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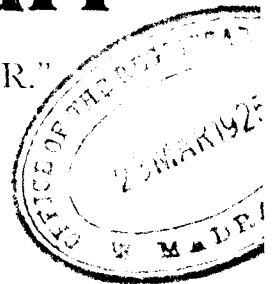
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The Vedanta Kesari

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."

VOL. XI, No. 8—DECEMBER, 1924.



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"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

VOLUME XI] DECEMBER 1924 [NUMBER 8

ISHWARA—AND THE NEED OF A MEDIATOR

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR, M. A.

IN the Christian religion, not only is God regarded as inflicting punishment upon man—and "the moral relation between God and man is conceived in terms of criminal law"—so as to bring about a reformation and prevent further acts of disobedience to His commands, but God's attitude to man is also always deemed to be one full of love and mercy and grace. Even while God judges and punishes, He does so only in the spirit which actuates a father when he punishes his son for disobedience as a means of getting him chastened and thereby helping to build up his character. If, in the latter case, this process of character-formation involves suffering for either father or son, it is a necessity of human nature and life. In the former case, God suffers, too, while he punishes, and, as Abelard points out, "The atonement (between God and man) is wrought by Christ's love which draws out man's love in return." Man is a spirit even as God is, and so God can reveal himself as Christ-man so as the latter may perform a supreme act of loving sacrifice on the Cross and thereby

accomplish, in however mysterious a manner, the revelation of the Kingdom of God in man. When agnostics like the late Sir Leslie Stephen declare that "the conception of God as an almighty Chief Justice is too antiquated for serious discussion," they forget that the Christian or deistic conception of God as a Judge is intended only as a metaphor, and not to be taken literally. Christian theologians have not failed to realise that "punishment which is merely retributive is always non-moral or immoral; in the case of the Creator, it would be outrageous." But, when Christians aver that God's punishment of sin proceeds from a desire to produce a chastening and disciplining effect on the soul, it must be said that the analogy of God to the father is pushed too far. It has also been held, and rightly, as we conceive it, that in the Christian religion, God, finding that the laws, natural and spiritual, which are inseparably associated with the nature of man and his place in the universe are insufficient for the accomplishment of his aims in creation, has to interpose His own personality in the form of the incarnation of Christ for the reform and redemption of man. Those laws ought in themselves to be sufficient for efficiently dealing with and conclusively determining the relations of all human personalities towards each other and also towards God Himself. In reply, however, the question is asked, "Why should not God lovingly assume the form of man and work for the latter's redemption?" Christian theologians and apologists have, in fact, often claimed that, when they speak of the need of an intercessor between God and man, in the form of Christ's Incarnation, this is exactly what they have in view. The Hindus, too, have their doctrine of *Avataras*, and the Vedanta seems to sanction it when the *Gita* declares that, whenever sin increases and virtue declines, God incarnates for the punishment of the wicked, the guarding of the righteous from being overwhelmed in ruin by their atrocities, and for the renewal and proclama-

tion of the eternal laws of righteousness which have lost their vogue and hold on the minds of men. But they steer clear of the Western idea that, either in His divine or human form (as incarnation), God has (or can have) any suffering,—either that which arises from His (supposed) grief at the thoughtlessness and perversity of the sinner, or which is due to His taking, as in the case of Jesus, on his own shoulders, the burden of man's sin in order to secure the latter's redemption.

The doctrine of vicarious transfer (though different from the Christian in essentials) is not unknown to Hinduism. For, the South Indian School of Vaishnavism holds what is known as the doctrine of *Nyasa* or *Nikshepa* as the essence of *Prapatti* (not *Bhakti*). The doctrine, however, is freed from the specialities considered essential in Christianity. In the first place, there is no single intercessor for all mankind. God alone can be the universal mediator, and no responsibility can be assigned to God or imposed on Him for man's redemption. For, as the Supreme Lord of the universe, He need neither have, nor take, any of the responsibility attaching to man, especially when the latter has the capacity and will of repentance and reform as an endowment and characteristic of His mixed nature. In the second place, the repentant human soul is required to feel the (preliminary) assurance that God will grant him the redemption he seeks. Another preliminary condition is that he must resolve—and proclaim his resolve—never again to violate God's commandments as resolved in the *Sastras*, feel compassion for all creatures, and avoid everything likely to be an impediment to the continuance of his act of self-surrender and unconditional reliance on God's supreme mercy as the only source of his redemption from the misery of the bondage of rebirths. In the third place, the responsibility accepted by the Guru ceases the moment he conveys to God the repentant *Jiva's* desire for redemption and God, in His unbounded mercy,

has accepted the latter as his devotee and dependant (*dasa*). God also unfailingly accepts intercession in the case of one and all. For, the Vaishnava does not, like the Christian, hold that the *Jiva's* sin and fall make him incapable of entering into communion with God. The *Jiva* never loses his capacity for repentance. According to the *Gita*, repentance rapidly acts to make him again righteous, and thereby renders him worthy of his intercessor's helpful intervention and his acceptance by God as a matter of course. In the fourth place, the doctrine put into the mouth of Jesus that he is "forsaken" by God while voluntarily (or involuntarily) suffering for others seems,—to a rationalistic mind at least,—both inconsistent in Jesus and unworthy of the being and characteristics of the Supreme. For, Christ has entered on his mission with the consent and approval of God; and, further, God can never "forsake" any one, and much less His divine representative and incarnation on earth. In the fifth place, we must not forget that, when the *Nyasa* or *Nikshepa* (the placing of the burden and responsibility for redemption) takes place and the *Acharya* takes on himself the task of an intercessor with God, the *Jiva* is at once, by his very act of repentance and solicitude for his soul's future, transformed into a righteous person,—into a "*Dharmatma*"—and attains to "peace," as the result of God's acceptance of him and his gracious act of redemption (*Gita*, IX, 30, 31).

In the Christian doctrine, one of the chief difficulties arises, (a) from the fact that the burden of sin is conceived in a rather too material sense, i. e., as something weighing on the sinner and requiring to be removed and placed on Christ's shoulders in order to help the former's deliverance; and (b) from the idea that Christ himself underwent sufferings of an inconceivable kind and amount from the transfer of the load of sin to his own shoulders and personality; and (c) that the incarnating body and person of Jesus is no longer available to us for

our present redemption by reason of His Ascension to Heaven when His mission to earth had been fulfilled. Christ's physical death and physical resurrection are regarded as the most insuperable of all difficulties and accepted in many quarters as mysteries not comprehensible by the limited understandings of men. It is easy enough to argue or accept the idea that service may involve sacrifice, and sacrifice, in its extreme limit and form, may involve death, as in the case of the late Father Damien, who sacrificed his life and became a martyr in the service of the lepers of Fiji islands. When, however, we once accept the fact of Christ's divinity as an Incarnation, the fact of death, especially when it is conceived as a judgment inflicted by a human judge over one brought up before his tribunal, presents difficulties which human reason cannot easily overcome;—and so we must once for all resolve to accept them as incomprehensible and insoluble mysteries which are matters of pure faith and not at all capable of being reasoned about and made clear to the understanding. Sometimes, the mystery is solved by the contention that, though the physical body of Christ's original incarnation is no longer available, He still lives, like God Himself, in every human being in such a manner that personal intercourse is possible between the two in such a manner as to elevate and purify the human spirit. If the process of personal intercourse between the spirit of man and the spirit of Christ is now possible as a means of the former's redemption, the question arises,—“Where was the necessity of His physical Incarnation and death on the Cross originally for this same purpose?” For, His coming had none of the larger aims which the *Gita* assigns to our divine *Avatars*, and He only came once for all and never again; nor is His presence and intervention understood as needed again. If it is argued that only the unredeemed of to-day require or gain the inward personal enlightenment and that this enlightenment is conveyed by the communication

of grace and mercy alone without the need of a physical incarnation, how can we avoid the inquiry why the same should not have formerly been equally sufficient and efficacious? The Incarnation of Jesus, when it did happen, would then lose its character of indispensableness, and this requires explanation. Further, as God, Christ, and man are, in a dualistic system like Christianity, different entities, how can they exist and have their sphere of operation in the same physical centre, whether mind or body, without a conflict happening, unless it is held that they have only identical aims,—a supposition which is clearly untenable, at least in regard to man? Lastly, we have the difficulty, often felt even by faithful Christians, that redemption, as originally conceived, has the form of a transaction (or bargain) between God and His Eternal and Divine Son, that the claims which God makes in order to compass man's redemption can only be made good by Christ's physical sacrifice and death,—a procedure which ignores the spirit of man and the possibilities of spiritual and moral development stored in it and awaiting the inspiration of a true *Guru* graciously seeking to free him from all the infecting and incriminating contacts of the flesh. Again, metaphors like those implied in the doctrine that "Death is the wages of sin" or that birth and death are diseases which can be got rid of by the curative process of imparting knowledge of eternal truths should not be taken literally, for, as the eternal *spirit* of man is in its *essential* nature, free from all taint or corruption, we must necessarily hold that birth, disease, and death and all the corruptions to which life in the world is subject can only be the attributes of our physical frame.

