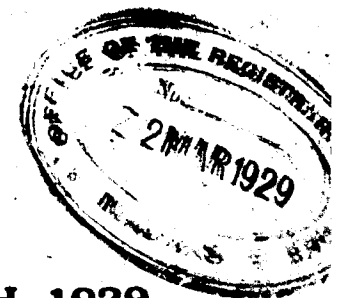


THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XV, No. 11 : MARCH, 1929.

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"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"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'."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Vol. XV]

MARCH 1929

[No. 11

PRAYER

ॐ

त्वमेव विष्णुश्चतुराननस्त्वं, त्वमेव मृत्युर्धनदस्त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव सूक्ष्मः पुरुषोऽव्ययस्त्वं, त्वमेव सूक्ष्मात्परमश्च सूक्ष्मः ॥

व्यक्तस्त्वमेव प्रकृतिस्त्वमेव, त्वमेव भूमिः सलिलं त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव वह्निः पवनस्त्वमेव, त्वमेव यज्ञो नियमस्त्वमेव ॥

त्वमेव भूतं भवनश्च भव्यं, त्वमेव सर्वः प्रकरोषि धर्मः ।

त्वमेव सर्वस्य चराचरस्य, पृथग् विभक्ता प्रलये च गोप्ता ॥

ततः सर्वे वयं भीतास्त्वामेव शरणं गताः ॥

Oh Lord, Thou art the all-pervading Deity, and the Creator sublime; Thou art Death and the Treasurer divine; Thou art the spirit, dwelling in all, and subtle and immutable; Thou art the subtlest of the subtle; Thou art the manifest and the unmanifest; Thou art the earth, water, fire and air; Thou art the sacrifice and the rule thereof;

Thou art the past, present and future; Oh mighty Revealer of religion, Thou maker of diversity of the world entire, and the Preserver of it in the end, Thou art all-in-all; therefore, in sacred awe, we do seek refuge in Thee!

SKANDAPURANAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple: Maharaj, some meditates in the heart, and some, on the head; I myself do exactly as I see one outside—as I just see you now. Of these different ways of meditation which is the proper one, sir?

Swami: The process of meditation differs in accordance with the differences in Sadhana. Ordinarily it is better to meditate in the heart. The body should be considered as the temple and God residing in it. Whenever the mind becomes steady through continued, spiritual practices, then alone can a man have a vision of his Istam (chosen Deity); and wherever he does realise Him—side, back or heart—exactly in that place can he then carry on his meditation with ease.

Through persistence in meditation the first experience that a man gets is the perception of a hallowed effulgence, and simultaneously with that experience or a while later, a kind of higher and nobler joy is felt by him, and his mind does not like to move onward leaving that joy. But if he pushes on his enterprise still further, he next experiences the effulgence solidified, now his mind tending to merge itself in that solid mass of consciousness. Sometimes again, the mind can be annihilated by continuously hearing the long, sacred sound of Pranava (or Oum, the sound symbol of the Brahman).

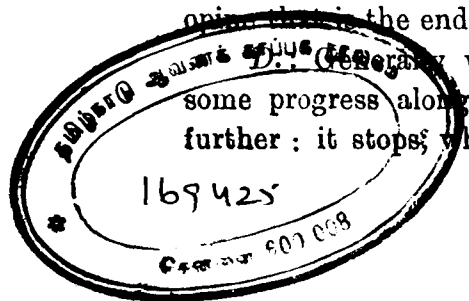
Spiritual realisation knows no bounds! The more you know, the more yet remains to be known. It is unbounded, infinite! By experiencing a little of effulgence or so many think, that is the end; but the fact is quite otherwise. According to some again, where the mind ceases its functionings, there only true religion begins; but others

opine that is the end. Generally we find that the mind, after making some progress along the spiritual line cannot advance further: it stops; what makes it so, venerable sir?

S.: The weakness of the mind! Yes, it is solely responsible for this mental torpidity. According to its 'capacity' 'the mind moves on to a certain extent; then it stops; it cannot advance more. And all minds are not of the same 'capacity', although it can be developed, and it must be. Sri Ramakrishna has said that through Brahmacharya the mind can be strengthened more and more; and a strong mind never vacillates at the slight disturbance of lust and anger. To such a mind these passions are simply trifles. To it comes the firm conviction that these can do it no harm. Many are the pitfalls that stand in the way of Sadhana; and the external ones are only a negligible minority compared to the internal. Hence the injunction for Asanam (sitting posture) and Mudra (position of fingers) in religious worship.

D.: Maharaj, it occurs to me at times that you do call everyone of us to you and inquire about the extent of our spiritual progress and also the difficulty thereof if any, and encourage and enthuse us abundantly.—B. says, whether we can actually help our fellow-man or no, we should not lack behind in giving encouragement to him all the while saying that we are at his back and he need fear no harm; and that thereby the dormant lion of the self shall rise up and all fear shall go. Yes sir, your encouragement takes away all fear and apprehension and makes us truly bold and uncompromising.

D.: Do you know, my child, such attitude of mind does not always come. At times, of course, the mind rests at such a state that I feel I should entreat and implore you all one by one, if necessary even by touching your feet and say: "Do this, my son, do this for God's sake." But again, I think: "Who am I to instruct you in all this; the Lord is there; and as He makes us do, so is done. And whom to ask! The Lord Himself is the cause; the Lord Himself is the instrument, and He Himself is all! Again, why should people take my words even though



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spoken to! But then you know, my boy, if the inspiration comes from within then people do take them and follow!

Strive on, my son, strive on and on, and do not waste a moment of time. At the close of a day Sri Ramakrishna wept and prayed: "Mother, another day is gone, I am not yet blest with thy vision!" Even so yearn after God, my child, and be lost in Him!

THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MOVEMENT—I

The history of every race has always witnessed a series of movements, both social and religious, whenever it has needed an adjustment on material and spiritual planes. In India similar movements have, of late, as in the past, come into existence in response to the spiritual demands of the people. And of all such movements of the present day, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, embodying as it does the spiritual consciousness of the newly awakened race, seems to constitute one of the most significant historical events of the 19th century. The forces working for centuries together deepened and intensified with the process of time and compressed themselves into the personality of a single individual whose silent and unostentatious life of intense spiritual culture on the eve of a new epoch stood as an eloquent interpretation of Indian thought and genius to the humanity at large. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna was indeed a historical necessity. It was a period of cultural disintegration and economic prostration, an age of intellectual stagnation and social disruption in India, and an era of scientific discovery and Realistic philosophy in the world outside. India stood at the parting of the ways. An intimate touch with the Western world opened the gate for an influx of many conflicting ideas that began to force themselves upon the attention of the Indian people and led them unconsciously to hug the complexity of Occidental mode of life and thought. It is the unfailing testimony of history that whenever any novel principle of life, social or political, is held by any conquering race before the vision of a subject nation, the latter, with the frantic zeal of a drowning man, grasps at that

sparkling philosophy of human destiny, without even pausing to consider how far it has its sanction in the collective spirit of the race or is conducive to its ultimate well-being. The individuality of the race is lost sight of in the alluring beauty of the in-coming ideas, and the entire population runs helter-skelter after the simulacrum of the new idealism. An unprecedented frenzy for reform and change,—an indecent madness for a thorough overhauling of the entire structure of social and political life, seizes upon the imagination of the people, and the whole host are swept under the stimulus of a sentimental urge into the realm of fanciful ideas that have no moral basis in the cultural instincts of the people. This has more often than not been the unfortunate experience in the life of most of the subject races in the world, and the case of India is nothing but a replica of such a tragic event in the succession of historical phenomena.

The contact of India with the outside world is not a novel occurrence but is as old as the history of the Indian race itself. But the difference between the past and the present is so sharply marked that it needs no philosophical expatiation. India was independent in the past and did never experience the bitterness of economic atrophy as now; and naturally, the cultural impact of the West could but rarely cut deep into the shore of Indian life and sweep away the sacred treasures of the land before it. On the otherhand, it only added to the tone and vigour of the organic life of the nation and satisfied the demands in so far as the people needed a *healthy* readjustment in the varied spheres of their activity. But the modern life of India tells quite a different tale, and the influx of Western culture into the vortex of Indian thought, coming in the wake of political subjection created an insipid mentality eager to satisfy itself with whatever was dangled down before it as a tempting bait. In an unlucky hour the Occidental ideas stole a march upon the unwary Indians and ultimately lured them into a position of utter helplessness through a silent process of intellectual, social and economic exploitation. Every 'cultured' Indian considered it to be his proud privilege to shine in the borrowed feathers of outlandish manners and customs, dress and habits, and any revolt against these prevalent notions and practices was labelled as a mark of rank vulgarity and barbarism. This was the state of India. The

wave of Indian life thus receded back to its lowest level under the pressure of European Imperialism. It was at this critical juncture of Indian history that Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest spiritual figures in the history of mankind, appeared on the platform of Indian life as an embodiment of India's spiritual heritage and stood as a mighty challenge to the materialistic philosophy of the West. The soul of India was indeed stirred to its inmost depth and quivered anew into a historic expression. The cosmic thought-forces of the entire race compressed themselves into the single organic life of that great spiritual being who stood before humanity with all the majesty and grace of India's culture to bring all the straying souls back to her catholic fold and to impart a new orientation to the disruptive forces governing the thought and action of the world outside.

