

173

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



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"Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

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

Vol. XV]

OCTOBER 1928

[No. 6.

PRAYER

ॐ

त्वं वैष्णवी शक्तिरनन्तवीर्या

विश्वस्य बीजं परमाऽसि माया ।

समोदितं देवि समस्तमेतत्

त्वं वै प्रसन्ना भुवि मुक्तिहेतुः ॥

देवि प्रपन्नार्तिहरे प्रसीद

प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य ।

प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं

त्वमीश्वरी देवि चगच्छस्य ॥

Oh Mother ! Thou art the the great Primal Energy, the seat of infinite strength ; Thou art the seed of the world and illusion Divine ; Thou hast enchanted the whole universe, Oh Goddess Supreme, by Thy deluding charms, and Thyself bestowest salvation in the world, when propitious !

Oh Goddess ! Thou Destroyer of troubles of Thy refugees, and the Mother of the universe, Thy mercy be upon all ! Oh Mother, Thou Mistress of the world, and Guardian, Thou one Ruler of the movables and the immovables, Thy grace be showered upon all !

DEVI-MAHATMYA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple:—Maharaj, while engaged in the Relief Work, I have to labour very hard all the day long; I have little or no opportunity to carry on my spiritual practices: I find no time at all; so I do not feel inclined to do such work.

Swami:—But have you to work like that althrough?

D.:—No Sir, for the first few days only.

S.:—Then, why do you complain that you find no time? It is the ordinary worldling who is often heard to grumble in this strain—that secular duties stand in the way of spiritual practices. Such flimsy argument, my boy, does not befit you, a Sadhu; you have the power of Brahmacharya (absolute continence) in you; you must carry on both spiritual practices and mundane duties simultaneously. My idea is that you do not possess any strong desire at heart for spiritual exercises; you only like to pass your time in vain works, in fuss and merriement; and your plea of shortness of time is nothing but a lame excuse. In Relief Operation the first few days may be a very busy time for you and I fully appreciate it; but this state of things does not continue for long. What do you do then? Why do you not carry on your Sadhana at that time? Don't you feel ashamed to complain in this wise? Fie on thee to grumble!

Those who are really inclined towards Sadhana do perform it under all circumstances: only they do it more intensely whenever and wherever the opportunity is more favourable. But those who always complain of inconveniences of time and place can never do any progress in their life; they wonder about like a 'vagabond' and spend their precious time in vain.

Engage yourself heart and soul in Sadhana and be plunged in it. Oh, the joy of it! If you once have a taste of that joy, all else will lose their savour to you. Then, wherever and under whatever circumstances you may be placed by Providence, you will not relish in anything else except Sadhana. True, in the very beginning, you cannot have that joy, but believing in the words of your Guru, if you persist in Sadhana for some time, verily, the joy of it shall descend upon you unsolicited.

In performing Japam and meditation, time and other conveniences are indeed necessary, but Smaran and Manan (constant remembrance and contemplation of God) waits for no such conditions. Whether at work or no, this you can do always, even when you are dining or sitting alone. You must cultivate this habit; and whenever you become an adept in it, know that you have made a fair advance in mind towards God. And according to Sri Ramanuja such an uninterrupted flow of thought is called Dhyana (meditation).

I wonder why you are so much afraid of work. (Pointing to Swami P.) They are all saintly men; you must at once do whatever they ask you to do. This will surely bring you good. But if you disobey you shall never make any spiritual advancement what-so-ever. Therefore I command you, my boy, to obey them implicitly and this is the sincerest advice that I can give you. Oh, what a huge lot of work we had to do under the Divine dispensation! Even as a Sadhu we had to be involved in litigations and frequently visit the lawyers' place seeking their legal advice. For all that we cannot say that any evil result has ever come out of our works: for we knew that all works were His.

II

[Seeing a small bottle broken by a monastic disciple through inadvertence] Lo! The bottle is broken;—all this is very bad habit. With such an unsettled mind

you work! Methinks you think of a hundred other things while engaged in a work. But secular or sacred, nothing great can be achieved with such an unsteady mind. Whether it is a noble undertaking or an humble one, it must be done with the utmost care and attention. And let it be known that those who are steady in secular works are also steady in their spiritual exercises.

If you desire to do a work in the right manner, you must hold these two great principles in view. In the first place you must possess a profound regard for the work undertaken, and secondly you must be quite indifferent to the fruit thereof. Then alone can you do a work in the proper way. This is called the secret of Karmayoga. And you can avert all disinclination and unpleasantness for work if you only consider it as belonging to God. It is when you forget this secret that you become diseased in mind; with a diseased mind spiritual unfoldment or secular advancement you can prosper in neither.

Under the impulse of name and fame, it is indeed easier to perform a magnificent work, but through such performance you cannot appraise the value of a man as he really is. In order to do so, you are to examine his daily works; for it is the ordinary actions of a man through which the real man in him is revealed unto us. Through such actions alone can you know how far the man has developed himself in character. A true Karmayogin (selfless worker) would ever lose himself heart and soul in any undertaking even though it is one of a most inferior kind. He is never actuated by the least desire of winning cheap popular applause.

Who cannot do a work if it is to his own choice? Where then lies the difference between a Karmayogin and an ordinary layman? A Karmayogin must welcome any work that may fall to his share and gradually adjust himself according to the requirements. Simply doing any work again, is not sufficient; it must be done

disinterestedly—in the holy name of the Lord. A Karmayogin must keep three-fourths of his mind fixed in God, and with the remaining one-fourth he shall do whatever he is to do. If you follow this rule, then alone can you do your work in proper manner; and your mind too shall become expanded and you shall feel great joy in you. But on the other hand, if you go to do a work forgetting God, egotism and pride will easily take the better of you, and quarrels and dissensions will ensue disturbing the equanimity of your mind. Therefore I tell you whether at work or not, do never forget God. And to effect this attitude, you must stick to your Bhajanam (spiritual practices) by all means.

SRI KRISHNA AND HIS MESSAGE

The history of India is but a history of the consecrated lives of a galaxy of saints and shining spiritual figures of the land. It has ever been the peculiar privilege of the Indian people to witness in every phase of their historical evolution an outstanding personality whose spiritual activities shaped the destiny of the country and contributed to the intensification of their cultural heritage handed down from hoary antiquity. With the march of time history is thus repeating itself in every age with added light and shade. The present static and somnolent state of India is but a replica of the past with slight variations. To-day India stands at a cross-road of her eventful career. Time has already wrought many a revolutionary change in the outlook of Indian life. The darkness of ignorance sits as a mighty incubus on the minds of the inert masses. Everywhere, deep marks of despair and helplessness as well as of a woful lack of confidence in the dynamic strength of Indian culture are writ large on the forehead of the hapless children of the soil;—the whole atmosphere is filled with a profound sense of humiliation. But even in the midst of these crowded misfortunes of modern India, it would give us an unfailing inspiration to recall that India that has fallen to-day, had had the vitality to give birth to a splendid

civilisation, at once original and unique in its character, and that she was the proud mother of many a luminous personality whose achievements in the various realms of human thought are still the wonders of the modern world. "This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up enquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and here the highest ideas of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points." In such a land in long past years,—away back where tradition even fails to peep into its gloom, was born one of the brightest personalities to fulfil the multifold needs of humanity. It was our beloved Sri Krishna—the harbinger of peace and harmony, love and righteousness. India was then but a congeries of States struggling for supremacy. The long-standing feud between the Kurus and the Panchalas and the bitter animosity prevailing among the then ruling princes of India transformed the land into a veritable theatre of bloody warfare. The land of righteousness became the land of vice and unrest. The pitiful cry of the oppressed and the helpless found no response in the hearts of 'the custodians of law and order'. The laws of morality were cast to the four winds, and the tyranny and arrogance of many a self-forgetful autocrat, masquerading as benevolent monarchism, strutted through the land to the horror and disgust of the peace-loving people. Multifarious were the sects that broke their heads against the dead walls of fanaticism and bigotry. The country indeed sorely needed the advent of one who would be a perfect synthesis of the varied ideals of mankind and a fulfilment of the complicated problems and needs of the age. The birth of a Saviour was therefore awaited with a thrill of breathless expectancy, and the advent of Sri Krishna ushered in an era of unprecedented joy and relief to the suffering souls. He was born within the prison-bars of Mathura—the capital-city of the tyrant king, Kamsa. The elemental fury was never more terrifying, and the gloom never more palpable than they were at the time of his birth. The stormy atmosphere was in fact symbolic of the profound unrest that agitated the hearts

of the millions of India. But the prison-walls were no bar to him, for the Soul of India can never be kept confined within the stony bounds of any earthly dungeon. The whole nature conspired, as it were, for the safety of the child and all the diabolical designs of the Satanic king, Kamsa, to crush him ended in a huge fiasco.

