

The Vedanta Kesari

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



24 SEP 1926

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PRAYER	121
SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA	122
EDITORIAL NOTES	124
THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION : <i>By Swami Sharvananda</i>	130
THE LIGHT OF ASIA : <i>By Prof. A. R. Wadia, B.A., Bar-at-Law</i>	137
THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF : <i>By Prof. K. Srinivasa Aiyar, M.A.</i>	145
NOTES AND COMMENTS	151
NEWS AND REPORTS	158

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- ii. To look upon all men, women and children, irrespective of sect, colour, creed or caste as veritable manifestations of the Lord and worship them as such by trying to remove all their needs and sufferings—physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual.

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"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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PRAYER

परात्मानमेकं जगद्बीजमाद्यं निरीहं निराकारमोक्तावेद्यं ।

यतो जायते पालयते येन विश्वं तमीशं भजे लीयते यत्र विश्वं ॥

अजं शश्वतं कारणं कारणानां शिवं केवलं भासकं भासकानां ।

तुरीयं तमः पारमाद्यन्तहीनं प्रपद्ये परं पावनं द्वैतहीनं ॥

नमस्ते नमस्ते विभो विश्वमूर्ते नमस्ते नमस्ते चिदानन्दमूर्ते ।

नमस्ते नमस्ते तपोयोगागम्य नमस्ते नमस्ते श्रुतिज्ञानागम्य ॥

I adore the Lord, the Supreme Atman, the One, the primordial seed of the universe, the desireless, the formless, who is signified by Om, from whom the universe comes into being, by whom it is sustained, and into whom it dissolves.

I take refuge in Him, the unborn, the eternal, the Cause of all causes, the good, the absolute, the Illuminator of all luminaries, the fourth state of Being, the One beyond darkness, without beginning and end, the supreme purifier, devoid of duality.

Salutation to Thee, O the all-pervading, whose form is the universe ! Salutation to Thee who art of the form of knowledge and bliss ! Salutation to Thee who art attainable by asceticism and meditation ! Salutation to Thee who art known by the highest knowledge revealed in the Vedas !

SRI SANKARACHARYA

SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

Q—Maharaj, how can the Kundalini* be awakened?

THE SWAMI—It can be awakened through the practice of Japam (repetition of the Lord's name), Dhyana (meditation) and other spiritual exercises. According to some Yogis there are special forms of meditation and other practices for arousing it. But I believe it can be best done through Japam and Dhyana. The practice of Japam is very much suited to our present iron age (Kali Yuga). There is no other spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the Mantram.

Q—Does meditation mean thinking of the form of the Deity?

THE SWAMI—It implies thinking of the Divine as both with form and without form.

Q—Well, Maharaj, is it the Guru who decides whether one is fit for the meditation of God with form or without form?

*Lit. coiled. It is described in the Tantras as a coiled serpent sleeping in the human body. Kundalini is the spiritual power latent in all beings. With its awakening begins the real religious life of the aspirant. According to the Yogis there exists in the spinal column a hollow canal called Sushumna with seven lotuses or centres. These centres begin with the Muladhara or the centre at the base of the spinal column, and end in the Sahasrara or the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain. As the Kundalini rises higher and higher, wonderful psychic powers and spiritual visions come to the Yogi. When it reaches the Sahasrara the Yogi attains to the highest spiritual illumination.

THE SWAMI—Yes. But the pure mind itself plays the part of the Guru. At times the mind is inclined to think of the form. At other times the formless aspect of God appeals to it. The human Guru cannot be had always. As the aspirant goes on with his spiritual practices, his power of comprehension also increases. Then his mind can act as a guide*.

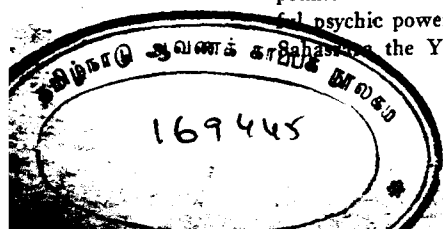
The Yogavasishtha Ramayana says that the mental current flows in various directions. The mental energy is wasted through various distractions. A part of it is drawn to the body, another part to the senses, still another part to the objects of sense. The mind is, as it were, tied to many things. Snap all the bonds. Collect the scattered forces of the mind and make them flow in a particular direction. This is the task of spiritual life. Concentrate the whole mind and direct it to spiritual practices until the goal is reached. Strive your best. Be up and doing. You are young now. This is the time to practise spiritual exercises.

You won't be able to do anything when you grow old. Begin, therefore, your spiritual life in right earnest. If you can concentrate all the distracted powers of the mind, you will find what a tremendous energy this will generate. Do it even now. Do it through Japam or meditation or discrimination. Know all these means are equally effective. Take up one of these, and merge yourself in Sadhana. Don't ask questions any more. First do something, and then come and ask questions if you have any.

Q—Maharaj, is it true that the Kundalini awakens by the grace of the Guru?

THE SWAMI—Through the grace of the Guru not only can the Kundalini be roused up, but everything else can be had,—even the knowledge of Brahman. But this grace can't be attained easily. One has to strive one's utmost to get it.

*The Divine Light shines through the purified mind.



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Ask the mind in your calm moments if you have done any spiritual practice. It will tell you that you have done absolutely nothing. Practise some spiritual discipline. Begin it now. And devote yourself to this and this alone. Don't pay heed to anything else. Merge into the very depth of your soul.

In the beginning, it is necessary to do some spiritual exercises as part of the daily routine. Whether the mind likes it or not, this must be followed regularly.

EDITORIAL NOTES

HINDUISM—ITS UNIQUE POWER OF ASSIMILATION

THE history of the growth of Hinduism is a glorious record of the assimilation by the Aryan culture of innumerable ethnic groups differing widely in race, colour, physiognomy, language, traditions and customs. Owing to its inexhaustible power of absorption the Hindu community has become a veritable ethnological museum containing an endless diversity of races and tribes. It includes within its bounds the so-called Aryan, Dravidian, Negrito-Kolarian and Mongolian races of the anthropologists. It contains the tall and short statured, long and round headed, dark, brown, yellow and white skinned, thick and thin lipped, long and snub nosed, as well as an infinite variety of mixed types baffling all descriptions and classifications. Indeed, to quote the apt words of Swami Vivekananda, Hindu India has been like "an ocean of humanity, composed of race-waves, seething, boiling, struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, spreading, swallowing little ones and again subsiding." The Hindu religion in its grand spirit of universalism opened its hospitable doors to all races and tribes who wanted to be admitted into its fold, and fused them into one people united by a community of ideals, social as well as religious. Indian civilisation, or rather Hindu civilisation is, as E. B. Havell puts it, "like Hindu sacrificial vessels, an amalgam of many metals; but the fire which fused them and separated the dross was the Aryan genius—the philosophy of the Vedas."

ARYANISATION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLES

The Aryanisation of India is not so much a political, as a cultural conquest—the conquest of Dharma. The early fathers of the Vedic civilisation lived in the Sapta-Sindhu or the land of the seven rivers including the Indus in northern India. But as they went on southwards colonising the country, the boundary of their culture also expanded as a matter of course, until it came to embrace the whole of India—the land watered by the Sapta-Ganga, or the seven Ganges, and bounded on the north by the snow-capped mountains, and on the other sides by the palm-clad sea-shore. "Long before the 4th century B. C. we find," says R. C. Dutt, "that the entire peninsula has been reclaimed, civilised, and Hinduised, and that primitive barbarians dwelt only in rocks, forests, and deserts which the Aryans disdained to conquer. It is not a story of conquests only, which would have little interest for the philosophical reader. It is a story of the spread of Hindu civilisation among hitherto unknown countries and aboriginal nations." Thus in course of time almost all the indigenous and outlying tribes, both Aryan and non-Aryan, came under the irresistible and elevating influence of the same Indo-Aryan religion, language and civilisation. Great seats of Hindu culture came to be established not only in the north but also in the south, particularly in the lands of the Andhras and the Cholas, which rivalled the great cultural centres of the Gangetic valley.

HINDUISING THE FOREIGN INVADERS

Foreign invaders were pouring into India from very ancient days. But captive India conquered most of her conquerors culturally. The Sakas, Kushans, Huns and other allied races had to yield to the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism. Even Persian, Bactrian, Parthian, Greek and other alien elements seem to have undergone the same process of Aryanisation. The Puranas speak of the Abhiras, Gardabhilas, Sakas, Yavanas, Bahlikas and other outlandish tribes. All these peoples underwent in course of time the same process of absorption. Vincent Smith very truly says—"The truth seems to be that when a foreign clan or tribe became Hinduised the ruling families were readily recognised as Kshatriyas or Rajputs, while the rank and file gradually lost their tribal organisation and developed into an Indian caste not regarded as aristocratic." In the Punjab, Rajputana, Gujarat, Assam and

other parts of the country, Hinduism freely admitted new converts who often espoused the cause of the adopted faith with exceptional zeal and devotion. The roomy fold of Hinduism with its graduated systems of ethical and spiritual cultures accommodated innumerable aboriginal and foreign tribes. And these became completely fused in the melting pot of Hindu society, sometimes leaving only some faint legends and traditions as regards their origin.

HINDUISM IN FOREIGN LANDS

The Vedic religion not only spread marvellously throughout the length and breadth of India, but also penetrated into Further India. Even before the birth of Buddhism numerous groups of enterprising Hindus crossed the sea, and founded small colonies in Siam, Cambodia, and Champa, and in Java, Bali and other islands of the Indian Archipelago. Says Prof. Phanindranath Bose in his 'Indian colony of Champa'—"we find all the component factors of Indian culture and civilisation having deep root in Champa. The Indian colonists took with them the religion and social manners and customs of India. . . . It has been often asserted that the Hindu religion is not a proselytising religion. In Champa we find that the natives of the country had accepted the Hindu religion as their own, and made numerous temples to the Hindu Gods and Goddesses." In Champa the conquest was both political and cultural. But India valued cultural conquest more than anything else. And the grand records of her cultural influence are to be found in the art and sculpture of Cambodia, Java and other places in Greater India even to-day. All this clearly indicates how greatly the Hindu religious ideals transformed the life and thought of peoples converted to Hinduism. And not only this,—Sanskrit language and Hindu manners, rites and institutions also came to be largely adopted at all the places.