Sri Ramakrishna needed a powerful exponent of his life and message,—a mouthpiece to interpret to the self-forgetful Indians and to the rest of humanity the accumulated wisdom of India's culture that he himself embodied in his synthetic personality. And this was fulfilled in the life of Swami Vivekananda. The advent of this heroic figure was no less significant than that of his illustrious Master. The meeting of the two souls like the union of the two historic personages of the past—Sri Krishna and Arjuna—on the eve of the great battle of Kurukshetra, produced a gigantic spiritual wave that has swept over the world and is still carrying humanity before its mighty urge. Rightly has M. Romain Rolland remarked in *The Response of Asia*: “The religious firmament of India was illuminated by two stars of primary grandeur, suddenly appearing—or re-appearing after centuries—two miracles of spirit: Ramakrishna, the ‘mad man’ of God—who embraced in his love all forms of Divinity: and his heroic disciple, Vivekananda whose torrential energy had re-awakened in his exhausted people the God of action, the God of the Gita.” The sacred mantle of Sri Ramakrishna fell upon the Swami, and like a faithful servant and friend, he carried out the mandate of the Master to the last breath of his life. His discipleship at the holy feet of that great soul endowed him with a vision to realise the synthetic value of human aspirations and qualified him for the noble task of revolutionising the thought-world of humanity. He understood where the heart of

India truly beat and what role she was to play in the moulding of human destiny. The heroic band of followers that clustered round the sacred standard of Sri Ramakrishna was afterwards organised into a dynamic force in the country through the instrumentality of the spiritual genius of Swami Vivekananda for the fulfilment of the divine message of their Teacher and Guide. The country needed the guidance of such an organised body, dedicated to the service of the mother-land and consecrated at the altar of humanity,—a body of Sannyasins who should be ready to devote their spiritual illumination to the uplift of their fellow-men, and whose whole life would be an eloquent exemplification of the great truth embodied in the words of the Swami:—*आत्मनो मोक्षार्थे जगद्धिताय च*।—“Personal illumination and the good of the world.” Swami Vivekananda was born not merely for his personal liberation but for the redemption of the entire mankind. Though blessed with the highest Bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the great Swami was not allowed by the Master to spend his life in that state of ecstatic Beatitude but was commanded to lay the accumulated wealth of his spiritual attainment at the feet of mankind, especially of his benighted countrymen whose poverty and ignorance stood in sad contrast with the opulence and progress of the world outside. He visualised the true theme of Indian life and knew what was needed to carry the straying souls once more to their rallying point. “I see,” said the Swami, “that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality, as in England. Artistic life in another, and so on. In India, religious life forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of national life, and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through transmission of centuries—that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt.” Swami Vivekananda poured his whole soul into the country's cause and inaugurated a movement that, true to his sacred mission, has crystallised to-day into a dynamic religious institution influencing the social and spiritual aspirations of the country. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement is thus a legacy of that great Indian genius who illustrated and represented in him the living principles of Indian life and culture, that stand as the

background of this sacred movement. And it is needless to point out that a resume of the teachings of that great soul is tantamount to the unfoldment of the truths that the movement embodies and is trying to actualise in its varied activities.

Swami Vivekananda was a patriot and a saint in one. In him patriotism was deified into the highest saintship, and loving service to fellow-men, into true worship. For true patriotism was with him nothing short of the transfiguration of a man's own personality into the soul of his people, rising and sinking with them. Truly has Sister Nivedita remarked: "The thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word 'nationality' nor proclaimed an era of 'nation-making'. 'Man-making' was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his motherland. Like some delicately poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo . . . His country's religion, history, geography, ethnology, poured from his lips in an inexhaustible stream. . . Like some great spiral emotion, its lowest circles held fast in love of soil and love of nature; its next embracing every possible association of race, experience, history, and thought; and the whole converging and centring upon a single definite point, was thus Swami's worship of his own land. And the point in which it was focussed was the conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed but young, ripe with potentiality, and standing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she had known in the past." But it is painful to find that *patriotism* has become a very cheap commodity in the modern market of Indian politics. Any one who is able to spin out a specious '*philosophy of activism*' and denounce most irrationally even the sacred duties and idealism that do not square with his cherished views and narrow outlook, is hall-marked as the hierophant of nationalism and idolised as the greatest of patriots in the land! India would have been emancipated long ago, had gasconade and tongue-doughtiness been deemed as the sufficient passport to the temple of Freedom. But fortunately it is not so. Says Swami Vivekananda: "My would-be patriots!

do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and sages, have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving, and millions have been starving for ages? . . . Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your dearest ones, your property, even your own bodies? . . . *That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.*" These are the words not of a sentimentae callow youngster having the hardihood of posing himself as an accredited leader of Indian aspiration without the legitimate sanction of the sacred cultural idealism of the land, far less the spiritual vision of a patriot-saint, but of a soul whose whole being was a fire of spirituality and who knew no rest till the end of his life owing to the gnawing agony of his heart at the helpless state of his motherland. Swamiji has demonstrated in his life that to be a true patriot one must identify his whole being with the throbbing life of the national organism and shed his life-blood drop by drop in the silent and devoted service of the country's cause.

The Brahmavadin once remarked: "The young visionary from his very boyhood felt that Indian men and women must grow in moral worth and strength, that only in a great, free and united India would Indians find light and life for the service of humanity,—an India free from corrupting facts, from a crushing materialism and passion for the finite, and united by a roused historic consciousness, united in the presence of an age-long spiritual culture,—and that only in such an India would the message of his Master be a living force to make her stand before the world as the spiritual teacher of humanity." Sri Ramakrishna came to establish Dharma in the world but Dharma has no meaning outside of society. The spiritual and the social must become identical. Swami Vivekananda found to his mortification that the society had become the veritable catacomb of healthy aspirations. The tyranny of the privileged few and the high-caste people, perpetrated without the least qualms of conscience upon the ignorant masses of India for ages; the unbridled reign of outworn customs and usages, of evils and hideous practices in

society ; the canker of Don't-touchism creating an unbridgeable gulf between the high and the low ; the rank illiteracy of the three hundred million souls of India prevailing at a time when the rest of humanity were making rapid strides in every walk of human thought and culture ; the political thralldom and economic exploitation of the once opulent land of his birth at the hands of an alien race ; and above all, the utter forgetfulness of Indian culture and spiritual idealism, and the blind acceptance of the Occidental philosophy of life as the determinant of Indian destiny, —all these rolled one after the other with kaleidoscopic quickness before his spiritual vision and rendered him entirely restless throughout his life. But the remedy he evolved was quite characteristic of that great soul. He went straight deep into the heart of the disease itself, and his remedial measures necessarily differ from those of many upstart reformers whose social or political obsession does not permit them to see anything beyond the tip of their nose. The history of India, social or political, is the history of a silent process of evolution of the spiritual forces of Indian life. Religion is the very soul of India's growth and expansion, as it has entered into the very foundation of her national existence. "Our method," said the Swami, "is very easily described. It simply consists in reasserting the national life. Buddha preached renunciation. India heard, and in six centuries she reached her greatest height. The secret lies there. The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself. The banner spiritual cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation."

His method of reforming society was not destructive but constructive. He visualised the spiritual destiny of his country and, armed with the dynamic principle of life he fell like a bomb-shell upon the society to rouse it to a conscious life of progressive humanity. He once wrote to an Indian friend from America : "All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priest-craft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure ; what was the result ? Failure ! Beginning from Buddha down to Raja Rammohan Roy, every one made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down

religion and caste all together, and failed. But inspite of all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallised social institution, which after doing its service is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality...Freedom is the only condition of growth, take that off, the result is degeneration." Freedom, he declared, is the *sine qua non* of the spontaneous growth of human society; and this message of freedom, spiritual, social and political, came out from him as a result of his realisation of the oneness of humanity—the very cardinal principle of Hindu religion. The high and the low, the touchable and the untouchable, the Brahmin and the Pariah, all stand on the common platform of the Vedantic conception of the unity of the soul and the community of spiritual aspiration. To divide mankind into artificial compartments of social interests and privileges on the basis of the accident of birth is to pull down to the dust the whole fabric of Indian philosophy and to negate the very principle of growth of our collective life. Swami Vivekananda's life-long endeavour was to rehabilitate India's ancient idealism in consonance with the healthy and progressive elements of modern cultural forces and to open to mankind the vista of spiritual freedom embodied in the Vedantic doctrine of equality of man. For he realised that without a due recognition of this basic principle of our cultural philosophy, no amount of sentimental rigmarole, or political shibboleth would find a living response in Indian hearts and succeed in bringing about the desired resurgence in the varied fields of our activity.

Social or political reconstruction of our land must be based, he says, on the sound bed-rock of the spiritual instinct of the race ; for spirituality is the very soul of Indian thought and movement. "In India social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring ; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants,—its spirituality . . . Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. *Before flooding India with scientific or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.*" This the Swami has pointed out in nounce rtain terms to his countrymen, and the first work that demands our attention, says he, is that the most

wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our Puranas and other scriptures—must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, from the forest, from the possession of selected bodies of people and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that these truths may run like fire all over the country, from north to south, and east to west, from the Himalayas to Comorin, from Sindh to the Brahmaputra. The sacred scriptures of the Hindus proclaiming as they do in thousand and one voice the divinity of man and the oneness of humanity throw wide open to all, irrespective of caste or creed, the gateway to the spiritual wisdom of the ancient seers. And it is not too much to emphasise that unless the socially suppressed and politically emasculated masses of India are awakened to the consciousness of their potential divinity and to the infinite possibilities of their nature, any empty bunkum, as is the forte of some political demagogues in India, shall only stultify their 'neo-philosophy of activism' without actually moulding Indian aspirations into historic landmarks of positive advancement. Swami Vivekananda viewed the problems of India and suggested remedies thereof, not from the standpoint of a self-constituted dictator but from the position of a humble servant of humanity, in whom the Vedantic conception of the oneness of life was concretised into the living ideal of service for self-illumination as well as for the good of the world. He saw the Narayana in all, in the sick and the poor, the Pariah and the inarticulate masses of his poverty-stricken land, and that is why his heart beat with each throb of all the hearts that ached, known and unknown. He has bequeathed to the young men and the unborn generations of his country the sacred task of educating, feeding and elevating the voiceless millions of India. "I may perish of cold or hunger in this land (America), but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go now this minute to the temple of Parthasarathi, and before Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokula, who never shrank to embrace the Pariah Gubaka, who accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles and saved her in His incarnation as Buddha—yea, down on your faces before Him, and make a sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves

above all, the poor, the lowly, the oppressed. Vow there to devote your whole life to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day."

