seed is posterior to the sprout or *vice versa*. The Atman alone is eternally pure and free—ever in its essence the one Undifferentiated Intelligence and Reality and the Innermost Bliss of Love. When it is realised in all its reality and fulness of perfection, all Samsaric evil and suffering vanish like the apparitions in a dream or the mother-of-pearl on the perception of the object before us as silver and nothing but silver.

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO MODERN INDIA

By

Swami Sharvananda

We have met here in the name of two great luminaries which graced our motherland and illumined the heart of India in the last century. You all know how with the dawn of Western civilisation on India there came a new impulse to our country, which was quite alien to the genius and cultural heredity of India, and as a result, with the first onslaught of the Western ideas Indian mind got staggered, as if the Indian life had not the potency to withstand nor the power to avert the new force. And being thus overwhelmed it began to drift and cut away from its own ancient moorings and look for a new haven in the ideals of Western materialism. Naturally there came an anamoly, a tangle of complexity in our national life and the Indian mind was struggling hard to adjust itself in the midst of the new surroundings thus created in a curious way. And out of this struggle emerged a new light to dispel her gloom and illumine her

* Summary of a lecture delivered at the Triplicane Annadana Samajam Hall.

path of life. And the light was Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Through him the soul of India spoke itself to the modern world in an unfaltering voice, the full force of which is slowly being comprehended to-day in our country. As if to show the greatness of the real culture of India, to vindicate the truth of her spiritual superiority, a man was born in an obscure village, unlettered, unschooled and untarnished by the modern civilisation and that man showed by his own life what True India is. The most cultured of the society of that time came to him and had to bow their heads to that ancient voice of the sages, and great savants of the West like Prof. Max Muller could not help paying tribute to him. For Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of the ideals for which India stood in the past and is standing still for the future. He was the messenger of the Ancient India to the Modern world. He wanted a messenger to spread his message broadcast with a dynamic force and there came in the Swami Vivekananda, the required messenger, who had blended in him all that was best in the East and the West—the deep spiritual introspection and idealism of the East and the analytical intellectualism and the dynamic practicality of the West. Drunk deep with the Divine Wisdom of the message, the Swami became inebriated and went across the seas to spread the message in the distant lands of America and Europe and came back to India to reiterate the same to the deluded soul of India. The life and works of the Swami Vivekananda have now become a matter of history and it is not necessary on my part to expatiate upon it. But to freshen up our memory of that message, to steady our faltering steps and strengthen our feet to follow the holy footsteps of the sages of the past, we meet once a year at least to celebrate the anniversary of the Great Swami's Nativity.

What was that of which the immortal Swami was the messenger and what was that message? It was that self-same message delivered times without number through the inspired lips of the sages of India and which the illustrious Swami heard in all its sweetness and force of realisation from his own master. To understand what that message was, to note its bearing on our present day problem is the theme of my to-night's discourse.

To-day the whole of the length and breadth of our country is pulsating with a new life. Much of the hypnosis of the Western culture which clouded her mind in the last century is disappearing—the spell of materialism is broken, and the old self is trying to assert itself, and the country is trying to find her old moorings—that anchor which holds and it is but meet that we should brush up our memory of that message and reiterate it to ourselves that we might not be lost again in another whirlpool.

• When the Western materialism invaded our land, it attempted to sweep away in its onrush all the indigenous culture and educational

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institutions of our country or strangle them with its octopus grip. The development of the moral and spiritual nature of man, which had been the one goal of Indian cultural institutions, was relegated to the background. The new-fangled institutions which came to our land in the wake of the Western culture, constantly attempted to instil into the mind of India, that man is no better than the lump of flesh called the body, and all his interest should be centered round his physical being. And this is the exact outlook of life that an average Westerner holds before him to influence his practical life, in spite of his profession of the Christian ethics and much vaunted civilisation. As once the atheist Ingersoll put it point-blank to our Swamiji while he was in America: "We here are trying to squeeze the orange dry." Indeed that is the true ideal of the West, they are trying to extract as much juice—as much sense pleasures—as it is possible to take from this physical life, the only life they are sure of. Beyond the physical existence they do not know anything else—so this philosophy of life is to extract as much sense pleasures, and enjoy as many creature comforts as are within one's reach. And the logic of this philosophy is so appealing to an ordinary man!

Man is after all not much removed from the brute so far as the physical life is concerned, and when his intellect sublimates his physical life, he becomes at best an exalted brute. The world-war has revealed unmistakably this fact to us. The intellect of man was prostituted only to sharpen the butcher's axe or to plan how to rob his neighbours. However the Peace Conferences, Disarmament Conferences, and so many other conferences of the kind may sit, real peace will never dawn upon this world, so long as man's interest is centered in the physical life. The true catholicity of vision and the universal brotherhood will arise only with the proper ethical development of man. The German philosopher Schopenhauer remarked in one place that man refrains from wickedness not because he is truly ethical, not because he likes morality, but because he is afraid of the police and social opinion. 'But morality through ignorance and fear is no morality at all. The true moral sense has to be developed in man, that would make him abhor all that is wicked and sinful. When man shrinks instinctively from all wickedness and evil, and loves the virtues of life spontaneously, then only he can be called moral. Referring to such men of the world our poet-sage Bhartrihari has remarked:

मनुष्यरूपेण मृगारुचरन्ति । (So many brutes stalking in human forms.)

So the mere body makes not a man. A man is he who has emerged from the brutish plane. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that real man was he who was an awakened soul—मानुष्य. One of his wise sayings is,—when the animal in man dies, there arises the *man* in him and on the corpse of the man dances the Divine Mother. All

these three elements, the animal, the human, and the Divine are in man. The first consists in the gross sense-life and is predominant in the savage whose entire interest of life is wholly concentrated like brutes' on his physical body alone. But with a little culture of the mind we feel our life can never be so narrowly circumscribed as that of a beast. No cultured man can enjoy his food with the gusto of a dog! This shows that there is something in man which is wanting in the brute. This is the moral sense in him. With the awakening of the moral sense there arises the human in man, and life presents a different view altogether. When there dawns the true moral sense, all the different fragmentary aspects of life which looked so disconnected and piecemeal to a brute-man are fused into a homogenous whole in the heart of the moral man.

Ethics starts with the question "why should I not do wrong to others, why should I not rob or injure my neighbour" and it ends with the answer that such a conduct of mine will be injurious to my own self. There are two schools of philosophers that have spoken on this point. The utilitarian school of ethics says that 'you should not steal lest you might be stolen' 'you should be good only for the sake of self-protection' Apart from this, there is no higher value of your goodness. But to this we may say 'Suppose if I fortify myself against others' actions and take the proper precaution that I might not be cheated, then it should be quite moral on my part to cheat others!' Our Eastern mind instinctively shrinks from such an idea. But this is the view-point, which the civilised West has taken towards the moral value of life. Having armed themselves to the teeth and fortified their homes with steel plates, the Western nations consider it quite moral to rob the weaker nations of the world. In spite of their profession of the sacred religion of the oriental Christ, their morality is based upon utilitarian ethics. And it was such ethics which was mainly responsible for the last world-war that has brought so much misery to the world. But the very instinct of a truly cultured mind feels abhorrence for this theory, because there is something else in man which the mere utilitarian principle of life cannot satisfy. It is the moral intuition in man; it makes him feel the kinship of man, nay, the underlying unity of life. This unity of life forms the real basis of all morality, ethics and spirituality. It is India which had the glory of discovering it and it is in India alone that this unity of life is sought to be made practical through all the institutions of society. And India lives to-day because it has the sacred duty of humanising the brute, nay, to raise man the brute to man the divine. The aberrations that came to her mind in the last century were only momentary in their duration and the subsequent events show clearly that India is trying to regain her old soul. The Leviathan is rising again from his age-long torpor!

• And in fact it was Swami Vivekananda, who first discovered that soul of India for us, and at the top of his voice cried halt to the

country in her headlong rush for self-alienation. It was he who first proclaimed from the house-top that Indian genius is not for the acquisition of mundane wealth or the prosperity of the physical life. From her immemorial past, the super-mundane has ever been the quest of her life, and it is the mission of her life still to spread the gospel of that supermundane spirit to the world. To quote Sri Swamiji's own words :

"I am not just now discussing whether it is good to have the vitality of the race in religious ideals or political ideals, but so far it is clear to us, that for good or for evil, our vitality is concentrated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy it and put in its place another. You cannot transplant a large growing tree from one soil to another and make it immediately take root there. For good or for evil, the religious ideal has been flowing into India for thousands of years ; for good or for evil, the Indian atmosphere has been filled with ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries ; for good or for evil, we have been born and brought up in the very midst of these ideals of religion, till it has entered into our very blood, and tingled with every drop in our veins, and has become one with our constitution, become the very vitality of our lives. Can you give such religion up without the rousing of the same energy in reaction, without filling the channel which that mighty river has cut out for itself in the course of thousands of years ? Do you want that the Ganges should go to its icy bed and begin a new course ? Even if that were possible, it would be impossible for the country to give up her characteristic course of religious life and take up for herself a new career of politics or something else. You can only work under the law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least resistance in India. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India—to follow the track of religion."

Thus he showed that it was in religion alone that the genius of our nation is manifested. If India has to be reawakened, she should be vitalised by religion. Some of the thinkers of modern India could not understand this. They drew their inspiration from the Western ideas of life and it is but natural that they should attribute her present decadence to her religion. It was Swamiji who first dispelled that delusion from the public mind and sounded a note of warning against all process of denationalisation. The economic and political development might be good in their own way, nay, they may be absolutely necessary for the healthy life of the nation, but in India religion is the basis of the entire edifice of national life and all her national activity should be in full recognition of this fact. We see to-day that in the whole movement of Indian nationalism all the old hallucinations are vanishing and our countrymen are beginning to appreciate that central note, which was the only music of all Swamiji's utterances, a decade back. That political, economic

and all other secular branches of our national life have begun to be vitalised with the ideas of religion, we all see now. In fact we have to remember that life has no watertight compartments. Life is simple and whole. Secular life and religious life, such distinctions, when we speak of life, is an anomaly. For life is simple and cannot be broken up into component parts. So life can only be either wholly secular or religious. When the interest of life centres in the physical and intellectual aspects of man, that life may be called lay and secular i.e., materialistic. But when the interest is decentralised with the awakening of the consciousness of the spiritual reality of man, the life becomes spiritual—*Adhyatmic*. The spirit is called the Atman in our Shastras and it forms the inner essence of our being, the principle of Pure Intelligence. When that consciousness of the Atman is brought to bear upon our daily activities, then only we become truly religious, otherwise not. You may be doing exactly the same thing externally as you are doing now—you may be a merchant, a prince or a peasant. To live the *Adhyatmic* life we have only to shift the centre of our inner consciousness from the physical to the spiritual principle of life ; and with this shifting the entire outlook of life will change, although its external activities may not change in appearance. When touched by the philosopher's stone the steel sword becomes golden and although it retains its former shape, still it cannot cut anybody. So the real religious or spiritual life begins with the awakening of this spiritual consciousness of man. One may visit all the temples and churches of the world, may bathe in all the sacred waters and fast and feast according to the injunctions of all the religions, or observe other sacramental rites, still if one has not developed this spiritual consciousness, one is no better than a materialist in spite of all his verbal profession of religion. This was the second message of Swamiji, that the present decadence is not due to our religion. It is really due to our irreligiousness. It all happened so because we have forgotten the great truths preached in the Vedas—we have forgotten the grand idea of the Atman and the spiritual institutions that fostered that idea.

Take, for example, our Varnashrama institution. How glorious it is from the standpoint of the principle, but alas ! how it has degenerated. We have squeezed out its soul of Dharma, and the rotten corpse now is made to gape merely for privileges and class-interests. The Varnashrama institution is intended to take man gradually to the highest development of life. The greatest man, it points out, is he who can give all to gain All. He gives up his little self and this little world to attain the higher Self and the bigger world. He is the Paramahansa—the man of supreme enlightenment. He stands as the ideal for all classes of people, the whole humanity. He holds in his hand the beacon light for man to follow and reach the

goal of life. The Brahmana who is the leader, the teacher of the society is the satwic man. The attribute given to him is *Tapodhana*. His wealth consists in Tapas, in self-mortification and self-control. So the highest position and honour is given to this Brahmana whose wealth consists in his purity, spirituality and non-possession of the worldly wealth. The man of power, the Rajasic Kshatriya, is given the second place of honour; the man of wealth, the Vaisya is relegated to the third place. In this scheme of Varnashrama, life is evaluated in the terms of cultural attainments in keeping with the spiritual ideal of Life; and it is so unlike what obtains in the modern society where the value of life is determined in the terms of worldly possessions—where the all-mighty dollar has arrogated to itself all position, power and honour, having enslaved both spirit and intellect, and has ruled that poverty is sin!

The greatest enemy of man is his own uncontrolled mind—his own desires and passions, and one who can emancipate himself from these, is the free man. You may have a mint of money and the sovereignty of the whole world, still if you have not subjugated your own mind, you are but a bond slave. Sri Ramakrishna used to say of Napoleon, that he conquered half the world, yet he could not conquer his own mind. In that he was little better than a slave. So spiritually speaking, all the conquests of a Napoleon, or a Caesar or an Alexander the Great, could not redeem their own slavery although they enslaved others. So according to the Indian ideals of life such conquest is not conquest at all. The most powerful man is not the happiest man. The richest man is not the happiest man; he who has self-mastery alone is the happiest man. He who has lost his little self in the consciousness of the universal Life is the happiest man. True bliss is in Infinite Life, and what is the gate to enter into that realm? It is the control of the senses. As has been said in the Upanishads, the Lord has created the senses in such a way that their natural tendency is to go out. But he is called the *Dhira* who can draw the senses in and concentrate them on the Self with the hope of getting immortality. The gate to this immortal region is in our own heart. The path is shown to us by the great saints and sages of yore. Only we have to tread it and that path will become easy and smooth, when we draw in our senses and the mind from the sense-pursuit and direct them towards the realisation of the Atman. So you see, the bliss eternal cannot be achieved by mere worldly presents. This fact is very well illustrated in our Puranas in the story of Yayati. Our law-giver, Manu also says:

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शस्यति ।

इविषा कृष्णवर्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

Desires cannot be quenched by their gratification, and this has been the experience of all humanity. The western nations are nations of yesterday. That is why they have not yet become

fully satiated with sense-enjoyments. The symptoms of satiety are not wanting at least amongst the thinkers of Europe. Already a kind of disgust for mere sense-life has set in. They have now begun to look for something of more abiding value than the fleeting sense-pleasures. The whole life of man is a long drawn struggle for getting *Anandam*. In every moment of life we are only seeking this eternal infinite *Anandam*. And if *Anandam* is the goal of life, we should give our best to gain it. And the religion of the Vedas tells us that it is in ourselves.

So Swamiji asserted that all our national striving should be imbued with the spirit of religion and spirituality. Spirituality is sometimes taken to mean an exclusive property of a recluse, to be lived, away from the public haunt, in some solitary mountain cave, or in a lonely cell of an anchorite. Swamiji asserted that the Vedanta was a *Rahasya* no doubt, a sublime mystery of pre eminence. The Aranyakas of yore kept the truth for themselves, a few Rajarshis also held it. It never became a public property, and that is why in spite of the greatness of our religion, India lagged behind in the march of humanity and has been brought to such bad plight to-day. So it was the foremost desire of Sri Swamiji to bring out the sublime truth of Vedanta from its forest home and establish it in the heart of busy work-a-day life. He proclaimed that the salvation of India lies in educating every Indian mind, high or low, with the grand ideal of Atman of the Vedanta. Swamiji further asserted, "I do not believe in a God who cannot give a morsel of food to the hungry mouth, cannot wipe the widow's tears or give solace to orphan's cry."

In fact, it is a wrong conclusion to make that with too much religiousness comes neglect of worldly duties. On the other hand, the truths of Vedanta, if practised by all, will bring a new life in the country and give a new impulse to all activities of man. This application of the truths of Vedanta to the activities of every day life and the sublimating of them to a highly spiritual value is what Sri Swamiji called Practical Vedanta. The ideal that I am the Atman, that glorious discovery of the Vedic sages should be made a common property of humanity. We must feel in every breath of life that we are all one in that Universal Life. And when this ideal is at least intellectually grasped and partially followed in life, it begins to cleanse our heart from all selfishness. It is only when we feel the separateness of our beings that we become selfish, we become keen over self preservation and self-augmentation. It is this feeling of separateness that creates the unethical outlook of life by which we raise artificial walls around us, within which we imprison ourselves, and soon poison its atmosphere with our own foul breath of selfishness and by inhaling which again, we commit spiritual suicide. Swamiji used to say that 380 millions in India are ruled by 30 millions

because the 30 millions have one mind and the 330 millions have 330 million minds.

Every one of us is thoroughly satisfied in serving the little interests of our own little selves, and have no mind to think of the higher self,—even of the communal life. Our selfishness is the cause of all our misery. The man who has understood this doctrine of Atman cannot be selfish, he cannot think that he is separate from the world and his interest in life is over by doing his duty to his little family only. He would feel the pang of hunger of the whole country. The man who is truly spiritual will be an asset to our country even economically. In spite of our poverty, if the true religious feeling is awakened in our heart, 90 per cent. of the sufferings of the country will disappear. It is through our own selfishness and the curse of Western capitalism that our country is suffering economically to-day. Our old Vaisyas were strictly controlled by the law of Dharma. The truly spiritual man never takes to the disease of selfishness which is the root-cause of all our sufferings. Sri Swamiji laid great stress on the awakening of our soul-consciousness. If we are to raise our country we must do it through religion,—we must feel that we are the Atman, and translate that feeling into action. Death and disease, wealth and pleasure, enjoyment and suffering belong only to the material body and not of the soul. Their consciousness has to be awakened. It is this awakening which Mahatma Gandhi calls soul-force and is trying to bring about in the political field. Even politics can be spiritualised when we bring the soul idea to it. In fact the whole world will be amazed to see the rise of India. In India a new political ideal is being born, nay, it is already born. That ideal is not based, upon the principle of expediency and self-aggrandisement. It is not the unethical policy of taking advantage of the weakness of others. It is to assert the greatness of the Soul which no prison-walls can imprison, no fire can burn, nor any sword can cut the soul which is eternally free, and no earthly shackle can fetter. We have hypnotised ourselves into this physical body. Break this hypnosis, and the next moment you will find that you are free through eternity. Assert this freedom of the soul in every thought, word and deed, and we shall see that to-morrow our country shall be free. When the spirit of the country is aroused, if the whole world tries to coerce it down, it can never succeed. Spirit when awakened can defy all onslaughts of matter. Matter is after all the shadow of the Spirit. How can a shadow imprison the real soul? When the spirit is awakened, what amount of Krup guns and howitzers or all that sort of infernal machines which the vile nature of man can invent, can keep it down? When the Atman in man is roused, it performs a miracle. That is why the sage in Swami Vivekananda foresaw all these, and enjoined in keeping with the genius of our country to develop our spirituality that would make us

masters of the flesh and destroy all our suffering. So he asserted that true religion means awakening of our soul-consciousness. It is not enough if you simply meditate five minutes in a corner and repeat 'I am the Atman.' Attached to worldly happiness, yet if one says 'I am Brahman', such hypocrite souls are devoid of both Karma and Brahman and such should be shunned as a base-born pariah. So the sage says :

सांसारिकसुखासक्तं ब्रह्मोऽस्मीतिवादिनम् ।

कर्मब्रह्मोभयभ्रष्टं तं त्यजेदन्तर्जं यथा ॥

The whole life must be a continuous meditation, a process of self-elimination and self-possession. When one repeats 'I am the Atman' that consciousness must be brought to bear upon our work-a-day life. The outside world must be looked up as nothing but a manifestation of the inner world, and all the apparent multiplicity of life and existence are but so many modes of one underlying unity. So in our whole inner consciousness we must feel constantly that unity of life.

The different reformers of our country imagine that on the particular reforms that the particular set of reformers are urging, depends the entire salvation of our nation. For instance the political reformers think that the political reforms can alone bring the waters of life to our country ; the social reformers in their turn imagine that the panacea for all our national ills is in the right social reform ; and similarly with other reformers also. Swamiji called all such reformers as branch-reformers, as they never attempt to touch the main spring of life. That life is one and whole and these political or social aspects are but different aspects of it. But Sri Swamiji called himself as the root-and-branch reformer, inasmuch as he called for the reformation of the very being of Men. The ideal of Swamiji was man-making. He wanted to reform the whole life of man by rousing his soul-consciousness. Thus when one's Atman is roused, let him take up any activity, he is sure to become great in that because he will draw his inspiration and energy from the unfailing fountain of the spirit. When the soul is awakened, that awakening will be manifest through all activities of a man's life. So his own effort was to bring about the reformation of Man. His endeavour was to breathe out the inspiring truth of the Atman and make every man feel his spiritual reality. This was his man-making message, and it was but the ancient message of the Upanishads. And let us reiterate the message, in conclusion, in the words of the Vedic sage :

शुश्रूषन्तु विरवे असृतस्य पुत्रा
आ ये दिव्यानि धामानि तस्थुः ।
वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं
मादित्यवर्षं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति
नाम्नः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ॥

Any amount of political reforms, or economic developments cannot satisfy the innate hankering of life. If political freedom would have done that, then all the free nations of the West would have been happy. But the restlessness of their souls show that they are not happy. The so-called free nations of the West are only nations of slaves. Political emancipation does not mean the real emancipation of man. The real emancipation is moksha.

