

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



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And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'".

Vol. XV]

MAY 1928

[No. 1

PRAYER

ॐ

एकं ब्रह्मैवादितीयं समस्तं

सत्यं सत्यं नेतरच्चास्ति किञ्चित् ।

एको रुद्रो न द्वितीयोऽवतस्थे

तस्मादेकं त्वां प्रपद्ये महेशम् ॥

एकः कर्ता त्वं हि सर्वस्य शम्भो

नानारूपोऽप्येकरूपस्वरूपः ।

यत्तत् प्रत्यक् सर्वे एकोऽप्यनेक

स्तस्मान्नान्यै त्वां महेशं प्रपद्ये ॥

Oh Lord, Thou Terrible one, Thou art the sole Existence; Thou art second to none; Thou art the Brahman; Thou art the Universe; and verily nothing is but Thee; therefore, my Lord, do I take refuge in Thee.

Oh Lord, Thou Brahman, Thou Master of the world, Thou art changeless in the midst of changes; Thou art the one indwelling Spirit in all, Thou art the One in many. Therefore, my Lord, I seek shelter in Thee.

SKANDA-PURANAM.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

It is the 2nd of February, 1922. The Swami is the honoured guest of a devotee in Calcutta. In a room H. and D. are eagerly waiting for the Swami. The Swami comes in, takes his seat and asks D. good news, news particularly of the mind. The latter replies, he is doing well. The Swami rejoins :

Swami :—That is good. That is wanted. A pure, healthy mind is what is required most. Remain under the shelter of His lotus feet. He will do the needful ; you are only to keep your mind ever fixed on him. Give up all charms for the world. It is a very nasty place. Don't pay much heed to it ; but pay as much as is a bare necessity and no more, and the rest to God. I tell you, you are just the fit person. Try and you will succeed. ' Struggle and struggle—you must have to struggle hard.' Begin this moment ; no more delay, no more doubts, no more speculations. Oh, the joy of realisation, the satisfaction of it ! A bit of it, and ' that will be sufficient for you'. Strive on ; you must have to cross over the Mahamaya (Divine illusion) ; yes, in this very life you must go beyond it. Strive hard ; it is indeed a difficult task. Faith, unshakable faith is necessary. Without that you can not succeed. Be determined ; remove all doubts and then can you tear the veil of Maya and see God. Faith, you know, is the only resource, hence faith you must have by all means.

D. :—If doubt creeps in at times ?

Swami :—The fact is, you can not have firm faith until God-realisation. It is possible only when you have the vision of God, when you have realised Him. Till then you can attain to the nearest approach of true faith and no farther. Whenever doubts disturb the even balance of the mind, hold fast to God and pray. If you can do so over and over again, your conviction will be

firm and invincible. And doubts, surely will they come, but drive them out in this wise. Think within yourself : ' God is, but because it is not to my lot that I cannot see Him. The moment His grace descends, the moment shall I be blessed by seeing Him.' Don't lose faith. Stick to him always, and under all circumstances.

This gross mind, it cannot comprehend God. God is beyond mind, He is far beyond intellect. The world that you see is within the domains of the mind ; the mind is its author, the mind has created it. Beyond it, the mind cannot go. But through Sadhana opens up a subtle mind, the mind of the spirit. That is already in you, but in the form of a ' germ.' In course of time, this ' germ ' will ' develop ' and unfold. The gross mind will lead you to the subtle. The subtle shines forth in the glory of its own self. It is at this stage that you can have the vision of finer truths. The world with all its multiplicities, will then lose all charms for you. It can delude you no more. Then will you pass your times, day and night, completely lost in the contemplation of God and His glory. The next stage is Samadhi. This Samadhi, you cannot describe. It is beyond the reach of the gross mind, and all language fails to explain it. It is beyond Asti and Nasti (human calculation), beyond pleasure and pain, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond light, beyond darkness, beyond all duality. Human language is too feeble to say what that blessed state is.

"The Vedas all deal with the three Gunas. Be thou free, O Arjuna, be thou free from the triad of the Gunas." In these words says Sri Krishna in the *Gita*. If you want God, you are to transcend the limits of the Gunas, (the three constituents of substance—Tamas, Rajas and Sattva—as opposed to quality or attribute, as the Vedanta expounds). Disputes and dissensions, wars and feuds, malice and jealousy, egotism and pride, these are the attributes of Tamas. And Rajas goads man to

activity, and creates desire for name and fame. Do you know what it is like? A man of *Rajas* meditates for half an hour at best, and then looks around if it has attracted the notice of others. If it does not, his meditation, he thinks, is all in vain; this half an hour's meditation! He is a beggar to popular applause. Then comes *Sattva*. The *Vedas* deal with these *Gunas* (perishable things); they cannot break off the limits. But you are to go beyond.

A little pause intervenes. The *Swami*, then, invites *D.* to ask any questions he likes, saying the *Swami* would answer them to his best, if he knows them. *D.* asks:

D.:—In this world certain works seem to us as duties; how are we to do these, Sir?

Swami:—‘This world is God’s. Nothing in it I have to call my own; He is getting His works done by me; verily nothing belongs to me.’—If you can do what you call your duties with this attitude, then they will do you no harm, your works will no longer bind you. ‘This thing belongs to me, that is mine;’—this attitude you must banish from your mind; and in its stead say: ‘Everything is God’s, even my very self; I am placed here by His sweet Will, and I shall be removed hence the moment He wills it.’ Let this be your principle. Do not identify yourself with the things of the world, yea, with none of them.

Do your duties in this light; and also do them thoroughly and well, so that people may not read your real motive and blame you for that. But in the heart of hearts know, earthly things you have none; to them let happen what may. God is the Doer and you the instrument. Through you He will get done what He likes to be done.

D.:—Maharaj, in my attempt to do work in this light, if at times I forget the true motive, if egotism asserts itself and if attachment prevails?

Swami:—‘Don’t depress yourself, no, never depress.’ If at times you forget your true motive, never mind. Begin once more with redoubled energy and see that it does not recur again. Doubts and confusions? Who can kill them before God-realisation. They will come and they will go. That is their nature. But don’t get dejected. Shake off despair, shake off disappointment, shake off doubts; no compromise. Infinite tenacity and infinite energy. ‘To do or die—let this be your motto.’ God, you must realise; this time, in this very life you must have to see Him. In vain your being, in vain your mind, in vain your life, everything in vain, if you cannot realise Him here in this very life. Boldly say: ‘What shall I do with the body, what is the use of the mind, if I cannot see God with them? What do I care if they perish? Let them be or go, but God I must see; by all means I must see Him.’

INDIA AND THE WORLD-PROBLEM

The *Vedanta Kesari* enters upon the 15th year of its existence with the dawn of this new year, and on this auspicious occasion we offer our salutations to the Lord whose unbounded grace has sustained us all through our arduous journey. We offer, as well, our heartfelt greetings to our readers and sympathisers, friends and admirers, who have evinced an unfailing interest in all our activities and encouraged us to carry the sacred message of the *Vedanta* to the doors of many, and to extend thereby the frontiers of the kingdom of spirituality established on the eternal verities of Religion. Our attempts have always been to recognise the truth of every religion and to cement the ties of human relations with the sublime teachings of the *Vedanta*, that awaken in every individual a consciousness of the potential divinity of man and seek to establish a spiritual fraternity on the noble idealism of Oneness in the diversity of beings. It has been our sacred mission, as well, to stem the tide of materialism that is sweeping over the land and is dividing mankind into petty hostile camps. We have spared no pains to demonstrate to the world at large the greatness of Spirit over matter and the special contribu-

tion of India towards the establishment of world-peace on the basis of the universalism of the Vedantic ideal. We, in our humble service, need the ungrudging support and co-operation of our readers and friends whose number, we are glad to note, is ever on the increase. We sincerely believe that the time is not far when, through a proper assimilation of the universal principles of the Vedanta, the entire outlook of international life would be changed, the clash of arms now ringing in the ears of the jaded humanity will be quashed into silence, and the star of peace shall reign supreme in the firmament of the world. We pray to the Lord that He may give us the necessary strength to render service to the humanity at large, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality with an undying faith in His infinite grace.

The question of world-peace has been the table-talk of to-day; and the problem did never so prominently become a subject of international discussion and so seriously tax the best brains of the East and the West as it has done to-day. Instances are not wanting when in the past many great master-minds met together in *pourparlers* to find out a lasting panacea for all human ills and thereby to cry a permanent halt to the interminable cycle of worries and troubles. But the militaristic policy of the European nations, instead of minimising war, has only helped the disintegration of mankind into hostile groups to the utter negation of the homogeneity of international life. The modern political history of the world reveals almost the same state of things as obtained even several centuries back with only this difference that the imperialistic tendencies among the ruling races of to day have all the more increased in proportion as the democratic principles have suffered a set-back in their mad pursuit after material gain. The Machiavellian philosophy of state-dynamics that fraud and force are the most convenient methods for the strangulation of weaker people was utilised by the ruling nations to their best advantage in the past as it is being done to-day. It is not therefore a matter of surprise that this subtle political philosophy has served only to keep the belligerent nations in a state of "suspended animation" during times of peace, and to call forth during times of war bloody scenes of violence and rapine amidst the pitiful cry of oppressed humanity.