The suppression and persecution of womanhood in India was, in the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, one of the most potent reasons for the demoralisation of Indian life; and in one of his letters he indignantly remarked: "Why is it that we are slavish, miserable and dead? . . . Do you know who is the real Shakti-worshipper? It is he who knows that God is omnipotent force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that force . . . What are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral! What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons.' As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. What are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now." But only inauguration of reformatory measures will not herald an era of progress and national advancement unless education on truly national lines be imparted to open out before the people the hideousness of the social evils so long nurtured in the arena of social life. Moreover, a nation whose higher aspirations have been smothered and vision of a better condition of existence has almost been befogged by a perpetual sense of helplessness arising out of poverty and political dependence, cannot be expected to rise to the full stature of nationhood unless it is properly fed and stimulated into a conscious being by means of proper education. "A country," says the Swami, "where millions of people live on flowers of the Mohua plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell! Is that a religion or devil's dance? . . . We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot . . . Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and

seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandala, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time? . . . The poor are too poor to come to schools and pathshalas We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the people its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside." But the Swami, in spite of his innate love for indigenous culture and a passionate yearning for the uplift of his sunken countrymen, was not a man of antediluvian ideas but a rational progressivist advocating a happy synthesis of cultures of the East and the West without detriment to the individuality of Indian thought and aspiration. For he urges that 'what we should have is what we have not, perhaps what our forefathers even had not;—that which the Yavanas had;—that impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe the electric flow of the tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that. We want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-sacrifice, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward; and we want that intense spirit of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot.' Himself an embodiment of spiritual strength, his message was a triumphant call to rise to the radiance of the spirit. His soul caught the national cadence and began to vibrate in unison with the mother-heart. In him the Vedanta became dynamic and the accumulated culture of centuries became aggressive and instinct with new life and meaning.

His was a multifold personality; for 'in the make-up of the Swami's temperament, one can see glimpses of the intellect of Sankara, the heart of Buddha, the realisation of Sri Chaitanya, and the spiritual fire of Guru Nanak combined with the mildness of Jesus the Christ and the apostolic eloquence of Saint Paul.' His love for the countless millions of his own soil expanded into the infinitude of spiritual solicitude for the well-being of humanity

grovelling in the sink of materialism. A great harmoniser of religions and a synthesiser of the highest ideals of knowledge, devotion, work and yoga, Swami Vivekananda proclaimed to the people that universal Religion has nothing to do with eclecticism and syncretism but stands for the grand harmony of all apparently conflicting thoughts and beliefs which like different streams having their sources in different places and ultimately mingling their water in the sea, lead men through various ways to the one eternal Truth. The Dvaita, the Vishistadvaita and the Advaita are but the three phases or stages in the gradual ascent of the human soul, which reaches the highest goal in the perception of Oneness. In fact, the depth of his spiritual realisation enabled him to see everything from quite a new angle of vision and to meet all contradictions in the light of the unity existing behind the manifoldness of the world. With the expanded vision of a seer he came to realise that without the help of 'practical Islam,' theories of Vedantism, however fine and sublime they might be, were entirely of no use to the vast mass of mankind. The people must be taught that the different religions are but the varied expressions of the one eternal Religion and that there is no conflict in the essentials between the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. "For our land," said the Swami, "a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body."

He felt the divine call from within to carry the sacred message of his Master to the world abroad not merely to uphold the cultural greatness of India but to deliver the much-needed spiritual pebulum—the accumulated wisdom of the Eastern world—to the expectant humanity in the West. The triumphant note of harmony of all religions, the central symphony of Hindu thought, as struck by the Swami in the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago thirty-six years back, even now rings clear and distinct in our ears and is gaining in volume and intensity with the roll of time. He read the meaning of his Master's message to him in a light that assumed new proportions with added knowledge and thought. The successful mission of the Swami Vivekananda in the West as the apostle of universal brotherhood and the exponent

of the eternal glory of Hinduism opened up a fresh channel for the interchange of thought and culture between the East and the West and raised India in no small measure in the estimation of the civilised races of the world. His imagination transcended the narrow geographical limits and embraced the entire world in its broad and catholic sweep. The heart of humanity has indeed responded to the clarion-call of the ochre-clad Monk of India, who as the accredited champion of Oriental culture voiced forth to the Western world the accumulated wisdom of the East. He left no stone unturned during the brief span of his life to reinstate the dethroned Mother of his heart in the native glory of her culture and wisdom and to spiritualise the human relation between the East and the West by throwing open the door of fraternal sympathy and cultural understanding. The Swami has passed away, but the spirit he infused into the movement still lives in the regenerated India as well as in the steady march of human thought and activity. The creative forces springing from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement have indeed come to stay, as they must, in India and the world outside, and it is only a question of time to see the consummation of the ideals that this new spiritual movement stands for. It would be our endeavour in the next issue to point out to our readers in brief the gradual expansion of the movement under the fostering care of the devoted fellow-workers and followers of the great patriot-saint, Swami Vivekananda.

RENUNCIATION AS AN IDEAL IN LIFE

By Brahmachari Purna Chaitanya

A spirit of dispassion for all objects of the senses, and a desire to get beyond the range of worries of worldly concerns have always been the marked features of men for whom religion has become a reality. A quest has begun in their case for something beyond the grasp of the senses, and day by day they feel that the bondages of the world are becoming more and more disagreeable for them. In the case of some this feeling becomes so intensified that they find it no longer possible to remain within the bounds of worldly life. They are then said to renounce,—which means the giving up of the worldly life in order to devote oneself entirely to the life of the spirit. In fact a truly spiritual life is impossible without the practice of renunciation in some form or

other, and some of the world's greatest spiritual figures like Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya, and Sri Ramakrishna have been uncompromising upholders of this doctrine. In the history of nations also we find that during periods of great spiritual fruitfulness the spirit of renunciation permeated the thinking section of the people. History records that in the Upanishadic age, and much more in Buddhist times innumerable men renounced the worldly life in order to devote themselves entirely to a life of spiritual pursuit. In later times also during the days of Sankara and Sri Chaitanya groups of monastic bodies, upholding a life of renunciation came into existence in our land. In the history of Europe too, we note during the middle ages the rise of many orders of monks, fired by the most uncompromising type of renunciation. It is only in modern times when the mind of Europe has been emancipated, as some may put it, from the shackles of religion that it has lost its respect for the ideal of renunciation.

This lowering of the ideal of renunciation in the estimation of people is not confined to Europe alone. Leaving aside those who have no faith in God or spiritual life, we find even in India at present a number of people considering the ideal of renunciation as a menace, or a source of trouble to society. In India they had their counterparts in ancient times also. There were in ancient times the followers of the ritualistic portions of the Vedas, who depreciated the value of renunciation as an ideal to be followed in life. According to them the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world as well as of the heavenly regions constituted the summum bonum of human existence, and the ideal of renunciation was only an aberration of the soul or at best an unnecessary and self-imposed hardship on a man's life. Their modern prototypes, though differing from them in their philosophy of life, hold views not much differing from theirs. They admit, however, that attachment for sense-pleasures must be avoided; but they hold that renouncing the worldly life is not the way to achieve that end. They point out the lives of some of the greatest teachers of the world like Sri Krishna, or Mohammad or King Janaka who lived in the world in a spirit of intense non-attachment, and say that it is their examples alone that men should strive to follow. If the highest spiritual experiences can be had even in this worldly life, they do not understand why one should renounce it and follow the monastic ideal. Hence a life of absolute renunciation is not a necessity; nay, it is a negation of the spiritual possibilities of life, and even reprehensible in the opinion of some! They point to the back-sliders in monastic life, to the idleness that is rampant among them, and to the waste of energy and resources that society has to incur on account of their presence.

These are the charges levelled against the the monastic ideal, by its uncompromising opponents. We shall here consider how far these charges are real. Looking at the monastic ideal through the perspective of history, we find that both in the East and the West it has been one of the greatest sources of social well-being. In India in the days of Buddhist ascendancy, when the monastic ideal was most widely diffused in society, the monks stood as the pillars of philanthropy and learning. It was their intrepidity that carried the religion of the Buddha beyond the bounds of India, and made it a world force. Turning to Hinduism, we find that most of those Rishis who produced the Upanishads were followers of the monkish ideal. The later-day reformers of Hinduism like Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, and others were mostly monks, and the whole fabric of Hindu society, and Hindu religion, as we find them at present, have been formed by them and their disciples. In Europe also the contribution of monks to European civilisation in the Middle Ages was in no way insignificant. At a time when the laity was steeped in ignorance, and the kings and nobles indulged in the utmost excesses of brutality, the monks stood for the cause of learning and social order. They were the only friends and sympathisers of the poor and the destitute; and the discontent among the peasants, and the rebellions that followed the abolition of monasteries in many European countries during the days of the Reformation bear ample testimony to these facts. Not only this, the monks were in many cases pioneers of agriculture even, clearing forests and jungles and bringing vast areas under cultivation. Such a record of social service falsifies the view that the monks have been an idle lot or a social burden in the past.