This mukti is described in Vedanta as Swarajya Siddhi. The soul has lost its own kingdom through Avidya and is wandering as a beggar in the world of matter; when that Avidya is destroyed, and the soul comes to know its own self, all that delusion of bondage and beggary is dispelled and it is reinstalled on its own throne. This is the ideal of our Indian people. When we have attained this goal, it will have a great reflex action on the whole world.

There are two ways of subjugating a brute like tiger. The first method is by coercion. The second way is by hypnotising the brute or metamorphosing its inner nature so that it can forget its native ferocity. If the brutish instinct of the western nations is trying to injure India, that brute can be conquered either by developing in us a greater brute power or by developing our spiritual power to such an extent as to be able to take away the brutish instinct of the West. The first course is against the spiritual instinct of India, so the latter course must be adopted. If India is conquered by England, we must be out to conquer England. Swamiji has said that if the West is out to conquer the East, the East likewise must be out to conquer the West. We must go out with none of the diabolical implements of cruel war but with our voice of peace, love and benediction. And we must show them that the reality of life is not in the flesh, but in the spirit. By this gospel of spirit of our ancient Vedas we must make them feel that they are also Atman and as such inseparably knitted to the whole world. If the White West injures the Coloured East, it injures its own self indirectly. The soul has no colour, no sex, no age. When this message of the solidarity of life will be appreciated by our Western brethren, then their vanity and pride will go away and they will come like a humble kid and fall at the feet of India, and drink deep of the nectar of her spirituality.

Om Tat Sat

CIVILIZATION—BEFORE OR BEHIND

BY

X. Y. Z.

When a wheel of a motorcar shows signs of giving way in the midst of a sandy track far away from home, it becomes difficult for a driver to decide whether he should try to go backward or forward nearing the destination though it is unknown, but long looked for. Here it would be height of folly if the driver, notwithstanding his willingness to handle the machinery with utmost care and delicacy, and to repair the puncture, begins to pump it with all his force, though other wheels may require similar treatment.

The question is, if the world has made any progress towards the attainment of high ideals that constitute civilisation. Has the world as a component of innumerable nations, come to a stage that may be called civilized, or is it still looming large in the twilight of the primitive age? I think not an inch has been gained in the direction of light and life, though the case may be quite different with regard to individuals. The world-civilisation is still in its cradle, or rather in its savage state—fighting, quarrelling, robbing, killing, and crushing. Fight and competition wins the day. Darwin's laws truly rule the earth. This fact is too obvious to require illustration.

A party of explorers having lost faith in the line on which humanity is moving, wants to go back to the primitive stage of simplicity, while another section, though disgusted with the present situation, places implicit faith in the law of evolution which is likely to bring something better or more glorious in the next stage. To them future is the asset of the past and the present. The former understands evolution in a different sense. To them evolution has involution both before and after. Like waves, nations rise and fall, and by falling they attempt to be high as before. Consequently one seeks one's realisation in the simplicity of life and thought, while the other in the endless complexity of organic evolution. Here, of course, experience and temperament make the division, and everybody has the way of his own.

Now, the pivot of the world-wide unrest is that the state of affairs we at present have, is not at all desirable. The devil should be given his proper dues, or it will keep us under further obligation.

We want to move before or behind, but it seems too early that we should reject either. We have already tasted one, I mean the joy of primitive simplicity, but as yet we have no clear conception of human perfection, as this scheme entails much of hardship, struggle, and waste of energy through proper channel.

A word of explanation is needed to clear the term 'complexity of life' that most often goads us to adopt a wrong line of action. Complexity of life has nothing to do with the creation of multifarious wants that have very little bearing on the growth of life. Verily we surcharge our life with unnecessary burdens of fashions and formalities under which it groans, and the fund of energy is almost used up in that direction. These sham things never respond to our inner call. They do not come from within. Every work is not worth the name. To move round and round an oil machine, like a bullock, from morn till night is to make little headway. Complexity of life consists in making patent the various latent forces of life that seeks its realisation through the proper expression and harmonious combination of all. The forces, in turn, seek outside their field of action, and find satisfaction in discovering therein their unity and identity. It does not consist in wasting limited power on endless things natural or unnatural. In a word, the immensity of life should not be sacrificed before its shallowness.

When I lay stress on the future being the suitable vehicle of a perfect life, I do not mean to say if we move along this very line we are expected to reach the goal. What I hope to impress on you is that we should give the present scheme a trial by purging it of its evils, and arrange for an experiment before we reject it.

The circumstances under which humanity is moving is far from satisfactory. It is not marching but dragging, for it is lame of many legs. The creator of nations has entrusted each nation with some particular charge and special mission which it is required to fulfil in due course. If it betrays the trust or delays to deliver the message it is taken to task by the Great Task-Master, or if any other nation offers resistance to its free growth it is also treated no better. One who through negligence or by force checks one's own progress or of others, incurs sin, for which divine vengeance is in store. Everybody should keep clear his account before the judgment day. We, the fools and impostors add to our own miseries that know no ending. I am sure the nations will have to atone for their inhuman conduct. Suffering is the greatest sin in the world, and it excludes none,—one suffers, the other causes suffering, the third either allows, or overlooks, or endures. How childish and emasculated we are! We do not care to do what we all feel we should do. It is the paralysis of will that matters, and not so much the indecision of reason.

It is to be noted here that suffering of this type should not be confounded with that which is intentional and which throws a cheerful halo around it, leading to calm resignation and attainment of the high ideals of life.

As long as the universal causes of suffering are not eliminated, of course, by the combined efforts of all the nations of the world, morality, civilisation, or peace is far to seek; and the nations instead of marching are toddling until they all would come to a dead

use. Verily the so-called civilised nations defeat their own purpose in so far as they attempt to attain to a stage of eclectic synthesis refinement and culture by crippling others that by birthright occupy a place in the plan and system of the organic whole.

It is known even to a casual reader of history how much good has been spilt in the world in the name of patriotism and religion. But both the feelings, if rightly developed in a mind, these being purely mental things, would never find rest without stopping each bloody course, or the causes and consequences should be diametrically opposite. As an idea of an individual is perfect only in connection with that of society, similarly the feeling of patriotism is complete with that of humanity alone. One without the other is dangerous if not false, and in this narrow sense even patriotism is destructive virtue.

The conception of the league of nations is grand, but it is doomed to utter failure, since it is not fully represented, nor does it represent a particular nation take into consideration the welfare of others. I am afraid, this league will, before long, turn out to be a powerful weapon in the hands of its most political-minded, self-aggrandising members.

Hence if the citizens of the world want to have peace and perfection, they should form a federation of nations whose look-out would be to remove the obstacles that impede the progress of other nations. At this stage 'fight and competition' should yield place to 'help and co-operation', the only features of true civilisation.

Most often the nations blind with brutal force and material resources, lose sight of the inner man, and become deluded with the idea of playing the role of a teacher or friend, which takes the form of dragging the weak and the unfortunate ones on their own line. This simply helps to crush their individuality rendering them not only weaker but impotent in their vain attempts to imitate others. As a good teacher does his work by removing the obstacles and rousing the powers in a child, and not by thrusting his own ideas and personality upon the young mind, similarly the nation, if any, with its heart overflowing to do good to others, should take into consideration the potentialities and possibilities of those nations, and guide them on their own lines by putting aside the stumbling blocks. A teacher should not make a student what he himself is, but what a student should be. The whole process to be adopted by a teacher presupposes love too deep to be dried by any number of sacrifices.

What does the world-wide movement mean? It is not the making of any particular mischievous mind, it is rather the psychic expression of the world-soul. No one can deny the bitterness of feeling consequent on the thoughtless working of imperious aristocracy. So long the rich have hated the poor, the learned the

ignorant, the religious the irreligious, the strong the weak, the white the black, the male the female, the high the low. In a word, the pampered and privileged classes have ground to dust the down-trodden and the depressed. Now, scientific truth demands that there should be a reaction, and everybody should be paid in his own coin, if not with compound interest. So long the law of hatred has ruled the earth from one side only, now it is the time to show its might from the other, and afterwards, when the circle will complete itself there is likelihood that the law of love,—the great law of truth, will dethrone the usurper.

If civilisation is to dawn on earth in time to come, the archers with their arrows of imperialism, commercialism, and capitalism, should make no attempt to cut off the pair of wings that as love and co-operation are impelling it to descend from the blue vault of heaven.

REVIEWS

The Philosophy of Shankara by Maganlal A. Buch, M.A. Published by A. G. Widgey, the College, Baroda. P. 15 + 276.

The present volume is the sixth of the Gaekwar Studies in Religion and Philosophy and aims at supplying a cheap, popular exposition of the system of the greatest Philosopher of India. Shankaracharya is universally recognized as the brightest luminary in the firmament of philosophy in India, and the philosophy of Advaitism propounded by him is regarded as the highest pinnacle of the achievement of man in the domain of metaphysical speculations. In the treatise before us, the author states briefly the arguments by which he refutes other systems of philosophy prevalent in India and establishes his own position. There were five other schools of philosophy prevalent in India, each of which maintained equally that it gives the best solution of the problems of life, but Shankara with his superhuman intellect and understanding finds out flaws in those systems and proves the superiority of his Advaitism. It is indeed a remarkable achievement of philosophic thought, which remains unparalleled even in India where we have luxuriant growth of religions and philosophies. The comparative study of Shankara's system with that of Berkeley, the pioneer of subjective idealistic philosophy in the

west, Spinoza, the exponent of pantheism, and Kant will be read with great interest and appreciated by all students of modern philosophy. The author draws also a comparison between Shankara's system and that of Bergson, the greatest thinker of the West today. There are indeed remarkable differences between these two great thinkers. "Bergson claims to emphasise just those aspects of experience which were relegated to background by Shankara, and neglects the importance of those which were fundamental for Shankara. Being is the central fact in Shankara's philosophy; becoming is the central word of Bergson's philosophy. Shankara's philosophy is a philosophy of the changeless, Bergson's system is a philosophy of change; the one denies the existence of time; to the other time is the very stuff of reality." Notwithstanding such contrasts there are points of similarity between the two systems. In the author's language, "Shankara lays it down, like Bergson, that the true method of metaphysics is intuition; it is intuition alone which makes grasp of the Absolute, knowledge of the Reality possible. The very word Darshana applied to Hindu systems of philosophy points to the fact that it is ultimately sight or insight, intuition, immediate experience, direct realisation of the Absolute, they aim at." We are confident that the masterly treatment of the learned author will be widely appreciated by the scholars and thinkers of the country.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, for the year 1921.

We are glad to review the annual report of the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras for the year 1921. The year under report marks an epoch in the history of the institution as it has witnessed the establishment of the Home in a permanent habitation of its own, after sixteen years of incessant struggle in rented buildings. The construction of the New Buildings on the Sullivan's Road, Mylapore began in 1918, reached completion early in 1921 and the dedication ceremony was performed on the auspicious Akshaya Tithi day, the 10th May, 1921, by His Holiness Swami Brahmananda, the revered President of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The strength of the Home had much to be limited during the past few years owing to inadequate accommodation, but the new buildings enabled the authorities of the Home to increase the strength appreciably at the commencement of the current academic year, though it had yet to be limited for want of funds. The year began with 45 on the rolls and 43 were admitted during the year. Twenty left, having completed their course or owing to other reasons, leaving the strength at 68 at the end of the year. The boys come from various parts of South India and from all classes of the Hindu community without distinction.

• During the year there were altogether 21 students in the B.A. (Pass and Honours) classes, 29 in the intermediate and 32 in the High

School classes; one was studying for L. M. & S. and five were at the Engineering College. Most of the boys passed their examinations creditably. Those that failed in the examination had to leave the Home according to the rules. A great many of the students were in receipt of scholarships from various sources. The authorities of many Colleges and High Schools in the City have shown special considerations towards the boys, and admission into the Home was considered a sufficient recommendation as to their poverty and merit in the matter of granting scholarships. The Madras Secretariat Party and various other philanthropic institutions have contributed liberally towards the maintenance of the Home.

The internal management of the institution is entirely in the hands of the boys and it cultivates in them habits of self-reliance and service which will stand them in good stead in future life. Religious instruction is given in early hours of the morning every day. Puja is conducted both morning and evening and it provides them an invaluable training. Thrice in a week religious discourses are given by a Pandit and on Saturdays Swami Sharvananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, delivers lectures on Karma Yoga to the students. A Sannyasin of the Math now resides permanently at the Home helping and guiding the boys in all matters.

The Home has a library attached to it to which many valuable additions were made during the year through the kindness of a few generous gentlemen.

The total receipts excluding endowments were Rs. 2,988-4-2 as against Rs. 9,184-2-4 last year. The expenditure amounted to Rs. 11,570-0-9 working out to an average of about Rs. 15 per month per boarder. Rs. 9,206-0-1 was received during the year towards endowments raising the total to Rs. 36,986-12-8 up to date. The balance on the 20th December was Rs. 44,145-8-0 which has been deposited in banks.

The long cherished desire of the authorities of the Home to find a permanent habitation for the institution has been fulfilled. They are now anxious to secure for it a financial stability to ensure its permanent maintenance. Literary education by itself is not sufficient to meet the modern conditions of life, so the authorities are now going to add a Technical Institute to the Home, so that the boys coming out of the Home may go forth to the world fully equipped to earn a decent living instead of following the beaten track of adopting the profession of a lawyer or clerk.

We pray that the institution may have many years of useful and prosperous life and through the students of the Home, who will be the future citizens of the Presidency, disseminate the lofty and inspiring truths of Sanatana Dharma as preached by Sri Ramakrishna.

NOTES AND NEWS

It will interest the Hindi-reading public to know that a Hindi Vedanta monthly named "Samanway" (Harmony) has been started under the auspices of the Advaita Ashrama, Publication Department, 28, College Street market, Calcutta. Being the Hindi organ of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Order, the magazine will deal with Practical Vedanta in a universal and harmonising spirit. Considering the rare value of the Great Master's teachings, the journal, it is hoped, will remove a long-felt want and be widely appreciated.

Birthday celebration of Swami Vivekananda at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.—The public celebration of the Sixtieth Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda took place at the Mylapore Math on Sunday, the twenty-second of January. The Tithi-Puja had been performed on the preceding Thursday with elaborate ceremonies. The boys of the local Students' Home came early in the morning to the Math and chanted Vedic hymns in sonorous tones. One of the Sannyasins of the Math read the Kathopanishad, the study of which the great Swami was never tired of insisting on, amongst the young men of the country. On the day of the public celebrations, the large portrait of Swamiji was placed in the spacious hall of the Math and decorated with flowers and fern. From early dawn there was joy and festivity all around, reminding each and everyone the greatness of the man whose influence is widening as days are rolling on. Bhajan parties came one after another and their devotional songs delighted the large congregation of Bhaktas who gather every year to commemorate the birthday of the illustrious Swami. The feeding of the poor Narayanas has become a special feature of these Birthday Celebrations in all the centres of the Mission, for no cause was dearer to Swamiji than the raising and uplifting of the poor and oppressed, in his scheme of the rehabilitation of our national life. About 4,000 poor Narayanas were fed. There was Harikatha in the afternoon in Tamil, and it was highly appreciated by the assembled Bhaktas.

At 5-30 P.M. a public meeting was held in which Mr. Narasingha Raju B.A.B.L.M.L.C. delivered a lecture. Mr. V.V. Srinivasa Iyengar, B.A. B.L. who presided on the occasion spoke in a nice short speech about the greatness of the Swami. The speaker had the privilege of meeting Swamiji, whom he described as the forerunner of the national awakening and the ferment that is passing over the country from the Himalays to the Cape Comorin. It was he who spiritualised politics and pointed out the true greatness of the Hindu race, which has withstood the onslaughts of centuries. After Aratrika and distribution of Prasad to the assembled guests, the functions of the day came to a close.

At Belur Math:—The Sixtieth Birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great eclat at Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. His Holiness Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, President of the Mission and His Holiness Swami Shivanandaji had arrived at the Math a week ago from Bhubaneswar, after their tour in Southern India. The presence of Swami Abhedananda who has returned to the Motherland after preaching the gospel of his Master for a quarter of a century in the Far West created fresh enthusiasm in the hearts of the Bhaktas and admirers of Swamiji. He addressed the assembled Bhaktas in Bengalee for fifteen minutes. Four thousand Bhaktas and Poor Narayans took prasadam. Fourteen youngmen were initiated into Brahmacharya on the Tithi Puja day.

The Swami Vivekananda Day in Bangalore:—The Sixtieth Birthday Anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekanandaji was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City, on the 19th and the 22nd January, 1922. On the former day which was the day of observance of *Thilhi puja*, special worship was conducted at the Ashrama, as usual on such occasions. Bhaktas both young and old assembled in the Ashrama towards the evening and performed Bhajana and partook of the holy *prasadam*.

The 22nd was the day of the public celebration. The day commenced with the arrival of Bhajana parties from the Kadigarpalyam, the City and Cantonment. At about noon, the parties adjourned to the Anjaneya temple, Basavangudi, where a large number of poor people—about 1,500—were fed, thanks to the help rendered by the students of the locality, who volunteered in greater number than usual and did their work in a more organised manner.

The feeding over, the audience who had by now begun to fill the spacious hall, were treated to a *Harikatha Kalakshepam* on *Chandrasahas* by Brahmasri Ramanujacharya. The Harikatha was followed by a lecture in Kannada by Rajasabhabhushana Narpur Shrinivasrav, Retired Chief Engineer to the Government of Mysore, who dealt at length with the religious situation in India in the nineteenth century and the reformation effected by the Swamiji which consisted in stemming the tide of Missionary influence in India and directing the attention of thoughtful Indians to religion and God. One among the audience (Mr. Subba Rao Gopal) was so pleased with the lecture which was delivered *ex-tempore* that he announced a prize of Rs. 25 to the person who could give a correct reproduction of the lecture. Mr. N. Venkatesa Iyengar then thanked the lecturer and announced that the first issue of the Kannada bi-monthly to be published under the auspices of the local Ashrama will appear on the occasion of the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday anniversary in March next and that all those who are willing to become subscribers may

communicate with the Secretary of the Ashrama. With the distribution of *prasad*, the functions came to a close at 8 P.M.

At Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Sangham, Sivaganga:—The anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Sangham with great enthusiasm. On the 19th January Tithi Puja was done. Vedaparayanam was recited and prasadam was distributed. The celebration was done on the 22nd instant. In the morning there was bhajan and then readings from various books. In the afternoon a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Mr. A. R. Rangaswami Ayer, a Pleader of the locality. Speeches were delivered by some prominent men of the town. Prasadam was distributed. The function closed with bhajana in the night.

At Kakdi, Faridpur, Bengal:—The Sixtieth Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 19th and 22nd January at the Ramakrishna Brahmacharya Ashram, Kakdi (District Faridpur), Bengal, with great eclat. People from the neighbouring and distant villages attended the festival and about 2,000 Bhaktas congregated on the occasion. Reading from the Scriptures, Sankirtan, Puja, speeches and feeding of about 500 Poor Narayanas were the chief features of the day. The parties dispersed at 11 P.M.

At the Satchidananda Sangha, Triplicane, Madras:—The Second Annual Celebration of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was performed on Sunday, the 29th of January, 1922 at the Annadana Samajam's Hall, Triplicane, with great devotion and enthusiasm. There was Bhajana in the morning—500 Bhaktas took prasadam. In the afternoon there were two lectures, one in Tamil, and the other in English by Swami Sharvananda on the "Message of Swami Vivekananda to Modern India" which we reproduce elsewhere.

Swami Vivekananda's Birthday Celebration at Trivandrum:—The Sixtieth Birthday of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Vedanta Society, Trivandrum, on Sunday the 22nd January 1922 at the Prabuddha Keralam office, Trivandrum. In the morning there was Pooja. At noon some three hundred poor souls were sumptuously fed. In the evening there was Bhajana and it lasted till 10 o'clock at night. In connection with the celebration a public meeting was also held on the next Sunday the 29th January 1922 in the Sri Ramakrishna Vilas Hall, Thampanoody, under the presidency of Dr. K. Raman Tharpy, B.A., M.D. Two interesting lectures by Messrs. P. Anandaswamy Iyer and T. P. Sundarasan Iyer, B.A., were delivered. The whole function came to a close with singing of songs in praise of Swami Vivekananda by Mr. D. Agaslingam Pillai.

On Sunday, December 25th, 1921, Swami Prakashananda held Special Christmas Service at the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California.

The Auditorium was tastefully decorated with Evergreens and Christmas Wreaths so apropos to the season ; while in front of the picture of Jesus the Christ was placed a beautiful floral offering of white Chrysanthemums nestled in a bed of green ferns.

Simplicity was everywhere apparent—forcefully suggestive of the pure and Divine life of the Great Master to whom these beauties were offered.

Swami Prakashananda chose for the subject of the morning lecture "The Birth of Christ-spirit," and for the evening lecture "The True Message of Christ's Life."

