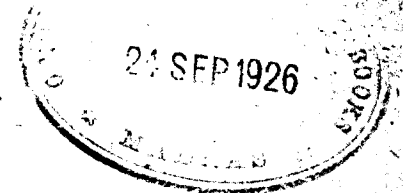


The Vedanta Kesari

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XIII, No. 3: JULY 1926

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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[NUMBER 3

PRAYER

तेजोऽसि तेजो मयि धेहि । वीर्यमसि वीर्य मयि धेहि ।
बलमसि बलं मयि धेहि । ओजोऽसि ओजो मयि धेहि ।
मन्युरसि मन्युं मयि धेहि । सहोऽसि सहो मयि धेहि ।

O Lord ! Thou art infinite energy ; do Thou fill me with energy. Thou art infinite virility ; do Thou endow me with virility. Thou art infinite strength ; do Thou inspire me with strength. Thou art infinite power ; do Thou grant me power. Thou art infinite courage ; do Thou give me courage. Thou art infinite fortitude. Do Thou steel me with fortitude.

—YAJUR VEDA

असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ।

From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to Immortality.

—BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

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.]

K—Maharaj, you spoke one day of the practice of Puja, meditation, continence and study of the scriptures. What does Puja mean?

THE SWAMI—Puja means both ‘external’ and mental worship. In ‘external’ worship certain accessories such as flowers, incense etc., are necessary. It is difficult for you to get these things always. So mental worship is more convenient for you. After worshipping the Ishtam (the Chosen Ideal) mentally with Padya (water for washing the feet), flowers etc. which are offered in external worship, practise meditation and ‘mental’ Japam. In ‘mental’ Japam the Mantram (the name of the Deity) is to be repeated without moving the lips. But in ordinary Japam one has to mutter the Mantram and there is therefore the movement of the lips.

In meditation you should think of the form of your Ishtam as effulgent. Imagine that everything is shining through its lustre. Think of this effulgence as non-material and enlivened with intelligence. This kind of meditation will later on develop into the meditation of the formless and infinite aspect of God. The aspirant has to take the help of imagination in the beginning, and later on when he develops his spiritual sense he will feel the presence of the Divine. Next when he gets the highest spiritual vision he comes face to face with the Truth, as it

were. He is then transported into a different realm altogether, of which this world of matter appears to be a mere shadow, and as such something unreal. The mind is then lost in Savikalpa Samadhi (Super-conscious state with mentation). Next comes Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Super-conscious state without mentation). There is then the realisation of that which is beyond thought and speech. In that state there is nothing to be seen; nothing to be heard. Everything is lost in the Infinite.

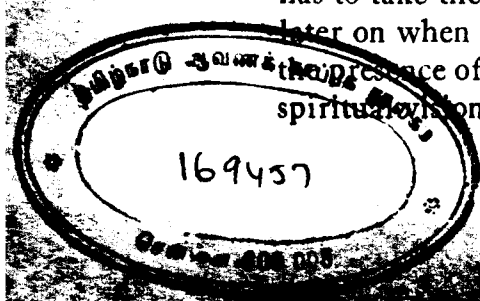
When one attains to this state one can bring down the mind only with great effort to the world of phenomena which appear to be unreal. It is द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जित—“beyond duality and non-duality”. Some persons attaining to this state look upon the body as an obstacle in the way of unbroken spiritual experience, and cast it off in Samadhi. It is just like the breaking down of an earthen pot.

Sri Ramakrishna used to give a beautiful illustration to explain the highest state of spiritual realisation. Suppose there are nine pots full of water, and the sun is reflected on them. You break the pots one after another until only one is left with the sun reflecting on it. Finally even this last pot you break. Then whatever is, is there. It cannot be seen or described.

K—Maharaj, some think of the Ishtam as the all-pervading Spirit. Isn't it also a form of meditation?

THE SWAMI—Yes, quite so. Everyone has to practise this meditation but only after making some progress in spiritual life, and not in the beginning. The presence of the Ishtam is to be realised everywhere. He who is personal and with form is also impersonal and without form. He dwells in every being. He pervades land and water, hills and dales, sky and stars and everything.

K—Maharaj, the Scriptures speak of service to the Guru as a necessary means to spiritual realisation. How far is it true?



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THE SWAMI—It is necessary at the preliminary stage. But afterwards one's mind itself plays the part of the Guru*.

The Guru should not be looked upon as an ordinary human being. His physical body is the temple in which resides the Lord. If the Guru is served with this idea in mind, one comes to acquire love and devotion for him, which can then be directed towards the Lord.

There are Sadhakas who meditate upon the Guru in the Sahasrara (thousand-petalled lotus in the brain), and next they merge there the form of the Guru into that of the Ishtam. Sri Ramakrishna used to say very clearly—"The Guru appears before the disciple in his spiritual vision. And then pointing out the Ishtam to him, he says, 'Look, there is your Ishtam,' and loses himself in it." Really the Guru is not different from the Ishtam. There are so many things in the spiritual life. How can I tell you about all these?

Follow the spiritual path in right earnest. When the mind becomes pure through religious practices, one can understand all the truths of the spiritual world. Remember, there is no end of them—they are countless. The spiritual aspirant keeps himself absorbed in them alone.

P—If the Sadhaka gets a little taste of Ananda (Divine bliss), he is very much encouraged to proceed on his spiritual path. Isn't it?

THE SWAMI—True. But in the higher spiritual state there is neither bliss nor sorrow, pain nor pleasure, existence nor non-existence. The Ananda that you speak of is only a help during the period of Sadhana. The boat stands in need of the favourable wind so long as it has not reached its destination. But when it has once reached it, the question of wind, whether favourable or un-

*The guidance of God—the Guru of Gurus, dwelling within—comes through one's purified mind.

favourable, does not arise at all. Ananda helps the aspirant in his onward course like the favourable wind.

Knowledge, the object known and the knower lose themselves in the Absolute—this much only have the scriptures been able to say. But what takes place after this none has the power to describe. One has to realise all that through spiritual practice.

How wonderful is the Infinite Existence—where there is neither want nor fear. The very thought of it elevates the soul. There are some spiritual men who realise the Absolute (Nitya) as distinct from the Relative (Lila—lit. Divine Sport). Others look upon both of these as one and the same. There is still another state of spiritual experience, which is beyond both the Absolute and the Relative.

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE GREAT HINDU REVIVAL

THE signs of a new awakening are manifest all over Asia. This spirit of renaissance has brought into being an increased communal and national consciousness in India, and is finding its expression in renewed activities in various spheres of life, political, social and religious. In the midst of this general revival, the vitality of the Hindu civilisation is also asserting itself in a number of vigorous movements aiming to reform Hindu society, and to unite and integrate its manifold parts into one organic whole. Hinduism is now putting greater stress on its eternal principles than on its customs and traditions differing widely from one another with time and circumstances. It is trying to break down the encrustation of forms and ceremonies which are threatening to kill its very soul altogether. It is further attempting to recover its wonderful power of assimilation and inclusion which enabled it to absorb most of the foreign hordes that invaded the land in olden days. In spite of some internal dissensions, a new consciousness of unity seems at present to pulsate through the entire body of the Hindu community. And all thoughtful Hindus are slowly

coming to be awakened to a sense of their duties and responsibilities towards the teeming millions—the masses, and specially those who are called the “untouchable” classes. Besides, they are also becoming alive to their kinship with those who were converted from their ancient religion. Further, they now seem to be eager to admit not only them but also others who want to come newly within the fold of the Hindu faith. In short, Hinduism is regaining its old dynamic spirit, and is busy in adapting itself to the changed environments and new needs of its innumerable votaries.

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE VITALITY OF THE VEDIC RELIGION

“The life of the organism,” says Herbert Spencer, “will be short or long, low or high, according to the extent to which changes in the environment are met by corresponding changes in the organism. Allowing a margin for perturbation, the life will continue only while the correspondence continues, the completeness of the life will be proportional to the completeness of the correspondence, and the life will be perfect only when the correspondence is perfect.” In following this great principle of biology lies the secret of the eternal life of the Sanatana Dharma of India. The ancient civilisations of Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome lacked this power of adaptation in spite of their greatness. This is why they have been swept away from the face of the earth or absorbed by alien cultures. But the Hindu civilisation still lives unvanquished. Foreign conquerors spared no pains to blot it out of existence. But such was its inexhaustible vitality that it could not only stem the tide of alien civilisations but also conquer most of its political conquerors by the mighty power of its spiritual culture. This phenomenon repeated itself many a time in India's past history, and is also going to repeat itself in modern times. Nay, Hinduism is giving unmistakable proofs of a renaissance which bids fair to throw all similar movements of the past completely into the back-ground. But unfortunately the new spirit has as yet inspired only a section, and not the main bulk of the followers of the Hindu religion.