This review of the history of the monastic ideal in its relation to secular life is not however intended to show that the glory of a life of renunciation lies in the amount of work that its adherents are able to turn up. In that case a hard-worked horse or a bull will have more to its credit than most human beings. Social service they may do to some extent as an aid to their spiritual progress, or after having attained their goal, out of sympathy for those who are lagging behind. The true test of their greatness lies in the purity they manifest, the intensity with which they are able to strive after the spiritual ideal, and the realisations they attain to in the course of their lives. Whether a life of renunciation is in any way more conducive to these ends than the family life has itself been open to question as suggested before; it has moreover been condemned, by some as a social disease and an organised system of idleness. That it was not anything of this sort when it was at its best has been proved by the reference to the history of monasticism. If abuses have crept into it in modern times, or at

any time before, it is not the ideal that deserves condemnation. At the present day in our country it is poverty that drives away many to assume the garb of a monk; for they expect to gain an easy living from the indiscriminate charity of our people. The ignorance, credulity, and degeneracy of the masses and the householders have not a little to do in encouraging charlatanism and miracle-mongering among monks. Thus we see that these so-called abuses are due not to any inherent weakness of the ideal—for we still see its supreme glory in those who are true to it—but to the short-comings and poverty of the society. The right way for reform is to rectify these and not to condemn the ideal of renunciation as a whole.

Now we come to the objection, already mentioned, that renunciation in its absolute sense, *i. e.*, renouncing the family life, is not necessary to attain spiritual illumination. As instances to this are pointed out the examples of such persons as Sri Krishna or King Janaka or Mohammad. It is true that these greatmen lived in the world till the end of their lives; but one thing to be noted, however, is that they had already attained to spiritual illumination before they entered into the thick of life. Sri Krishna was the full manifestation of the Divinity itself, and the illumination of his divine glory was with him even from his childhood. Whatever he did in this world was only for the blessing of his devotees or for the benefit of the world. Both Janaka and Mohammad had already reached spiritual illumination before they entered into the world, and their subsequent lives were devoted entirely to the service of the world, or the fulfilment of the divine command. Are the ordinary men of this world, who spend their whole lives in the pursuit of selfish ends, in any way a comparison to these spiritual prodigies, and are the former more fitted to follow the example of the latter than a man of average abilities is to undergo the same system of education as a man of genius? The life of renunciation on the other hand affords a man of the required mentality suitable environment for growth in his spiritual infancy, and when he has considerably grown in it, carries him on to the logical conclusion of his ideal. It is not however meant to show that the life of non-attachment is of no value as an ideal and that all men are to renounce the world at once. Before a man is fit for a life of renunciation, it provides him with a practical ideal which carries him to the door of a higher life. When a person has reached that stage a life of renunciation will ordinarily be found more conducive to rapid spiritual development. For it provides him with better facilities for the practice of Brahmacharya and meditation, which constitute the two of the most essential and unavoidable conditions of spiritual growth. Thus a person on

whom real spiritual life has dawned will be able to make better progress by following a life of renunciation than if he remained in the world. Moreover it should also be mentioned in this connection that if we analyse the mentality of those who deny this claim of the ideal of renunciation, it will be seen that most of them are only trying to cover their own weak points, or are labouring under a sense of egoism which prevents them from admitting the existence of an ideal higher than their own. Anyway, the modest claim that renunciation as an ideal in life is highly beneficial at least to a large section of spiritual aspirants is an undeniable fact.

It has been often urged that the ideal of renunciation fosters a sort of parasitism in society. As the monks, do not earn money but live on the charity of others, they are considered a burden on society, feeding on the resources of the people without giving anything in return. But is the capacity to earn money the sole criterion of social usefulness? If by production is meant only the production of articles useful for the satisfaction of hunger, thirst and other physical needs, then surely the monk is a parasite but along with him have to be placed in the same category almost all other classes of society except the agricultural and industrial labourers. But if production is only interpreted to mean the creation of utilities, then the monk has his own services to contribute to the welfare of the society. In the first place he presents before society by his life a practical example of the ideal he represents, and keeps the people in mind that spiritual illumination is the ultimate goal of life. The ideal of non-attachment, however beneficial it may be for a few individuals, is not sufficiently tangible to inspire the common run of mankind, and it is the ideal life of the monk alone that will serve this purpose. In religious bodies which can boast of a band of devoted monks, the general level of spirituality is always higher than in societies without them. What is more, it is the life and realisations of the monk that stand as the best commentary on as well as proof of the spiritual facts that are mentioned in the scriptures, and that serve to dispel the doubts that may gather in the minds of men about the reality and usefulness of the spiritual state. The example of a group of really intelligent and sincere men who have given up all that is generally considered near and dear, as well as all cravings for the pleasures of the senses which are valued so much in the world, to devote their whole lives for the service of the Lord and realisation of the truth, will certainly increase men's faith in the efficacy of spiritual life, and also intensify their pursuit after the same. Moreover, if monks take to active social service as a means to their spiritual upliftment, as they have often done in the past and are still doing at present, it will result also in material gain to society. Thus

the ideal of renunciation which provides society with the most efficient means for the spread of genuine spiritual culture, and that at the minimum cost, cannot be considered as fostering parasitism.

Another objection, of an entirely different nature, to the ideal of renunciation is that it is incompatible with the due recognition of woman's dignity and rights in society. It is pointed out that monks being celibates and of an ascetic temperament have always considered women as the greatest impediments to man's spiritual progress, and have depicted them as vile and detestable creatures. There is, however, some historical and psychological foundation for this charge. If we examine the circumstances under which monasticism first arose either in the East or the West, we will see that they were times of great social degeneracy. In India the pre-Buddhist days, when monasticism first arose as a regular institution, witnessed a great downfall in the spiritual ideals of the nation. Enjoyment of sensual pleasures captivated the minds of people so entirely that religion was reduced to a system of rituals for the attainment of the same. In the West the period known to the historian as the Dark Ages was notorious for the license and brutality in which the laity indulged. It was as a protest against these extreme forms of worldliness and sensualism that monasticism first arose. Bands of thoughtful men who were horrified by the degrading influences that surrounded them, cut themselves aloof from society, considering that worldly life was an evil in itself, and that woman who was chiefly responsible for binding man to it was the very instrument of Satan. Looking from the psychological standpoint also we find that when the spirit of renunciation first dawns on men, he thinks that it is the objects of the senses that attract him to the world. The feeling of sex is so great in him that the proximity of woman rouses up lust in his mind, and he thinks that woman why is responsible for it must be a vile creature. But as his vision grows subjective, he learns that it is not woman or anything external that is chiefly attracting him, but it is the intensity of his desires that drags him to the slavery of the senses. This experience has already altered the wrong impression that early monks had about womankind. It is more and more recognised that depreciation of woman's character is not what helps one to conquer her influence. A man who has renounced the world must of course avoid her company; but what is required more of him is to transform his outlook on her. In place of viewing her with sexually contaminated eyes, he must look upon her as a symbol and manifestation of the Divine Mother. By this he can not only root out all feelings of lust in him, but also improve the position and dignity of womanhood in society.

What we have considered till now are objections generally raised against monastic life as a whole. But the opponents of the ideal of renunciation are, however, specially severe against those who have given up the world from their very youth without passing through the householder's life. Concerning them it is said that even if renunciation be accepted as a true ideal, they are not fit for it, as they have not discharged their duty to society by leaving any issue behind, and also because they have not had a full experience of life! Some people even fear that a wide-spread prevalence of this ideal will lead to the destruction of human society and as such they accuse its followers as working against the purpose of the Creator!

But if we examine these arguments closely we will realise that they are the outcomes of either prejudice or fears without any foundation. What is regarded as negligence on their part in the discharge of their duty to society, is the outcome of their devotion to a greater duty,—the duty towards God. In their opinion the propagation of the species is not the highest duty of man towards God or society, nor is the life-long celibacy of a few individuals likely to upset the plans of the Creator. He is resourceful enough to see that His schemes are not frustrated by the efforts of man. Man's supreme duty towards God consists in offering his whole being unreservedly at His feet, even before he is contaminated by the influence of this world. A man who is sincere and earnest in his spiritual life must devote the best part of his life to God, and not its declining period when the fire of his youth has subsided. Such a man whose only concern in life has been his God and whose only wealth his spiritual illumination, is able to do to society the greatest service that any individual can possibly do for it. His noble example inspires many men with the sublimity of the spiritual ideal, and if he does not leave any children of his body behind, he can confer on society the services of many men whose lives have been moulded after his example. This is surely a much higher sort of social service than the mere upbringing of children, good, bad or indifferent. They are further accused of not having had the full experience of life, and of not having made use of all the faculties that God has endowed them with. As regards the first point, is it not a pertinent question to ask these apostles of worldly life whether a life of absolute renunciation without any taint of the sex life is not also an experience of life, and whether their own lives which they are so particular about idealising are complete without the same? Moreover, if it be held that an experience of the other aspects of life is absolutely necessary to have genuine renunciation, cannot the attitude of those in whom this feeling is roused up without passing through them be explicable in the light of the theory of reincarnation? As regards the

second point, it has to be remarked that all the God-given faculties of man have two aspects, a higher one and a lower one. The feeling of love which is the point here in question, appears as lust in its gross aspect, and as divine love in its most sublime aspect. Is not the latter manifest in the life of a man of renunciation, and as such can he be accused of having strangled the feelings of his heart?