It is the standing assurance of the Scriptures that whenever this world of ours needs an adjustment on the spiritual plane, Divinity that dwells on the top-most crest of the spiritual wave of humanity incarnates himself for the restoration of order and peace in the land. To many an Anglicised Indian who draws his inspiration from the materialism of the West, the life of Sri Krishna would seem to be an incredible mass of myths, for it has not yet had the pious sanction of the sceptic Occidentalists! The Brindavan-leela of Sri Krishna has particularly been the target of trenchant and sarcastic criticism at the hands of some fastidious moralists, who, in their anxiety to establish their position as 'the upholders of the ancient Faith', have not felt the least scruple to paint Sri Krishna and his playmates as so many prototypes of Belial, and have gone to the length of damning the principal actors in the drama of Kurukshetra as a band of non-Aryans without even the faintest tinge of rudimentary civilisation! Needless to say, the studied ignorance of history as well as the bare-faced bigotry of these unthinking critics have blinded them to the transcendent idealism set up before humanity by the Beauty-Boy of Brindavan in the varied fields of his activity. It must be the good luck of the lovers of Truth that while waves of conquest and religious fanaticism, and along with these, millions of lives, and glorious spiritual movements, have been swept away, the message of Sri Krishna remains still a living reality. It is only to the sense-bound dunderheads and pampered wiseacres of the commercial world who are more concerned with the gratification of the senses than the realisation of the Spirit, that it must ever remain a sealed book and an incomprehensible mystery; for who else than the chaste and the pure—one who has transcended the limitations of the senses and become intoxicated with the love divine, can ever dare to enter into the sacred play-ground of Sri Krishna's spiritual activities that embody in fact a most sublime illustration of "Love for love's sake"? The music of his mystic

civilisation, at once original and unique in its character, and that she was the proud mother of many a luminous personality whose achievements in the various realms of human thought are still the wonders of the modern world. "This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up enquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and here the highest ideas of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points." In such a land in long past years,—away back where tradition even fails to peep into its gloom, was born one of the brightest personalities to fulfil the multifold needs of humanity. It was our beloved Sri Krishna—the harbinger of peace and harmony, love and righteousness. India was then but a congeries of States struggling for supremacy. The long-standing feud between the Kurus and the Panchalas and the bitter animosity prevailing among the then ruling princes of India transformed the land into a veritable theatre of bloody warfare. The land of righteousness became the land of vice and unrest. The pitiful cry of the oppressed and the helpless found no response in the hearts of 'the custodians of law and order'. The laws of morality were cast to the four winds, and the tyranny and arrogance of many a self-forgetful autocrat, masquerading as benevolent monarchism, strutted through the land to the horror and disgust of the peace-loving people. Multifarious were the sects that broke their heads against the dead walls of fanaticism and bigotry. The country indeed sorely needed the advent of one who would be a perfect synthesis of the varied ideals of mankind and a fulfilment of the complicated problems and needs of the age. The birth of a Saviour was therefore awaited with a thrill of breathless expectancy, and the advent of Sri Krishna ushered in an era of unprecedented joy and relief to the suffering souls. He was born within the prison-bars of Mathura—the capital-city of the tyrant king, Kamsa. The elemental fury was never more terrifying, and the gloom never more palpable than they were at the time of his birth. The stormy atmosphere was in fact symbolic of the profound unrest that agitated the hearts

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flute is an ever-present reality to every seeker of truth and of profound spiritual import to every sincere soul. *Srimad Bhagavatam*—one of the monumental works of an Indian genius—furnishes a delightful picture of the Rasha-dance of Sri Krishna. Flute in hand on one beautiful autumnal night when the whole nature was steeped in silvery silence, when the fragrant flowers were opening up with the sweet kisses of the wooing breeze and the gentle Jamuna was singing the glories divine, Sri Krishna—the master-musician of the universe, seated himself near the forest of Brindavan on the bank of the Jamuna. The dulcet melody of the flute rolling out in an unceasing stream of beauty thrilled the whole of the charming Arcadia,—kissed every sense of the unwary Gopa-maidens whose unsophisticated hearts became tense with excitement; an unprecedented yearning seized every heart for union with the Beloved. No physical consciousness was there to prevent such a union,—heart only spoke to the heart; and all earthly considerations were cast off in that moment of supreme spiritual longing. What a tremendous madness—a madness that was only witnessed in the sacred lives of Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna of hallowed memory; for it hardly comes over any other ordinary mortals with the ideas of sex constantly boiling within.

The unique love of the Gopis opened a new chapter in the history of religion; for it was for the first time in the annals of mankind that the ideal of love for love's sake, work for work's sake and duty for duty's sake fell upon the soil of India from the lips of the greatest of incarnations—Sri Krishna. It solved once for all the eternal conflict between the Dualists and the Monists—the followers of the Personal and the Impersonal aspects of the Lord. Personal God is the highest conception of human nature and shall remain a paramount necessity so long as different classes of human minds exist on the face of the earth. The Gopis in their self-effacing drunkenness of love got beyond every form of physical consciousness and there came a moment when, through madness of spiritual ecstasy, the face of every one looked like Sri Krishna and their very soul became tinged with the Krishna-colour. What a splendid illustration of the gradual ascent of the human soul from the gross to the fine, from the fine to the finer until it merges

into the Absolute! Is it not an unpardonable vanity on the part of the blind materialists with the ideas of sex, of name and fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart to dare to criticise and understand the transcendent love of the Gopis? The spotless purity of the eternally immaculate Suka Deva—the maiden exponent of the self-abnegating love of the Gopis, is the only passport to the mystic realm of Brindavan. The melodious strain of the divine flute is still a living force. "Within our heart of hearts is the forest of Brindavan in which the sacred river of love—Jamuna, flows lapping with thrills of joy, the bank of bowery lawn where Krishna—our soul, with his Gopis—our ensouled mental aspirations, is performing his ever favourite, never-ending Rasha-dance." The more we realise it the more do we feel elevated on a higher spiritual plane. The humanity has forgotten the ideal and the world has become the play-ground of the worst instincts of human nature. Let us love the Beloved, for by loving Him alone can we love our fellow creatures and attain to the oneness of human existence.

The annihilation of the tyrant-king, Kamsa who sucked like vampire the life-blood of his people at Mathura and the restoration of Ugrasena by Sri Krishna to the throne put a seal upon the orgy of tyranny in the land of the Yadavas. With a marvellous spirit of non-attachment did the Sannyasin-hero snap away the silken tie of the happy association of Brindavan, abnegate the pleasures of the crown and jump into the vortex of fresh activity. The duties of a mightier import loomed larger and larger before his spiritual vision and the golden memories of his boyhood could no longer chain him down to the past. The complex problems of the then Indian life roused him to a vision of a mighty empire to be established on the ashes of villany and vice that ran rampant in the country. The clouds thickened more and more in the political firmament of India. The Pandavas, the most innocent of the Kuru-race were deprived of the legitimate share of their kingdom by wily Duryodhan in collusion with some of his powerful satellites. The heart of the just and the law-abiding revolted in righteous indignation against the inhumanity meted out to the sons of Pandu, and the whole hosts of the kings from the Himalayas down to the Cape Comorin and from Gandhar to Prag-Yotish participated in this

titanic struggle and ranged themselves on one side or the other to fight out the issue on the memorable field of Kurukshetra. Duryodhan and Arjuna, the two stalwarts of the hostile camps hastened simultaneously to the court of Sri Krishna at Dwaraka for military assistance in the impending struggle. Duryodhan retired satisfied with the invincible army of Sri Krishna; but Arjuna would want nothing—nay, not even the rest of humanity on his side save and except the loving guidance of Sri Krishna—the greatest of the spiritual heroes. The union of the two souls is indeed one of the greatest historical events of the past. The accumulated wrongs of the Kauravas, the organised vandalism of their confreres and, above all, the insult and humiliation to which Draupadi—the symbol of purity and innocence was subjected,—the gravest wrong that could ever be done to the womanhood of India, all flashed before their vision one by one. Sri Krishna and Arjuna foresaw the grave possibilities of the coming Armageddon, and the two souls mingled in that historic moment into a mighty stream on the crest of the Raivataka, that subsequently poured down upon the land in a deluge and swept away the sinful accretions of ages from the bosom of India.

Sri Krishna made a last effort to sound a death-knell to the impending conflict between the two parties and as an accredited plenipotentiary of the Pandavas stood before the monster gathering of the Kauravas with the message of peace: "Make peace," said he, "O prince of the Bharat race, with the wise, brave and energetic Pandavas, great in learning and self-subjugation. From peace would proceed happiness to kinsmen and friends, aye my dear, to the whole world. The man who having heard the advice of his friends followeth it not, is tormented in the end." His pregnant words created a stir and commotion amongst the shining lights of the Kaurava assembly, but Duryodhan was not prepared to part with even the strip of land covered by the point of a needle. Thus the hostility became inevitable and the two armies stood unbuttoned in the field for the final event. It was here in the midst of the din and bustle of the army, the clatter and whirr of chariots and the neighs and snorts of the excited chargers that Sri Krishna sang the Song Immortal—the celebrated Bhagavat Gita, laid bare all the mysteries of human existence and chalked out for humanity

the paths for final deliverance. Sri Krishna realised that the compassion which Arjuna felt for his kinsmen was but an outcome of his momentary weakness. The secrets of true Knowledge, Work and Devotion were unfolded before him one after the other, and it was pointed out in a synthetic way that the different paths suited to the different temperaments of the struggling aspirants led but to the same goal. Man through ignorance has completely identified himself with his body and the senses, and thus has become a subject to an interminable cycle of births and deaths. But the real Self of man is neither born nor susceptible to any change or decay. It is beginningless and ever-existent. "If the weapons can not cut, the fire cannot burn, water can not wet and the wind cannot dry." It stands deathless and ever-effulgent in the midst of endless changes of phenomena. It is only nescience that creates a dichotomy in what would otherwise appear to be a unitary experience. The Karma-yogin through perfect desirelessness, and dedication of all the fruits of his actions to the lotus-feet of the Lord, the Jnani by dint of his unerring discrimination between the real and the unreal, the Noumenon and the phenomenon and the Bhakta by means of his unqualified love and absolute dependence upon his Beloved, are able to cross the limitless ocean of births and deaths and reach the supreme goal of all human aspirations. The teachings had their desired effect. The gloom of weakness that gathered before the vision of Arjuna was dissipated and he was filipped up to the highest pitch of activity; for he knew that he was merely an instrument in the hand of the Lord, and no actions, good or evil, would bind his soul to the earth. The compunction that overpowered his mind in the battle-field sprang up from the predominance of Tamas; for the man of Sattva-Guna is equally calm and unperturbed in all situations in life—whether it be prosperity or adversity. That was why Sri Krishna had thundered forth at the very outset:—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनाद्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥
क्लैव्यं मास्म गमः पार्थनैतत्स्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तब्रह्मविष्टं परंतप ॥

"In such a strait, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Aryanlike, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment

of heaven? Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies."