THE PROCESS OF HINDUISATION

The authors of the Hindu socio-religious system never believed in the extermination or cultural enslavement of the aboriginal and foreign tribes admitted into their fold. Each community after it had imbibed the Aryan culture, was allowed to settle down within the bounds of the Varnashrama Dharma. But it maintained its distinctive individuality and followed its own law of growth. This "gradual Brahmanising" of the aboriginal, non-Aryan or casteless tribes is still going on in

India. As Sir Alfred Lyall observes in his 'Asiatic Studies,' "The clans and races which inhabit the hill tracts, the outlying uplands, and the uncleared jungle districts of India, are melting into Hinduism all over India by a process much more rapid and effective than individual conversions. Among all these aboriginal or non-Aryan communities a continued social change is going on; they alter their modes of life to suit improved conditions of existence; their languages decay, and they gradually go over to the dominant Aryan rituals. They pass into Brahmanists by a natural upward transition which leads them to adopt the religion of the castes immediately above them in the social scale of the composite population among which they settle down." New tribes when they enter the fold of Hinduism bring in also their gods along with them. Hinduism clothes these Gods with new conceptions and thus "civilises both Gods and worshippers." The Varnashrama Dharma differs in one important respect from other social systems. These take the individual as the unit. And the individual, if he happens to amass wealth or grow in power leaves his social group to its fate and rises to a higher level. But being altruistic, the Hindu social system recognises the group and not the individual as the unit. And as such the individual, if he wants to rise to a higher caste, can do so only by taking the whole community along with him. Thus the Hindu method of social fusion or elevation is not individualistic but communistic in the cultural sense.

THE "NEW" MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN HINDUISM

Hinduism is a missionary religion believing in cultural conversion. It has no faith in the formal conversion done with the sprinkling of water and muttering of formulas, a process having nothing to do with the change of heart. The so-called proselytisation by the missionary has little spiritual value and is no better than the recruiting of labourers or soldiers by prospects of social and economic betterment, as the Indian Social Reformer of Bombay very aptly put it. And there is an actual craze for this sort of conversion in India to-day. Both the Christian and Mohammedan propagandists have been trying vigorously to convert the followers of the Hindu religion. They are succeeding to some extent in their attempts amongst the poor lower classes. This conversion of its members to alien faiths is a real danger to Hinduism. And as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, so long as other religions are actively engaged in proselytisation, Hinduism also has to take

the necessary steps for the readmission of the perverts, and even to make new converts from other faiths to save itself from dwindling. That is why the Suddhi movement has come into existence. It is only a re-assertion of the old spirit of assimilation adapted to modern needs and conditions. Missionaries of proselytising religions, who have been enjoying the monopoly of conversion at the cost of the Hindu community, resent this "new" spirit which is, in fact, as old as Hinduism itself. "It is a great mistake to suppose that the Hindu religion is not proselytising; the system of caste gives room for the introduction of any number of outsiders"—observed Sir George Campbell. The chief cause why Hinduism is thought to be non-missionary is that it never tried to propagate itself by fire and sword. It never cared to carry the flag of religion at the head of armies, and spread itself by means of forcible conversions and persecution of "heretics."

HINDUISM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION

It is a remarkable fact in the religious history of India that Hinduism has been constantly producing great reformers and revivalists unlike other religions. These great spiritual leaders come to widen the bounds of the Hindu faith. By their saintliness and devotion they bring new inspiration to men and women and bring them under their banner, irrespective of race or caste. They make not only wholesale conversions but also individual conversions. Sankara, Ramanuja and other great "orthodox" revivalists brought the Jains and the Buddhists into the fold of the Mother Religion. Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya and other Vaishnavite reformers, who tried to eliminate caste exclusiveness from the field of religion, admitted the members of the lowest classes and even Mussalmans into their sects. This process of conversion is still going on in Hinduism in spite of the apathy of the majority of its members. And one of the redeeming features of the modern Hindu renaissance is the breaking down of meaningless conservatism and exclusiveness, and the re-assertion of the spirit of assimilation and expansion. This is manifest in all our reform movements which have come into being since the days of the great Raja Rammohan Roy. And Swami Vivekananda's crossing the prohibited ocean in order to preach to the West the eternal truths of the Vedanta marks a new epoch in the history of Hinduism. It is the beginning of the fulfilment of the great spiritual mission of the Vedic religion outside

the bounds of India. But the Swami did not go to the West with the ordinary "missionary spirit". The conversion he aimed at was not a formal one, a "changing of labels," but the conquest of heart. His dream was, as he said, to conquer the whole world by Hindu spiritual thoughts, and thereby to bring about the union of the East and West on the sure basis of spirituality.

HINDU IDEAL OF RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION

Of all the world's faiths, Hinduism alone has recognised the great truth that all religions emanate from the same Divine Source, and are but different expressions of the One Universal Religion. And conquest of the world by Hindu religion and spirituality means the universalising of the world's religious thoughts, by helping men and women to realise the unity behind the diversity of sects and creeds. Whether it is acknowledged or not, the process of universalisation is slowly going on imperceptibly in the realm of thought. A new age dawned upon humanity with the discovery by the Western savants of the invaluable treasures lying hidden in the Sanskrit literature. Hindu ideas have been steadily flowing into the West not only through the translations of the Hindu scriptures, but also through the writings and teachings of Hindu preachers, poets and philosophers. Through all these and other agencies the universal ideals of Hinduism have been influencing the Western mind and bringing about a remarkable change in the mentality of the Christian missionary towards non-Christian religions. But for this influence it would not have been possible for Dean Inge to speak in this catholic strain—"There is a common ethical and religious ideal influencing the whole civilised world, and each people tries to find it in its own religion, and does find it there. . . . Supposing they (the Asiatics) worship a being with the same attributes. It does not very much matter whether they call him Buddha or Christ. We must look to things rather than words." An unexpected transformation is taking place in the attitude of the Christian missionary towards Hinduism. As Mr. K. T. Paul—a well-known Indian Christian leader—frankly pointed out in the last Swarajya Annual Supplement—"Every religion is from God but the culmination of it all is in the revelation through Jesus Christ. That was in short the new attitude not merely tolerant but reverent and constructive towards all non-Christian religions. . . . The best missionary opinion is now definitely moving away from that attitude. There is a

more humble approach to the whole question. If God has been speaking to the Hindus through their experience and history as individuals and groups for forty long centuries of unbroken religious history, obviously He has trained them to understand and interpret His mind in ways different from those disciplined in totally different conditions of life and thought to which the missionary belongs." Thus the message of universalism as preached by the Hindu religion is being gradually recognised also by Christianity. Still greater changes are yet to come. The spirit of toleration is bound to lead to the acceptance of all religions as true. And then from this will follow the exchange and assimilation of one another's ideals. It is this fellowship of faiths that Swami Vivekananda proclaimed at the Chicago Parliament of Religions—"Do I wish that the Christian would become a Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth."

THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION*

By Swami Sharvananda

TO those who reflect a little upon the process of life, it will appear to be a movement, a flux, a process of becoming. Many of the modern philosophers have built their systems of philosophy on the conception of life as a movement. Taking an unsophisticated view of life, we see that all on a sudden, a child is ushered into being from some unknown state. The child grows in his surroundings, develops his body and mind, fosters ambitions which become partly fulfilled and partly unfulfilled, and finally leaves this world. How and whence he came and whither he goes,—all these are kept hidden from man's knowledge. Philosophers alone venture to offer solutions to these problems.

This life has been designated by ancient thinkers as a Samsarana or a movement from birth to death and again from

*Notes of a lecture delivered at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION 131

death to birth. Man can be compared to a plant. The plant comes out of the seed, and then it produces the seeds which die giving rise to fresh plants. The animal life also follows the same course. It is something like the rise and fall of the wave and it has been going on from eternity to eternity. It is not a mere rise and fall, but there is a forward motion as well. When we compare the state in which society must have existed some thousands of years ago with its present state, we feel that the present-day society is quite different from the society of pre-historic times. This change is brought about by what we call civilisation. Human society has evolved from the primitive and savage condition to the civilised stage.

Western evolutionists say that evolution is a process of becoming. Now let us consider what it is that evolves in man or in human society. Western evolutionists say that it is the efficiency of life that is evolving. Compared with the ancient savage, the civilised man is more efficient. Again, studying this rather difficult phenomenon of evolution, biology has discovered how it takes place, marked the different links in the chain of life and traced them even to the vegetable kingdom. It was found by observation and analysis that the same process which we notice in a more evolved form in human society is going on also in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The same law is operating there as well. Life marches forward from the less efficient to the more efficient,—from the vegetable, the insect, the animal, to the man. In this theory of evolution, we notice clearly that the clue is taken from the purely physical manifestation of life as body. Naturally the evolutionists took the theory as embracing what they call the species or the forms of physical expressions. In the beginning of this earth, when it became habitable, the first manifestation of life was vegetable, and then came the reptile, the fish, the lower vertebrate and finally man.

Coming to human society again, we notice different stages of development—the savage, the semi-savage and the civilised. Though there is no change of form, there is a change in the internal life, the mind. Behind the biologists' definition of the evolution of life, we see that the materialistic standpoint is predominant. In short, they say that life is evolving when it manifests more and more power and greater and greater dominance over external nature.

