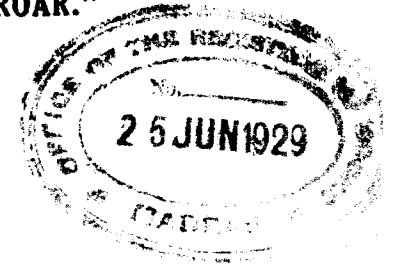


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THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XVI, No. 2: JUNE, 1929.

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PUBLISHED BY

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH.

as Nag M MYLAPORE MADRAS...
travelled? ... parts of the globe, but
meet a great soul like Nag Manashaya.

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

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Vol. XVII]

JUNE 1929

[No. 2

PRAYER

ॐ

नमामीशमीशान-निर्वाणरूपं, विभु व्यापकं ब्रह्मवेदस्वरूपम् ।
अजं निर्गुणं निर्विकल्पं निरीहं, चिदाकाशमाकाशवासं भजेऽहम् ॥
कलातीतकल्याण-कल्पान्तकारिन्, सदा सन्नानन्ददातः पुरे ।
विदानन्द-सन्दोह-मोहापकारिन्, प्रसीद प्रसीद प्रभो मन्मथारे ॥
न यावद्भवानीश-पादागविन्दं, भजन्तीह लोके चतुर्वर्गकामाः ।
न तावद्भजन्ते भवे शान्तिलेशं, प्रसीद प्रभो सर्वभूताधिवास ॥
न जानामि योगं जपं नैव पूजां, नतोऽहं सदा सर्वतः शर्वं तुभ्यम् ।
जग-जन्म-दुःखौघ-तातयमानं, प्रभो पाहि पापान्नमामीश शम्भो ॥

Salutations unto Thee,—the All-pervading and the Great, who art liberation itself and whose embodied form is the Vedas. I worship Thee,—the unborn, attributeless and unconditioned One; who art without any desire—whose form is brightness itself and whose garment is the sky.

O Lord! Thou who art beyond all duality, the Cause of all that is good as well as of dissolution, the Bestower of bliss on the holy ones; Thou who art the embodiment of knowledge and bliss, and the destroyer of delusion; be Thou propitious unto me.

Those that aspire after the fourfold desires in the world can hardly be the recipient of peace supreme, unless, O Lord of the Mother divine, do they worship the lotus-feet of Thee on this earth.

I do not know the practice of Yoga; nor am I skilled in Japam or rituals. Dost Thou, O Lord, save me from sins,—thy humble suppliant sorely afflicted with countless miseries of birth and death.

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GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(Continued from page 6)

III

Adhar entertained the Master with fruits and sweets. The Master then left for Jadu Mallik's house.

It was a beautiful moonlit night. Having reached Jadu Mallik's house, the Master and the devotees went directly to the shrine, where they found the Mother's image beautifully decorated with flowers, sandal paste and garlands. Lights were burning and the priest was seated before Her. A devotee, instructed by the Master, made an offering of a rupee and saluted the Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna was all along standing, looking on at the Mother, and lo! he was plunged into Samadhi! He stood motionless as a stone image and his eyes were winkless. A long time after, he heaved out a deep sigh and came down from Samadhi. He exclaimed, "Mother, I am coming!" His voice sounded as of one under intoxication and he was yet unable to walk. He asked Ramlal to sing; he said, that would restore him to normal consciousness.

Ramlal sang: "O Mother, Thou Delight of Siva, Thou hast charmed the world!....."

Now the Master was able to walk towards the drawing-room. He repeated several times, as he went, "Mother, do thou abide in my heart." On entering the drawing-room, Sri Ramakrishna found Jadu Mallik sitting with his friends. But the Master was still in an ecstatic mood, and he began to sing forthwith a song of the Divine Mother of which the refrain was, "O Mother Blissful, do not make me unhappy!" When he finished this he asked Jadu Mallik, "O Babu, what song shall I sing? Shall I sing that one which begins with, 'Am I thy hapless son?'"

Without waiting for any reply, however, he began to sing:

"Am I thy hapless son, that thou shalt frighten me with thy frowns?"

"The ruddy feet which Siva so lovingly holds on his heart,

Why then am I thus harassed when I seek to possess my own property?"

"I have carefully preserved the deed attested by Siva himself. And I shall now bring my plaint before him, and assuredly get an uncontested decree.

"Then only—when I shall ceremoniously lay out the documents given me by my Guru, shalt thou feel what sort of son I am!"

"Says Ramprasad, this law-suit between the son and the mother, will no doubt be a mighty affair. But I shall be quiet only when thou hast pacified me by taking me into thy affectionate arms."

The song ended, the Master came down to the normal plane by and by, and was given the Mother's Prasadam, as desired by him.

A few friends and sycophants of Jadu Mallik were sitting by. The Master was seated on a chair, with M. and a few devotees near him. The other devotees were waiting in an adjacent room. The Master said smilingly to Jadu, "Why do you entertain buffoons?"

Jadu: What if I do? Will you therefore refuse to redeem me?

Sri Ramakrishna: The Ganges cannot save a consummate drunkard. . . How is it you have not yet arranged for Chandi-song in your house?

Jadu had promised to the Master to arrange it.

Jadu: I have been very busy all these days.

Sri Ramakrishna: How is that? A man must stick to his word! 'The word of a man, like the tusk of an elephant, cannot be retracted.' Is it not so?

Jadu (smiling): Yes, it is.

Sri Ramakrishna: You are a very calculative man. You never act without extreme calculation. You want things to be like a Brahmin's cow which is expected to eat little, but produce dung in a large quantity and give torrents of milk! (All laugh). [After a short silence] I see, you are like the stone at Ramjivanpur, half of which is cold and half hot. You have your mind in both God and the world.....

IV

It was ten at night when the Master came to the house of Khelat Ghosh. The whole house and the extensive courtyard were flooded with moonlight.

No sooner did the Master enter the house than he was overpowered by a superconscious mood, and in that ecstatic mood he was welcomed by the host into one of the inner apartments of the big and almost solitary house. The devotee who had invited the Master was one of the occasional visitors at Dakshineswar. He was a brother-in-law of the owner of the house and a devout and orthodox Vaishnava, as his dress and various religious marks on the body indicated. The Vaishnavas are very conservative generally and speak ill of the Shaktas and the Jnanis. Evidently in reference to this fanatical attitude, the Master observed,

"It is not right to say that one's own creed alone is true and other creeds are false. God is one and not two or more, and Him men call by various names. Some call Him 'God' and others 'Allah'. Some others call Him 'Krishna', or 'Siva' or 'Brahma'. It is like the water of a tank. The Hindus name it *jal*, the Christians *water*, and the Mohammedans *pani*. But it is one and the same substance. 'So many creeds—so many paths'. They are so many ways to the realisation of God, like rivers entering into the same ocean.

"The Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras, all teach the same Sachchidananda. The Vedas teach the Sachchidananda Brahman, the Puranas, the Sachchidananda Krishna and the Tantras the Sachchidananda Siva."

The Vaishnava Devotee (after a short silence): Sir, why should I think of God at all?

Sri Ramakrishna: The attitude is justified of the Jivan-mukta alone. With others, it is only a matter of talk, not true faith. The worldly-minded have heard that there is God and that everything happens by his will, but they do not believe it at heart. Do you know what is God with the worldly people?—like the God of children, by whose name they swear having learnt it from the wranglings of their aunts.

"Not all can know Him. He has made good as well as bad people, devotees as well as those averse to God, those who have

faith in God as well as those who have not. His vast creation is full of variety, wherein his power manifests in unequal degrees, just as the sun reflects differently in earth, and water and mirror,—brightest in the last. There are again various gradations, among those who are devoted to God,—the highest, the middle and the lowest. All these are mentioned in the Gita."

Vaishnava: Yes, sir.

Sri Ramakrishna: The lowest kind of devotees say that God exists high above the sky. The middle say that He exists in everything as life and consciousness. The highest say that it is God who has become all these—whatever seen are but different forms of the Lord. He has become this Maya, Jiva and Jagat, and there is nothing which is not He.

Vaishnava: Does anyone realise this?

Sri Ramakrishna: Not until one has seen God. And there are signs by which to know whether one has seen Him or not. He is sometimes like a mad man, laughing, crying, dancing and singing. Sometimes he appears as a child of five years, simple and unsophisticated, devoid of egoism, unattached, free and blissful. Sometimes he looks like a ghoul—dirty, making no difference of pure and impure things and observing no purificatory rules. At other times he becomes a non-living thing, apparently senseless, with a vacant look, unable to do any work and make any effort.

" 'Thou and thine'—this is knowledge, 'I and mine' this is ignorance. 'O Lord, thou art the doer, not I' this is knowledge. 'O, Lord, body, mind, house, family, beings, universe, all these are thine, not mine,'—this is knowledge. The ignorant only speak of God as distant. The knowing ones feel him to be very near, abiding in their own hearts as the Internal Regulator, and as embodied in all the various forms outside."

LORD BUDDHA AND HIS MESSAGE

In the great cycle of evolution the world sometimes reaches a stage when the whole humanity quivers under the stimulus of a new life for a fresh start on its career of progress. The sixth century before the birth of Christ may be reckoned as one of such remarkable periods in the history of the human race. The soul of humanity woke up as it

were to the vision of a far-off destiny after a profound slumber of countless centuries. The signs of a new consciousness were manifest in the silent march of events in the social and political life of the people. It was an 'Age of Confusion' in China when the two great master-minds, Confucius and Lao-Tse, lived and ushered in an era of unprecedented order and peace in the land. It was in the very same century that Zoroaster, the Prophet of Iran, opened a new chapter in the history of the spiritual life of his countrymen. The same spirit of enquiry was palpably manifest in the Near East as well. The Jews of Babylon found in Isaiah their messenger of light and freedom; and at Ephesus the genius of Heraclitus harnessed itself to the noble task of solving the intricate problems of human existence. It was in such an age that India—the homeland of saints and saviours—produced one of the greatest of her sons. He was Buddha—the Light of the world. Never indeed was the time more propitious for the advent of such a soul in India. The abstruse philosophy of the Upanishads that dealt with the ultimate reality of being had become a meaningless jargon to the common run of men. The most unostentatious religion of the Vedic seers had degenerated into cumbrous ceremonies and forms. The descendants of the ancient sages had stepped out as the self-constituted custodians of the moral and spiritual interests of the people,—arrogating to themselves all the privileges in the society and holding in their hands the very master-key to the floodgate of spiritual life like the demoralised European clergies of the 16th century assuring salvation to the ignorant laity by 'the sale of Indulgences'. In short the spirit of religion had been stifled in the hocus-pocus and the paraphernalia of elaborate ritualism; and the Vedic gods had lost all significance and existed only in name.