In these stirring lines lie imbedded in fact the whole message of the Bhagavat Gita. Man is the architect of his own destiny. It is only the colossal ignorance of the real nature of man that has bound him with the shackles of weakness and fear. Never did Indians stand more in need of this gospel of strength than they do now. It is indeed a pity that the children of the knowers of Brahman lie prostrate to-day at the feet of Occidentalism and are seized with an undignified fear that once stupefied the sturdy mentality of Arjuna in the midst of an impending struggle. It is the knowledge of the deathless glory of the soul, which is the desideratum of the present age; for it is this knowledge alone that shall furnish strength to the drooping soul in every walk of life. Indeed, the battle must be fought out in the very depths of the human soul; for then and then alone the cannon-ball shall stand as no terror to him and the death will come but as 'a welcome guest to his door'. *क्लृप्यं मास्म गमः पार्यं नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते*. No other finer words were ever uttered in the whole world of scripture. It is quite unworthy of the Indians to stoop to weakness and fear while their own forbears did score victory through sheer soul-force and indomitable courage. Let every one be inspired with the sublime idealism of the Bhagavat Gita and nerved to lion's courage to fight out the grave issues of the modern age in the sacred Kurukshetra of his own heart; for the victory is the meed of the brave and the heroic, and not of the weak and the faint-hearted.

The great war of Kurukshetra was fought and won. Evil was sacrificed at the altar of Good and the Pandavas came out victorious in the deadly conflict. The great task of Sri Krishna was done. The kingdom of righteousness was established, and order and peace were restored in the realm of unrest and chaos. He harmonised all the conflicting religious systems by placing before humanity a comprehensive religious ideal in his immortal Song Celestial,—the essence of the Upanishads and the guide to the realm of Truth. A perfect specimen of mankind in whom the ideals of a Sannyasin and a householder commingled in a beautiful synthesis, and whose whole life was but an illustration of

the spirit of renunciation and service, love and disinterested work, he stands for all ages as the ultimate refuge and solace of every longing soul. Though acclaimed as the greatest among men by the whole host of the Indian princes congregated at Indraprastha for the Rajashuya sacrifice, it was he who voluntarily undertook the humblest function of washing the feet of the assembled guests! What a sweet and harmonious blending of all the aspects of an ideal life in Sri Krishna—the teacher of humanity! "Blessed indeed is he who has learned to worship him with the flowers of faith, regard and love; for he is the soul of the entire cosmos and has given us the best and the most universal religion." He has brought out and popularised the grand truths of the Upanishads as an exponent of the Religion Eternal whose broad nature stands unparalleled amongst all the religions of the world. May the blessings of Sri Krishna alight upon us and enable us to follow the path of truth and work out the sacred mission of our race for which we are born in this Punyabhumi—India, the blessed land of the East.

IDEAL OF LIFE

By Brahmachari Srish Chaitanya

Man is the most perfect of all creatures, occupying the highest rung in the scale of creation. In him there is the divine aspect as well as the animal instinct. Although man, in common with the animal creation possesses the natural propensities of eating, sleeping and procreation, he differs from them in one important respect. This is reason or the power of discrimination. Through a proper use of this power man can approach God, visualize Him, nay even become one with Him, while an improper use of it leads him imperceptibly to the nadir of moral turpitude. From the earliest of times this creation has been the object of perception to both man and beast; but while to the beast nothing appealed and it remained quite contented, man grew restless under the impact of an inner urge for wider and greater outlook and thirsted for more knowledge. He began to question within himself: "What is all this? Is there any one at its back?" These and many such questions began to crop up from within and troubled him day and night. By observation he found out that the external phenomena, though apparently various and separate, were not only not unconnected but wonderfully systematised and well-regulated. And their uniformity

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and unerring regularity revealed to him the existence of a grand scheme. Turning his attention inward he discovered through introspection the same kind of regularity and uniformity and the same purpose dominating the mental phenomena. And the results arrived at by these observations made him more and more inquisitive. More doubts sprang up in his mind and once again he began to cogitate within himself: "Who is at the back of all these phenomena, mental and physical?" And the answer came forth from within: "There must be a person or force at the back of this universe; and it must be discovered."

As a result of these unceasing speculations two enquiries were started,—one directed to the physical world and the other to the mind. The former enquiry ended in the discovery of certain truths which revealed to man that nature was the depositary of all beauty. He was fascinated by this captivating beauty of nature and lost sight of the object of his search. This sense of beauty took possession of his mind and it created in him a strong and uncontrollable desire for sense-enjoyment. It made him selfish, and he dived deep into the vortex of sense-pleasures and completely lost himself in the eddies thereof. Surely this was a moral death to his noble enterprise. And lo! to-day these truths about external phenomena have proved a veritable menace to the humanity at large in as much as they have become deadly engines of destruction at the hands of the 'civilised nations' of the world. These material achievements which ought to have been directed towards the unfoldment of the divine mystery, have in the name of progressive science gained a mastery over the spiritual sense of men and gone so far as to question the very existence of God. Thus the seeker stumbled upon the externals of the phenomenal world and could not proceed towards the ultimate principle—the Noumenon and thus the flood-gate of spiritual life was locked for him.

But the other enquirer threaded quite a different course. He abstracted himself altogether from the panorama of nature's beauty and slowly and steadily began the introspective analysis of his mental phenomena. But to his utter surprise and disappointment he found that his mind was the most turbulent and unyielding factor constantly ready as it were to frustrate the noble aspiration of his heart. He found also that its nature was to drag him always outward through the senses to death. But his higher nature lying dormant within revealed itself and impelled him to be patient and to persevere. Thus after many a hard struggle the mind became docile and friendly and he was vouchsafed a faint glimpse of the great truth for which he had struggled so much. He did not stop there but strove on and on until, after many a severe

ordeal, he reached a positive state of Consciousness where neither the mind nor the intellect could penetrate. It was then that the mystery of the universe was revealed to him and the doubts and the knots of his heart were now all gone. His search after truth was thus crowned with success. He now proclaimed to the humanity at large that God is the underlying principle of this mysterious creation, and nothing but an intimate knowledge of Him can solve the problems of human life and bestow eternal peace and happiness on the thirsting soul. With the clarion call he proclaimed:

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा
आये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्युः ॥
वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम्
आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वा तिमृन्युमेति
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

"Hear, ye children of Immortal Bliss, ye residents of region celestial! I have found the Ancient One Who is beyond all darkness and effulgent as the burning sun. Knowing Him alone, ye shall be saved from death once for all; for there is no other way than this for the attainment of Bliss Eternal." This is in fact the highest ideal of human life.

This is the message that the Rishis of India delivered to the world and the seers of all countries and of all ages have one and all echoed the same. The avatars, the mangods,—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahomet, Chaitanya and others had no other message than this. Christ's exhortation to his disciples to seek the kingdom of heaven instead of 'these things' which the 'nations of the earth' hanker after points to the same ideal. Sri Krishna, the unique charioteer-guide of Arjuna proclaimed in the battle-field of Kurukshetra that in God alone the ultimate refuge is to be sought and that by his grace alone supreme peace can be attained. The latest of these mangods, Sri Ramakrishna whose voice is still ringing in our ears and whose 'living testimony' are still with us declared the very same message: "God alone is real and He is to be realised first."

An examination of the world itself leads but to the same conclusion. Is not this entire creation perishable? Do we not see the seal of death imprinted on all things? Will our dear ones, son and wife live for ever? Will our beautiful houses, the palaces replete with enchanting decorations exist for ever? Will this name and fame after which we run so madly follow us after death? Will this our beloved body which we so tenderly nurture last for ever? Rightly does the poet Grey speak out the truth in his Elegy—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
All that wealth and all that beauty ever gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

To death everything must be reduced and to it every one is equal, rich or poor, king or beggar. Death brings us all to the same level. The most autocratic monarch or Napoleon or Alexander, the most powerful government with its vast naval and military resources and its deadly machine guns—all shrivel into nothingness before the majesty of His power. Our thousand and one crooked diplomacies can not save us from "the inevitable hour". But there is one transcendent Reality which is constant and is beyond the phenomena of change and death; and It is God. If we can once reach Him, there shall be then no more fear, no more death, no more destruction. He is therefore our goal and ideal.

But unless some idea of the nature of God is formed it is not possible for man to worship Him. Therefore such questions as—What is the nature of God? How is He to be realised?—naturally crop up in the minds of men. The Rishis of India, according to the extent of their spiritual experiences have described God as *Sachchidananda*. Some have realised Him as Existence Absolute, having neither birth nor death. He is unchangeable and therefore permanent; some others have realised God as the one Fountain-head of Knowledge Absolute, intensely bright and dazzling. "He is self-effulgent: the sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars; not even the lightnings, much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after him; by his light all this is lighted." "If he is known everything else becomes known. He is Omniscience." Others again have realised Him as Bliss Absolute, the Source of all joy, being ever happy and cheerful. To them this Bliss is Brahman; and of this Bliss, these creatures are verily born; by Bliss they live and into Bliss again they depart. They have further declared that God incarnates himself in every age for the good of the world—to protect the holy and punish the wicked. Thus we find that God is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. These are the three aspects of God; and the aspirant can attain to Him through the realisation of any of these three aspects of the Lord.

Such a benign Providence is not the monopoly of a particular section of humanity. "God is everybody's own," said Sri Ramakrishna "as the moon is every child's. Everybody has an undisputed right to pray to Him; out of his grace he manifests himself to all that call upon Him." He is the father and mother of all and as such everyone has a right to go to Him. Even the most wicked and the wretched have access to God

and can worship Him; He makes no distinction whatsoever between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, man and woman, the touchables and the 'untouchables', the learned and the unlearned, the white and the coloured. The *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavatam* and other Pauranic scriptures of the Hindus have gone a step further; for according to them not only man alone but even animals are entitled to call upon the Lord: for He loves all alike.