But this explanation of evolution as the expression of capacity to make nature subservient does not lead us to under-

stand the ultimate value of life. For instance, we all instinctively feel that a Christ, a Buddha or a Sankarā is the last word of human evolution. Their influence on human society has been tremendous, though they had not the material power which a Napoleon or an Alexander possessed. Hence efficiency is not the test of the evolution of life. Let us consider what the Hindu saints and sages had to say on this matter. To them, this Samsarā appeared to be a peculiar thing. By their analysis and intuitive introspection they found out that evolution does not mean efficiency, but the manifestation of Intelligence (Chit). A cultured or evolved man manifests more intelligence than a savage. What is true of man is also true of animals and vegetables; for the whole creation is a series expressing different aspects of life, all forming different links in one and the same chain. Therefore the intelligence which is seen expressed in man must also be found, though in a lower degree, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. A close examination will show that the intelligence which is manifested in the perfect man is found in a crude form in the lower orders of life. The Sanskrit word for this intelligence is Chit. It is the pure principle of consciousness. It is this Chit that differentiates the living from the non-living. It is the subtle essence of all forms of consciousness. In human life, it exists in all the three states of consciousness, *i. e.*, Jagrat (the awakened state), Swapna (the dream state) and Sushupti (the deep sleep state). In the Jagrat state, the principle of consciousness is mixed up with its contents, the impressions of the objects which have been perceived and felt. It associates itself with the body as the perceiver and feeler. Then it is called Viswa. In the dreaming state, the consciousness of the objective world is absent and the Ego is closely associated with the memory in the form of ideas. Then it is called Taijas. There is another state of consciousness which is almost purely contentless as in the deep sleep state. It feels its own existence while it is unconscious of other things. This shows that the Chit is not a faculty of the mind but quite different from it. The Chit exists even in the unconscious state when there is no activity of the mind. It is the golden thread running through all the three different states of consciousness and is at the background of all human personality, giving unbroken continuity to it. It is Swayamprajna—conscious of its own existence—and Swaprakasa—self-luminous and so quite unlike material objects which are not self-effulgent. It is the intelligence of the living beings, which illumines the material

objects. It illumines itself in the deep sleep state, the mind in the dreaming state and the objects of the senses in the awakened state.

This principle of consciousness, the Atman, is also found manifested in the vegetable kingdom. The growth of plants and their response to external stimuli as shown by the experiments of Sir J. C. Bose are sure signs of the existence of the same consciousness. This consciousness becomes more and more manifest in the higher and higher grades of life. In the animal, the response is more distinct than in the vegetable, and therefore the consciousness of its own existence is seen to be more vivid. Again in the human plane it is still more vivid. Hence it is the degree of expression of intelligence or Chaitanya that is the real mark of the evolution of life. The Western evolutionists only perceived the external forms or the evolution of the species from less efficient to more efficient forms. They took into account only the efficiency of life but not the expression of intelligence. The ancient sages of India said that the real efficiency or progress of life depends upon the expression of intelligence.

The present state of life is the result of an adjustment. We have to combat against the external and internal forces of nature. The more successful the struggle against these forces, the greater is the evolution. For instance, a savage is more subject to these forces—both external and mental—than a cultured man. He thinks that his diseases are due to the malice of evil spirits and he propitiates them sometimes with success and sometimes without it. The cure is not in his hands. But a civilised man understands the laws of nature and the secrets of physical life and he effects a cure for his diseases. Here is expansion of life, a comparatively greater freedom from the operations of the external forces. The higher we ascend, the more marked becomes the conquest of matter. In a similar way, the civilised man is endowed with a greater measure of refinement, culture, purity and other qualities. In the perfect man, we find an absolute conquest of matter—conquest of the body and mind. He is not fettered. He has completely broken the shackles of matter, from which the principle of consciousness is perfectly set free. The realisation of this principle is the last stage in the evolution of man.

The materialistic evolutionists posit that the urge behind the evolution of life is the will to live or the desire for self-preservation from the opposing forces. Hence they also believe that the embodiment of life which is defeated in the

struggle for existence ceases to exist. They believe in the survival of the fittest. It is only that form of life which is efficient enough to withstand the external onslaught that can exist and progress. But according to Indian philosophers, the principle of life is indestructible and the strongest instinct in a highly evolved being cannot be self-preservation. A thing that cannot die can never think of its preservation. What then is the first principle of life? It is not self-preservation but Self-manifestation. The Atman is trying to express itself through several sheaths of matter which hide it like so many veils. The more it pierces the veil and expresses itself, the higher is the evolution, the greater the mastery of the soul over matter, the broader the expansion of life. This evolution starts from a crude manifestation and ends in the perfect stage. And the plan of evolution is this: The manifestation of intelligence becomes more and more prominent as life proceeds towards its goal which is the perfect freedom of the Soul from the shackles of matter.

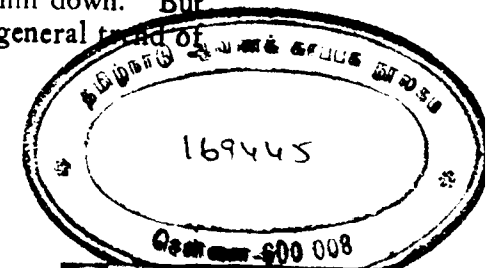
Again, Western evolutionists believe that life is evolving as a whole, from species to species. They say that the human species came from the monkey species. The monkey species from the lower species and so on. In their scheme of evolution, there is no place for individual evolution. But individual life is the supreme thing. The Jatis or species are, of course, evolving, but much more important than that is the evolution of each individual life—the manifestation of his Chit. According to the Garbhopanishad, the individual soul has to pass through eighty-four lakhs of expressions of life or species before it can come to the human type in which it attains the power of discrimination to work out its salvation.

Then, again, we believe that creation is a cycle—a manifestation of something unmanifest. The cosmic energy in the manifested state is called Srishti (projection) and in the unmanifested state it is called Pralaya (dissolution). In the beginning, the whole universe with its living (Chit) and non-living (Aчит) principles remained in the Karana or causal state. Viewed from the universal collective standpoint, this Supreme Principle or Intelligence is called Iswara. There is no individuality there. So the Ego does not arise in the Karana state. Then a desire arose in Iswara Who willed—“I am one. I shall be many.” Then the Cosmic energy became a little disturbed and the creation started. The Ego which is at the back of the universal state is called the Hiranyagarbha or the Universal Mind or the Cosmic Ego. It splits

into many subjective and objective forms and causes the multiplicity in the universe. As this is true of the macrocosmic life, it is also true of the microcosmic or individual life. In the individual life also, there are the three states—the Sthula (gross), Sukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal) states. At the time of the Pralaya (dissolution) the gross merges into the subtle and again the subtle merges into the causal. For example, the seed is the causal state of the tree. There is no individuality of the tree in the seed. But when the seed grows, diversification comes in as stem, leaves, flowers, fruits and so forth.

Why does this creation come into being, if God is really perfect and has no desire? In the previous Pralaya (dissolution) many souls have done various Karmas (actions) and they have not attained Moksha (liberation). In order to give them an opportunity to reap the fruits of their actions, and thereby to evolve higher and higher, the universe is projected. At first it is in the etheric state, then it comes to the molecular and atomic states and so on. According to the Vedas, at first, it was in the form of Prakriti Tatwa; then came Manas Tatwa, Akasha Tatwa, Vayu Tatwa, Tejas Tatwa and Jala Tatwa. In each state of the creation those souls who are fit to live in it, come and have their chance. For instance, in this gross physical world, only those with physical bodies can live. Again we have a belief that the soul comes to this world from Chandraloka (the world of the moon) where the bodies are made of the Jala Tatwa. This resembles the Western notion that life has come from the moon. Some think that souls come from Suryaloka where their bodies are made of Tejas Tatwa. The idea is that life came from the subtle to the gross state of existence; from the Prakriti (causal state) to the Akasha (etheric) state, then to the Tejas (luminous) state, then to the Jala (watery) state and lastly the physical gross state. Then a question arises—whether a soul, which has attained the full evolution or has gone to a certain stage in its progress in the previous cycle, should retrace its path once more. No, it is not necessary. They remain in the Vayu or Chandra Loka till the present earth attains that stage of evolution in which it will be fit for their occupation.

Involution is as true as evolution. The same law governs both. If a good and virtuous life takes man up the ladder of evolution, a wicked or brutish life will take him down. But the Vedantins believe that, on the whole, the general trend of



life is upward. Man is bound only to be free, is suffering only to be happy. The Buddhi (determinative faculty) which guides and controls his life, is made of Satwa and the movement of his life is towards the realisation of perfection. Of course, sometimes, there are set-backs and the soul which goes down to the lower plane comes up with redoubled vigour to work up its evolution.

That is the reason why the Vedantins believe that even a worm which crawls in the dust will realise the highest perfection in course of time. This is the plan and purpose of evolution. It is true of both the Jati (species) and the individual. These Jatis are eternal as the human species and different animal and vegetable species. But the individuals come and go finding a place in these Jatis only for a short time. The Jatis are, as it were, the various rungs of the ladder for the individual soul to ascend. The manifestation of the species proceeds along with that of the whole earth. The manifestation of individual beings proceeds with the evolution of the inner capacities or the expressions of the Atman till perfection is reached. With the savage, the interests are first limited to himself, then as he evolves more and more they are widened gradually to the family, the clan, the community and the nation. Ultimately he feels that he is the Self of the universe. The interests of the universe are his interests. Like Buddha, he feels even for the smallest worm that lives. He has freed himself from all the shackles of mind, body and individuality. That is Nisreyasa—the attainment of *summum bonum* of life. When the principle of life has identified itself with the universal life, all its littleness disappears and it is beyond all wants. That state of unalloyed bliss is infinite perfection and unity. There is no going further, and evolution ends in the realisation of perfection of the Infinite. What the modern evolutionists speak of in uncertain terms, the ancient sages of India have by their introspection expressed in greater detail and with greater thoroughness.

“Reaching the highest perfection, and having attained Me, the great-souled ones are no more subject to re-birth which is painful and ephemeral.”

“All the worlds, O Arjuna, including the realm of Brahma, are subject to return, but after attaining Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no re-birth.”