In fact what lies at the root of all these wrong notions about the ideal of renunciation is the misconception that religion and God are to occupy only the last period of a man's life, and it is this very same misconceived idea that monasticism seeks to combat. An old and decrepit body that has been corrupted by long association with the gross objects of sensual enjoyments, and a mind still more vitiated by filthy thoughts, and torn asunder by a hundred passions—are these the instruments with which a man is to achieve the stupendous task of self-realisation which the scriptures have described as hard as traversing along the sharp edge of a razor? Are these again the objects that a person is to dedicate at the feet of the Lord? Anyone who is really earnest about spiritual life will not agree with this view. There is of course the conception of renunciation as the crown of a well-spent life. There is nothing objectionable in this. But where are the people in whose lives this ideal is exemplified? How many even among those who are supposed to have spent their lives usefully manifest the mental strength necessary to give up all that they have earned and all that they have held as dear and near to them in the course of their long lives? There is nothing to be said against those who are able to achieve this difficult task. But renunciation from early life must be considered a higher ideal, as it enables a person to keep himself absolutely away from worldly contamination, while giving him ample opportunities for self-less work in an attitude of service for the Lord until he attains that spirit of non-attachment and fervent dispassion without which self-realisation is an impossibility. Having attained these, he must lose himself in an unceasing effort after God-realisation, and after reaching the consummation of this great purpose, he may, if it be the will of the Lord, participate in the ordinary life of mankind for the welfare of the world at large. It is the service of such a one, only who sees the image of his Lord in all beings that is really worth the name, and is of enduring value to mankind.

THE CONCEPT OF RELATION

By Prof. H. K. Raja Rao, M. A.

The sages and seers whose sole yearning is to seek the Truth have all to face the rocky concepts of Metaphysics, the concepts that puzzle the mind as to their place and function in the Science of sciences. The concept of Relation is no exception to the rule, and philosophers have fought hard to find its place and function. The importance of this concept is enhanced by the subtlety of thought itself, for, thought implies relation—relation between the subject and the object, the that and the what. Still more prominent does this problem of Relation become, when one sees that even the primary concept of Substance—not to speak of the concept of Quality—has to depend upon the concept of Relation.

It is no wonder, then, that critics muster all their rigour when the idealist frankly pronounces that even such a mighty concept is but an appearance of Reality. The critic naturally persists in asking how the concept of Relation is necessarily a sign of appearance. The idealist has one answer to give, and he does not shift his position,—that is, that abstractions involve self-contradiction becoming thus self-destructive. The concept of Relation is to the idealist an abstraction from the world of the whole and hence an appearance only. The relational way of thought is to be found when there are two or more terms *related* to one another and certainly relation cannot create terms; nor can terms create relation. Herein consists the famous paradox of the idealist that Relation presupposes the related and the related pre-supposes Relation—that the one cannot be found without the other, even like the bright blossom without its perfume.

In asserting the appearance of Relation, the idealist does not commit the blunders which the persistent realists and the frantic scientists are forced to commit. He does not posit a world of independent chaotic reals, driving away, as Herbart did, all relations from such a Pandemonium. Nor does he reduce the world into mere relation, sinking down the individuality of the terms related. He is equally sensitive to the Naiyayika who posits the reality of the notorious *samavaya* relation. Above all, the idealist holds it a monstrosity when the realist offers his curious suggestion of external relation. The idealist on the other hand posits an organic, systematic whole that is composed of organically and systematically related parts a whole that is free from self-contradiction, that is made up of parts

which contribute to the whole. In such a scheme, a part when abstracted and considered as a whole becomes an appearance.

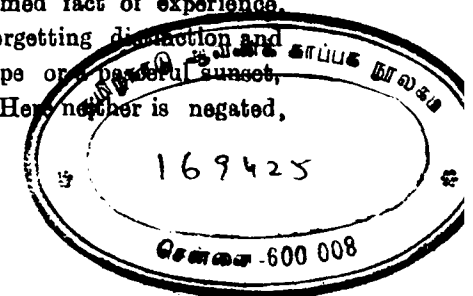
Herein consists a grave danger to which the commonsense school is a victim. It supposes that appearance is opposed to Reality, always refusing to understand the idealist's repeated words that the one is *not* opposed to the other. In fact, Reality "*lives*" in its appearances. But appearance alone cannot be Reality, nor can a sum of appearances be Reality. Relation, to come back, is an appearance in so far as it is a mere abstraction from the whole, in so far as it is itself considered as the whole. But Relation is not appearance in the sense that it is opposed to Reality, for the idealist is alive to the practical value of the concept of Relation.

The ingenious dilemma that either the Absolute's sway must be accepted or relation itself must be dismissed as illusion, has to share an unfortunate fallacy of ignoring the idealist's statements. The theory builds a structure of turbulent parts ever rebelling against the whole, but never defeating that whole; but the idealist is no victim to such a romance. He finds harmony and self-consistency in the parts that are related to the whole, in fact, that form the whole.

Then arises the question, Is this whole free from relations? How far can the Absolute be said to be free from relations? The Absolute, as has already been noted, is the systematic, self-consistent whole and stress is to be laid, if it is to be laid at all, equally on the whole and the parts. A concentrated attention on the aspect of unity implies a negligence of the various elements that unite and a blind devotion to the variety and multiplicity of parts suggests an indifference to the whole as mere fiction, a working of the mind. But truth consists in a strict view of the whole of facts, in an impartial enquiry into the complete concrete experience. Then is the Absolute free from all relations in so far as the stress is laid equally on both the Absolute and its parts.

If the relational stage is thus an appearance, a mere incomplete development of the Absolute, it follows that the Absolute is beyond relations. The Absolute is free, not in the sense that it has nothing to do with relations, but in the sense that it supersedes relations and thus includes them. The Absolute is Relation and is more than Relation. This supra-relational aspect of the Absolute is no convenient fiction of any imaginative brain, but a confirmed fact of experience. Every day experience of a simple feeling of forgetting distinction and relation in the vision of an enchanting landscape or a peaceful sunset, proves the unity of the that and the what. Here neither is negated,

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but the one is transcended. Similar experience is to be found in the mystic who dances in ecstasy forgetting himself. True, a translation of such an experience into the language of intellect involves a variety, but that experience which is the crowning glory of intellectual achievement itself, goes beyond variety and distinction. It is this beatific intuition where all is bliss that one finds no longer any relation or quality, but always the supreme joy of the One.

RECONCILIATION OF THE RACES AND RELIGIONS IN INDIA *

(Continued from the February Issue)

By Swami Ghanananda

The fundamental unity of India and Indian nationalism :—Turn we now from the reconciliation of religions to the reconciliation of the different communities.

In geographical, political, cultural and other aspects, India possesses a distinct fundamental unity behind its apparent diversity of castes and creeds, customs and manners. Shut out from the rest of Asia by the Himalayas in the north and bounded by the sea on its three sides, India is naturally the area of a single people. This unity has shown itself in empires in the past like those of Chandragupta and Asoka. The varied productions interchangeable with one another, and the long rivers affording facilities for transport and communication, make India a single industrial unit. Nor is she lacking in cultural unity. The great Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are national and universal classics. The Ganges is the sacred river of all India. Her pilgrims wander to her shrines, from all her corners. To the Mohammedans she is the land trodden by the feet of their saints and the diadem that adorned the crown of the great Mohammedan emperors. Prof. Radhakumud Mukherjee aptly mentions that Bharatavarsha is held up as a convenient symbol of unity. In the words of Sir Ramsay MacDonald: "This sense of unity in the heart of the people of India is a far greater binding force than the separatist force of the differences in social status, caste and religion."

In bringing about a reconciliation between India's racial elements, what we have to do is to emphasise and intensify the fundamental unity of India in order to create a common national impulse, a fiery

* Read at the Sixth All-India and Burma Bahai Convention held at Calcutta on the 6th December, 1928.

patriotism, a united effort and aspiration on the part of the Indian people to weld themselves together and create a great wave of national resurgence, which will engulf all petty communal differences and distinction. Critics of India hold that such a reconciliation is impossible in our country which presents a baffling diversity in many respects. But the history of countries like Russia, Canada and the United States of America, which have as many diversifying features as India, if not more, proves that a racial or communal reconciliation is possible through nationalism.

The Indian national spirit can be fostered by bringing about a great religious revival, by imparting a national system of education, by awakening the masses through spiritual and social equality, and by inculcating civic and national duties into the mind of every Indian.

Religion.—*Firstly*, as the past history of India shows that a national resurgence followed great religious revivals, we should bring about a great spiritual upheaval. Religion has all along contributed to the unity of the people of India. It has also conserved the energy of the entire nation by directing it towards a higher moral and spiritual ideal. And in a few generations after a religious revival, when the spiritual tension would naturally slacken, the conserved energy of the people would manifest itself in rich national vitality and a glorious renaissance in arts, literature and other forms of activities. This was how an Asokan empire came in the wake of Buddhism; united races and powerful kingdoms in the South in the wake of the spiritual movements of Sankara and Ramanuja; the Maharatta empire in the West in the wake of the Renaissance that had its stimulating force in Tukaram and Ramdas; and the Sikh power in the wake of Nanak and the Sikh Gurus. Can we not expect a similar outburst of national life in the wake of the union of hearts resulting from the harmony of religion? True religion which transcends all churches and creeds will serve as the greatest reconciling force in India as well as the whole world.