We come at last to the Advaitic doctrine of the Vedanta. Here, we find the theory of Vicarious Atonement—whether in the Christian form of the transfer of the burdens of all human beings, *once for all*, to the shoulders of the Divine Incarnation, or in the more acceptable, logical, and practicable *Vaishnava* form of

Nikshepa (called also *Nyasa*), i. e., the placing of the burden of liberating each man on his own living *Acharya* (or intercessor with God)—is altogether non-existent. The Advaitin, too, accepts the need and even indispensability of an *Acharya*. It must be accepted, because common-sense, everyday experience, and the *Veda* too, teach us that the ignorant, struggling, suffering, sinning soul wants an enlightener and helper to discover to him and guide him along the path to be followed in order to cross this seemingly shoreless ocean of *Samsaric* life of endless births and deaths. The *Veda*, in especial, assures us:—" (Only) the person who has an *Acharya* can know (the Supreme Self). " The *Acharya* is not only one who has learned the traditional teaching from his own teacher, and so on in a line of succession leading up to the Creator Himself, but through him also passes, in the same line of succession, and without any interruption, God's infinite mercy and grace which helps to enlighten the understandings of all who seek the blessing of redemption and the eternal bliss of self-realisation.

Both these form essential elements in the spiritual equipment of an *Acharya*, *first*, an inspiring and impressive personality capable of conveying the traditional teachings, in their speculative and practical aspects; *second*, the transmission of divine grace, flowing through him as through a conduit, and helping to make his work fruitful and truly enlightening. We may briefly dwell on these points: *First*, even in our secular education, it is our daily experience that, when the teacher possesses the gift of personality, the pupil rises at once above his old helplessness, indifference, or mediocrity, and displays a power of comprehension and advance which he never before possessed. The influence of personality is seen to be equally efficacious in the formation of character. The fact of personality, however mysterious, is indisputable. *Secondly*, the grace (*anugraha*) of God is, according to the Vedanta, like a perennially flowing

stream, and passes through a line of teachers, each of whom, in his own turn, has been a disciple, and therefore, a recipient of the same. There is no difficulty in conceiving this direct transmission of divine help from teacher to pupil, for, God is accepted as a pervading presence and personality seated in the hearts of all, and so can influence both teacher and disciple at the same time. There is no need to conceive it in the likeness of a stream flowing from one place to another, or of a dose of medicine given by a doctor to cure the disease of his patient. According to the Advaitic doctrine, there is but one soul only without a second, and it is only the beginningless ignorance due to its identification with *Maya* (i.e., matter, nature) that has led to the perception of all the differences in the universe. The idea of unity or identity (*abheda*) has also to be taken account of and realised in its true significance in comprehending how the divine grace is transmitted from the teacher to his chosen disciple. In the first place, it makes him perceive more clearly than ever before how his sinfulness and sensuality is only an attribute of his mental and material nature, and not of his spirit (*Atman* or self) which is—to use the language of the Upanishad—*niranjanam paramam samyam*. "entirely untouched by evil and absolutely one." Man's disobedience of divine law only affects his mental and physical nature with sinfulness and sensuality, and not his innermost self, the spirit which is ever perfect and sinless. The Christian ideas of Fall and Redemption become clear and intelligible when we comprehend the Advaitic idea that sensuality and selfishness can only attach to the soul in its fallen condition, with all the limitations (bondages, *bandhas*) of which it is fully conscious in all the three states and conditions in life (*Avasthas*) known as *jagrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream), and *sushupti* (sleep). If our human self includes both *purusha* and *prakriti* (both *prakara* and *prabhavi*, nature and spirit), if it is only akin to the divine—it can never rise above the limitations

which are imposed by nature (*prakriti*), and redemption from its complication with evil can only be a hopeless dream. Grace, however fully mediated, can never alter the essential composition of man's self which makes it liable to err and is ever speeding for a fall. Hence, its mingling with materiality, sensuality, and sinfulness must be conceived as due to a false super-imposition of and consequent commingling with matter (and sense-objects) at a time of which we can know nothing,—for the state of ignorance and the state of sinfulness have become mutually so much "implicated," so to speak, and endured so long that purity of the Self has itself become impossible for us even to conceive. In fact, the very conception of purity is impossible without mind, and therefore, must be understood as due to the limitation of the Self by *prakriti*. Hence, the Advaitic doctrine conceives the Self in its absolute essence as free from both bondage and liberation, from both *bandha* and *mukti*. The Veda emphatically asserts this fact in the passage above quoted, viz., "*niranjanam paramam samyam*." In the second place, divine grace augments the value and force of the efforts independently made by the disciple to attain to the purity of mind which is the essential preliminary to the shining experience of the Innermost Bliss of Love within the human understanding whose vision is now limited to the narrow range of the phenomenal world. Man is in truth only the one spirit, even as God is; but so long as he carries within his mind the corrupting effects of his contact with the world of matter, he can never cross the ocean of rebirth and sorrow which lies between him and the unknown and unidentified Divinity of the Absolute Self enshrined in his own heart.

The doctrine of redemption through a Mediator or Vicarious Atonement is now either ignored altogether or relegated to a position of unimportance by men of faith or culture everywhere. Every doctrine, whether old or new, has in these times to satisfy but one test, what moral

or spiritual *value* attaches to the experience which it brings to humanity. The world is now fully awakened to the consideration that ignorance is the only source of sensuality, selfishness and sin, and he alone is a helper or mediator who can, *here and now*, lead us to the revelation and realisation of the Light of the Innermost Bliss of the Self that lightens up every human heart at its very entrance into the world.

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR.

THE MYSTIC PATH

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

(Continued from page 255)

THE practice of the mystic path is divided into eight steps. The first and second, *Yama* and *Niyama*, include all the ethical laws that govern our moral nature. All the fundamental principles of ethics taught by Buddha and all the truths proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount are contained in these first two steps. Without the strong foundation of morality and purity of character, nothing worth while can be built in the realm of spirituality. One must remember that purity, chastity and morality are the very corner-stone of the structure of the science of yoga.

In the requirements of the first step we find *Ahimsa*, *Satyam*, *Asteyam* and *Brahmacharya*. *Ahimsa* is non-injury. Non-injury must be in thought, word and deed; so with *Satyam*, truthfulness; and *Asteyam*, non-covetousness. Chastity in thought, word and deed, always and in all conditions, is what is called *Brahmacharya*.

The second step is *Niyama*, which includes *Tapas*, austerity; *Svadhyaya*, study; *Santosha*, contentment; *Saucham*, purity; and *Iswara Pranidhana*, the worship of God. Fasting, or in other ways controlling the body, is called *Tapas*, austerity. *Svadhyaya*, or study, is the regular study of such books and holy scriptures that give us the impetus to the realisation of God, the study of such books that help us to remember the highest ideal. Study also means repetition of the *mantram* or the name of the Lord. Repetition, again, is of three kinds, verbal, semi-verbal and mental. The repetition which is loud is verbal. The repetition of the name of Lord has a great effect on our mind. It helps us to drive away the evil thoughts and desires from our mind. Sri

Prana is thus controlled made rhythmic and focussed upon the *Muladhara*, the basic centre, the dormant *Kundalini* is awakened and creeps up through *Sushumna* towards the *Sahasrara*, the cerebral centre. Then only dawns the mystic spiritual life upon the Yogin.