BHAGAVAD-GITA

THE LIGHT OF ASIA*

By Prof. A. R. Wadia, B. A., Bar at-Law

I THINK, as true men, we have to recognise with feelings of great shame and humiliation that India is a fallen country to-day. But it cannot fail to be a perpetual source of inspiration to us to know that India was not always that and that Indian civilization is one of the hoariest in the world, that India that has fallen now, had in the past vitality enough to give birth to some of the greatest statesmen and warriors such as Chandragupta and Asoka in ancient times and two great empire-builders—Akbar and Shivaji—even in modern times. In the realm of philosophy, in the realm of music, in the realm of architecture, India has not had her peers. But it seems to me the greatest glory of India is that more than any of these things—and these are among the greatest in the world—she has been the birth-place of no less a person than Lord Buddha who has been the source of light and salvation to millions of people. Though technically a Buddhist may not exist in India to-day—though technically there is no shrine in India which is worshipped as the shrine of Buddha—yet, it is a source of pride to feel that millions of people in China and Japan and other countries have always been content to call themselves followers of the greatest Indian. And even in India, though we do not technically follow Buddhism, the teaching of the great Teacher has left a perpetual mark on the life—the mode of thinking and worship of the millions of Indians to-day. Not merely this; of all the Asiatic teachers apart from Christ, Buddha has been the one man that has succeeded in forcing the admiration and homage even of the proud Europeans of to-day so that many of them have come to feel the inspiring personality of a great teacher whose memory we have met to-day to celebrate. It would be sheer presumption to say that we have met to-day merely to honour the great Buddha. He is not in the least in need of our honour. We are honouring ourselves by showing that in spite of these fallen days we have got spirituality enough to pay homage to the memory of a great man's name and a great man's deeds and teachings.

* A lecture delivered at Bhagawan Buddha's birthday celebration held on 27th May, 1926, under the auspices of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore.

I need hardly say I do not pretend—in fact, I cannot pretend—to stand here on this platform, as a follower of Buddha himself or as one who has thoroughly mastered his philosophy, and if you expect a profound Buddhist or a profound authority on Buddhism to lecture to-day, I should unhesitatingly sit down. I stand here to-day as one of the ordinary mortals for whom Buddha lived and taught. Even in an age when learning was esoteric, when it was the privilege of a few individuals, the glory and personality of Buddha appealed to all the ordinary mortals. His message was meant for all. He lived literally for humanity. And there was nothing human which was alien to him. His message was at best to the ordinary mortals like me and since I, as an ordinary mortal, have learned something from the teachings of the great Teacher, I think I have justification to stand upon this platform to address a few words to you—for what?—not to praise him, for, that he does not need, but to spend a few minutes or perhaps an hour in recalling some of the pregnant teachings of that great soul—teachings which if we enshrine in our heart can yet make of this fallen India a better India. It is in that light that I mean just to refresh my memory and your memory about that great teacher.

We all know that about 2,500 years ago, India had the glory of giving birth to a great teacher. We know also how he was not born to ordinary humble parents as Christ or Muhammad. Here was a man—a great religious teacher—born in a princely family, perhaps not princely in the ordinary sense of the term, for modern scholars have proved that he belonged to a more or less republican community—the Licchavis. They had not a king in the accepted sense of the term—it was a democratic community. It was in such a community that young Buddha was born. Perhaps, he had not all the accomplishments and accompaniments of royal munificence and magnificence that we usually associate with him, but there is not the slightest doubt that he was born in a noble family. He was a fond child of doting parents and that was why he was brought up with tender care and extraordinary solicitude so much so that it appears his father was unwilling that the young child should get even the shadow of misery to cross his path. Here was a young man bred in all the atmosphere of comfort and even luxury, an atmosphere so unsuited to real spirituality. So, for all practical purposes, we might expect him to have grown up as so many ordinary princes grow up—lost in the

pleasures of the world. But that was not the case with Buddha. Whatever he tried to do, the young prince felt dissatisfied with his life of ease and luxury. The fond wife and son and doting parents could not keep him from the lure of humanity, and when, in course of time, as he came face to face with misery and suffering, as he saw an old man bent with age, as he saw a man suffering from disease, as he saw a corpse taken to the burial ground, he came to realize that life was transitory, he felt a loathing for his own life of ease and luxury, and here was a prince who felt that he must turn his back upon such life and upon his worldly possessions and all his worldly status. Here was a man who was prepared to sacrifice the possibility of succeeding as a chief of his tribe. And one night in the dark, he left his house to seek illumination so that he could be of service to humanity.

In one of his pregnant sentences Buddha says—“Let me be enlightened for the service of humanity”. He was not caring to redeem his own narrow individual soul. He was hungering to fulfil the greater ambition of serving humanity as a whole. He felt it his duty to serve humanity and for that, he followed—as an ordinary Hindu would do,—the practices of his age : he spent six long years in austere, rigorous penance, fasting and mortifying himself in all ways, so that at the end of six years, on one occasion, he fainted through sheer fatigue and was on the point of losing his life. He felt he had not yet been enlightened. Then he gave up this asceticism just as willingly as he had given up the life of pleasure and began to lead the life of an ordinary mortal, but concentrated upon the deeper purpose which has always stirred the heart of humanity in all countries. And as a result of the new life, he felt that he got the enlightenment and he also felt that he had something to teach to the world. This was at the age of 35 years. He lived till his eightieth year and so for forty-five years he poured out his gospel in full, in the form of parables, in epigrams and in *slokas*, and lived a life of pure spiritual activity. He poured out the treasures of his heart first to a few admiring followers, and then, as he went from town to town, he enlightened the people, he kindled a new zest profoundly spiritual which indirectly stirred the whole world. It was for that stirring that Buddha went forth into the world, not as one who was sick of life and who wanted to turn away from it—he did not want to hug his own salvation—but as one who felt that as long as there was misery in the universe, so long there could be no rest for him. He

felt the oneness of humanity. He said that it was impossible for man to find rest so long as he felt and knew the existence of misery and suffering on earth. He felt that the secret of happiness lay in losing the sense of individuality and in helping the world at large to a better and to a higher life. That was his sense of happiness and it was in that sense that he worked, and worked so splendidly that his name to-day is impressed in the hearts of millions as that of the greatest of mankind. It is such a person whose life and teachings we are met to-day to refresh our memory with.

It is very often taken for granted that Buddhism is a religion entirely different and distinct from Hinduism. There is a sense in which the statement is quite true. There is a sense in which the statement is utterly false. There is a sense in which it is true to say that Christianity is nothing but a development of Judaism. But the development is so novel as to justify the claim of Christianity to be a higher religion than the narrow and almost tribal Judaism. So, too, in the case of Buddha who was born a Hindu, who was brought up in the Hindu atmosphere, who had followed Hindu precepts and Hindu teachings, who had assimilated some of the most important basic conceptions of Hindu philosophy. It would indeed be surprising if a man born in a certain community, brought up in a certain atmosphere, should all of a sudden give up that atmosphere, be entirely independent of it. That would indeed be against all laws of historical evolution as we have come to realize to-day. Buddhism was so far a development of Hinduism but with a marked difference—a difference which would justify the claim of Buddhism to be a higher religion—to be more spiritualised. I mean no disrespect to Hinduism when I say this, because the Hindus could not possibly have been blind to the real greatness of his teaching or to the real spirituality of his message; for we know that the post-Buddhistic Hinduism is not the Hinduism of the pre-Buddhistic days. And this reveals the spiritualising influence of Buddhism. Buddhism, even while dying in India, gave up a part of its inspiration and spirituality to the Hinduism that came after it. Hence, it would be true to say that Buddhism is dead in India and also to say that it is not dead in India, and it would be better for India if the living elements of Buddhism were as living to-day in India as they were in the days of Asoka. We have to recognise that even in the case of Christ who has been held as the Son of God by his followers, it is asserted that he was a reformer of the Judaic faith.

Much more so, perhaps, in the case of Lord Buddha who himself did not claim to be a God, though later generations raised temples to him and worshipped him as God. There is greater justification in regarding him as a reformer of Hinduism. There are some main elements of Hinduism with which he was dissatisfied. There are three things which he preached against and rebelled against. The first was the extreme ritualism of the Hindu religion as it was practised in his time. The second thing that he rebelled against was—and perhaps this was a part of the first—the frequency of the animal sacrifices that were offered to the deities in the name of religion. Thirdly, it was the ascetic practices which were so common in the Hinduism of the day,—which are not dead in the Hinduism of to-day. But all these three things, Buddha felt, were useless. From the higher standpoint of spirituality, he felt the utter nothingness of mere spiritualism. He felt the heinousness of sacrificing innocent lives of animals for the purpose of gaining some boon from the deity. And by bitter experience of six long years, he had come to realise that no man could be spiritual, that no man could attain the highest by mere ascetic practices. Thus on one occasion when a Brahmin came to him and praised the virtues of the Bahuka river as having the potency of destroying the sins of the sinners, Lord Buddha said, "The Bahuka, the Adhika cannot purify the fool of his sin, bathe he himself ever so often. . . . No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime. To the pure it is ever the holy month of Phaggu. To the pure it is always a perpetual fast. To the man of good deeds it is a vow everlasting. Have thy bath here, even here, O Brahmin, be kind to all beings. If thou speakest not false, if thou killest not life, if thou takest not what is given thee, secure in self-denial—what wouldst thou gain by going to Gaya? Any water is Gaya to thee." And similarly against asceticism he declared—"To keep the body in good health is a duty. Otherwise we cannot trim the lamp of wisdom, and keep our minds strong and clear. Water surrounds the lotus flower, but does not wet its petals." In another place, he said, "The lamp that is not cleansed and not filled with oil will be extinguished; and a body that is unkempt, unwashed, and weakened by penance will not be a fit receptacle for the light of Truth."