It is now an undeniable fact of history that the attempts of the "peace-makers" of the West to establish peace on the quick

sand of militarism and on the unstable basis of the adjustment of political, economical, and territorial interests of nations have produced no appreciable results but have only broadened the way for the extension of their "sphere of influence" and political jobbery, to boot, and prepared fresh chains of slavery for helpless people. The Roman imperialism of yore, the 'benevolent' autocracy of Mediaeval Europe and Napoleonic regime of the 19th century sink into insignificance before the magnitude of political camouflage and duplicity resorted to in the arena of modern politics to determine the relation of international life. The last Armageddon of 1914 to which moth-like all the nations of the East and the West flung themselves, heedless of consequences, is nothing but a prelude to a mightier and graver political catastrophe that awaits them in the near future. It is, therefore, vain to expect these self-forgetful warring nations to run deep into the very root of the present chaotic state of things and to evolve a comprehensive scheme for ushering in an era of peace and order out of the present welter of strife and disorder.

But the world seems to have grown too sick of this orgy of bloodshed and internecine warfare. In spite of appalling craze for self-aggrandisement and political domination there has grown up a natural tendency to draw a final curtain over this tragic drama of international wars and political jugglery. The teeming millions are looking up to the East with all the intensity of soul for a healthy balm that shall assuage the unending worries and bitterness of life and sweeten the relation between man and man. Rank materialism is now stinking in the nostrils of many a weary soul. Even "modern" Christianity has miserably failed to rise above parochial patriotism or the banalities of Europeanism and proved its inefficiency to tackle the serious problems of the world. The Asiatics—the unwary victims of the deceptive snares of Occidental civilisation are showing unmistakable signs of awakening as well as a grim determination to cast off the veil of superstitious fear that had so long checked the all round growth of their individuality. A stirring is now manifest in every department of life. An irresistible tendency for intellectual freedom, social, and political emancipation from the octopus of Western culture marks the beginning of a new era in the annals of the East.

Of all the countries in Asia, India, though now politically effete and economically atrophied, has ever stood resplendent in

the forefront of nations with the message of love and spirituality in her gift inspite of her political vicissitudes. For the wreath of Indian life is strung not with the iron-thread of politics but with the golden string of spirituality—the matrix of its strength and inspiration. From time immemorial India has played the role of a world-teacher and has sent forth waves of spiritual ideas to mould the destinies of mankind. The bead-roll of Indian prophets and seers from remote antiquity up to the present day points to the same conclusion. The humanising teachings of these sages and prophets wrought phenomenal changes in the thought-world of humanity. The resplendent personality of Lord Buddha looms even now clear and distinct through the mists of centuries, and the world best knows how the tidal wave of Buddhism at one time broke down the artificial barriers and quenched the spiritual thirst of one-third of humanity in the remote past. An enlightened soul as he was, "his heart beat with each throb of all the hearts that ached known and unknown" and he embraced the suffering mankind with all the catholicity of a Saviour. He stood as an angel of love and freedom to work out the liberation of the sunken people. This is in fact one of the many instances of how India responded to the spiritual needs of men at different periods of her career. To day again in this age of cultural conflicts and rank materialism India has stepped out from her position of political seclusion to take up the role of a world-teacher to broaden and spiritualise the cribbed vision of man.

Militarism was never a determining factor in Indian life. The Indian culture with a spacious spiritual background has always toned down every form of militarism by its liberalising force, and never suffered 'matter' to predominate over 'spirit'. To-day the world with its numerous sects and communities, different teachers and doctrines, has been transformed into a hopeless welter of chaos and disorder, and it is needless to point out that without a living and universal religion that can restore the missing string in the instrument of harmony and spiritualise the relation between man and man, the world would have no respite from worries and wars. The Western nations have almost exhausted the whole armoury of their cultural achievements, spiritual and secular, to solve the problem of world-peace, but they have been found sadly wanting in their efficacy. The world in hopeless confusion has turned to India—the light of

Asia—for an immediate solution of this complexity of life. The Vedanta, it must be admitted, is the only synthetic philosophy that possesses all the elements requisite for the happy adjustment of disturbed relations among men of different climes. In fact, it is Vedanta and Vedanta alone that can satisfactorily meet the demands of the age and promote a feeling of fellowship among the adherents of various religious systems of the world. What other religion but Hinduism has ever unlocked the secret of the Oneness of Spirit that dwells as a permanent link in and through the diverse manifestations of the cosmic universe? Vedanta—the crown of Hindu philosophy—is a bold challenge to the materialistic world and establishes the homogeneity of international life inspite of manifold differences in human activities. It breaks down the artificial barriers that have narrowed down the intellectual outlook of each race or nation and asserts with a triumphant note that until and unless the knowledge of the potential divinity of man and the oneness of human existence bursts upon the self-forgetful mankind and the transcendent idealism of Vedanta is accepted as the background of future activities in the scheme of individual or international life, no amount of political shibboleths shall ever establish peace in this world of unrest.

The responsibility of India was never so great as it is to day. The throbbing heart of Europe wants a life-giving, spiritual message from the East to counteract the baneful influence of materialism. It is indeed gratifying to note that at this psychological hour India has again undertaken to fulfil her noble mission—the mission of unlocking the treasures of her culture and bringing within the reach of every one, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality, the sacred message of the East—the message of the spiritual oneness of humanity. The banner has already been planted in various centres of material culture and has commanded the spontaneous homage of many a noble soul. Our Vedantic view of life has been accepted in many quarters as the only basic principle to determine human relations. What is now needed is the immediate orientation of the Western psychology to the transcendent doctrines of the Vedanta philosophy. This radical change in the angle of vision in the light of this spiritual ideal is the sine qua non of the elimination of racial prejudices, political megalomania and the evolution of a spirit of hearty co-operation and brotherhood amongst all. It is, thus, Vedanta and Vedanta alone that shall

prove the absurdity of the pithy apothegm of the poet that "East is East, and West is West ; and never the twain shall meet." Let us hope that the voice of the East shall not go unheard and that the universalism of the Vedantic ideal shall usher in an era of peace unprecedented in the annals of mankind, and unite the various races with divergent proclivities and achievements on a platform of brotherhood, and put an end to the orgy of bloody struggles that have so long blackened the pages of history.

Om ! Shantih ! Shantih ! Shantih !

IMAGE-WORSHIP IN HINDUISM

(By Swami Iswarananda)

Blessed are those that can realize God by breaking images and blessed are those that realize Him by worshipping images. This was the thought that naturally arose in my mind when I heard that a learned Professor, a Hindu, gave a harangue on the evils of image-worship and called upon us all to throw away idols into the Arabian Sea and raze the temples to the ground. We are all Hindus and our religion being one of toleration and inclusion, we need not be ashamed of that. According to us any way, or any method, if it will help us on towards realizing God is true and valid. Therefore if it can be proved that a man can realize God by breaking images, may the Lord bless him and grant that he may have as many images as he likes to break.

Nothing is acceptable now-a-days without a scientific explanation. Therefore you have to invent some scientific superstitions, if you do not know anything better. It has been discovered to our cost that the Hindus put on sacred ashes as a cold-preventive and Chandanam or sandal paste for curing head-ache ! They make *prostration* before gods, because it is a good exercise and helps to develop the calf-muscles. Similarly the sacred Havan must have been kept up, they said, by the ancient Aryans for the purification of the atmosphere. It would not have surprised me in the least if they had also said that the Hindus chant the *Pranava* (Om), for clearing the throat of phlegm !

Aye, they discovered for us that an image made of clay could be knocked down by a rat ! Ignorance in children is excusable, but grown up men and learned professors ought to have known a bit of Indian History. They ought to have heard of the famous sacks of

the temple of Somnath and of the thousand and one other temples throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan by the Mahamedan invaders. They ought to have known that scarcely had the fire of a burning temple died out before twenty others raised their domes and towers in its neighbourhood. They ought to have known that we Hindus want no ghost to tell us that images made out of clay could be broken and powdered to dust. And yet the Hindu clings tenaciously to the image and the temple. What is the secret of it ? What is the explanation ? Let the wise ponder, before they rush to condemn.

An image is a poor little clay thing. It is powerless even to protect itself. Therefore, throw it away, says one section of the follower of the Vedas. Once a Christian Missionary was preaching to a Hindu crowd in the streets of Calcutta. When he reached the climax of his zeal he asked, if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick, what could it do. A boy in the audience sharply answered, 'If I abuse your God what can He do ?' 'You would be punished,' said the preacher, 'when you die.' 'So my idol will punish you when you die,' retorted the Hindu.

Therefore by the same weapon with which you break the idol you break your God as well. What can the Brahman of the Vedas do to me if I abuse Him ? What will become of me if I burn the Vedas themselves ? We will have therefore to stop according to their logic all talk about God and religion. That is my reply to the argument from the historical 'rat incident.' The Hindu knew it very well. They saw to what absurd conclusions it would lead. And they also knew only too well the fallacy in the argument. The Hindu does not and cannot worship a God who would have stood up and fought a duel with a tiny imp of a rat, however much it might have satisfied the ideal of certain reform-sects. A God who could be teased and provoked to a duel by mischievous rats, might be very good for baby minds, but the Hindus know better. They would not care to notice such a God or his image.