The fifth practice is *Pratyahara*, freeing the mind from the thralldom of the senses. The root-meaning of the word is 'starvation,' i. e., this practice purposes to starve the senses of their respective perceptions. When the senses are restrained from their different sense objects, the mind which ordinarily runs after these senses and sense objects, gets a respite as it were, to collect its different rays and focus them on a point. So to have control over the mind through the control of the senses is the practice referred to. Ordinarily we are slaves to our mind, and this restless mind has to be brought under control. You all know how, when we try to concentrate our mind on a certain ideal or thought, it runs away in spite of ourselves. The practice is that, regardless of whatever cause it runs away from the Ideal, it has to be brought again and again to dwell on the Ideal. That is what is meant by the control over the mind. There are certain exercises which, if practised, helps us to bring the mind under control. As for instance, you keep a constant watch over your mind, it will come under your control. What generally happens is this : we try to concentrate on one ideal, and do not notice when the mind has run away from the Ideal and has busied itself with other thoughts. If you let the mind run and at the same time keep watch over it, you will find you are again gathering its forces together.

The next step is *Dharana*, or concentration. Concentration becomes easier, when, through the practice of *Pratyahara*, we have been able to bring the mind under control. Concentration means holding the mind on one centre, or, in the language of the mystics, on one of the lotuses already described. But the form or content of

concentration will vary according to the temperament and taste of different individuals. Through the practice of concentration the student or the aspirant experiences the real joy of spiritual life. If you analyse your own life, you will find that concentration is the real secret of happiness. Even in our sense enjoyments you will find that the more our mind gets concentrated, the more we enjoy even the sense-objects. But in enjoying the sense-objects we lose the power of concentration and ultimately we lose the power to enjoy also. But in the cultivation of concentration on the Divine Ideal, our power of concentration grows more and more and we derive real joy out of the practices.

And then, when we begin to taste the real joy, our mind naturally attains to the next higher state of *Dhyana*, or meditation. When concentration becomes steady and continuous, when there is no disturbing thought, but only the thought of the Divine Ideal and that Ideal alone, that is said to be the state of meditation.

Through these practices of *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana* and *Dhyana*, the *Kundalini* will rise through the canal called *Sushumna*, through the different centres or lotuses, and we begin to experience wonderful visions and attain wonderful powers. Ultimately, when we attain to the state of real meditation, the *Kundalini* rises to the highest centre, the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain and we achieve the highest experience—the *Samadhi*, or superconscious state. In this state, the spiritual eye, as it were, is opened, and one realises that his true self is one with the Universal Spirit, and he receives all the revelation and inspiration that can possibly come to the human soul. In the words of the Great Master, Sri Krishna—"When the mind, absolutely restrained by the practice of concentration, attains quietude, and when seeing self by the self, is satisfied, in his

own self ; when he feels that infinite bliss—which is perceived by the purified intellect and which transcends the senses, and established wherein he never departs from his real state ; and having obtained which no other acquisition is regarded superior, and wherein established he is not moved even by heavy sorrow ;—let that be known as the state called by the name of Yoga,—a state of severance from the contact with pain.” One becomes free and attains mastery over the whole of nature external and internal.

In conclusion, I wish to point out to you that these different practices of yoga have to be learnt from a Yogi teacher. We cannot really get the practices in detail from any book, as the details must differ with different individuals. These details have to be learnt from the Teacher, who can study the individual lives and prescribe the paths accordingly.

(Concluded)

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

M. H. SYED, B. A., L. T.

THE world is never tired of hearing about the need of progress, advancement in every department of life, and yet we do not progress in the true sense of the word. We simply mark time. We are deluded into thinking we are moving onward and yet when we examine the steps we have put forward, in the cold light of reason, we find to our surprise that essentially we are where we were. Judging our progress from the highest achievable goal, the ideal that is really worth attaining, we discover to our disappointment that we have not reached any nearer the summit to which we have been endeavouring to climb. In the midst of bewildering varieties of passion, physical and mental enjoyments, we are so much lost and veritably hypnotised that unless we receive some rude shocks and hard knocks as we occasionally do, we never pause for a moment to take stock of our doings. It is then that we truly realize for the time being that we are still pursuing shadow and have not yet risen above illusion, we are still captured by momentary objects of sense and are not yet even in distant sight of the Promised Land, the haven of rest and peace, the final goal of our search. It may be remarked that with the stream of evolutionary waves every one is slowly but surely swimming towards the shore and hence it will be untrue to say that we are not progressing. The answer to this remark is that in the course of evolution we shall cross the sea of *Samsara* which will take in other words, æons and countless ages.

Those who have become alive to a true blissful state of existence completely free from decay and change, should not rest content with a mere passing show and be seduced by the shadowy progress that does not lead to the Eternal Rest and Home, but keeps us whirling round the ocean of death and existence. This is no advancement at all for one whose eyes are slightly opened and who has learnt to discriminate between the real and the unreal, shadow and reality, shade and substance. True progress lies in the realisation of Spirit, Self ; after attaining which nothing better or more remains to be

attained or done. Nothing that does not lead mankind to the lofty height and highest goal, may be considered progress.

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Does God take interest in human affairs? Does He guide them? Is everything that is happening in the outer world the result of a fixed plan?

Most assuredly yes. Because the world as we see it, is the expression of His Divine Will, and manifestation of His Divine Power. But for Him the world would not be what it is. Every life is enlivened by Him, every form is ensouled and shaped by His vital force. There is absolutely nothing that can possibly exist bereft of Him. He is the indwelling spirit in all.

As He is the hidden life vibrant in every atom, it stands to reason that He cannot and does not remain indifferent to His creatures. He is fully responsive to our thought of Him, and ever watchful of our well-being. While thus helping and guiding us He does not interfere with our individual liberty of action. He does not stop us from rushing headlong towards material enjoyment, because in that way, for the time being, our growth lies. Unless we gain experience of every lower and higher type of pleasure in the course of our upward journey, we shall not be able in the long run to fix our eyes and set our heart on the eternal bliss which we are destined to attain in the course of time. Another reason for his non-interference is that as separated *Jivas* we share His universal life and eternal freedom potentially. Therefore every individual is free to choose for himself what is best for him or what his particular stage in evolution requires him to do. Thus the divine way of dealing with the people of the world may be summed up as follows :—

He is deeply and rationally interested in our affairs and in us, in so far as it does not run counter to the Law of Evolution which is the one law of life that dominates all our activities.

As we grow spiritually and thus learn consciously to harmonise our individual wills with His, we shall understand His way and His will more clearly and intelligently and cease to chafe at Karma.

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“ Weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor water weteth him, nor wind drieth him away. ” Why? Because these are made of matter and as such they can change and transform each others' forms but have no vital capacity to injure the spirit indwelling them. Like is influenced by like. Material objects can be formed or deformed by their own cognate objects but have no power to affect non-material things. Spirit as spirit stands apart and has absolutely no affinity with matter : one is the opposite of the other as poles are asunder.

The powerful rules over the powerless. The spirit is mightier and infinitely higher than matter whose characteristic is disintegration and is therefore inherently weak and elusive. The characteristic of spirit is unity and therefore it is strong and mighty. All life and strength come from it. Man is essentially spirit and not matter. It is the realization of this fact that constitutes spiritual life.