The society on the other hand had become stratified into layers with a considerable number of sub-divisions. It was utterly disfigured by the unhealthy distinctions of castes and privileges with the result that a fire of discontent had begun to smoulder among the socially ostracised masses of the time. The Sudras, the very backbone of the country, by their industrious life and development of various arts and crafts, had already outgrown the cast-iron mould in which they were held in society. Justice demanded that the invidious barriers must be levelled down to ensure a healthy flow of life and culture amongst all the sections of the society—that the industrial classes must have their legitimate aspirations satisfied and be allowed the amount of freedom they were fit to enjoy in the collective life of social good. Politically, the country was parcelled out into numerous independent states, each struggling for supremacy at the expense of his neighbour. The systems of government varied from autocratic monarchies to self-

governing communities. There was indeed no cohesive force to check the girations of these repellent molecules of body-politic and to weld them together into a harmonious socio-political life based upon the bed-rock of a transcendent spiritual idealism. Needless to say, the life of Buddha was ushered into being to fulfil this crying need of the time. And his message of love and peace was hailed with universal acclamation; for he stood as an embodiment of a mighty challenge to the inhumanities practised for ages upon the duped masses of the land by the so-called guardians of law and spirituality. His religion soon became the refuge of many a thirsting soul and the very basis of one of the most consolidated empires in India.

Gautama Buddha was the son of a Sakya chieftain of Kapilavastu. It was prophesied that the child would either be a Raja Chakravartin, a universal monarch, or the founder of a new religion. Siddhodhan the father of the child was not a little disconcerted at the prospect of his son relinquishing the pleasures of the crown for a life of renunciation and poverty. Determined to switch back the destiny of the prince, he left no stone unturned to minister to the physical comforts of his son, little apprehending that all his efforts to wean him away from the pursuit of a monastic ideal served only to prepare the ground for the consummation of such a life. With the advance of years the prince developed an introspective mentality, and day after day the visions of a more glorious life—a life consecrated at the altar of suffering humanity—began to flash before his imagination and rendered him completely restless. Even the charm of married life failed to silence the inner craving of the soul; for he was born not to satisfy the demands of the flesh but to solve the complex problems of human existence and to evolve a radical panacea for all the ills humanity is heir to. It is indeed a universal phenomenon that when the right moment comes, nobody can turn back the page of destiny. That was the case with the prince Siddhartha. In one silent hour of the night when the whole nature was locked up in the embrace of sweet sleep, the prince resolved to tear himself away from the blissful scenes of his youthful life in search of the light of Truth. He left behind all the shining prospects of earthly power and glory and plunged into the darkness of the night, thus changing once for all the sceptre for a begging bowl for the salvation of himself and the redemption of the rest of mankind. Indeed he was destined to be a universal monarch, but not of this material world; for it was ordained that his sovereignty would be characterised not by bloodshed or violence, but by the one absorbing passion of love for humanity irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality. So said the prince:

"My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels
 From victory to victory, till earth
 Wears the red record of my name. I choose
 To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,
 Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes
 My dwellings and its meanest things my mates;
 Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,
 Fed with no meals save what the charitable
 Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
 Than the dim cave lends or the jungle-bush.
 This will I do because the woeful cry
 Of life and all flesh living cometh up
 Into my ears, and all my soul is full
 Of pity for the sickness of this world;
 Which I will heal, if healing may be found
 By utmost renouncing and strong strife."

The intensity of his spiritual craving gave him no rest and drove him from place to place. During the first year of his new life he mastered what the Hindu philosophy had to teach, from some Brahmin ascetics near Rajagriha, the then capital of Magadh. But this dry intellectualism did not quench the ever-growing thirst of his soul. He left the company of these teachers, and for six long years he subjected himself to the severest form of asceticism. But these penances could bring him no enlightenment save physical atrophy and mental inertia. He came to understand that the cherished object of his life could not be realised by mere physical mortification. His was thenceforward a middle path. "Two extremes," he said, "are there, which the recluse must avoid—the life of passion and of sensuality on the one hand, a low and pagan way, ignoble and profiting nothing, and on the other hand self-tortures, which is also ignoble and unprofitable, as well as very painful. The path which I have discovered is a Middle Path which opens the eyes, gives understanding and leads to peace, to Nirvana." The intense mental anguish and physical hardship which Buddha had to undergo during his period of Sadhana before the attainment of supreme spiritual illumination form one of the most instructive chapters in the annals of his glorious life. His mind was swayed by thousand and one temptations; failures and disappointments disturbed the calm equipoise of his soul many a time. But his deathless determination to realise the truth triumphed in the end, and in one blessed moment of his life when the senses were charmed down into a state of sacred calm, the vision came upon him, and he was plunged into the ocean of supreme Bliss under the Bo-tree on the banks of the Nairanjana. Buddha attained Nirvana—not a far-off goal beyond

life but a spiritual state realisable even here in one's own life. With a heart throbbing with compassion and attuned to catch every quiver of the life of the world, Buddha stood before humanity to proclaim the truth of his realisation. He travelled from door to door with this priceless gift and invited one and all without any distinction whatsoever to embrace his doctrine of love and peace. He proclaimed a message of sympathy for all—a message which has in it 'the eternity of a universal hope, the immortality of a boundless love, an indestructible element of faith in final good and the proudest assertion ever made of human freedom.' In infinite compassion did Buddha call out to humanity:

"Ye suffer for yourselves. None else compels,
 None other holds you that ye live and die,
 And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
 Its spokes of agony,

"Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.
 Behold, I show you truth! Lower than hell,
 Higher than heaven, outside the utmost stars,
 Farther than Brahman doth dwell,

"Before beginning, and without an end.
 As space eternal and as surety sure,
 Is fixed a Power divine which moves to Good,
 Only its laws endure.

"Such is the Law which moves to righteousness
 Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
 The heart of it is Love, the end of it
 Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey."

None has ever been so misunderstood as the Lord Buddha, and truly Dr. Hopkins says: "There is perhaps no person in the history in regard to whom have arisen so many opinions that are either wholly or partly false." Buddhism, as we understand, is a system of self-culture and self-restraint. It aims at the extinction of human suffering through a process of purification of the mind by the pursuit of a life of selfless activity and holiness. Buddha was impressed with the idea that a life of self-abnegation and absolute purity is the *sine qua non* of the attainment of Nirvana—the *summum bonum* of human existence. He discovered the four Noble Truths,—the Truth of suffering, the Truth of the cause of suffering, the Truth of the cessation of suffering and the Truth of the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nirvana. Human life, says Buddha, is but a bundle of suffering, and the thirst for life and enjoyment is the procreative cause of repeated births and deaths. Complete annihilation of this desire is therefore the only way

out of this interminable cycle of human existences, and this can only be consummated by a faithful adherence to the Noble Eightfold Path, viz., Right belief, Right aspiration, Right speech, Right conduct, Right means of livelihood, Right exertion, Right mindfulness and Right meditation. Just before his passing away he called together the Bhikkus and enjoined them to follow the laws codified in the form of Seven Jewels, viz., the four earnest meditations; the fourfold great struggle against sin; the four roads to saintship; the five moral powers; the five organs of spiritual sense; the seven kinds of wisdom; and the noble eightfold path. Needless to say that a faithful observance of the moral injunctions embodied in the seven jewels must lead the sincere aspirant after Truth to Nirvana,—to 'the extinction of that sinful condition of mind, that thirst for life and its pleasures which bring on renewed existences'. The whole world, says Buddha, is but an outcome of illusion, and there is nothing of the nature of permanency in it. The cosmos is always tending to renovation or destruction. It is always in a state of flux. To this universal law of composition and dissolution men and gods form no exception. 'The unity of forces, which constitutes a sentient being must sooner or later be dissolved; and it is only through ignorance and delusion that such a being indulges in the dream that it is a separate and self-existent entity.' Man, in his opinion, is an assemblage of different properties called skandas such as material qualities, sensations, abstract ideas, tendencies of mind and mental powers. And it is only the Karma which is permanent, and determines the future course of a man's life. Thus instead of accepting the deep-rooted Hindu belief in the transmigration of soul he has described this metempsychosis in terms of character which is the result of one's own doings, good or evil. One life, says Buddha, stands in the same relation to the next as the flame of a lamp does to the flame of another lit up by it. Though there is a continuity of the flame, still both are not one and the same. Human life is likewise the resultant of a man's own Karma, and man being the maker of his own destiny must reap as he shall sow; it is only *in the action, thought and speech* that the identity between the two existences can be found after the body is dissolved into atoms or its constituent parts. In fact the results of the actions are not dissipated into many separate streams but are concentrated in the formation of a new sentient being—new in its constituent parts but the same in essence, its being, its doing. Thus each individual in the long chain of life inherits all of good or evil, which all its predecessors have done, and takes up the struggle towards enlightenment exactly there where they have left it. In short 'the Karma of the previous set of skandas. (i.e., the previous body with mental tendencies

and capabilities, etc.) determines the locality, nature and future of the new set of skandas—i.e., of the new sentient being.' The theory of Karma has thus been taken up to explain the theory of transmigration, and as the condition of future existence is solely dependent upon a man's own doings, he must pursue all his actions in a spirit of complete desirelessness and cultivate absolute purity of thought so as to neutralise the effect of his evil doings of the previous birth; for lusting after happiness in life is the root of all bondage and miseries on earth. 'Drop then this petty foolish longing for personal happiness,' Buddhism would say. 'Here it comes of ignorance, and leads to sin, which leads to sorrow; and there the conditions of existence are the same, and each new birth will leave you ignorant and finite still. There is nothing eternal; and the very cosmos is passing away; nothing is, everything becomes. And all that you see and feel, bodily or mentally, of yourself will pass away like everything else; there will only remain the accumulated result of all your actions, words and thoughts. Be pure then, and kind, not lazy in thought. Be awake, shake off your delusions, and enter resolutely on the Path which will lead you away from these restless, tossing waves of the ocean of life;—the Path to the Joy and Rest of the Nirvana of Wisdom and Goodness and Peace,'—writes Dr. Rhys Davids in his Buddhism.