But can a man, limited both physically and mentally realise the Unlimited? The Upanishad declares that through his grace alone he can be known, and not by any other means. "This Atman," it says, "can not be attained by the study of the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much learning of the sacred scriptures. He is known only by those to whom He chooses to reveal Himself." So says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita: "By His grace alone, Arjuna, thou shalt attain supreme peace—the eternal abode." His grace is therefore essential in realising Him. But some preparatory spiritual exercises are of indispensable necessity to become the recipient of His grace. The Upanishads style them as "Tapas" (spiritual practices) and make it distinctly clear that this is necessary so far as it serves to purge the mind of the aspirant of all its impurities, of the little ego that binds him down to the frailties that flesh is heir to. For He is absolutely free and unconditioned and 'beyond Tapas'. Therefore although Tapas has no absolute value, it is essential for the purification of the mind. As the Sruti tells us: "God cannot be attained by him who does not refrain from sins and whose senses are not restrained. Nor can He be realised by one who has not attained mental equilibrium. But he who has a strong discrimination, is ever pure and has controlled his mind reaches that goal from whose hour no traveller returneth. Verily, He reveals Himself to a pure mind." Hence the necessity of Tapas. And for this, four paths are mentioned in the scriptures—Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

The Rajayogin in trying to realise his goal restrains his Chitta—the Manas, the Buddhi, and Ahamkara) from taking various forms or Vrittis. And for this purpose he adopts an eightfold means of Yama, Niyama, etc. The Jnanayogin on the other hand does not take cognisance of this world which he considers to be but an outcome of Maya (Ignorance). He resorts to the path of discrimination and works towards a positive state of Consciousness by an elimination of what is unreal until at last he gazes upon the very face of the Reality.

The Karmin realises his ideal through work; for no man can live for a moment without work. But the fruits of this Karma he should consecrate to the feet of the Lord; otherwise they themselves will be the

veritable source of bondage in the world. So did Sri Krishna point out to his 'dear one':—"Do thou, O Arjuna, always perform actions which are obligatory without attachment;—by performing action without attachment, one attains to the highest." Thus it is that disinterested work alone terminates the cycles of birth and death and leads the Karmayogin to the highest state of realisation.

A Bhakta worships God as the embodiment of bliss eternal and establishes a sweet relationship with Him according to the nature of his own mental aspiration. A spirit of complete self-abnegation comes over him, for the devotee dedicates everything to God;—even his body mind and all his near and dear ones. "Bhaktiyoga", says Sri Ramakrishna, "is specially adapted to Kaliyuga. This is the *Yugadharma*,—the way best suited to man in the present age."

These are the four principal ways of Sadhana embodied in the scriptures for the realisation of the Truth Absolute. It is, however, not to be understood that they are absolutely independent of one another but they are inter-related. They are differently named only because of the predominance of the particular feature present in each of them; but none can take to them without the help of a proper Guru (spiritual guide). For many are the pitfalls that a man has to cross before reaching his goal. It is indeed very hard to find out such a guide; But when the spiritual yearning becomes intense God Himself procures for the devotee everything that is needed for the fruition of his spiritual aspiration.

It should therefore be our unfailing endeavour not to allow ourselves to be entangled in the meshes of the objects of sense-enjoyment but advance inward in search of the Truth until the goal is reached. We should never lose sight of the fact that to be born as man is a rare privilege, which should never be abused but be turned to good account. The Rishis of India—than whom none else in this world have understood and solved the problem of life so well—have said "If a man realises God here, there is the everlasting life for him; but if he fails, only destruction will await him." Let us keep these glowing words always fresh in our minds and mould our life accordingly. Let us once more remember the triumphant call of the Rishi: "Knowing Him alone, Ye shall be saved from death once for all."

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

THE AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI

By Dr. A. R. S. Sundaram Bhishak

"The rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to attaining Divine Wisdom, super-conscious perception, realisation of the Spirit"—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Kundalini is described as a Shakti like a thread in the lotus and resplendent having its seat in the Muladhara and it is the mightiest manifestation of creative power in the body. Sometimes it is described to be bright as fire and possessing the heat of many suns. It is also generally described as a serpent coiled up three and half times round the Lingam and sleeping above the Kanda which is described to be four fingers in length and breadth and corresponds to a position two fingers below the penis and two fingers above the anus. While asleep it takes hold of its tail with its mouth and closes the way to the Brahmrandhra at Brahmadvarya—the lowest end of the Sushumna. And the rousing up of this Kundalini from its deep slumber and raising it through the Brahmanadi to the highest centre the Sahasrara, and making it stay there permanently, when the aspirant becomes a Jivanmukta, is the highest aim of a Yogin. During the passage of the Kundalini through the Sushumna to the Sahasrara, it gathers more strength from the different centres, through which it passes. Further as the Kundalini ascends from centre to centre, layer after layer of the mind, as it were, opens up and this universe is perceived by the Yogin in its causal form and when the Kundalini reaches the Ajna Chakra, Divine Knowledge comes to the Yogin. And when it reaches the Sahasrara the Yogin is said to attain the super-conscious state or Samadhi. In this state the Yogin becomes unconscious of this world and remains so until the Kundalini returns to its abode.

Before going into the details of the awakening of this Power, it will be indispensable to have an elementary knowledge of that portion of the Tantric Anatomy which deals with the part of the human system that is affected with this practice. The first essential thing is to have an idea of the six Chakras or Padmas as termed in the Tantras. Going up from the lowest, they are named serially as Muladhara, Svadhishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. These Padmas or lotuses are said to hang like beads along the Sushumna Nadi with their faces downwards.

The first of these is Muladhara, the name of which is derived from its being the original abode of the Kundalini (Mula-root; adhar—

the support). It is said to be triangular in shape and is situated in the midmost portion of the body with the apex downwards. Muladhara is situated 2 fingers' breadth below the base of the sexual organ and 2 fingers' breadth above the anus. Prithvi is the Tattvam of this Chakra, which is of yellow colour. There are four forms of bliss in coincidence with the four petals this lotus is supposed to consist of viz., Yogananda, Paramananda, Sahajananda and Virananda and four letters namely, Va, Sha, Sha and Sa. In the centre of the lotus is Svayambhu Lingam, which is of a ruddy brown colour. At the base of the Lingam is the opening of the end of Chitra Nadi which is called the Brahma-dvara or the door of the Brahman. Through this door only the Kundalini ascends. The presiding Deity is Brahma.

The next Chakra is Svadhisthana, which means one's own place. It is situated at the base of the sexual organ, below the navel. It is a six-petalled lotus corresponding to which there are six qualities namely credulity, suspicion, disdain, delusion, false-knowledge, pitilessness and six letters namely Ba, Bha, Ma, Ya, Ra and La. The Tattwa of this Chakra is Ap (water) and this Chakra is of white colour. In it are the Devatas, Maha Vishnu, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi within the semi-circular space in the pericarp. In front resides the Lord, Varuna. The presiding Deity is Vishnu.

The third centre is Manipura, which means full of rays, the name being derived from the Shakti shedding lustre at this centre. It is situated above the last at a distance of 8 digits, and in the region of the navel. Tejas is the Tattwa of this Chakra. It has ten gunas and ten letters in coincidence with the ten petals that this lotus is said to consist of. The gunas are shame, fickleness, jealousy, desire, laziness, sadness, ignorance, aversion, disgust and fear. The letters are Da, Dha, Na, Ta, Thah, Da, Dha, Pa, Pa and Pha. This is red in colour, which is an astral image seen by the Yogins. Within this lotus is the triangular-shaped Agnimandalam. This region which is solar is said to absorb, as if drinking, the nectar or ambrosia which is being constantly shed from the region of the Chandramandalam in the Sahasrara. The presiding Deity is Rudra.

The fourth in the series is Anahata, where the Kundalini passes in the manifestation of sound in virtue of which the term Anahata is given to this Centre. It is situated 10 digits above from Manipura in the region of the heart. This should not be confounded with the heart lotus. It has 12 letters and 12 qualities corresponding to the 12 petals that this Chakra is supposed to consist of. The twelve qualities are hope, care or anxiety, endeavour, selfishness, hypocrisy, rancour, conceit, discrimination, covetousness, duplicity, indecision,

and regret. The 12 letters are Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha, Nga, Cha, Chha, Ja, Jha, Nya, Ta, Tha. It is of smoky colour and the Tattwa is Vayu. The presiding Deity is Isha, Overlord of the first three Chakras.

Visuddha is the fifth lotus, which is situated at the lower end of the throat at a distance of 10 digits above from Anahata. Visuddha means place of purity. It has 16 petals corresponding to which there are 16 gunas and 16 letters. The sixteen letters are from 'A' to the end of the vowels. It is of white colour and the Tattwa is Akasa. The Deity is Maheswara. Within this lotus there is a triangular region within which is Shiva known as Arddhanarishvara. Near Shiva is Shakti Shakini dressed in yellow garb.

The next and the sixth Chakra is Ajna; it is a lotus of two white petals between the eyebrows on which are the white letters Ha and Ksha. This is also called Paramakula and Mukta-triveni. It is of ruby colour and the presiding Deity is Sadasiva. The Tattwa of this Chakra is the subtle mind with four divisions namely Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankara. Within this lotus is the Tejomaya Lingam in the form of Pranava. It is here that the Yogin at the time of his final exit from the stage of this world, places its Prana, and enters the supreme primordial Deva (Purana Purusha).

Thus we have understood something about the six Chakras. There is yet another Chakra which is the highest, and is situated in the top centre of the head. The letter is OM. The colour is that of one crore suns' light. The presiding deities are all the devatas and one's own Guru. So far for Chakras. Now we shall try to understand something about Nadis.

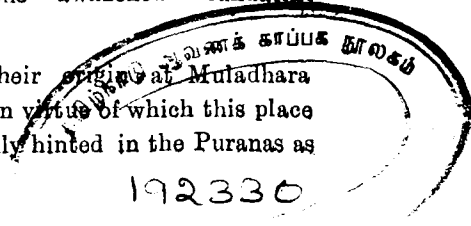
Of the 72,000 Nadis said to spread over the whole human system, fourteen are important. They are Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Saraswati, Varuni, Kuhu, Sankhini, Payasvini, Alambusa, Gandhari, Pusha, Hastijhiya, Yasavini and Visvodari. Of these, the first three are specially important, namely Ida, Pingala and Sushumna.

Of the latter three Nadis, the Sushumna extends from the Muladhara to the twelve-petalled lotus in the pericarp of the Sahasrara and runs through the interior of the Merudanda-the spinal column. Within the Sushumna is Vajrini Nadi within which is Chitra. The interior of the latter is called Brahma Nadi. The opening of the Chitra is called Brahmadvvara, through which the awakened Kundalini ascends.