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True religious or spiritual life begins from the moment when one feels satiated with the enjoyment of transitory pleasures and feels no attraction for any thing earthly. In other words, when a man attains what is called *Vairagya*, dispassion and turns away from every kind of mundane objects, then he becomes entitled to lead a truly higher life. God and Mammon cannot go together. The same idea is expressed by Jaluddin Rumi, “ To desire both the mean world as well as God, is a mere chimera, an impossibility and idiocy. ” The essence of religious life is whole-hearted devotion, unalloyed purity of heart and complete resignation to the will of God. So long as a man has a will of his own and wishes to acquire things for his personal gain, and instead of giving to spiritual ends the uppermost place in this thought, allows himself to be dragged by ever so many sensuous pleasures, he is far away from the Reality which he seeks to attain. The outer bonds of heart must be broken utterly and attached to higher and loftier regions of life. Until this is done, it is futile to talk of religious or spiritual life.

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Why does our mind love to dwell upon and run after every kind of material things? Because it has an affinity with them and shares their material nature. Mind and

matter come from the same stock, have the same essence and characteristic, therefore one is the outcome of the other and naturally drawn from the other. It is not easy to subdue this unruly horse unless one tries to understand its nature and function. When it is found that mind is made of finer matter and differs from the indwelling self in its nature and constitution, the non-material self will assert its superiority over it and will gradually try to bring it under its control.

One need not be disheartened if one finds it difficult to check it from wandering. It has been running and constantly moving after illusory things for ages. It will be some time before it can be trained and ruled by one's own will, the direct expression of higher and permanent self as opposed to the lower and passing one.

Freedom : spiritual, political, personal. Freedom in any sphere of life is the legitimate desire of man because he is essentially and inherently free in his potential nature struggling to realise freedom which is his birth-right, in actual life also. If there is any thing that a man resents and is anxious to get rid of, it is bondage, restriction and limitation, and quite naturally so.

So long a person, in whatever position of life he may be, is free to do what he chooses, he is happy ; but the moment he is bound down in any way he begins to fret and worry, having been deprived of his natural freedom.

The same simple but significant principle holds good in all types of cases, high or low, human or divine.

In the realms of Higher Life, the highest goal of man is considered to be liberation from the round of birth and death, and the galling limitations of physical senses and physical vehicles.

Personal and national freedom are also based on the same principle.

Freedom of thought and action within certain limits and with accompanying responsibility is the genuine right of man. It is but right that if a person's freedom is in any way jeopardised he should not only feel its unfairness but also try to gain his personal right.

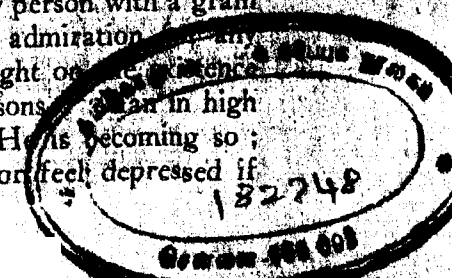
Similarly those countries or nations that are living under political domination and are considered as subject races, should not rest content till they have achieved their national freedom.

This is the most commendable desire surging in the human heart. By virtue of his essential and inward freedom no man on earth who is averagely evolved can ever be happy unless he regains his personal and national liberty.

In the East, especially in the ancient Hindu thought, there has never been recognised, nor does there really exist, any sharp line of demarcation between religion and philosophy. The one is dependent upon the other ; in fact the one remains incomplete without the other. What does philosophy treat of in general ? The ultimate reality, the individual ego, the problems of life and form, meaning of pain and pleasure and the final destiny of man. Now, religion, strictly speaking, deals with these questions more or less in an attitude of reverence. The attempt of philosophy in the East has always been to make the one the necessary counterpart of the other and the two subservient to each other. There never has existed any unbridgable gulf between the two. The one may be treated as a science and the other as an art. What we intellectually apprehend and theorise in the domain of philosophy we put into practice and realise in our daily life. Mere truth in the abstract does not help a man in his moral and spiritual advancement. He must translate it into action before he can fully grasp the meaning of what he speculates.

So long as a man has not fully transcended material limitations and is still swayed by material forms and phases, he is in the nature of things liable to make mistakes, which belong mostly to his physical life and are due to his age-long relation with matter.

One who understands this principle, does not expect much from the men of the world who are greatly dominated by matter. He takes every thing and every person with a grain of salt and hardly cherishes unreserved admiration for any body. This fact also throws enough light on the existence of some kind of weakness in exalted persons. A man in high or low position, is not fully perfect. He is becoming so ; and therefore one should not wonder nor feel depressed if



Ramakrishna, the Great Master, used to say that, when a tree is crowded with crows, if one goes under it and claps his hand, the crows fly away; so when evil thoughts crowd our mind, if we repeat the name of the Lord, they fly away and we become free from those thoughts. The next higher kind of repetition is where only the lips move, but no sound is heard. The inaudible repetition of the *mantram*, when even the lips do not move, accompanied by the sustained thought of its meaning, is called the mental repetition, and is the highest. Then comes *Souham*, purity. Both external and internal purification are necessary to become a *Yogi*: purification of the body by water, as bathing, and internal purification, or the purification of the mind, attained by truth and by the practice of other virtues. *Iswar Pranidhana*, or worship of God, is by praise, by thought and by devotion.

We have spoken about *Yama* and *Niyama*. The next step is *Asana* or posture. A series of exercises, physical and mental, is to be gone through with everyday until certain higher steps are reached. Therefore it is quite necessary that we should practise a certain posture in which we can remain long. As one practices the spiritual exercises, new sorts of vibrations will begin, the whole constitution will be re-modelled, as it were. And the vortex of the vibratory activity of the subtle force in the body called *Prana* will pass through the *Sushumna* in the spinal column; so one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the chest, neck and head in a straight line.

Next comes *Pranayama*, or the breathing exercises. Lungs are like the fly-wheel in this machine of a body. As in a big engine the fly-wheel moves and carries motion to finer and finer parts of the whole machine, so do the lungs by breath supply and give motive power to everything that goes on in the body. The mind and body, as you all know, are inter-related. The control of the mind de-

pends on the control of the body and vice versa. Prof. James, the great psychologist of America was the first experimental psychologist in the West. And he has proved beyond the least shadow of doubt that if we can control the body we can also control the mind. And as you all know the restlessness of the mind is exhibited by the irregularity in breathing. So, if we control irregularity of breathing by regular breathing exercises, we advance a great deal in controlling the restless condition of the mind and in attaining the power of concentration.

As I gave you the psycho-physiological analysis of the *Yogis*, I mentioned the two 'nerve-currents'—the *Ida* and the *Pingala*;—but I did not speak then of the function of these nerve-currents in spiritual exercises. In Sanskrit these *Ida* and *Pingala* are called nerves, *Nadi*, but it must be remembered that they are not nerves in the modern physiological sense of the term, although their functions appear partly analogous to the two chains of sympathetic ganglia. *Nadis* are conduits of *Prana*. Now, as *Prana* signifies both breath, and the vital energy that sustains the physical system, these *Nadis* were supposed, by the ancient *Yogis*, to function both in respiration and in the nerve currents: one in inhalation and the afferent current and the other in exhalation and the efferent current. As in every other matter, the Hindu philosophers saw the subtle counterpart of the gross. They found that these *Nadis* were not only nerves for the gross physiological nerve currents but were also channels of the life-elements (*Prana*) of the subtle body; nay, they represent the positive and the negative aspects of the same energy which we find interacting in every form of activity. Hence, you see the control of breath means the control of the vital energy proceeding from the gross to the subtle. This control brings about an inner rhythm which is symbolically spoken of by the *Yogis* as *Nadi Suddhi*. Without this *Nadi Suddhi* or inner rhythm of life element (*Prana*), no spiritual life is possible. When the

he discovers flaws in the life and character of men otherwise good and holy in so many ways. This principle explains to us, to no little extent, many apparent anomalies in human nature.

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It is rather hard to define consciousness metaphysically. All that an average man can say is that "consciousness of some sort goes on," "states of mind succeed each other in him."

The sense of consciousness varies from man to man according to his grade in evolution.

The meaning of spiritual consciousness may be summed up in the ancient logion, "I am I." In other words, this may be called a state of pure *Atmic* consciousness *minus* all its vehicles. Consciousness will forthwith alter its meaning when it is sensed or realised in terms of material objects.