But nothing has been so fruitful of controversies as the idea of Nirvana. Buddha understood the practical difficulty in the promulgation of the truths of his realisation before men of the world, who are concerned more with the actualities of daily life than the metaphysical subtleties that demand a trained intellect and mature understanding for their proper apprehension. The lofty teachings of the Upanishads were at that time kept confined to a limited circle of men, as they were beyond the easy reach and comprehension of the untutored intelligence of the common people riddled with manifold concerns of their daily existence. That is why Buddha scrupulously abstained from committing himself to any positive statement about the existence or non-existence of the soul. "Whenever Buddha denies existence to the Ego, what he really does is to deny reality to the individual Ego, to the ordinary surface self." And rightly Prof. Sarma has pointed out recently in his learned article in the *Monist* that in one sense, Nirvana is extinction; but what is extinguished is not the fundamental reality of life but the empirical self. Buddha has also made it distinctly clear that Nirvana is not the monopoly of any particular section of humanity but is the common heritage of all irrespective of caste or creed. Nirvana, it must be understood, is not the negation of the spiritual values of life. "It is a state," says Buddha, "where there is neither earth nor water, nor heat, nor air; neither infinity of space, nor

infinity of consciousness nor nothingness ; nor perception, nor non-perception ; neither this world nor that world ; neither sun nor moon. It is the Uncreate. That is neither coming nor going, nor standing ; neither death, nor birth. It is without stability, without change ; it is the eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow." It is in short the same as the Upanishadic at-one-ment with the Supreme Reality—the mergence of the empirical self in the infinitude of one cosmic existence. The same spiritual state has also been emphasised in the Upanishads. The Mundaka says, "There the sun shines not, nor the moon nor the stars. These lightnings also do not shine there ; how can this fire then do the same?" So also has it been described in the Taittiriya,—the condition of at-one-ment is indeed ineffable. It may be called neither existence nor non-existence, neither stability nor change, neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. In truth the Buddhistic Nirvana is identical with the Upanishadic at-one-ment with the Supreme Entity—or Brahman. And Buddha himself has declared that this spiritual condition has been attained in his own life and is accessible to every earnest seeker who shall tread upon the Noble Eightfold Path. It is thus not the destruction but the sublimation of life into the divine. And the greatest service the Lord Buddha has done to humanity is the democratisation of the sublime truths of the Upanishads and the lucid presentment thereof without those metaphysical subtleties and jugglery of words which none but a disciplined mind and a prodigious intellect can understand. He had to deal with various types of men from the Brahmins to the Pariahs and the robbers downward for whom he built up a moral code which was easy of comprehension as well as of application in practical life. Thus what was abstract and theoretical was made practical, and any man, be he rich or poor, a Brahmin or a Chandala, was able to attain Nirvana by means of a strict observance of the rules embodied in his system of self-culture.

Buddha brought about a complete revolution in the social and religious life of the people of his time by presenting before them a scheme of democratic religion that demolished all distinctions of castes and privileges and opened the gateway of peace and salvation to all. He was not indeed an innovator ; for what he has said could be found in their fulness in most of the orthodox philosophical systems of the Hindus, existing before Buddha. "His credit lies in giving the Upanishadic teachings a practical turn, bringing them into the closest touch with the work-a-day world, translating them into the language of daily life and in making them available for the man in the street." And rightly has Dr. Radhakrishnan observed in his *Indian Philosophy* : "Buddha did not look upon himself as an innovator but only as the

restorer of the ancient way, i.e., the way of the Upanishads." Gautama even permitted the adoption of the popular belief in the Hindu gods but these beings, he held, had also to struggle through repeated births in various spheres to attain that Nirvana which is the supreme destiny of all. "Gautama," says Dr. Rhys Davids, "was born, and brought up, and lived, and died a Hindu....There was not much in the metaphysics and psychology of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adopted, enlarged, ennobled, and systematised that which had already been well said by others ; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers. The difference between him and other teachers lay chiefly in his deep earnestness and in his broad public spirit of philanthropy.....Buddhism was the child, the product of Hinduism. Gautama's whole training was Brahminism ; he probably deemed himself to be the most correct exponent of the ancient faith ; and it can only be claimed for him that he was the greatest, and wisest, and best of the Hindus."

Besides the masses, the religion of Buddha found a ready acceptance among the great Kshatriya monarchs and the illustrious self-governing communities of the Mallas, the Sakyas, the Koliyanas and the Licchavis of Northern India during his life-time. He was welcomed as the redeemer of the oppressed humanity. There was in fact a spontaneous outburst of popular sympathy on his side as his practical philosophy did not shrink in the struggle with the abuses most peculiar to his time. It was the religion of Buddha which in after years became the most powerful force to unify all the disruptive elements into one great homogeneous empire. The necessity of an organised Order of monks was most keenly felt, and it was during the life-time of Buddha that the celebrated Order of the Buddhist Bhikkus came into being. He laid down the most stringent rules and regulations for their guidance, and his attitude towards the purity of such a life of monasticism was of the most uncompromising nature. And it must be admitted that the services which these monks have rendered to humanity form some of the glowing chapters in the history of human progress. Much against his will, Buddha had to build a separate Order for the nuns in compliance with the persistent importunities of Ananda, one of his foremost disciples, though he was fully conscious that 'their admission meant that the Good Law should not endure for a thousand years, but only for five hundred.' And it is needless to point out that his prophetic utterance proved to be too true. More than two

thousand and five hundred years have rolled by; the memory of the brilliant galaxy of Sannyasins that gathered round the banner of the Lord Buddha and the splendid contribution they made to the sum total of human knowledge serve as a fountain of unfailing inspiration to all even to-day. The merits and demerits, the success and failure of this holy Order which was one of the greatest organisations ever ushered into existence, must be a standing eye-opener to the inaugurators of such Orders for ages to come. India has witnessed a similar movement in the recent years, and a sacred Order of monks with the ideals of renunciation and service as its guiding principles has already been built up to mobilise all the cultural forces of India for the uplift of land as well as for the collective good of mankind. The country needs it, nay the whole world wants it to-day. But where is that burning spirit of renunciation and grim resolution that characterised Buddha and his disciples in the pursuit of their ideal of life? Spirituality is the only dynamic force that sustains a man in the manifold spheres of his activity. Let every one of these servants of humanity be imbued with that spirit of dogged tenacity that finds utterance in that historic saying of Buddha :

इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं त्वगस्थिमांसं प्रलयञ्च यातु ।

अप्राप्य बोधिं बहुकल्पदुर्लभां नैवासनात् कायमतश्चलिष्यते ॥

“Let this body of mine fall into decay. Let the skin, bone and the flesh run to dissolution. Never shall this body leave the seat until the long-cherished knowledge be vouchsafed unto me.” For without such an iron determination no lofty ideal can ever be materialised into action. The whole world is convulsed to-day with a feverish excitement for political supremacy, and the muffled cry of oppressed humanity has been drowned in the clash and clatter of arms. Time has indeed come when the immortal songs of the sages and the saviours of India must be sung anew before the expectant world. Buddha has already shown the ideal which must be placed before mankind in its pristine simplicity. We must re-live that catholic ideal of universal love and freedom, carry his noble message to every door, preach the gospel of equality and fraternity and prepare the ground for the dawn of a new era of peace and brotherhood which the world needs most seriously to-day.

WIT IN PHILOSOPHY

By Swami Gnaneswarananda

“Brevity is the soul of wit,” they say. Philosophers and men of religion are not people without any sense of wit and humour as they are supposed to be. In fact, if the above good old saying is true one is more apt to appreciate the finest of wits in philosophers and men of religion than in jesters and fools. Ask a real philosopher any question regarding your deepest concern of life and he will at once answer you in a couple of well-chosen and well-balanced words apparently very commonplace and simple and at the same time free from that jugglery of the confused mass of nonsense which foolish and ignorant persons give the high sounding and bewildering name of “Techniques”. This is an amusing psychology of foolishness that whatever the ignorant fail to understand much less to follow, is always considered by them as something great and deep. Answer any question put to you by a fool in meaningless jargons which you yourself do not understand much less he, and you will be considered a wise man. But a real philosopher's business is not to command the fool's praise by confusing his poor understanding but to enlighten the seeker, and as such he is simple and clear both in his conduct of daily life and his utterings. If you have the patience and good sense of pondering over the brief, simple and commonplace words of such a real man of enlightenment, you are sure to realize in their brevity and simplicity the real soul of wit. The more you meditate upon them the more amusing, attractive, deep and pregnant they appear. Compare with this the frothy nonsense, the apparently amusing words of a professional entertainer—there are professional entertainers even in the field of Religion and Philosophy—and you will at once know the difference. It is indeed a pity that the world runs after false shadows, few only can know the truth!

Apropos of this I have before my mind a nice specimen of a real philosophic wit. So goes the story :—

A Pharisee, foolish in his vanity, once asked a question to a Yogin as to what a Yogin's mind was like. The Yogin was about to drink a glass of water from a crystal glass. Without thinking a moment he pointed out to the clear water in the glass and said “just like this.” He drank the water and sat silent. The vain Pharisee expected a long discourse and perhaps a discussion to entertain and feed his own vanity. The Yogin had nothing more to say and showed no sign to open a discourse. The foolish Pharisee failed to see any sense in the

answer and as the Yogin did not feel any mood to talk more on the subject the Pharisee could only go home disgusted and disappointed with the impression that the man was ordinary, matter of fact, and had no sense of scholarly wit. The holy man in his turn felt very much amused at the sheer absence of good sense and wit on the part of the vain questioner although he believed that he was very wise.

Let the fool go home to his den, the philosopher is none the worse for that. But how does a real seeker, a sincere student, a real appreciator of the art of philosophic wit think about it? He is at first amused and attracted at the ready wit of the answer—it sets him thinking. And gradually in course of his patient deliberation he becomes fascinated by its prompt preciseness and finally he appreciates clearly and unmistakably the deepest and the most wholesome entertainment in the simple gesture of the simple philosopher.

"Yes," he realizes, "the Yogin's mind is precisely like that colourless, shapeless and motionless water in that crystal glass. It has absolutely no colour, no shape, no special tendency or inclination of its own. This is the reason why it can be poured into any vessel. It does not stick to anything like some gummy sticky matter. It loses nothing in the change of its environments. Having no colour or shape of its own it can at once take unto itself the colour and shape of the vessel into which it might be put, without losing anything of or doing any harm to its own intrinsic nature. Put it into a red glass—it is red in colour and has taken exactly the shape of the glass, but is intrinsically free from both. Again put it into a green cubic glass—it has become absolutely green and cubic but neither of the two in reality. Did it lose any degree or amount of its own intrinsic nature in course of these changes? Absolutely none: And why? Because it did not *attach* itself to the changing qualities of the environments. Well then, did it miss, for the reason of its being *unattached*, any fun or enjoyment under any of these changing environments? None at all: On the contrary, for the very fact of being *unattached* to any of these changing environments it could do the fullest amount of justice to each one of them by taking, without any reservation, on itself the qualities and virtues of these environments to the highest degree of possibility.

"Again, suppose you give a colour and a definite shape—say, in the form of ice—to this water. Now try again all the previous process of your experiment in the change of environments. Can it accommodate and harmonise itself with any of its changing world of environments? Does it really enjoy the fun of its different relations with its associates and relatives? Most emphatically, not: And

why? Because, having a definite colour and solid form of its own it can only break itself to fit into the form of its environment and getting there can only show itself in a mixed up colour which is neither its own nor that of the environment."

Now, to apply this illustration to our daily experiences in our work-a-day life who should be considered the most happy and harmonious, deep and true, exact and accurate in the daily relations of life—covering all phases, conditions and walks thereof? Surely a person having a *colourless* and *shapeless* mind. Such a person alone can be the ideal husband or wife, best father or mother, nicest brother or sister, the sweetest lover, the noblest friend, the most successful man of business, the greatest social worker, or the biggest of Yogins. Such a person is the most attractive, sociable and lovable in society, for whoever finds such a one always finds such exactly in the own colour of the observer. This is the secret of that attractiveness that we find in some persons. These persons have a more or less colourless and shapeless mind.