Here arises a very pertinent question. God is eternal, without any form, omnipresent. Is it not then a blasphemy to think of Him possessing a form ? Form is limitation and it cannot be eternal. Again God is spirit. He is pure *chit*, the very essence of consciousness and knowledge. Is it not then a sin to worship Him in dead matter, in the insentient *Jada* ? Not at all, declares Vedanta ; for there is in fact no such thing as Matter. The Vedas say : All that exists is the Lord and Lord alone. He is One without a second. There

is nothing here other than Himself. The wise who sees the omnipresent, supreme Atman as bodiless, within the bodies, as unchanging among changing things, goes beyond all sorrows. Therefore it is the greatest blasphemy to say that He does not exist in the image. What you call matter appears to be insentient and lifeless, because of our ignorance. Dr. J. C. Bose has proved by his experiments to the whole world that even minerals and metals have got life, though the manifestation of it to our perception is in the lowest degree. It has been shown that even they react to external stimuli, because they have got life. The more subtle the instrument of perception, the greater becomes the immanent divinity visible to us. Our inner instrument of perception is covered by *Tamas* and *Rajas* and so we do not see the divinity in the clay. When the mind becomes purified, the clay is no more clay. It is sentience itself, it is *Akhanda Satchidananda*. A learned man once asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Sir, one may hold that God is with form. But surely He is not the earthen images that are worshipped." Sri Ramakrishna replied, "But my dear sir, why should you call it an earthen image. Surely the Image Divine is made of spirit." He who cannot see God in the clay image is therefore an atheist, says Vedanta. To say that the image is mere clay is rank materialism. It is against the teachings of the Vedas.

What then is the meaning of this image-worship? It is, says Bhagavan Ramanuja,—the concentrated effort of the mind to see the Reality, the Brahman in a thing which is taken by the ignorant for something else than Brahman. The symbol may be anything, a divine incarnation, a *Mukta purusha*, a Deva, any being or a tree, stone, or a stick. But the greater the manifestation of divinity that already exists in the *Pratika* or image, the greater the association of purity and holiness, love and mercy, freedom and the like with the *Pratika*, the fitter does it become an object for worship. That is why the divine incarnations and God-men come first in the scale of worshipful objects. A Buddha, a Krishna, a Christ, or a Ramakrishna Paramahansa has manifested attributes of divinity on a far greater scale than you and I could ever think of. In fact our idea of God is very little and it is through these great gigantic souls that we get a glimpse of the Reality that lies beyond. So also the gods of mythology. These gods are not mere imaginations, as many of us may believe; these are aspects and forms in which the Supreme Reality was vouchsafed to the devotee. In whatever form, in whatever aspect, the devotee wants to see God, in that form the all-merciful One, the all-knowing One, the all-loving One

reveals Himself for the sake of His devotee. How absurd it is to think that He cannot take a form at His will? And the testimony of hundreds of devotees and saints, not only of Hinduism but of other faiths, who had proved by their life that they had nothing to gain by speaking untruth, who had given up all desires for money, name, fame, and position—the testimony of these messengers of truthfulness goes to show that these forms of gods can be actually seen, by any one through sincere *Bhakti*. The gods of mythology therefore are forms in which the Lord revealed Himself to many a devotee and therefore they are some of the best *Pratikas* or images of God.

There is however one danger against which the worshipper should guard himself. If the ideal supreme Brahman is Himself, dragged down by image-worship to the level of the *Pratika*, that is, if the supreme Reality, God, is taken to be of the size, shape, colour, and qualities of the Deva or the image, the worshipper gets entirely misled, as no *Pratika* can be the Atman of the worshipper. But where Brahman Himself is the object of worship and the *Pratika* stands only as a substitute or a suggestion thereof the worship is not only positively beneficial, but is absolutely necessary for all mankind, until the devotees have got beyond the preparatory state of mind regarding worship. Therefore when the *Pratikas* of any Devas or other beings are looked upon as Brahman and worshipped as such, the result obtained is the same as worshipping the Iswara. Thus it is that a Deva or a sage or a saint is idealised into Brahman and then worshipped. For is not everything Brahman when the name and form has been removed from it?—Says the Advaitin. Is not God the innermost self of every one?—Says the Vishistadvaitin. The very same man who kneels before the idol will tell you, "Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars. The very lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire. Through Him do all shine."

The idea of a personal God, of an all-knowing acting Power from whom this universe comes into being, in whom it exists, who is the ruling power of this universe, who is all love, mercy, freedom, purity and blessing—such an idea of God has obtained in almost every religion except a few. With the exception of Buddhism and Jainism perhaps all the religions of the world have the idea of a God and with it comes the idea of worship and devotion. Though the Buddhists and Jains have not personal God yet they worship the founders of their religions almost in the same way as the worshippers of God worship their Deity. Through out the history of the world

we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through forms or symbols. The Christian must have his church and the cross. He must look up to the sky in prayer. The Roman Catholic Church is full of images of the saints. The Protestants, when they pray have so many images in their minds. The Muhammadan, when he prays imagines himself to be standing in the temple of Kaaba. He prays at the tombs of the saints. He does not believe in image-worship and yet Al Ghazzali in his book of worship gives the following injunction, "Know that when you stand for prayer, you stand before Allah, He being your examiner. Stand before Him as you stand before some earthly king, if you are unable to perceive the extent of His Majesty." Among the Jews idol-worship is condemned, but they had a temple, in which was kept a chest which they called an ark wherein the tables of their sacred laws were preserved, and above the chest stood two figures of angels with wings outstretched, between which the divine presence was supposed to manifest itself as a cloud. A section of the Hindu religious reformers, lured by the iconoclastic spirit of the West decry image-worship, but if the image is in sound, if the symbol is the Pranava (Om), then it is alright. What is the meaning of quarrel, then?

There is another peculiarity with Hinduism, which we must all take note of. The whole religion of the Hindus is centred in realization. Man is to become divine by realizing the Divine. Idols, temples, churches, books are only the supports, the help of his tottering spiritual childhood; it is the kindergarten of religion, but on and on he must progress. He should not stop anywhere. He must go beyond the necessity of images, beyond even the necessity of a God outside until he comes face to face with Reality, until he realizes God in his own self. So it is said—it is very good to be born in a church, but it is very bad to die in a church. It is good to have certain forms and rituals in the beginning, but surely every one in the long run should go beyond the bounds of forms and rituals. "External worship, material worship," say the Vedas, "is the lowest stage; struggling to rise high, mental prayer is the next stage; but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realized." Aye, ours the only scriptures in the world, which have again and again declared that man must go even beyond the scriptures, beyond the Vedas. It is said that the famous Trailanga Swami in his later days used to lie down with his feet resting on a Sivalingam which he used to worship in his earlier days, because to him everything was Brahman, his feet as well as the Sivalingam. And yet people would offer their worship with Ganges water and flower to that very same image and

those blessed feet. The Hindu, therefore, instinctively knows that the man of realization may give up all worship and that they would also worship the images in order to set an example to those who are struggling on the way. Therefore if anybody says that the images are to be kept for ever, he is certainly wrong.

Nor should any one who has passed beyond that stage call it an error. Is childhood or youth a mistake? Is manhood alone true and right? According to the Hindus, man does not rise "from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. To him all religions from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each conditioned by the circumstances of its birth and associations; each of these marks a stage of progress," and the lower stage is not to be condemned because you have passed beyond it. Remember that even the uncompromising Advaitin Bhagavan Sankar and Vidyaranya Swami recommended image-worship and Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna after scaling the dizzy heights of realization did the same.

Nor is the use of images compulsory in Hinduism. The Hindu does not say that those who discard the help of images cannot realize God. Unity in variety is the plan of nature and the Hindu has recognised it. "The Hindus have discovered that the Absolute can only be realized or thought of or stated through the relative and that images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols, so many pegs to hang the spiritual idea upon." It is not that this help is necessary for every one, but it is so for many; and those who do not need it themselves have no right to say that it is wrong or unnecessary for any one. Idolatry in Hinduism, therefore, does not mean anything horrible.

SUPREME KNOWLEDGE AND THE MAN OF REALIZATION

(By. C. Leik)

When one no longer is satisfied with intellectual gymnastics, he strives for the spiritual and spiritual realisation, the ultimate goal of which is Self-Knowledge.

To the aspiring one there may be many teachers, even invisible ones, to lead him gradually on to higher and higher truths. With childlike faith in his Guru and ever conscious of his presence, loyal

and obedient, he waits for the teaching in patience and submission. In the higher spiritual states there is a law, that the faith of a trusting child can never be betrayed. And just as pupils at school are passing from standard to standard and teacher to teacher, till they are ripe for matriculation, so also in the spiritual unfoldment one may derive inspiration from the lives and teachings of men leading the spiritual life, till he feels an intense yearning to come face to face with Truth and then the Divine Mother Herself condescends to take him under Her direct guidance and tuition and sends to him his Guru, when the time is ripe, to lead him safely beyond the world of Maya to the realisation of Absolute Reality. Indeed, She Herself appears as his Guru through Her sons, who have attained Illumination. She, the All powerful One knows best, what is beneficial to Her children and it depends upon Her grace, whether the more studious of Her children is to attain Self-Realisation by becoming merged in the Impersonal and Absolute. One moment She is the Universe and Intelligent Cosmic Energy and in another the Unconditioned and Absolute. The Divine Mother and the Impersonal are one and the same and cannot be separated one from the other.

Can the realisation of the most High be expressed in frail human language, when even all that an earthly mother feels for her child fails description? The Divine Mother knows the great temptation there lies in this Self-Realisation of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, of the Ocean, on the surface of which man is but a mere ripple and a world-teacher only a wave. Would there be any meaning for the return to the world of Illusion and super imposition, when Maya is perceived as a projection from That, the eternal Ocean of Divinity and Impersonality? So there was a promise given, to return unto Maya and work in Maya by showing his other selves the way out of Maya. And thus the return-journey, though repulsive, had to be made.