Education.—*Secondly*, as education greatly helps in organising the different communities of a country into a single nation, all efforts should be made to impart a national system of education to our boys and young men through schools and colleges and to the elders in the cities and the villages through newspapers and magazines, moving libraries and other means. Such an education will reveal to all Indians—be they Hindu, Moslem or any other—the common traditions, the common historical background and the common national point of view, which are all essential for a united India.

Take, for example, the teaching of Indian History. It should be so taught as to intensify the national consciousness of the entire people—

The one impression that it leaves, as it is taught today, is that India has failed. But is it true that India has failed? How then has she been living on for several thousands of years, of which nearly ten centuries were a long period of political subjection? How can we explain her wonderful and death-defying vitality? What was the part played in Indian history by Hindu, Buddhistic, Dravidian and Islamic cultures and civilizations? What again has been the part played by the socio-religious polity of India and her village community in maintaining the security of her national life?

History as it is taught to-day also portrays the different Indian communities in a biased manner. Interested historians have exaggerated the discordant features of our national history and this has gone to embitter the already existing feeling of communalism. In Sir P. C. Ray's words, "It was the policy of the English historian to paint the Hindus and Moslems dark.....Near the palace of Tipu there was the temple of a Hindu God. A Mohammedan prince who allowed a temple near his palace could not have been a persecutor.....At Dacca there was a temple built in the time of Jehangir, and within a stone's throw of that was a Musjid.....Are not the Hindus proud of the Taj-mahal equally with the Mohammedans of India?" It was Swami Vivekananda that observed that Shahjehan would have turned in his grave to hear himself called a 'foreigner'. What depth of love and poignancy of feeling! Can this be engendered by a reading of our history as it has been written! Why is Sivaji considered by the early historians as a robber-chief and by some of the later historians as an empire-builder and administrator? Not only history but all other subjects should be taught from the truly national point of view. In such work of constructive education, it is no mean part that the teacher at school, the priest at the village and the parent at home will have to play.

Just as comparative religion is revealing many points of striking affinity between different faiths, a comparative study of our cultures and civilizations will draw us closer together. The Aryan, Dravidian and Semitic cultures and civilizations, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture and music should be studied side by side, and the results of the investigation made available for one and all.

Great stress should be placed on the vernacularisation of studies in schools and colleges and organised attempts made to disseminate religion and philosophy, science and literature, and especially the researches of our modern Indian scholars in the various branches of thought through translations from the original in Sanskrit, English or other languages, as the case may be. As we are sadly lacking in a

knowledge of the various kinds of literature of the different provinces of our own country, we should bring it within the reach of every Indian.

We should try also as far as possible to have a common language for India. Endeavours should also be made to remove the illiteracy of the masses, as otherwise they would be cut off from the educated classes, who form the rest of the country.

Spiritual and social equality :— Thirdly, as the greatest weakness of India to-day is her toleration of privilege which has cast a dark shadow over the land, we must give complete social and spiritual equality to all the children of our motherland. Spiritual equality must first be restored as it will prepare the way for the abolition of social privileges and also for the spread of culture. Sri Krishna, Buddha, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir and a host of other teachers, prophets and reformers arose in the past to democratise the religious culture of Hinduism, Islam and others religions. The same work has to be done to-day for bringing about a religious awakening which in turn will usher in a national renaissance. In this endeavour care should be taken not to destroy castes and communities but elevate the lower to the position of the higher. The general cultural level of the masses is to be raised. This attempt may be beset with obstacles in the Hindu fold with its crystallised form of caste, but in the Islamic world it will be far easier on account of its great democratic spirit. Unless this is done, the masses who form the backbone of the country cannot move nor can the power which lies dormant in them be released to energise and vitalise the nation. The secret of the solution of the problem of untouchability lies in raising the cultural level of the so-called untouchables, and the sure way of ending the conflicts between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins is by the latter's appropriation of the culture of the former.

Besides giving vocational training in agriculture and industries which will enable the people to stand the competition in the economic sphere, we should also give to education a modern outlook, as it is helpful to the growth of co-operation and co-ordination which precedes all groupings and organisations. The Indian proletariat should know something of India's position in the world in economics, commerce and industry. It should know also about the growth of nationalism in countries like Ireland, Russia, China, England, France and America. In one word, it should acquire "a world sense" in its general primary education.

Such an awakening of the masses will be created by an alliance of the spiritual idealism of Vedanta and the practicality and democratic

spirit of Islam. By it will be gathered up all the scattered nationalising and unifying forces in our country. In the words of Sister Nivedita, "Hinduism alone in its completeness can never create a nationality, for it then tends to be dominated by the exclusiveness of the Brahmin caste, whose ideal is naturally and rightfully its central type. Learning and austerity are the characteristic virtues of that ideal. Exclusiveness is its characteristic weakness and vice. It is only, therefore, when there is within Hinduism itself a counter-centre to the Brahmin that Hinduism can suffice to create a nationality. This counter-centre was found during the Asokan period in the personality of Buddha, who was a Kshatriya by birth."

"After the advent of Mohammedanism, even this could no longer be sufficient, so that Akbar and Shahjehan combining the ethos of Hindu culture with Islamic idea of the Brotherhood of Man became the representative figures of the new conceptions of nationality." Swami Vivekananda meant the same thing when he once wrote to a Mohammedan admirer, "For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, Vedanta brain and Islam body, is the only hope". The unity which the Swami speaks is to be based not merely on the material concerns of life but also on the spiritual synthesis of Vedanta and Islam.

Civic and national life ;—*Fourthly*, we must inculcate civic and national duties into the minds of every man and every woman. The elements of nationality being civic, every Indian, be he Hindu, Moslem, Christian, or any other, must be imbued with a profound sense of civic and national idealism which will transcend all considerations of castes and religions. Hindus, Moslems and all are on one footing in this relationship to the commune and the nation. The civic and national spirit requires the expansion of consciousness from the family to wider and more complex groups. India being a country mainly of village in which 90 per cent of its population live, in the rural reconstruction that will have to precede all national growth and development, great emphasis must be laid on the civic duties and national responsibilities as the Dharma of every villager, whatever be his caste or creed.

The era of conciliation and consolidation;—There are undoubtedly many signs of the reconciliation and unification of the different sections of the Indian people like the Bengali, Punjabi, Mahratti, Canaries, Tamilian, Telegu, Malabari and others. There was an age when Hindus, Moslems and Christians were all radically divergent in religion, daily life, social views and political outlook. To-day a fresh modern type is emerging to which each of these groups approximates.

In literary appreciation, artistic enjoyment, political aspiration and national ambition, the different communal, sectarian and social peculiarities tend to disappear. All are marching to a new era of conciliation and consolidation.

The work before us :—To-day India is in the throes of a new birth. In order to hasten her evolution, we have first to accomplish the task of reconciliation of the various communities on lines indicated above. Purely political activities touch but a fringe of our national life. All bodies and institutions, political or otherwise, that have the welfare of India at heart, should contribute their quota for the fulfilment of this task in a spirit of self-sacrificing service.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to carry out two main objects. These were, firstly, to preach the Universal Religion which proclaims that every man is potentially divine and must realise his divinity by suitable spiritual disciplines; and secondly, to look upon all men, women and children, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or sex, as veritable manifestations of the Divine and serve them by removing their wants and sufferings, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. With this end in view, the Swami established the Ramkrishna Mission, which bears the name of his Master who preached the harmony of religions and the divinity and solidarity of mankind. "The national ideals of India," said the Swami, "are renunciation and service. Intensify her in these channels and the rest will take care of itself." Is this not applicable to the whole world? What can we achieve without renouncing our little self and without working with a purified heart?

In fine, we will do well to bear in mind that it won't do if we merely speak in terms of internationalism and universality, but think in terms of nationalism or communalism and act in terms of our own narrow and selfish individuality.

If, in our spiritual life, we remember that amidst all our diverse religions, there is only one goal—

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves"—

and if, in our endeavours, we remember the message of the ancient Vedic Rishi—

"Common be your desires, united be your hearts,
united be your intention, so that there be
a thorough union among you,"—

then the reconciliation of races and religions not only in India, but in the whole world, will sooner or later be accomplished.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT MADRAS

The Sixty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodie's Road, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday, the 3rd. of February last. A life-size picture of the Swami was placed on a platform in the hall amidst floral decorations of taste and grandeur. Several parties sang devotional songs in Marhathi, Hindustani, Tamil and Sanskrit. On the occasion as usual about 3,000 poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed in the spacious grounds of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and in the Math itself more than 300 devotees partook of the holy Prasad, besides petty distribution in hand throughout the day. The boys of the R. K. Mission Students' Home and the staff, and the Boy Scouts of the local P. S. High School rendered excellent service specially in connection with the feeding business.

In the afternoon a very nice speech was delivered in Tamil by S. N. Subramanya Iyer, B.A., L.T., of the Students' Home on the life and teachings of the Swami. Then followed the English lecture on "The Dynamic Message of Swami Vivekananda," by Dr. Savoor, M.A., D.Sc., Professor, Presidency College, Madras, with Dewan Bahadur S. R. Ramachandra Rao, C.I.E., Retired Collector of Madras, in the chair.