DYNAMIC LIFE—A NECESSITY

Great obstacles stand in the way of the Hindu revival. And the most formidable of these is the tendency of the vast majority of the Hindus to keep themselves drowned in the ocean of Tamas, and this in the name of

Sattva. In most men gross ignorance and morbid inactivity are coupled with deplorable weakness and inordinate pride in the ancient glory of the race. And ignorance is passing for knowledge, passivity for renunciation, cowardice for non-injury, impotence for forgiveness, and manifold evil actions as practices of religion. The spirit of freedom, the sense of self-respect, the power of self-help, the strength of will, the tenacity of purpose, and above all the passionate yearning for a new order—all these are yet to be born in the hearts of many. The entire Hindu community should feel the impulse of the coming renaissance, and shake off “the mean faint-heartedness” which has overtaken its soul. We Hindus have now to fight the battle of life boldly. We must rise from our slumber and call up the dormant potentialities of the Hindu race. We want intense life and activity. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, “we want energy, love of independence, spirit of self-reliance, immovable fortitude, dexterity in action, bond of unity of purpose and thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want the expansive vision infinitely projected forward; we want that intense spirit of activity which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot.” Tamas is to be overcome by Rajas, inertia by activity. Then alone will come Sattva with its purity, knowledge and equanimity, and not otherwise.

AGGRESSIVE HINDUISM

The hope of the Hindu community lies, as Swami Vivekananda very strongly held, in making Hinduism aggressive. The Eternal Religion of India must inspire its votaries to follow the highest ideals of life, and apply these ideals boldly to the numerous problems facing the Indian people in general and the Hindu community in particular. It must defend itself from the onslaughts of foreign cultures, assimilate what is best in them, and enrich them in turn by its own contributions. It must open its old hospitable doors to all, irrespective of race and nationality, as in the days long gone by. What Swami Vivekananda actually meant by aggressive Hinduism Sister Nivedita clearly states in her ‘The Master as I saw Him’—“The Eternal Faith must become active and proselytising, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate

assimilation of new elements." This aggressive spirit does not mean any interference with other peoples' rights. It has nothing to do with bloody persecutions, forcible conversions and extermination of "heretics." Such actions have been against the very spirit of the Hindu religion. Aggressive Hinduism implies activity in place of passivity, strength in place of weakness, dynamic transformation in place of static conservatism, conquest of the world by religion and spirituality in place of domination by bigotry and sectarian spirit. But without the organised efforts of its innumerable members Hinduism can never become dynamic. The problem of all problems therefore now is—how to bring about the solidarity of the diverse sections that form the mighty body of the Hindu community.

COMMON BASES OF HINDUISM

Hindu society is a vast ethnological museum consisting of peoples differing widely from one another in race, colour, language, traditions, manners and customs. But at the back of this baffling variety there lies a fundamental unity which superficial observers fail to notice. Those who are able to come in close touch with the deep life-current of the Indian people are bound to agree with Sir Herbert Risley when he says—"Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin." This uniformity is manifest in the case of the Hindus in a very pronounced manner. Besides, India is regarded by the Hindus not only as their beloved motherland and the glorious land of their forefathers, but also as the Punyabhumi or the blessed land of their religion and spiritual traditions. The Mussalman looks up for inspiration to Arabia—the country associated with the life and activities of his Prophet. The Christian cherishes great love for Palestine—the holy land where the founder of his religion was born. But in the words of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the Hindu thinks of India "not only as a political unit, but as the outward embodiment, as the temple—nay even as the goddess mother—of his spiritual culture. India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul." India encircled by snow-capped mountains and mighty seas and containing innumerable races and tribes, forests and deserts, fauna and flora is simply grand as a geo-

graphical unit. But grander still is India as a cultural unit, as the great stage of Divine Leela, as the birth-place of saints and sages, as the treasure-house of religion and philosophy. It is the recognition of the motherland as Punyabhumi that makes the patriotic Hindu devotee declare जनना जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी "Mother and motherland are higher than heaven itself."

UNITY OF HINDU INDIA

In his admirable little book—"The Fundamental Unity of India", Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee clearly points out that the early fathers of the Hindu civilisation fully recognised the geographical unity of their vast motherland which first consisted of Aryavarta—the territory between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, and later on included also the Dakshinapatha or Southern India where the Aryan culture gradually spread along with the extension of Aryan colonisation. The ancients called the whole country Bharatavarsha after the great King Bharata who by his conquest of new territories carried the Indian civilisation beyond its original bounds at the very dawn of India's history. "Bharata was held up," observes Dr. Mookerjee, "as a convenient symbol, a comprehensive token of this early renaissance, of the conquest of a new thought and a new faith finding expression through their appropriate literature, discipline and institutions, social, economic and political, of the accomplishment of a new cultural unity imposed upon and pervading a rich, manifold variety, round which were gathered, as in a system of federation, different creeds, cults and cultures with liberty to each to preserve its own special features and genius and contribute its own quota to enrich the central culture." Etymologically the word 'India' has only a geographical significance, it being the name of the country beyond the mighty river Sindhu which was called 'Hindu' by the Persians and 'Indos' by the Greeks, while the name 'Bharatavarsha' implies not only a geographical, but also a political and cultural unity. This conception of Indian unity is older than any foreign rule, ancient or modern. The founders of the ancient Indian civilisation combined their deep religious instinct with their passionate love for the country. They thus sublimated patriotism into religion, and realised in the motherland a living Deity to be worshipped with love and devotion.

THE BOND OF COMMON CULTURE

To the Hindu the whole country with its innumerable Tirthas—holy rivers, mountains, cities and other places of worship—

is indeed a vast temple. The great institution of pilgrimage has tended to keep up very vividly this consciousness of unity in the minds of the Hindus. It has, besides, enabled them to feel the solidarity of the Hindu race. What this really means can be understood by visiting any important place of pilgrimage. Men, women and children coming from the farthest corners of the country meet one another and worship the same God in a remarkable spirit of harmony and good-will. They may speak different tongues unintelligible to one another. But they have, as Sir Monier Williams noted, "only one sacred language and only one sacred literature accepted and revered by all adherents of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank and creed." Indeed Sanskrit language and Sanskrit literature—the repository of the religion, philosophy and traditions of the Hindu race—combine the manifold elements into a homogeneous whole. Besides, the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul, the laws of Karma and reincarnation, the theory of the eternity of creation, the ideal of the emancipation of the soul—all these common beliefs tend to strengthen the consciousness of unity. There is no doubt that a common spiritual heritage unites the north and south, east and west of India into an indivisible cultural whole.

UNION OF THE HINDUS

In spite of their heterogeneous sectarian and racial composition, and diversity of sect, language, dress, manners and customs, the Hindus profess the same Eternal religion of India, and are spiritually and intellectually one people. In studying the innumerable indigenous faiths we are bound to acknowledge with Swami Vivekananda that "from the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta Philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all, have a place in the Hindu religion." And the religious communities that have sprung up on the soil of India,—the Sanatanists, the Jains, the Buddhists, the Sikhs, the Brahmos, the Arya Samajists and others—are knit together by common spiritual affinities which must be strengthened to-day for the realisation of Indian unity. Our kinsmen from ancient Iran—the Parsis—have also much in common with us Hindus in the essentials of their faith. By divine dispensation they have come to settle in the country south of the Sindhu, and have therefore become

'Hindus.' Long stay in India for about thirteen centuries has made them imbibe to some extent the Hindu culture and has greatly made up the differences which made their ancestors separate themselves from the founders of the Vedic religion during the early days of the history of the world. These two branches of the great Aryan family must now unite in closer bonds of harmony and fellowship for the well-being of their common motherland.

HINDU SOLIDARITY—A CONDITION OF NATIONAL UNION

The new awakening of Hinduism should not rouse any misapprehension or suspicion in the mind of any community. What the Hindu revivalists aim at is to realise the solidarity of the various sections of the mighty Hindu society, and to try to bring about at the same time the unity of all the communities who have settled on the soil of India. This union, to be worth its name, must be a stable one and not a dangerous combination of incompatible elements ever ready to explode at the slightest touch or friction. True union can take place only between parties equally strong. But the Hindu is weak and disorganised. He has lost the strength to protect even his hearth and home, defend the glory of his religion, save the honour of his womenfolk from the attacks of ruffians and fanatics. The mild Hindu must now be strong and organised. Keeping intact the high spiritual idealism of his religion, he must now develop a strong body, a fearless mind, an iron will and an unyielding valour. He must draw his inspiration from the gospel of strength as preached by his religion, awaken his potential divinity and express the infinite power that is locked up in his soul.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF STRENGTH

Appalling physical weakness is one of the main causes of the manifold ills the Hindu is suffering from to-day. This physical degeneration is partly responsible for his mental weakness and loss of faith in himself. It has brought untold miseries on his community and may even threaten its very existence unless it is checked in time. Swami Vivekananda fully realised the gravity of the situation, and suggested also the proper remedy when he boldly declared—"Our young men must be strong first of all. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You

will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger." Indeed the great message which Sri Krishna delivered in the Gita can be properly appreciated only by a heroic person of Arjuna's stamp. The immortal glory of the Atman—"the shore free from fear," proclaimed by the seers of the Upanishads—can be clearly understood only by an intrepid soul like Nachiketas, who can boldly meet death face to face. Self-realisation, individual or collective, can never be attained by the weak and the imbecile. The hope of the Hindu's regeneration lies in his upholding the glory of the eternal, deathless Atman—the repository of all power and knowledge. Faith in the infinite potentiality of the soul is sure to bring strength to his weak body and knowledge to his hypnotised mind. It is this great message of strength and hope that Swami Vivekananda proclaimed again and again with all the emphasis at his command when he declared—"None is really weak, the soul is infinite, omnipresent and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindu, dehypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your sacred books. Teach every one his real nature, call up the sleeping soul to see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity."