His message was: "Do not depend upon external favours for the enlightenment of your own soul; do not assume that your sins could be forgiven by shedding the blood of an animal

or that your sins could be expiated by prayers of another man who is paid to pray." Buddha, with the true insight of a spiritual genius knew—and none knew better than he—that "man literally is the architect of his own fortune," that a man is what he is because of himself and not because of any other agency, human or divine. It was in that sense that he asked his followers to be self-reliant, to be pure in their own actions, in their own thoughts and in their own lives. And he held out the hope that whosoever can be pure in that way, has a right to Nirvana or salvation or whatever we call it. He held out the hope to every human being—however rich he be and however lowly he be—that if he acts aright, he cannot but attain the end which is the birth-right of every human being—to cultivate his own soul life, to assert his own spirituality and to assert his own dignity in the realm of spirit. Hinduism of that day was different from that of to-day. There was a division of mankind according to their capacities—some are fit to be educated and some are not. Some can educate themselves as a matter of right and some must not be educated as a matter of right. That was not the spirit of Buddha. He, as the embodiment of humanity at its highest and its best, insisted upon and emphasised the right of every human being to cultivate this higher spirituality. That is the reason why on one occasion he told his disciple Ananda—"I have preached the truth without making any distinction between the exoteric and esoteric doctrines, for in respect of the truths, Ananda, the *Tathagata* has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps something back." Here was a doctrine of Buddha's heart to be openly laid at the service of humanity. Whoever wanted to better himself could come to him who was a huge reservoir of spiritual enlightenment, could be educated in his teachings and then could follow him. He said: "No man should preserve to himself the Truth. The followers should not keep it for themselves as a miser keeps his own gold." He therefore insisted that his followers should go into all lands and preach his gospel. He said to them—"Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, are all one, that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea." And that was the message which was of a curious significance in the historic conditions of the India of his day, as that is the message much more sorely needed in the unfortunate India of to-day.

His teachings were pervaded by a lofty idealism. As we saw before, the first awakening to spiritual unrest was caused

by his sense of suffering. In one of the passages which *prima facie* looks pessimistic, he says: "Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and pain are suffering; affliction and despair are suffering; to associate with loathsome things is suffering; failure to attain what we love and the failure to attain what we long for are suffering." One feels that suffering; we begin with suffering and end with it. It is the very sense of the acuteness of suffering that made Buddha a great teacher, for he explained this suffering in terms of the famous Hindu conception of Karma—"Man is the architect of his own fortune." He has built his own Karma and what he suffers from is the result of his Karma. "Look not to any one for release besides yourself." "Work out your salvation with diligence."

"Not by birth the outcaste label,
Not by birth the Brahmin know!
By actions only are we able
To judge a man high or low."

It is Karma that determines it. And what is this Karma which helps a man to spiritual salvation? It is nothing but ethical life—moral life in all its intense purity. Hinduism, whether as a religion or as a philosophy, may have generally attained greater heights than other religions. But as a system of morality, Hinduism has been weak, comparatively speaking of course*. It was that weakness that was felt by Buddha and it was that weakness that was exposed by Buddha. So we find a curious paradox that Buddha who is said even by European authors to have

*Comparing Hindu and Buddhist ethics, Dr. Rhys Davids says—"A great deal of his (Buddha's) morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adapted, enlarged and systematised that which had already been well said by others, in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers." In refuting the general notion that Buddhism is a religion entirely different from Hinduism, Prof. Wadia himself aptly observes: "So also in the case of Buddha who was born a Hindu, who was brought up in the Hindu atmosphere, who had followed Hindu precepts and Hindu teachings, who had assimilated some of the most important basic conceptions of Hindu philosophy. It would indeed be surprising if a man born in a certain community, brought up in a certain atmosphere, should all of a sudden give up that atmosphere, be entirely independent of it. That would indeed be against all laws of historical evolution as we come to realise to-day." This observation is also applicable to the influence

been the most intellectual of prophets, was weak in philosophy and metaphysics. But that weakness did not trouble him, for he knew that metaphysics must necessarily be for the few. What he wanted was a message which could go straight to the hearts of the lowliest—no metaphysical jugglery but the direct, pure essence of morality. That was what he wanted to instil into the minds and hearts of all his contemporaries and succeeding generations. It is in that sense that he emphasized the moral Karma or pure life. It was his desire to uplift every human being. But he recognised that it was a hard task before him. For generations, people had been born and had died and he knew that for generations men would be born and would die. He felt that this Karma necessarily led to a continuous series of re-births, and if that were the only end, there could be no religion more pessimistic than Buddhism. But that was only the beginning. What he as a Buddha felt was that there was power in every human being to put an end to the cycle of births and deaths and that power lay within himself—there it was, not extraneous,—that in the pure depths of our own soul, each one of us could fight out his own battle of life. Each one of us must resist temptations to a low life. There is suffering. No man is without it. No human being can entirely escape suffering but there is the power to overcome that suffering. It is from that that the famous idea of Karma and redemption comes in, and it is not a mere dogma with him. He does not merely tantalise human beings with impressing on them this acuteness of suffering and raising a false hope of redemption. He shows them the way by which these sufferings are to be met, the way by which the soul can realize this intense power of spirituality. He felt that that was done not by benevolence alone nor by of Hindu moral teachings on Buddhism.

Buddhist ethics is much less comprehensive than Hindu ethics. It certainly lays strong emphasis on the highest ethical aspects as we find in the Upanishads and other sacred books of Hinduism. But the exaltation of the ethical standard does not mean that all the people to whom it is presented to follow and who are of varying degrees of moral culture can all at once become highly ethical. As the later history of Buddhism shows, the inordinate desire of men and women for leading the highest ethical life regardless of their capacity to do so was one of the main causes of the degeneration of Buddhism in India. Hinduism, on the other hand, guards itself against this danger by giving a graduated course of ethical training which takes the aspirant from the lowest to the highest step. Hindu ethics is inseparable from metaphysics, and even in its highest aspect it is but an ante-chamber to Truth that transcends morality which is relative. All this clearly shows that Hindu ethics has not been comparatively "weak".—Ed., V. K.

meditation alone; because benevolence is action, and meditation gives knowledge. It is action that is spiritualised by knowledge. It is knowledge—which is not mere abstract knowledge—that is redeemed by action. And it is the union of these that he emphasized and he held out the famous eight-fold path for the elevation of mankind.

(To be concluded)

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

I. INTRODUCTORY (I)

By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.

THE Vedantic Doctrine of Experience (or Reality) as interpreted to his school of disciples by Sankaracharya has been much misunderstood and attacked by numerous foes from his own time to the present day. The reason has been, chiefly, that he taught it not as a mere theory, or mere *ipse dixit*, as prejudiced persons assume, but as Experience, Knowledge, or Illumination, supreme, ultimate, innermost,—the basal Self of all phenomenal existence and activity, material, mental, spiritual, personal, or other, in this world or elsewhere. He taught it directly and *by word of mouth*—at least in the first instance—to his disciples, as we gather from a direct statement made by one of the foremost of them, Padmapada,—though he used the Three Prasthanas (sources of systematised knowledge), viz., the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Sariraka-Mimamsa-Sutras, as the vehicle for conveying to the world his teaching in all its simplicity, fulness, and implications. Later on the teachings must have been gathered together and written down under his direction and supervision, and published everywhere by means of manuscript copies eagerly sought all over the land by enthusiastic followers of the Vedic religion. We learn from one of Sankara's works that, in his own days, as subsequently, he had numerous determined opponents who upheld the Bheda-Vada

—the doctrine of Pluralism, as it is now called in the West— in various forms on the basis of mere analogies, biological or mechanical. In a passage of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, the Purvapakshin is made to say :—“How is it that, when there are many opponents, you are an upholder of the doctrine of the One Existence ?” To which the (Monistic) Vedantin replies :—“To me an auspicious circumstance this which you have mentioned, viz., that against me who maintain the doctrine of the One Existence only there are many opponents who postulate Plurality (of existences). I shall overcome all of them, and I shall now begin the discussion.” This passage enables us to confirm the substantial accuracy of the later portraiture of his life as one spent in constant controversy and contention against numerous opponents representing various schools of speculation. We also see with what alacrity he welcomed opposition, what majestic confidence of success marked his entry into and progress along the arena of discussion, and how he came to be proclaimed or accepted as a Loka-Guru (World-Teacher). His controversial campaign not only met the requirements of his age, but accorded well with such methods of interpretation and exposition of thought as were still current among the Vedic and philosophical schools of the land,—and his skill as a dialectician produced so profound and colossal an impression and gained such wide acceptance as to make his polemical progress over all quarters of the land—*Sankara-Dig-Vijaya*, as it is still called—an event of everlasting significance. His dialectics still remain an inviting study and possess an enchantment all its own,—one not realisable except by those who have familiarised themselves with its methods of developing the argument so as to establish the true purport of each Vedic passage (the “*Vishaya-Vakya*,” as it is called) taken up for discussion.

We shall now deal with two topics which, at our very start, are clearly of first importance. (1) Is Sankara's doctrine of Experience supported by the Three Prasthanas ? (2) Can we claim for it the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time ?

As regards the first point, all modern authorities, Western and Indian, have totally failed in arriving at an agreement regarding the dates of the Upanishads and other ancient Vedantic authorities. The man in the street is necessarily inclined to accept as gospel truth the side on which the big battalions are

ranged. But this rough and ready way of arriving at a decision may suit us well in ordinary life, but can never be regarded as satisfactory when we are engaged in the investigation of such ultimate problems as the supreme reality, the goal of life, the methods of purification of the soul, etc. Here at least the influence of personality or partisanship ought not to have weight, and each individual or school must, without rest and without haste, continue its endeavours and inquiries from age to age so as to illuminate and influence the human mind to an ever-widening extent. We are not in a position to apply any uniform and reliable test for deciding which of the Upanishads are really old and which are not. If we are to regard as old those from which passages are taken up for discussion in the Sutras of Badarayana, then Svetasvatara, Kaushitaki and other Upanishads will have to be regarded as old. And yet Dr. Roer—as we learn from Colonel Jacob—holds that the Svetasvatara “does not belong to the series of the more ancient Upanishads” and that it was “composed not long before the time of Sankaracharya.” If, secondly, we resolve to regard as old those Upanishads which have received the honour of being commented upon by Sankaracharya, then we have to take account of the fact that he is the author of Bhashyas on the Svetasvatara and the Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishads. Thirdly, if, as some scholars hold, the Svetasvatara is “the oldest Upanishad in which the illusory nature of the world is plainly taught” (Col. Jacob), and is therefore clearly post-Buddhistic, we have to account for the fact that Ramanujacharya who denies that doctrine accepts this same Upanishad as of equal authority with the rest and quotes from it throughout his great work, the Sri-Bhashya. All other schools of Vedantic thought in India, too, accept this Upanishad as having the same authority as any other. The late eminent scholar, A. E. Gough, has also fully agreed that “its teaching is the same as that of other Upanishads,—the teaching that finds its full and legitimate expression in the system known as the Vedanta.” The truth is that in India the authenticity of an Upanishad is not made to depend on its date—for the determination of its date, like that of every other part of the Veda, has ever defied, as it does even to-day, the ingenuity, however persistent, of the scholar and the antiquarian,—but on the circumstance that it has ever been included in the canon accepted as classical by the Vedic Sakha (school or succession of teachers) to which it belongs. Whenever questions of date are raised, much heat is caused, but rarely

or never does there spring forth the light which is calculated to remove our ignorance of the stages of development in the growth of a doctrine or of the conditions which originally gave rise to it. It is easy to see that questions like these can never be decided by counting votes ; the still, small voice behind continues to revolt against such a decision, and often the whirligig of time is known to bring its revenges.