The philosopher's wit is really deep. Ponder over it and many more problems would be solved and you would find an immense source of profound knowledge. In the light of this gesture from the philosopher which do you prefer—a colourless and shapeless mind or one opposite to that? Consider thrice before you choose.

All the different Yogas—'Bhakti', 'Karma', 'Raja' and 'Jnana'—teach you to obtain and command such a mind. Do it by any means suitable to you—by one, two or more. But surely one has to do this, for there is no other way to Peace and Perfection. This is, in fact, the only means to attain that happiness and joy which everybody is seeking in vain in everything. This is the real secret of that magic word 'success' which enthruses many into activity and throws many more out of the track. Know this secret, try to attain it by sincere and honest practice and you will become really successful in life.*

INDIA AND HER PRESENT NEEDS

By Swami Sarvananda

Those of us who are bestowing any serious thought over the conditions of our national life must have been forced to acknowledge that the national life is anything but healthy. All serious thinkers of the land have come to believe that the national life is suffering from

* From the notes of a lecture delivered in the Vedanta Society of New York.

some serious ailments, and a radical cure of it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the nation. The leaders of the country are keenly divided in their diagnosis of the diseases and in their prescriptions. Some sincerely believe that the real disease of the nation lies in the political servility,—the root cause of the national decadence. The political life at every stage and every turn is retarded, and their prescription is that if the nation is to be rejuvenated, and rehabilitated in her glory, she should first attain political freedom (Swaraj). Others again there are who believe that the present state of decadence is due to certain social defects, for instance, caste system, and if the nation is to attain her healthy state these social defects must be cured; so a healthy social life is an urgent necessity for the uplift of the nation. Then again, others believe that the present state is due to the common ignorance of the people. The bulk of the people, *i.e.*, the masses, live in cottages in the villages, and the ignorance of the masses in India is simply appalling, and naturally as ignorance is always the mother of all defects so the redemption of the land depends upon the diffusion of knowledge. Then there are others who believe that the present state is due to economic defects, and the economic betterment only can lead us to the national redemption and so on.

Various prescriptions are given out by various thinkers. Seeing the problem from different angles of vision, it is but natural that they are viewing things from their own particular perspective, and with all the sincerity and intense love for the country they cannot but prescribe according to the best judgment of their own, and it must be owned that there is a grain of truth in the assertions of all these great thinkers though not the whole truth. From a study of the ancient Indian history we find that the present decadence is not wholly due to any of these causes. These may be only secondary causes, but the primary cause, the immediate cause of the national decadence, is the weakness of the manhood of the land. The manhood of the land has been weakened, and with the deterioration of that manhood has come all the disease that we find to-day in the national life. So we say that if India is to be resuscitated to her glory the first thing that is necessary is to awaken the manhood of the nation. All that is noble, all that is glorious, all that is powerful is conjured up by that one word "manliness" and has to be brought into our nation. Our blood has to be spiritualised, heart has to be strengthened and made stouter; it is to be made stronger, it is to be made more robust, and above all the spirit has to be cleansed and purified.

As students of history we all know that ancient India lived in villages and there has never been a national consciousness in the

masses in the sense of the term as it obtains at the Western world to-day, and we sometimes feel that collective consciousness, which is so important a basic principle for nationalism, is being lost sight of. A nation is formed by various forces,—geographical position, unity of culture, unity of political interest and above all racial connection. Some emphasise on the cultural aspect of nationalism, some emphasise upon religion and some upon political and some upon the racial connections. But when we study the national life and the nationalism of the West we know that modern nationalism is more or less based upon political unit or political interest. The modern America is made up of various races of Europe. There is not one race and certainly not one religion; yet they are combined under one name of American nation. The different elements of the nation have that one single political interest, and there they have developed the conception of Government as one, organised through which the entire organism of the nation works. In the West the Government is conceived as a central organ, the heart, for instance, of the body politic, through which the entire nation must work, and their whole attempt is to make Government a perfect organ. The Government must take charge of the political aspirations of the people, the economic growth of the people, the culture, the education, and even religion. It is the duty of the Government, in their view, to look after all the needs of the people, to minister all requirements of the people, even religion, until Government becomes an all-absorbing interest to the Western mind.

We, imbued with the Western ideals, think to-day that our nation's rejuvenation cannot be made possible without establishing that perfect Government. But that was not the case in ancient India. In India the conception of nationalism was quite different. Our nationalism was more or less a cultured nationalism; we used to call ourselves Aryans. From the remote corner of Kashmere or Assam down to Cape Comorin wherever an Aryan went he did not feel that he was amongst foreigners. In ancient India there were imperial cities; there were kings and emperors ruling over different parts of the world. As we all know from the study of history that many a king came and went away, and from the structure they were thrown down, but there was a feeling that the national life was to be left undisturbed. It was possible only in India that a peasant would till his soil, that a philosopher would go on with his philosophy, even in the midst of the booming of cannon and the clatter of arms. It was possible here and so the political cataclysm did not disturb even, at any rate, the smooth tenor of our national life. The nation lived in spite of the changes of the rulers. So it is really a wonder for

historians and sociologists how in spite of thousands of years of political decadence India still survives. India saw the pyramids of Pharaohs, India saw Cæsar making his conqueror's march, India saw the rise and fall of Athens and Greece, but India still survives and Greece lives only a small land! Rome lives only as a historical memory. Egypt lives to-day in desert, in the form of pyramids! All these are gone, swallowed in the waves of time, but India still survives in spite of the changes. Why? Because it had such tremendous strength of soul, such tremendous power in its culture, that all these political changes could not touch her, and it is time for us to understand the Indian nationhood,—this Indian nationalism.

To-day 330 million souls of India are being governed by only a handful of English people! Most of the loyal Indians are mere instruments in the hands of the Government and are being used one against the other to subserve their political ends. There is no doubt a little stir and commotion in the political life of India, but in view of the grip the Bureaucracy has upon the destiny of the people, the agitation seems to be of no practical utility unless the forces of India's cultural life are mobilised to keep up the flame of her nationalism. The soul of India spoke through Mahatmaji and it was he who in a way materialised the dream of Mr. Gokhale. It was the Mahatma who could conceive the soul of India and could spiritualise the Indian dream of the Western conception of politics. As in politics so also in industry and education. All the failures and decadence in industry are due to the deceit and want of character on the part of either the Directors or the Managers. We have no sense of responsibility; we have not the sense of honesty, and that is the reason why whenever there is a joint stock company here, it sooner or later comes to grief. So far as the education of the land is concerned, the best minds have already been too much stuffed with Western notions and ideals, with the result that a hybrid culture without having the necessary sanction of our spiritual civilisation has now come to stay in the land. The ancient idealism and cultural purity have altogether been lost sight of and the national life has thus become completely stranded without the hope of an early emancipation. Religion has degenerated to an woeful extent. There are four kinds of people who worship God: the man suffering, the man needing money, the philosopher enquiring after the truth, and lastly the Jnani (seer). Of these, the Jnani is the highest, and the philosopher comes next, but the number of sincere devotees is almost negligible.

Thus we see from every standpoint that there has been a national deterioration, and with this deterioration and with these defects it is not possible for us to gain anything. As Swami Vivekananda said: this earth is to be enjoyed by the great heroes, and unless you

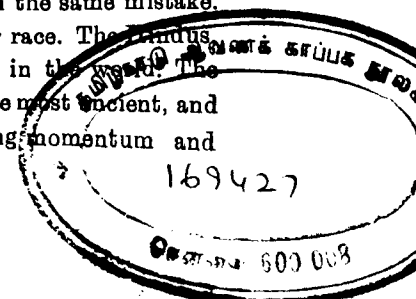
be heroes, how you can dream to get the mastery of your own land? You cannot get the mastery of your own body; how can you get the mastery of your land? Cowardliness is the root cause of our national decadence. When Swami Vivekananda returned from America after his world experience, he was asked what was his religion, and what he was going to preach to India. He said: one religion that India needs to-day is the religion of manliness; you must be man first and then anything else. Your path to heaven will be open not by closing the doors but by fighting the battle. So from whatever standpoint we may see, the first thing that is necessary appears to us is the rejuvenation of the manliness of India. This vitalisation of the nation can be made possible by two means, as a man can be vitalised, and strengthened by two or three ways. You can vitalise the body by giving all kinds of nourishments, all kinds of tonics and so on, but if you look upon a man as nothing but a psychological entity, then your nourishment should take the form of ideas and education. If you see him as a spiritual entity, then the process of this nourishment or vitalising will be the awakening of spiritual consciousness. In spite of the great conquering power of the Grecians and Romans, they could not live many centuries together. They had to die. And sometimes the Hindus have been given the appellation of being mild. Sometimes Westerners say that Hindus have never been a conquering nation; what have the Hindus done? the Hindus are mild and have never been conquering heroes. To that we have the best reply: in our manliness lies the grandeur of our lives. We never thought of conquest and of becoming rich by plundering our neighbours. The conquest of the West is synonymous with the exploitation of the weaker nations, the pillaging and robbing of weaklings. The Westerners are trying to adopt all possible means to strengthen their physical life, their physical power and intellectual power, for it furthers their spectacular grandeur; but it is bound to be short-lived, as the European nations are changing one after the other. And it is needless to state that the nations who have been trumpeting their power so much for more than 100 years must go away as the deterioration of the intellect of Europe is already so much in evidence.

If we want to vitalise our nation purely from the physical standpoint, we will be committing the same mistake as the Europeans have done. Similarly if we want to vitalise our nation purely from intellectual standpoint we will be committing again the same mistake. Moreover it will be different from the genius of our race. The Hindus, perhaps except China, are the most ancient nation in the world. The Hindu civilisation,—Hindu culture—is perhaps the most ancient, and this national culture has come down to us, gathering momentum and

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reaching itself deeply in the inner consciousness of the people. Do you mean to say that we can leave it off easily? It is easier perhaps for the icy region of the Himalayas to go down to the ocean to start back afresh; you can ask the Ganges at Calcutta to return back to its icy source, but it is not easy for the nation that has passed through several centuries in a particular way of life to recede. The blood of the Rishis is still in our veins: however we may consider we can never get ourselves alienated from the blood that we have inherited. We can never denationalise India by such political or other means.