CONCEPTS OF GOD—EASTERN AND WESTERN

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

MODERN philosophic thought of the higher type has realised and proclaimed the truth God's existence despite scientific agnosticism and philistine materialism. Science has lifted the veil of ignorance and shown the activity of change during a period of the known evolution between two realms of darkness—the unknown darkness of the past and the unknown darkness of the future. Philosophy has however realised even in modern times that the first cause of every change in the world is the original and creative thought of God.

Fichte says that God is just, holy, blessed and all-powerful. God is equally the witness and the knower of physical effects and moral decisions. Hence He is omniscient. "Eternity is required for God to establish the balance between morality and happiness; therefore God must be eternal." Religion is founded on the idea of God as the determiner of nature to moral ends. God may reveal Himself within and without us. "Indeed the entire system of phenomena may appear as a revelation, and further, when a man or humanity has sunk so low that the moral laws given by pure reason have lost their power, a particular fact in the world of sense may give sanction to the moral law. The pure moral impulse may be specially revealed to man, when he has sunk into a degenerate state, through the medium of sense-phenomena. There may be cases where a revelation is necessary to produce moral feeling in a race." In this view we see a groping towards that combination of Eternal Revelation and Occasional Incarnation which Hindu thought alone has realised and formulated in clear and convincing terms. Fichte says that "God may transcend the sense-world but not the moral world." Here also we find a bewildered half-way stopping in the ascending path of speculation. Hindu thought alone has gone up the whole road and reached the central core of Ananda where the lines of moral as well as of physical evolution have come. Fichte says that the primal fact in being is Action. Vedanta says that it is Ananda. The identity of self-consciousness is no doubt the primary fact. But its nature is *Sachchidananda*. Fichte says that the finite I is a form of the manifestation of the free activity of the Eternal Reason. Mr. Leighton says about Fichte's conception of God: "The absolute I is the *impersonal and universal Intelligence* which is immanent in and gives reality to the entire activity of the finite I's in all their relations active and passive. . . . It is the only reality, for the sense-world has no reality in itself. . . . The idea of the absolute I is, when viewed from the practical standpoint, the idea of God. The pure I is posited outside ourselves and called God." Fichte says that from the transcendental point of view there is no self-existent world, and that what we see is only the re-appearance of our own inner activity. It is however difficult to comprehend him when he says that God is an order of events and not a substance. He says that God is not dead Being but rather pure action, the life and principle of the super-sensuous World-Order. Duty cannot be done

without reference to an end, but the end would be blessedness and not enjoyment. He says that God exists in the immediacy of our felt life and that philosophy has to do only with a concept of the *idea* of God. The weakness in all this is an artificial divorce between the God of Religion and the God of Philosophy. Fichte was accused of atheism and pantheism. But he stated clearly that God exists and manifests Himself but He is not exhausted in His manifestations, and that the true destiny of humanity is to return to God. He realised the immanency of the Divine Life in the ethical striving of humanity and brought about a new union of the moral life and the mystic life.

Hegel says that God is the Eternal Prius that eternally manifests itself. He says : "The Good, the absolutely Good, is eternally accomplishing itself in the world." He uses the phrase "the Absolute Idea" to represent both our thought and the object of that thought. It is the ultimate existence and is really the divine self-consciousness. It is not *abstract* thought but the most concrete reality. He says : "Philosophy has the end to know the truth, to know God, for He is absolute Truth, and in contrast to God and His explanation, nothing else is worth the trouble of knowing." God is a circle that returns upon itself, not a straight line projected indefinitely. He is all pervasive and omnipresent. It is the nature of God to manifest Himself. He is the beginning and the end of the World-Process. The world is His self-determined self-limitation. It is, however, impossible to follow Hegel when he says that God negates Himself in order that there may be a world. Equally vitiated by a subtle fallacy is his statement that "the Spirit which disperses itself into finite flashes of light in the individual consciousness must again gather itself together out of this finitude." The fact is that everything is God though owing to dateless *Karma* causing the diverse refractions of the mind and the senses we have a perception of finiteness and diversity. What is eternal and infinite Bliss is or seems to be all this cosmic diversity. We need not go here into the vexed question of *Vivarta* or *Parinama*. There is no self-negation of God or a final summation of fractions. The Absolute is the synthesis of God and Man and Nature. From Eternal and Infinite Freedom and Bliss comes this triplicity, the glory of each depending on the fineness of the medium of manifestation. It seems to me that the Absolute limited by an infinite mind in an infinite frame—which

however may be self-limited into a finite frame out of grace for purposes of worship—is God. The Absolute limited by a finite mind and a finite frame is the embodied soul. The Absolute limited by matter of three different degrees of fineness is the cosmos. But the Absolute is the Prius of the Love and Bliss of God, of the mind of the embodied soul, and of the cosmic frame. This view is the matrix of the Vedantic conception, letting alone for the present the diversities of thought of the Vedantic sects. Hegel says that God projects the cosmos out of Himself to realise Himself through the negation of Himself. He says that this does not mar His perfection. He says that History is the theatre of the unceasing strife and reconciliation of the Absolute Spirit and the final individual. The former continually overrules the purposes of men in order that they may realize their true destiny which is freedom. God is immanent in the world and directs the world's movement towards the development of Freedom.

Schleiermacher regards the God-consciousness as immediate. He says : "True Science is a perfect intuition. True conduct is self-produced culture and art. *True religion is sense and taste for the Infinite.*" The organ of religious realisation is feeling by which the subject and the object become one and wherein God-consciousness and true self-consciousness attain identity. His feeling seems to be similar to the Vedantic *Sakshatkara*, i. e., immediate and intuitive self-consciousness. God, he says, is Divine causality which is different from the causality of nature. The latter occurs in time, the former is eternal. He is hence omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. In God Thought and Will are identical. He says that the Divine fore-knowledge does not destroy human freedom, since the latter is the expression of the nature of the Self, and not a power of acting arbitrarily. Thus his view of the immediacy and uniqueness of the religious life in man and of the immediate self-consciousness of unity as the source of religion is valuable.

Mr. Herbert Spencer's theory of the Unknowable is not a valuable or true idea. If the mystery of the universe is "an absolute mystery" and if the power "which the universe manifests" is not only unknown but also unknowable, then religion is exhausted of all its spiritual content. He calls the Unknowable as "an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed". He says : "The Power manifested throughout the universe distinguished as material, is the same

Power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness." He says again : "The consciousness of self and the consciousness of non-self are the elements of an unceasing rhythm in consciousness." This attempt to explain mind in terms of matter and both in terms of some Unknowable Energy which is the matrix of both is futile and empty agnosticism. How does the mind know matter? Why may not this be because matter is a derivative of mind? If the mind in a certain state of purity can realise God, how can God be said to be Unknowable, a mere postulate? Spencer slays God by calling Him the Unknowable and then drags the corpse into our vision and glorifies it as the Persistence of Force! Persistence of Force! Nay, it is the Persistence and Aboluteness of Bliss. Spencer gives us a mere phantom of scientific logic and not the Eternal Fulness and Perfection about which a well-known Sanskrit stanza says :

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

The fact is that "consciousness is a name for the self-revealing light of experience". The perception of the unity of God, man and universe is a fact of intuition. The multiplicity of form is in the light of a truer vision realised as a unity. Directness and immediacy of vision and intuition is an experience and cannot be described or proved in terms of mind which is an instrument of diversity—a prison breaking the white light of the One into the coloured rays of the Many. The *organon* of religious experience is based on a correct epistemology or theory of knowledge. The ultimate analysis leads us to Self-realisation as a Single Consciousness in which there is no dichotomy of Subject and Object but Pure Sachchidananda. The relation of God and Man must be that of an Eternal Blissful Spiritual King to a realm of eternal blissful spirits, or a relation of the All-embracing Self-consciousness unifying and sustaining the whole world of spirits as His cosmic frame or the Eternal Blissful Absolute above all dichotomy of Name and Form. Thus the ultimate metaphysical analysis must lead us to Dwaita of one sort or another, Visishtadwaita of one sort or another, and Adwaita of one sort or another. But are these mutually exclusive and irreconcilable? Or are they themselves a gradation of intuitive self-realisation of Bliss?

The sense of the Infinite is always with us and is the unconscious standard we have in view when we speak of finite things. The senses and the mind stop with different degrees of finiteness of realisation but always give us a hint of the Infinite. The path of *Jnana* enables us to realise the Infinite. Realising the Infinite means being one with the Infinite in the Superconscious state.