But what a change has taken place in that hour of liberation! No longer is he, the Witness, limited to Time, Space and the Law of Causation. Spiritual Wisdom and Divine Love have become one—Wisdom tempered by Love and the latter guided by the former. The subtle workings of Maya no longer can deceive him who has learnt to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. He has returned to love and serve and to radiate light and warmth, like a spiritual Sun, towards all beings, from the meanest to the highest, not wishing to know, who may be the recipients of those rays and whether they are conscious of the source of those rays.

The experience of Self-Realisation is never lost. He no longer needs to quote authorities for the support of his teachings, since this realisation has become his all-sufficing authority. To his inner gaze there is revealed the great Plan of the Divine Mother, where in the course of Kalpas and Maha-Kalpas one link fits exactly into another, making a harmonious Whole, each being playing its allotted part, all perfection and done in the best and only possible way.

Thus, viewing the Kaleidoscopic panorama of that great Play from the centre, with the right perspective and objectively, he no longer is distressed or elated by the pairs of opposites, knowing peace eternal to be beyond them both. Many deaths did he, the emancipated one, pass through in the fiery furnace of soul-agony and inward loneliness, ere that Peace, which passeth understanding, entered his being.

What are sex, family, race, nation, country, scriptures and religions to him, who now lives in the great Unity and the bodi-less, time-less, form-less, and thought-less consciousness? He has risen to the state of spiritual sexlessness, in which the male and female principles of wisdom and love have become united in one and the same being and the whole humanity has become his family. How can he belong to that race, or be of such a nationality and creed, when only the 'genus homo' has a meaning to him? Scriptures, religions, and spiritual practices were a help on the way, by pointing to the supreme goal, whence he has voluntarily returned.

Knowing that the greatest workers are to be found in the darkest spheres of ignorance and spiritual darkness, where the less strong ones like plants reared in a hot house, tender and beautiful to gaze upon, would break down under the heavy burden of density, he has chosen to work there, where the need is greatest.

Does he shun woman, whom he has come to look upon as the representative of the Divine Mother on earth,—whose spiritually beautiful and noble life might have taught him true spiritual refinement? And was it not in woman, in whom first he realised his Divine Mother? And did she not reveal to him the divine mission of womanhood—she, to whom was entrusted the care of the life-to-be had to spiritualize herself, so as to raise, by her subtle influence, man from sensuality and conceited intellectuality to higher and higher spirituality?

The Divine Mother is always nearest to Her child and ever ready to respond to his call. There is none of that gulf or distance between them, which man, in his ignorance, has set up between himself and his fellow-beings. It was only the blind intellect that

created all these ideas of distinction, as of race, nation, creed and social position among the children of the one Divine Mother, who were born alike and visited by Death in the same way.

The urge of Evolution is to manifest in higher and higher forms. Are we so sure, that it has come to a stop with the human kingdom? Can the man of Self-Knowledge not view humanity objectively, as an ordinary man views the lower kingdoms? Ever is the Divine Mother teaching him to dwell in the Eternal and Unity underlying all life, ever revealing to him That, which is the all-embracing, all-penetrating and changeless in a world of constant change and diversity, that Oneness, in which all beings have become ourselves.

Now he understands the great sacrifice a world-teacher makes in taking human birth and why those saviours of mankind never put their living teachings on paper, leaving this for the disciples to do. When heart speaks to heart and soul communes with soul in the silent soul-language, what meaning would have there the medium of a dead letter, put on paper?

Oh, that compassion, when it was so easy, and one was so willing to let his life-blood ebb out to save even the meanest of creatures! Oh, that Love, when with one's whole being one could exclaim: 'Come all ye, that are troubled and heavy-laden and I will give ye rest!'

Are these spiritual experiences and realisations mere ideals, unattainable in this Kali-Yuga? Or perhaps only idle day-dreams of one, who fails to take facts in life as such and count with them? Or, may be, hallucinations of one, who has lost his mental equilibrium and is haunted by Utopian pictures, the magic conjuring of the subtle forces of Maya— all outcome of the unbalanced mind and a diseased brain? Verily, the world is ever ready to condemn, what it fails to understand.

But he, being in the world, is not of the world and waits in patience and childlike faith for his Divine Mother's call, when the mission She charged him with, has been fulfilled.

Thou art That;—the realisation of the Self as the Witness and Onlooker is always the eternal background and refuge, whenever diversity threatens to cover the Unity underlying all. Peace to all beings.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

As An Incarnation of the Indian Genius

(Continued from the April issue)

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

It is most fitting that I should sum up the life and work of Sri Ramakrishna in the words of the great Professor Max Muller who was a great lover of India and of the Indian genius. He says in his work on *The life and sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*:—"Ramakrishna was in no sense of the word an original thinker, the discoverer of a new idea or the propounder of any new view of the world. But he saw many things which others had not seen; he recognised the divine presence where it was least expected; he was a poet, an enthusiast, or if you like, a dreamer of dreams. But such dreams also have a right to exist, and have a claim on our attention and sympathy. Ramakrishna never composed a philosophical treatise; he simply poured out short sayings, and the people came to listen to them, whether the speaker was at the time in full possession of his faculties, or in a dream, or in a trance. From an ordinary Samadhi a man may recover as one recovers from a fainting fit, but the true Samadhi consists in losing oneself or finding oneself entirely in the Supreme Spirit. From this Samadhi there is no return because there is nothing left that can return. A few men only who have reached it are enabled to return from it by means of a small remnant of their Ego, and through the efficacy of their wish to become the instructors and saviours of mankind."

I shall now refer to a few of the great sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and shall show presently how his life, his personality, and his utterances have been among the finest incarnations of the Indian genius and are among the proudest possessions of the Indian spirit. I shall refer here only to the sayings relating to the soul, the *Sadhanas*, and the Supreme and to a few miscellaneous sayings and parables.

The soul

"As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God."

"Like unto a miser that longeth for gold, let thy heart pant after Him."

"Woman and wealth have drowned the whole world in sin. Woman is disarmed when you view her as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. God cannot be seen so long as the love for woman and wealth is not extinguished."

"When does a man get his salvation? Then only when his egoism dies."

Sadhana

"Pure knowledge and pure love are both one and the same."

"He who does not find God within himself will never find Him outside of himself. But he who sees Him in the temple of his own soul sees Him also in the temple of the universe."

"When all personality is effaced, then one realises the knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi."

"Anandam or enjoyment of perfect bliss within is one of the signs of God-vision."

"The realisation of God is of two kinds:—The one is the unification of the Jivatman and Paramatman; and the other is to see Him in his personal manifestation. The former is called Jnanam and the latter Bhakti."

"As a lamp brought into a room which has been in darkness for a thousand years, illumines it immediately, even so the light of Jnanam illumines the Jiva, and dispels his age-long ignorance."

"The Guru is a mediator. He brings man and God together even as a match-maker brings together the lover and the beloved."

"The hearing of the truth from the lips of the preceptor makes a greater impression on the mind than the mere reading of books; but the seeing makes the greatest impression."

"As the drowning man pants hard for breath, so must one's heart yearn after the Lord before one finds Him."

"Meditate on God either in an obscure corner, or in the solitude of forests, or within the silent sanctuary of your own heart."

"The easiest way of concentrating the mind is to fix it on the flame of a candle."

"If a man is convinced that the images of the gods and the goddesses he worships are indeed divine, he reaches divinity."

"He who has faith has all, and who lacks faith, lacks all."

"God is seen when the mind is perfectly tranquil."

"The two characteristics of Prema are, first, forgetfulness of the external world, and, second, forgetfulness of one's body."

"Visit not the miracle-mongers and the exhibition of occult powers. These men are stragglers from the path of Truth."

"Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God."

"Sandhya loses herself in Gayatri. Gayatri loses herself in Pranava. The Pranava in the end loses itself in Samadhi. So all Karma (Sandhya or the like) ultimately loses itself in Samadhi."

"His steps never falter who has taken refuge in Him."

"God is to be reached by child-like faith and gentleness."

"The child-moon is upon me; I behold the Lord within and without."

"So long as one does not become simple like a child, one does not get the divine illumination."

"Let the householder do his work with one hand, and touch the feet of the Lord with the other."

"Do not let water get into the boat; let the boat be in water."

God

"The same Being whom the Vedantists call Brahman is called Atman by the Yogis and Bhagavan by the Bhaktas."

"God is beyond mind and intellect so long as they are bound within relativity, but He manifests Himself to them when they are purified."

"God is in all men but all men are not in God, and that is why they suffer."

"Her devout sons only see Her by going near Her behind the screen of Maya."

"God with form is visible, yea, we can touch Him and talk to Him face to face as with our own dearest friend."

"God is formless and God is possessed of form too. And He is also that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone knows what all He is."

"The perfect man alone can see the Divine forms."

"God the absolute and the personal are one and the same."

"He is the Absolute and again His is the Lila. This Lila is of four kinds,—Iswara Lila, Deva Lila, Jagat Lila, and Nara Lila."

"Why does the God-lover find such ecstatic pleasure in addressing his God as Mother? Because the child is freer with the mother than with anybody else, and consequently to it She is dearer than all."