Both lectures were very impressive and full of life-giving, practical and inspiring truth as represented in the Life of this Great Messenger of Light.

Beautiful and appropriate music was rendered at the morning service by Mrs. Allan, and at the evening service by Mme. Marks.

Notwithstanding the inclement weather, the Auditorium was well filled at both lectures with a highly appreciative audience.

The Swami was the recipient of many beautiful gifts from his numerous students and admirers.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda

(Continued from Page 291)

Such contentions may be plausible in the case of an ordinary man, but we have to say a few words in regard to the particular conduct of the Master.

Though it may be true for ordinary men whose eyes are ever fixed upon the pleasures of the senses alone, bereft of all radiance of the spiritual nature of life, that it is unwise to follow blindly the dictates of that unrestrained mind, yet the scriptures of the Hindus testify to the fact that there are such rare persons to whom, through the grace of God, the virtues of self-control and abstinence become as natural as the breath of the nostrils, and their minds being absolutely free from all taints of lust and passion become the perpetual habitat of nothing but good tendencies alone.

The Master also used to say that if one can resign oneself absolutely to the Divine Mother, then, in that well resigned mind, through Her grace, no evil thought can ever arise. "The Divine Mother never allows his steps to go wrong." Such a soul by reposing absolute trust in whatever arises in his mind never comes to grief; on the other hand it brings nothing but good to others also. For, when

the little ego with its unholy alliance with the body which solely instigates us into all kinds of selfish activities and makes us seek to monopolise all the pleasures of the world to ourselves, gets merged for ever in the Macrocosmic Ego of the Supreme Being, it becomes absolutely impossible for such a soul to strive for anything that may have even the least tinge of self-interest. Then the Divine Will of the Macrocosmic Soul, which works for the good of all beings flows through the heart of such a man, giving rise to various mentations of his, which are all for the good of the world. Or, in that stage, as the devotee realizes constantly in his heart of hearts, this fact that "I am the machine and thou art the manipulator," he develops within him the firm conviction that whatever thoughts arise in his mind are all due to the will of that Universal Being, and so he never hesitates to do anything under the impulsion of those thoughts. And in effect also we notice that such conduct of these great souls brings nothing but great good to humanity. In the case of such rare personages like the Master, such a state of fusion of the individual with the Universal comes even in the early stage of life. That is the reason why we find such great souls run the career of their lives placing perfect confidence on their own minds. Further, having got their individual minds perfectly united with the Universal, they can feel and perceive things which are beyond the ken of ordinary minds, as all things of the past, present, and future exist in a subtle form in that Universal Mind. And again, being constantly in tune with the Universal, their mind becomes so perfectly devoid of fear and selfishness that even after having known previously how, where and by whom their little physical bodies would meet destruction, they feel no aversion or fear for those objects or persons; on the other hand, they allow them most willingly to perpetrate their physical dissolutions. A few instances will make the point clear to our readers.

Sri Rama knew full well the perfect innocence of Sita, yet in obedience to the untrifling destiny he had to banish her. And again, being fully conscious that if he were to abandon his younger brother Lakshmana, who was dearer to him than his own self his earthly tenure would come to an end, yet he did so. Sri Krishna was perfectly aware of the future destruction of his Yadu family, yet he made no attempt to avert it; on the other hand, he contrived to hasten the catastrophe. Further, knowing that the time was come for his own departure from this world, he kept his whole body hidden under the foliage of a tree excepting his bright red feet that the hunter might easily mistake them for a bird and shoot

at them with his sharp arrow. Subsequently, when the fowler finding his fatal mistake, was drowned in remorse and agony, he blessed him, and tried to console him by saying that there was no fault of the fowler in that happening, it was he who contrived it to be so. And so saying he quitted his body in yoga.

Lord Buddha knew it even previously that he would attain Parinirvana if he were to accept the invitation of the Chandala; yet he did accept it and blessed and consoled the poor Chandala, thus saving him from general reprobation. Further, he was fully conscious that if women were admitted into the monastic order, it would soon defile the purity of the dharma preached by him, and would spell its extinction in the long run; yet he did allow his own aunt and wife to enter into it.

Lord Jesus knew it even previously that his disciple Judas would betray him into the hands of his enemies for money, and that would bring about his crucifixion; yet this fore-knowledge never could in any way affect or diminish his sincere love and mercy for the disciple.

Leaving aside the extraordinary cases of these God-incarnations, such incidents are met with even in the lives of ordinary perfected souls—the Jivanmuktas. In the lives of such great souls, if we want an explanation of the harmony that exists between their life of extraordinary activity and their perfect resignation to the will of God, we cannot but conclude that the inspiration for all their wonderful activities came from the Divine Will. Therefore it is clear that owing to their perfect resignation to the Divine Will, all self-seeking tendencies are completely annihilated in the mind of such souls and thus it reaches such an exalted state of purity that no selfish thought can ever arise there; and in that state there comes such a certitude about its own conviction that the mind feels not the slightest hesitation in following its own promptings, and the man does not suffer in any way through such pursuance of his mind. So the above-mentioned mode of conduct of the Master, though it may not be fit for imitation by ordinary men, is sure to shed a flood of light on the spiritual path of those exalted souls who are similarly circumstanced. In that state, there remains, no doubt, a few of the little activities of personal interest such as eating, sleeping, and the like, but the Hindu Scriptures compare such apparently selfish acts of these perfected souls with the "burnt seed." As the burnt seed cannot germinate and grow into a tree although it maintains its old form, so such apparently selfish desires or acts of the perfected man cannot attract him any more to the

pleasures of life nor lead him astray, inasmuch as these desires are perfectly burnt in the fire of self-control and spiritual knowledge. There is also a saying of the Master on this point: "When the steel sword is transmuted into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, it loses all power of injuring anyone, although it still maintains its former shape."

The Rishis of the Upanishads have called such persons "true-willed," i.e., whatever they will is sure to come to pass. Had we not seen the verification again and again of the truths of the spiritual *Bhavas* that arose in the mind of the Master, perhaps we would not have been able to believe in this saying of the Rishis. We have seen, if he ever felt a dislike to accept any particular food or drink, it was found out afterwards that it had previously been actually defiled somehow or other, although the Master was not aware of the fact at the time; then again, while going to speak of some spiritual matter to anyone he found it difficult to do so through the involuntary restraint of the tongue; it used to be found out afterwards that the particular person was perfectly unfit to be the recipient of that spiritual advice; if he had perceived in reference to any particular person that that person would not attain any spirituality in this life, or that he would attain only a little of it, it was found out to be actually so afterwards; if the sight of anyone would evoke in his mind any spiritual idea or thought of any god or goddess, it turned out afterwards that the man was the *Sadhaka* of that particular spiritual idea or a devotee of that particular god or goddess; again, if he had said anything to anyone under the impulse of a sudden inspiration, it transpired that that particular utterance of his opened up a new vista of life for the man, or brought about a complete change in him. There are innumerable instances of this kind in the life of the Master.

However, it has already been mentioned that during the time Jatadhari came to Dakshineswar the Master used to imagine himself as one of the softer sex and all his actions used to get tinged with emotions peculiar to women, so when he got the vision of the beautiful boy-form of Rama, his heart was naturally filled with a mother's love for the Divine Child. Although long before this incident he had been initiated in the sacred mantram of Rama to make him fit for the worship of his tutelary deity, Raghuvira, still his attitude towards the deity was one of a servant towards his master. But now when he found a new emotion arising in him for the same deity, he thought it necessary to get a proper initiation from a Guru in that particular path of devotion that he might attain the right fruition of that spiritual *Bhava*. When he made mention

of this desire of his heart to Jatadhari who had perfected himself in the sacred Gopala-mantram, the latter was much pleased to initiate the Master in that mantram of his own *Sadhana*. And Sri Ramakrishna thus initiated, with the aid of that sacred mantram, engaged himself with all the assiduity of his nature in that particular *Sadhana* of the *Vatsalya-Bhava*, and ere long was blessed with the constant vision of the Divine Child Sri Rama. By constant meditation on that spiritual form of the boy Rama through the *Vatsalya Bhava*, he soon came to realize the truth of the ancient saying, "The Rama who was the son of Dasharatha is also ensouling every being; the same Rama has spread himself out as this whole Universe, yet he is different from everything of this Universe."

Besides the initiation in the sacred Gopala-mantram Jatadhari gave the Master the image of Ramlala also which he had been worshipping with so much of devotion hitherto. He had to do so because the deity expressed His desire to Jatadhari that henceforth He would stay on with Sri Ramakrishna.

Referring to this episode, we have heard the Master say—"Subsequently Ramlala grew so much attached to me that he would scarcely remain with Jatadhari. It used to happen many a day that after cooking his food, when Jatadhari used to go to offer it to his Ramlala, he could not find Him near him; then in an extreme anguish, he used to run hither and find Ramlala playing with me in my room. His loving heart used to take offence at this seemingly neglectful conduct of Ramlala, and often he would accuse Him of heartlessness and cruelty towards him. And then he used to almost drag Ramlala by force and make Him eat his offerings. In this wise Jatadhari had to remain here for a long time, as neither Ramlala liked to part with me nor Jatadhari could part with the idol of his heart whom he had been worshipping so long.

"One day Jatadhari came to me all on a sudden, and told me with tears in his eyes that Ramlala had at last vouchsafed His infinite grace to him and had completely quenched the thirst of his heart by showing him the Divine Vision as he had desired to see, and that He had told him that He would not go from Dakshineswar leaving me. He further told me that he was not at all sorry for it since it was His Divine Will to remain here and be contented with my company—he could not go against His wishes; and whatever pleased Ramlala could not but be a source of joy to him also. So he told me he would feel no pang in leaving Him behind under my care and derive satisfaction of heart by

thinking that He was happy with me here. So saying, he gave me the Divine Image of Ramlala and left Dakshineshwar for good. Since that day the Image is with me."

It has already been told to our readers that during the time when the Master was engaged in the *Sadhana* of *Vatsalya Bhava*, Bhairavi Brahmani, Yogeshwari, was still living at Dakshineshwar. We have heard it from the Master himself that she too was an adept in the *Sadhana* of the fivefold *Bhavas* mentioned in the Vaishnava scriptures. Whether he had actually any help from her in this particular *Sadhana* of the *Vatsalya Bhava* at the time, we are not aware of. But it was a fact that the Brahmani used to often look upon the Master as the Divine Child Gopala, and treat him as such. We have heard it from the Master's own lips and also from Hriday. So it is quite possible that Sri Ramakrishna might have got some sort of aid in this particular *Sadhana* of his from the Brahmani also. But this much is certain that having seen the Brahmani engaged in the practice of the spiritual *Bhavas*, and having heard her speak in praise of them, the desire to practise the *Sadhana* of these *Bhavas* must have been stirred up in the heart of the Master.

(To be Continued)

BY THE WAY

Nineteenth century witnessed phenomenal changes in the social and political institutions of India and these, coupled with the onrush of foreign ideas and ideals, created a revolution in the mentality of the thinking people of the country. In Europe the age was marked by the gigantic strides of science and the advance of rationalism and free-thinking, and these had their reflex on India. The old landmarks of the country were going to be washed away and foreign institutions were being grafted, as a direct consequence of the passing of political suzerainty into the hands of a Christian nation of the West.

It has been the fortune or misfortune of India to welcome the followers and preachers of the different religions within her four corners from time immemorial, who have been living here peacefully for thousands of years. She has seen the rise and fall of Buddhism and has been the only country in the world which has given shelter to Zoroastrians, Christians, Buddhists and Muhammedans, who have lived side by side. To the student of ethnology, India affords perennial interest. Within the fold of Hinduism there are sects, quite independent of one another and claiming equally the right to give the best interpretation of Hinduism. Added to these, there sprang up another religious movement in the country viz, Brahmo Samaj, started by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and pushed on by its greatest exponent, Keshub Chunder Sen, which, though it successfully combated against the aggression of Christian missionaries, was directed to a certain extent against Hinduism in that it condemned image-worship and many of its cardinal doctrines. The movement was gaining strength day by day and was deeply influencing the new generation of the Hindus.

What with the rising tide of rank materialism and agnosticism in the West, which had found access in and was influencing India because of her political union with England; what with the rival claims of the different religions of the world for the monopoly of giving salvation to mankind and the decline of true spirituality in Hinduism, India, the mother of religions, was demanding a man who could demonstrate by his life that God-vision was not an impossibility even in the nineteenth century and that all religions are true, and

such a man was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His life has been the illustration of the following saying of the Bhagavad Gita, which has been so often proved true in the history of India :

यदायदाहि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अगम्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

Never before in the history of India had there been spirituality at such a low ebb as in the nineteenth century, when the very existence of Sanatana Dharma, whose eternal and life-giving truths have rolled down centuries, was threatened by the onslaught of alien domination and the persistent efforts of foreigners to dupe the inheritors of the most ancient and glorious civilization of the world into the belief that their Vedas are nothing but the pastoral songs of the peasants and that they should look to Europe for the ideal of the highest religion and civilization. And it is the testimony of the great Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, whose brilliant and unprecedented success at the Chicago Parliament of Religions was an eye-opener to the last generation of the hypnotised Hindus that the attitude in spiritual life to which Sri Ramakrishna had attained, remains unparalleled amongst the Acharyas of India. The manifestation of power through this unlettered priest of Dakshineswar whose name encircled the globe within ten years of his passing, and whose image was literally worshipped by men and women who had been crying against idolatry for hundreds of years, remains a puzzle for the rationalist, brought up in the School of Spencer and Tyndall. But the wise men see in this life nothing but the demonstration of the above-mentioned saying of the Bhagavad Gita.

It is the peculiar feature of the Modern World that the several races, inhabiting in different parts of the earth and professing widely different religions have to meet one another and exchange ideas and ideals in work-a-day life. This age, more than any other age in the history of the world, demanded a man, who could realise in his life that the different religions are equally true and can satisfy the highest religious aspiration of man, and the life of Sri Ramakrishna is the fulfilment of this demand of the age. Born in one of the most orthodox Brahmin families, and following the lines of Sadhana as prescribed in the Hindu Scriptures, he had worshipped Allah, the God of Islam, and Jesus, the Divine Son, had attained the Vision Beatic by following these religions and realised the truth

that different religions are like the paths leading to the same goal. This unique and wonderful life, fulfilling the demand of humanity, has been lived and it is for the world to accept the Ideal. In him the Vedantists can see a Shankara, the Vaishnavas a Gouranga, the Shaktas a Ram-prasad and the Christians the Divine Son ! May the mankind, torn asunder by political and racial strifes and factions, look up to this life for inspiration to its higher destiny of realising the Divinity in each and every one !

THE TEACHINGS OF SRIMAT MADHWACHARYA

BY

Swami Ramakrishnananda

"Whenever religion is corrupted and irreligion gains the ascendance, I create myself, O Bharata," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. So we see that the same God at different times gave different religions to the world. But how can different truths come from the same being ? How can we believe that He who once preached that the Vedas are indisputable, the universal authority for all our actions, could find fault with them at another time ? In answer we can only say that there cannot be one panacea for all diseases ; different diseases must have different medicines. These contradictions proceed from one individual to cope with contradictory diseases. As Swami Vivekananda says, "One coat cannot suit John and James alike, similarly one religion cannot suit variously disposed men, having various tastes and tendencies, suffering from various spiritual maladies." When we look upon the different religions of the world in this light, then alone can we have any chance of escaping the band of fanaticism and bigotry, strife and narrowness, then alone can we escape the lot of being a frog in the well. When religions are studied in this light, they not only give us ample pleasure when we come to know and clearly understand the propriety of them, when they were first promulgated, to remedy the standing evils of what periods, but they also serve to broaden our hearts, enlarge our sympathy, and make us Gods on earth. With this noble spirit let us examine the different religions of India from time immemorial, that is from the Vedic age up to the advent of Sri Madhwacharyar, the subject of our present discourse, for by so doing we may hope to get rid of the misunderstandings which Monists and Dualists have been cherishing in their hearts against one another.

We know from the Puranas that at the end of the Dwapara and beginning of the Kali Yuga, Bhagavan Vyasa split up the one Veda into four different Vedas, Rick, Yajur, Saman and Atharva, in

order to render them suitable to the weak intelligence of the man of the Iron age. Every one of these Vedas is subdivided into three parts, the ritualistic part, the part dealing with prayer and invocations, and the third part dealing exclusively with knowledge absolute. He ordered his disciple Bhagavan Jaimini to take up the ritualistic portion of the Vedas, and evolve a philosophy out of it, which the latter did. The name of his philosophy is the *Purva Mimamsa*. Bhagavan Vyasa himself took up the three latter portions, and evolved a philosophy which goes by the name of *Uttara Mimamsa*, or Vedanta. These two books constitute the philosophy of all the religions of the Hindus. The Monist, as well as the Dualist, quotes the authority of the same books to support his apparently opposite views. Now let us see what Jaimini teaches. According to him, *Karma* is the only way to enjoyment, as well as to Salvation, and, as such, he lays down the rules of actions by following which a man can get whatever enjoyment he wants, and at last attain to Salvation. It is the nature of action that when it is done with a certain end in view, it brings enjoyment by fulfilling the desire, but when it is done without any end in view, simply for its own sake, it brings salvation. Action with desire brings enjoyment, action without desire brings *Moksha*. This is Jaimini's theory. Now we come to the Vedanta of Vyasa. His book is the authority of all the different sects of Hinduism, and every sect has its own annotation of it. Among the different sects of the Vaishnavas, it has its commentators in the persons of Ramanuja, Madhwa, Nimbarka, Ballavacharya, the modern Baladeva Vidya-bushana. Among the Shaivites, Abadhutacharya and others have written commentaries upon it. Among Sannyasins, the Bhashyakara Sankara and others have explained it in their own way. Even Raja Ramohan Roy, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, has written a commentary upon it to support his own views. In the oldest commentaries of Sankara and Ramanuja, we find mention of two ancient commentators, one Bodhayana Muni, and the other Pandita Upavarsha, the teacher of the great grammarian Panini. So we see that the Vedanta has been handled by almost all the sects of Hinduism. In the old days the ritualistic portion of the Vedas was in vogue. Rituals ruled the country and Brahmins were regarded by other castes as God on earth, and when any one of the lower castes dared to oppose a Brahmin he was sure to be immediately tortured, and generally to death. Manu enjoins the three lower castes :

"Do not rouse the anger of a Brahmin, even if you find yourself in great danger and difficulties."

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"As fire, whether it be sacrificial or non-sacrificial, in both cases should be regarded as the highest God, similarly if the Brahmin be learned or not, he should be regarded as the highest God."

"In this way if a Brahmin does all manner of wicked actions he should be still honoured and worshipped in every way, for he is the highest of the Gods."

"When a man of lower caste intentionally troubles a Brahmin, the king should persecute and torture him in various ways and finally put him to death."

"Even if a Sudra be competent to earn money, he should not do so, for if he gets wealth he may prove to be a source of great trouble to the Brahmins."

The above extracts show that the Sudras were not well treated in those days. But so long as the Brahmins remained as Brahmins, that is to say, so long as they observed the injunction of Manu, "a Brahmin should always desire to be truthful, pious, noble and holy, should control his tongue, hands, and appetite, and thus dutifully look after his wife, children, disciples, students, and servants," the Sudras had no cause of complaint against them. But undue power makes a demon of even a God, so, what wonder need there be when we come to know of the mal-treatments and persecutions which the Sudras had to undergo from the hands of those very Brahmins who had once been mercy and forbearance personified, as it were? But in the economy of Providence nothing here can last long, and the Sudras at last found a saviour in the person of the great Sakyamuni, the moving image of mercy and broadness of heart, who valued the life of a pigeon or of a sheep as much as his own life, the great Buddha, who felt equally for man and beast.