What is the meaning and implication of *Infinite*? The Infinite is that which is above time, space and causation. It is one, because if the infinite is not one, it is finite. If there is another, it is limited by that other and would be subject to time, space and causation. So matter is not separate from, or outside, God. He is not separate from, or outside of, our soul. God is, therefore, Infinite and One. He is Eternal, Self-luminous, the basis and foundation of everything, the Absolute. In relation to creation the Absolute is called God. Creation is only the self-projected being of God, not an emanation from nothing. It is a manifestation of His cosmic energy or *Maya*. He is the material and efficient cause of the universe. He is Immanent (*Antaryamin*) and Transcendent (*Vibhu*). He is the repository of all auspicious and blissful attributes (अनन्तकल्याणगुणनिधिः). The love of the soul compels the revelation of the Infinite in a finite spiritual form. He appears as *Iswara* or *Devi* according to the nature of our longing. *Iswari* is both *Vidya Sakthi* and *Avidya Sakthi*. The former leads us unto Truth (*Satya*) the latter drives us into the world of desire or *Samsara*.

I have thus sought above to state some of the western and eastern philosophic concepts of God. God in terms of simple faith and feeling is all that most men know or care to know. But the conceptual mind is the deepest fact of our being and will, and it must be satisfied. An idea of God which faith affirms but reason rejects, or which reason affirms but intuition or superconscious experience negates cannot be a glorious inner force for a long time. It is the Hindu idea of God that is full and perfect and appeals equally and simultaneously to morality, faith, feeling, reason, and intuition or mystic and superconscious experience.

THE UTILITY OF RELIGION*

By Swami Yatiswarananda

RELIGION has been the key-note of the music of Indian life. It has been the central theme of the life of our great ancestors—the Rishis, the seers of Truth. And now standing on the sacred soil of India, the land of religion, we, the children of the Rishis, question the very utility of religion and ask “How are we going to be benefited by it?”

All this indicates that we are now passing through a period of utter degeneration. We claim to be the followers of the Varnashrama Dharma. Dharma is that which supports, sustains life. But then, why is it that we are now in a most helpless state? The reason is that we do not care for the ideals of Dharma. Neither do we care for the ideals of Varna. Where is the Brahmana whose chief traits, as the Gita declares, should be control of mind and senses, austerity, purity, forbearance, uprightness and knowledge? Where again is the Kshatriya—the protector of society, who is endowed with prowess, boldness, fortitude and generosity? Where is the Vaishya—the accumulator and distributor of the national wealth? Where again is the Sudra who, by following the path of service allotted to him, can attain to the highest perfection? The ideal Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra is rarely to be found in our modern days.

The different Ashramas also have practically ceased to exist. The life of a student does no longer imply moral and spiritual discipline that is to be practised along with study. The Hindu household has stopped being an Ashrama—a place for the practice of self-control and fulfilment of the duties of life. The life of the Vanaprasthin—the hermit—has become a thing of the past. Sannyasa—the life of renunciation and service—the crowning glory of the Hindu's existence—is dreaded and avoided by almost everybody. The original Varnashrama Dharma exists nowhere. What remains is only a travesty of the grand socio-religious system built up by the ancient sages of India on the eternal ideals of the Vedic religion.

*Notes of an address given at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.

We have degenerated. That is why we idolise sense-life and think of the practices of religion as unnecessary. We speak of God but behave in a way which shows as if no God exists. We talk about the Atman, but act in a manner which indicates that we look upon the body as our Self. Like the Charvakas of old we follow the doctrine *यादृज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेत् क्लृप्तं कृतं विवेत्* “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” Asked by Napoleon the Great about the place of God in his system, the great astronomer Laplace replied—“Sire, I have done without that hypothesis.” Most of us too have done away with the hypothesis of God and soul. This is the great tragedy of our modern life. Religion has little influence on our thoughts and activities.

Does the fault lie with religion? No. It is the neglect of religious practice that is responsible for our pitiable state. The root-cause of our misery lies not in the want of knowledge, but in the want of practice as the King Duryodhana once said—

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः

“I know what the Dharma is, but I have no inclination to practise it. I know also what Adharma is, but I cannot desist from it.” It is the neglect of Dharma that has brought about our downfall. And the sincere pursuit of Dharma can again elevate us. Now in order to follow the path of Dharma, we should first of all know what it means. We should also be fully convinced of its utility—how it is going to benefit us both materially and spiritually, individually and collectively.

धारणात् धर्ममित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः

“Dharma comes from a root which means ‘to support.’ Dharma is that which sustains or protects mankind.”

The Aryan conception of Dharma is a very comprehensive one. Dharma is for all, for people of all stages of life and evolution. Dharma does not speak to us only of the other world. Declares the sage Kanada—*यतोऽन्यदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः*—“Dharma is the means to material prosperity as well as to spiritual well-being.” The Sutra has been interpreted differently by different commentators. But whatever it is, Dharma has a larger and more complex significance than the word ‘religion’ in English. According to the Hindu sages, Dharma includes both the Pravritti Dharma or the path of legitimate worldly achievement and enjoyment, and also the Nivritti Dharma—the path of renun-

ciation and divine realisation. The first, if properly regulated, culminates in the second and brings about the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter and worldly desires.

Like Dharma, the Hindu conception of Vidya or Knowledge too is all-embracing. Aparā Vidya or the "lower knowledge" implies, as the Upanishad declares, the study not only of the four Vedas but also of phonetics, ceremonial, grammar, etymology, metre, and astronomy. Para Vidya is the "higher knowledge" by which the Indescribable Brahman is realised. Direct realisation of the Truth precedes theoretical knowledge which need not necessarily imply the study of religious books alone. Any branch of learning which developed the mental powers of man and enabled him to understand himself and the things around him were valued by the ancients and formed part of the curriculum of their times. The Chhandogya Upanishad enumerates the various branches of "lower knowledge" studied by the sage Narada. These include, besides the four Vedas, history and tradition, grammar, the rites of the manes, mathematics, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, politics, etymology, ceremonials, prosody, the science of the elementals, the science of war, astronomy, the science of snake-charming and the fine arts. This "lower knowledge" found its fulfilment in the higher knowledge of Brahman—the Truth of all truths, the very Essence of things. And the pursuit of both the Aparā and Para Vidyas formed part of the Dharma of the "twice born", particularly of the Brahmacharins—the students of ancient times.

The great teachers of the Hindu religion took into consideration the all-round development of man. They declared

शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्

—“A healthy body is the first essential for the practice of Dharma.” In the peace invocation the student of the Upanishads has to repeat—

ओं आप्यायन्तु ममांगानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो क्लमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि

“Om! May my limbs, speech, energy, vitality, eyes ears and other senses become vigorous.”

ओं भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरेतैस्तुष्ट्वांसस्तनूभिः व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

“Om! O Gods! May we hear with our ears what is auspicious! O ye worshipful ones! May we see with our eyes what is auspicious! May we, who sing praise (to ye), enjoy the life allotted to us by the Gods with strong limbs and body!”

Dharma is to concern itself not only with man's physical well-being but more than that with his spiritual welfare as well.

How does religion promote our individual spiritual well-being? Religion gives us what nothing else can. It is the greatest source of peace and blessedness in a world in which we are constantly buffeted by troubles and tribulations, worried by cares and anxieties and threatened by the harrowing sights of old age, sickness and death. We turn to it and to the God it preaches, not out of our goodness but out of dire necessity, as is generally the case. “But man's necessity is God's opportunity.” God—the Soul of our soul—is anxious to reveal Himself to us though He rarely finds the opportunity to do so. But He finds it when we take shelter unto Him after trying in vain all human means.

As Sri Krishna says in the Gita—

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जना सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

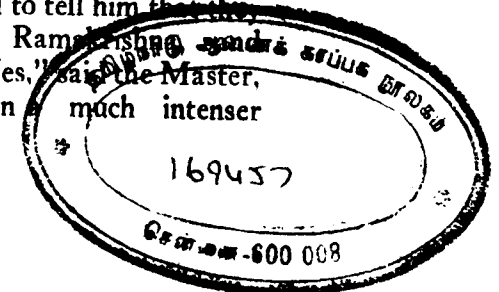
आर्तो जिज्ञासुर्यथार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

“Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna—the distressed, the seeker for knowledge, the seeker for enjoyment, and the wise.” The Jnani—the man of knowledge—sees God everywhere. It is but natural for him to worship God. And his love and devotion flow out of the fulness of his heart. But such is not the case with the others. Misery in some form or other goads them on to God. It may be worldly suffering, or it may be the misery caused by ignorance or want of objects of enjoyment. Or it may be the great agony which spiritual hunger brings to the human soul,—a hunger which nothing that is worldly can appease. It is God-vision alone that can put an end to it. And only those persons can appreciate the utility of religion, who are made restless by this soul-hunger, who feel the misery of existence, and yearn for a peace which they seek in vain in this world of change.