The self *plus* its sheaths has a different consciousness. As we grow and evolve, refine our vehicles and subdue matter with its variety of forms, the fact of consciousness undergoes its value and sense *pari passu*.

M. H. SYED, B. A., L. T.

FLOOD RELIEF

SWAMI GHANANANDA

"Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life, I did not know where my next meal would come from; but money and everything I want must come, because they are my slaves and not I theirs. Money and everything else must come. Must,—that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question. Young men of Madras, my hope is in you. Will you respond to the call of the nation?"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FLOODS in the north of India where there are large rivers rising from snow-capped mountains are commoner than in the south. No country through which a river flows is, however, immune from their attack. This is shown by the recent floods in the southern districts of India. No such floods have occurred there within living memory.

As rivers afford many natural facilities, large villages and towns and even cities grow on their banks. When the rivers swell in times of floods, the houses and huts on the banks and near are either entirely washed away or partly pulled down. Whole stretches of land are thrown over with deep layers of silt which is a source of fertilisation if it consists of alluvial soil, but causes damage if it be sand. Often all means of communication are cut off completely, and consequently also the supply of provisions. The lowest and middle classes suffer most, and necessity for relief is felt after every abnormal flood.

Information about the floods can be received through newspapers as well as from passengers travelling from the affected area. Though a flood relief party which intends to work can fairly rely on them, it must personally investigate and reconnoitre the area before judging for itself the necessity for relief or otherwise. Relief, if found necessary, should be given as early as practicable. It may often happen that several villages and portions of towns are surrounded by water or so isolated that the inhabitants suffer for want of food. In such cases, speedy rescue is the necessity of the hour. Every town and village may have its own local workers, but in times of abnormal floods workers from several other

parts of the country will be doubtless required. It is a pity that in many parts of India, the people have little or nothing of civic consciousness in them, and do not care to form bands or groups of workers from amongst the citizens, officials, and school and college students of suitable age. Where there is a will, there is a way. Even those who have to do some regular daily work to eke out their livelihood as under the Government can set apart a few hours every day for the suffering and the destitute during the times of flood or famine. Students, who, as a whole, are the least selfish and most capable of enthusiastic work, in and around the affected area, can be granted leave for a fixed period and enlisted as volunteers, under careful leaders who will watch and guide them. The best work is often done by the students as they work wholeheartedly and with entire devotion when they are willing. Misery is a great leveller and unifier but fails to rouse the callous and the apathetic from their languor and lethargy.

Several relief parties under the inspiration of selfless, strong and capable men to whom service is not only a pleasure and privilege but also a worship, who are imbued with a spirit of work undaunted, who can strive and do in the face of all obstacles and dangers, who have to gain nothing and have no axe to grind of their own, will render the most splendid service. They will have to be sent throughout the affected areas which should be divided into strips or blocks for purposes of relief. They will have to open relief centres in all the chief and commanding positions of the affected area, from which work can be easily spread around. Each relief centre can conveniently work within a radius of four, five, or six miles. To follow arbitrary divisions of area made for relief is almost always better than to follow revenue or geographical divisions such as province, district, or taluq. Portions of two or three districts, or two or three taluqs bordering each other can be well brought under a single centre, a radius of a few miles from which will cover them all. In one block of the affected area, a relief party can have a chief centre which can command the facilities of a post, and if possible, also a telegraph, office, and the remaining centres in that block will work as sub-centres under it. The chief worker in the block will live in the chief centre, direct the work of the sub-centres, and do the work in his own. Remittances of money and important communications regarding work from the Head-quarters can

be received in the chief centre, and visitors and enquirers about relief can obtain informations from it.

As many among the lowest classes, and even some belonging to the low middle classes may be addicted to drink, and as any money doled out may be misused by them, a relief party should always bear in mind that in almost no case, relief in money can be given. Should pecuniary aid be requested for, it must be very limited and cautiously rendered. The relief party must therefore make it a general principle to give relief only in kind. It must begin that part of the relief which may have to be immediately attended to, like feeding, and may put off such work as housing the poor and affected families by a short period.

Once the rescue work, wherever necessary, is over, the relief work that remains falls into three distinct divisions, viz., feeding, clothing, and housing. A fourth item of work may have to be attended to in certain portions of the area where the poor peasants and others have to be "started on their legs" by providing them with seeds, fodder for cattle, looms for weaving, implements for work and so forth. The conditions of several parts of the affected area may not require all these items of relief work to be carried out. In some places, one or more of the items can be avoided.

If, in parts of the affected area people are found to have been starving for some time after a flood and require food to be immediately given, some dry food like fried or puffed rice can be given once or twice to serve the immediate need, and then some cooked food. But this may not be usually needed for more than a day as the flood-stricken will become fit enough by that time to cook for themselves.

The most important thing to be done before relief is started on a large scale is the preparation of a correct and reliable list of the lowest and the low middle class flood-affected families. This list will serve well with necessary modifications for all the kinds of relief, feeding, clothing and housing. The workers must themselves visit the huts to find out those who require and deserve relief. The test of deservedness for food relief will be, firstly, the families own no landed properties, secondly, they have no corn or grain stored in their temporary or old huts; thirdly, they have no cash; fourthly, they have no credit in the market to enable them to borrow.

In order to make the list quite correct by including only such huts as require and deserve relief, great circumspection should be exercised in discriminating the very indigent and destitute from the comparatively better families.

As a relief agency may not be quite confident of receiving sufficient money from the Head-quarters or from the public, it will do well to begin administering relief with such low classes as the Pariahs, Chucklers, Shanars, Pulayas and Nayadis, and try to extend it gradually to the affected poor of higher classes when it receives more money.

The list or register of the affected families must contain information as to the heads or chief recipients of each family, the number of souls requiring relief in it, the number of men, women, children and babies, and working members, the dates of distribution, the quantity distributed and the kind of grain used. As babies take their mother's milk, the mothers can be given a little more than an adult's share and the children can be given half the same. Small printed tickets with the name of the centre, village, and signature of the worker of the centre must be issued to the chief recipients of the families, and on production of the tickets on days appointed by the worker, doles for each family sufficient for a day or more can be given to its representative member.

The register prepared will serve as a guide to the quantity of grain to be purchased and the quantity to be distributed, and the ticket issued as a mark of identification of each family enrolled.

During times of floods, on account of scarcity of food-grains, the merchants will try to raise their prices and profiteer. A relief agency distributing grain will be helpful to the people, as the prices will naturally have to be kept down. Grain must be purchased directly from the rural markets and not from local shops. Due to the distribution of food-grain to the affected poor, the demand for grain in the local shops will be less and consequently raising of prices and profiteering will be, to a great extent, prevented. If, however, rice and other grains sell at a dear price, it will be necessary to open depots in the required places and sell them at their normal price or even less.

Some people may believe that the distribution of cooked food (solid or gruel) with some curry is better than the distri-

bution of grain. But the latter is preferable for these reasons :—

(1) the employment of cooks for cooking the food for the Hindus, the Christians, and the Mahomedans ;

(2) the employment of several scores of volunteers for distributing the food to hundreds and thousands of starving recipients and for managing the crowd ;

(3) finding a suitable compound where the poor can conveniently sit and eat ;

(4) the necessity for all the members, young and old, the men, women, children and babies of each flood-affected family to walk all the way from their huts to the centres of distribution every day during the food relief period exposing themselves to the sun or the rain ;

(5) the providing of leaves, plates, etc., for the recipients ;

(6) the cooking of different kinds of grain needed by the recipients to suit their taste ;

(7) the inconvenience which Goshia women and women of respectable, though impoverished, low middle class families will feel in coming to the distribution centres for eating ;

(8) the removal of solid cooked food which is done by the poor almost invariably when they are fed ; and

(9) the great confusion and rush which will result naturally from the distribution of cooked food.

Usually, therefore, food-grain and not cooked food should be distributed.