We pass to the *second* topic, viz., Has the Vedantic Doctrine of Experience the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time ? Dr. Thibaut has said in his Introduction to his translation of Sankara's Bhashya on the Sutras of Vyasa :—"Sankara does not, on the whole, impress one as an author particularly anxious to strengthen his own case by appeals to ancient authorities." This view is clearly a mistake. For, in his various Bhashyas, he refers, expressly or by implication, to the teachers of his school who lived before him. As our present purpose is to give brief statements regarding the leading tenets of his doctrine and interpretation of Vedanta, and as this first section is intended as a brief preliminary to it, we shall content ourselves with but two references. At the commencement of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, Sankara says:—"I offer my constant obeisance to those Gurus (teachers) who, in former times, have commented upon all the Upanishads by explaining the words, the sentences, and the proofs." Again, in his Gita-Bhashya, Sankara makes the following broad pronouncement :—"Whatsoever one's mastery of all branches of knowledge, one who does not know the Sampradaya (the traditional interpretation of a context or passage) must be discarded in the same way as we discard all perverse and ignorant people." Also, in his Bhashya on the Prasna-Upanishad, Sankara addresses an appeal couched in severe terms of denunciation to all who attempt to learn for themselves this Vedic doctrine of Experience without the aid of a teacher who can convey its true import according to the traditional interpretation :—"Give up all your egoistical fancies and listen to the meaning of the Sruti. Independent effort, even if continued for a hundred years, cannot disclose the true import of the Sruti to those whose heads are filled with self-conceit and who foolishly assume that they can know it for themselves (and without a qualified teacher's aid)."

A *third* point which we must bear in mind at our start is that Sankara does not build up a philosophical system of his

own, or even expound the doctrine of a philosophical school or sect to which he belonged, for the benefit of those who are interested in it. What, then, is the exact relation of this doctrine of Experience (or the One Self) to its basic sources, —the Three Prasthanas already mentioned. Sankara's aim was to formulate the *synthetic* teaching of the Veda (*Samanvaya*, as it is called by Vyasa) without mixing it with, or reading into it, any non-Vedic doctrines, beliefs, or traditions, however venerable or popular. The aim of the Veda is to explain to man his real nature and high destiny and to guide him along the path which leads him to the goal of life. Hence, it is regarded in India as an independent source of knowledge side by side with sensuous perception (*Pratyaksha*) and the processes of ratiocination (*Anumana*). Sankara points out:—"The authoritativeness of the Veda with regard to the matters stated by it is independent and direct, just as the light of the sun is the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour." We cannot understand the Veda in the light of any other authority,—even that of the Agamas ; on the other hand, the Veda, as traditionally interpreted and understood among the succession of disciples preserved without interruption from Sri Narayana himself, is the supreme authority in the light of which we have to test the value of all other sources of spiritual knowledge, whatever their pretensions or the vogue they have gained among men. These other sources have value only in so far as they accord with the teaching of the Veda (or are at least not inconsistent with it),—and they lose all claim for acceptance or recognition, when they are directly in conflict with it. We must not also forget that even such recognised and popular sources of spiritual knowledge as the Itihasas and Puranas can be consulted or accepted as authoritative, in regard to our Vedic doctrine of Experience *only* when the traditional interpretation (or Sampradaya) current among the enlightened disciples and teachers of this (*i. e.*, the *Advaitic*) school of *Mimamsa* (*inquiry*) fails to clear up any doubts or difficulties which may arise and demand a solution. Hence we gladly quote Dr. Thibaut's view that Sankara's statement or interpretation of the true doctrine marks "a strictly orthodox reaction against all combination of non-Vedic elements of belief and doctrine with the teaching of the Upanishads." It, therefore, cannot but seem strange that Dr. Thibaut should also hold that "the philosophy of Sankara would on the whole stand nearer to the teaching of the Upanishads than the Sutras of Badarayana." This view is entirely untenable, for all

schools of Vedanta are agreed that the Sutras are intended to present the essence of the doctrine of the Upanishads in a reasoned form free from all doubts, imperfections, and inconsistencies. Sankara makes for himself the significant avowal and claim :—"The Sutras have merely the purpose of stringing together the flowers of the sentences of the Vedanta. The sentences of the Vedanta referred to in the Sutras are discussed by us here. For, the realisation of the Brahman (the one Self) is produced by the determination, consequent on discussion, of the true purport of the sentences of the Vedanta, not by any other sources of knowledge." No Indian Vedantin, whatever the school to which he owns allegiance, can be found willing to admit that the Sutras of Vyasa do not teach the essential tenets of his school, or be indifferent to a proposition of that kind. The Sutras owe the authority they command to the fact that they contain in a convenient, concise and systematised form the teachings lying scattered in the voluminous range of the Vedic revelation known as the Upanishads. In one place of his Sutra-Bhashya, Sankara calls Vyasa by the designation of *Vedacharya*. Vyasa's function as an Acharya is to teach the world the essentials of the Vedic doctrine, besides compiling and distributing the Vedas into Sakhas. The Sariraka-Mimamsa—otherwise called Brahma-Sutras—was composed by him in the fulfilment of that mission and function,—to clear all doubts regarding the true doctrine of Experience (Brahman) as contained in the Upanishads, to expand hints, to connect what is seemingly unconnected, to reconcile what seems conflicting, to contrive and construct a harmonious whole which will attract, inspire, enlighten, and satisfy the human mind. Finally, before leaving the present topic, we may briefly state that, when it is once admitted, as has been done by Dr. Thibaut and others like him who hail from the West, that Sankara's interpretation of the doctrine of Experience is in entire consonance with the contents of the Upanishads, everything that has to be said in its favour has been said and that he stands fully justified before the world. The Sutras of Vyasa and even the Bhagavad-Gita are only classed as Smritis, and owe their unquestionable authority and universal acceptance to the fact that they conform in all essentials and even wholly to the doctrine of the Upanishads of the Holy Vedas.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE MODERN REVIEW ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TREATMENT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

CRITICISM BY THE MODERN REVIEW

I N a note on Prof. S. N. Das Gupta who sailed for America as a delegate to the International Congress of Philosophy to be held at Harvard this year, the *Modern Review* for August informs its readers : "The little interest that Swami Vivekananda's popular lectures had aroused in America soon vanished; and as his treatment of Indian Philosophy was never intended to be scholarly, his lectures failed to satisfy the scholarly interest of the philosophers of the West and did in a way more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy in the estimation of scholars and philosophers."

We do not know whether the Modern Review writes the above from direct knowledge or from information supplied by others. But whatever the source of the news may be, the interest in Indian Philosophy which the Swami created in America was not little but profound; this interest, as distinct from sensation, has not disappeared, but is steadily increasing; the Swami's treatment of philosophy was not merely popular but also scholarly at the same time; and it has done no harm but great good to the cause of Indian Philosophy by presenting it in a form, at once lucid and learned.

Enthusiasts exaggerate the Swami's influence in America too much and think as if the majority of the American people have become Hinduised in thought. Cold critics, on the other hand, belittle the influence to no small extent, and imagine it has passed away completely. But the truth lies between the two extremes.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GREAT INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago, Swami Vivekananda made, as the *Rutherford American* observed, "a profound impression not only on the audience who listened to him, but on the religious world generally." Dr. Barrows, Chairman of the General Committee of the Congress also frankly declared—"Swami Vivekananda exercised a wonderful influence over his auditors." And through the glowing reports of the newspapers which were full of appreciation for "the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions," as the *New York Herald* spoke of the Swami, his influence spread far and wide in the American continent and even outside it. After the Parliament of Religions this "orator by Divine Right" spoke in many cities and towns to "immense audiences" who, in the words of the *Detroit Free Press* had "but one opinion of praise," and were "enthusiastic over his magnetic power and his way of giving light and life to every subject" he touched upon. The *New York Critique* wrote about the Swami thus—"He

has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us. . . . His culture, his eloquence and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindu civilisation." Great tributes were also paid to the Swami by many other papers too numerous to mention. In short, wherever the Swami went, he attained "wonderful success" through his lectures and classes. The Vedantic ideas gained ground at many of the important places in America, and more so in the hearts of numerous men and women of unquestionable culture and sincerity, who found in the Swami's sublime teachings "new courage, new hope, new strength, new faith to meet life's vicissitudes," as Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, one of America's well-known poets, put it aptly. We ask the *Modern Review*: Does not all this prove that the interest roused by the Swami was not little but was profound?