Ida (Moon) and Pingala (Sun) take their origin at Muladhara from the Kanda and meet Sushumna here in virtue of which this place is called Yuktatriveni. This is allegorically hinted in the Puranas as

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Prayag, the place of meeting of the three sacred rivers—Ganga (Ida), Yamuna (Pingala) and Sarasvati (Sushumna). The Ida and Pingala are the left and right sympathetic cords respectively on each side of the "fiery" Sushumna and they go straight along the Sushumna on either side of it up to the Ajna Chakra. Here they form themselves like a pair of scissors, enter Sushumna making a plaited knot of three and then separating themselves go to both the nostrils each going to the opposite nostril of its origin, i.e., the Ida takes its origin near the right scrotum and crossing itself at the Ajna Chakra goes to the left nostril, and similarly the Pingala on the other side. The plaited knot of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna at the Ajna Chakra is termed Mukta-triveni.

As already noticed the awakening of Kundalini is the most important practice in Yoga without which success in Yoga cannot be achieved and without knowing which no man can claim himself as a true Yogin. By knowing this one becomes a Jivan-mukta, liberated in this birth. The awakening of Kundalini is a very great thing and the aspirant gains for every step he advances.

The chief symptoms of the rousing of Kundalini are a good appetite and diminution of excretions, healthy complexion, bodily vigour, hearing of all sorts of internal sounds called Nadas. An aspirant leading the life of a strict Brahmacharin with a very moderate and nutritious diet, is said to obtain perfection within 45 days' steady practice. By this practice the impurities of the Nadis are first purified, and the aspirant is not perishable like ordinary mortals. One thing to be noticed here is that when Kundalini ascends, the lower limbs become cold as well as other bodily parts which it has passed through in succession. But the upper part of the body will be lustrous and warm.

Mainly there are two ways of awakening this Kundalini. The one is by repeating the mystic Melana Mantram. Melana means joining. This Mantram is a power which is thought-movement veiled by and expressed in speech and is identical with the manifested Sabda Brahman. As Kundalini is both light (Yotirmayi) and Mantram (Mantra-mayi), the Japam or repetition of Mantram is used in the process of rousing the sleeping "Serpent Power" who lies coiled up at the sacral plexus (Muladhara), the lowest point of the vertebrate column. Its object is the rousing and ultimate mergence of the Kundalini Shakti in Purusha when Samadhi is attained. This Kundalini is the individual bodily representative of the great cosmic power which creates and sustains the universe. In short both Shiva and Shakti are Consciousness; the former is the changeless static aspect of Consciousness

and Shakti is the kinetic aspect of the same Consciousness. Thus when this individual Shakti manifesting as the individual Consciousness (Jiva) is merged in the Consciousness of the Supreme Shiva (Atma), the world for such a Jiva is destroyed and liberation is attained. Since this Mantram is the key to this practice, it is kept profoundly secret by the Masters and is given only to the deserving initiates. The superiority of this Melana is indescribable when it is said that it is not obtained even after hundred births and when a Yogin leading a solitary life, gets this Mantram from his Guru's mouth, then he surely obtains psychic powers as mentioned in various Yoga and Tantra literatures. As this Mantram is to be obtained from a competent Guru, we shall leave its discussion and proceed with the next one which is popular.

The second method of arousing the Kundalini is what is called Sakti-Chalana in which a spiraling movement of the abdominal muscles from left to right and right to left is made, being accompanied by a process of inhalation and the union of Prana and Apana. In practising this, two things are most essential, namely Saraswathi Chalana and the Kumbhaka. Of these, Saraswathi Chalana is described as follows:—

When the breath is passing through the Ida or left nostril, this practice should be commenced. Assuming the Padmasana one should inhale with force so that the breath goes 16 inches inside, 4 inches in excess of the usual 12 inches. Then the Yogin should bind the Saraswathi Nadi by the breath thus inhaled and by means of both the hands, having one hand on each side, should firmly hold together both his ribs near the navel and should stir up Kundalini by stirring the abdomen from right to left for nearly 48 minutes fearlessly. By this the Saraswathi is thrown out into vibration. This should be done every day. By this, various diseases of the abdomen are cured. When the Saraswathi is thrown out into vibration it acts on the Kundalini and causes it to awake from its deep slumber.

The next thing to be discussed is Kumbhaka. For this a special posture named Vajrasana is to be known. One heel should be placed below the navel and the other heel above the former. Then the aspirant should sit with his body, neck and head erect. This is Vajrasana. Now the Kumbhaka is to be studied. There are various Kumbhakas, but that which is required for us is Bhasthri, about which we shall now discuss.

Seated in Padmasana, the aspirant having closed his mouth should exhale with care through the Suryanadi. Then he should inhale with a little speed so that the Prana goes down to the navel. Then exhalation

and inhalation should be done often as the bellows of a smith, *i.e.*, keeping the air stuffed within the body and then letting it out entirely. When the belly is full of Vayu, Kumbhaka or restraint of breath should be performed by pressing the nostrils with the fingers. The main thing to be noticed is the way of breathing, *i.e.*, just like the bellows of a smith quickly. By this the gastric fire is increased and the Yogin gets the power of floating in water. Further the more important result of this practice is the destroying of phlegm which closes the mouth of Brahmanadi and piercing of the Granthis, namely Brahmagranthi, Vishnugranthi and Rudragranthi.

Having studied about the adjuncts of the Shakti Chalana, we shall go into the details of rousing the Kundalini by Shakti-Chalana.

Sitting in the Vajrasana, the Kanda (Navel) should be slowly beaten with both the feet by holding them near the ankles. Then the Bhastrika Kumbhaka should be performed as described above. The stomach should be contracted by which the Sun which is there, is also contracted, on account of which the Kundalini is roused from its deep sleep and rises up with a hissing noise as an enraged serpent.

Having aroused the Kundalini it should be taken through the various Chakras to the Sahasrara. It should never be allowed to wait on its way anywhere, but led onwards. At times like a fierce serpent beaten with a stick, this Kundalini will rush up with a tremendous force and as there is always much danger in such a strong onrush it should be very carefully guarded against. When the Kundalini is being raised and made to pierce through the various Chakras, the Sadhaka experiences a kind of bliss and power at each centre. As the Kundalini reaches each Chakra, the lotus opens out and lifts its flowers upwards.

The Kundalini on its onward march through the Sushumna will carry with it only the surplus and separable energy from the various centres on its way, while blessing them in return. Just as a traveller to a distant country takes rest in inns on his way, the Kundalini should be made to stop at various centres to add fresh energy to it. For this purpose various Bandhanas or restraints are mentioned in the Yoga Sastra, which should be practised according to the stage of ascendancy of the Kundalini along the Sushumna. For the practice of the Bandhanas, the Brahmanadi is divided into three parts from the Muladhara to the Brahmarandhara. The first region is between the Muladhara and the Manipura and the second between the Manipura and the Visuddha, while the third is from the latter to the Sahasrara. The Bandhanas are named Mulabhandha, Udyanabhandha and

Jalandharabandha in coincidence with the three resting places in the three regions, namely Muladhara, Manipura and Visuddha.

Of these, we shall study about the first Bandhana, namely Mulabhandana which literally means the restriction of the Muladhara. By practising this Bandhana the Apana is raised up, which after rising upwards reaches the sphere of Agni, whose flame now grows long. Then Apana and Agni mingle together with Prana, when they are in a heated state. Now, on account of this fiery state of the Agni the sleeping Kundalini is roused, which rises like a serpent beaten with a stick. Then the Kundalini enters the hole of Brahmanadi making a hissing noise. Therefore Yogins should practise this Mulabhandana daily, which is as follows:—

Assuming an erect posture, the anus has to be contracted to an unusual degree and as an aid the heels of both the legs must be pressed against it; while doing so the Apana Vayu must be drawn upwards with mental effort. The Prana should be taken in and pressed down, so that both the Prana and Apana meet at Muladhara. This meeting is also explained in some literatures as Nada and Bindu. Added to these the mind is to be concentrated, when the Apana Vayu will give Nadijnayanam. Then as explained above, the sleeping Kundalini is awakened and raised along the Brahma Nadi.

After leaving the Muladhara centre the Kundalini passes through the Svadhisthana to the Manipura gathering all the energies in the Svadhisthana and invigorating and enriching itself with those energies. When the Kundalini reaches the Manipura the next Bandhana namely Udyanabhandha should be performed. The name Udyana is derived from root *Ud* which means to fly up. As such by this Bandhana the Kundalini is made to fly up with good vigour through the Sushumna. In order to perform the Udyanabhandha all the nerve currents are to be collected at the Manipura. Having seated himself in the Vajra posture the aspirant should breathe in hard thereby taking the Prana down to the navel. Then by contracting and drawing the walls of the abdomen round the navel towards the back, it should be held tightly in that position without allowing any energy to go below. Meanwhile the Kundalini should be drawn up with a strong mental effort. By this the Kundalini is made to fly up straight to the Visuddha centre crossing the Anahata. The other effects of this Bandhana are good complexion, health and vigour.

The next Bandhana is Jalandhara. This acts on the networks of nerves around the Visuddha centre. Therefore a lot of currents running hither and thither around this Chakra should be gathered and

confined before they can be united to the Kundalini, on its onward march. The Jalandharabandha is practised thus :—

Sitting in Vajrasana the chin should be bent and firmly pressed against the chest at a distance of about 4 inches from the heart and the breath stopped. At the same time the pit of the stomach should be contracted and drawn against the top of the spine opposite to it. Then the Kundalini should be pushed up by the mental operation of lifting as before. By this the glands above the throat secrete, which the Yogins style as Amritasrava. In this Bandhana the act of squeezing is done. It is required in this practice that the gullet should be drawn, which is done by exhausting the lungs, when the external air presses the gullet in owing to the decrease in pressure of the air inside the lungs. When the neck is tightened whereby the energy is confined there, the Kundalini is pushed up to the Sahasrara through the Ajna Chakra, with the help of the will. Thus the raising of the Kundalini to the Sahasrara is completed.