The only way of revitalising India is to develop her spiritual consciousness and the path that Swamiji has showed for the rejuvenation of India is the development of the *Atmic* consciousness. We have to develop the consciousness that we are not all the body, we are not the lump of flesh, we are not a dying and decaying element, but we are an undying and undecaying element, one *Atman*. But the predominant thing the Mahatma preaches to-day is the soul-force. This soul-force is the *Atmic* power; this *Atmic* consciousness has to be rejuvenated, and reawakened in ourselves. The *Atma* is undying and undecaying: no fire can burn it, no sword can cut it, no water can drown it. It is eternal. If we can have that strong doctrine, if we can awaken that soul force in us, everything else would be perfectly smooth and easy for us. Only we have to awaken our soul-force. Vedanta denies the separate existence of matter. It is the mind that images the body, and it is the soul that images the mind. We have seen so many instances in the lives of great saints (sages) that their body becomes their slaves; and matter becomes their slaves. In fact the matter is the shadow of spirit. If that spiritual feeling is awakened, all the other defects of the mental and physical body would get themselves corrected. As when the water falls from the higher peaks of the Himalayas, it goes down to several channels to fertilise lower soils; many cities, towns and villages are watered by the water that falls from the high peaks; so when our spiritual life is attuned to the consciousness of the ultimate reality of the self, all the other activities of life will get vitalised; mind will become cleaner, and stronger, soul will become adamant and the body would be capable of doing the command of the soul.

Even Swamiji used to say that if we wish to bring back our Upanishads in our midst, the truths of the Upanishads should be brought to us first. The great truth of the Vedanta has to be brought out from the forest, from the sannyasins, and has to be preached and practised by the grihasthas, be he a peasant, or a judge ruling from the Bench, or a governor, or in whatever position he may be; he has to

practise, observe and get himself imbued with the truths of Vedanta, and there lies the real hope of India. The real manliness will develop with the awakening of spiritual consciousness, and the spiritual consciousness will reflect itself upon the mind and body. It will invigorate not only physical muscles, it will invigorate not only the mind, it will not only make the intellect keener, but it will give that strength to the man, which triumphs over all physical impediments in the world.

India has to choose either of the two: the material culture of the West or the spiritual culture of the East. As the former is quite ill-suited to the temper and genius of India the only alternative for her is to resort to the latter one: to develop spiritual strength in us, to show to the world that our spiritual culture is superior to all. The Hindu lives for the safety of the whole world. The other parts of the world are still groping in the dark. All the inarticulate voices of the West in the form of democracy and socialism, etc., are but the unconscious hankering of the Western soul for something superior to their own politics, for something superior to their so-called democracy, their so-called autocracy. Today India is not Hindu India, today India is not Mohammedan India, nor Christian India. Indian affairs have become very complex; Indian nation is but an aggregate of different cultures, different religions, different races, different temperaments; and if India can solve the problem of politics India would be solving the problem of the whole world; and owing to the fact of such varying interests, currents and cross-currents of thought, it is not absolutely possible to settle or solve the problem of Indian national life, political, economic or anything. There is one thing in which all these different elements are synchronised, in which all the varying principles can seek profound harmony, it is spirituality. From the very ancient times the Indians preached this unity of life; and the solidarity of man can only be realised if this gospel of unity is put above all the different problems of the world, social, political, economic, etc.

The same universal life is throbbing in every heart; we must feel it, and bring that feeling to bear upon our work. Let us therefore all try to rehabilitate our glorious heritage, and reinstall our God in our own hearts in the form of that very Self—the one unifying bond in this world of variety, and the problems that confront us to-day shall be solved once for all.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

(Continued from the May issue)

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

CHAPTER III: THE HIGH WATERMARK OF INDIAN
METAPHYSICS: THE BHAGAVAD GITA

I would take up, therefore, the faith of the Epics, and especially of the Bhagavad Gita before dealing with Jainism and Buddhism. Dr. Radhakrishnan swallows wholesale the myths of modern Western scholarship about the Aryans and Dravidians,—myths which were exposed and disproved by Swami Vivekananda. He says: "Some of the later Upanishads describe the attempts to build up a Vedic religion on non-Aryan symbolism. The Pasupata, the Bhagavatha, and the Tantrik developments belong to this period of social upheaval through which the Aryanisation of vast multitudes in pre-Buddhist India proceeded." It seems to me that the setting up of an Aryan-Dravidian conflict in the realms of social and political life is itself a myth. It is a yet greater myth to set up a philosophic conflict as well. The root ideas of our Itihasas and Puranas and Tantras and Agamas occur in the Upanishads. Each age emphasised one aspect of the many-faceted Truth revealed in the Vedas. Dr. Radhakrishnan outruns his fleet-footed Western brethren when he says about the Mahabharata story: "The original event seems to be a non-Aryan one, if we may judge from the blood thirst of Bhima, the polyandry of Draupadi, and such other incidents." When dealing with the religion of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (the author reverses their usual order), we have in his account a summation of the views of Western scholarship. Here is a sample: "The dance of Krishna on the head of Kaliya means the suppression of the worship of nagas or serpents by that of Krishna. The defeat of Indra by Krishna symbolises the suppression of Vedic orthodoxy by the Vishnu cult. The henotheistic tendency is still prevalent." Dr. Max Muller's new-coined word 'henotheism' reflects a misunderstanding of Vedic doctrine. The Western savants are genuinely puzzled by the Vedic exaltation of each deity as the Supreme Deity. The same exaltation is found in later religious literature in regard to the Trimurthis, the Devi cult, etc. We can never realise the spirit underlying these declarations unless we have the master-key furnished by the great Rig Vedic declaration '*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanthi*'. The Supreme God has taken various manifestations to approach man and to be approached

by man. Dr. Radhakrishnan thinks that image worship and pilgrimage were introduced in the epic period. The root ideas about these matters also are found in the Upanishads. The author quite naturally regards Durga as a non-Aryan goddess brought into the Aryan heart and married there to Rudra. Uma is at least as old as the Kena Upanishad. The Devisukta also is equally well-known. The author naturally accepts also the alleged equation of Siva with Rudra and of Krishna with Vishnu and Narayana and Vasudeva who had somehow become equated to each other. There are yet more fantastic theories. Krishna was Ghora Angirasa's son and was hence a Vedic thinker. In the Rig Veda he is spoken of as a Non-Aryan chief waiting on the banks of the Amrawathi with an army of ten thousand men to fight Indra. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar believes that a nomadic tribe of cowherds called Abhiras were worshippers of a boy-god. Weber and Dutt contend that the Pandavas were a non-Aryan people. Dr. Radhakrishnan makes an amalgam of all this and says: "In the Mahabharata we have a combination of all traditions about Krishna that survived till then, a non-Aryan hero, a spiritual teacher, and a tribal god." This is not all. The Swetadwipa episode in the Mahabharata is regarded by Weber and Dr. Seal as referring to a contact between Hinduism and Christianity. Fortunately Garbe and Barth have overthrown the view. The name Vasudeva occurs in Panini's grammar which cannot be put below the 7th century B. C. The Buddhist and Jaina scriptures refer to the Bhakti cult. Dr. Radhakrishnan, fortunately for us, negatives the acceptability of the perverted inference from the Swetadwipa episode.

The ancient and unwavering Indian view is that the Epics (Itihasas and Puranas) implement and amplify the Vedic doctrine. The epic cosmology agrees with the Upanishadic view that Brahman is the material cause and the efficient cause of the world. The Epics accept and elaborate the Upanishadic doctrine of the Gunas. The Epics elaborate the Vedic doctrine of the Purusharthas. The Vedic ideal of ethics is accepted and elaborated and amply illustrated in the Epics.

We can therefore easily realise why the Bhagavad Gita is said in a famous Sanskrit stanza to be the milk extracted from the Upanishadic cows by the divine cowherd. The Mahabharata is regarded as the fifth Veda and the Gita is its Upanishad. The Hindu believes that God who revealed the Veda incarnated as Sri Krishna to lead the world from the chaos of thought into the true Vedic doctrine once again. It is therefore improper to imagine and then seek to find in the Gita any divergence or departure from the Vedas as well as Itihasas and the Puranas which explain and amplify and implement the Vedic doctrine. The Gita has fascinated the mind of the West no

less than the mind¹ of the East. William Von Humboldt says that it is "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue". H. E. Sampson says in a recent work on the Gita: "If good people, looking for a 'coming teacher' to reincarnate in the flesh, would escape that snare of delusion, and seek for Krishna, the Master, Iswara, in themselves, the world would be wiser, happier and lovelier than a thousand 'coming teachers' would make it." In strange contrast with this is Dr. Radhakrishnan's description: "The author is a man of deep culture, catholic rather than critical." This is of a piece with his reference to the Upanishads in the following sentence: "The thin abstractions of the Upanishads would not satisfy the many-sided needs of the soul."

Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to think that the Gita is a post-Buddhistic work. It is not possible to agree with this view at all. It is wrong as his view that the Katha Upanishad quotes from the Gita, (Vol. I, p. 142). Even the learned author assigns the Gita to the fifth century B. C. Further, the Gita belongs to the time of the Mahabharata war. Such at any rate is the consensus of Indian opinion on the point. Professor S. N. Das Gupta says in the issue of the "Modern Review" for July 1928, that the Gita is pre-Buddhistic. It is not possible to go here into the vexed question about the date of the Mahabharata war and of the composition of the Mahabharata. Suffice it to say here that these are certainly much older than Buddhism. It is hence impossible to accept Dr. Radhakrishnan's view that "the Gita adopts the ethical principles of Buddhism". This is further wrong because the author is wrong in his view that "in the descriptions of the ideal man the Gita and Buddhism agree". The Buddhist ideal of the ideal man, as I shall show below, is the ideal of ethics divorced from religion and is devoid of the warm tints of devotion and the concentrated white glow of spiritual realisation and divine consciousness.

In the same way it is not proper to imagine an indebtedness of the Gita to the Samkhya and Yoga Darśanas. These Darśanas were subsequent to the Gita. The Vedānta Sūtras frequently refer to Gita passages as Smṛiti and cite them as authority to enforce the statements of its doctrine. The fact is that all the later crystallised systems with their common points as well as points of departure are traceable to the ancient and eternal and infinite mine of the Vedas, especially the Upanishads. The Gita has given to us the perfect synthesis of the separate truths revealed by the Upanishadic seer. The Hindus believe that God who gave the Vedas as the chart of man's voyage through the ocean of life (*samsara*) gave the Gita as the synthesis and summation of all the highest spiritual truths by lips divine. If modern scholar-

ship demonstrates the untenability of this view and shows that the Gita merely shows the undigested eclecticism of an able individual scholar who composed and shoved the Gita into the Mahabharata, if it shows that it is later than Buddhism or the six Darśanas and is a magnificent failure in its attempt to reconcile the unreconciled and irreconcilable, then it will be time enough to scrap the traditional view and follow our great new guides. But modern scholarship, be it European or Indian, has not demonstrated any such thing at all.