CONTINUATION OF THE INFLUENCE

Before the Swami left America, he had the pleasure of seeing his Vedanta work established there. And this movement started by him has been continued by his brother-monks, disciples and followers. The mighty current of spiritual thought which emanated from this "cyclonic Hindu" swept over the United States of America for some time. But after the first flood was over, it settled down gradually as is always the case. It has since then been flowing like a placid stream supplying the waters of life to many a thirsty soul dissatisfied with narrow doctrines and dogmas, and yearning for a liberal and vitalising interpretation of religion. A number of Vedanta centres are at present working in America for the spiritual uplift of American men and women. Many of these centres are established in their own permanent buildings. New centres are also coming into existence. And there is an ever-increasing demand for more centres and more Swamis to guide them. The circulation of the Vedanta literature and journals is also steadily increasing. Do these facts go to show that the "little" interest which Swami Vivekananda created in America disappeared long ago? Or rather do they not, on the other hand, prove beyond doubt that the interest has been kept up and even increased by the monks of the Swami's Order with the hearty co-operation of his American followers and admirers?

THE SWAMI'S EXPOSITION—LUCID AND SCHOLARLY

It is an unquestionable fact that Swami Vivekananda came in close touch with and greatly impressed many "scholars and philosophers" whose opinions the *Modern Review* cannot possibly set aside. Dr. J. H. Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard University, was so deeply impressed with the great learning of the Swami that he wrote about him to his friend, the Chairman of the Committee for selecting delegates to the Parliament of Religions—"Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together." Prof. William James, the leading American psychologist and philosopher, was greatly influenced by the "Master's" learned and inspiring exposition of Hindu philosophy and cherished a great admiration for the "paragon of Vedantist missionaries." Prof. Josiah Royce, the Harvard Professor of Philosophy, who too was deeply influenced by the Swami's profound

teachings, frankly admitted his debt to him. Dr. Lewis G. Janes, President of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, was also struck with the Swami's erudition and masterly treatment of religion and philosophy and became his life-long admirer and friend.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS AND PHILOSOPHERS

The Swami left a deep impression in the "intellectual circles" wherever he went. He spoke before Ethical Associations, Metaphysical and other intellectual societies. He lectured before the graduate students of the Philosophical Department of the Harvard University—"one of the foremost intellectual bodies in the world." His profound but lucid interpretation of the Vedanta Philosophy drew so great an admiration from both the professors and students that he was offered a chair of Eastern Philosophy in that celebrated university, which, however, as a sannyasin, he could not accept. The Rev. C. C. Everett, D. D., L. L. D., Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, wrote in the Introduction to the pamphlet embodying this address—"This system (Vedanta) is not to be regarded merely as a curiosity, as a speculative vagary. . . . The reality of the One is the truth which the East may well teach us; and we owe a debt of gratitude to Vivekananda that he has taught this lesson so effectively." All these eminent men universally recognised as "scholars and philosophers" sent an address of greeting to the Swami when he came back to India, containing these remarkable passages—"As members of the Cambridge Conferences devoted to comparative study in Ethics, Philosophy and Religion, it gives us great pleasure to recognise the value of your *able expositions* of the Philosophy and Religion of Vedanta in America and the interest created thereby among *thinking people*. We believe such expositions as have been given by yourself and your co-labourer, the Swami Saradananda, *have more than mere speculative interest and utility,—that they are of great ethical value in cementing the ties of friendship and brotherhood between distant peoples, and in helping us to realise the solidarity of human relationships and interests which has been affirmed by all the great religions of the world.*" (Italics are ours)

Besides the "scholars and philosophers" already mentioned, Prof. Seth Low, President of the Columbia University, Prof. A. V. W. Jackson of the Columbia College, Prof. Thomas R. Price of the College of the City of New York, Professors Richard Botthiel and N. M. Bulter of the New York University, and many other intellectuals were interested in the Swami's work. Dr. Herschell C. Parker of the Columbia College became the President, and the Rev. Dr. R. Heber Newton and Charles R. Lanman, Professor of Sanskrit at the Harvard University, became honorary members of the New York Vedanta Society. Besides many University professors, a large number of prominent clergymen were also drawn towards the Swami, who, according to the "Unity," combined in himself "the learning of a University-president, the dignity of an archbishop, with the grace and winsomeness of a free natural child."

Space does not permit us to give in detail an idea of the deep impression which the Swami made on Professors Max Muller, Deussen and on M. Jules Blois, Mr. Hiram Maxim, Monsieur Loyson and other

prominent men of thought, some of whom were his personal friends. But what we have already said is, as we think, more than enough for our purpose. We now ask the *Modern Review*—Was not the Swami's exposition of the Indian Philosophy "scholarly" enough to satisfy a number of "scholars and philosophers"? And was it considered by them to have done in any way more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy? We would like to know the opinions of other "scholars and philosophers," if any, holding a different view which made the *Modern Review* bold enough to make a sweeping statement which is as unhappy as it is wrong. For the sake of truth, let the *Modern Review* either publish documents, if it possesses any, in support of its assertion, or let it boldly retract the injudicious words which, we fear, it cannot substantiate by evidence.

THE SWAMI'S INTERPRETATION—MORE

SPIRITUAL THAN SPECULATIVE

The Swami's exposition of the Vedanta was more of a highly moral and emotional rather than of a purely intellectual character. It included logical and philosophic forms, but was highly spiritual in its nature. Indeed, to him the Vedanta was more a path to Self-realisation than a system of intellectual speculation. And more than any other school of thought, he presented the Advaita Vedanta rightly called by Prof. James "the paragon of monistic systems". This he tried to do in the most lucid form possible. As he himself said—"The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come the most scientific and practical Psychology—and all this must be put into a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my work." The mission of the Swami was to democratise the highest spiritual thoughts of the Vedanta by bringing them within the reach of all, the learned and the unlearned alike. He furthered greatly the work begun by orientalists like Professors Max Muller, Deussen and others, not only by his lectures and writings, but also by his life embodying the sublimest ideals of the Vedanta. And being the first Hindu missionary who preached the message of the Vedanta to the West and attained phenomenal success, he also prepared the way for those who were to follow him later to spread Hindu ideals, religion and philosophy. Like all true Hindu philosophers Swami Vivekananda was a seer and philosopher in one. And from the Hindu "philosophic" standpoint, he was eminently fitted for fulfilling the mission of the Vedanta which he did in a unique manner combining high scholarship with wonderful lucidity in interpretation.

UNJUST CRITICISM BY THE MODERN REVIEW

The great object of Swami Vivekananda was to present to the West the grand philosophical synthesis underlying the numerous traditions and mythologies, creeds and dogmas of Hinduism. And whatever the *Modern Review* may think, by his masterly treatment of his subject, he convinced even many scholars and philosophers of the West of the great fact that India does possess a philosophy which is the rational aspect of religion, and also a religion which is the practical form of

philosophy. But the Swami had no time to write "any systematic treatise of Indian Philosophy". His mission lay elsewhere. To sit in judgment on him for not doing a thing that lay outside the scope of his mission, and to pass the verdict that by his "popular" exposition of the Vedanta Philosophy he has done more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy is to be not only unjust but also captious to the extreme. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore may be said to be interpreting some of the highest ideals of Hindu Philosophy in more a poetic than a philosophic way. Sir J. C. Bose is also demonstrating "one phase of a permanent unity that bears with it all things,"—the fundamental idea of the Philosophy of the Upanishads—and this in a pre-eminently scientific rather than a speculative manner. Does not the *Modern Review* think that it will be puerile on the part of a critic to belittle the noble work that is being done by these great sons of India, and to blame them for not fulfilling a mission which is other than their own?

RELATION BETWEEN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The *Modern Review* at first tells us that philosophy is the main-spring and basis of Indian culture. Here it seems to mean by philosophy intellectual speculation as distinct from religion. Its remarks may be true of Western philosophy but certainly not of Indian philosophy in which speculation loses its meaning without the spiritual background. Towards the end of the note the *Modern Review* speaks of India's philosophy and religious culture which may bring about world peace, universal friendship and world-good. What is the relation between this philosophy and religion? The *Modern Review* does not seem to have any clear conception of the point. Rather, it misunderstands the relation, and brings down Indian Philosophy from its high pedestal of spiritual realisation to the level of intellectual speculation. But according to the Hindu tradition, philosophy and religion fulfil each other. "In all other countries," observes Prof. Max Muller, "philosophy has railed at religion and religion has railed at philosophy. In India alone, the two have always worked together harmoniously, religion deriving its freedom from philosophy, philosophy gaining its spirituality from religion." The reason of this harmony is that Hindu philosophers were no mere speculators. They were primarily men of realisation who built grand structures of thought on the unassailable foundation of the Truth perceived through intuitive visions. And the glory of Indian philosophy lies in its being not a feat of speculation, but a path of Self-realisation.

THE CRITICISM REFUTED

It is the failure of the *Modern Review* to understand the central theme of Indian Philosophy that has led it to attach too great an importance to its speculative side to the neglect of its spiritual aspect. Had it been otherwise, it would not have taken a distorted view of the Swami's work in America and underrated his influence there and his service to the cause of Indian Philosophy. Presented only in a particular form, Indian Philosophy cannot appeal to all people. For persons of a "scholastic" bent of mind there is much need for a "scholastic" interpretation of Indian Philosophy as is being admirably done by

Professors Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta. But there is a still greater need for a "scholarly" yet popular exposition which can satisfy the spiritual hankering of the human soul that has no charm for "intellectualism" and "academic discipline concerned with concepts and the attainment of scientific knowledge". If the former interpretation does not in any way do more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy, how can the latter? The reason why the *Modern Review* thinks that Swami Vivekananda's "popular" lectures have in a way done more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy is beyond our comprehension, and is best known to itself. Indeed we are surprised to find in it a note which is confused in its thoughts, unsound in its arguments, self-contradictory in its statements, unbalanced in its judgment, undignified in its tone,—in short quite unworthy of the *Modern Review* of whose achievement in the field of Indian journalism we feel so proud.

THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

Commenting on our note on the Hindu-Moslem tension, which appeared in the May issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the *Modern Review* writes in its August number :—"Regarding remedies for this national disease, the *Vedanta Kesari* does not think it easy to eradicate communalism by stimulating the feeling of 'Indian first, Hindu or Moslem after that' among the masses; for we are told 'only a few educated men of the country can' feel like this. On the other hand the *Vedanta Kesari* is of opinion that one can considerably mitigate the communal evil by making Hindus and Musalmans realise that their apparently different religions are really one in essentials. We do not see how this is going to be done without spreading proper education. And if one can educate religious fanatics to see the unity of the fundamental principles of Hinduism and Islam, why cannot one teach them to think themselves to be Indians first and followers of religions next? Philosophy is more difficult to teach than economics, sociology and politics, hence it would be harder to teach religious unity than national unity."