As already stated, above all is the lotus of a thousand petals known as Sahasrara wherein is the Supreme Shiva Himself who is identical with the Brahman of the Vedas, the nature of which is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute). It is the union of the Shakti (Kundalini Shakti) with Para Shiva or in other words the realisation of the identity of the Jiva with Brahman, which is said to be the aspirant's goal. Hence the Kundalini which has been led from the Muladhara all the way to the Sahasrara should be united with this Para Shiva, when the aspirant enjoys beatitude itself. In the awakening of the Kundalini it is described as female having three stages of life, namely when it is in the awakened state, it is in the Kumari (girl) stage, when it reaches the Anahata, it is in the Yoshit (woman-hood) stage and when it is in the Sahasrara, it is in the Pativrata (under coverture) stage.

After the Kundalini has been led to the Sahasrara it does not always stop there but tends to return to its original abode. Liberation is not gained by merely awakening and leading the Kundalini to the Sahasrara, but only when She permanently stays in the Sahasrara with Her Lord. An aspirant should make every effort to make this Shakti have a permanent stay with Her Pati, Sadasiva in the Sahasrara, when the Kundalini becomes a Pativrata. Then the aspirant forgetful of all in the world becomes a Jivan-mukta and enjoys the final beatitude and Self-consciousness.

THE ELEPHANT SET FREE *

By Swami Atulananda

Harken well, ye great ascetics, worshippers of Hari, the Lord of grace, for now I will relate to you an ancient story. Hearing this story your hearts will melt in devotion for Him whose glories surpass all human speech.

And the ascetics bowing their assent listened attentively. Then the auspicious Suka spoke:—

In former times, O ascetics, in a previous world-cycle, there lived a mighty monarch, Indradyumna by name. His territories spread over the four corners of the earth, and his wealth was unlimited. And for his justice he was loved and revered by all his subjects.

Now, one day when the king was already advanced in years, looking upon his children and grand-children, he thought, "Great power have I enjoyed and vast wealth and the best this world has to offer. Now let me spend my last years remembering Him who is the Giver of all good. Let me renounce all worldly concerns, and with my mind concentrated on Hari I shall hereafter forever dwell in His abode."

Consequently the king abdicated his sovereign power, and placing his eldest son on the throne adopted the ascetic life. In a small hermitage, nestled in a forest on the slope of a vast mountain, Indradyumna lived in solitude worshipping the Lord. His daily ablutions he performed in a sacred stream flowing near his cottage, and seated under a tree he practised self-control and various religious disciplines to subject the passions of the flesh. And with it all he observed the vow of silence.

Now it came to pass that one day the highly renowned sage Agastya came to the hermitage with his disciples. Being a Brahmin and accustomed to respect and honour wherever he appeared, Agastya was greatly annoyed seeing the indifference of the silent ascetic, who did not even get up to welcome him. And being of an irascible temperament he flamed up in anger. Addressing Indradyumna, he exclaimed, "You wicked ascetic devoid of sense, and insulter of Brahmins, why do you sit there like a dumb animal? In your next birth you will be an elephant!" Having thus cursed the pious king, Agastya and his disciples departed.

Indradyumna, sad at heart, but knowing that all things are fore-ordained according to one's own Karma accepted in good nature the

* Adapted from the Srimad bhagavatam.

decree of destiny. The curse of a sage, he knew, is but the revelation of future events.

At the appointed time the king giving up his body entered upon the existence of an elephant. And the memory of his previous life became clouded.

* * *

Now there was an island in the Southern Ocean. And on this island stood a great mountain with three towering summits reaching up to the skies. The summits were of gold and silver and iron. The slopes of this mountain were covered with forests with trees and shrubs bearing fruits and flowers during all the seasons. And in the valleys flowed streams of crystal water. There were also gardens and lakes where celestial nymphs sported at their pleasure. And there were caves in this mountain where lurked wild beasts. Lions roamed about, and tigers and rhinoceroses; and all kinds of creatures inhabited the waters.

There lived in that mountain-forest a huge elephant, the leader of a herd, with many she-elephants and their young. Wherever this herd went they uprooted trees and trampled under foot whatever stood in their way. At their approach the earth trembled and the jungle animals fled in all directions. Other elephants trumpotted in anger, and lions and tigers roared, and giant serpents hissed as they fled before the approach of the herd, and its undaunted leader.

One day when the herd was greatly oppressed by the heat of the day and their throats were parched with thirst, the leader elephant smelling from afar the fragrant breeze of a lotus lake ran towards the lake followed by the herd. And as they came upon the lake they found it filled to the brim with sparkling, limpid, water. In great joy, raising the water with their trunks, the elephants drank their fill. And the leader like an affectionate father, pushing aside the lotuses, bathed the young ones, and made them drink also. And he made merry with the she-elephants splashing their bodies with the cool water.

All this time the elephants did not realize that their frolicking in the lake was causing great distress to the inhabitants of the water. Little creatures were trampled to death; larger ones were thrown about and badly injured; others again had to flee in fear, leaving behind their eggs or brood.

At last in despair the poor water-creatures hastened toward the king of the lake, a giant alligator as big and strong as a hippopotamus. This alligator had ruled over the lake for ever so long and no one had ever dared dispute his rights. He took his tribute, it is true, from amongst the dwellers in the lake devouring many of them.

he also protected them in time of danger when outsiders tried to invade his territory.

Now he was peacefully basking in the sun, on the muddy bank on the other side of the lake, when the excited host of creatures approached him. In their confusion they all talked at the same time, each one relating his own tale of woe.

The alligator seeing their sad plight and hearing what had happened rose in anger. "Who," he roared in a terrible voice that vibrated over the entire lake, "who are those brutal wights that dare invade my kingdom, and disturb my subjects? Come, show me where they are, and I shall teach them a lesson!" Then, led by a little minnow the alligator came to the spot.

All the elephants by this time had left the water, except the leader of the herd. Seeing this huge beast but nowise daunted, the furious king of water denizens made for the brute. Firmly embedding his strong teeth in one of the hind legs of the elephant, and tightly locking his powerful jaws, he began to pull with all his might, wishing to drown the elephant in the lake.

Then began a terrible struggle the like of which had never been witnessed before. The powerful beasts, both fired with wrath, put forth their utmost strength. They pulled and pushed and jerked each other. Sometimes the alligator seemed to gain ground; then again the elephant won back his former position. Neither was victorious.

The she-elephants shrieking in dismay, ran hither and thither. Some seizing hold of the trunk of their leader tried to pull him to the land. But no matter how they exerted themselves they could not succeed in rescuing him.

At last, however, the elephant wrenched himself free from the clutch of the alligator. But the alligator was upon him again.

Now the aspect of the combat changed. The elephant turning, faced his opponent, fire in his eyes. They charged, tusks pointed at protruding snout; they collided with a thud, the impact shaking their bodies.

So matched were they in the fight that sometimes they stopped together panting hard against each other. Then they sped up again with furious strength. Time was annihilated, a red fury possessed their minds.

Thus it went on, neither gaining victory, and mortals and immortals marvelled greatly watching the mad struggle.

At last, after a long lapse of time, the elephant began to lose strength. He staggered, tottering on his feet, gasping for breath, his

eyes blinking. The life blood flowed like water from his wounds. The alligator relentlessly kept after him. Now clinging to his leg again he pulled the elephant slowly towards the lake.

Inch by inch the elephant lost ground. At last he was dragged into the lake, trembling, his power almost spent. Half submerged in the water, exhausted, he still struggled spasmodically.

Finally, realizing that his end was drawing near the mighty elephant thought, "Who is this alligator of unwaning vigor? He must be Destiny personified, commissioned from above to bring about my destruction. But there is a sovereign power greater than he. By my own strength I cannot free myself. Now let me take refuge in Hari, the Savior of the poor and the afflicted. He is the protector of all creation. For fear of Him Death even flies away."

Having thus contemplated, the harassed leader of the herd concentrated his thoughts within his heart, and as he entered more and more within himself, his mind so long overclouded by illusion began to clear. He remembered his former birth; and before his mind flashed the words of a hymn he had learned when he was king Indralyubha. Then, with great devotion, mentally prostrating himself before the Lord, the greatest of elephants recited this hymn—a hymn that has become immortal:—

"Salutations to the revered One who endues all beings with consciousness, who is the soul of the universe, who is the basis of all things. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to the Self-Existing Lord of creation, the source, the support, the end of all that is; beyond cause and effect, the cause of all causes. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him whom the sages worship, whose praise the Rishis sing, to attain whom Yogis practise chastity and various penances. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him who is birthless and deathless, eternal, beyond name and form, who assumes forms to please His devotees. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him of unlimited power, of wonderful works, the Lord of emancipation, the giver of Nirvana. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him who is far and near, who dwells in the lotus of the heart, who is beyond thought and speech, the Bliss of the blissful. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"May that Supreme Purusha compass my good. I do not pray for life in this elephant body. I crave that emancipation which time cannot affect. I pray for Self-knowledge which destroys the bondage of Maya. O greatest of Yogis, Lord Supreme, rescue me from the rounds of birth and death."

This prayer uttered with great devotion touched the heart of Hari. And the Lord summoned the devas and sent them to rescue the elephant. But the devas seeing the mortal struggle between the terrible brutes trembled in fear and dared not approach the spot. Then Hari who is the energy of all the devas, filled with compassion, himself assumed a celestial form. With a body shining like burnished gold, riding on an eagle of moonlike lustre, with flaming sword in hand, the Lord appeared in the heavens, and accompanied by a host of celestials came to the scene of combat.

And the elephant seeing the Lord approaching through the skies marvelled greatly. And lifting up his trunk holding a lotus, he spoke with difficulty, "O Lord, Savior of all creatures, I take refuge in Thee."

Then the Lord hastening to his rescue, quickly descended from the eagle and with a swift stroke of the sword cut off the head of the alligator.

Then, O ascetics, flowers began to shower from above, and devas and gandharvas and siddhas with song and music began to extol this mighty deed of Hari.

And he that was the alligator, once a great gandharva, freed from the curse that had brought on him this lowly birth, now appeared in a wonderful form. Cleansed of his sins he worshipped Hari, and with His blessings, ascended to the high region from which he had fallen.

And the elephant being touched by the Lord was transformed into a divine, ethereal form, and freed from the bondage of ignorance he attained the eternal abode of the blessed.

This, O ascetics, is the end of my story. He who contemplates this story with pious heart, and he who recites it with true devotion, with him the Lord is pleased, and on him He bestows his richest blessings.