No narrowness could creep into that bosom, ever ready to shelter even an ant in one of its capacious corners. He could not tolerate the exclusiveness of the Vedas, or the cruel injunction laid down therein. He laid open the gate of salvation to a Brahmin or a Pariah alike. The very idea of a God favouring some and disfavoring others was repulsive to him, and in place of God he established the theory of *Karma*. There is no God to punish or to reward, it is one's own *Karma* that punishes or rewards: such was the doctrine which he began to preach. Every one has equal right to salvation if his *Karma* leads him through the true path. People flocked from all sides to his banner and even during his life-time he converted the whole of Aryavarta. His followers and disciples began to preach the new gospel outside of India,

and half of Asia acknowledged and accepted the faith of Buddha in the course of a century after his death, and even up to this date the number of Buddhists is greater than that of any other religion. The godless religion of Buddha thrived for centuries and centuries throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan. But was it really godless all this time? To the common and illiterate people it was not godless, for reverence and devotion are the two things which are inseparable from the constitution of man, and as such, although Buddha had no God for them, they created a God for themselves in the person of Buddha himself. Hills and rocks were carved out to give forth images of Buddha, temples and pagodas were built everywhere in which to worship their noble teacher, and the people were in no way wanting a Personal God. But quite the reverse was the case with some of the men of letters, those who prided themselves upon knowing the real doctrines of the Buddha. They found that they had not a Personal God to whom to answer, and as senses in almost every man get the upper hand, they began to be ruled solely by their senses. The moral injunctions of Buddha were overlooked, and they began to write their own scriptures as prompted by their senses. The result was the promulgation of a set of abominable doctrines which found ready advocates among all classes of people, and the country was again plunged into the deep mire of grossest immorality. Lawlessness, debauchery, profanation, harlotry, and many other heinous crimes were perpetrated publicly. The few good men that were left at that time wanted the old Hindu religion again, and in answer to their call, God again appeared on earth in the form of Sankara. To the common people who were more or less worldly-minded, he began to preach the old Hindu gods and goddesses, forgotten for centuries, and himself composed many beautiful prayers and *stotras* to them for the benefit of the populace. He laid down a code of worship for each one of the gods and goddesses, and thus revived Hinduism. To the thinkers and philosophers he had another religion to give. It was the religion of the *Vedanta* which he brought out of the oblivion in which it had lain during the long centuries when the Buddhists held their sway over the then known world. He wrote a new *Bhashya* upon it, in which he laid down the principles of his own philosophy. He scaled the realm of relativity, rose far above space, time and causation, to where knower, knowledge and known were unified. He discovered Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, and Bliss Absolute. Returning from that highest pedestal, he found that all human souls were one, that it was through mistake that we thought different from one another. There is only one universal existence, and realisation of

this unity of existence is the highest goal. The knowledge of unity in variety is the true knowledge. Because he was the discoverer of this unity, he has come to be known as the Father of Monism or Advaitism. He preached "ब्रह्म ब्रह्मास्मि." I am that Brahma "तत्त्वमसि" "Thou art that Brahma," Brahma meaning one Universal Self, which is neither male nor female. But he did not preach that 'I am God,' for in explaining the aphorism, जगद्गोपापारवर्जं प्रकरणाद सत्तिहितत्वाद् च. Sankara says that although a man can get some powers such as *Anima*, *Laghima*, etc., by worshiping *Saguna* Brahma, he can never hope to attain to the power of creation, because that power only belongs to God, or Iswara according to the scriptures, and because he, being a created being himself, was not present before or at the time of creation. But as time went on, many of his followers, forgetting the true meaning of ब्रह्म ब्रह्मास्मि "I am the absolute sexless Self", misinterpreted it and thought they were all Gods, and being themselves all Gods, whom could they worship?—they rather wanted to be worshipped themselves. The result was, that being irresponsible to any God they became as immoral and profane as the later sects of corrupt Buddhists. Piety and devotion were laughed at and ridiculed by them, and lawlessness and debauchery became rife. They argued that since all things were nothing but *Maya*, or delusion, how could there be any difference between good or bad? What harm was there in lying or stealing, that is regarding others' property as my own, for are we not all one and the same Brahma? At this juncture God had to come down again in the person of Ramanuja, who began to preach that it was true that there was one universal self and not a second, but the One Soul was composed of several parts which in themselves were distinct from one another, as there was one tree, yet that tree was made up of different parts, such as stem, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits, which form the portions of the same tree but are not the same in themselves. Because Ramanuja admitted that all the constituent parts of that one universal whole were all qualified or different, his doctrine is called qualified Monism or Visishtadvaitism. Again morality was established, for all beings being different from one another, they were responsible to one another. Ramanuja established God on a higher pedestal than Sankara had done, and consequently devotion and piety to that God were again brought back. He admitted the eternity of three things—God, Jivas (or individual souls) and Matter. God was the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. He did not admit the existence of *Nirguna* Brahma, as Sankara understood the term, but according to him, *Nirguna* meant void of all bad qualities. God, according to him,

was the only one existence, and He was eternally merciful, and greatly loved by his devotees. For the sake of His devotees He Himself becomes Images, Incarnations, etc. God was to be served in five different ways, 1st, by sweeping and keeping clean the temple of God, 2nd, by offering flowers, sandal, incense and lamp, 3rd, by worshipping, 4th, by repeating His Names, singing hymns to Him, etc., 5th, by meditating upon Him. A man could never reach Him by simply knowing the meaning of "Thou art That." So we see that Ramanuja, although advocating devotion as the only means to realize the One Universal, All-powerful Being, still could not escape the hand of Monism. It was even yet a little bit abstruse and abstract. It was therefore reserved for another incarnation, not of God Himself but of His devoted and eternal servant, the model and ideal servant in the universe, even Sri Hanumanta Mahaprabhu, to present God to all men and women in a more concrete form. We have already seen, by misunderstanding Sankara's doctrine, what an amount of immorality crept in amongst some of his followers, and so God had to send again his servant to denounce that interpretation and soon after we hear such bold denunciations as this:

"The demons alone can proclaim in all directions such monstrous doctrines as this universe is false, God is without any quality, there is no difference between one individual soul and another." Of course this is not a condemnation of Sankara's own theory, but of a wrong interpretation of it, as we have already seen.

However that may be, the good people were disgusted at the time with lawlessness and immorality everywhere existing. They convened a meeting to consider how to avert this evil, when suddenly one of the congregation, Satyapragna by name, rose, being as it were divinely inspired, and prophesied that the Wind-god Vayu would incarnate himself a third time, the first incarnation being that of Hanumanta, the servant of Sri Ramachandra, and the second that of Bhima, the second of the five Pandavas. In fulfilment of the prophecy, after a short time, Madhwacharyar was born of a Brahmana Madhwa Geha Bhatta, in the village of Ananteswar (also called Pajaka Kshetra) near the town of Udupi, in the Tuluva country, that is, in South Canara, in Madras Presidency.

Sri Madhwacharyar taught dualism. According to him there are two Truths, one independent, and the other dependent. He was in no sense a monist like Sankara or Ramanuja. The independent, eternal, all-powerful, gracious God is as true to him as individual souls and matter which all are altogether dependent upon the independent God, who is Vishnu. God is always good and

gracious. All living beings are His servants. When through mistake a man thinks that he is not the servant of God, but is God Himself, he falls from the path of Truth. It is a sin to utter such sentiments as *aham brahmasmi*, "I am Brahma or God." There is no other duty left for man or woman than to serve his or her Master, the eternal and independent God. God should be served in three different ways by all men and women. *Ankara*, *Namakarana*, and *Bhajana*. *Ankara* means marking the forehead, breast, arms, etc., with the metal device, representing divine weapons such as discus, mace, etc., after smearing the same with *gopichandana* and water. *Namakarana* means the christening of the children in the names of God that their names also will remind them of God. *Bhajana* means worship of God by entire self-surrender to His will. Along with *Bhajana* the following duties are enjoined. Veracity, benevolence, kindliness, sacred study, charity, defence of the weak, protection of all, clemency, contentment, faith and absence of earthly longings. Real worship consists in practically carrying out each of the above duties, and offering all good results springing therefrom to God. When a man can successfully carry out all these duties, he will ultimately get rid of the five *kosas*, or vestures, and be at last free. The five *kosas* are, (1) *Annamaya kosa*, food, (2) *Pranamaya kosa*, vital energies, (3) *Manomaya kosa*, will, (4) *Vignanamaya kosa*, discrimination, (5) *Anandamaya kosa*, bliss. Of these five *kosas*, or coatings, the first coating is our material body and the others constitute the subtle and causal bodies. When the soul gets rid of all these bodies it is liberated, but it still preserves an ethereal body with which it enjoys supreme bliss. Souls get four kinds of salvation, (1) *samipya* or similarity of Divine form, (2) *salokya*, or living in the presence of God (3) *sannidhi* or close proximity to God (4) *sayujya* or living in God, as a fish lives in ocean. A soul can never be one with God; every soul must keep its separate individuality for ever. According to Madhwa the five-fold difference is eternal. The five-fold difference is (1) God is different from everything else, (2) matter is different from God, (3) *jiva* is different from God and matter, (4) the innumerable particles of matter are different from one another, (5) every *jiva* is different from every other. Hence it is clear that God is only the efficient or instrumental cause of the universe, whereas *jada* or matter, is the material cause of it, and not as Ramanuja says that God is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. Hence according to Madhwa, God should not be called creator, used in the sense of creating out of nothing. God with the materials ready at hand shapes the universe according to His will. Madhwa also preached that

thoughts you take from me that is of so much value, as what thoughts you give to the subject, I shall therefore restrict my scope to the one particular aspect of the Guru, that I have chosen, hoping that by so doing, we may become better and wiser. Let us look fixedly at him for a while until he becomes a person and substance to us.

"When the rose is blown and sheds its fragrance all around, the bees come of themselves. The bees seek the full-blown rose and not the rose the bees;" so said Sri Ramakrishna and he exemplified this in his own life. He was a wonderful mixture of God and Man. He belongs to that rare class of men known as God-men or Messengers of God who never fail to appear whenever spirituality in men declines below a certain point, and calls out for help against the materialistic wave. To a people who spend their whole energies and lives in material pursuits and learned disputations, and in whom the disparity between profession and conduct had assumed large proportions, he brought a message once more from the deep of things, that all worldly pleasures are naught and supreme happiness without limit can be attained by man by living in God. His intense and passionate longing to see God and live in Him, manifested itself when he was very young; and the trials and acute sufferings he underwent for a good many years, have been amply borne out by the voice of many who had the good fortune to move closely with him. Often he cried out in a heart-rending manner, "O Mother, show me the truth! Art Thou here? Dost Thou exist? Why then should I be left in ignorance? Why can I not realise? Words and philosophy are in vain: Vain all this talk of things: Truth! It is Truth alone I want to realise: Truth I would touch: Truth I seek to feel!" He was bitterly lamenting the loss of day after day, without any realisation for him. After a very long time and patient sufferings the true secrets of his inner nature began to reveal themselves to his vision. For Nature pursues her mysterious and tranquil ways in the blaze of day, and reveals her secrets freely to the human spirit when it quietly believes with intense devotion but it is vain to think of wringing out her secrets with levers or with screws, if she should refuse. Sri Ramakrishna in proper time had that Grace and saw visions (wonderous ones) which unfolded such secrets to him to the complete realisation of what is beyond words, be it called Truth, Love or God or Brahman. All of us know the three states—the sleeping, the dreaming and the waking states. During deep sleep, the man is totally unconscious of himself and the world. In dream, he is somewhat conscious and in the waking state he has the ordinary amount of consciousness. The sages have said and shown that there is a fourth or *तुरीय* state, in which the consciousness is extreme and the man sees things, which the ordinary waking man does not. This is called Samadhi, in which the mind is temporarily freed from the body and is centred in the contemplation of the one Reality existing behind all forms and names. Bhagavan Sri Krishna says:

या विद्या सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जायति संन्यमी ।
यस्यां जायति भूतानि सा विद्या परमतो मुनेः ॥

There have come forth from time to time men who had the vision of God in Samadhi. They have said that every man has the same prospect before him, if he would only choose the way pointed out by them, that is,—the path of renunciation. In all lands and climes and in different languages have gone forth the trumpet call of the Seers.

"The world of spirits no clouds conceal.

Man's eye is dim it cannot see;
Man's heart is dead, it cannot feel
Thou who would'st know the thing that be,
The heart of earth, in the sunrise red,
Bathe, till its stains of earth are fled."—FAUST.

It is only after Sri Ramakrishna had some of these visions that he began to preach forth what he saw, to those that went to Him. He was so intoxicated with the beauty of what he saw, that he passionately longed to show it in its truth to everybody. The public, miscalled foolish, with its cap and bells, yet knew how to find out their man, and thronged to him the whole day and listened eagerly to the sweet voice pouring forth tidings from the supersensual world,—that hidden fountain from which flow all streams of life. He preached day and night and overworked himself. He suffered from throat disease; but warnings had no effect on him; he would not give himself any rest; when pressed to do so he would say "I would suffer willingly all sorts of pains; and deaths also, a hundred thousand times, if, by so doing, I could bring one single soul to freedom and salvation." If any one asked whether it was not his duty to take some care of his body to carry out his Mission, his only answer with a smile would be "This body? I had a hundred such! Blessed indeed is it, if it may go in the service of others; I would give a hundred thousand bodies if it could help a single soul." "This body has been sacrificed to Ishvara. Do you mean to say that I should take it back again? It has been given to the service of the world." He had Samadhis or visions frequently and in one of these, he passed away. Can any hope to have a better ending for his body than in the service of humanity? He lived and died true to the ideal of the Sannyasin embodied in the Vedic Rik inscribed in front of this hall,

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन साधनैकेऽमृतत्वमानुषः ।

It is not by Karma, Praja, or wealth but by the renunciation of all these, that a few here and there have been able to obtain freedom from births and deaths. Blessed indeed is he who can cry out in the last moments of his life:

That light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move,
That benediction which the eclipsing curse of birth
can quench not,

friends and play-acting in the neighbouring mango grove. He was very precocious in every way. People were charmed with him and found in him, even in infancy, something beyond ordinary. In his infancy and boyhood, he, unlike other boys, was ignorant of any feeling of fear. He used to sing well, imitate others to a nicety, show an extraordinary memory, and in all ways exhibited a remarkable rapidity and success in everything he attempted. Folklore and legends about gods and goddesses used to move him to tears when he was only seven years old, and he already felt a deep yearning for a sight of the Divine Mother, Kali. It is said, even when so young, a beautiful landscape scene affected his imagination so deeply that he fell into a trance over it, and had to be carried home by a wayfarer who happened to notice him in that state. As he grew, he began to read and hear the lives of those that had renounced the world, and he became so fascinated over them that it is said, he once dressed himself like a Sadhu, and asked his mother how well he looked in that garb. In the various Pujas, religious dramas and festivals that in the course of the year relieved the humdrum monotony of the village life, the young man used to show considerable excitement and almost lose himself. His intense imagination was so considerably exercised over such things that once when he entertained a party of worshippers with songs of the Divine Mother, and recital of Puranic stories, he lost all outward consciousness and fell into a deep trance. These are strange doings for a young boy that would naturally alarm his parents, relatives and friends! Is it madness? or epileptic fit? The signs of the latter were absent! As for madness, yes, it is seer's madness; with method in it. Except for these trances he was all right in every way. His health was good; and otherwise too there was no cause for alarm. Even the trances resulted only from religious or spiritual exercises. Is it not better to be mad after God than after woman and wealth? All the world saviours have been considered to be madcaps by their worldly brethren in their time. Once when he was asked to do the evening Puja service to Durga he so far forgot himself then by the side of the idol, that he expected the idol to touch him and speak to him. It is not my purpose here, gentlemen, to give a narrative of the sage's doings in life, but I recite these few events of his boyhood simply to show the extraordinarily early development of the spiritual temperament in him. A man who utterly renounced the world and yearned after and realised the supreme truth, that lies hidden beyond it, is however a matter of abiding concern to us; for, he has seen perfect beauty and happiness—is enjoying it and calls out to us to come and enjoy with him. The deafening noise of worldly life around us has not yet stifled the small still voice within, that whispers that happiness is not to be sought for in it and we should search for it elsewhere. In every phase of thought and action we walk with fear in life and in our subconsciousness feel that this world is a wilderness. The ascetic walks without the slightest fear, for, to him, the world is the manifestation of the Ishvara whom he seeks in the good and the bad, in chastity and prostitution, in pleasure and in pain, and in fact in everything that attracts or repels

us. The phenomenal world that is before us is the same for the worldly and the ascetic, but the standpoint of view is totally different. The man of the world stands on the unreal Maya and mistakes shapes for real things; the man beyond the world plants his foot on the real and sees the one in many. The former, like the frog in the well, does not believe that there is an ocean elsewhere bigger than his well: the latter, living in the ocean, calls out to his brother in the well to come and live there as the well will very soon dry up or get filthy and the ocean is ever full and pure. A pretty woman of the world takes water in a jug, from a pipe;—the man of desires is thinking of the price of the woman but the Paramahansa sees a type of the Divine Mother in the woman, the jarring discord of worldly life in the noise of the partially filled jug, and the deep silence of eternity in that of the completely filled jug. To the man of sin, "this compact home of an existence, the body in which we live, complaining no doubt, yet as in a home, is during death, passing away in great agonies into an unknown of separation foreignness, unconditioned possibility." To the seer, the body is not the home, the so-called death is only an avabhrita snanam अवभृत्स्नान or bath of purification, and he always lives in God. We have often looked upon the beauty of a chandelier and its variegated colours with admiration and pleasure. The holy man looks at it and smiles, for, to him, it is, like life, "a dome of many coloured glass that stains the white radiance of eternity until death tramples it to fragments." When a bee hovers round a flower, it buzzes, but when it drinks honey from inside it makes no noise. The man of the world makes much noise with his book-learning but the sage who has vision of God quietly enjoys Him. The tearing of a letter to pieces after its contents are known, brings before the Paramahansa the tearing of this world of forms after reading the Divine will written in it. Every trivial incident has been turned to account in this way. To extract the real from the unreal in which it is hidden or entangled, to separate the milk from the water with which it is mixed and then to drink the real milk, is the way of the hansas. Every action, expression and word of Sri Ramakrishna brings out the fact that the world of thought and spirit in which he lived, was different from that of ordinary men, though, to all appearance, the men and things he dealt with were the same. (To be continued)

MY WORK IN AMERICA

BY

Swami Abhedananda

In response to an Address of Welcome presented by the Hindu citizens of Dacca to Swami Abhedananda, the Swamiji said:

MR. PRESIDENT AND HINDU CITIZENS OF DACCAs,

I thank you heartily for the warm reception and the kind expressions that you have uttered this evening on this occasion of presenting an address of welcome to me. I thank you heartily also for the kindness that you have shown towards me on other occasions during my visit to this city. I feel that I have come to the heart of

the province of Bengal. This historic city of Dacca has had its past which is glorious. When I think of the people of this city who have done various kinds of work in literary lines, also in philanthropic lines, in the lines of domestic industry and other avocations, I feel proud of myself as being a fellow-citizen of this province of Bengal. I consider it as a great privilege to me to be present at this meeting and to express the work that I have done in foreign countries for the last twenty-five years. Few people realise the length of twenty-five years which is not a short period. It is a quarter of a century. I have spent the best part of my life to spread the Sanatana Dharma which we have inherited from our ancient Rishis and to help humanity irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality. Through our labours India has been raised in the estimation of the Western people, especially of America. To-day you find hundreds of young Hindu students who are studying in the United States of America, but when I went there in 1897, I was the only one Hindu in the whole continent, and I had to fight tooth and nail to correct the misrepresentations which were started by the American Missionaries. When these Missionaries returned to America from our motherland they gave wrong ideas and their ideas were incorrect. I will give you an illustration of one of the methods of raising funds which was adopted by these Missionaries. It was a method of misrepresentation. I noticed that there were text-books in the Sunday schools connected with different churches and in these Sunday-school books there were pictures of Hindu mothers throwing their babes into the Ganges to feed the crocodiles. The mouth of the crocodile was open and the mother represented as a dark woman throwing the babe at the mouth of that crocodile, and it was represented as the highest ideal of our religion. When I first went to America, I was regarded as a heathen, as an uncivilized savage, but through our efforts and through our patience and untiring perseverance, I succeeded in changing the ideas of the people. I remember on one occasion, Dr. Barrows, who was the President of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 where our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda represented the ancient philosophy and religion of India, I remember Dr. Barrows mentioned in one of his discourses that the Hindus had neither morality nor religion nor philosophy: whatever they have to-day, they had learnt from the Christian missionaries. And I had to stand up and contradict such a statement and I showed them that it was not true that the Hindus have learnt what they have today in the lines of religion and philosophy from the Christian Missionaries. I showed that what they regard as the highest philosophy and religion of Jesus the Christ, came from India, that their baptism came from the banks of the Ganges, that the parables and the teachings of Jesus the Christ were the feeble echo of the teachings of Lord Buddha, the founder of the great humanitarian religion known as Buddhism. All these years I have struggled with all my efforts against odds, and convinced the people that the philosophy of the Vedas is the highest philosophy in the whole world, that the philosophy of the Vedas contains the essence of all religions and it holds the key to unlock the doors of wisdom among all nations. I had the good fortune of coming in contact with Professor Max Muller, the translator into English of the Rig Veda and other Vedic literature. I had also the good fortune of meeting Prof. Duesen of Kiel University who is the only Sanscrit scholar in Europe who can speak in Sanscrit. It was he who came to Bombay many years ago and delivered his address in Sanscrit, but you will be surprised to know that Prof. Max Muller could not understand Sanscrit when I spoke to him in

that language; He could read and write in Sanscrit, but his ears were not trained to the sound of Sanscrit words, and therefore he could not speak.

Here allow me to mention when I went to America and how I went. Our President has already told you that our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda whose name is honoured and revered all over the world as the great patriot saint of modern India, Swami Vivekananda went to represent the philosophy and religion of ancient India at the great Parliament of Religions which was held at Chicago in 1893. He gave his message before that vast congregation which consisted of men of talents from all parts of the world, where gathered the great philosophers from all countries, including China and Japan and other parts of Asia and Europe, where there were Bishops and Archbishops, monks and giants in literary lines. Before that Swami Vivekananda had never lectured before a public. At that time he stood up unprepared at the call of the President of the Parliament of Religions and with his benign manners and kindly expression, he addressed that vast assembly, as "Sisters and Brothers of America." That was a new way of addressing the public. Other speakers who went before him had not addressed the audience with those expressions, and those two words touched the hearts of the whole congregation. They cheered and cheered and cheered, that cheer would not stop, and Swami Vivekananda did not know what happened. His mind was confused, he thought he made the greatest mistake of the day, because other speakers addressed and the audience had not behaved in that way. And at that time he lost his consciousness: he stood there like a statue and from his lips dropped words of wisdom while he was unconscious of himself; and that was his first address. He could not remember what he said, and afterwards when the reporter published the report of his speech in the daily papers, the anxiety of his mind was removed. Then he knew that he had not committed any mistake but they liked the expressions and that he was the hero of the day.