Such an intense spiritual passion moved the very being of Swami Vivekananda. The desire to see God and know the ultimate Truth seized his soul. He wanted to meet a religious teacher who had realised God and could tell him about God. He saw many a religious preacher of the day but none could claim to have realised God. None dared to tell him that they had seen God. At last he came to Sri Ramakrishna and asked him—“Sir, have you seen God?” “Yes,” said the Master, “I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser

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Yoga. The tendencies to perform Karma is innate in man, and none can remain without action. Thus in the case of persons of active temperament what is required is not the cessation but the proper controlling and directing of activity. Work with attachment binds the soul. But selfless work performed in a spirit of worship becomes a means of attaining to freedom. "He who does actions forsaking attachment, resigning them to Brahman, is not soiled by evil, like unto a lotus-leaf by water. . . . Even doing action always, taking refuge in Me—by My grace he attains to the eternal, immutable State"—So says Sri Krishna in the Gita.

The man of a contemplative bent of mind, endowed with a tremendous will-power, wants to control his whole nature, both external and internal. But spasmodic attempts at concentration will lead only to failure and mental depression. The restless mind is to be brought under control slowly and steadily "through practice and renunciation." This the Lord definitely points out in his Song Celestial—"With the intellect set in practice, with the mind fixed on the Self, let him (the Yogi) attain quietude by degrees. Through whatever reason the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from that, bring it under the subjugation of the Self alone." This is the path by which the Raja Yogi, with his passions quieted down, attains to the infinite bliss of Brahman.

The devotee hankers after union with his Beloved with all his heart. Worldly love is not able to appease the hunger of his soul. His whole mind flows as it were in a continuous current towards the Lord who is of the "nature of Love unspeakable." His God is not a Being dwelling somewhere in a far-off heaven, but is seated in his very heart. The devotee has only to look within and see the beautiful face of his Beloved—the Soul of his soul. "The Lord," says Sri Krishna, "dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings, by His Maya to revolve (as if) mounted on a machine. Take refuge in Him with all thy heart; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace and eternal abode."

The Jnani or the person of a philosophic turn of mind is not satisfied with the little things of the world. He is anxious to know the reality at the back of the phenomenal world. He does not possess any great attraction even for the personal aspect of the Divinity. He hankers to attain to the Universal—his true Self. According to the Gita, "This Self is never born, nor does it die. This is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever itself. It is not killed when the body is killed. Those

who have their intellect absorbed in That, whose Self is That, whose steadfastness is in That, whose consummation is That, their impurities cleansed by knowledge, they attain Non-return or Moksha."

All spiritual paths can be classed under the four Yogas mentioned above. In our study of religious psychology in general and of the Bhagavadgita in particular we find that these Yogas are not like water-tight compartments. They are on the other hand interdependent. The name Karma Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga is given according to the predominating feature of the path. The Karma Yogi possesses concentration, devotion and knowledge along with non-attachment. The Raja-Yogi may not give expression to any feelings of Bhakti, but he too must have—in varying degrees it may be—all the indispensable elements of spiritual life. And so also the Bhakta and Jnani. Indeed it is practically an impossible task to put a dividing line between the different types. "Evenness of mind is known as Yoga"—says the Lord in the Gita. This evenness must be possessed by all Yogis alike. "One with true insight into the domain of Guna and Karma, knowing that the Gunas as senses merely rest on the Gunas as objects, does not become attached. . . . The knower of Truth being centred in the Self should think, "I do nothing at all," convinced that it is the senses that move among sense-objects. He who worships Me dwelling in all beings, being established in Unity, whatever be his mode of life, that Yogi abides in Me. He who is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of "I and mine," ever content and steady in meditation, with mind and intellect fixed on Me, is dear to Me." All these words of Sri Krishna are more or less applicable to all types of Yogis. There is thus a conscious or unconscious synthesis of all noble attributes in the lives of all really spiritual men.

The reason of this combination is not far to seek. Human mind is a synthetic whole possessing the faculties of will, feeling and knowledge. Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga both depend more on the faculty of will than on the others, although the former path is more objective and the latter more subjective. Bhakti is the expression more of feeling than of the other faculties. Jnana lays greater stress on knowledge than on all the other elements. But the faculties are inseparable as the Yogas, they all fulfilling one another.

Such being the case, is it not desirable to put equal stress on all the four paths of Yoga and develop the faculties of the mind to an equal extent? Indeed if this can be done, it will mean an all-round spiritual growth. In the world of religion one-sided developments have their dangers. Karma sometimes becomes aimless and leads to the restlessness of the soul. Yoga at times degenerates into physical mortification and pursuit of psychic powers. Bhakti may deteriorate into meaningless sentimentalism. And Jnana also may lapse into dry intellectualism and morbid inactivity. Hence there lies the great necessity of combining the different paths to strengthen and support one another. Let work be combined with meditation, and knowledge be tempered with devotion. Let us try to be equally established in all the Yogas and bring about a harmonious development of all our spiritual powers. This will mean a full religious life which should be the ideal of religion. Says Swami Vivekananda—"Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and work were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider 'one-sided'; and this world is almost full of such 'one-sided' men, with knowledge of that one road only, in which they move; and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions, is my ideal of religion." Fully illuminated by the light of the highest knowledge, ever active in helping others without any idea of self, intoxicated by Divine Love which thinks lightly even of Mukti, perfectly established in the glory of the Self through the complete control of the senses and the mind—such is the perfect Yogi who has attained to the fullest growth of all his spiritual faculties, and who is therefore "a free man of the whole estate."

THE STORY OF ANDAL

By A Vaishnava Devotee

"FOR the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of Dharma I come into being in every age"—so says Sri Krishna to Arjuna. According to the Vaishnava tradition, sometimes when the disturbance that prevails in the world is not so serious as to demand His

incarnation, He sends from His blissful region called 'The Highest abode' some of His devoted servants like Garuda, (the Divine Eagle) and Adishesha (the Divine Serpent) who having drunk deep of the immortal bliss of divine love shudder not at the miseries of even a thousand births in this world for His sake. Like a band of devotees suddenly entering a house, they come into the world all of a sudden with God's name on their lips, sing and dance in a state of divine ecstasy, set an example to the people of the world and after fulfilling their divine commission go back to the blissful region whence they came.

Once upon a time, with a view to carry spiritual wisdom and love to the doors of mortals groping in ignorance, Narayana, the Supreme Lord, entrusted His devotee, the Eagle, with the divine commission of establishing the grandest and simplest truths of the Upanishads and the ancient Dharma of the holy land of India, that had long ago sunk in oblivion; and he came as Perialwar and lived in Srivilliputtur, a town in South India. His whole life was one of uninterrupted and intense devotion to the Lord residing in the 'Big Temple' of Srivilliputtur, and his only joy was in serving Him in all possible ways. The quintessence of the Upanishads he immortalised in his famous work which begins with 'Pallandu' (Long live the Lord!) and which forms the very Pranava, as it were, of the Tamil Veda. He was an embodiment of the Dharma of this sacred land.

Floating on a banyan leaf in the ocean of milk called Ksheerabdhhi that is far beyond the haunts of men, there was Narayana, the Supreme Being, with His eyes closed, lost in contemplation, immersed in Samadhi and insensible of the world. Along with Him there was His consort, Lakshmi, our Divine Mother, the very incarnation of mercy. With a heart bleeding with infinite pity for the countless sufferings on earth begotten of the ignorance of the one Truth, she awoke Her Lord one day from His trance divine, and referring to the good work done by His servant, Perialwar, and the secrets of emancipation that he revealed to mankind at large in his immortal Veda, begged His permission to be born in the world of mortals as his daughter for the sake of relieving the sorrows of Her children. The Lord blessed Her and said, "And be it so. Go Thou to the world of mortals on Thy mission of mercy and reach Me in the end. Let men worship My divine form, and Thine later, in all temples and thereby obtain easily all that they may desire."

Adjoining what is known as the 'Big Temple' of Srivilliputtur, there was a flower garden which was cultivated with great care and devotion by Perialwar for the purpose of decorating the Lord in the temple and worshipping Him with flowers. Morning and evening the saint would be engaged in his labour of love in the garden; he would gather the fairest flowers he could find and make a wreath of them with which he would adorn the Lord. One day in the course of his usual work in the temple garden, the saint heard a sudden noise in the ground as though the earth opened. He hastened to the spot which was a beautiful one surrounded on all sides by Tulasi plants the flowers of which were perfumed with a sweet aroma and filled the air with their fragrance. It was about noon on Friday in the month of Adi in the year of Nala, when the moon was in conjunction with the star Puram, when five planets were in the ascendant. The saint beheld in that charming and sacred spot a child of five who fell at his feet and made obeisance to him. His heart was unconsciously overflowing with love for the mysterious child, whom he gently asked, 'Who art thou?' The girl in her sweet and tender accents of love and humility declared, "Sire, I am thy daughter, thou art my father and this Tulasi plant is my mother." Remembering the birth of Sita and believing that a daughter was granted unto him by the Lord in His infinite mercy, Alwar carried her in his arms and left her in the presence of the Lord in the 'Big Temple' who bestowed on her the name Gotha and directed the saint to bring her up as his own daughter.

The young child grew up in later years into a charming girl who with a heart full of love for her father was sharing with him all his divine services in the temple and the garden. Love and devotion for the Lord began to dawn on her young heart even in her early days. Day after day she would gather the most fragrant flowers and make them into a wreath with which she would adorn her beautiful black tresses in her father's absence. She would gaze at her own reflection in a mirror and fondly ask herself whether in her beauty she would be a match for the Lord. She would then carefully remove the garlands from her hair and place them along with those that were intended for adorning the Lord without the knowledge of her father as she knew he would not consent to her polluting the sacred wreaths by this act. This she used to do every day without fail in a spirit of devotion and service.