THE RELATION BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND THE UPANISHADS

By Prof. A. K. Sharma.

I.

THE greatest want under which Buddhism has been suffering for a long time is perhaps the restoration of its spiritual background. Much has been written about the teaching of Buddha; an increasingly large amount of work has been done by way of translating original texts; the career of Buddhism has been accurately traced in all its vicissitudes; and even the conditions of life, economical, political, social and religious, which prevailed in Buddha's days, have been more or less ascertained. But the animating spirit, the fundamental principles, and the guiding ideas, which made Buddha give a particular form to his teaching, have yet precisely to be determined. Unless this is done it will not be possible to view Buddhism in correct perspective, much less to appreciate it properly.

It is in the absence of such an inquiry—owing to a deficiency in scholarship, if one may say so—that the world has come to possess a false notion of Buddhism. The illusion was created that Buddha's teaching was directed not only against Brahmanism but against the Upanishads also. One illusion begot many. That Buddha was atheistic or at least agnostic, that he denied the reality of soul, and that he characterized the supreme quest of life as a condition of utter annihilation, are only prominent examples of these. The result is that, at the present day, Buddhism is understood to be an odd mixture of high moral teachings and thorough going denial of the very basis of moral life. How these illusions arose is not in question here.

Unfortunately Buddhists themselves are blamable in large measure for this state of affairs. And our gratitude to Dr. Rhys Davids for all the good things that he has done in the cause of Buddhism, should not forbid us to point out, with regret, that he, more than any one else, is responsible for the spread of these illusions in English-speaking lands. If Buddha were to visit the earth to-day and talk with his followers on the various aspects of their beliefs or read the books written by eminent orientalists, he would be shocked to learn that views are attributed to him which he never held, and consequently he would have no hesitation in disowning and repudiating them altogether.

That Buddha was anti-Brahmanical in spirit admits of no doubt. In no measured terms he condemned the sacrifices, the meaningless rites, the extravagant ceremonials, the hocus pocus of magic, and the

and the vulgar superstition associated with the religion of the Vedas. But so also did the Upanishads! As a matter of historical fact Buddha fully entered into the spirit of the Upanishads in his attitude towards the popular religion.

Whether this sympathy between the two was confined to the negative attitude of condemning a third, or whether it was wider in scope, is a problem which does not seem to have been raised seriously in the history of Buddhist thought. The doctors of earlier days, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Asanga who were more in touch with the sources than we can ever aspire to be, understood and interpreted Buddhism in terms of the ideas developed in the Upanishads. But time and human perversity did their worst. The old doctors were forgotten, and a false view of Buddhism was allowed to creep in. In modern times it was only recently that attention was called to this question. Mr. Edmund Holmes pointed out "that Buddhism had been deeply influenced by the ideas of the ancient seers can scarcely be doubted." More recently still, Prof. Radhakrishnan adopted this view: "Buddha did not look upon himself as an innovator, but only as the restorer of the ancient way, *i.e.*, the way of the Upanishads." The professor would appear to hold that "the only metaphysics that can justify Buddha's ethical discipline is the metaphysics underlying the Upanishads." Buddha carried out the teaching of the latter only partially; for "the central defect of Buddha's teaching is that in his ethical earnestness he took up and magnified one half of the truth and made it look as if it were the whole."

Mr. Holmes' view is wider; to him Buddhism is as complete an expression of the Upanishads as the limitations of practical life would allow. Thus it is held that the relation between Buddhism and the Upanishads is that of one-sided dependence, *viz.*, of the former on the latter.

But when all the facts are envisaged the relation would seem to be one of mutual dependence. Chronologically, the Upanishads were anterior to Buddhism. This should not mean that the former in no wise depend upon the latter. When considered from the point of view of development, the two seem to be organically connected. The theoretical basis of Buddha's scheme of life is the teaching contained in the Upanishads; and separated from the latter the former would appear like a Jack in the box in the history of thought, in flagrant violation of the law of continuity. Conversely, for the practical application of the Upanishads we have to turn to Buddha's teaching. * * * *

This view is not as innocent as it might at first sight appear. It has serious implications, and it is well that they should be brought

out explicitly. Scholars are in the habit of contrasting the metaphysics of the Upanishads with the ethics of Buddhism. This is, to say the least, an absurd convention. Certainly the Upanishads contain a metaphysics; but as certainly they have also an ethics. The disciplines which the older as well as the later Upanishads advocate are, if anything, moral. The supreme end of life in the view of the Upanishads is not merely noetic in character; it is, to be sure, a spiritual condition; and to attain it the will is also pressed and transmuted into service. Now look at Buddhism. It is admittedly ethical; but—pace scholars—it is also metaphysical in that it has a definite and coherent view of reality and of phenomenon. The morality which it teaches is only a preparatory discipline in the sense in which it is understood in the Upanishads. And the goal presented by Buddha is not the realisation of the moral ideal in a narrow sense, but the attainment of a perfect spiritual state—the same as in the Upanishads—for which knowledge is also used, transcended, and sublimated. Thus each is metaphysical and ethical at the same time; and, as we shall show, they share the same pre-suppositions, present the same goal, adopt the same methods, and use the same ideas for scaffolding purposes.

How then shall we distinguish the one from the other? The Upanishads have three distinct marks. First, they move on the plane of theory, loftily indifferent to the facts of life; secondly, they contain profound thoughts which are conveyed in highly technical and learned language; thirdly, though in Buddha's days they were just reluctantly emerging from the seclusion of hermitages, they still retained their original esoteric character and were still protected, as it were, from the vulgar gaze of common men. Buddha took hold of their teaching, gave it a distinctly practical turn, brought it into touch with the work-a-day world, translated it into the language of daily life, and thus made it available even for the man in the street. In this attempt it was necessary to make some adjustments and even certain modifications—not, indeed, in fundamental principles, but in matters of details. In this way what was taught in the Upanishads as a theory of life was converted by Buddha into a regular programme.

II.

One pre-supposition which is generally considered to be common to both is the doctrine of transmigration. Strictly speaking, this is not a pre-supposition at all, for it is not organic to the teachings of themselves. It was taken as the starting point merely because it served the purpose of summing up the popular beliefs of the day and of stating the problem in clear terms.

The doctrine as understood in the days of the Upanishads was derived from two primary beliefs, *viz.*, the reality of self and the theory of Karma. The average Hindu, like the average man anywhere, took it for granted that, behind all the manifestations of individual life, there is an entity, a mysterious being called the self, and that it is the substratum of all the qualities and the source of all the deeds. Side by side with this, another interesting belief was developed. It is a matter of daily experience that nothing happens without bringing about something else, and that anything happens because of something else which happened before. This rule, if it be so, was applied to the moral life; and hence resulted the theory of Karma, *i.e.*, the law of causation in the moral sphere. As you sow, so shall you reap, and what you reap is what you sowed. This looks simple enough.

But there is a difficulty. There are facts which cannot be easily fitted into the theory. Variations in congenital tendencies and abilities, inexplicable privations like the one which puzzled Nicodemus, the undeserved happiness of the vicious in contrast with the misery of the virtuous: these are baffling mysteries of life. If anything could account for them, it must lie somewhere beyond the realm of experience. In the manner of the philosopher Kant who posited immortality on the grounds of ethical necessity, the Hindu of ancient days deduced not only future existence but also pre-existence on the same grounds. The theory of Karma was elaborated in such a manner as to include complicated processes of transcendental psychology. The distinctions of birth and death were swept aside at one bold stroke and reduced to stages in one continuous process of the life of the soul. It would appear that every deed leaves on the self a permanent effect which is bound to manifest itself in due time, and that, at the expiration of visible life, the self takes its accumulated burden with it, like a snail carrying its house on its back, to be born again on the earth in order to reap the fruits of its own deeds. Transmigration is a self-propelled circular activity: birth, deeds, death; birth, deeds, death, and so on. The soul is caught in it and it gets nowhere.

This was the form in which the doctrine was held even in Buddha's days. Buddha eliminated the idea of self, and described trans-migrations in terms of character: there are deeds and no doer. In this he made no departure from the teaching of the Upanishads; for even in the latter human individuality was condemned as an illusion. In the statement of popular beliefs it was allowed to stand where it was, only in the confidence that all empirical forms, including self, could be

transcended together in one act by the inculcation of correct knowledge. Moreover, the circumstances under which the Upanishads were taught permitted the teacher to explain, and the disciple to understand, the precise sense in which the term soul was used in various contexts. Buddha had a difficulty in this respect. He had to deal with the men of the world; and they had no sort of philosophic discipline. To introduce, in talking with them, a term of protean meanings would be only adding to the confusion. He perceived also that there was also an advantage in his way of presenting the matter. The average man would understand much more clearly what is to reform his character than what is to transcend empirical individuality. The problem was thus made simpler and reduced to manageable dimensions.

III.

The second pre-supposition is the belief in the expulsive power of knowledge. The ancient sages as well as Buddha took for granted that worldly life, with its implied egoism, selfishness, and misery, is rooted in Avidya, and that Vidya is capable of bringing about a spiritual transformation. By Avidya the Upanishads meant, not indeed intellectual privation, but positive knowledge of empirical forms. Correspondingly Vidya was defined as intellectual intuition, as direct perception of reality. The intellectual gives a twisted view of things so that the more intellectual we become the farther away we are from reality. Hence scientific knowledge is worse than even ignorance. Real knowledge is acquired neither through instruction, nor through erudition, but only through an act of sympathetic insight.

Buddha did not think it necessary to give a systematic exposition of the nature of knowledge. He did not look upon himself as a philosopher who should propound doctrines, eluce conclusions, and offer proofs, but as a reformer whose mission lay in the application of the old teaching to the facts of daily life. Nevertheless, he exhorted his disciples to free themselves from ignorance and cultivate knowledge. "Buddhists are introduced into the realm of truth by faith, they possess truth only by sight." On occasions when he lapsed into philosophical mood, Buddha made himself very explicit. It was in such a mood that he once told the Bhikkus that, while ignorance of the four noble truths and of the three characteristics of the Unmanifest would confine them to the path of transmigration, knowledge of these would effect a sure release.