After giving his message before that assembly, he was regarded as magnet, a gigantic magnet of the whole congregation and people sat at his feet and listened to the words of wisdom which dropped from his lips, with reverence, admiration and astonishment. Afterwards Swami Vivekananda was invited to different parts of the country to deliver his message and for eight years he remained there and lecturing in different parts of the country delivered the message of Vedanta and Sanatana Dharma before the hungry population of the United States. After spending three years of untiring labour Swami Vivekananda was invited to go to England to spread the gospel of truth in that land of coldness, dampness and fog. Swami Vivekananda came there in 1895 and in 1896 and stayed there for a while. Then he sent his request to me. He called me to come over and take up the work which he had started. I responded to the call and went alone, and crossing the different oceans landed in London in 1896. Giving the charge of his work to me he returned to India and asked me to stay there and continue the work which he had started. I stayed in London for a year and a half and lectured three or four times every week. My first lecture to the public was in London before an English audience and I continued to do the work as I was directed by my predecessor Swami Vivekananda. Then at his request I went to New York and started to continue the work which he had started there. He left only a handful of students in New York, who were eager to continue the study of this great philosophy and they invited me. So I landed and starting with this handful of students I continued to work and established a big society known as the

Vedanta Society of New York. It was incorporated and well-organised and after many years Swami Vivekananda returned again to America and lived with me for two months in New York and saw the work that I was doing and he was highly pleased with the extent of the work that I had started and which was an organised work. It was through our efforts that the Vedanta Society published many of Swami Vivekananda's writings and also other works which contained our lectures. We made the Vedanta Society of New York known all over the world. We published the gospel of Ramakrishna and the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and you will be surprised to hear that the Gospel has been translated into the Spanish and Scandinavian languages and into other languages of Europe. People are eager to know the truth which was given out by our great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva. gave this new ideal before the world and his ideal is the ideal of the Sanatan Dharma. Swami Vivekananda was the first exponent of that ideal in the Western world and I followed his footpath, and kept up the work; the seed that was planted by Swami Vivekananda was fostered by our continuous effort and works.

Now I have given you a short outline of all the work that was started there during the twenty-five years. I travelled back and forth from London and Paris and New York and crossed the Atlantic seventeen times going to different parts of Europe and giving the message of Vedanta to different people. Then I crossed the Continent to the United States which is about 3,200 miles wide crossing back and forth many times. I lectured in the Universities of New York, Chicago, Cornell, Kalifornia, Toronto. I travelled from Alaska to Mexico and through Canada, and met men like William James of Harvard, who is the greatest psychologist of the present day. Prof. Lamb who has translated the Atharva Veda into English, Prof. Jackson of Columbia University, Prof. Carson of Cornell University and all these great intellectual giants were my friends and I made them honorary members of our Society and they were glad to become connected with our work. Then we have made quite a number of students who are known as Brahmacharis and Brahmacharinis. We have given such names to them as Sivadas, Ramdas, Haridas, Gurudas and so on. One of our students Gurudas has come to our headquarters at Belur Math and many of you have seen him. He is now in America and he will come back again some time this year and we have Brahmacharinis who are devout students of Vedanta and who have been initiated and their names are Bhabani, Sankari, Narayani and so on, and they are proud to be called by such names. They call themselves Hindus but, my friends, when they call themselves Hindu, you must not think that their religion is *Chulmarga*, that their religion has been confined to the kitchen. They have a different idea of Hinduism and that Hinduism is the Sanatana Dharma. My friends, what you call Hinduism is not a religion. It is the worship of Lokachara and that Lokachara has covered the truth of the Sanatana Dharma. It was taught in the Vedas. Sanatana Dharma teaches that we are all Atma, parts of Paramatma, we may say all children of God, that God dwells in all, that we are all united in the infinite ocean of Knowledge and Existence and Bliss, that we are like waves in that infinite ocean of Brahma, that all Jivas are nothing but the representatives of the Divine Spirit. It is one whether we belong to Vaisnavism, or Saivism, or Buddhism or Mahomedanism or to Christianity or any other sectarian religion. We must remember that our body is a temple wherein dwells the Eternal Being whom we shall worship in spirit and by spirit. We have no right to hate anybody; we

have no right to condemn any one, but we have a right, an eternal right to worship everyone and recognise Narayan in all human beings.

My friends, our religion teaches us to salute our brothers and friends and strangers when we meet them, by folding our hands. Do you know the meaning of that? Why do we fold our hands before strangers? That means that we recognise Divinity in him. We do not shake hands as Europeans do? Because that is a barbarous custom. Do you know why it is a barbarous custom? I will explain to you. In ancient times when people were fighting one against the other, if anyone met a stranger he considered him to be his enemy. They used to have swords hanging on the left side and when they met a stranger they were ready to draw the sword with the right hand; but when they realised that he was not an enemy, instead of drawing the sword with the right hand they gave the right hand to the stranger. That meant an expression of friendship. That is the reason why I said it was a barbarous custom. It originated in barbarous times when the people were uncivilised and were fighting each other. But to-day we know that instead of fighting each other we must love each other.

And that love is to be manifested by recognising the same Divinity in all. Therefore we have a better method of meeting our friends and strangers by saluting and by recognising Divinity in all. In this way, my friends, you will find that our Sanatana Dharma teaches that God is all in all, God is all-prevading, that even in a pariah the same divine spirit dwells. We must recognise the same divine spirit in a Brahman, in a cow, in a dog, and in a pariah. Do you not remember the famous passage in the Bhagavat Gita where Bhagavan Sri Krishna says विद्याविनयसंपन्नो ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि । शुनिश्चैव स्वपाके पवित्रताः समदर्शिनः ॥ Do you know the meaning of it? You must recognise the same divinity in a highly cultured Brahman, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog and in a pariah whom you regard as a scavenger. That scavenger is as great as you are, if not greater. What you cannot do yourself, your scavenger does for you. Therefore he is greater than you. Regard him as the living God and then you will uplift the downtrodden masses of coolies and the lower castes of India; and they have the power to regenerate India and to elevate India, not the higher classes. The higher classes are worse than the lower classes. The lower classes have conserved their energies for centuries and if they will let loose that energy they will move the world. Do you know how Buddhism was spread? By starting with the lower classes. Do you know how the religion of Chaitanya was spread? By spreading it among the coolies, malis, jeles and they overran the highest classes afterwards. Do you know how Christianity was spread? Christ had only a handful of fishermen as his disciples who were down-trodden and hated by others; and when Christianity was spread in Rome the higher classes never put their attention to these things but the slaves accepted because they found more freedom in Christianity and therefore Christians afterwards conquered Emperors and made them disciples. The same thing will happen in our country, my friends. You must remember that the lower classes are Narayana and so long as you have treated them with ignominy the Lord has punished you and therefore you are down-trodden to-day, therefore you are slaves to-day, therefore you are punished to-day, and in order to propitiate the Deity, in order to expiate your sinful acts or the sinful acts of your forefathers you should now regard the divine spirit in all and recognise them as the temples of the Almighty Being. That is the religion of the Vedanta. To-day I say

going to preach before you the religion which was started by the Rishis of ancient times, who expressed their conviction and their realisation of the eternal truth in the language which is known as the Deva-Bhasha, the language of the Gods. You know that in Rig Veda we find a beautiful expression. **एकम् सद्विप्राबहुधा यदस्ति** That which exists is one, men call it by various names, that which exists is one that eternal truth has many names.

To-day your Dacca city is honeycombed by hundreds of sects whom you regard as Sampradayas. One is trying to beat the other : one is trying for the head of another and they call themselves the teachers and preachers of Sanatana Dharma. But my friends, the fundamental principle of the Sanatana Dharma is to recognise God in all, that there is one God and that one God has many names. We may call him Vishnu, or Siva, or Kali, or Durga, or Brahma, or Allah or Jehovah. It is the same one God. Why do you quarrel? Why do the Vaishnavas call Shaktas all names and drive them into eternal damnation? Is that our religion? My friends, the Vaishnavas are worshipping the same God whom the Shaktas are worshipping. Hindus are worshipping the same God whom the Mussalmans are worshipping. Why do you not recognise the same God under different names, which is the fundamental principle? Our great master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was mentioned in this address of welcome as the Yugavatara, the Incarnation of Divinity in the present cycle, when the harmony of religions was to be established, because at this time dissensions and quarrels and persecutions have filled the country with disturbance and disorder. At this juncture Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva incarnated himself in our midst to establish righteousness and to destroy evil as a fulfilment of the celebrated passage of Bhagavan Sri Krishna,

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

In this cycle, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came to establish the harmony of religions, that the same God who is worshipped by the Hindus of all sects is worshipped by the Muhammadans, also by the Christians. He gave this illustration that as the same substance water is called by some pani, by others bari, by others jalam, in France they call it Eau, in Germany they call it Fisser, in English they call it Water but the substance is the same and when an Englishman is thirsty he will ask for that water by calling it in English but the same water will quench the thirst of a Frenchman although he does not use the English word and the same water will quench the thirst of a Hindu who calls it jalam and pani and bari. As that water is one but the names are many, so there is only one God whose names are many, and whose substance is the same, and Bhagavan Sri Ramkrishna came to prove that to the world by his own experiences. You are familiar with all the spiritual exercises which he went through during his time of Sadhana. When once he wanted to know whether through Mahomedanism the same ideal can be reached, he ate like a Mahomedan and dressed like a Mahomedan, and through that method he found that the same ideal of the Vedas could be reached. Then through the Christian method he also discovered the same ideal. Therefore he emphasised that He who is worshipped by the Christians, by the Mahomedans, by the Vaishnavas, and by the other sectarians is the same one God. Have we not seen with our

own eyes Christians coming at his feet and worshipping him as their ideal Christ who is regarded as the incarnation and the son of the Almighty Father? Have we not seen him worshipped by the Mahamadanans as their ideal, by the Sikhs as Guru Nanak, by the Vaishnavas as the Vishnu, by the Shaktas as the incarnation of Divinity, by the Saivas as the ideal Siva, a living example of Siva and Mahadeva?

So my friends, we have seen a living example of this great harmony of religions and to-day we must follow his footsteps and follow his example and live up to the ideal. Then we shall spread this harmony of religions in all parts of the world. As you know, that your forefathers were the first preachers of the great religion which inundated the continent of Asia in earlier times, that religion which was started by Buddha, as you know that Dipankar was born in Bajrajogithi, and Shilabhadra, a great professor of the Nalanda University was a native of your land, so, my friends, to-day it is your duty to take up the banner of Ramakrishna and spread the gospel of truth all over the world. I want from among you a dozen young men who will go prepared to establish centres in China, in Japan, and in other parts of Europe like Germany and Italy speaking their language and teaching them the religion of the Vedanta and the idea which was taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. This is your duty because religion is our life; politics we do not speak because politics is the last thing. Our ideal is Moksha, freedom. Moksha means spiritual freedom and my friends, you should know that spiritual freedom includes all other kinds of freedom, even political freedom, which is a secondary thing. Moksha is our ideal and that ideal we shall hold close to our bosoms and regard it as the aim and end of our life; and if any system would interfere with this ideal, I would fight tooth and nail to overcome that obstruction. Our Sanatana Dharma teaches that we shall be all united, because unity is the goal of our religion. Hindus and Mussalmans and the Parsis and Christians should be all united for the good of this motherland. There should be no dissension among the different Sampradayas like the Vaishnavas, Shaktas, and Saivas. We should all join our hearts together for the good of our own people and regard them as incarnations of the Divinity, because each one of us is a temple of the Almighty God as I have already said and we must recognise that upon the altar of the heart of each soul, of each individual, is seated the Almighty Being and that Almighty Being is to be worshipped in spirit, by spirit and when we have succeeded in recognising divinity among all, then we shall find a solid foundation upon which the structure of unity should be established.

REVIEWS

The Spirit of Ancient Hindu Culture by Maganlal A. Buch, M. A., Baroda. Pp. 264. Price Rs. 2-4-0.

We have read Mr. Buch's book on "The Spirit of Ancient Hindu Culture" with immense pleasure and have been impressed with the depth of the author's scholarship. His power of expressing deeply philosophical conceptions in simple and forceful language is remarkable and will, we are confident, appeal to all learned and scholarly men. His range of inner investigation is vast, extending from the remote vedic age to the latest and Scientific discoveries. In some respects, the present book is unique in as much as there are very few books of modern savants in which we find such a brilliant exposition of the ultimate explanatory principles of Hindu Theology and Metaphysics. What strikes one most in going through the book is the learned author's comparative study of Eastern and Western Philosophy and Theology &c. in discussing the value of image

worship he shows the similarity between the lack of religious emotion, and of religious habits resulting from the first onslaught on Hindu religion by Christian Missionaries and European civilization amongst the Neo-Hindus with the waning of religiosity amongst the Christians of Europe when Luther had accomplished his mission against the Papal faith; or how the greatest thinkers of Europe, *viz.* Scopenhauer and Bergson have recognized that intuition is the true method of knowing the Reality, which the Hindus have always regarded better and safer than abstract ratiocination.

The Introduction, in which the author sets forth the contrast between the cultures of the East and the West is a masterly piece of composition. We quote a few passages for our readers. "The fact is, that the East was rather creative; the West is rather critical. The Eastern people originated brilliant ideas in the days of the Upanishads; but they knew little of the modern methods of systematisation, interpretation and criticism. The modern Western outlook is above all critical. A critical spirit has spread over all departments of life and thought. In religion instead of the throbbing consciousness of a devotee, or the sincere out-pouring of a vedic seer, we are now treated with the abstractions of theology. In philosophy, instead of a deep conviction of the reality of soul, of God, of eternal life which we had in the old days, the West gives us endless commentaries on those sublime ideas and points out in unmeasured terms the limitations of the conceptual faculty, the impotence of man and so on." "The East has cast its die for a life of perfect repose in the bosom of the Infinite, for a life of eternal contemplation and eternal enjoyment. It demands unity, it demands union and absorption, it demands rest and repose 'from the fitful fever of life.' The West has thrown its weight for a life of endless efforts, for endless triumphs, for endless progress towards 'unpathed' waters undreamt shores." The author is not blind to the truth that both these oriental and occidental temperaments have their merits and demerits, and a synthetic union and a comprehensive harmony of the two cultures is desirable. The chapters on 'Hindu Literature,' 'Hindu Politics' and 'Hindu Theology' exhibits the author's vast study in the ancient Shastras and Samhitas as well as Western literature and philosophy. As a matter of fact, the book is the product of ripe scholarship and as such, deserves the careful attention of all true scholars of India.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Birth-day Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Hindu Temple San Francisco, California, on Sunday, January 22nd, 1922, with simple and unostentatious, yet solemn and impressive services, and whole-hearted devotion.

Tasteful floral offerings, sweet strains of melody interspersed throughout the ceremony, together with the fragrant perfume of burning incense lent an added sacredness to the occasion.

Swami Prakashananda delivered two special lectures taking for the morning topic at 11 O'clock "Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to World Civilization"—and for the evening at 8 O'clock "The Universal Key-note of His teachings."

Many came both morning and evening to pay homage to the hallowed memory of this Great Messenger of Light and to listen to the Divine Truths and High ideals represented in His life so lucidly presented by our Swami.

"Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh"—and from the depths of his worshipful heart Swami poured forth the sacred principles of Vedanta embodied in the life of his beloved Master.

NOTES AND NEWS

During his lectures Swami explained the purpose and importance of the celebration of such lives,—how thereby we keep great ideals before us: such lives are an inspiration without which we cannot grow. So we should celebrate the lives of those great ones whom we love, honor and revere. To become imbued with the spirit of those high ideals is good—but—urged Swami, it is much better to do your utmost to assimilate those ideals and thus put them into practice in your daily lives; Divinity is your Birth-right, none can take it away from you. It is your duty to unfold that Divinity.

All who were fortunate enough to have been present on that sacred occasion were touched by the depth of love and whole-hearted devotion manifested throughout by the Swami, and to those who could imbibe the true spirit of the celebration, it was an inspiration, and to have been there—a grand privilege.

His Holiness Swami Abhedanandaji paid a visit to Dacca last February. A public meeting was held in the Curzon Hall of the Dacca College in which Mr. Harlog, the Vice-Chancellor of the University presided and an address of welcome was presented to him. We reproduce the reply to the address of welcome elsewhere. From Dacca he proceeded to Mymensingh, where he laid the foundation stone of Sri Ramakrishna temple.

Since Swami Paramananda lectured, on the invitation of Miss Anna Maud Hallam, before the Convention of Applied Psychology last September in Cleveland, he has received urgent invitations to lecture all through the East and Middle West. In response to some of these he set out on November 27. His first stop was in Rochester, where he spoke before the club of Practical Psychology. So great was the interest shown that he was asked to hold a class on the following day before leaving for Syracuse, where he went to deliver a lecture for the Practical Psychology Club of that city. The meeting was held in the Universalist church and every available space was filled with eager listeners. In Rochester he gave a second lecture in the large hall of Exposition Park and at its close he was carried to another meeting where he was kept busy until midnight answering questions. Cleveland was his next stop. His first lecture here was scheduled for the Hotel Winton; but the crowd which gathered nearly half an hour before the meeting so far exceeded the capacity of the hall engaged, that it became necessary to secure larger accommodation. Nothing spacious enough being available, some one suggested opening the lunch room. It was quickly filled and in order to be seen and heard, the Swami was forced to convert the lunch counter into a rostrum. On Friday morning he held a class and in the afternoon he went with Dr. E. Thayer Ward, National Secretary of the Associated Clubs of Applied Psychology to address the Psychology Club of Youngstown. The lecture, which was preceded by a banquet, was given in the Auditorium of the Young Men's Christian Association and so numerous was the attendance that even after filling aisles, platform and dorways, several hundred people were turned away.

The Ramakrishna Mission Student's Home, Calcutta: The Students' Home of Calcutta is a College Students' Hostel, specially for free-boarders, and is run after the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashram. Its object is to turn out all-round men by supplementing University education by practical, moral, cultural, intellectual and spiritual training. "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man." So said the great Swami Vivekananda and the Home tries to translate this grand principle into the daily life by

instilling into the mind of every student this positive idea, and giving every one the greatest possible scope to advance towards perfection. Indeed, it has always been the humble ambition of the organiser of the Home to chalk out a new line of mental development, at least for some of the young men of Bengal during their University life. It is to the young men of Bengal that the illustrious Swami looked forward to carry out the noble and laudable work of regenerating the land by carrying the light of Hindu culture to every door. The country has realised the baneful effect of the present system of education, which is quite foreign to the genius of the nation, nay, detrimental to her best interests and is now turning to her own treasures.

The value of an institution which aims at the assimilation of the best elements of Western culture and education and wants to turn out young men who have built up their lives on the rocky foundation of spirituality cannot be over-estimated and deserves the financial support and encouragement of all patriotic Indians. But it is a matter of regret that the institution cannot flourish for want of funds and has to content itself with accommodating only eight boarders! It is a well-known fact that many Hindu students have to turn to Christian Missionaries for their residence, who not unfrequently try to infuse Christian ideals in the Hindu mind. Fortunately, their attempts have been a signal failure but the Hindu public of Calcutta may take a leaf from the book of those men in England and America who finance liberally towards educational and evangelical work.

The country requires a band of self-less teachers who will carry light and culture to every cottage, if the dream of the uplift of the masses in India is ever to be realised. This Home hopes to turn out teachers of this very type out of those inmates who will aspire to serve their poor brethren in this way. The scope of the work has been seriously hampered by pecuniary wants. The Home is situated in a rented house, which cannot accommodate any more than eight students and funds cannot maintain any more than seven free students.

If the noble object with which the Home has been started is to be fulfilled even in a humble way, the Home should have a building of its own which can accommodate at least twenty students and it should be also equipped with the necessary funds to maintain them. Moreover it should have a plot of land in the outskirts of the city where students may receive the vocational side of their training.

The Secretary of the Home appeals to our generous countrymen, who have realised the paramount need of man-making education, and have been privileged by fortune to serve their brethren, to push on this noble cause by contributing their quota.

A worker earns money by coaching College Students. This income, together with the subscriptions and donations by the generous public is the mainstay of the Home. The total receipts during the year amount to Rs. 3,301-0-1 and total disbursements amount to Rs. 2,315-4-9 leaving a balance of Rs. 985-11-4. This with last year's balance, Rs. 1,867-7-6, makes a total balance of Rs. 2,353-2-10. This clearly shows that the financial condition of the Home is far from satisfactory. A permanent fund is absolutely necessary to consolidate and expand the work of the institution. Contributions may be sent to the following addresses:—(i) Swami Brahmananda, President Ramakrishna Mission Belur Math, District Howrah. (ii) Swami Sardananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Calcutta. (iii) Brahmachari Anadichaitanya, Secretary, Ramakrishna Students' Home; 119/1, Corporation Street, Calcutta.