But this did not long remain a secret. One day, in the course of his Puja, Perialwar was about to decorate the Lord of the temple with garlands. To his horror and surprise he saw a hair lying in their midst. Keen was his sorrow and bitter his disappointment. Alwar was sure that Andal alone could have been the cause of it. He called her and gently reprimanded her for making the garlands unfit for the use of the Lord. Forthwith he gathered fresh flowers and made fresh garlands with which he proceeded to adorn the Lord again but the Lord saw that an opportunity had arrived for a public demonstration of the greatness and the glory of His devotees. The Lord declined to wear the garlands and expressed his opinion to Alwar that His eager longings were only for those very garlands that had been perfumed by the fragrance of his daughter's hair. Ever after Alwar did according to the Lord's wish. At this all people were struck dumb with amazement and wondered who this Andal would be.

Years thus rolled on, and Andal came of a marriageable age and her parents and other relatives were seeking far and wide for a suitable bridegroom. But ever since she saw the light of the world, her wisdom and devotion were waxing like the moon during the bright fortnight; her mind was full of the spirit of renunciation; already her virgin heart had conceived a holy passion for the Lord which was slowly ripening to fruition. So when her parents talked to her of her marriage, Andal declared in stern and unmistakable tones, with all the strength of her conviction: "If I but hear it said that I am for a human being, I cannot bear to live." Day after day her passion for the Supreme Lord was growing like wild fire. She wished indeed that she were born earlier, for then she would have been a fortunate sharer, in company with the beautiful Gopis of Brindaban, of the intense bliss they enjoyed with Sri Krishna; but her lot was cast in a different time. Fain would she rest content with seeing at least the footprints of that sweet Lord of Brindaban, and the blessed river Jumna which formed the scene of His enjoyment with those pure damsels, and the hill of Govardhana that He playfully lifted on His fingerends. But alas! even that was far beyond her reach. And so she imagined Srivilliputtur to be Brindaban and the damsels of the city to be the shepherd maids, herself being one of them; the 'Big Temple' in the city became the palace of Nanda Gopala and the Lord in the temple stood for Sri Krishna. Like the Gopis she began her penance for the sake of

wedding the Lord and enacted in imagination all the scenes associated with them. To the silent outpourings of her heart on those occasions of divine communion she freely gave vent in the thirty songs which she has dedicated to the Lord. Just as the Lord allowed Himself to be adorned with her garlands of flowers in early days, so now he accepted with great delight her sweet offering of the garland of verses. These songs reveal her intense madness for the Lord and wonderfully inspire the heart of the readers with feelings of devotion. They breathe the immortal perfume of the subtle and glorious wisdom of the Upanishads and shower from every verse the nectar of Bhakti that knows no surfeit.

But all this deepened the sorrow of Alwar who on one occasion anxiously questioned his daughter thus: "If for a man thou art not, for whom art thou, my darling?" "From settling my marriage with anyone other than the Hari of Thirumalirumshola (a hill temple near Madura), I forbid you all" — was the reply. "Out of the Lords in the one hundred and eight holy temples of the land, whom wilt thou choose to wed?" asked Alwar respectfully. Andal said, "Let me hear then the beauties and the virtues of all the Lords and I shall answer." Alwar began to narrate all the incidents, wonders and glories connected with them all. With tears of joy in her eyes and with her hair standing on end, she listened rapt in divine ecstasy to the glowing and vivid accounts of one and all of them, but at the mention of the ravishing beauty of the sweet Lord of Sri Rangam on the Kauveri, her mind went mad after Him for ever and could not be put back on anything else.

Ever since this she lost all peace of mind. No longer could she endure the agony of separation which was growing more and more intense every moment. One night she had a blessed vision of the Lord's marriage with her which she warmly described in detail next morning to her companions. When Alwar heard of it, he clearly saw that the best bridegroom for Andal would be only the Lord of Sri Rangam, but he failed to see how the marriage could be celebrated. He grew despondent and sorrowful, and overcome by grief, one night, he fell asleep. The Lord of Sri Rangam appeared to him in a dream and bade him bring Andal to the Mantapam in front of the temple at Sri Rangam where He promised to accept her hand, and Alwar was free from all fear and anxiety. At the same time the Lord appeared in a vision before the inhabitants of His city and commanded them to go to Srivilli-

puttur and bring Andal with them to their city, whereon they made great preparations and marched to Srivilliputtur. Alwar was taken by surprise. He calmed himself and prayed to the Lord of the 'Big Temple'. In the midst of a procession attended by relatives and friends, Andal was then carried in a closed and beautifully decorated ivory palanquin with bridal music playing on all sides, away to the fair and holy city of Sri Rangam. The curtains were drawn in front of the Lord. Andal in the presence of all gently stepped forward towards Him with her entire heart lost in Him, and climbing the bed of Adishesha, reached the Lord's hallowed feet.

Alwar and his disciples stood bewildered at this sight, when the Lord exclaimed with joy, "Thou, like the Ocean of Milk, hast become Our father-in-law!" and added, "Wend thy way to Srivilliputtur and serve the blessed Lord there." Alwar returned to his place and spent the rest of his earthly career in one unbroken flow of divine service and love.

So ends the tale of our Divine Mother, Andal, which fulfils the Lord's words to Arjuna, "I am easily attainable by him, that stead-fast one, who remembers me at all times, everywhere and under all conditions, with a single mind."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WHAT IS PRAYER ?

In reply to a certain medical graduate Mahatma Gandhi has written an illuminating note on "What is prayer?" in a recent issue of "Young India." He observes—"Prayer means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessings."

As it is generally seen, ordinary human beings pray to the Almighty for the fulfilment of their wants and desires. But when the mind rises above the gross plane, they pray for the purity of the heart, knowledge and devotion which are indispensably necessary for God-realisation. Finally when they reach their life's goal they say their prayers, but do it only out of the fullness of their love for God.

At the time of prayer the mind should be withdrawn from all worldly thoughts and desires. The devotee must approach God with reverence

and love. His sole yearning should be for communing with Him. There is no hard and fast rule that prayer must be said in a particular language. The worshipper may pray to the Divine in any tongue he pleases. But the prayer must come from the innermost recess of his heart. What the Lord appreciates are the sincere thoughts and feelings of the devotee. "It is," as Mahatmaji says, "the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered."

Is there any efficacy in prayer? or does it all go in vain?—Such doubts arise in the mind of the devotee in the beginning of his spiritual life. But as he goes on with his prayer with sincerity and patience he comes to perceive tangible results. Says Sri Ramakrishna—"Take my word for it that if your prayer come from the bottom of your heart, my Mother shall respond to it, if you will only wait."

Again, is there any fixed rule as to the time that should be devoted to prayer? To the man who has realised God, life is a continuous act of worship and prayer. For the man who lives for the self and acts only to sin, no time is too much. But in the case of the average man there should be some definite hours for prayer. "We are not so exalted," writes Mahatma Gandhi, "as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have nowadays become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary therefore is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions."

THE ALLIANCE OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The Hindu philosophers were primarily religious men. They built up their systems of thought on the secure basis of the eternal truths they perceived in their spiritual vision. This is the main reason why Hindu philosophy and religion cannot be separated. And intuitive perception being the common goal of both, they have always supported each other in India. But the relation between philosophy and religion has been different in the West. There philosophy being in the main discursive and religion intuitive, they have been railing at each other all along as Prof. Max Muller has aptly said. But they can be harmonised even in Western lands. This is indicated by new movements in modern philosophic thought in Germany.

Mr. Arthur Liebert writing in the current number of the *Monist* points out that contemporary German philosophy has turned seriously to metaphysics. There seems to be a wide-spread demand for a philosophy capable of satisfying the spiritual yearnings of the human soul. Graf Hermann Keyserling is an able exponent of the new metaphysics "growing out of the need for a world-view" in Germany. He is not much interested with intellectual ideals or the enrichment of knowledge. "His primary concern is," says the writer, "rather that the excessively busy and intellectual European again acquires wisdom. This also explains his commendations of the Orient. For in the Orient one may find precisely that 'wisdom,' that poise and repose, that inner self-control and simplicity which we Europeans have lost because of the disintegrating influence of an extreme intellectualism. Philosophy, in his

judgment, should therefore not be an academic discipline concerned with concepts and the attainment of scientific knowledge, but a matter of practical import yielding a world-view. And thus philosophy is for Keyserling an art. It is a form of the art of life, and can be exemplified by him alone who, through self-cultivation, has become a complete 'wise' man."

To the average man the value of philosophy consists in its capacity to remove human misery, and place before him a higher meaning and purpose of life. And not only in Germany but also in all other countries we need a new philosophy, a new metaphysics which, as the writer very happily observes, "is not so much strictly theoretical enlightenment concerning the nature of the world as, much rather, religious edification and inner peace, an indubitable basis for the faith that, despite all horrible disillusion, the world nevertheless has a rational meaning and a rational goal."