"Many have seen the king, but how very few can entertain him as a guest in their homes!"

Miscellaneous

"He who exerts to make himself free is the real preacher."

"Honour both spirit and form, the sentiment within as well as the symbol without."

"That knowledge which purifies the mind and heart is alone the true knowledge; all else is only negation of knowledge."

"Do yourself what you wish others to do."

"What is the strength of a devotee? He is a child of God, and tears are his greatest strength."

"The vain man of intellect is uselessly busy in finding out the 'why and wherefore' of creation, while the humble man of wisdom makes acquaintance with the Creator and enjoys supreme bliss in this world."

"The difference between the modern Brahmoism and Hinduism is like the difference between the single note of music and the whole music. The modern Brahmos are content with the single note of Brahman, while the Hindu religion is made up of several notes producing a sweet and melodious harmony."

"All are mad in this world; some are mad after wealth, some after power, some after carnal appetites, some after God. If drowning is to be the fate of man, it is better to be drowned in an ocean of milk than in a pool of filth."

"It is the sign of knowledge that when it dawns full on a man, he become silent. Then the salt doll of 'I' melts away into the Ocean becoming one with it,—there remains not even the slightest consciousness of separateness."

I wonder if it is really necessary to say anything more on such a man and such a life—such a divine man and such a divine life. Is it necessary to moralise, to state the implications and applications, to add a human commentary to a text divine? It does not look so at all. Left to myself, I would stop here. But as a slave of convention I proceed. The first reason for my affirmation that Sri Ramakrishna is one of the first incarnations of the Indian genius is his dower of great personal qualities. We find in him those sterling Indian qualities of *Santhi*, *Ahimsa*, *Viveka* and *Vairagya*, (peace, non-injury, discrimination, and dispassion), which are the pivotal and central elements of the Indian genius. We find in him the traits of insight and vision and faculty divine which are the inalienable possessions of the Indian spirit. We find in him the characteristics of serenity and sanity and synthesis and sweetness which are the *differentia* of the Indian outlook on life. He was no maker of sects. The malady of sect-formation is a recent malady in the history of India. But he fought resolutely against the insidious malady and won. He said:—"He, whose heart earnestly runs after the Deity, has no time to give for anything else. He who looks for fame and honour forms sects." He

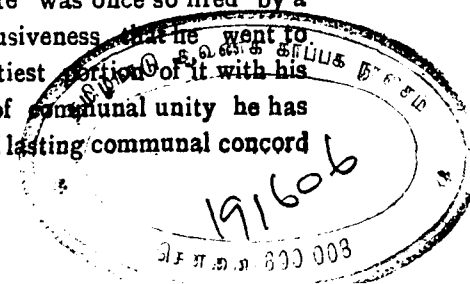
had the Divine Mother's command (*Adesha*) to utter Her to the world, and hence he spoke, and men came in thousands to hear him. He never sought fame and glory for himself. He says:—"At last I perceived the Mother's command, 'Remain at the threshold of relative consciousness for the sake of humanity'." He says again:—"Therefore I say, your lecturer must not be an ordinary man. He must be a person armed with credentials,—clothed with authority from the Most High. He must be one who has received his commission from Him."—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna I, 224). He once told Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani:—"When I first heard of you I inquired if you were mere book-learned man or had discrimination and renunciation. A scholar without discrimination is a nonentity. There is no harm in playing the teacher's role if one has got the command of God. Such a preacher is invincible. One ray of light from the Goddess of Learning is sufficient to overthrow the brightest intellects. Moths come of themselves to the lighted lamp. They come in thousands and no one has to call them. Similarly the man who has received divine commandment need not invite people to his lectures, announcing the time. The magnet never invites a piece of iron to come to it. It is attracted automatically. Therefore I ask you if you have got the command." He said on another occasion:—"And what man can dare to procure freedom from the world for other men, unless he has found the Lord and received His ordination direct from Himself, and has been empowered with His power?" It is this sense of absolute and measureless dependence on God as the inspirer, the comforter, the uplifter, and the bliss-giver of the human soul which is the greatest and most distinguishing trait of the Indian temperament and of the mind of Sri Ramakrishna who was one of the truest and finest incarnations of the Indian temperament. Sri Ramakrishna saw life steadily and saw it whole. His nature was one of singular serenity, balance, and calm equipoise. Such poise in the empyrean of the higher life is not a minimisation of human energy but rather a maximisation of human energy, like that of a *garuda* poised on outstretched wings and uttering Sri Krishna's name in longing and yearning melancholy. Sri Ramakrishna's life was true to the kindred points of heaven and home, as he belonged to the type of the wise who soar but never roam. He never fled away from earthly life nor did he shun heaven with loathing as some do today. His mind never made a hell of heaven but could make a heaven of earth and hell. He sublimated and adorned whatever he touched. Sex-life was irradiated with the life spiritual by him; and his house-holder's life was full of renunciation and his *sannyasa* was full of detached attachment and love

and sympathy and toleration and charity. When such personal characteristics were resident in a body which was fair and which had a face which was calm and had eyes lit up with a spiritual light and a tongue every utterance of which was a benignant blessing and a merciful benediction, it is no wonder that his hearers were spell-bound and were under the fascination of a personality which was the embodiment of Indianness,—an incarnation of the soul of India.

Sri Ramakrishna was an embodiment of the soul of India as much by his teachings as by his life, though of course a man's life is of even greater importance and interest and value than his teachings. Let us take first of all his teachings in regard to individual life, family life, and social life, because even in regard to them he has given us valuable guidance and they show how he was Indian to the core of his being. When Indians are abused as being supine and fatalistic, we may well remember his advice: "So raise the hood and hiss but don't bite. There is no harm in hissing at bad men, your enemies. Keep them off by showing that you are ready to give tit for tat—that you know how to resist evil. Only one must take care not to pour one's venom into the blood of one's enemy. *Resist not evil by doing evil in return. All that you may do is to make a show of resistance with a view to self-defence.*"—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol. I, page 50). He said on another occasion: "Do not bite like the serpent, but hiss like the serpent. Make thyself feared and respected. Do not injure any one, but be not injured by others." He taught how passive resistance to evil and active assistance of good should go together. It is our duty to help our fellowmen in every way. *Paropakara* (good to others) is the essence of all the books on 'morality and religion.' *Parapidana* (evil to others) is the greatest sin against God. At the same time he showed how we must not allow philanthropy to become a fetish and a craze and an obsession. He said: "First go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that inspiration and powers will come down to you and you may talk of doing good."—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol. I, page 160). He said again: "First cultivate devotion. All other things—schools, dispensaries, etc., shall, if you like, be added into you. First devotion, then work. Work, apart from devotion or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand."—(Do—page 215). He said again in regard to action and inaction: "A man who has absolute purity of mind naturally goes beyond action. He cannot work even if he tries to, or, the Lord does not allow him to work. As when a young wife is going to be a mother, she is given less and less work to do, and when the child is born she gives up the household work altogether and is

engaged with the child alone. But the ordinary man must do his work unattached, depending on the Lord—like the maid-servant in a house who does everything for her master but knows in her heart that she has her home elsewhere. This is known as Karma-Yoga. One should as far as possible take the name of the Lord and meditate on Him, while discharging one's everyday duties in an unattached way";—(Life of Sri Ramakrishna, page 346). While he inveighed against *Kamini Kanchana* (lust and avarice), he was full of a holy reverence for womanhood and accorded a high place to family life as a step in the ascent of the soul. He said: "Let the house-holder do his work with one hand and touch the feet of the Lord with the other." P. C. Muzumdar says: "He has successfully escaped the evil of carnality which he dreaded. His mother to whom he prayed, that is the Goddess Kali, made him recognise every woman as her incarnation, so that he now honours each member of the other sex as his mother. He bows his head to the ground before women, and before little girls; he has insisted upon worshipping not a few of them as a son might worship his mother. The purity of his thoughts and relations towards women is most unique and instructive. It is the opposite of the European idea. It is an attitude essentially, traditionally, gloriously national. Yes, a Hindu can honour woman." In regard to family life Sri Ramakrishna said the words which are strangely reminiscent of the words of Kasyapa Prajapati in the ever-blessed *Srimad Bhagawatha*: "What will you gain by renouncing the world? The family life is like a fort. It is easier to fight the enemy from within the fort than outside. You will be in a position to renounce the world when you can bestow three-fourths of your mind on God but not before." Sri Ramakrishna had keen artistic tastes and his criticisms of works of art were sound and valuable, and he had a sweet and vibrant voice and sang religious songs in a way which brought tears to eyes and the vision of God into hearts. His talk was musical and was full of glowing imagery. As Emerson says well: "Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be sweet and lyrical and universal as the rising of the wind..... When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love." Quite as valuable as his ideas in regard to individual life in the realms of everyday life and in regard to the life ideal in the realms of art, are his social ideas. He was once so fired by a desire to get rid of social pride and exclusiveness that he went to the hut of a Panchama and cleaned the dirtiest portion of it with his long tresses. In regard to the question of communal unity he has shown to us the only way by which real and lasting communal concord

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could be attained and maintained. He realised in a reverent way the great truths of Islam and Christianity and Buddhism and practised the *Sadhanas* revealed in those religions and had the greatest and most reverent love for the founders of all the great religions of the world. It is only by means of true love born of true understanding that we can get nearear to each other's hearts and minds and souls and realise the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In the modern age humanity is trying to realise the brotherhood of Man without trying to realise the fatherhood of God. This is like trying to build a building downwards beginning with the upper storey and working down to the basement, and is foredoomed to failure. Sri Ramakrishna was himself the best proof of the inherent and inalienable unity of feeling between the Brahmin and the non-brahmin sections of the Hindu community. He had both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins among his disciples and loved them with an equal love and uplifted both with an equal affection. Nay, his most favourite disciple on whom he lavished all the rich and divine wealth of his pure and purifying affection was a member of the great non-brahmin community—Narendra Nath who became afterwards the great Swami Vivekananda.