N.B.—In the case of (i) and (ii), the money should be earmarked for this Home.

The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want.
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the
Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

BY

Swami Saradananda

(Continued from Page 326)

The Inner Truths of Madhura-Bhava

Unless one be a Sadhaka himself, it is not possible, indeed, to have a full understanding of the Sadhana-life of others. For, Sadhana is a matter of that subtle spiritual world where exist none of these sense objects which decoy the senses to delusion. In that world, there is to be found neither the interrelated arrangement of events of this gross world, nor anything of that mad struggle for self-aggrandisement and cruel competition for the acquisition of creature comforts, which passes in the world for heroism and greatness. There is only the Sadhaka's own mind and in it the tendencies born of his myriad previous births; there is also the uncommon attraction of his heart for the highest ideal—the attraction born of the conflict of his internal world with the external,

and its perpetual struggle to destroy all those tendencies of his mind which are inimical to the attainment of his goal. The facts of that spiritual world are the gradual withdrawal of the Sadhaka's mind from the sense plane, its complete merging within itself,—diving deeper and deeper into the depth of his soul and unravelling the subtler and subtler truths of the spiritual consciousness, and at last reaching the innermost depth of his self,—and its final realization of and unification with that "One without a second, the Indestructible, beyond sound, beyond touch, and beyond form," which forms the basis of all ideation and egoition and all consciousness of existence. Another fact of the spiritual world is the return of the Sadhaka from that state of Samadhi to the consciousness of the external world again, by retracing his steps by the same path. This backward and forward movement of the mind of the Sadhaka from the state of external consciousness to that of Samadhi and again from Samadhi to the external consciousness is continued repeatedly until all the tendencies of his mind (Samskaras) get attenuated by the process and its volitional nature is completely destroyed for ever. But again the religious history of the world has recorded, from the very early days of the human society till now, of such a few rare Sadhakas with whom the Samadhi state appeared to be the normal state of consciousness, and their coming down to the external world consciousness for the good of the suffering humanity was a forced affair, as if it was a great effort on their part to remain in the ordinary consciousness of the external world even for a short time. And the more we learn of the Sadhaka life of Sri Ramakrishna the more will it be clear to us that he belonged to this category of Sadhakas. If the study of this biography cannot evoke that feeling about him in our heart then it must be understood that the fault is with the present writer and not with the Master, for, time and often, he told us, "I cherish a few of the petty desires with some effort in my mind that I might keep it down with their help for you! Otherwise its natural tendency is towards the Absolute—to remain merged in It."

That Absolute Reality realized in Samadhi has been described by some of the ancient sages of India as the fulfilment of all relative realities, i.e., the noumenal Entity in which they find their ultimate meaning; by others again it has been posited to be a Nihil—the negation of all relative realities. But virtually both mean the same thing; because all of them have accepted It to be the origin and end of all things. What Lord Buddha has designated as Shunya, the Nirvana, or negation of all relative existences, has been described by Bhagavan Shankaracharya as the All, the fulfilment

of all relativities. Leaving aside the dilectics of the subsequent Buddhistic philosophers, if we study the teachings of these two Masters in their own words, we cannot fail to come to this conclusion.*

* According to the Indian logicians there are four kinds of negation, viz., absolute negation, mutual negation, antecedent negation, and sequent negation. It is in the light of these antecedent and sequent negations that the Absolute of the Vedantins has been designated by Buddha as Shunya or Nihil. The antecedent negation means the negation of the effect-form in the cause; for instance, a tree as a tree is non-existent in the seed, so from the standpoint of tree the seed can be called as the negation of the tree. Sequent negation means the negation of the cause-form in the effect, for instance, the seed as a seed is non-existent in the tree. So from the standpoint of the cause-form, the effect is the negation of the cause. Therefore, if the Absolute is the origin and end of the phenomenal world, it can well be defined in the terms of negation of the relative in the above sense. But this is from the pantheistic view of creation.

Even from the transcendentalistic view of the Advaitins of Sri Sankaracharya's school, the Absolute can be defined in the terms of negation of the relative, as it has actually been done in the Upanishads—'Neti Neti Atma.' But this negation is of the second kind, i.e., mutual negation, which means the assertion of a thing is the negation of its antithesis: for instance, assertion of A means the negation of not-A. In this sense, the Absolute is certainly a negation of the Relative, and in this sense alone Lord Buddha must have meant his Shunya as Nirvana or complete negation of all relative phenomena.

He could never have taken his Shunya to mean the absolute negation, which means absolute non-existence like that of chimera or hobgoblin or a 'barren woman's child.' For he has asserted often in his teachings that this Nirvana or Shunya is a state of supreme peace and the highest bliss. To quote some of them:—"These wise people (Arhats), meditative, persevering, ever full of strength, attain to Nirvana, the highest bliss."—*Dhammapada* V. 23. "Temperance and charity, to discern the Noble Truths, to experience Nirvana, that is the greatest blessing."—*Mangala Sutta* V. 11. "Hunger is the worst disease, the samskara the worst suffering: knowing this, as it really is, is Nirvana, the highest bliss."—*Dhammapada* V. 208. All these quotations clearly show that Nirvana is not a state of absolute Nihil or annihilation of life, but a positive state of existence, the maximum bonum of life, and as such it is exactly the same as the *Nishkryana* or *Mukhi* state described by the Vedantins.—*Translator*.

THE SUPREME RIDDLE AND THE SUPREME REALISATION

BY

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

Whatever is now, is but a limitation of what always is. The flux of things has a background of permanent Reality. Every passing thing only obscures the light of the Infinite and Eternal Truth as clouds obscure the sun. If we do not see the Eternal, it is not because it is not there or because it is not visible, but it is too bright and vast for our selfish and limited vision. Only when we free ourselves from selfishness and are ourselves, can we see the supernal Sweetness and Loveliness.

We must get over our illusion that what we do not see is not. Some realities can be grasped only by the mind and not by the senses. They are greater than the realities reported by our senses. The roundness of the earth and its vastness can be realised and held only by the mind and not by the senses. They are not the less true on that account. In the same way there are truths of spiritual realisation that transcend the mind. They are not the less true on that account.

This search of the noumenon through the gate of the phenomena has been the privilege and the task of philosophy and religion. It is not my purpose here to discuss the rival theories or doctrines of cause and creation. What is important to know is that the search for the noumenon is one of the imperative inner impulses of our nature and that the noumenon belongs to a higher order of truth than the multiplicity of universal phenomena.

Time, space, and causation are of the very stuff of our mental operations. When the mind seeks to go beyond them and realise the evolution of these principles themselves it is attempting a task impossible of performance. The trial is really an effort to stand at the centre of the relative and realise what is beyond the circle. This is the most perplexing situation—that we should feel an irresistible impulse to learn the absolute cause, that the mind should be the sole means, and that it should not be able to realise the absolute!

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But what the mind cannot fully focus and demonstrate, it can vision and apprehend, leaving it to another faculty to perfect what it begins. Just as, though there be a gamut of vibratory motion, the human eye receives only a fraction of it, so, though the Supreme Thought has infinite manifestations, the human mind can receive into its small chamber only a fraction of the same. The question that we must ponder over and investigate and solve is the means by which we can bring into operation this larger faculty of perception.

The two words *evolution* and *creation* have long been at war with each other. Evolution merely means a succession of connected states of being, each being like yet unlike the other and each being the transformation of the previous state. But it cannot explain why there should be this transformation at all. Similarly *creation* has reference to the causal energy and somehow imports a force outside the realm of phenomena. We have to find out that truth where these two ideas meet and find their reconciliation.

Once again I deprecate any idea that we must launch into a discussion of pantheism or idealism or materialism or any other ism. I am seeking to think the thing straight out. What becomes clear to us on reflection is that the whole is implied in the parts and includes the parts. The successive transformations that we call evolution have a sustaining principle of immanence that at the same time transcends them all. Hence there are two standpoints—one in the plane of the limited and the relative and the other in the plane of the Infinite and the Absolute. In the former plane there is certainly a relation of the part to the whole. If it is a rhythmical relation we call it good. If it is unrhythmical, we call it bad. In the plane of the absolute there is only an infinite inclusiveness. It is not nothingness but a fulness and a summation.

The world-order at each point of time is different from what it was and will be before and after. It is only a fraction of the Infinite Absolute. Each ego can remain in a relation of disharmony to the whole or in a relation of harmony. The latter is a love-relation. The very force of love implies and causes an expansion of the mind that limits the self. The grand sacrifices of self mean a sundering of the mental limitations of the self.

Hindu philosophy analyses the universal order into *Sattwa*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* (rhythm, movement, inertia), and shows the unity out of which emerges this triplicity. In relation to it the Absolute is called the *Iswara*. The final summations of Hindu

thought are contained in the words *Parameswara* and *Satchidananda*—according as we approach the problem from the plane of the relative or from the plane of the Absolute. From one point of view God is the transcendental and immanent cause of the ceaseless transformations of the universe. The cause of creation is His love or His sport—His love that yearns to give a chance to each soul to outgrow its limitations by rhythms of adjustment to His will, or His sport which delights in this play of the One in the Many. From the other point of view, He is the fulness which seems to be creation or evolution when seen in parts but is Itself—Eternal Consciousness and Bliss—when seen as a whole.

What is the means of this realisation which the mind dimly apprehends but cannot fully comprehend? Our wonderful religion tells us that it is the slow removal of our egoistic mental limitations. By processes of *Yogic* meditation, by the disciplines of goodness, by the ecstasies of love, and by the expansive power of illuminating thought, we must purify and enlarge the mind so that it may attain the fitness to receive the cosmic vision. It will then cease to be a limitation and an obscurer of truth. Then will shine forth the effluence of the soul's splendour and what will be realised is the Bliss of Light and the Light of Bliss.

THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN AMERICA:

The Boston Centre

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its Thirteenth Anniversary on the evening of January 5th. The Chapel was entirely filled and everyone expressed great admiration for the additions and improvements in the house. After music and a few words of welcome by Swami Paramananda, the report of the year's work was given. It ran: "The best commentary on the growth of the Centre in the year 1921 is to be seen in the numerous additions to the building. The enlarged entrance, the entirely new structure covering the remaining portion of the property, the raising of the rear wing, another story, and the addition of a fourth story to the front of the main building amounted to a complete reconstruction. One of the most effective changes is the building of the new entrance porch lighted by Gothic windows. This has made possible the rearrangement of partitions inside, which has materially

increased the seating capacity of the Chapel. In the large Gothic window of the porch the symbol of the Ramakrishna Mission, which appears on all the Centre's publications and stationery, has been reproduced in stained glass, and in the arched division below is inserted the Vedic Text: "Truth is one, men call it by various names."

As if stimulated by the fresh setting, the work has shown a great increase in activity. The added rows of chairs in the Chapel are already occupied each Sunday and people keep warning us that our enlargements will prove insufficient before the season is over. The Centre has had also unusual opportunities during the past year to act as a link between the East and the West. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was entertained on three different occasions; and a prominent physician of Bombay, (Dr. Nair) with his entire family spent a day with us. Still other prominent visitors have come to the Centre. It has made many new friends also through "The Message of the East," as well as through the Swami's outside lectures and travels. In September he attended a large Convention of Applied Psychology in Cleveland, delivering two lectures and speaking several times informally. As the outcome of the warm interest aroused, the Swami has been besieged with invitations to lecture before the different clubs represented at the Convention. On the last of November he set out on a tour arranged by their National Secretary. During the twelve days it covered, he visited seven cities in four different states and delivered twenty-two lectures, sometimes speaking three times a day. The best measure of the enthusiasm and appreciation which met him everywhere is to be found in the fact that in the twelve days eighteen hundred of his books and pamphlets were sold. A number also subscribed to "The Message of the East."

Through the year the magazine has received encouraging words from many unexpected quarters: One, for instance, from a Russian refugee in Switzerland, a Professor of Chinese literature, who found an early bound volume in a second-hand book stall and drew from it fresh strength to bear his poverty and exile. The *Message* now travels each month to England, France, Germany, Switzerland, British East Africa, India, Ceylon, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, British Columbia and to many different states in this country. It was interesting to us also to receive Hindi translations of three of Swami Paramananda's works,—"*Problem of Life and Death*," "*Self-Mastery*" and "*The Way to Peace and Blessedness*." The same translator brought out Swami's "*Path of Devotion*" last year.

Because of the confusion incident to building, the publication department has not been as active as usual during the last twelve months. In all, through mail orders and local sales, about seven thousand books and pamphlets have gone into circulation. But no new titles have been added to the list of publications. These figures, however, do not give the true measure of the growth of the work. Its real achievement is unseen and unmeasured. It is in the stillness of the closet, when the door is closed and some yearning heart seeks God—it is then that the fruit of the Centre's effort is garnered; and that none but God sees. Therefore our part must always be not to count costs or calculate results, but by holy thoughts and eager loving service to keep the central source of inspiration free and unclouded."

In his commentary on the report, the Swami said in part: "I came to Boston about Christmas time, 1908. I had no idea of building up a work of this size; in fact I had no plans, but I was ready and willing to do anything that came to me to do. I went where I was invited, I slept and ate wherever I happened to be; my life was wholly planless; and that is the way the Centre started. My purpose was not to proselytize or to establish a church. The message I brought, it seemed to me, had a tremendous appeal and I gave it wherever an opportunity presented itself. At first it was not easy. There was opposition and a great deal of misunderstanding. People had an idea that the Orient was full of mystery, and they were amazed to know that India had so simple and direct a teaching to offer to the world.....Our mission here is to create unity—unity of thought and unity of culture. Although the vital aim of the work is to fulfil the spiritual need of those who seek it, it has also another definite purpose,—to bring together East and West.

This little seed which has been sown here in the form of a modest centre, is bearing fruit in various ways. I do not consider it a big work. I have not the ambition to build up a big work in the outer sense. When a religious work becomes pretentious, often the higher expression of feeling is lost. I like rather to feel that we are humble, that our bigness lies in the ideals we uphold and try to live up to. We have not always met with success, but we have tried to go forward with a steadfast spirit of devotion. And it is our prayer at the beginning of the new year that our conviction may be so fixed in our hearts that whether people look on us with suspicion or friendliness, whether they try to crush us or aid us, yet we may maintain a loving spirit of tolerance and deeper understanding. This is what the world has need of. If even a few of

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those who come here realise this in their hearts, that is enough. Our effort is to eliminate all feeling of harshness, discordance, doubt and suspicion of one another; to break down all boundary lines. We have never tried to organise, because it is difficult to express the highest ideals in a large organisation. We stand for freedom, freedom of thought and action; that each one may realise the loftiest and best in his own way. We like to be able to do our share. It does not require a large institution to send out loving thoughts and to pray for one's fellowmen; on the contrary, it is easier to do it when our mind is less distracted by outside influences and concerns. Let the work ever remain modest and let our hearts grow big and full of feeling for others. It does not matter whether people agree or disagree with us. Ours is to love and serve. A spiritual work can be built up only by putting its trust in God; if He sustains us, then nothing can thwart us. Those of you who are friends of the Centre and have your heart's interest in the work, let this be your prayer for it:—That God's will may be fulfilled in every step of its journey; that we may have ever greater courage; and that we may serve all men with selfless devotion, without asking anything for ourselves."

The exercises closed with a prayer and benediction; and the rest of the evening was spent in informal social intercourse. Refreshments were served and there was music by the gifted violoncellist, Miss Florence Colby, who also played at intervals during the exercises.—*The Message of the East.*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE SAVIOUR OF THE AGE*

BY

S. Bhaskar Iyer, B.A., B.E.

(Continued from Page 343)

This is the standing miracle which is, in my opinion, greater than all the reputed miracles going with his name. Gentlemen, I do not propose to go here into the subject of miracles; for endless discussions about their genesis and progress have been made, and in my opinion, uselessly made by learned men all over the world in connection with the lives of all saintly men. I shall be contented with merely pointing out that their lives and teachings have their

* Lecture delivered at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mysapore, on the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

value and lessons for us solely from the human and spiritual interests in them and in spite of the miracles narrated of them. How did Sri Ramakrishna achieve this miracle of miracles? By intense faith and devotion to God. He says so and he did so. All the Paramahansas have said so. They had all seen God; they had all the same human bodies as we have; they had some, though very few, of even our failings at certain stages of their progress. They have all suffered as few of us have! Many and hot are the tears that we have shed for the loss of our nearest and dearest, but in this vale of tears, very few are shed for Him who is in us and around us; "He finds who seeks; who weeps for God finds Him." The power of devotion will shake Mahadeva in Kailasa, deprive Krishna of his dinner, and make Brahma your servant. When I was very young, I was told a story that I have never forgot. Certain Devas went to Brahma's house with complaints and for protection; at the threshold they enquired of the door-keeper what Brahma was doing. They were very much surprised at being told that he was doing Puja. During their interview, they asked Brahma what he was doing Puja for, as all the world were doing worship to him. He replied that he had much greater burden to do than all men, for each devotee worshipped only one God but He himself had to do service to as many Gods as there were devotees. Hanuman achieved more through his faith in Rama than his master; for, he at one jump crossed the ocean but Rama had to build a Setu. It is *faith* in the name of Hari that works miracles; for, "faith is life and doubt is death." God gives to each whatever he honestly and fervently longs for:—the mother gives dolls to her children who ask for them, and herself to those children who ask for her. Child says to mother "Mother dear, wake me when I am hungry." Mother with ineffable light and love in her face, kisses the child and says, "Darling, thy hunger will awake thee!" The spirit of confidence, love, devotion and happiness that characterises the relation between mother and child is unsurpassable amongst created things in all countries and times. Sri Ramakrishna saw such a relation between God and man; and it is persistence in keeping up such a relation in his mind and such a spirit of devotion to God as towards his mother that enabled him to see and realise Him. He panted for a vision of the Divine Mother as a drowning man would pant for a breath of air. He saw Her and Her alone in all women from his devoted wife to the vicious prostitute.

This vision of the relation of mother and child as between God and man formed part of his perpetual experience. How many of

us can do this? It is very difficult to feel like Sri Ramakrishna, as our spirit does not respond in harmony to his. He was free and we are bound in every direction in life. What can then be made of him for our own purposes? He himself has pointed out the way and we can honestly try to study it up and follow it. The Goal is vision of God. The path is Renunciation with Devotion. By Renunciation is meant the gradual and ultimately complete elimination of all our desires for merely transient things. Tranquillity in mind is essential for God-vision, for, "when the mental sea is agitated by the wind of desires, it cannot reflect God and God-vision is impossible." The two great products of Maya that very powerfully blind man's vision are woman and wealth; and the Guru has given us special warnings against them. He says "Women and wealth have drowned the whole world in sin. Woman is disarmed when you view her as the manifestation of the Divine Mother." The habit of looking on all women as children, sisters or mothers, according to their age or condition is not very difficult to attain, if one makes a conscious effort in that direction. It is very easy for some of us to acquire such a habit of thought. To those who meet with difficulty, the holy sage points out that the carnal desire can be thrown out in time, and that this dog petted and caressed for some good length of time and thrown out as dangerous thereafter, will continue to trouble the master for some time but cease to do so after frequent beatings. I have heard of a cobra fascinating a bird circling in the air. The cobra merely holds his head up and steadily looks at the humming bird which wrestling against the fascination but without avail, gradually sweeps less and less in the air and comes down nearer and nearer to the cobra until at last it falls into his mouth. Lust is such a fascination and the moment it ceases to be the relation between man and woman that relation undergoes a beautiful change and they become real helpmates to each other. As you see the image of Ishvara in every man, so you see that of Ishwari in every woman. As regards money, there is nothing to be proud of in it. The rich man is a beggar before another richer than himself. A suppliant who wanted a little money for carrying out a sacrifice came to Akbar when he was praying to Allah to bestow upon him more countries and more wealth. He went away without asking any thing of Akbar as he did not come to beg from a beggar. When the glowworms appear after dusk, they give light to the world, but they disappear when stars begin to twinkle. They disappear again when the moon appears and the moon is paled and humbled when the sun rises. A little reflection over these natural facts will show that money and power are only a means that God

has placed in our hands for the service of mankind and the means not so used is a waste. "We are but servants to extend blessings that flow from man's One Friend." The Ego (अहंकार) in us gets very clamorous when the desires are being got rid of. This must be fought out. Professor Tyndall was once accosted in the streets of London by an American, who pointed out to him that if he would only apply a few of his scientific discoveries to some commercial enterprise he could make his pile. The professor replied that he had no time to waste in piling money. The man of dollars nearly sank to the ground. If the professor could do so much for the cause of mere abstract science, can't we do so much for the sake of seeing Iswara? Carnality and wealth form clogs that will not allow any one to advance in the path of renunciation. They are like those heavy logs of wood that the village schoolmaster used to give to naughty boys as a punishment, or like the wheel-barrow which I hear is tied permanently to some convicts in Siberia and which never leaving them a single moment is the most dreaded punishment there. Carnality and wealth form the standing hall-marks of the bondage of the spirit; and it is only when we shake ourselves of them, we can advance in the path of freedom.