In the Upanishads actual imparting of the higher knowledge was deferred to the very end of a long period of discipleship; while in the case of Buddha's teaching it was not so. The ancient sages were in a

privileged position. Pupils sought them, resided with them, and it was only after being gradually prepared that they were taught the secret lore. Buddha had neither a hermitage nor a school. None sought him at first; instead, he went out, like Jesus, in search of lost sheep. It was not possible for him to put men through a course of discipline before imparting knowledge. Even if it were possible, laymen could not have patience enough to undergo a preliminary training in order to gain something of which they could have no idea. Naturally they would ask what it was all about. So Buddha told them what it was about, and then suggested how they should cultivate it, establish themselves in it, and make it their own. This explains the fact that in the Upanishads knowledge is the ruling theme, while in Buddhism it looks like a means.

In this context we have to raise a very interesting problem. The Upanishads taught that all notions are illusions, and that knowledge is concerned with reality as such. Buddha accepted these propositions, but instead of adopting them as they were, he gave them a particular character. Throughout his teaching egoism is described as illusion and it is insistently contrasted with reality. We may be allowed to remark parenthetically that the original word for reality has been mistranslated by many as truth. The opposite of illusion is not that but reality. Be it as it may. Why did Buddha mark out the self for special treatment as if it were the only illusion? In asking this question we are perhaps asking for the very secret of Buddha's teaching. General propositions were propounded in the Upanishads in an admirable way. But Buddha wanted to work them out in life. The only way in which he could go about this was to concentrate attention on the self. Among illusions, egoism occupies a peculiar position. In the first place, it is a term in every illusion, the subject, as it were, of all of them. Destroy it, and they lose all significance. In the second place, the self is the breeding place of every kind of illusion, and there is a great advantage in applying a caustic remedy to the very source of infection. In this manner Buddha adjusted the knowledge which he learnt from the Upanishads to the needs of a programme of life.

IV.

It was in the presentation of the supreme end of life as Nirvana that Buddha was most conscious of his heritage. Nirvana is a spiritual entrance into Reality which comprehends all and which is comprehended by none. The difficulty in grasping its import was foreseen by Buddha himself. While he was resting under the shepherd's *Nyagrodha* tree on the bank of the Nairanjana, as depicted in the Arcadian scene

in the story of third temptation, he was taking stock of the situation and working out his plans for the future. Then the fear crept into him that his mission might end in failure; for the worldling might not grasp the meaning of Nirvana, but might, on the other hand, mistake the joy of selflessness for abject surrender, and eternal life for annihilation. This fear has been fully justified by history. Nothing which Buddha taught has been so fruitful of controversies as the idea of Nirvana. Diverse interpretations have been put upon it; and Prof. Poussin has done a service in classifying them under three heads, viz., annihilation, immortality, and "unqualified deliverance". The last is his own view, and the other two belong to Rhys Davids, Childers, Pischel and the rest, whom he has criticised.

It is neither possible nor necessary in this paper to give an exposition of these views or even to appraise their values. It may, however, be pointed out that their authors have allowed themselves to be carried away by certain undetected assumptions. They seem to have assumed that a reference to conditions after physical death is essential for the full explanation of Nirvana, and therefore they have shifted the venue of enquiry from this life to the other. They seem to have assumed further that there should be continuity of empirical self even after Nirvana has been attained; and this has made them anxious to find out the how and the where of this post-Nirvanic individuality. If it is not there, Nirvana is annihilation; if it is there it is immortality; if it is there, and if nothing positive can be predicated of it, it is "unqualified deliverance". Neither assumption has any foundation in the teaching of Buddha. In the first place, Nirvana is a spiritual state; to the life of the spirit as such the presence or absence of a body is not a vital matter. It is not a far off goal lying beyond the gates of death but a level of life which is attained here and now. Did not Buddha himself declare explicitly in his sermon at Benares, that he had attained Nirvana even as he was? In the second place, it is enough to observe that any casual student of Buddhism can see for himself that the reality of self, either here or hereafter, is repudiated, in spirit and in letter, in every page of the scriptures.

In one sense, Nirvana is extinction; but what is extinguished is not the fundamental reality of life. "Whenever Buddha denies existence to the Ego, what he is really doing is to deny reality to the individual Ego, to the ordinary surface self." This is not a surmise. Whenever General Simha asked in the most straightforward manner if it was true that he was preaching the annihilation of the soul and the extinction of life's very essence, the master gave the plainest answer that he was preaching the annihilation of egoism and all the evils which issue there from, but not the annihilation of love, truth and charity. Again in the course of a sermon he told the Jatilas that a disciple of his should free himself from selfishness and thus attain Nirvana.

Self is the attempt to split reality into incompatible forms. The values it creates in order to consolidate and perpetuate itself, are impalpable and competitive. So long as they are allowed to remain life is a war of each against all. Destruction then is of negative values, particularly of selfishness which is the home of all negative values. In other words, the old Adam has to die in order that the new may live.

In another and real sense Nirvana is preservation of life. In his discussion with Simha, to which reference was made earlier, Buddha

gave the assurance that his teaching was intended to preserve the soul and not to destroy it. On another occasion he told the Brahman Kutadanta that his mission was to teach life and not death. Self is the epidermis of life; scratch it, and you find eternal values within the derm. The pursuit of truth, disinterested service, benevolent affections, the holiness of disposition, love, charity, wisdom, righteousness: these abide for ever. In addition to the conservation of values, Nirvana brings with it, Abhinna and Idhi—Supernatural wisdom and power. The former would appear to be a kind of omniscience, and the latter a kind of omnipotence. When life takes these forms it attains a measure of divinity, and reaches the last degree of spirituality. It then moves on the plane of the eternal. According to the law of evolution taught by Buddha, change and formation are illusory notions created by Avidya. When these are removed, life soars to the highest altitude possible, transcending all limits and distinctions. "There is O Monks, a state where there is neither earth nor water, nor heat, nor air; neither infinity of space, nor infinity of consciousness, nor, nothingness, nor perception, nor non-perception; neither this world nor that world; neither sun nor moon. It is the Uncreate. That, O Monks, I term neither coming nor going, nor standing; neither death, nor birth. It is without stability, without change, it is the Eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow." This was Buddha's way of expressing that Nirvanic life is at-one-ment with ultimate Reality, whatever be its name—Over-soul, Absolute, Brahman, God. It is the sublimation of human life into the Divine. It is metalogical; there is neither feeling nor emotion in it. Though as is often done, it may be asymptotically described in terms of the highest spiritual values known to us, it still remains incomprehensible, baffling the categories of ordinary knowledge.—

--Extracted from "The Monist" Chicago, U. S. A.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The self or the spirit of man : by T. R. V. Sarma ; printed at the Electric Printing Works, Coimbatore. Price Rupee one.

This little book by T. R. V. Sarma places before the reader that the ideal of man should be the realization of the self. It is as it were a brief yet a lucid commentary upon the Maha Vakya, viz., "Tat Twam Asi" the English rendering of which is "Thou art that." The various aspects of this Maha Vakya are dilated upon at some length with special reference to the different stations in life: the book is divided into 7 chapters of which the chapter on "Renunciation in home life" is very interesting and instructive, interspersed as it is with apt stories and illustrations. We recommend the book to all aspirants after Truth.

Why I should read the Gita : by B. K. Venkatachar B. A. L. L. B., Printed at K. N. Press, Mysore.

Mr. Venkatachari's treatise entitled 'Why I should read the Gita' is a fervent appeal on the part of the author to his country-men to promote the study of the Gita among them. The author gives in the earlier part of the book an elaborate appreciation of the Gita and dis-

cusses in detail the benefits that the nation as well as the individual may derive by a close and reverent study of the same. In the last portions of the book the author suggests, as a practical step for popularising the Gita, the formation of an All-India Organisation to collect funds for freely distributing copies of the Gita and for celebrating the Gita-day. The book is from the beginning to the end full of love and reverence for this sacred book of Hinduism. We hope the happy suggestions of the author, embodied in this volume, will meet with a ready response from every lover of Truth.

Shri Ramakrishna : by T. L. Vaswani ; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price as. 8.

This little book by T. L. Vaswani is a collection of some of his lectures and talks on Sri Ramakrishna and his message. Containing, as it does, a short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life and an appreciation and estimate of his greatness, the book will certainly be a valuable introduction to a study of Sri Ramakrishna. It is also to be remarked that the get-up is very neat and handy.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A NEW CENTRE OF THE R.K. MISSION AT SINGAPORE

A Branch Centre of the Ramkrishna Mission has been opened at Singapore in July last. In 1913 and 1919 Swami Sharvananda, then President of the Mission Centre at Madras, was invited by the local Hindus. The Swami's visits were so inspiring and impressive that during his second visit in 1919 the members of Arya Sangham a local society working on similar lines as the Mission resolved to hand over to the Mission all its properties, so that a centre of the Mission could be opened. The authorities of the Mission accepted the gift and expressed that a branch centre would be gradually opened at Singapore. Since Swami Sharvananda's visit in 1919, Swamis Abhodayananda, Paramananda and others of the Mission passed through this beautiful metropolis of the Eastern Seas and lectured on the ideas and ideals of the Mission. In May last, Swami Adyananda was instructed by the Governing Body of the Mission to open the branch centre and take charge of it. Accordingly Swami Adyananda came down to Singapore from Kuala Lumpur and opened the centre. Several lectures have since then been delivered by Swami Adyananda on the ideas and ideals of the Mission. The subjects of Swami's lecture were: (1) Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission, (2) Heart of Hinduism, (3) The plan and purposes of human evolution, (4) The philosophy of Good and Evil, (5) The message of Bhagavat Gita, (6) What is Vedanta.

The Swami is at present conducting an Evening Service on every Sunday at the Mission House when the following programme is followed: (1) Invocation and Chanting. (2) Music, (3) Preaching through lectures and discourses, or Study Classes on Bhagavat Gita or Upanishads. Attendance to all these lectures and classes has been large. An Advisory Committee to assist the Swami has also been formed. The leading Hindus have agreed to serve there. The Mission has already obtained a plot of land from the late Arya Sangham and appeals will soon be made to collect funds to put up the Mission House. The other lines of activities will also be opened gradually.

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