The alliance of philosophy and religion, if it can be brought about on a grand scale, will fulfil both philosophy and religion. Philosophy will then get its spirituality from religion and religion its spirit of freedom from philosophy. Such a happy union will certainly mean a great blessing to mankind.

CHRISTIANISING PAGAN RELIGIONS

"I think it quite certain," Dean Inge is reported by the *Manchester Guardian* to have recently said, "that the Asiatics will never become Anglicans, Romanists or Scots Presbyterians. If they become Christians they will develop a Christianity of their own, and although some may think that we have the divine promise that Christianity will ultimately be victorious everywhere, I think on the whole that it is likely that they will prefer to Christianise their own religions."

There are missionary zealots who still indulge in the pious hope of evangelising the whole Asia in the near future. Whatever may be their inward feeling, they at least speak in this strain to those whom they try to persuade to contribute to their funds. But the saner among the Christian missionaries are almost convinced that the dream of Christianising the Asiatic races can never be realised. And they are now prepared to be satisfied with Christianising the Asiatic religions instead.

The missionary mind has been disillusioned at least to some extent. In the Islamic countries Christianity does not appear to have a promising career. China once seemed to lay bare "fresh fields and pastures new" for the shepherds of Christ. But the Chinese youth is now positively antagonistic to Christianity which is inseparable from foreign domination. Japan, too, is suspicious of the missionary bands whose evangelical spirit is thought to be often guided by political motives. The missionary's prospect in India, too, does not appear to be as hopeful as before. Powerful religious and political movements have practically stopped the progress of Christianity among the higher and educated communities. The Christian evangelist's only hope now lies in the poor depressed classes. And these classes, again, as Christian writers frankly

acknowledge, embrace the religion of Christ not for any spiritual uplift but only for some social and economic improvement. No wonder then that the missionary has become less ambitious than before.

The educated pagan is too conservative and obstinate to change the faith of his forefathers. And hence the talk of Christianising his religion, and then claiming him as a Christian in spirit, though not in form. Finding it a hopeless task to root out the pagan religions, the missionary is now pleased to think that "the big reform movements in Hinduism, Mohammedanism and Buddhism everywhere to be found in India, are part and parcel of the Christianising process."

Indeed the Christian missionary mind is passing through very great changes on the soil of India. The early Christian propagandist was profoundly ignorant of the people and its religion. To quote the words of a South Indian Christian leader, "He judged others from what he saw on the surface and forthwith concluded that what he had must displace almost everything he saw." With the increase of knowledge the more thoughtful of the missionaries have now come to acknowledge that all religions are from God, although the culmination of them all is the revelation through Christ. A sympathetic missionary has even proclaimed that Christ is the crown of Hinduism. Even this semi-patronising and semi-tolerant attitude is changing still further. If God is the God of all peoples, He must have revealed His truths to the Hindus also. And Christ's life, hitherto interpreted in terms of Western traditions and experiences by Western theologians, may yet yield a new interpretation in the light of India's spiritual heritage which Indian Christians are now claiming as their own. Still greater changes are going to take place as the signs of the times clearly indicate.

The Indian Christian community is anxious to give Christianity a truly Indian expression. "The Indian nature," once wrote an Indian Christian writer, "is not much attracted by the psychology of sin; it requires, on the contrary, the symbolism of form, colour and music. In the light of these interpretations of the Indian nature the whole field of ecclesiastical forms must change." Many Indian Christians hold that the Gita, the Upanishads and some other sacred books of the Hindus should supplement the Bible. They feel that some of these Hindu scriptures are more appealing and philosophical than certain portions of the Gospel themselves. These and similar ideas may be very shocking, if not blasphemous, to many a pious missionary. Whatever it is, those who rejoice to see in the present Hindu renaissance the triumph of the Gospel will do well to note that Christianity too is taking, as some people call it, a decidedly "Vedantic colouring" in India.

HINDU INFLUENCE ON FURTHER INDIA

India did not keep her civilisation limited within her natural boundaries, but also spread it to foreign lands beyond her seas and mountains. This took place in the case not only of Buddhism but also of the Mother Religion. Even before the birth of Buddha, the Vedic religion peacefully penetrated into Further India. Adventurous merchants, soldiers and Brahmanas crossed the sea and settled themselves

on the coasts of Indo-China and the Indian Archipelago. And wherever they went, they founded small colonies which were pre-eminently centres of culture. At some places the colonists conquered the aborigines and became their rulers. But this political conquest is of much less importance than the conquest of culture which the colonists achieved wherever they went.

Speaking of this spread of Hindu culture by Aryan immigrants Prof. Jadunath Sarkar observes in the *Modern Review* for July—"Everywhere they carried, propagated and imposed, with their Brahmanic religion and respect for the higher caste,—manners, ideas, usages, rites and institutions of India,—her alphabets, literature, and classical Sanskrit language. It is true that the oldest epigraphic document as yet discovered in Indo-China, which is in pure and classical Sanskrit, does not go beyond the 3rd century after Christ. But the slow work of colonisation and civilisation which preceded that brilliant proof of Indian culture could have begun only 8 to 10 centuries, probably more, earlier, and had already attained to a full expansion in the 4th century B. C."

The greatest of all conquests is the conquest by Dharma—by religion and spirituality—as the great Buddhist emperor Asoka proclaimed in his rock edict. But this conquest began even long before Asoka's council met at Pataliputra about the third century before Christ. History is repeating itself. Indian thoughts are again flowing out vigorously through various channels, but this time, not so much to the East as to the West. Swami Vivekananda was the first Hindu missionary of modern times to travel to foreign lands, holding aloft the torch of India's culture and civilisation. And many of his followers are carrying on his great mission of preaching in the West the grand truths of the eternal religion of India. There is a great demand for able Hindu teachers in the Western countries, particularly in America, as one of our brother-monks writes—"I only wish some more Swamis would come to this country to work vigorously in the different cities of the United States. There is a great field of work everywhere."

We Indians should now cease to be beggars. "Give and take" is the law of life. We must follow this law. We are receiving from the Westerners the wealth of scientific culture, and must now share with them the great verities of our religion and philosophy—our priceless spiritual treasures. We must have our foreign policy. We must spread India's spiritual culture throughout the world, not for any material conquest, but for the spiritual regeneration of the entire human race. And this has ever been the chief mission of the Indo-Aryan race.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE ROMANCE OF THE SOUL by the author of "The Golden Fountain". Published by John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London. W. C. 2.

This is a beautiful book written by a lady (who chooses to remain anonymous) who sets down in a very simple and natural and therefore very impressive and effective manner her experiences regarding the Romance of the Soul. She deals with the question comprehensively enough telling us how to attain it, what its impediments are and how to remove them.

'The romance of the Soul' consists in the personal love of God brought to fruition whilst still in the flesh. "God the Holy Trinity, once found and known by us becomes our All, and by some unspeakable condescension He becomes to us all things in all ways. The soul is filled with romantic and divine love, and instantly God is her Holy Lover. Oh, the wonders of the fulness of the finding and knowing of God!"

The book is written frankly from the Christian point of view and hence the great importance attached to the study of Jesus and His ways. He is the one and the only Door in the wall that separates us from God. Through constant companionship with Him we get more and more power to reach God till at last the separating wall "goes down in its entirety, never again to rise up and divide us."

The richer and fuller life of God-consciousness and companionship is fully derived from its beginning which consists in the subjugation of lower passions and placing ourselves under the guidance of Jesus allows the Holy spirit to work. A faint echo of this great ecstasy is what is experienced by the lovers of Nature, of music, of the beautiful and romantic and of poetry when in the highest moments reached by them "they are aware of an indefinable something. . . which goes beyond the beautiful into a Nameless Bourne."

It is with great difficulty that we have to resist the temptation of making the author speak for herself by making copious extracts from the book. A still greater temptation is to present parallel passages from Indian mystic literature when almost every statement of the author has been anticipated and expressed in beautiful language. We shall be satisfied with a general statement that the experience of our race as recorded in our literature agrees word for word with what the author has written; only we have to substitute the word 'Guru' for the word 'Jesus'. 'The human reason is too small to stand the greatness of God' (p. 61).

वादो नावलम्ब्यः बाहुल्यावकाशत्वादनित्यतत्वाच्च

"Never reason about God; for discussion is endless and futile." Narada Sutra (73-74). This one instance is enough to indicate the fundamental agreement between the experiences of the Seekers of God whether they be in the East or in the West.

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There are just one or two points, however, on which, in our opinion the writer has laid too strong a stress forgetting that one cannot be dogmatic in matters of religion, for 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.'