The holy seers have laid down four ways of attempt in this matter. One is to cultivate the habit of separating the Real from the Unreal, Brahman from Maya, God from His Manifestation and to finally live in the Real by the elimination of all that only seem to be and that really are not. This is known as the practice of Jnana and total renunciation of the world is the first step. The object aimed at is to attain the Nirguna Brahma or the Absolute aspect of God by a straight and short path. This is a course of practice which sanuyasins or Hamsas alone can follow, for they alone have renounced the world totally and are fit as Gurus to do Jnana Yajna or the sacrifice of knowledge to God. For us, men of the world, who have not yet got a sight of the first step and cannot have the faintest notion of what Jnana Yajna is, this practice is wholly out of the question. Everything in the world has got five aspects for the human mind. Its absolute existence, knowledge or recognition of its existence in the mind, its use, its name and its form. The first three factors are Brahmic or real, as they are universal and immutable and the last two are Maya or unreal because they are relative and changeable. For us, names and forms are everything in life and we are unable to look behind them into their real existence and enjoyment. Thoughts themselves are forms and the spoken words do not carry all the thought-forms

with them to the hearer. We are so chained to names and forms that we have given names to the nameless and forms to the formless. We have built houses for Gods, laid down limited jurisdictions for them, prescribed what they are to eat, licensed the men who alone can approach or touch them, and in every way have put in our own limitations and hall-marks upon Him who is limitless. The Sannyasi does not recognise any such limitations. To Him the house of God is the prapancha प्रपञ्च or the Universe in which God is manifest everywhere. The Sannyasi alone can work towards attaining the limitless God Whose presence is ever before him. He starts from what may be called our aim; that is to say, to see God with form. Since it is not given to ordinary men of the world to realise that which is beyond all names and forms, let us work to attain the form and name which is the highest generalised expression of it, i.e., the blessed form of Iswara, the concrete aspect of Satchidananda, as it were. Vyasa, after writing the Puranas, begs pardon of God for this action:—

कथं रूपविवर्जितस्य भवतो ध्यानेन यत्कल्पितं
स्तुत्यानिर्वचनीयताञ्जलिगुप्तो दूरीकृता यन्मया ।
ध्यायित्वं च निराकृतं यत्तार्थयात्रादिना
कृतमयं जगदीश तद्विकलतादोषत्रयं मरुतम् ॥

Here the sages have laid down two methods of practice Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. The essence of the former is the principle of Non-attachment (निस्तन्मावृत्ति) to results of actions: Do plenty of work but without attachment to or desire for the results: Work for duty's or Dharma's sake. Work for work's sake is condemned, inasmuch as it has no goal or aim before it; for it dignifies every bit of work and if logically followed will land you in the mad-house. Work with desires is somewhat better for through satisfaction of desires you learn to get rid of them. The one good feature in all desires is that they possess all their sinister attractions to you only so long as you do not possess the objects desired, but the moment you get them you straightway despise them.

In spite of this, our desires are so strong in us that it is very difficult to carry this principle of non-attachment to results through most of your actions. The worm in which form Vyasa had to take birth owing to some curse was going its slow way in the field of Kurukshetra and hearing the sound of a man's tread hastened to get out of his way so that it may escape death. Narada who was

passing that way saw the worm and the Vyasa in it, and after giving it for a moment the Divine eye which enabled it to see its previous lives asked Vyasa how he came to love the life of a worm so much. Vyasa replied that he did not know and that when in the body of the worm he was deluded that that body and life were the best and most lovable. In this world-drama of man, delusion is everywhere and without some aid from Jnana and Bhakti it is very difficult to practise Karma Yoga. The Bhakta prays to God devoutly to reveal Himself to him in form. Bhakti Yoga is communion with God through love, devotion, and self-surrender. Sri Ramakrishna was a Jnani and a Bhakta and in the little Karma that he had to do was a Karma Yogi. He has said that Bhakti Yoga is the easiest for the man of the world and he himself though a Jnani illustrated this in his life for our sake. The true Bhakta realises that work with attachment is dangerous and that work without attachment is exceedingly difficult. He prays for God-vision, for reduction of his Karma, and for the strength of mind necessary for doing all his actions without attachment. Such an attitude if cultivated and kept up steadily will help one to reduce his work by fixing one's mind upon his ideal i.e., God. The object being to see and realise God, why not go directly towards Him? For He Himself has proclaimed in a voice that has reached far that He will give Himself to those who truly worship Him. *यान्ति मया जिनोपि मां* "To those who worship me without thinking of anything else, and who have perpetually taken refuge in me, I take their concerns entirely upon myself."

अनन्याश्रित्यन्तोमां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां निष्ठाभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

This is the real charter of human rights and why should we faint on the face of it? Karma with attachment binds us further; Karma without attachment frees us from Karma, but Bhakti alone takes us to God-vision. For Karma, even without attachment is only a means to enable us to reach God. After reciting the various Karmas which are considered great and good the holy Rishi Prajapati points out that renunciation of action is better than all Karma, for, *जग* or renunciation is greater than all others.

Suppose a man sees God, would he ask for wealth, possession, power, so that these may be used for the benefit of mankind? No! He will ask that the last vestiges of bondage may fall off from him and that he may be completely freed from birth and death and all the bonds that they imply. Sri Ramakrishna refused to touch the

large sums of money which Rani Rasamani and others so profusely offered him for being used to the benefit of mankind. He was once asked why he could not have asked the Divine Mother to bestow upon him the healing art, so that fell diseases like leprosy may be cured. He simply replied that the idea did not strike him when he saw the Mother and if it had struck him, he could not have asked for it. Power, dominion, possession for whatever purpose, are quite useless for a man who longs to see God. Pure Bhakti pants for freedom from Karma and not for Karma. To a real Bhakta, the whole creation seems to pay worship to the creator. Apart from the jarring noise which man makes, there is a deep silence in Nature in which, quiet and hushed, his inner sense listens to and pulsates with the solemn celestial music to which all things keep consent. It is Bhakti or Love that irradiates everything; bends the sun-flower towards the sun, brings out the wild tiger in the domestic cat when her kitten is touched, conducts the marriage of the margosa to the Aswattha tree, and prompts the dog to give up his life to save his master. It is only when we enter into any work with love that we are able to do something; this common experience should teach us that it is only when that love expands and embraces the whole of creation and keeps consent with the Divine Love manifested in it, that one can see and realise God. This progress can be achieved only through Grace of God and prayer is the only form through which that Grace can be attained. The place selected should be a landscape scene or a temple, or if these cannot be had, a garden or a room in the house. The one thing needful is, that all the noise and bustle of the world should be shut out as far as possible, so as to be free from disturbance to your thoughts. There is special manifestation of God in holy places where countless people have long practised austerity, Japam, meditation, prayer and worship with a view to realising. Through their devotion, spiritual ideas have become condensed as it were; hence one's spirituality gets awakened more easily at those places. Let the place selected be fitted with everything that is holy and divine; pictures of avatars or acharyas or idols of gods and goddesses that are likely to lend facility to your meditations. With a view to avoid dispersion of your thoughts, catch hold of some holy saying of your Guru and ponder over it in all its applications and bearings to your life. Make a repentant confession of all your faults and sins to God and pray to Him to lend you sufficient strength of mind to enable you to avoid them for the future. Try to analyse your life, your actions and desires and form a just and correct appreciation of their real value and discriminate between what is more or less lasting and valuable and what is merely

transient and valueless. Compare your life with that of your Guru, find out your shortcomings, and try to raise yourself to his level in all ways. It is difficult to point out in detail what you are to meditate upon in prayer, for, each must do this for himself. I have attempted to indicate this only in a general manner. A systematic practice of some such communion with God in the form of meditation will soon bring us towards seeing things that we had not seen before, more correct ideals and actions, juster appreciation of men and things and a truer and straighter direction to one's action in life. For example, to every thought and action we shall begin to apply the test:—Is it acceptable to God and to my Guru? A test which was absent or perhaps not very prominent before. We shall begin to see that we cannot enjoy as well when people around us are unhappy as when they are happy, and why it is so. Active, energetic good to others will soon begin to have a charm which did not show itself before, and which in its happiness, will have dwarfed into nothing the merely sensual enjoyment that so took us before. Calamities and sufferings in body and mind that used to cast such a gloom over us and take away all our brightness, change their character and appear to us as only experiences which we are expressly born for in this Karma Bhumi, to expiate our past karma. There is every encouragement about us for this worship but we reject it. Who has not been ravished by the bewitching smile of an infant? "Blessed indeed is he that remains a child throughout his life, free as the morning air, fresh as the newly blown flower, and pure as the dew-drop." Have we not been almost enchanted by the weird smile of the Bala Gopala when they put up Krishna Jananam in the Cinema theatre? So smiles Heaven around us perpetually and it is the darkness woven by Maya that like Sita between Rama and Lakshmana hides the Divinity from our view. In a drama in seven acts there are all sorts of things brought in: the king and the clown, love, anger, wisdom, folly, mirth, melancholy, temples, palaces, the ocean and the stars are squandered away at the pleasure of the poet. But throughout we find a unity, a beauty, and a harmony in which all these have been set, and which dwells much longer in our minds than all the incidents of the play. The same feature is to be seen in this world-drama of God, by the intelligent observer. The world is His stage, men and things are all His playthings, which have no intrinsic value, and only act their part in the Divine drama. If we could only realise this, and keep it up perpetually in our minds, our actions would be totally different. As our love for God increases, love for the world is bound to decrease and the inner vision of truth is opened. Through Bhakti, discrimination and non-attachment will increase.

and in their turn re-act on Bhakti. All these are interdependant; the Jnana Yogi and Karma Yogi cannot proceed in their methods without Bhakti. Every word and action of Sri Ramakrishna brings out his intense devotion to God, through which alone he was able to see God. Let us then make a start on the road he has pointed out to us, first by daily prayer, second, by using some discrimination in separating the real from the unreal, and third, by a little non-attachment to things and desires of the world. Prayer and meditation will be of the greatest help to us towards acquiring right knowledge and cultivating a habit of non-attachment. A brass-vessel or a human body needs daily rubbing and scouring to keep it clean. Similarly, the mental body which gets defiled and tainted every moment with dirty thoughts, needs scrubbing and washing with holy and pure thoughts in prayer and meditation if it is to be kept pure. Is it not strange that we ignore or forget such a simple truth?

There is a heavenly music in created things. It is so enchanting that once heard, all worldly happiness is given up for its sake. To hear it, we have not developed that sense in us which alone can respond to it. A deaf man cannot enjoy earthly music. The man of nice ear can enjoy music but cannot hear when the note is pitched higher or lower than his limit. We are so hide-bound with the gunas or the qualities born of Maya that the individual is unable to respond to the celestial music or to reflect the celestial musician. It is said that Orpheus sang so "wildly well" that his music drew iron tears out of Pluto's cheek and got him back his fair Proserpine; but he was not able to draw the gold of Pluto out of his pocket. The best human music like that of Orpheus is defective and pales into insignificance before the music of the spheres. It is the devotee alone accustomed to God-visions that can enjoy that music. In the solemn silence of his stillness, when the whole world is hushed, he hears it in his heart and sheds tears of joy over it. In the path of devotion one gets it as one proceeds when the Grace of God descends upon him. The perception of a beauty and harmony in all created things is the first step in the cultivation of this new sense in us. Man with the devil stands on the top of a hill, and is very much struck with the scenery of Nature, the vastness, beauty and arrangement and order in creation. He sees the hand of God everywhere and has unspeakable thoughts in him. The devil sneers and informs him that this world was created by him and that when the fallen angels shut up in the centre of the earth found it too hot and uncomfortable and began to sneeze violently, the earth's surface became mottled with boils and became so uneven.

and ugly ; and that his sign and cipher are written clear in the convulsion, tumult, devil's work, and madness so very much in evidence. Man asks not the when and wherefore of creation and only finds God's delight there. Every man who has taken a view from Doddabetta hills has throbbed with love and fear at the beauty and the immensity of the scene before him. Why does he not feel similarly in the horticultural gardens ? Because there is the crude hand of man and his arithmetic there, marring the sacred beauty of Nature. It is silent meditation alone in a secluded place or in a temple or a room with holy associations that will reveal to us this hidden harmony in things. From of old it is written : " Each thinks and works alone."

In the practice of Bhakti the devotee should at first choose one particular idea or aspect of God to worship, and a Guru to guide him. The form in which the chosen Ideal comes out best may be taken up for the purpose. Anantasayana, Narasimha, Ramakrishna, Buddha, Mahadeva, Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati represent different aspects of divinity in manifestation and a devotee should choose for his worship that form and aspect which he thinks suitable or desirable, remembering always that the other forms are intrinsically equally valuable for worship. It is necessary to choose one form and one aspect to facilitate concentration of the mind. A Guru is equally necessary. Why Guru ? I have a conscience to guide me ! Is it not the voice of God guiding from within ? Yes, but it has no free play, and is foully choked up by a good deal of filthy matter in which the soul is enmeshed. The Yoga practice is so new and is really a battle against our environments ; hence external help is necessary. Even Sri Rama required the advice of Vibhishana for killing Ravana. In going to a strange country one requires a guide to point out the way. You engage one and only one lawyer or doctor when you want aid in their respective professions. So also you should have one and only one Guru to advise you in seeking your way towards God. Choose the best and holiest man available as Guru. Treat him as the representative of God though he is only an imperfect man. It is he that whispers into your ears the sacred mantram that opens the way to reach God. Do not waste a single word on his defects. Take the pearl in him and throw away the oyster shell. He himself says :

यान्मन्त्राकं सुचरितानि । तानि स्वयोपास्थानि । नो ह्यन्यथा ।

"Whatever good there is in me, practise that and nothing else." In carrying out whatever he says or does, maintain spirit. A Sadhu was very fond of a kitten. He fondled it so much

that the animal would not leave him even in his prayers, which in due course came in for much disturbance from the purring and rubbing of it. The Sadhu at last found it necessary to find out the animal and tie him up before beginning his prayer so that it may not come in to disturb him in the middle of his prayer. His disciples saw the Guru doing this every day before prayer and in course of time came to believe that prayer would not reach God unless a kitten had been tied up beforehand. So each disciple hunted up a kitten and tied it up before he began to pray. The Guru was very much disturbed in his prayer by the mewling and caterwauling of so many animals in chains and when he came down he saw a whole menagerie of them. Do not be such a disciple. Treat the Guru as the representative of the Divine Guru who whispers his spirit into your heart. *आचार्यदेवो नमः*, reverence him, consult him and serve him and you can be sure of his help in the spiritual path.

As one proceeds thus in Bhakti Yoga, through communion in prayer and longing for discrimination and right action in his daily life and with his chosen form of God to worship and his Guru to guide him, there comes a time when at least intellectually he is able to perceive the rudiments of Ishvara's hand in everything in and around him. He begins to forget his ego oftentimes in that intense enjoyment of the light, and beauty that is gradually revealed to his mind. Then begins the mad dance. He seizes his thing and begins to treat it as a child treats her doll, speaks to it, feeds and clothes it, serves it, pours out his confidences to it, and in every way enjoys it. For verily it is written,

रसो वै सः । रसं शेषायं कुरुक्षेत्रात् नदी भवति ।

"He is the essence of sweetness. Having obtained it one reels with joy." The mad devotee while eating dry grass for food, carries a sharp sword in his heart with a view to punish the wretch Narada for perpetually keeping God awake with his music, the rash Draupadi for her audacity in calling Krishna away from his royal dinner and offering the impure remnant of her food to Him, the cruel Prahlada for asking the Lord without any hesitation to break through a hard adamant pillar and the wretch Arjuna for presuming to bestow upon the Lord the mean office of his own charioteer in the battle of Kurukshetra. First the devotee becomes the servant, next friend, sometimes mother, sometimes child and at last the bride to God. This is what is meant by Seer's madness. In this progress of devotion carnality had died out completely long ago even before the *राज्यभक्त* or service aspect was taken up,

Hence the bridehood here, means only soul-dissolution. The devotion of a wife to her husband implies in its ideal everything of the devotion of a mother to her child, a friend to a friend, and a servant to his master, with something more, the entire merging of mind with mind. Hence the bridehood is held up as the highest stage in the progress of a Bhakta.

"Love whose perfect type is woman
 "The Divine and human blending
 "Love for ever and for ever
 "Wins us onward, still ascending."—Goethe

The Gopis of Brindavan attained this मधुर भाव. Sri Ramakrishna in his life has shown all these aspects to us, but it is clear that this मधुरभाव is most unsuitable to us. There is no question that it has been grossly misused for vicious purposes in the trantrik orgies of the near past that we have all heard of. Till we get rid of carnality altogether, it is dangerous to think or talk of मधुर भाव. Hence I take it, that for all practical purposes, the relation of mother and child as between God and man is the highest to aim at on the part of the Bhakta who has proceeded so far as to get rid of the pests of carnality and gold. In the unfolding of the divine vision the devotee at first sees God everywhere; then feels Him near; then finds He is of the same form as himself; and finally finds that he himself is God.

There are thus four methods of practice, ज्ञानयोग or practice of right discrimination and concentration of mind on the Real, भक्तियोग or practice of devotion and self-surrender to one form and name of God, कर्मयोग or practice of right action through Jnana or Bhakti, राजयोग or practice of concentration of mind on the worldly substance with a view to find out their ultimate ingredients. Sri Ramakrishna has said that Bhakti Yoga is the only method of practice that lends facilities in these times to us for our spiritual progress. Prayer with devotion and self-surrender to God with daily review of actions and thoughts in a place free from noise and bustle is the essence of this practice, and the end is to see God in form.

Gentlemen, in the storm and stress of life, we have got to spend our energies towards breadwinning. This is as it should be; for if a man does not earn his food for himself and his dependants, others will have to earn it for him and he will thus fail in one of the purposes for which he exists. But

is this all for him? No. Not only is he to satisfy his hunger and his desires but he should work for Dharma and Moksha. धर्मार्थकाममोक्ष is said to be पुरुषार्थ in life. He who does not try to find out the exact place he holds in the लीला of God and act out his part, lives in vain and fails in पुरुषार्थ or the purpose for which he lives. Not a day passes but we are either unduly elated with hope realised or unduly depressed with disappointment. This frail bark of our body and mind is tossed about violently by the wind of desires and the waves of opposite emotions; cannot we do something to steady it? Yes, we can. It is said that in the Chinese seas very violent cyclones occur at times and do havoc to all crafts happening to be in the area of the storm; but there is an area of calm within, in which a skillful navigator takes his rest until the storm blows away. When skies and earth frown and the five elements dance, there is a spot for the rainbow. Sri Krishna sang the Celestial Song in the midst of Kurukshetra in the presence of the two armies and at the commencement of the great battle. In the midst of the life battle when the wild desires are making ducks and drakes of beauty and light, there is a resting place for man in his own heart to which he can occasionally retire and in which he can quietly enjoy that peace and serenity which is denied to him in worldly life. Soul force or will power if practised regularly with faith will give us much more power or satisfaction than what the weak body can have. It will soon blunt the edges of our desires and reduce the amplitude of our swing under them. The regular practice of Bhakti will soon make us realise that enjoyment and suffering in life are the necessary results of our karma for which we are born in this world, and that they are very ordinary features like any other things in life, and that it is the weakness of our nerves and not any qualities inherent in the objects concerned that make us reel under joy and pain. May Sri Ramakrishna inspire us and guide us towards beginning this practice at least in a small way and give us sufficient strength to proceed in it!

Gentlemen, will you allow me to avail this opportunity of mentioning some silly questions often put by us and to us? Why should God create the worlds at all? Why should he place the free spirit in this bondage of clay? What is the Divine purpose in creation? It is really very funny that a human being with such limitations to knowledge as he has should either put such a question or should be expected to answer it. Even the seers have not been able to answer it and have merely called it लीला or God's play. We are all actors in a play; how can an individual

meeting was held. Mr. M. O. Parthasarathi Iyengar, M.A., M.L., Retired District Judge, presided on the occasion and Rao Bahadur S. Bhaskar Iyer, B.A., B.E., delivered a lecture, the subject being, "Sri Ramakrishna, the Saviour of the Age," which we reproduce elsewhere. The learned president pointed out in a nice short speech that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came at a time when religion was declining in India and showed that like Bhagavan Shankara and Sri Ramanuja, he too appeared to dispel ignorance and darkness and establish righteousness. The functions of the day came to a close with Aratrikam and distribution of prasadam.

Bangalore

The Eighty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated by his disciples and admirers at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City, on Tuesday the 28th February and Sunday the 5th March 1922. On the 28th February the *thirithi-puja* day, there was a select gathering of disciples and Bhajana in the evening; and the children of the locality were given a sumptuous treat.