Of the several kinds of grain available in an affected area, what will suit the majority of the flood-stricken can be used for distribution. In some places where the Pariahs, Chucklers, Shanars and others are accustomed to *kambu* or *ragi*, which is cheaper than rice, it will be advisable to distribute the cheaper grain. Rice also will have to be given wherever necessary.

The extreme importance of the register which serves as a guide for distribution will be realised when the relief workers want to eliminate or cut short the shares of any recipients in a family on finding that they get labour. A relief party will have to be constantly on its guard and take all necessary

VEDANTA KESARI

including only such measures to find out who all get labour and wages. In these matters as well as in the preparation of the village munsiffs, revenue inspectors, tahsildars, and other reliable and trustworthy gentlemen. Great care must be exercised in accepting or rejecting any information and steps taken to verify its truth. In every detail, like this, of the whole relief work, and in the carrying out of every item of it, from beginning to end, caution and exactness will be required the fineness and value of the work done depending upon the soundness of the workers, their mental training, conscientiousness and scrupulous devotion to service. Every worker in the relief area must be so trained that no error, however small, may pass undetected or unrectified. Work has its own power of giving satisfaction and peace to the mind when it is done selflessly and thoroughly. A worker will do well to bring the spirit of right activity (*Karma Yoga*) to bear upon his task.

The ration per head per day, to begin with, may be less than half a Madras Measure. But in a few days, it can be reduced. Along with this reduction, the elimination of the shares of those who get work, which information has to be ascertained from time to time, by careful personal inspection of the villages served and personal study of the labour conditions twice or thrice a week should be done. This reduction and elimination will serve to keep up the incentive for work amongst the recipients who will otherwise grow very lazy and indolent.

(To be continued)

SWAMI GHANANANDA

tribution of grain
reasons :

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Hindu Religious Movements

RELIGION SUSTAINS ALL HIGHER ACTIVITIES

THE spirit of religion permeates and sustains all the higher activities of life. The recognition of this fact adds strength to the zeal of the reformer, for it raises him above the sordid concerns of material life and gives him a glimpse of the true goal towards which he and his fellow-beings are steadily progressing. The statesman, the patriot, the social reformer, in short everyone who works for the well-being of society is inspired by ideals which transcend the ordinary concerns of life. Consciously or unconsciously they are guided by the spirit of true religion which has "Sacrifice" for its watch-word and freedom from the bondage of the senses for its noble goal. "The life on earth is a mere vision, a dream and at best is a sojourn towards a higher goal," says the philosopher. The patriot who had not the opportunity to look into the deeper realities of life may turn round with a sarcastic smile and say "Sir Philosopher, you had better keep your visionary theories to yourself ; I know that this life is real, the miseries and sufferings of my fellow-countrymen are too real to escape my notice ; I am prepared to lay down my life in the endeavour to remove the ills of my countrymen and bring them peace and plenty. Do you not see that I have sacrificed my all and remain unfettered to carry on the work to which I have dedicated myself." The patriot who loves his motherland with such love that transcends life itself is indeed filled with the true spirit of religion. Although he swears by the material concerns of life, does he not confess by his action as well as by his words that he himself has risen above the sordid concerns of a worldly life. He has sacrificed his creature-comforts and is prepared to lay down his life for

the Cause to which he has dedicated himself. That Cause is to him something dearer than life itself. If he was really convinced that the material concerns of life were worth struggling for, he would not have turned patriot. On the other hand, he would have led a life of aggrandizement and cheated his fellow-countrymen to serve his own ends. Thus we see that the patriot has a glimpse of the deeper realities of life and in the conscious or unconscious endeavour to manifest his own spiritual nature he counts all miseries and troubles to relieve the sufferings of his fellow-beings. To him the world—by which we mean the life in the senses—is unreal, but he is alive to the sufferings of kindred spirits and knows that in serving them lies the path to his own emancipation. Again, the statesman who constructed his plans for the uplift of his country upon the sure foundations of morality and truth is indeed inspired by the spirit of religion. The time-serving politician who attempts to build upon the quicksands of expediency, putting aside the dictates of Truth, is doing incalculable harm to himself and his country, for Truth alone endures and institutions based upon falsehood must sooner or later meet with their destruction.

RELIGION IS THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH

Again, the most well-meaning person cannot achieve anything unless he has the strength to act up to his convictions. The martyr at the stake and the patriot who defies the threat of tyranny, both draw their strength from the same inexhaustible source. He who consciously seeks this divine source and puts himself in communication with it becomes the possessor of an unlimited store of strength. Vedanta, the cream of all religious philosophies promises to lead its votaries from weakness to strength and from the darkness of ignorance to the light of divine wisdom. But let us bear in mind that even Vedanta cannot elevate that person who sticks to mere

forms disregarding the spirit of religion. The man who performs *Puja* to the Gita book but is such a coward as to take to his heels when duty demands him to hold fast to his post has no real reverence for the teachings of that sublime scripture. His assimilation of the Gita may be likened to that of the moth which has eaten of the paper on which the text of the Gita is written. The gospel that was delivered at the battle-field of Kurukshetra has in it all that is necessary for the scoring of a victory in the battle-field of life. All great religions have in them the power to inspire man to accomplish great and noble acts; they all teach the immortality of the spirit and declare in unmistakable terms that the fight against the powers of evil should be strenuously kept up until final victory is won. The recognition of the immortality of the spirit is indeed the source of all heroism and it is also the summing up of the highest truths of all religions.

THE RENAISSANCE OF RELIGION

When irreligion is rampant and the good feel themselves helpless to withstand the onslaught of the powers of evil a Saviour appears in the world to demonstrate by His own life the invincibility and might of Truth. Following His wake there appear many lesser lights who shed their lustre on Art, Literature and other noble pursuits,—pursuits which constitute, as it were, a ladder between heaven and earth by combining in themselves heaven and worldly elements. The renaissance of religion, thus brings about an all-round renaissance. Swami Vivekananda often used to say that what was needed was not partial reform but "root-and-branch" reform, and the Swami consequently worked for the revival of the spirit of true religion. With unparalleled apostolic fervour he sacrificed his precious life inch by inch for the spiritual regeneration of India. He sounded the clarion call of religion and India rose from her long slumber conscious of her past glories and

fully aware of the glorious future that was awaiting her. Swamiji clearly showed that strength, manliness, love and renunciation were the essentials of true religion and that forms and sectarian doctrines were only of secondary importance.

REVIVAL MOVEMENTS

The all-consuming love of the great Hindu monk of India is spreading everywhere liberalism of thought and promoting good understanding. Swami Vivekananda wanted a Hindu to be a true Hindu, a Muslim to be a true Muslim and a Christian to be a true Christian, for thus alone could the much-desired-for solidarity between the various communities be attained. It is gratifying to note that this principle put forward by Swamiji is daily gaining ground. Recently some of the Hindu leaders of Bengal met together to discuss the ways and means for organising Hindu religious activities. The president of the meeting, the Maharajah Bahadur of Darbhanga, in the course of his presidential address said, "Religion alone is calculated to raise us from the degraded state into which we have fallen; it must form our highest aims and aspirations; religion affords a cause, a reason, or an origin of morality, the consummation of social and domestic life; religion in short is, and should be, to the Hindu, the be-all and end-all of his life." Commenting upon this revival movement *The Servant* of Calcutta has written a leading article which we quote in full:—

"We welcome the movement for organising our religious life with all our heart. Every race or community lives and grows on a faith, on a sense of mission, on a high purpose in life. Take this out of it and it is a mass of bondless human units who cannot unite to any purpose. The trite saying that man does not live by bread alone with its apparently other-worldly ring is a hard fact of this material world. Where is the race or community that has made its mark in the world by simply concentrating on the provision of its creature-comforts? Even these comforts will elude your grasp, as we see it

to our cost to-day, unless they are sought to subserve a higher interest. Take upon yourself the service of God, the fulfilling of His purpose, the doing of His will and He will take care of all your animal needs just as He does in respect of the lilies of the field that neither spin nor toil. Since the hour the Hindus ceased to be animated by the aim and object which made their forbears what they were, trouble after trouble, misery after misery, mishap after mishap has crowded into their life which is now about to sink under the fatal pressure of these accumulated ills. Leaven our life again with its higher aim and object and it is as sure to buoy up as a cork buoys up though long pressed down. Make a nominal Hindu a true Hindu, a nominal Mussalman a true Mussalman and many of our racial and national problems will take care of themselves. Seek ye the kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you—this is the last word of wisdom, this is the highest practical politics and how can you live up to it without making the religion you are born to a living and moving force. The much-needed reconstruction is the reconstruction of the religious life and Hinduism must read the signs of the times and act accordingly. Has not divine Paul also urged the necessity of being fortified with truth as the only armour which avails. All else is a mere broken reed."