To take for example the author's statement that, 'to begin with we must have a set purpose and will towards God. In the whole spiritual advance it is first we who must make the effort which God will then stabilise, and finally on our continuing to maintain this effort He will bring it to complete fruition.' On other occasions also emphasis is laid upon our doing something before we can hope to get the grace of God. There has been much controversy over this question of God's grace whether it comes spontaneously or only as a reward of an effort on our part. The medieval controversy over the question of predestination and freewill was mainly about this. - It is interesting to note that in this country learned opinion is sharply divided and in fact this is one of the fundamental points of difference between the two sections of the followers of Ramanuja called Vadakalai and Tenkalai sects. They use the highly expressive figure of Markataksoranyaya and the Marjaraksoranyaya. The former sect believes that God saves us as the monkey saves its young ones if the young ones were to cling to the mother, whereas the latter hold that His grace is Nirupadhika or Ahetuka Karunyam and He saves us as the cat saves its young ones by taking care of them itself. A catholic poet of England has described this irresistible flow of Divine grace as the Hound of Heaven pursuing the sinner and making escape impossible for him. Manikkavasagar ('the man of ruby-like words') a great Saivite saint extols the inexplicable Release or Salvation granted to him by God purely out of His compassion and not on account of any merit on his part and compares himself to a dog that was at once put in a palanquin. In these high matters therefore it is safer not to be dogmatic.

Then again the author says (p. 53), "But whilst doing all this (i. e., attend to our fellow-creatures, wait upon them, bear with them and work for them) we are not to make them the object of our life: we are not to think that by merely running about amongst creatures frenzied with plans for their social improvement and comfort the nearer we are necessarily getting to God, or even truly pleasing Him. This cuts at the very root of Nishkamyas-Karma or selfless work—the central teaching of the Gita. We are told again and again that work will lead us on to salvation provided it is done without attachment. What the author characterises as not likely to be even truly pleasing to God are the very acts of Yagna (sacrifice), Dana (gift) and Tapas (austerity) interpreted liberally to suit modern requirements, actions which are again and again insisted upon. To perform them in the right spirit is the real Karma-yoga and Janaka and others attained salvation by Karma only.

कर्मणेवहि संसिद्धिमाप्सिक्ता जनकादयः

In her enthusiasm for what we would call Bhakti-marga or the path of devotion she has been unnecessarily severe on Karma-marga or the path of selfless work. We, however, have been taught that the Lord blesses everyone by whatever way He is approached.

Except for one or two such points of difference of view which are due to the different cultural and spiritual environments in which we have been brought up we are glad to be able to find, as we mentioned before, so many points of complete agreement.

We recommend this book to the earnest student of Religion who will find in it many a valuable practical suggestion for finding God and re-entering the Garden of Eden.

S. K. YEGNANARAYANA AIYAR.

MATSYAVATHAR or Saving the World from the Deluge : A picture by Messrs. M. S. Sarma & Sons, Artists and Illustrators, 20, Alangatha Pillai Street, Triplicane, Madras. Aqua-tints. Size 14" x 20". Oriental Art series. Annual subscription Rs. 15 : Single plate Re. 1-8-0 each.

This work of art depicts the allegorical scene of the Matsyavathar (Incarnation of the Lord in the form of fish in the Hindu mythology) splashing its tail on the ocean in deluge. In the picture is seen an ark which is tied to the body of the fish and which holds the king Satya-vrata, the seven Rishis, the seeds of creation and four babies standing for the four Vedas. Flags of victory are also drawn floating on the mast of the ark and suggest the triumph of spirit over matter, the conquest of the eternal laws of Dharma over the surging waves of the deluge.

A long note affixed to the picture gives the philosophical significance behind the allegorical imagery employed to depict the central truths of cosmology. It points out that when the entire manifested universe disappears into the potential form of creation, it never suffers annihilation but only remains in a seed form within the womb of Unmanifested Prakriti (matter). The Vedas are the eternal truths of life. When these truths are lost in the deluge of darkness and ignorance and the surging waves of Samsara (worldly life) envelop the whole world, the Lord comes to the rescue of humanity.

The artists deserve congratulation and encouragement, as their executions are calculated to popularise the truths of religion and philosophy through the effective, though silent, medium of pictorial art.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, has been staying in Ootacamund since the 4th of June last. The construction of the Ramakrishna Mandiram, the new centre of the Mission in Ootacamund, is progressing. The main work is expected to be finished about the end of August. After the opening of the Mandiram the Swami proposes to visit Natarampalli, Bangalore, Mysore and Bombay. We hope he will be able to visit Madras again before leaving for Bombay.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta centre at Portland, Oregon, U. S. A., whose exposition of the Vedanta is being much

appreciated, paid a second visit to Seattle in May last. An American correspondent writes : "He delivered three lectures under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge and one on a Sunday morning in the Chamber of Commerce Auditorium for the Congress of Religions sponsored by the First Unitarian Church of Seattle. The hall was crowded to overflowing. The audience evinced very profound interest in the truths of the Vedanta."

SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S ARRIVAL IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda, President and founder of the Vedanta centre at Boston and the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta in California, who sailed on 2nd May last, accompanied by Swamis Dayananda and Akhilananda, landed at San Francisco on the 18th June. Swami Prakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, was at that time at the Shanti Ashrama where he went with his students for the annual summer classes. In his absence the Swamis were received by Swami Prabhavananda who came for this purpose from his Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, and were taken to the Hindu Temple. The same evening Swamis Paramananda and Akhilananda left for La Crescenta and arrived the next morning. Swami Paramananda conducted the Sunday service at the Ananda Ashrama on the 20th June. The same day a reception was held at the Vedanta Society, San Francisco, in honour of Swami Dayananda. Swami Prabhavananda introduced the new Swami to the members and friends of the Society. Swami Dayananda gave a short address suited to the occasion. He was accorded a hearty welcome by Mr. Woolburg, the President of the Society. Mrs. Pettee, a prominent member of the society, also spoke a few words of warm welcome on its behalf.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK

In order to relieve the distress caused by famine, flood, cyclone and other widespread calamities, the Mission opened relief centres in Behar, Bengal and Burma.

At Jamtara in the Santal Parganas, the suffering of the famine-stricken destitutes was very acute owing to the failure of crops in two consecutive monsoons, stoppage of work in coal mines and delay in the breaking of the monsoon. Feeding and clothing of the poor had to be done on an extensive scale. The showers which fell recently have brought some relief to the cultivators. During one week 1288 persons of 33 villages were given 63 maunds of rice and 4 maunds of salt. The able-bodied men were employed in sinking 20 new wells and renovating 4 old wells and tanks. Seeds for cultivation, clothes and rice will have to be distributed for another two or three weeks.

In Midnapore, relief was given from a centre opened at Pickemajita. During the first week of the relief operation 44 maunds of rice were given to the helpless people of 45 villages. In the succeeding week 32 maunds of rice were distributed to 666 persons of 39 villages. The condition of the sufferers is gradually improving on account of rainfall during the last few days. The relief work will have to be continued for about a fortnight.

At Arakan, the recent flood and cyclone caused very acute distress. The poor sufferers of six neighbouring villages were given food. Clothing and housing relief is urgently needed.

All contributions in kind or coin will be thankfully acknowledged. They may be kindly sent to :

The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, P. O., Howrah, or
The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukerjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Chittagong, from May 1922 to April 1926.

This Sevashrama was started by a band of selfless young men of Chittagong in 1922. It conducts a small dispensary which renders medical relief to the sick. There are a small library, a students' home and a primary girls' school attached to the Sevashrama. Religious discourses and classes are held every week in the Ashrama.

The total receipts were Rs. 1,163-13-3 and the expenditure came to Rs. 537-7-3, leaving a balance of Rs. 626-6-0.

The Ashrama is in need of a permanent residence of its own and appeals to the generous public for help.

The Seventeenth Annual Report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bharukati, Narayanpur, Barisal.

This report is the record of the philanthropic work done by the Ashrama for one year beginning from September, 1924. Besides giving medical relief to the poor, the Ashrama rendered also pecuniary help to indigent persons and students. It has been conducting, for the past ten years, a free school for poor boys. It has also recently started a school for girls. It possesses a library containing a fairly large number of books, magazines and newspapers. A religious class is held once a week.

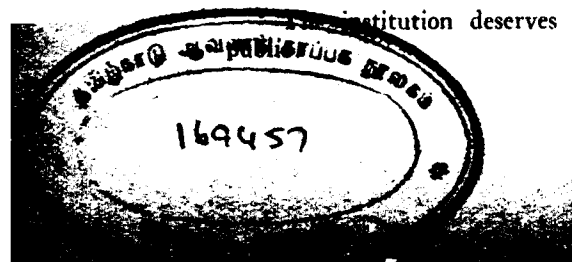
The total receipts during the year under review including the last year's balance amounted to Rs. 1,077-1-0 and the total expenditure to Rs. 1,027-10-9.

The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Sevasamiti, Sylhet, Assam, for 1925.

The activities of this Sevasamiti in the field of education and philanthropy are increasing day by day and are being more and more appreciated by the public of Sylhet. The Samiti is conducting two libraries and four primary schools—three for boys and one for girls—in the neighbouring villages. It also holds regular religious classes and occasional religious meetings for the public. Outdoor medical help, cremation of the dead bodies of helpless people, sinking wells, undertaking relief work during Melas and epidemic times and feeding of the poor are the main items of its philanthropic work.

The total income including last year's balance of Rs. 183-2-0 amounted to Rs. 1,616-11-0 and the total disbursements to Rs. 1,412-8-6

The institution deserves the active sympathy of the benevolent



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