(To be continued.)

CHINA'S DEBT TO BUDDHIST INDIA

By Prof. Liang Chi Chao*

China's Classical Scholar

India is China's nearest and dearest brother. To say that the country of India is our brother is not a mere matter of courtesy to India. It has its foundation in history. In ancient times China did not enjoy that facility of communication which was the privilege of the races bordering the Mediterranean Sea. We suffered from the disadvantages of being shut up in one corner of eastern Asia without any means of communication with other great races and cultures. The islands in the eastern and southern oceans were populated by savages. America, on the far side of the Pacific, gave no sign of civilization. Beyond our western and northern frontiers there were

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those barbarous and ferocious races whose business it ever was to threaten and devastate, but never to help us.

It is well for us to remember that this little privilege of culture which we possess today has been handed down to us by our ancestors, who labored long within secluded boundaries, unaided and single-handed. It is also due to this seclusion of its environment that our culture gives the impression of being monotonous and conservative to an extraordinary degree.

But across our south western boundary there was a great and cultured country, India. Both in character and geography, India and China are like twin brothers. Before most of the civilized races became active, we two brothers had already begun to study the great problems which concern the whole of mankind. We had already accomplished much in the interests of humanity. India was ahead of us and we, the little brother, followed behind. But nature had not been kind. She had placed between us a vast area of unfeeling desert and two great ranges of cruel snow peaks, which separated us for thousands of years. It was not till two thousand years ago that we were given gradually to know that we had a very good elder brother on the earth. When did these two great countries begin to communicate with each other?

According to Indian history, King Asoka sent a number of missionaries to propagate Buddhist ideas. Probably some of them has travelled as far as China. Our own tradition says that in the time of the famous Chin Sze Huang (who built the great Wall) there were already more than ten Hindus, who had been to Chang-an and who were imprisoned and killed by him. Asoka and Chin Sze Huang were contemporaries and therefore this might have been true. But we need not worry over half fairy tales.

What we as historians are able to vouch for is that the first communication between us as brothers occurred in the first century of the era of Christ. From the tenth year of Han Yung Tsin to the fifth year of Tang Chen Yuan (67—789 A. D.), roughly during eight hundred years, the Hindu Scholars who came to China numbered twenty-four, to which may be added thirteen from Kashmir (which in Tang times was not recognized as part of India), thus making thirty-seven in all, not counting those who came from other countries on the eastern and western side of Chung Lin (Turkestan). Our scholars who went to India to study during the period from the western Tsin to the Tang dynasties (265—790 A. D.) numbered one hundred and eighty-seven, the names of one hundred and five of whom we can ascertain. Among the most famous from India were

Tamolosa (Dharma-raksha), Chu Shien (Buddha-bhadra), and Chen Ti (Jina-chandra) and from China, Fa Hien, Yuan Chuang and I-Tsing.

During the period of seven or eight hundred years, we lived like affectionate brothers, loving and respecting one another. And now we are told that, within recent years, we have at last come into contact with civilized races. Why have they come to us? They have come coveting our land and our wealth; they have offered us as presents cannon balls dyed in human blood; their factories manufacture goods and machines which daily deprive our people of their crafts. But we two brothers were not like that in the days gone by. We were both devoted to the cause of the universal truth, we set out to fulfil the destiny of mankind, we felt the necessity for co operation. We Chinese specially felt the need for leadership and direction from our elder brothers, the people of India. Neither of us was stained in the least by any motive of self interest—of that we had none.

During the period when we were most close and affectionate to each other, it is a pity that this little brother had no special gift to offer its elder brother, whilst our elder brother had given to us gifts of singular and precious worth, which we can never forget. Now what have we so received?

India taught us to embrace the idea of absolute freedom—that fundamental freedom of mind which enables us to shake off all the fetters of past traditions and habits as well as the present customs of a particular age,—that spiritual freedom which casts off the enslaving forces of material existence. It was not merely that negative aspect of freedom, which consists in ridding ourselves of outward oppression and slavery, but that emancipation of the individual from his own self, through which men attain great liberation, great ease and great fearlessness.

India also taught us the idea of absolute love, that pure love towards all living beings which eliminates all obsessions of jealousy, anger, impatience and disgust, which expresses itself in deep pity and sympathy for the foolish, the wicked and the sinful,—that absolute love which recognizes the inseparability between all beings, 'The equality of friend and enemy,' The oneness of myself and all things.'

But our elder brother had still something more to give. He brought us invaluable assistance in the field of literature and art.

Of minor gifts, I will enumerate only the following:—

Music—This came indirectly through Si Yu. The most popular tunes were Kan Chou, I-Chou and Liang Chou, all names of district;

in the Siu Chang and Kan Su provinces. But at that time these provinces were almost wholly under the influence of India. But from what is recorded in the history of Tang and the Book of Music, as well as in the appreciations of music found in our general literature, we can be certain that that music must have been beautiful and exquisite. The cause of such excellence is probably due to the union of Chinese and Indian modes.

Architecture—That China has been influenced by India in her architecture is an obvious fact. We have still standing a number of ruins which tell us of the glory of those olden days. The pagoda is purely Indian in origin; we never had anything like it before the days of Indian influence.

Painting—The paintings of the most ancient period of our history have disappeared. Only from the stone tablets and stone inscriptions, such as the famous Han paintings in Wu Liang Tsze and Joh Siang Shien, do we obtain a glimpse of the fine simplicity of style in the paintings of that period. The most renowned painters in our early history were Kuo Tan Wei and Kuo Hu To. They were famous for their paintings of the Buddha. It seems obvious that from the East Chin Dynasty to that of Tang there was continuous communication between India and China, and this, with its introduction of numerous Indian pictures, had a shaping influence upon Chinese art; in fact we might go further and say that we probably owe the very foundation of our Chinese painting to Indian influence. A great school continued to flourish till the North Sung Dynasty, when it was superseded by the artists of our Royal Academy. It is still regarded as embodying the classical style of Chinese painting.

Sculpture—In olden times we had engravings upon stone, but never, I think, sculpture in three dimensions before the introduction of Buddhism. But the greatest treasure we have is the group of figures at Yung Kuang, Ta Tung and Shensi, large and small, not less than a thousand in number. It is said that the style is of Gandhara in Afghanistan, the result of the meeting between the Greek and the Indian cultures. This is indeed a priceless possession of which, if it had not been for our elder brother, we should have been deprived. Incidentally, we might also mention the art of the *Kakemono*, whose origin we also owe to India. In fact in the inventory of Yuen Tsang there is a record of a number of *Kakemono*, which he brought back with him from India.

Drama—We can trace the art of drama back to the play of Fish and Dragon, which was probably a species of magic or

trickery, rather than drama in the modern sense. The earliest operatic play we know of was called Pu Tou. Modern research has shown that it was introduced from a country called Pato near Southern India, some ten thousand miles from Ta Tung.

Poetry and Fiction—To say that India influenced us even in poetry and fiction would perhaps seem astonishing. But we have reason to believe that the celebrated translation of the two great books, *Fun Pen Shen Tsai* (the life of Sakyamuni by Ashvaghosa) and *Ta Shen Chung Yen Tsin* (Mahayana Sutra), by the great Indian poet Ma Ming (Indian name unknown), did exert a decided influence upon our literature. The vast imagination and rich emotional appeal of Hindu literature opened new vistas for the Chinese poets.

Astronomy and Calendar—This special branch of science was early cultivated in China, but received further development in the Tang period, when the publication of Ju Tschu Sie showed the distinct influence of India.

Alphabet—With the introduction of Buddhism and Sanskrit a number of Indian scholars attempted to invent an alphabetical system to solve our difficulties.

Literary style—Ancient Chinese written books do not show sufficient effort at organization and therefore lack clarity of presentation. With the coming in of Buddhist classics, it began to be more systematic and consequently more lucid and logical in the exposition of ideas. Indian Logic (*Hetuvidya*) and Methodology opened a new era in China in the art of writing.

Educational Method—Exactly how education was conducted in ancient China no one is able to say, but we are quite certain that Confucius and Mencius did not resort to the method of addressing large audiences for the propagation of their teachings, and it is quite likely, therefore, that the system of formal lecturing, with which we are so familiar to-day, came from India. Further more the academies which flourished since the Tang dynasty cannot be other than Buddhist in origin.

Social Organization—The unit of Chinese society is the family. The different forms of social organization are only the family in its various modifications. Since Buddhism became popular in China, public bodies with religious and scholarly purposes, independent of the family, began to appear.

Indian thought has been entirely assimilated into our world of experience and has become an inalienable part of our consciousness

It has helped us to develop our faculties and has enabled us to achieve notable results in various fields of literary and artistic endeavour. Even if we confine our case to Buddhism itself, we find that we have made some worthy contributions to its many metaphysical systems, forming ever new schools of thought upon the foundation of the old, through the energy and application of men like Yuan Chuang; so that we may take just pride in saying that Buddhism has become as distinctly Chinese as it is Indian.