In the course of his lecture Dr. Savoor dwelt upon the multiple personality of Swami Vivekananda with special emphasis on the universality of his teachings. He pointed out in the words of the Swami Vivekananda, that scriptures and seers all have recognised in one voice the divinity of the human nature, and that religion and education are but the accessories to the revelation of the ultimate truth of the human existence. The realisation of the oneness of humanity—the cardinal teaching of the Vedanta—eliminates the invidious distinction that we generally notice in different walks of our life—between the high and the low, the Brahmin and the Pariah, the touchables and the untouchables and so on. Swamiji's ideal of service is grounded upon the fundamental truth of this Vedantic conception of the oneness of life which has imparted a new orientation to the ideal of service in this new age; for service, viewed in this light, is nothing short of the highest form of worship. Swamiji's life is an eloquent illustration of this sacred idealism of service. The learned speaker concluded by saying that real democracy and brotherhood can be established when we shall

have such a synthetic vision of life and look upon every human being as the manifestation of the divinity. The Chairman in a nice little speech paid his loving tributes to the sacred memory of the Swami, and said that in view of the complexity of human life and thousand and one demands of worldly duties on the capacity of man, it may not be always possible for him to live up to the highest ideal at once, but the daily performance of at least one act of selflessness would morally elevate the man and would ultimately qualify him for the realisation of the highest truth of human destiny. After the termination of the meeting with the usual thanks-giving the audience were entertained with the sweet inspiring music, both vocal and instrumental, of S. Krishnaswami Iyer, Advocate, and his worthy friends.

The *Tithipuja* of the Swami was also observed as usual in the Math on the 1st of February.

AT OTHER PLACES

The blessed memory was also celebrated in a grand scale at the Ramakrishna Mission Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai, Jaffna, Ceylon. The entrance to the Vidyalaya as well as the hall were tastefully decorated and they presented a picturesque appearance. On the dais that looked like a sacred forest in miniature was installed the picture of Swami Vivekananda. The proceeding for the day began with Bhajanam in the morning followed by a special Puja. Then a public meeting was held, presided over by Swami Vipulananda. In a short speech the President explained the significance of the day and the immense benefit afforded to the Hindus throughout the world by the advent of Swami Vivekananda.

In the afternoon a display of music both instrumental and vocal, by talented musicians was gone through. Six boys from the Students' Home of the Mission at Vannarponnai performed "Kolattam". Then came the most important item of the day,—a lecture in Tamil on "Swami Vivekananda and His Message" by Mr. Natesan, B.A., B.L., Principal, Parameswara College, Tinnevely. During the one hour of the lecture the whole audience, which was composed of students, ladies and gentlemen, was kept in rapt attention as the subject was a very impressive one. Special songs composed for the occasion were then sung. Mr. S. Sinnadurai then delivered in Tamil an interesting lecture on the "New Awakening through Swami Vivekananda." "Valthu" songs (songs of blessings) and Thevaram brought the day's proceedings to a close at about 8.30 p.m.

The Sri Ramakrishna Math, Gariston-Burn Bastion Road, Delhi, observed the Anniversary at the local Narain Dharmasala. A big-size portrait of the great Swami was decorated with flowers and bouquets. In a public meeting, presided over by Sj. M. K. Acharya, M.L.A., three lectures were delivered in Urdu by Lala Uttamchand, Asst. Head Master, D. A. V. School, Delhi, Mrs. Vedi and Pandit Muralidhar of the Theosophical Society. Lastly, Swami Sharvananda spoke to the audience in English, and in a neat little speech he placed before them some important characteristics of the Swamiji's ideals.

The Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Sevashrama of Muzaffarpur, U. P., also observed the sacred Day under the presidency of the Local Commissioner. About 600 poor-Narayanans were fed.

In connection with the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda we have received invitations from the following organisations:—

Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Headquarters, Belur, Howrah; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Chandipur, Midnapur; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dinajpur; The Vivekananda Pratisthana, Bankura; Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Dacca, in the Bengal Presidency; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore; Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah; Sri Ramakrishna Yogananda Ashrama, Alleppey, Coorg, in the Madras Presidency; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay; Ramakrishna Ashrama, Civil Station, Rajkot, Kathiawar; Swami Vivekananda Club, Kolhapur, Satara, in the Bombay Presidency; The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon; Sree Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipur; The Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur, in Behar; The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Luxa, Benares City; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar; The Public at Almora, in the United Provinces.

Everywhere feeding of the poor-Narayanans forms an important part of the celebration, besides lectures and discourses on the life and teachings of the Swami.

R. K. MISSION RELIEF-OPERATION FROM 1922 TO 1927

The Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission places before the public a Report on the various works done by it in different places of Bengal, Madras, Assam, Behar and Orissa from the month of July 1922 to December 1927. In 1922 flood-relief work was carried on from 15 centres in the districts of Rajshahi, Midnapore, Faridpur, Hooghly and Bankura on an extensive scale. The Mission further undertook the Gangasagar Mela relief-work in January 1923. The total receipts on the above accounts from different sources including

the R. K. Mission Provident Relief Fund, amounted to Rs. 25,462-4-3 and the expenditure to Rs. 15,199-14-9, the balance being Rs. 10,262-5-6 deposited in the P. R. F. of the Mission after the completion of the work. Since 1925 the Mission ceased to send its relief party to Gangsagar Mela and the total expenditure during the years 1923-1925 for this Mela-relief work came up to Rs. 1,842-7-0 in cash. In August, 1923 owing to heavy showers the river Sone rose in high flood and created a havoc over an extensive area of 250 sq. miles. The Mission's relief party started five centres in the most affected parts of the devastated area. The total receipts and expenditures were Rs. 6,885-3-0 and Rs. 5048-4-3 respectively and the balance was kept deposited in the R. K. Mission Provident Relief Fund. Besides, the Mission undertook various other relief operations according as the situations demanded. A brief outline of these multifarious works is given below for general information:—

(a) Fire-relief:—(i) In the districts of Manbhum and 24 Perganas in 1923; (ii) in Kamrup, Bankura and 24 Perganas in 1924; (iii) Panchguda near Bhubaneswar in 1926; (iv) Andharua near Bhubaneswar in 1927; (v) Parbatipur in 24 Perganas in 1927. The total expenditures:—(i) Rs. 618-14-0; (ii) Rs. 2575-13-3; (iii) Rs. 410/-; (iv) Rs. 355-2-3; (v) Rs. 323/- respectively.

(b) Plague-relief:—In Lahore and Rohatak in 1923. The total expenditure met from the R. K. Mission P. F.:—Rs. 987-9-0.

(c) Cyclone and tornado-relief:—(i) Eastern part of Ganjam in 1923-1924; (ii) Madaripur Sub-Division (Faridpur) in 1926. The expenditures:—Rs. 3096-14-9; (ii) Rs. 1312-14-6 respectively.

(d) Flood-relief:—(i) In the District of Bhagalpur in 1924; (ii) in the United Provinces of Oudh and Agra in connection with the Ganges and the Jumna floods in 1924; (iii) in Balasore (Orissa) in 1927. The expenditures:—(i) Rs. 4685-3-0; (ii) Rs. 2883-10-6; (iii) Rs. 10173-0-9 respectively.

(e) Cholera-relief:—(i) Jayanti (Jalpaiguri) in 1924; (ii) Garbetta (Midnapore), Batanal (Hooghly), Araria (Purneah) in 1925. The expenditure:—(i) Rs. 88-12-0; (ii) The epidemic subsided after a prolonged attempt of the workers for a month and a half in Araria and for a month in Garbetta and Batanal. Araria Local Board bore the entire cost of relief-work within its jurisdiction.

(f) Small-Pox and Malaria-relief:—(i) Jayrambaty (Bankura) in 1925; (ii) in the districts of Maldah and Purneah in 1926. Expenditure:—(i) Rs. 50/-; (ii) The District Board of Purneah bore the

entire cost of relief work conducted by the Mission within its jurisdiction.

(g) Famine-relief:—(i) 33 villages near Jamtara (Santal Perganas) and 45 villages near Paikmajeta (Midnapore) received help in kind in 1926.

Thus from a brief review of the extensive relief-works of the R. K. Mission from 1922 to 1927, the public would be able to realise the importance and usefulness of such a philanthropic institution in the country. The Report contains a detailed audited account of the receipts and expenditures of the different relief-centres as well as a list of the names of the places that received substantial help from the Mission in cash and kind during the years under review. The Secretary of the Mission conveys its hearty thanks to the generous donors and subscribers to the Relief Fund, but for whose continued co-operation and unstinted support the Mission would have found it impossible to render any service to the suffering people.

R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The Seventh Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama (Charitable Dispensary), Rangoon, for the year 1927 is to our hand. In the year under review the Corporation of Rangoon made some additions in the Hospital buildings at a cost of about Rs. 6,000/- and kindly granted a sum of Rs. 21,000/- for the accommodation of women and children as in-patients for treatment. During the year the total attendance of patients at the Sevashrama was 1,13,507; this exceeded the total of the previous year by 10,000. The number of the in-door patients was 1,616, the number at the out-patients' department came up to 91,631 and the aggregate of the daily totals of attendance was 21,876. The activities of the Sevashrama extended also to spreading among the people the elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene by instilling into their minds the beneficial effects of prevention rather than the cure of diseases. It is purely a charitable institution and depends for its growth and expansion upon the beneficence of the public. Help and co-operation in any shape will always be gratefully accepted and acknowledged.