The Gita is the greatest of all the gospels. It reveals the Truth in all its many-sided beauty and shows the gradation of steps by which we can realise and attain Godhead. Its synthesis of Karma-yoga and Raja-yoga and Bhakti-yoga and Jnana-yoga is the most wonderful synthesis of all the means and methods leading us to God. Like the Upanishads it is the soul of religion and not a petrified system of dogma and creed. It is incandescent with the glow of mystic spiritual emotion and can kindle such emotion in every fervent and prayerful heart. Dr. Radhakrishnan is wrong in imagining a disparateness between it and the Upanishads and saying that "it attempts to derive a religion from the Upanishad philosophy". The truth is that the final and perfect fusion of philosophy and religion is found in both the Veda and the Gita. Both are aglow with feeling and show also the cold light of reason. Both lead us to the bliss of spiritual liberation from the non-self. Both dower us with that vision, that insight, by which we know our true nature and therefore also the true nature of other souls, of nature and of God. Both lead us to unselfish and God-surrendered action which brings us peace and devotion and vision. Both form the meeting point of poetry and philosophy and religion about which Plotinus says: "There are different roads by which this end (of spiritual apprehension) may be reached: the love of beauty which exalts the poet; that devotion to the One and that ascent of science which wakes the ambition of the philosopher; that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular, where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out as from the depths of the soul." In the Gita we stand in such immediate presence of the Infinite, the presence where we have God the Yogeswara (the Master and Lord of all yogas) with the obedient and illuminated and beloved human soul ready to carry out His commands and realise His glory (धनुर्धरः). Only when we want such a combination can there be individual and national and universal auspiciousness and victory and prosperity and righteousness:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्त पाथो बभूवुर्धरः।
तत् श्रीविजयो भूतिप्रवानीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

CHAPTER IV: THE EBB OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS

It is not possible to pursue the exposition of the Gita further here. The heretic systems such as materialism, Jainism, and Buddhism arose later on. They signify not an advance but points of departure in the history of Hindu thoughts. The restraints and disciplines of the Aryan religion were felt galling and there were attempts to break away therefrom. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The sickly-minded and the suffering of reduced vitality and weak nerves the world over try to heal their sickness by either seeking repose and calm, deliverance and nirvana through art, knowledge, morality, or else intoxication, ecstasy, bewilderment and madness.....There were also political crises which unsettled men's minds." This is picturesque and also true in some measure but does not contain a full statement of all the root causes. The revolts against ethical and spiritual discipline cannot be always traced to geographical or historical causes alone. The history of philosophic and religious progress, like the history of human progress in general, has many ups and downs, many forward and circular and eddying and even backward movements which are not always traceable to definite external causes.

If it is permissible to hazard a theory about the matter, I would urge that the national suicide of Hindu culture in the Mahabharata war was the cause of the disintegration of India's outer life as well as her inner life. Just as the Ramayana is the epic of Indian unity and its vitalising power, the Mahabharata is the epic of Indian disunion and its devitalising power. Arjuna cried on the field of battle: स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव—(O Madhava, how shall we attain happiness after killing our own people?). He referred also to कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् (the evil of destruction of families and the sin of hatred and injury to friends and comrades). He cried out further:

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मो नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥

(When families die, the eternal family dharma die; when dharma dies, adharma ruins entire families). It was this inevitable result which happened as the result of the national suicide. Adharma ruined the land and the culture. The outer sovereignty passed away from the God-appointed guardians of the national dharma; and the inner sovereignty passed away from the God-given scripture, at least for a while. At

the time of the sorest need, Lord Krishna Himself protected the dharma. Later on, His chosen ones reintegrated the Vedic doctrine after its disintegration by the heretical systems of thought.

The classical division of the Indian systems of philosophy is into the six *avaidika* darsanas and the six Vaidika darsanas. The former six deny God and Veda; the latter six affirm God and Veda. The former are the Charvaka system, the Jaina system, and the Buddhist system with its four subdivisions, viz., the Vaibhashika, the Sautrantika, the Yogachara, and the Madhyamika. The latter are the Nyaya, the Vaisesika, the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Purva Mimamsa, called also the Karma Mimamsa, and the Uttara Mimamsa called also the Brahma Mimamsa. The Avaidika systems were in vogue for some time but were later on superseded and overthrown by the reasserted power of the Vaidika systems of Indian philosophy.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON CHILD MARRIAGE AND "THE SANATANIST"

Among the social questions that at present agitate the minds of the leaders of the Hindu community, the question of child marriage seems to be the most important one, especially in view of the fact that a Bill for its prevention is at present under consideration in the Legislative Assembly. The orthodox sections all over the country are raising a great hue and cry against the Bill and are busy marshalling the authority of the scriptures and of sages, both ancient and modern, to make out a case for their opposition. An instance to the point is the editorial of the Sanatanist of the 25th of March, 1929, wherein the learned Editor quotes a passage from the writings of Swami Vivekananda to contradict the statement of a certain lady named Mrs. G. Sumathi Bai that the Swami Vivekananda along with other great men like Ram Mohun Roy and Mahatma Gandhi has condemned the custom of child-marriage. The Editor also remarks that "it may be possible to catch a few snap-shots from the Swami's inspired writings and speeches favourable to her by tearing them from their context". But we can assure the learned Editor that no such mean trick is necessary to show that Swamiji was against this custom, as there are many clear passages in his writings wherein he condemns it in most uncompromising terms. We propose to quote below at length and with full context a few of such passages to remove misconceptions that may be created by the quotation of the Editor of the Sanatanist.

Before doing that we deem it proper to make a few remarks about the passage quoted by the Editor to suit his purpose. He has, as we find from his own acknowledgement, quoted from the Brahmavadin of December, 1897 and not from the Mayavati Memorial Edition which is the most authoritative edition of Swamiji's works. As it appears in the Brahmavadin, the passage in question differs in certain important respects from what we find in the Mayavati Memorial Edition of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. III ; page 408-9. Wherever the expression "child marriage" is used in the Sanatanist and the Brahnavadin, we find only "marriage" and the "marriage system" in the authoritative Mayavati Memorial Edition. From the quotation given below the difference would be quite clear to the readers: "And as these bodies become more and more finely organised, as the *Tamoguna* becomes the *Rajoguna*, and as the *Rajaguna* becomes *Sattvaguna*, more and more of this power and purity becomes manifest, and therefore it is that our people have been so careful about eating and drinking, and the food question. It may be that the original ideas have been lost, just as with our marriage (Cf. 'child marriage' in the Sanatanist)—which, though not belonging to the subject, I may take as an example. If I have another opportunity I will talk to you about this ; but let me tell you now that the *ideas behind our marriage system* (Cf. 'ideas behind child marriage' in the Sanatanist) are the only ideas through which there can be a real civilisation. There cannot be anything else. If a man or a woman were allowed the freedom to take up any woman or man as wife or husband, if individual pleasure, if satisfaction of animal instincts, were to be allowed to run loose in society, the result must be evil, evil children, wicked and demoniacal. Aye, man in every country is on the one hand, producing these brutal children, and on the other hand multiplying the police force to keep these brutes down. The question is not how to destroy evil that way, but how to prevent the very birth of evil, and so long as you live in society your marriage certainly affects every member of it ; and therefore society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry, and whom you shall not. And great ideas of this kind have been behind the *system of marriage* here, (Cf. 'child marriage here' in the Sanatanist) what they call the astrological *Jati* of the bride and bridegroom. And in passing I may remark that according to Manu a child who is born of lust is not an Aryan. The child whose very conception and whose birth are according to the rules of the Vedas, such is an Aryan. Yes, and less of these Aryan children are being produced in the country and the result is the mass of evil, which we call *Kali Yuga*. But we have lost all these ideals ; it is true we cannot carry all these ideas to the fullest length now ; it is perfectly true we have made almost a caricature of some of these great ideas. It is lamentably true that the fathers and mothers are not what they were in old times, neither is society so educated as it used to be, neither has society that love for individuals that it used to have. But, however faulty the working out may be, the principle is sound ; and if its application has been defective, if one method has failed, take up the principle and work it out better ; why kill the principle ?"

The difference in certain places, which we have indicated in the quotation given above, must surely be due to some mistake in the report or wilful interpolation in the Brahnavadin. This seems to be the case, especially in view of the fact that the purport of the passage is not to justify child marriage, but to show that the principle underlying the Hindu marriage is not the satisfaction of animal cravings, but the begetting of virtuous children. Swamiji has no objection to changes being introduced in the marriage system according to the needs of the time, but this underlying principle should be maintained. That Swamiji was a staunch opponent of the system of child marriage will be amply clear from the following quotations from his letters and from his dialogues, recorded by some of his orthodox householder disciples.

In a letter from Chicago, dated 28th December 1893, Swamiji writes, comparing the conditions of Indian women with those of American women : ".....And 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". (Vide M. M. Edition, Complete Works, Part V, page 22—23).

Speaking to S. Surendranath Sen on Monday, the 24th January 1898, Swamiji says as follows, concerning the early marriage of girls :—

Q.—May I ask you, sir, what is your opinion about early marriage ?

Swamiji:—Amongst the educated classes in Bengal, the custom of marrying the boys too early is dying out gradually. The girls are also given in marriage a year or two older than before, but that has been under compulsion,—from pecuniary want. Whatever might be the reason for it, the age of marrying girls should be raised still higher. But what will the poor father do ? As soon as the girl grows up a little every one of the female sex, beginning from the mother down to the relatives and neighbours even, will begin to cry out that he must find a bridegroom for her, and will not leave him in peace until he does so ! And, about your religious hypocrites, the less said the better. In these days no one hears them, but still they will take up the role of leaders themselves. The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man, under the threat of penalty, to live with a girl of twelve years, and at once all these so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it, sounding the alarm, "Alas, our religion is lost !" As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen ! So the rulers also naturally think, "Goodness gracious ! What a religion is theirs ! And these people lead political agitations and demand political rights !"

Q.—Then in your opinion, both men and women should be married at an advanced age ?

Swamiji:—Certainly. But education should be imparted along with it, otherwise, irregularity and corruption will ensue.....We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on his own feet. (Vide M. M. Edition, Complete Works vol. V, pages 256 and 257).

In his conversations with S. Sarat Chandra Chakravarty (Cf. Dialogue XXX, Page 216 of Volume VII, M. M. Edition) Swamiji, speaking about his plan for a female Math with a school for the education of girls, says, with reference to the girl students : "...But there must be this rule that the guardians of the students in the female Math must not even think of marrying them before they attain the age of fifteen."

In his conversations with the same gentleman at Calcutta in March 1897 (Vide Pages 447-448, Complete Works Vol. VI) Swamiji holds the following conversation about the marriage of girls :

Swamiji:—...Such educated men are not yet born in this country who can keep their girls unmarried without fear of social punishment.....Only the other day, when the Age of Consent Bill was being passed the leaders of society massed together millions of men to send up the cry, "We don't want the Bill";—had this been in any other country, far from getting up meetings to send forth a cry like that, people would have hidden their heads under their roofs in shame that such a calumny could yet stain their society.

Disciple:—But, Sir, I don't think the ancient law-givers could support this custom without any rhyme or reason. There must be some secret meaning in this attitude of theirs.

Swamiji:—Well, what may be this secret meaning, please?