On the 5th March, the day of public celebration, Bhajana parties carrying in procession the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna on beautifully decorated rathams arrived at about noon, when commenced the feeding of the poor, and about a thousand hungry *Narayanas* were fed. The evening functions commenced at 4 P.M., with an excellent *Harikatha kalakshepam* on Prahlada Charitram by Mr. H. P. Krishna Rao, B.A., Head Master of the local Hindu A. V. School, and an authority on South Indian Music. The audience were next treated to vocal music by a student of the National High School. Mr. T. S. Venkannaiya, M.A., Lecturer in Kannada, Central College, followed with a speech in Kannada on Sri Ramakrishna's method of teaching. In telling language he emphasised that the chief point in the Master's teaching was that he did not adopt a universal prescription for all but took into account individual temperaments and showed each the path that would best suit his tendencies. The English speaker of the day was Mr. B. Nagesa Rao, M.A., English Lecturer, Central College. He said that in an age when owing to scientific advance and study of English literature, the spirit of unbelief and relentless spirit of enquiry which refused to believe in anything that was not proved, was reigning supreme, a new feeling of the unity of life dawned upon the consciousness of human race and was embodied in the meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The lecturer referred to a few salient points in Sri Guru-maharaj's life and drew pointed attention to Sri Ramakrishna's mystical consciousness even as a child, to his intense longing to realise God and to his *sadhana* which was full of lessons for the doubter. The functions terminated with arati and distribution of prasadam.

It is to be mentioned that the first issue of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Granthamala was brought out on this day and copies were distributed to subscribers already registered. It is an interesting issue containing Kannada translations of Swami Vivekananda's conversations with a disciple and the early chapters of Swami Saradananda's *Lila Prasanga*.

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Kadur .

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated for the second time at Kadur on the 28th of February. In the morning the Maha-Puja, chanting of Vedic portions, prayer, *bhajana* and distribution of prasadam were observed. The students, teachers, *bhaktas* and generous public gathered in the Muruthi Temple and Bhajana was conducted in a procession with the decorated photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna with great reverence and devotion. The joyous and shrill cry of the boys was "Jai Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva," "Jai Swami Vivekananda Maharaj," "Jai Sapatana Arya Dharma"! Short speeches were delivered by the devotees, referring to the touching and soul-stirring incidents of the life of Guru Maharaj. The functions came to a close at 1 P.M. after the distribution of holy prasadam.

Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S.

The Celebration took place in the Vivekananda Ashrama, K. Lumpur, on Sunday, the 5th instant with much grandeur and devotion. The hall and the adjoining premises of the Ashrama were beautifully decorated.

The celebration started with Usha Keerthanam from 4 to 8 A.M. which was composed of Bhajana parties from the various parts of K. Lumpur, one from Brickfields, another from Central Workshops and the third from Galleway Road and they showed great enthusiasm. The parties carried the photos of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, neatly decorated and the devotees went round the various centres from where they came and all met near the Amman Temple and arrived at the Ashrama at 6 A.M. in large numbers. The Keerthanam created a profound impression in the minds of the public of Kuala Lumpur of the life of the Bhagavan. The parties were composed of adults and school children. The devotees were received in the Ashrama Hall and served with breakfast.

The next item in the programme was music from 9 to 11 A.M. The most important part of the programme was feeding the poor *Narayanas*, which item is an addition to the previous years' programme. This branch of service was in charge of experienced and capable devotees who left no stone unturned to make the feeding a great success. The service was done by volunteers in a systematic way and was one of love. It took place in tents specially erected for the purpose. It started at 11.30 A.M. and continued up to 4 P.M. About 3,000 poor *Narayanas* were fed and amongst them there were besides Indians, several Chinese and a few Malays who were all treated alike. From 4 to 5 P.M. there was free distribution of clothes to the deserving poor men, women, boys and girls numbering about 400. From 5 to 7.15 P.M. there was *Hari Katha* on the life of Saint Nandanar by Mr. T. R. Subramania Iyer, to the accompaniment of music which was very attractive, instructive and impressive and was much appreciated by the audience.

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Brahmins and Mahomedans (students) sat side by side and partook of the *Prasad*.

Tamluk,—Midnapur (Bengal)

The Birthday was celebrated by the local Sevashram with usual *Homa*, *Puja*, *Kirtan* and the distribution of *Prasad* to the people assembled.

Kagdi—Faridpur (Bengal)

The Eighty-Seventh birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated at the Kagdi Ramakrishna Brahmacharyya Ashram on the 5th March with great eclat. Classes and masses vied with each other in working out the programme of the day. Police officers of Palong Thana also joined and distributed *prasad* to the Bhaktas numbering about three thousand. The local merchants, traders and others contributed to the funds of *utsav* very liberally. People from distant villages, about seven Sankirtan parties from local villages, teachers and students from different schools enthusiastically joined the *utsav* and helped the Ashrama-workers in cooking and distributing *prasadam*. There were Rama Nama Kirtan, Kali Kirtan, Padabali Kirtan besides *Puja*, Aratrick and reading from Scriptures. The *utsav* lasted till 12 o'clock at night. Such enthusiasm has never been witnessed in a small village like Kagdi and it is expected that the enthusiasm kindled on the occasion will enflame the whole of southern Bikrampur and carry the banner of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's holy name to every door.

Madras

The Eighty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great eclat at the Madras Math. On the 28th February, the *Tilkipuja* day, there was special *puja* and *Bhajan*. Early in the morning the boys of the Students' Home came to the Math and chanted Vedic hymns in sonorous tones. The Bhaktas and admirers of the Math were all invited and took *prasadam*. In the evening there was a large gathering of the Bhaktas and some of them played on musical instruments, which delighted all who were present. On the 5th of March, the day of public celebrations, the large portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was placed in the spacious hall of the Math, tastefully decorated with flowers and ferns. At 8 o'clock in the morning began the *Bhajan* in Tamil, which was followed by *bhajan* in Marhatti. Meanwhile, people were assembling in the hall. It was a source of great joy to all to hear the Marhatti *bhajan* continually for three hours, sung with great devotion and enthusiasm. About three hundred Bhaktas took *prasadam* at noon. As customary on these occasions of public celebrations, a large number of poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed.

In the afternoon Harikatha was conducted by M.R.Ry. C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar Avargal, B.A., on "Sita Mahatmyam", which was highly appreciated by the Tamil audience. At 5-30 P.M., a public

EIGHTY-SEVENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Belur Math

The Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm at the headquarters of the Mission on the 5th March. From early in the morning people of all sects began to pour in to participate in the festivity, which is attracting people from far and near. The presence of His Holiness Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj added special charm this year and the number of people who gathered in the adjoining lawn of the Math has beaten the record of all previous years and is computed at 1,50,000! Indeed, the number of men is swelling in strength every year since Swami Vivekananda's return from the West and this time it has become phenomenal. Nothing but a sea of human heads could be seen in the afternoon, and those who have eyes to see can discern clearly the growing influence of the Great Man of Dakshineswar all over India and the world at large. One notable fact of these birthday festivities is the influx of people of different sects and denominations who can meet here on the common platform and sing the glory of the God of his sect without prejudice to others. For, this is the birthday of the Man who was the embodiment of Sanatana Dharma and vindicated the claims of all sects for attaining God-vision and realising the highest end of human life. The large portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a prominent place and hundreds of men and women could be seen making *pranam*. Several Bhajana-parties came and were entertaining the assembled Bhaktas, the most conspicuous among them was the Kali-Kirtan party of Andul, whose devotional songs produced a thrill of ecstasy in the hearts of the devotees. There came many concert-parties, who struck sweet musical notes. Thousands of poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed and the festivities terminated with fire-works.

Faridpur (Bengal)

The Birth-day anniversary was celebrated with great devotion and solemnity by the local Sri Ramakrishna Samiti on the 5th March. From an early hour in the morning Sankirtan parties paraded the streets. At the place where *Puja* and *Arati* were held, Kirtan continued from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. In the evening a meeting was held under the presidency of Babu Nitode Ranjan Guha, M.A., B.L., second Subordinate Judge, at which two papers were read—one by Kaviraj Nagendranath Sankhyaratna and the other by Prof. Sishir Kumar Acharya. Mr. K. N. Mitra, Principal of the local college, spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. The President wound up with a speech full of devotion. About 800 people including 600 poor Narayanas were fed.

meeting was held. Mr. M. O. Parthasarathi Iyengar, B.A., M.L., Retired District Judge, presided on the occasion and Rao Bahadur S. Bhaskar Iyer, B.A., B.E., delivered a lecture, the subject being, "Sri Ramakrishna, the Saviour of the Age," which we reproduce elsewhere. The learned president pointed out in a nice short speech that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came at a time when religion was declining in India and showed that like Bhagavan Shankara and Sri Ramanuja, he too appeared to dispel ignorance and darkness and establish righteousness. The functions of the day came to a close with Aratrikam and distribution of prasadam.

Bangalore

The Eighty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated by his disciples and admirers at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City, on Tuesday the 28th February and Sunday the 5th March 1922. On the 28th February the *thilthi-puja* day, there was a select gathering of disciples and Bhajana in the evening; and the children of the locality were given a sumptuous treat.

On the 5th March, the day of public celebration, Bhajana parties carrying in procession the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna on beautifully decorated rathams arrived at about noon, when commenced the feeding of the poor, and about a thousand hungry *Narayanas* were fed. The evening functions commenced at 4 P.M., with an excellent *Harikatha kalakshepam* on Prahlada Charitram by Mr. H. P. Krishna Rao, B.A., Head Master of the local Hindu A. V. School, and an authority on South Indian Music. The audience were next treated to vocal music by a student of the National High School. Mr. T. S. Venkannaiya, M.A., Lecturer in Kannada, Central College, followed with a speech in Kannada on Sri Ramakrishna's method of teaching. In telling language he emphasised that the chief point in the Master's teaching was that he did not adopt a universal prescription for all but took into account individual temperaments and showed each the path that would best suit his tendencies. The English speaker of the day was Mr. B. Nagesa Rao, M.A., English Lecturer, Central College. He said that in an age when owing to scientific advance and study of English literature, the spirit of unbelief and relentless spirit of enquiry which refused to believe in anything that was not proved, was reigning supreme, a new feeling of the unity of life dawned upon the consciousness of human race and was embodied in the meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The lecturer referred to a few salient points in Sri Guru-maharajji's life and drew pointed attention to Sri Ramakrishna's mystical consciousness even as a child, to his intense longing to realise God and to his *sadhana* which was full of lessons for the doubter. The functions terminated with arati and distribution of prasad.

It is to be mentioned that the first issue of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Granthamala was brought out on this day and copies were distributed to subscribers already registered. It is an interesting issue containing Kannada translations of Swami Vivekananda's conversations with a disciple and the early chapters of Swami Saradananda's *Lila Prasanga*.

Kadur

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated for the second time at Kadur on the 28th of February. In the morning the Maha-Puja, chanting of Vedic portions, prayer, *bhajana* and distribution of prasadam were observed. The students, teachers, *bhaktas* and generous public gathered in the Muruthi Temple and Bhajana was conducted in a procession with the decorated photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna with great reverence and devotion. The joyous and shrill cry of the boys was "Jai Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva," "Jai Swami Vivekananda Maharaj," "Jai Sanatana Arya Dharma"! Short speeches were delivered by the devotees, referring to the touching and soul-stirring incidents of the life of Guru Maharaj. The functions came to a close at 1 P.M. after the distribution of holy prasadam.

Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S.

The Celebration took place in the Vivekananda Ashrama, K. Lumpur, on Sunday, the 5th instant with much grandeur and devotion. The hall and the adjoining premises of the Ashrama were beautifully decorated.

The celebration started with Usha Keerthanam from 4 to 6 A.M. which was composed of Bhajana parties from the various parts of K. Lumpur, i.e., one from Brickfields, another from Central Workshops and the third from Galleway Road and they showed great enthusiasm. The parties carried the photos of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna neatly decorated and the devotees went round the various centres from where they came and all met near the Amman Temple and arrived at the Ashrama at 6 A.M. in large numbers. The Keerthanam created a profound impression in the minds of the public of Kuala Lumpur of the life of the Bhagavan. The parties were composed of adults and school children. The devotees were received in the Ashrama Hall and served with breakfast.

The next item in the programme was music from 9 to 11 A.M.

The most important part of the programme was feeding the poor *Narayanas*, which item is an addition to the previous years' programme. This branch of service was in charge of experienced and capable devotees who left no stone unturned to make the feeding a great success. The service was done by volunteers in a systematic way and was one of love. It took place in tents specially erected for the purpose. It started at 11.30 A.M. and continued up to 2 P.M. About 8,000 poor *Narayanas* were fed and amongst them there were besides Indians, several Chinese and a few Malays who were all treated alike. From 4 to 5 P.M. there was free distribution of clothes to the deserving poor men, women, boys and girls numbering about 200. From 5 to 7.15 P.M. there was *Harikatha* on the life of Saint Nandanar by Mr. T. R. Subramania Iyer, to the accompaniment of music which was very attractive, instructive and impressive and was much appreciated by the audience.

The next and the last item in the programme was the meeting from 7-30 P.M. On the dais of the meeting hall were placed miniature temples of the Hindus in the centre, in front of which was placed a large sized photo of the Bhagavan, on its right a Chinese temple and behind the latter a Mohammedan mosque, and on the left of the Hindu temple were a Buddhist temple and behind it a Christian Church, with words "That which exists is one, the sages call it variously", hung on either side of the dais, representing the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa that all religions are but different paths leading to the same God. The dais was most tastefully decorated with numerous varieties of flowers, leaves, creepers, evergreen and palms with small paths from one temple to the other and in an artistic manner and illuminated with electric lights of different colours giving the appearance as if the temples existed in an isolated grove of palms, etc., under the canopy of the shining stars in the sky. Amidst applause, Mr. Low Y Swee, a Chinese devotee and admirer of the Bhagavan occupied the chair and by his side was seated Srimat Swami Vivekananda. The audience was composed of both sexes and of various nationalities and religionists, Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans and Christians. Special arrangements were made to accommodate ladies. The meeting was started with the singing of Dhevarnam. The Chairman expressed that he was happy to be present on the occasion and said in an introductory way that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa whose anniversary was being celebrated on that day was by birth religious and was the head of a religious movement, always doing virtuous deeds and that he was an incarnation of divinity. He also read a portion of the lecture by Srimat Swami Vivekananda, the world reformer, on the Bhagavan's life regarding the liberal religious principles manifested through his life.

Dr. Visuvalingam was called upon to deliver his lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna and his religion of harmony' in English. The lecturer said amongst other things, that in the midst of all our attractions we stop to see what is outside. Spiritual struggles are represented by different religions, they have had great teachers who have come to give an impetus to human power. Sri Krishna appeared thousands of years ago giving to the world his message of work without attachment, i.e., without looking for rewards or fruits, for, they entangle one into the clutches of the world. Buddha came and delivered his message that one must not have desires for worldly things but it should be his desire to get Nirvana. Christ gave his message that one must be prepared for the Kingdom of Heaven. In the days when God was almost forgotten and when wealth and luxury were the order of the day there appeared on the stage Sri Ramakrishna with his message of Attainment of the Absolute Truth by everyone whatever religion he may profess to be in. With the Hindu religion means realisation. One must manifest divinity in his every day life and subdue animal nature. Such a man was Sri Ramakrishna. He was born in a Brahmin family and when he was sent to school he found that the education imparted there was only for money-making and opposed to his nature and there-

BIRTHDAY OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

fore discontinued attending school. He was a priest in a ten and worshipped the image of Blissful Mother representing G. The Paramahansa wanted to see the Truth behind the image. He would say that if God has the form of Mother he must see it. His parents wanted to divert his close thoughts to religious matters and got him married while young. However, he was determined to see the Blissful Mother and went into the woods. He sat under a tree in meditation and had visions. He would never think of money. He took money and earth in his hands and found it both were same and threw them into the river. He was initiated into Yoga by a woman and by another Sannyasin. His wife heard his state and presented herself to him. He prostrated before her and said that it lay in her power either to make or mar his life towards realisation of God and begged of her not to drag him into the world. As she was also a noble soul she understood her husband's aspiration but begged of him to allow her only to do him service at his feet and the request was granted and she was one of his devoted disciples. He taught humility and spent his whole life in religious practices without caring for his body or its health and realised God. He went into Samadhi, the state of super-consciousness. He then became a Mohammedan, a Christian and a Buddhist and found them all to be one and the same and realised God in all of them following the teachings of the respective religions. He taught unity in variety. As many had come to attend this meeting from various places by different paths and in different conveyances, so with religions, some paths are short, some long and others crooked, but leading to the same goal. He thus taught harmony of religions as the group of miniature temples on the dais would represent. The same spirit is pervading everywhere. He taught peace to the world. When we can subdue the animal nature in us we will look upon one another as brothers.

Dr. Visuvalingam having concluded his lecture, Mr. R. A. Naganathan delivered a lecture in Tamil on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

He said that when virtue subsides and vice prevails God appears in this world to help mankind. So Sri Ramakrishna appeared in this world to give his message as already explained by the previous lecturer. The lecturer said that the Bhagavan found that he and God were one. What his Guru Totha Puri realised in several years Sri Ramakrishna realised in three days. Mr. Naganathan touched generally on his life and his teachings and the Tamil audience much appreciated his lecture.

The Chairman then rose and said that harmony of religions was the order of Sri Ramakrishna and the principles of Sanatana Dharma are embracing all religions of the world.

Mr. V. Suppiah, on behalf of the Ashrama, spoke and said that the teachings of the Institution are not sectarian but universal and harmonious as the models on the platform would show. The

stitution is prepared to receive with open arms all religionists, Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans and Christians. He said that he was glad to see Chinese friends taking active part and thanked all those who contributed for the success of the function and also thanked the Chairman and lecturers. The meeting came to a close at 8-30 p. m. with singing of Devaram.

NOTES AND NEWS

We publish below the prospectus of the Residential High School which is going to be started by the authorities of the Ramakrishna Students' Home:—

PROSPECTUS

The Ramakrishna Students' Home, as an institution providing free boarding and lodging to the absolutely indigent students of all castes is now well known to the public. Started in the year 1905, it has now had a life of nearly 17 years. Till now the instruction given in the Home has been confined to the religious side, the boys being sent for secular instruction to the various educational institutions in the city. It must be readily conceded that to allow the full benefits of the Home to flow to the inmates thereof, it should be self-contained, itself providing for their secular education also; and the advantages of such a development are incalculable. Now that the new buildings of the Home have been completed, the authorities are desirous of directing their attention to this matter. The Madras Secretariat Party have been kind enough to contribute a sum of Rs. 7,000 already for founding a Technical Institute in the Home with promise of further help towards completing it. The plans and estimates for the Institute are now under preparation. It is contemplated to start the three higher forms of secondary school so that the younger members of the Home at least may derive the full advantage of the scheme. The task of the authorities in this matter has been rendered easy and cheerful by the offer of some of the old students who have graduated from the Home to work as teachers in the classes to be opened with a commendable spirit of self-sacrifice, stipulating to draw only such salary as is absolutely necessary to maintain themselves and their families. The Home is really proud of the noble spirit which has animated these old students and feel that this in itself as a sufficient vindication of the value of the training imparted in the Home. The authorities are anxious to take advantage of this offer and start the new classes as early as possible.

NOTES AND NEWS

EQUIPMENT

The classes will be located in the first floor of the new buildings, in the halls which are now vacant. The extensive play ground and the good library containing nearly 5,000 books attached to the Home will be available to the school. What is immediately needed will be a laboratory for the teaching of Science. No large outlay on furniture and equipment will be incurred for the present, as it is proposed to make the boys squat on the floor with only a small sloping desk in front.

COURSE OF STUDY

The Madras Secondary School Leaving Certificate scheme will be followed. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and History among the optional subjects and Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit among the languages will be taught in the school. The study of vernaculars and of Sanskrit will be given an important place. A prominent feature will be the vocational training that will be given to the boys. The Technical Institute that will shortly be opened will provide the necessary facilities for the purpose.

STRENGTH

Admission to the new classes will be confined to the students of the Home. In no case will the strength of a class be allowed to exceed 30. It is unlikely that even this number will be reached for some years.

STAFF

The regular staff will consist of four graduates, all past students of the Home, who have undertaken to serve the institution and live with the boys whole time for a period of not less than three years for the present. One of them is a distinguished Honours Graduate in Chemistry and two others have had previous teaching experience. There will be in addition part-time teachers for languages, drawing and drill.

FINANCE

The recurring expenses of the school are estimated at Rs. 6,000 per annum towards which a grant of Rs. 2,000 might be expected from the Government. Though the boys will not be charged any fees, the Government will for the purpose of assessing grant assume a fee receipt calculated at the standard rates, and it is not likely that an exception will be made in this respect on behalf of the school and a larger amount of grant realised. The recurring

VEDANTA KESARI

penditure of Rs. 4,000 per annum will have therefore to be found and a sum of Rs. 6,000 at least for the laboratory as a non-recurring item of expenditure.

RECOGNITION

The scheme was discussed informally with the Director of Public Instruction and the Inspector of Schools. They have stated that there appears to be no *prima facie* objection to their proceeding with the scheme especially as the department believe that there is large scope for additional facilities for secondary education in the city and in the locality where the Home is situated. The Inspector of Schools was good enough to scrutinize the proposals and inspect the buildings.

CONCLUSION

The authorities of the Home appeal to the generous public for help towards the realisation of the ideal of a *Gurukulam* which the scheme sketched above aims at.

Subscriptions however small may be sent to the Secretary, the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.

SHARVANANDA,

President,

The Ramakrishna Students' Home, Mylapore.



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