Politics, social reform and even educational reform are only side-issues. Let the life-giving ideals of religion be sown broadcast and the awakened sense of national life would manifest its fulness by bringing about all necessary reforms.

RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Islamic Review for December, 1924 :—We are afraid that Mr. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall has not been able to achieve the cause of Hindu-Muslim *en tente*, which we are sure is nearest his heart, by the observations which he has expressed in his paper on "Islamic Tolerance in India" in the *Islamic Review* for December, 1924. Religious tolerance is admittedly the basic principle of Islamic religion and propagation by the sword wherever it has taken place is an unfortunate phase in the history of Islam. But what is the need for sentiments such as those extracted below :—'...in all the Muslim States which have survived the break-up of the Moghul Empire and our British tendency to grab on any legal pretext the Hindu citizens possess acknowledged rights as they did in the Moghul Empire itself. Far different is the case of Muslim subjects in Hindu States of the Peninsula ; in most, if not quite all of which, Muslim subjects are regarded as intrusive foreigners, deserving no consideration. In Kashmere, where the Muslims form 95 per cent. of the population under a Hindu ruler, they have been plundered right and left, deprived of education and rendered subject to the Hindu 5 per cent. Quite lately, in the Hindu State of Bharatpur a number of mosques were ordered to be demolished by the Hindu ruler, without the least consideration for the feelings of his Muslim subjects ; nor have the protests of the Muslim population been at all regarded.' It is unfortunate that Mr. Pickthall should have allowed himself to write in this strain.

In the *Vedic Magazine* for September, 1924, Pandit Dharma Deva Siddhantalankar discusses the sanction for and the significance of *Yajnopavita* as a sacred symbol. He quotes passages from the Rig, Yajur and Atharva Vedas sanctioning the use of *Yajnopavita*. The right of the three *Varnas* for using the sacred thread is not questioned but in the Parasara Grihya Sutra, the Upanayana of even persons born in the Shudra families, who are of good character is sanctioned by the shastras except for Shudras who eat unclean food, who are without character and who have given up the study of the Vedas. As for women, in ancient times, they were enjoying not only the right of studying the Vedas, but also of wearing the sacred thread after the performance of Upanayanam as may be seen from the writings of the Smriti writers.—Harita, Yama. Regarding the significance of the *Yajnopavita*, the Pandit says that one who is invested with the sacred thread is expected to study the Vedas as far as it lies in his power. *Yajnopavita* is a symbol to remind

the wearer of it of the three-fold duties of preserving the purity of body, of mind and spirit. It is equally regarded as a sacred symbol to remind the wearer of the duty of aiming at the harmonious development of body, mind and soul, and a steadfast resolve to follow the three-fold path that leads to God, namely knowledge, disinterested action (*Yajna*) and devotion.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has a characteristic paper on the education of the child in the *Modern Review* for October, 1924. His complaint is that the present system of education refuses to admit that children are children, in that they are punished because they fail to behave like grown up people and have the impertinence to be noisy children. The modern schoolmaster wants to mould the child's mind according to his ready-made doctrines, and through this tyranny of the adult mind children are everywhere suffering. The aim of true education is to make the boy a full man—full in all directions, mentally and spiritually, and to this end, children have to be brought up in an atmosphere of freedom. The schoolmaster to whom is entrusted the training of the child will need all the sympathy and understanding and imagination which he can command, for his great task. It is on these lines that the great poet is training his boys in his Bolpur School and his advice, born of experience, should appeal to educational reformers in this country.

THE RELIGION OF TIBET :—*The Occult Review* for December, 1924, has an informing paper on the Religion of Tibet by Captain J. E. Ellam. Buddhism was introduced into Tibet from India in the sixth century about 1200 years after the death of Buddha by the Tibetan King Strong-tsan-Gampo, who had married two wives, one Chinese and the other Nepalese, both of whom were Buddhists. The form of Buddhism which was introduced into Tibet was a mixture of Mahayana, with the ancient Animistic Bon Religion of Tibet. The ecclesiastical system known as Lamaism was founded by one Padma Sambhava, the "Wizard Priest." Tradition has it that he was a Mahayanist monk from the great Indian University of Nalanda. He is said to have been of the Yogacharya School, and to have gone to Tibet at the invitation of King Thi-stong-d-tsan in 747 B. C. In the eleventh Christian Century, an Indian Buddhist monk, Atisha, also a Mahayanist, went to Tibet, and introduced reforms in the direction of monastic celibacy and a stricter moral code.

At the head of the Tibetan "pantheon" is Adi-Buddha, the impersonal source of all beings, without beginning or end, that which is

formless, nameless and inconceivable, in and by which all phenomena existence manifests. This is symbolised in its innumerable aspects by the various "powers" of which Chenrise incarnated in the Dalai Lama, is the most popular. The other greater powers, the Dhyana, or heavenly Buddhas, are also aspects of the Adi-Buddha. These are spiritual, belonging to the "formless worlds," emanations of the Adi-Buddha. The human Buddhas as Gotama, are considered as existent in the "worlds of form," though beyond the necessity of incarnation, and able to assist the efforts of struggling humanity. A little lower are the human Bodhisattvas, also belonging to the worlds of form, of which Maitreya, the Buddha to come, is the most notable. Below these are the saints and further down these are innumerable local spirits and demons of all kinds, most of whom are regarded as mischievous and capable of producing diseases and calamities. The people of Tibet are in constant dread of these demons and the Lamas who alone have the powers of exorcism are naturally a most formidable priesthood. The power of the Lamas lies in their supposed ability to bring good or ward off evil future by means of their religious ceremonies. Tantricism is a feature of Tibetan Buddhism, and it is claimed that underneath all the intricate ritual of the religious ceremonies is a deep esoteric significance.

A.

COMMENTS AND CRITICISM.

The so-called standards of civilization set up by the West are crumbling to pieces under the stress of modern civilization, because they have not taken into account the development of the individual. False standards of life have blurred our vision and the undue development of the city at the expense of the village is responsible for completing the ruin by sapping the vitality of the nation's manhood and incidentally womanhood which can live and grow only in the pure unsullied atmosphere of the country. The civilization of to-day has, in the words of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, (*The Visva Bharathi Quarterly*, October, 1924), "turned into a vast catering establishment." It maintains a constant feast for a whole population of gluttons. The universal greed, produced as a consequence, is the cause of the meanness, cruelty and lies in politics and commerce, that vitiates the whole human atmosphere. The consequence of such material and moral drain is more evident when one studies the conditions manifested in the tatters of the cities and the physical and mental anemia of the villages, almost everywhere in the world. The remedy for this state of things, Dr. Tagore thinks, lies in the reconstruction of rural life.

like women, and in her keeping is the cradle of human race. Villages are nearer to nature than towns and are therefore in closer touch with the fountain of life. They have the atmosphere which possesses a natural power of healing. But when constant strain is put upon her through the extortionate claim of ambition, when her resources are exploited through the excessive stimulus of temptation, then she becomes poor in life, her mind becomes dull and inactive, and she is degraded to the position of a maid-servant. While in its turn, the city in its egotism and pride, remains unconscious upon the devastation it constantly works upon the very source of its life and health and joy.