Disciple:—Take it for instance, in the first place that if the girls are married in an early age they may come over to their husband's home to learn the peculiar ways and usages of the family from the early years of their life. They may acquire adequate skill in the duties of the household under the guidance of their parents-in-law. In the homes of their own parents, on the other hand, there is the likelihood of grown-up daughters going astray. But married early, they have no chance of thus going wrong, and over and above this, such feminine virtues as modesty, reserve, fortitude and diligence are apt to develop in them.

Swamiji:—In favour of the other side of the questions, again, it may be argued that early marriage leads to premature child-bearing, which accounts for most of our women dying early; their progeny also, being of low vitality go to swell the ranks of our country's beggars; for if the physique of the parents be not strong and healthy, how can strong and healthy children be born at all? Married a little later and bred in culture, our mothers will give birth to children who would be able to achieve real good in the country. The reason why you have so many widows in every home lies here, in this custom of early marriage....."

Disciple:—But, sir, it seems to me, if our women are married late in life they are apt to be less mindful of their household duties....."

Swamiji:—.....Our part of the duty lies in imparting true education to all men and women in society. As an outcome of that education, they will of themselves be able to know what is good for them and what is bad and will spontaneously eschew the latter....."

Disciple:—What sort of education is suited to our women?

Swamiji:—Religion, arts, science, house-keeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene—the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and fictions..... Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion for lofty principles of selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana, and Mira should be brought home to their minds and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these.

Concerning the education of women Swamiji has many more things to say, but we shall quote here only one important suggestion

of his, which occurs in the same conversation with S. J. Surendranath Sen, that we have already referred to in another place. It runs as follows:—

".....To make a beginning in women's education: Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. Now, first of all intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married, or single if they prefer to remain so, they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity. Is it little heroism to be able to sacrifice one's life for the sake of one's ideal whatever that ideal may be?"

We fear we have given rather too long quotations, but considering the importance of the subject we feel that it is not improper to be a little exhaustive. In conclusion we may summarise Swamiji's view on the question by stating (1) that child marriage is an evil, (2) that if it has contributed to the purity of women in any way, it has also been responsible for the physical degeneration of the race, (3) that the right way of preserving the purity of women is to give them proper sort of education, (4) and that the intensification of the idea of chastity and purity should form the essential feature of this right type of education for women.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Krishna of Brindavan: by Krishnadas; published by Bengal Library, Patuatuly, Dacca: Price Rs. 6. Page 601.

One of the greatest needs of India at the present day, both from the national as well as the spiritual points of view, is a correct and appreciative interpretation of the glorious contribution of the ancients in a language that could be understood by the modern mind. The author of this book under review who styles himself as Krishnadas has accomplished this task as far as one aspect of Indian religious tradition is concerned. He gives in a language so simple, yet so lucid and so luminous, a most fascinating presentation of the personality and the pastoral life of Sri Krishna at Brindavan and a most scholarly exposition of the philosophy of Love which has been built round him by Sri Chaitanya and other great Vaishnava saints and scholars of Bengal. The philosophical dissertation which deals with the various stages and signs of Divine Love, of the ways of acquiring it, and of the personalities of the Divine Lovers, Sri Krishna, Sri Radha and the Gopees (milkmaids) of Brindavan has been vivified by the English renderings of some of the sweetest and most enthralling of Vaishnavite songs depicting the love-madness of Sri Radha and the Gopees, and by the translations of inspired and stirring passages from Chaitanyacharitamrita, and the writings of Vaishnavite Acharyas like Sri Rupa Goswami, Sri Jiva Goswami, Sri Viswanath Chakravarty and Sri Narottama Das. The book concludes with a chapter containing a very warm appreciation of 'Holy Krishna' by a Mohammedan saint, and nine valuable appendices dealing with some interesting and thought-provoking subjects.

We feel that the spontaneous love which the Gopees had for Sri Krishna will be much appreciated at the present day, especially as it

stands in striking contrast to the spirit of mean calculation and commercialism of the modern age. The Gopees loved Sri Krishna not because they expected any reward from him or wanted to satisfy their sexual appetite; for the very consciousness of the body and its wants disqualifies a person for having that pure form of Love. The thought of him alone was sufficient to enrapture their whole being to such an extent as to make them lose every form of physical consciousness. The burning passion of their heart was to be in his presence and to minister to his happiness; and for this they dedicated their whole self, body, mind, and soul, forsaking their hearth and homes, their dear and near ones, and all ideas of family prestige, virtue, vice, etc. There was no return for this whole-hearted self-surrender except that the Beloved graciously accepted the same; nor was there a demand for any. For the very thought of being serviceable to their Beloved was enough to satisfy the Gopees and to madden them to a frenzy of Supreme Bliss. This is the central idea of the states of *Rati* (nascent love), *Prema* (holy love) *Bhava* (supreme love) and *Mahabhava* (transcendent love) which the author delineates in their various aspects and sub-divisions. His exposition of this theme, we feel, will stand as a challenge to those persons, Indian as well as foreign, who depreciate and blacken the personalities and the holy love of Radha-Krishna, simply because they have not the instinct to feel its potent influence, or because they are steeped in the brutish cravings of lust and greed. We hope the public will extend to this book the patronage which it richly merits.

The Religion We Need : by S. Radhakrishnan of the Calcutta University. Ernest Benn Limited, Bouverie House, Fleet Street, London. Price one shilling net.

In this small book Dr. Radhakrishnan gives a brief exposition of the modern criticism of the old idea of God, and tries to give a scientific interpretation of the position of the theists in answer to the agnostic conclusions of modern thinkers. As the foundation of his faith he takes the theory of some of the modern savants that evolution is not a blind and mechanical change, but is due to the work of an inner directing principle. The religion he advocates does not consist in the acceptance of academic abstractions, in the celebration of ceremonies, in sentimental adoration, or in a vague social idealism. On the other hand it is a process of self-control, of deep meditation and of strenuous self-discipline. Its culmination is the realisation of the ideal of universal brotherhood. We hope that this interpretation will meet with the approval of many modern minds.

Indian Christians : published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Rs. 3 only.

Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co. have brought out this book as a companion volume to their book of sketches of Eminent Mussalmans. Short biographical sketches of fourteen prominent Indian Christians like Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Rev. Lal Behari Day, Michael Madhusudana Datta, Kali Charan Banerjee, Pandita Ramabai, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, Sushil Kumar Rudra, Sadhu Sundar Singh and several others are included in this book. A perusal of their lives will reveal to every one the brightest aspects of the results achieved by the preaching of Christianity in India. And the generality of Indian Christians who still show some sort of outlandish sympathies may very well

learn from these leaders of their community that Christianity and adherence to Indian national ideals are not in any way incompatible with each other. We wish the book a wide circulation which it rightly deserves.

NEWS AND REPORTS

It is with a heavy heart and a deep sense of loss that we announce the passing away of Srimat Swami Kamalananda, one of the devoted workers of our Mission. He joined the Order some ten years back and worked in the R. K. Mission Home of Service, Benares, for about 4 years to the entire satisfaction of all. His services were afterwards availed of for more than three years in the interior of the Himalayas at the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary in the District of Almora. It was during his stay there that, while attending an indoor tuberculosis patient for months together, he caught the infectious disease, which ultimately necessitated his removal to the Government Tuberculosis Hospital, Royapettah, Madras, for proper treatment. There was a distinct improvement of his health during his residence in this Hospital, and after his discharge he spent almost a year without any symptom of the disease. But as ill luck would have it, there was a sudden relapse of the fatal malady a few months back, and in spite of the best medical aid available from Calcutta the Swami expired on the 4th of May last at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur. Needless to say, the Swami by his charming personality, loving service and his unswerving devotion to the ideal endeared himself to all, young and old. His passing away from our midst at this juncture when the services of such noble souls and tried workers are most seriously needed, has proved a veritable blow to the Mission. We pray that his soul that knew no rest may enjoy eternal peace in the bosom of the Lord.

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

Since the outline of the activities of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, under the leadership of Swami Prabhavananda in March 1928, many interesting changes have been made for the growth of the society and the members individually. Regular classes and lectures continued with a steady attendance and sustained interest. During the third week of June and at the time of the Rose Festival which is an annual city festival in Portland, Swami Madhavananda of San Francisco visited the Society. It was a great treat when he lectured to large classes that week and to a crowded house in the evening of June 24th. The second fortnight of July was spent by Swami Prabhavananda in California. After visiting friends in San Francisco he went to Los Angeles and Alhambra, California, where he spent the major portion of his vacation period. Several lectures were delivered in the California centres. Upon his return to Portland Swami Prabhavananda delivered a comprehensive series of lectures upon the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sunday Morning Service-hour. This series covered some three months and was deeply appreciated by all the students whose privilege it was to hear it. The classes for members continued with studies of the Gospel according to St. John and of the Isha Upanishad. Upon the completion of the studies from the Bible the Swami began interpreting, at the Friday evening classes, "Vivekachudamani" of Sri Sankaracharya. This

study will continue through the remainder of the present year. With the beginning of 1929 Swami Prabhavananda began a second study of the Gita.

Early in January of this year by unanimous decision of the official board, the location of the Society's Headquarter was changed. A fine hall for the Sunday services was procured in the new Studio Building which has recently been constructed for the housing of musicians and allied artists. Adjoining the hall another smaller room very comfortably and tastefully furnished has been secured for the week day classes, personal conferences, etc. With the opening of the new quarters Swami Prabhavananda has inaugurated two new activities. He has generously donated his personal library, consisting almost completely of books not available for the American reading public, to be used in a reading room (the regular class room) which is open on afternoons every day in the week except on Sundays. Swami Prabhavananda holds an informal question and discussion class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons of each week. As a result of these changes and activities the membership has increased and all classes and lectures are better attended than ever before in the history of the society. Since early in January announcements of the public lectures have been made by Radio over one of the largest broadcasting stations in the city and advertising has been carried in the two leading daily papers. This, we feel, has helped to create a more general interest. The birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna were observed publicly in a fitting manner on February 3rd and March 13th 1929 respectively. Swami Prabhavananda's masterly discourses on those occasions were much appreciated by the audience. The Portland public is becoming aware of the splendid work that Swami Prabhavananda is doing. We feel that it is impossible to put into words an estimate of the deep and untiring efforts of the Swami to bring to the Western world the ideals of the Vedanta. To those who are in personal touch with him in his work this is a constant inspiration.