We have unfortunately been separated from one another now for at least one thousand years and have each pursued our respective lines of development. We have had calamities during these years of separation. What have we not experienced? We have been threatened, mocked, trampled upon and have suffered all possible mortifications, so much so indeed that not only have we been looked upon with contemptuous eyes, but we ourselves have begun to lose our sense of self-respect.

But we have faith in the imperishability of human endeavour, and the seeds we have sown, in spite of the many vicissitudes and inclemencies which we are passing through, will eventually bring us a harvest in the fullness of time. Do not we find an inspiring symbol in the ancient trees of the sacred wood round Confucius' tomb, reputed to have been planted by himself and his chief disciples, which though shrunk with senility and almost in a petrified state are yet capable of manifesting their hidden vitality by shooting forth new branches of tender green, when the earth is awakened to the call of Spring? Both the civilizations represented by India and China are hoary with ancient traditions, and yet I feel that there is in them the vigor of eternal youth, which shows itself to day in India in the two great personalities of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

After a thousand years of separation during which period, however, we two continued to cherish thoughts of love for each other, this elder brother of ours has once more come to us animated with fraternal sentiments. Both of us bear lines of sorrow on our faces, our hair is grey with age, we stare with a blank and vacant look as if we are just awakened from a dream; but, as we gaze on each other, what recollections and fond memories of our early youth rise in our mind,—of those days when we shared our joys and sorrows together! Now that we have once more the happiness of embracing each other we shall not allow ourselves to be separated again.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IS JESUS THE ONLY SAVIOUR ?

In his 'The ever lasting Man' Mr. Chesterton, that brilliant writer and critic of England shows his utter ignorance of the great Indian religions. We cannot understand what made this author ignore the religion of the Hindu when he wanted to place Christianity as the only religion which was blessed with the personality of God in human shape. He tells us in his interesting book that no religion of the world has declared in clear terms this Avatarhood of God and *the Bible* as the only book where we hear 'the loud assertion that this mysterious maker has visited his world in person.' 'It declares,' says the writer, 'that really and even recently, or right in the middle of historic times, there did walk into the world this original invisible being; about whom the thinkers make theories and the mythologists hand down myths; the man who made the world. That such a higher personality exists behind all things had indeed always been implied by all the best thinkers, as well as by all the most beautiful legends. But nothing of this sort had ever been implied in any of them. It is simply false to say that the other sages and heroes had claimed to be that Mysterious Master and Maker of whom the world had dreamed and disputed. Not one of them had even claimed to be anything of the sort. The most that any religious prophet had said was that he was the true servant of such a being.' "The most that any primitive myth has ever suggested was that the creator was present at the creation. But that the creator was present at scenes a little subsequent to the supper parties of Horace and talked with tax-collectors and Government officials in the detailed life of the Roman Empire and that the fact continued to be firmly asserted by the whole of that great civilization for more than a thousand years—that is something utterly unlike anything else in nature. It is the one great startling statement that man has made since he spoke his first articulate word, instead of barking like a dog. Its unique character can be used as an argument against it as well as for it. It would be easy to concentrate on it as a case of isolated insanity; but it makes nothing but dust and nonsense of comparative religion." We do not question the historicity of Christ though learned writers have doubted whether a person like Jesus lived at all. Erudite and sober-minded scholars have contended that the Jesus of *the Gospels* never lived at all, and 'that the story of the founder of Christianity is a curiously composite story of several Jewish rebels

against Rome, plus myths and pious fictions based on Old Testament predictions of a Messiah.' Renan that great French scholar, that worshipper of the good and the beautiful, declared his difficulty in arriving at so much as one page about the personage who was called Jesus which another careful student of the Bible asserted recently 'As a historical personage Jesus is unknown' and that 'in the last analysis, Jesus is derived from an induction'! We mention these only to remind that this man of letters with his sheer brilliance of diction and the scintillant glitter of his phrasing has vainly tried to carry convictions to his readers and that his pooh-poohing of the student of comparative religion in his eagerness to place Christianity on the top of the pedestal is found wanting in force when weighed in the scale of cool and dispassionate reason.

This man who moved amongst the tax-collectors of Rome—his personality has been doubted. No wonder then the personality of a Buddha has been questioned. Still less wonder when the scholars questioned the realities of Rama and Krishna whom the Hindus declare sons of God as Jesus of Mr. Chesterton was.

Some of these great ones have been recognised by the people as prophets, others as messengers of God, and others as saviours of humanity, the Incarnations of God. In the scale of graded humanity they were called prophets, messengers or saviours and each fulfilled his mission by setting an example of purity, unselfishness and all-embracing love. Mr. Chesterton is prepared to recognize the prophets and messengers but not prepared to think or speak of religions which recognise the Incarnations of God, the saviours of the world. To him Christ only spoke to the world that he and his Father were one and he that hath seen the son hath also seen the Father. The Hindu always believed in the Avatars or Incarnations of God and he placed them higher and nobler than all the teachers of the world. "They can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and most degraded characters become in one second saints at their command. They are the Teachers of all Teachers, the highest manifestations of God through man. We cannot see God except through them. We cannot help worshipping them,"—so said the Swami Vivekananda regarding these God-manifestations in blood and flesh in this earth. Such a great Teacher was the Lord Krishna who proclaimed :—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्याग्य साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

'Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails I manifest Myself. To establish virtue, to destroy evil, to save the good I come from Yuga to Yuga.' And in his person he was God manifest in the flesh—said the Lord in no uncertain terms to his beloved disciple Arjuna in the *Gita*. Nor is Lord Krishna,—who declared that he and his Father are one. "Whom do you worship, whom do you meditate? The object of worship is here present in flesh and blood. Behold! I am That * *. The whole world comes from me";—said Lord Chaitanya to his beloved disciple Srivas when the Mussalman was ruling India and a Mussalman Governor was marching his regiments to suppress the Vaishnava Sankirtans; and in quite clear terms Chaitanya told his disciple that it was no other than he himself that was bringing the Mussalman array towards him. And the Lord Chaitanya met the Mussalman host with Sankirtan, confounded the Governor and made him and his whole family take to his doctrines, and the descendants of that family live to the present day. Only a generation back did Sri Ramakrishna pass away. It is in the memory of the living people amongst us,—men who are so-called educated in modern times;—the message of this great prophet of Dakshineswar who declared, "He who was Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Rama, Chaitanya, has now become Ramakrishna." This blindness of Mr. Chesterton to other living religions, is something astonishing to us—astonishing because he is an English man—and an Englishman of all Europeans having had opportunities to come in contact with this country. When so brilliant a genius as the writer of 'The Everlasting Man' could not or would not understand the religions other than his own, we can well understand the intolerant attitude of the millions of Christians in all parts of the world. Thanks to the study of comparative religion, this attitude of the frog in the well is slowly passing away. The world is becoming awake. And the disciples of Christ are coming to recognize the 'Forgotten Christs.' Said Rev. John Hayores Holmes in the Community Church in New York a few months back,—"Jesus was not *the* Christ, but only one of the many Christs who have lived and died in history to bring a message of peace on earth, and good will to men." Universal love and universal tolerance—these have been the watchwords of all the saviours of the world whether he be Mob Tih—the Chinese, or Pharaoh Akhnaton—the Egyptian. It is gratifying to note that in spite of the Chestertons that come and pass away the world is slowly but surely coming to recognise this great message which Sri Ramakrishna in our own times gave to the world—this universal love and universal tolerance. The world therefore is bound to find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth, but in all the great Ones that have preceded him and all that are

yet to come, and the salutations of the world are bound to go to all these God-like men and women—whatever their race or clime or creed.

THE QURAN AND THE MUSSALMANS

"Islam means peace"; "Islam means obedience to divine Commandments, love and affection for the human race,"; "He is a Muslim, from whose hand and tongue no one suffers"; "Do you wish to love God? Then love his creatures"; "The Muslims believe that every religion before Islam was, in its pristine purity, Islam—the religion of Divine Commandments and human obedience! and if the purity of their teachings suffered from human interpolations, it should not allow us to speak evil of those religions and their teachers, because those teachers were the true Messengers of Allah, and were entitled to our respect and reverence"; "The Quran clearly enjoins upon Muslims to police all houses of worship * *. Abu Bakar, the first Caliph, ordered that the soldiers should not disturb non-Muslims in their worship, and should pass by their places of worship without any noise"; "To pass one night in contemplation for the benefit of the human race was more meritorious than prayers and devotions of many a night"; "Man was not born in sin, but was Muslim by birth, namely, capable of following the law, no matter whether he was born in a Muslim or a non-Muslim house"; "Animal sacrifice was a lesson for self-sacrifice in the way of the Lord"; "None will carry the burden of others; every one has to bear his own cross and will reap as he will sow"; "Poverty was not a sin but the pride of the prophets"; women "possessed soul like man"; "Verily, Allah orders you to be just—take your dues and let others have their dues—He orders you to be beneficent—help even those who have no claim upon your help; and lastly, He wants you to treat others as you treat your own family folk"; "The object of marriage in Islam is not satiation of lust and flesh"; "All creatures are God's and he is dearest to God who is more energetic in His service"; "Be equitable and just and let not your inimical relations to others allow you to do injustice to them"; "And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance." We have taken these quotations from the Presidential address of The Rt. Hon. Lord Headley—the English Mussalman who came to India in December last to preside over the All-India Tubligh Conference which held its sessions at Delhi. Here we have the soul of Islam. When we read the essence of Islam we find that real Islam always stood for union and harmony rather than for separation and dissension. "Allah o Akbar," "God is great" is the foundation and corner-stone of that religion. It is a perfect equalizer of men. It is a religion of compassion.