Cities there must be in man's civilization, just as in higher organisms, there must be organised centres of life, such as the brain, heart or stomach. But our modern cities feed upon the whole social organism that runs through the villages. They continually drain away the life stuff of the community and slough off a huge amount of dead matter, while assuming a blind counterfeit of prosperity, resulting in an almost complete substitution of true civilization by what the West calls progress. We have great faith in the mission of the Visva-Bharathi which has for its object the reconstruction of the villages and to bring to the villages wealth and knowledge; wealth of space in which to live and wealth of time in which to work and rest and to enjoy.

We started by saying that the so-called modern civilization has not taken into account the true development of the individual. Europe denies this allegation. Europe is incessantly singing pæans to Freedom, which to her means freedom to enjoy, freedom to work. In the process of attaining freedom a man must bend his will in order to save his forces from destruction and waste and this has tended to make him a slave. Individualism was also the object of India's quest: it stretched up towards self-emancipation, and it tried to gain this larger individual freedom through every detail of life, every relation of family and society, in the strict regulation of the most intimate details of the daily life. In the artistic conception of the scheme of the life of a Hindu in its four-fold aspects of *Brahmacharya*, *Garhusta*, *Vanaprastha* and *Pariwrajaka* is to be found the key to the sublime harmony of the universe having no room for untrained desires to pursue their destructive career unchecked, but leading them on to their relations with the Supreme. As so well put by the poet in the pages of the *Modern Review*, India's aim has been to guide life's current through its boundaries of banks towards an unbounded sea of freedom.

Modern Europe falls very much short of this ideal, with disastrous results as we shall see. Death or the dissolution of our physical

existence and of the environment which it builds up is certain. Modern Europe says we enfeeble the moral purpose of our existence if we put too much stress on the illusiveness of the world. Europe has no doubt gained a certain strength by pinning its faith on the world by refusing to dwell on its evanescence, on the certainty of death, and has thereby trained to be more efficient in *competition*, to gain victory in the struggle which in her view represents *the whole of life*. We admit, that though all our mortal relationships have their end, we cannot ignore them with impunity while they last. And yet all our works which make for the composition of our life have to be judged according to their harmony with their background, namely, death. In this way should we reconcile in harmony the spirit of attachment and detachment, as in the inimitable dance of Siva, which is a harmony of bondage and freedom, the male principle of Truth representing freedom which is of the spirit, while the Goddess Sivanī, its female principle, represents the bonds which are of the real. In their union dwells the ideal of perfection. In that way is effected in India the reconciliation of the opposite aspects of bondage and freedom, of the means and the end. Desire is not exhausted but rather increases with the getting. Dr. Tagore asks : "How then is one to come to the end of work ?" That is the problem which India has attempted to solve in her fourfold scheme of life, while according to the conception of the West, there is only the chase, but no game.

The successful completion of the Conference of Living Religions in London marks an important landmark in the history of world thought. It appears from a short report of the proceedings of the Conference just to hand, that throughout the Conference (lasting a fortnight) there had been a total absence of controversy. Many of those who attended the Conference had had an opportunity of hearing the basic principles of the great living faiths from men who believed in those faiths. The Conference had borne witness to the spirit of broad-mindedness and tolerance which had made it possible for men possessing the most divergent creeds to meet together on a common platform and to give each other a fair hearing. Sir Denison Ross, the President, spoke, I think, the barest truth when he said that the Conference had been in the nature of a League of Religions aiming at spiritual peace, just as the Conference at Geneva had for its aim material peace. A feature of the Conference was the reading of lessons from the Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures and the *Koran*. There was also a valedictory address and benediction from the Ahmadiyya Khalifa whose conclusion was : "Kipling is mistaken ; East is East, and West is West, but the

twain have met to-day," a remark which evoked the approval of all present.

Intellectual Co-operation :—Dr. Highbury Wright of the London Library has brought before the League of Nations at Geneva a scheme for what he calls a "Sub-Committee on Intellectual Co-operation." He proposes to publish under the auspices of the League of Nations, a short list of books limited to six hundred entries representing the best literature of the world in all departments of knowledge. Dr. Wright contends that if the nations are to draw together into closer intellectual contact, such a list would greatly help to that end and make it possible for one country to get acquainted with the thoughts and standpoints of another country. We agree that the League of Nations should actively help in this great project.

A. S.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PRIMER OF WATER-HEALING, RS. 1-4-0 ; NON-VIOLENCE IN HEALING, RS. 1-4-0, by Mr. Lakshman, Pondicherry.

These are books on Nature-healing, that is, a drugless method which Mr. Lakshman pleads for the prevention and treatment of diseases, and they consist in the proper use of sunshine, pure air, cold water and fasting. We have already noticed similar publications by the author on these subjects and the books under notice are an amplification of this method of combating disease.

THE WONDER CHILD (A sequel to FLOWERS AND GARDENS), by C. Jinarajadasa. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. 1924).

This is an exposition of the Vedantic doctrine that the *Jivatma* which the author calls the 'Wonder Child' is an emanation from the *Paramatman* (Divine child) and yearns to return to its home. The great secret is that each Wonder-child looked forward to the day when the Divine Child would come to him, to lead him back to the Home of Light which he had left to serve the Light. On that day the Divine Child and the Wonder-child would become the Ineffable Light. The descent into the darkness and all the long struggles to overcome it were worth the discovery of that great secret which the ages had held for the Wonder-child.

A. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

Srimat Swami Shivanandaji, the President of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, who has been in the South for the last eight months, leaves Madras for Bombay on the 7th January. He will be staying at our Bombay centre for some weeks, after which he will leave for Calcutta.

The announcement made by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archaeology in India, of the discovery of a very ancient civilization in the Punjab and in Sindh has evoked the keen interest of scholars. Students of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities like Mr. C. T. Gadd and Mr. Sidney Smith, who have examined Sir John Marshall's report, find a very striking similarity between the relics that have been dug up at Hosappa in the Montgomery district of the Punjab and in the Larkhana district of Sindh, and objects that have been commonly found at Susa and on Babylonian sites, dated about 3000 B. C. The similarity is very marked both in the seals and pottery that have been unearthed, while the ritual symbols inscribed are so closely alike as to lead one to the conclusion that there must have been close contact between the peoples of India and of the Sumerians of 3000 to 2000 B. C. How desirable is the further exploration of the Indus valley in the light of even the little that is now known will be manifest to all who are in any way interested in the origin and development of Indian civilization or in the assessment of the full influence on the evolution of Asiatic culture.

The death of Dr. S. Subramania Aiyar which we have learnt with the greatest regret, deprives India of one of her best sons, best in every sense of the term. He has passed away full of years and honours, having earned the approbation of Government and enjoyed the fullest confidence and esteem of the people. He lived a full life. The earlier years of his notable career were devoted to the service of his country. If his splendid achievements in that sphere have evoked admiration and earned the respectful thanks of a grateful public, the years of his retirement and seclusion were no less remarkable. The beauty of his secluded life at Guindy was illumined by a quiet contentment. When the Swami Vivekananda first came to Madras, Dr. Subramania Aiyar was one of the first to recognise the greatness of the Swami. Dr. Subramania Aiyar encouraged the Swami to cross the seas to go to America. Dr. Subramania Aiyar also discovered the late Mr. P. Subramania Aiyar, whose High School in Mylapore owes its existence entirely to his efforts. The Trustees of the P. S. High School and Charities cannot better honour the memory of the founder and his revered friend and master Dr. Subramania Aiyar than by taking early steps to give the School a habitation which it so much needs, and enlarging the scope of the institution.

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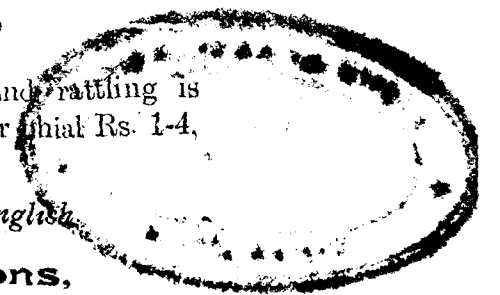
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