The *Modern Review* is of opinion that education and good education alone is the only remedy for our communal evils. This is exactly the remedy we also suggested in the concluding paragraph of our note, that was not quoted in the *Modern Review*. We wrote that ignorance and its offspring, bigotry and fanaticism, which breed the communal spirit can be removed only by "proper education". And for the spread of this education, we also said that we wanted truly religious and liberal-minded teachers who could place before the teeming millions of India the highest truths of their own religion as also of other faiths, which are one in their essentials. Thus the *Modern Review* is really at one with us on the point that "proper education" alone can solve the Hindu-Moslem problem. But there are differences, we fear, as to the nature of this "proper education".

The *Modern Review* holds that if the religious fanatic can be educated to think of religious unity, he can also be trained to think of national unity. Theoretically it may be so. But in actual practice there are many difficulties. And the greatest of them is that the religious instinct of the Indian masses is very strong. Our so-called illiterate brethren think more in terms of religion, of a refined type though it may not always be, than in terms of nationalism. And compared to their literate compatriots, they often understand more of what we meant by religion, which however the *Modern Review* is pleased to call philosophy, than economics, sociology and politics. As Swami Vivekananda has said, we can work under the law of least resistance, and the religious line is the line of least resistance, particularly in the case of the Indian masses. Besides, it is not enough merely to arrest the disease of communalism by temporary expedients, political or otherwise. It is to be cured radically. And this can be done by directing the religious sentiments along proper channels. The disease of communalism is a "religious" disease. And that is why we have suggested for its cure a sure "religious" remedy.

Whether we like it or not, we have to take things as they are, and suggest solutions based on actual facts. Bigotry and fanaticism which breed communal hatred are expressions of religious sentiments which are generally sincere but always misdirected. For good or bad, religion is an object of great concern to our simple-hearted masses. And their religious feelings cannot and should not be suppressed. To try to do so is to attempt to take the life of a patient in order to cure his disease. National unity we must have by all means. But we think that in a country like India inhabited by religious-minded peoples it cannot be achieved without trying to establish religious unity on a secure basis.

The repeated outbursts of the so-called "religious" animosity have created a dread for religion in the minds of many of our educated countrymen. And some even go so far as to suggest the divorce of religion from our collective, if not also individual, life. But we must not forget that it is false religion, which owes allegiance only to forms, that divides. On the other hand true religion, which values the essentials more than the non-essentials, can lead only to unity. Religion of the right sort does by no means stand in the way of national union. Nay, it spiritualises and strengthens the collective consciousness as it did in the case of the Sikh and Mahratta powers. India, we believe, is not going to develop the Western form of political nationalism. Her nationalism, as we see it, is going to be the expression of her spiritual idealism.

The true spirit of religion in India is universal. We have to imbibe this universal spirit, however difficult it may be. And when we do that we shall see that we can be Hindus or Mohammedans and at the same time also Indian—that is, children of India—our common motherland. We may be charged with talking "philosophy". But we cannot help it. We hold that this "philosophy" is the product of the genius of the Indian people. And the more we try to understand and spread this "philosophy," the better for ourselves and the country.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK
IN MIDNAPORE, BENGAL

On account of very heavy flood in the district of Midnapore, the poor people of Contai, Tamluk and Sabong Thanas are suffering from acute distress. Most of the houses have collapsed and the rest are in a tottering condition. Hundreds of men, women and children are starving. Carcasses and thatched huts are seen floating at many places. All means of communication have been cut off. Even boats are not available for going into the interior of the villages for the purpose of giving relief. The Ramakrishna Mission has sent three batches of workers to the flood-affected Thanas. They have already opened relief centres at Contai, Dasgram and Tamluk, and with much difficulty are penetrating into the interior of the affected areas. At Dasgram they have already made the first distribution of rice. To Tamluk and Contai they have sent rice, Chira (flattened rice) and condensed milk for infants. The innumerable and urgent letters and telegrams that are pouring in every day show that the situation is very serious and delay in relief may involve more acute suffering to the people, which may even result in loss of life. The generous public are requested to send their contributions which will be thankfully received and acknowledged by

THE PRESIDENT, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR, HOWRAH.

THE SECRETARY, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, 1, MUKHERJEE LANE,
BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION : A DECLARATION

We have received the following for publication :—

For some time past, we have been receiving various queries, oral as well as written, both from our friends and from the public, regarding the relation of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society founded by Swami Abhedananda in Calcutta and Darjeeling, with the Ramakrishna Mission which has its Headquarters at Belur in the District of Howrah. We have also been informed that some time ago persons wishing to help the Ramakrishna Mission proposed to offer donations to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, or co-operated with it in other ways under the mistaken impression that it is a Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. Moreover, complaints have reached us from some of our sympathisers who, working under the same impression, make the Ramakrishna Mission responsible for the ways and doings of the above institution. We understand that this misconception arises from the fact that the Vedanta Society bears the name of Ramakrishna and that Swami Abhedananda is a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and an ex-Vice-President of the Mission.

As it is our bounden duty to clear up the confusion and the false notions created in the public mind, we beg to inform our countrymen, as we did once before, that the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society with its branches is an independent organisation and has absolutely no connection

whatsoever with the Ramakrishna Mission which has its Headquarters at Belur in the Howrah District.

In this connection we would like to draw the attention of the public also to the fact that the Ramakrishna Sangha of Calcutta and Dakshineswar is another independent institution which is, in no way, connected with the Ramakrishna Mission.

SARADANANDA,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

THE SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY OF SRIMAT

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

The sixty-third birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnananda, the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch in Madras, fell on Friday the 6th of August. It was celebrated in a befitting manner at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, in the morning and at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in the evening. A big-sized photo of the revered Swami was tastefully decorated and the celebration began with devotional music and chanting of hymns. Many of the Swami's admirers and devotees took part in the celebration. In the evening they participated in the function at the Students' Home where a meeting was held under the presidency of Swami Yatiswarananda. Mr. P. Manickyaswami Mudaliar, Mr. S. Raghavachariar and Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar spoke feelingly on the life and ideals of the revered Swami. Swami Yatiswarananda brought the meeting to a close by dealing with the Swami's teachings and mentioning how his life was a long and uninterrupted Sadhana and served as a source of inspiration for selfless service. He hoped that the students and others present would enshrine in their hearts the high ideals of the revered Swami, of which the institutions of the Mission in Madras were eloquent monuments. The functions at both the Math and the Home ended with the distribution of Prasad.

THE HINDU TEMPLE, SAN FRANCISCO

During June, Swami Prakashananda held the summer Yoga classes at the Shanti Ashrama as usual. About twenty-five students joined the classes this year. Keen interest is being evinced in the teachings of the Vedanta and in the living of a practical spiritual life in the quiet and elevating atmosphere of the Ashrama. Some of the students came from very distant places such as St. Louis and other cities thousands of miles away.

On the first two Sundays in June, the services at the Hindu Temple were conducted by Mr. Brown in the absence of Swami Prakashananda, and on the last two Sundays by Swami Prabhavananda. Mr. Brown spoke on the "Conquest of Fear" and "Who deserves Immortality," and Swami Prabhavananda on the "Fulness of Life" and "Reincarnation and immortality."

Swami Dayananda who recently went from India to assist Swami Prakashananda in San Francisco has commenced giving discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita every Tuesday evening at the Hindu Temple. He has impressed all those with whom he has come into contact by his sweet disposition and amiable nature.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA

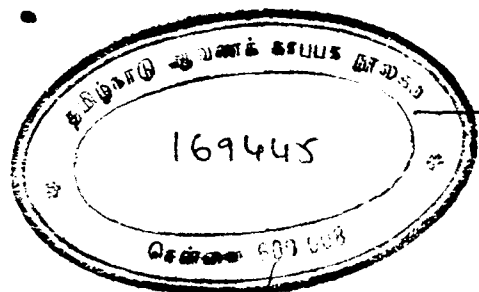
A reception was held at the Ashrama Community House on Tuesday, the 22nd June. Swami Paramananda took this opportunity to greet his friends and to present to them Swami Akhilananda who was accorded a warm welcome. Swami Akhilananda thanked those present in earnest words which were highly appreciated.

Owing to insistent demands from Boston, Cincinnati and other places, Swami Paramananda left La Crescenta for the Eastern states of America on June 29th. He was expected to be back in California before the first of August. During his absence the services and classes at the Ashrama were being conducted by Swami Akhilananda and Sister Daya.

PASSING AWAY OF MISS S. E. WALDO

It is with great sorrow that we record the passing away of Miss S. E. Waldo—one of Swami Vivekananda's foremost American disciples—after five days' illness at Brooklyn on the 15th July last. Sister Haridasi, for that was the name by which this high-souled lady was known among the Swami's devotees, served her Master with unremitting devotion since the very early days of his mission in America. It was to her that the Swami dictated the Raja Yoga including the translation and commentary of the Sutras of Patanjali. And upon her he conferred spiritual powers and authority, saying that she alone, of all others, was best able to teach the practice and philosophy of the Raja Yoga.

A lady of remarkable literary powers, Miss Waldo prepared all the Swami's American publications for the Press. So great was the confidence the Swami had in her ability that he would pass the type-written transcription of his lectures to her with the instruction to do with them as she thought best. She was one of the blessed group of disciples who sat at the feet of the Swami at the Thousand Island Park. And it was to Miss Waldo that we are indebted for the Inspired Talks—an invaluable book published by the Ramakrishna Math, Madras—which embodies the Swami's wonderful teachings as also his illuminating conversations on the various Hindu scriptures—the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Vedanta Sutras, Bhakti Sutras of Narada, Avadhuta Gita, etc. Till her last days Miss Waldo tried to further the cause of her Master in various ways that lay in her power. May her soul rest in peace!



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