R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BRINDABAN

The Twenty-first Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for 1927 gives a satisfactory account of its philanthropic activities. The total number of patients treated during the year in the In-door Hospital of the Sevashrama was 269; of these 222 were cured and discharged, 34 died, 5 left treatment and 8 remained under treatment at the end of the year. Altogether 27,996 patient

were treated in the Out-door Dispensary, of whom 8,410 were new and 19,586 were repeated cases. 12 disabled persons were treated and nursed at their own quarters and 4 helpless pardanashin ladies were helped with Rs. 2/- per month.

The crying needs of the Serashrama are noted below :—

(1) An Out-door Dispensary building with necessary outfits. (2) An additional general ward for male indoor-patients. (3) A cholera ward. (4) A guest-house. (5) A protecting wall for the Sevashrama on the Jumna side, and a bathing ghat.

The importance of this institution can hardly be over-estimated. It needs adequate financial support, and any donation or contribution will be most thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA NATIONAL GIRLS' SCHOOL, GEORGE TOWN, MADRAS

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna National Girls' School, George Town, Madras, on the working of the institution for 1926-28 is to our hand. During the years under review there were 108 admissions and 149 withdrawals. The average monthly strength ranged between 160 and 140. The teaching staff consisted of 6 teachers, 2 of whom were Christians and the rest Hindus. Most of the teachers were trained. Besides, an elderly gentleman who is a graduate of the Madras University and intimately connected with the Mission for over 25 years, worked during the period as a religious instructor. But owing to inadequate funds, the management had to incur a liability to the extent of Rs. 947-1-5 during the years under review. Under the circumstances it has been found necessary to provide a capital of Rs. 2000/- at the beginning of each year to meet the monthly recurring expenditure of about Rs. 260/- and various other contingencies. Moreover, the school is located in a rented building which is not commodious and fit for school purposes. It must have a building of its own. The importance of such an educational institution run on national lines can hardly be exaggerated. The management confidently hope that the public interested in female education would come forward with necessary financial support to place the school on a sound footing. We believe the appeal would be generously responded to. Contributions may be sent to the President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

The Report of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar, for the year beginning in March, 1927 and ending in February, 1928, gives a detailed account of its growth and gradual expansion. Within the short span of one year of its existence the Ashrama has proved its

usefulness by its silent activities. Regular discourses on Vedanta Philosophy and religion were held, thrice a week in the Ashrama, and a series of class talks were given to the upper standard students of the Saurashtra and the Alfred High Schools. Occasional public lectures were also organised, and Bhojan was made an important item of its activities to stimulate the spiritual aspirations of the devotees. The newly started library, containing a small number of books and periodicals, was of great use to the public. During the year the Ashrama, according to its small means, helped two poor, deserving students of the local High Schools with money. The Ashrama celebrated the birthday anniversaries of almost all the great saviours of the world, and usual lectures and discourses formed the special feature of these occasions. Lastly, in co-operation with the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, the Ashrama conducted splendid relief-work for over five months in Bombay, Baroda and British territories affected by the last disastrous flood. The want of a well-equipped library, an ideal Students' Home and an outdoor Dispensary is now being keenly felt and an adequate fund is also needed for the maintenance of the workers of the Ashrama. The importance of such a philanthropic institution can hardly be over-estimated. The Secretary, while offering sincere thanks to all subscribers, donors, friends, sympathisers and well-wishers of the Ashrama, earnestly appeals to the large-hearted public to come forward with a substantial financial support so as to place it on a sound and stable foundation, and we hope the appeal shall not go in vain.

CITY STUDENTS' CLUB, MADRAS

We have received a copy of the Report on the working and progress of the City Students' Club for the year 1927-28 for review. The Club has its object, the mental, moral and physical development of its members, the fostering of the spirit of brotherhood and the cultivation of the histrionic talents. The process of culture is promoted by means of literary meetings, parliamentary debates, socials, dramatic entertainments, etc., and the number of such sittings came up to 48 during the year under consideration. The Club had 45 members on its roll, consisting of students from the various colleges in the city, besides a few officials. The financial position of the Club is not satisfactory. In view of its cosmopolitan spirit and catholic outlook as well as of its good services, the institution should be substantially supported by the influential men of the city so to ensure it a useful career for time to come.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, BANGALORE CITY

The Ninth Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, for 1927-28 is to hand. There were altogether 15 students in the Home. Of the three final year students, two qualified themselves for the degree with a second class in the optional subjects and the other passed only in one part. The other students in the college classes were all promoted except two of the first year students. Notwithstanding a few debating classes held during the year, we cannot but allude to the fact that any suitable provision for the religious and moral training of the students and the teaching of the dignity of labour is indeed conspicuous by its absence in the Report. We hope the authorities of the Home would do well to open facilities in the Home for supplementing the students' college education by a regular course of practical and religious training as is done in similar institutions elsewhere and thereby raise the Home from its present position of a mess or a hostel to the dignified status of a Ramakrishna Students' Home. The Home, as the Report shows, stands in need of financial assistance and we hope the public would respond to the appeal for help.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Bhagavad Gita: An Exposition, by Vasant G. Rele, F.C.P.S., L.M. & S. Published by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Kitab Mahal, Bombay.

Mr. Vasant G. Rele gives in this book a new interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita, based on the science of Psycho-analysis. His theory is that the Gita was revealed to Arjuna to remove a peculiar mental disease he was suffering from on the eve of the great battle. This mental derangement was brought about in Arjuna by a break or disturbance in the harmony between the conscious and sub-conscious aspects of his mind. This disharmony in itself was the result of not having liberated the vast mental energy resulting from the constant suppression of impulses coming from without. To prove these points the author enters into a critical investigation of Arjuna's previous history and of his mental state on the battlefield. He also expounds the psychic organism of the human being, as indicated in the Gita, and proceeds to show how Sri Krishna, the master psychologist that he was, tries to cure Arjuna of his mental disease by a regulated course of advice and suggestions. He gives summaries of the various chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, arranging them in a different order and interpreting them in a new light. Many obscure passages, hitherto interpreted in a theological or allegorical sense, are more rationally expounded in consonance with modern science and psychology. The most striking of these is his interpretation of the Aswatha tree which he explains, not as an allegorical tree, but as the inside apparatus which we call the nervous system of the human body. The book departs in many respects from traditional interpretations, and whether all students of the Gita may agree or not with the author, he has undoubtedly revealed another aspect of the manifold greatness of the Gita, thus opening a new line of research for the future students of this great scripture.

The Religion of Zarathushtra, by Dr. I. J. S. Tarporevalla, B.A. Ph.D., Bar-at-law. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

The Religion of Zarathushtra is the religion of the Parsis and was given out to the world by Zarathushtra, a prophet of Iran. At one time the whole of the Aryan world was plunged in chaos; wickedness was rampant and oppression of the weak became unbearable and intolerable. The world was looking anxiously for the advent of a prophet and at this opportune moment there was born a third son to one Pourushaspa, a pious and learned man of Iran. This boy was named Spitama after the name of the warrior family to which his father belonged. His mother Dughdhova, the daughter of a nobleman of Iran, was "deeply devoted to religion and to the study of the higher problems of life and was as God-fearing and pious as her husband". Being born of such parents Spitama from his childhood exhibited qualities of greatness and at the age of 15 retired into absolute seclusion from which he emerged in his 30th year and delivered his message of love, peace and service. He was thereafter known as Zarathushtra which name means "He of the Golden Light".

From the mass of traditions and worship of various phenomena of Nature which were personified as gods, Zarathushtra wove out a splendid religion that emphasised the worship of one God, gave a rationalistic exposition of Evil and Good and enjoined Service of Humanity as the indispensable means of attaining communion with God. This religion spread throughout Iran shedding its beneficent lustre on all those that embraced and followed it. In the course of some centuries it degenerated and was crushed ultimately by the religion of Islam which on account of the simplicity of the rites and ceremonies and the supreme importance it attached to brotherhood attracted and appealed to the minds of the masses who were then groaning under the tyranny of priesthood and "autocratic aloofness".

The religion of Zarathushtra had many vicissitudes. The sacred texts of the Zoroastrians were destroyed by Alexander the Great who "in a drunken fit set fire to the palace at Persepolis" where they were preserved. Various attempts were subsequently made to collect them from priests and others who got them by heart and handed them down by memory from generation to generation. After the removal of the domination of Arabs, the real persecution of the Parsis began. They were hunted from place to place by the fanatic Moslems until they took refuge among the hills of Kohistan in the province of Khorasan. Remaining here, they defied the Moslem fanatics for nearly half a century. They were at last forced to flee from that place and finally took refuge in India where the Yadava Prince of Gujarat welcomed them. They ever afterwards have lived there as a peaceful and enterprising community hugging to their bosom what little of religious literature they were able to preserve. We are glad that attempts are being made to restore Zoroastrianism to its pristine purity and we join the author in the hope that the message of Zarathushtra will once more flood the world.

The author has devoted 9 chapters to the exposition of the religion and philosophy of Zarathushtra, of which we would specially recommend to the readers those on "The Path of Asha" and "The Religion of Action" as giving a lucid and succinct description of the cardinal doctrines of the religion. We wish the book a wide circulation.

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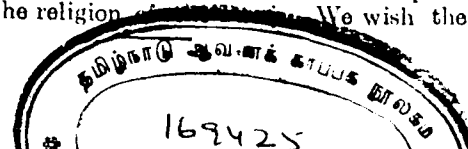
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