Withal that, in India Islam has been looked upon with terror and not without reason: for the Hindu could not easily forget the havoc that Mohommed's followers in his holy name have been doing in this country. Islam arrived at nothing less than universal brotherhood. But this idea of universal brotherhood meant to the organised Arabs and later on to the Muslim world an Islamic brotherhood and nothing more. To the protagonists of that religion there was ample support for that idea in their own scripture. On a reading of the Quran it is easy to find a passage in which Mohommed urges the believers to fight and take captives after slaughter in the land. It was unfortunately such "revelations" that appealed to the imagination of the nebulous masses of the Arabian deserts. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the "orthodox" Ulemas supported the rapacious sovereigns to carry fire and sword in the sacred name of Islam: for to "kill idolators wherever they could be found, to take them prisoners and besiege them and lay in wait for them in every convenient place," they said, had the positive sanction of the Quran. But to the credit of the Prophet it must be said that he had advised his followers not to take all the verses of the Quran literally. "There are some verses that are decisive; they are the mother of the book and others ambiguous." It was for the followers of Mohommed to choose and interpret these verses. And the self-seeking ambitious leaders of the uncultured flock aroused the latter to commit acts which had a look of divine sanction in the Quran. It was the devil quoting the Bible. They could not understand the doctrine of self-realization through self-subordination which Mohommed preached. One class of people, the Sufis understood Mohommed, but their voice would not be listened to in the clatter of armour and the rattle of drums of the onrushing Muslim hordes. Islam was on the war-path, though Mohommed, their prophet, did not approve wars of aggression. In the history of this world this was not the first time when the name of the Holy of Holies had been invoked for man's base ends. It was not the first time that religion had been interpreted to satisfy the will of rapacious sovereigns and a greedy but sturdy people and the consequence had been that the followers of the Prophet like others came to use their sword too freely. This was how the "questionable and ambiguous" verses of the Quran came to be interpreted and as another Mussalman, Mr. Pickthal once put it this was a falling away from the spirit of Islam. In fact the "Mussalman" had turned his back on what had been enjoined on him, the part which ordered him to seek knowledge and education and to study God's creation.

This explains why the Quranic injunction,—“there is no compulsion in religion”—has not been heeded to tell the present day by a

large section of Mohommed's followers. The Prophet enjoined on his followers not "to repulse them who call upon their Lord in the morning and in the evening desiring his face." "Repulse them," said he, "and thou wilt be unjust."

The religion of the Prophet became a sectarian religion and dogmas and creeds and fanaticism darkened its history. The President of the Tabligh Conference was quite right when he remarked that at the present time the religion of Islam had to be preached first to those who are under its flag and "goad them to act upon it." This is not the first Mussalman who begins to recognise this important fact. Mr. Pickthal said only the other day that the conduct and condition of the Muslims now were very bad advertisements for the teaching of Islam. We trust the Mussalman brotherhood would take heed to this advice of their own brethren, try to cast off the slough and allow Islam to shed its light and illumine the world.

We wish this Presidential address found its way into the millions of homes in India—both Hindu and Mussalman to disabuse the Hindu of his wrong notions of Islam and to teach the Mussalman what his noble religion has taught him.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The 93rd Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Craddock Town, Nagpur, C. P., with great eclat and devotion. Besides poor feeding, a meeting was convened under the presidency of Mr. A. S. Sathe, Add. District and Sessions Judge, in which lectures were delivered by eminent speakers. Swami Viswananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, graced the occasion and spoke eloquently on the life and teachings of the Master.

The Sacred Day was also observed by the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Asansole, Bengal; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Guntur; Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddappah; The Andhra Social Welfare League, Bezwada. The devotees of Ranchi, Behar, also celebrated the Birthday.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA'S VISIT TO ANDHRA DESHA

On the occasion of the 93rd Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, paid a visit to Andhra Desha at the earnest invitation of some Telegu devotees. At Bezwada, under

the auspices of the Andhra Social Welfare League, the Swami delivered two lectures on the "Essentials of Hinduism" and the "Ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda" on the evenings of the 19th and 20th of March, at Gandhi Chowk and Museum Hall. At Guntur under the auspices of the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, the Swami gave a series of three addresses at the Municipal Library on the 22nd, 24th, and 25th of March,—the subjects being, "Message of Sri Ramakrishna," "Ideals of Sanatan Dharma," and "Teachings of the Gita." Besides these, the Swami also held two conversazioni, one at the Municipal Library and another at the Lokabandhu Hall. The Swami returned to Madras on the morning of the 30th March last.

REPORTS

1. The Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar, while recording a number of 19785 patients including the 668 indoor patients treated, issues an appeal for funds for important objects—Worker's Quarters, one Dharmashala, one Rest-house for pilgrim indoor-patients' friends and relatives, a building for Depressed Class School, etc.
2. The Biennial Reports of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour, and the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Lucknow, for 1925 and 1926, after showing satisfactory progress in different activities of the centres within their limited means, appeal to the generous public for funds for carrying on their works in a better way.
3. The Hon. Secretary of the Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur in its Annual Report for 1926 says that for want of active sympathy and support of the public, the Society's activities have been handicapped. He appeals for funds.
4. The Ramakrishna Mission Out-door Charitable Dispensary, Bhubaneswar in its Biennial Report for 1925 and 1926 contains an appeal for funds in the name of the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj. For want of sufficient funds the dispensary cannot purchase up-to-date medicines and surgical outfit. The kind-hearted people are requested to help the workers of the Mission to serve the poverty-stricken populace of Orissa.
5. The Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, maintained fifteen boys in 1926. The management brings to the notice of the benevolent public that the response to the appeal issued year after year is not quite generous. It appeals anew for funds to enable it to serve more efficiently the cause of the poor helpless students—to which it has devoted itself. A statement of accounts is attached to every report.

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND, OREGON, U. S. A.

We have received a report of the work of the Vedanta Society, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. for 1927, a summary of which is placed before the readers for information:—

During the year under review besides giving lectures on Vedanta on various subjects, Swami Prabhavananda has given series of lectures on the following: 1. Buddhism; 2. The Philosophy of the Upanishads; 3. World Teachers; 4. Yoga and Mysticism.

The series of lectures on Buddhism was given early in the year to small but interested audiences. It covered the life of Buddha, his teachings and the influence of his philosophy. In many ways the group of discourses dealing with the philosophy of the Upanishads was one of the greatest studies ever given in this city. The full course was open to the public, affording perhaps the greatest opportunity ever offered in this part of the west, to come in touch with the highest philosophy. The group of lectures upon the World Teachers was perhaps, the most popular course Swami has offered. This series too was open to the public, and covered the lives and teachings of Krishna, LaoTze, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna. With the series dealing with Yoga and Mysticism the Swami closed the year's work. It was so arranged that the lectures covered the regular Sunday services and the two week day classes, for the latter part of the month of February. It was an intensely interesting course of lessons and lectures. The society made a special effort to advertise the series. Much interest and enthusiasm was aroused.

In the regular class work, the study of the Gita was finished. The lessons in Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms and lessons from the Bible are being continued. The first Friday night of each month is question night, with the public invited. Much interest has been aroused in these meetings by the Swami's interesting method of conducting them. Opinions are expressed and viewpoints clarified; while at the close of each discussion, Swami never fails to give a satisfactory summary.

During the month of October Swami Prabhavananda, at the urgent request of friends living in St. Louis, Missouri, spent two weeks in that city lecturing with great success to large and enthusiastic audiences. A permanent interest was created through these lectures and a centre established. Swami Akhilananda is expected to take charge of the centre in a short time. During Swami

Prabhavananda's absence in the East activities of the Portland Centre were continued in charge of the students.

Since Christmas day fell upon a Sunday this year, it was fittingly observed with special devotional services at the regular Sunday morning service hour. In the evening the Swami gave a masterly discourse on "Jesus, a World Teacher." To many of the students and friends this was one of the best lectures Swami Prabhavananda has delivered in Portland.

Swami Vivekananda's Birthday was fittingly celebrated on the fourth Sunday in January. The theme of the morning address was "Vivekananda the Man", in which he gave a pen-picture of the great Swami's life and career. The subject for the evening discourse was "Vivekananda's contribution to World Thought." Quite a large audience listened to this stirring tribute.

The Ninety-second Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth was observed on Sunday, March fourth. Again the little chapel was brightened by the floral offerings of the students. A beautiful picture of the Master was draped in dainty sprays of fern and pink roses. In the evening a large audience gathered to hear Swami Prabhavananda give a most illuminating discourse on "Ramakrishna and the Modern Age." It was very satisfying and heartening to hear Swami point out that the Master's blessed life and message was not for the East alone, but for the whole world.

Perhaps the most congenial part of the evening was the dainty refreshments served by the committee in charge. It is hard to put into words the feeling of fellowship engendered among the students as an outgrowth of such gatherings. The one just mentioned is the second such held since the Society has occupied its new quarters.

In conclusion the report refers to the all too short but delightful visit of Swami Dayananda and three students from the Temple in San Francisco last August.

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