R. K. MISSION PREACHING WORK

Swami Vasudevananda and Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna Mission started from the Headquarters at Belur on the 19th last on a propaganda tour through Midnapur District and delivered lectures in several places. Swami Vasudevananda spoke in Bengali at Kharagpur, Midnapur, Contai, Gaonkhali, Mahishadal, Kalyanchauk, Tamluk, Raghunathbadi and other places, on Sri Ramakrishna and the Harmony of Religion, Karma Yoga and Indian National Problems, Religion and Politics, Sanatana Dharma, Religious Basis of National Service, Sri Ramakrishna, Duties of Students, etc. Swami Ghanananda delivered his lectures in English at these places on the Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life, Evolution and Perfection, Duties of Indian Students, Soul of Indian Nationalism, The Dharma of the Indian Villager, Sri Ramakrishna and Indian Nationalism, Rural Re-construction, Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of India's Soul. In some places the lectures were translated sentence by sentence into Bengali by Swami Punnyananda of the Ramakrishna Sevasram at Contai who accompanied the Swamies throughout from Kharagpur and spoke also in most of the places visited. All the lectures were well appreciated. Swami Vasudevananda was presented with addresses at Midnapur and Gaonkhali in appreciation of his services in the cause of religion and philanthropic work. In some of the places there were public

celebrations of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and the presence of the Swamies was taken advantage of on these occasions. At Gorkai a Charitable Dispensary and a primary school were opened for the benefit of the villagers.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARISHA, DIAMOND HARBOUR

The Secretary, R. K. Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour has sent us a Report of the works done by it during the years 1927 and 1928. Started under the most discouraging circumstances some seven years back, the Ashrama has, after a good deal of struggle, developed into a dynamic centre of constructive work in the village. The Report shows a very good record of useful service rendered to the neighbouring villages. The Ashrama has undertaken the stupendous task of village organisation, and we are indeed glad to note that its honest efforts have met with phenomenal success within such a short period of its existence. From the very start it has been the primary concern of this Ashrama to educate the masses on national lines, and much of its strength has been harnessed to that end. The Ashrama ran the following institution during the years under review :—

(i) An Upper Primary School for Boys (the R.K. Mission Siksha Mandir) : the number of boys on the rolls at the end of 1927 was 103, and it swelled to 194 towards the close of the year 1928. Besides free tiffin, books, writing materials, etc., the boys were supplied with mill-made cloths and blankets as well from time to time. The weaving classes were incorporated in the primary school in 1924 and three fly-shuttle looms worked during the period. The Siksha Mandir had nine teachers of whom five were paid, and the rest were monastic members. To stimulate the enthusiasm of the boys prizes also were distributed in the year 1928 amongst the meritorious boys. (ii) One Night School for those boys and grown-up people who are unable to attend the day school. Classes were taken up mainly by the members of the Ashrama and there were 22 students on the roll at the end of the year 1928. (iii) An Upper Primary School for Girls (The Ramakrishna Mission, Sarada Mandir) : the school was started through the generous support of Her Highness the Dowager Maharani of Mayur bhanj in a rented house at Sarisha. It counted 78 girls on the roll and four qualified male teachers on the staff. Out of a total number of 78 girls, 41 had to pay full fee which was annas four per head a month; and of the rest, 35 enjoyed free studentship and two were half free. Inspectress of Schools recommended a monthly government grant of Rs. 40 which was sanctioned on the 23rd July 1928. One of the girls sent up for the Lower Primary Scholarship Examination secured a scholarship of Rs. 2 per month for two years. (iv) Sri Ramakrishna Sarda Mandir, Mankhand (an L. P. School for girls) : this school is situated in the village named above about 3 miles and a half from the Ashrama. It had 44 girls on the roll and a qualified senior trained teacher on the staff.

Besides these educational institutions of various degrees of usefulness, the Ashrama ran one Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary during the years under review. The total number of cases treated was 1836 in 1927 and 1714 in 1928 of which 2497 were new and the rest repeated cases. The Ashrama had to its credit a well disciplined and well organised troupe of Boys Scouts and a pack of Wolf-Cubs

whose services were availed of in times of fire-relief and Mela-relief works during this period. Besides, the Ashrama library and the free reading room containing 725 volumes and some high class monthlies, weeklies and dailies afforded ample opportunities for study to the students and teachers of the local High School as well as to the village people. The Ashrama maintained 17 indigent families consisting of 40 members with food supply, provided pecuniary help for some college students, and distributed 155 pieces of cloths and 861 pieces of blankets amongst the needy people of different villages. It undertook Mela-relief at Joyrampur, organised a cholera-relief at Nabashan and rendered house to house relief in the villages during the years under consideration.

In short no pains were spared by the workers of the Ashrama to render themselves serviceable to the suffering humanity. The stupendous nature of the works undertaken by the self-less workers of the Ashrama would be quite evident from this brief review placed before the public. The Ashrama stands in need of substantial financial support from the generous public to continue and develop the works. The present needs are outlined below :—

i. The erection of a shed for weaving and other technical classes of the Siksha Mandir for boys. The cost has been estimated at Rs. 6,500 including the expenses of levelling the land.

ii. The sum of Rs. 7,000 for the erection of the building for the girls' school at Sarisha.

iii. A minimum amount of Rs. 1,000 for the purchase of a magic lantern and slides for the night school as well as for the propaganda work in the neighbouring villages.

iv. An additional monthly subscription of Rs. 150 to meet the monthly deficit.

v. An amount of Rs. 80 towards the pay of three teachers to be appointed.

The Ashrama has been a permanent source of light and inspiration to the surrounding villages, and the importance of this philanthropic institution in such a locality where education and medical aid are sorely needed can hardly be over-estimated. We sincerely hope that in view of the manifold works the Ashrama has undertaken, and the benefit it has been able to confer upon the suffering and the needy through the services of its self-less workers the kind-hearted public would come forward with adequate financial help to enable the institution to carry on this humanitarian work. The Secretary, in conclusion, conveys his heart-felt thanks to all donors, subscribers and friends for their sympathy, assistance and co-operation without which it would have been impossible to build up the present work.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VEDA VIDYALAYA, BHAWANIPUR, CALCUTTA

The Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta, is conducting a Vedic Vidyalaya for the promotion of Sanskrit learning, especially of the study of the Vedas and other scriptures of the Hindus. The Ashrama has not only served as the nucleus for the growth of the Vidyalaya, but has also been accommodating it from its very inception in July 1922. The strength of the institution soon rose from nine to seventeen

during 1924-25, and ever since the work of the institution has steadily and largely increased. The number of students receiving instruction at present is forty. The staff consists of two Swamies of the Ramakrishna Mission, and two stipendiary Pundits. All branches of Sanskrit learning including the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, Grammar, Kavyas and various branches of Indian philosophy like the Vedanta, Yoga, Vaisheshika, and Nyaya are taught in the Vidyalaya. A library named The Vivekananda Vani Bhavan, containing a choice collection of over 1000 books on Indian philosophy and religion, is attached to the Ashrama. The total expenses of the Institution during the fourteen months from the beginning of November 1927 to the end of December 1928 came up to Rs. 3,224-4-0 as against Rs. 639-2-0 incurred during the previous ten months. Its principal sources of income are a recurring grant of Rs. 60 per month from the Government with a special library grant of Rs. 60 and a contribution of Rs. 360 from the Corporation of Calcutta. From the very start it has also been receiving donations and subscriptions from the public; but as an educational institution imparting free tuition and, in deserving cases, free board and lodging it ought to meet with still more ready response from the generous public. It is hoped that in these days, when Indians are becoming conscious of the glories of their ancient culture, an institution of this type will never suffer for want of patronage and encouragement.

THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, SHELLA, KHASI ILLS

The Khasis form an important section of the hill population of Assam. Although they are the descendants of an ancient and heroic race of Puranic times, their financial and educational conditions today are extremely deplorable. Taking advantage of this, Christian Missionaries are not slow in carrying on vigorous propaganda for their conversion. And already as many as 40 thousand (i.e., the one-sixth of the whole population) of the Khasis have gone into the Christian fold, adopting and professing everything Western as good. To combat the wholesale denationalisation of these people the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission have been carrying on educational, charitable, and missionary work among them for the past five years. The mission is conducting at present 8 schools and two small boarding houses financed mostly by local friends. The Ashrama also conducts a Dispensary which administer Homeopathic and Biochemic medicines, and the number of cases treated during the years under review is 2158. The monks of the Ashrama hold classes at different places, on the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, Gita, and other scriptures in Khasi. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda as well as other important Hindu festivals are celebrated. Extensive tours over the District are undertaken by the workers. Over 20 magic lantern lectures were given on religious, educational and health subjects. A library containing over 200 books is also attached to the Ashrama. Though the Ashrama contemplates further extension, it is handicapped for want of funds. Its immediate needs are:—

(a) More self-sacrificing and young workers.

(b) A permanent fund to help any centre whenever necessary, to raise the status of existing schools to that of H. E. Schools which will require at least Rs. 1,000 per institution, to start 5 more M. E. schools of which the average expense per school will be Rs. 500 a

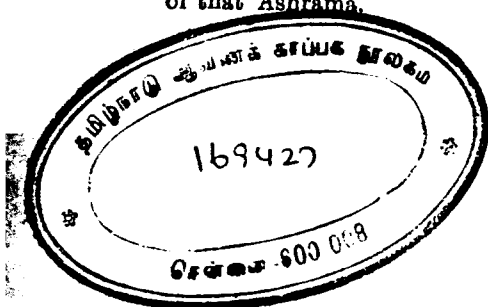
year, and to finance the publication of religious books in Khasi. Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged by Brahmachari Mahachaitanya Ramakrishna, Ashrama, Shella, P.O. Lait Kynsew, (Khasi Hills).

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, FARIDPUR

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Faridpur, Bengal, originally started under the name of Sri Ramakrishna Samity in 1921, has been doing much useful social service in that locality. A free primary school and a Homoeopathic Charitable Dispensary are attached to the Ashrama for the benefit of the cultivators and poor people of the place. The Ashrama also undertakes relief of distressed families, the nursing of helpless persons and cremation of dead bodies. It also organised a relief party for collecting money in aid of the famine-stricken people of Bankura, Balurghat, and Khulna, and the collections which amounted to Rs. 412-4-6 were sent to the various relief parties operating in the distressed areas. The Ashrama is also conducting a Students' Home accommodating five students at present. The Ashrama authorities desire to raise the strength to 25 and to provide facilities for their secular and spiritual education, as well as for their training in agriculture and some other useful home-industries. The land and buildings required for these purposes will cost nearly Rs. 30,000 for which the Ashrama appeals to the generosity of the public. Contributions may be sent to Brahmachari Bibhuchaitanya, Secretary, Ramakrishna Ashrama Faridpur, Bengal.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VIVEKANANDA SEVASHRAMA, MUZAFFARPUR, BRANCH OF THE R. K. VEDANTA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA

The Sevashrama has been for the past two years trying to meet the medical and educational needs of the place. A free Dispensary giving both Homeopathic and Allopathic Medicines as well as a free day school and a free night school are attached to the Ashrama. The total expenditure on the Dispensary amounted to Rs. 329-10-9 and on the schools to Rs. 286-9-3. It is proposed to start vocational training classes in the schools. The pressing need of the Ashrama at present is the construction of buildings for the workers' quarters, for the free schools, for the Dispensary, and for the temple. The Ashrama appeals to the public for funds. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of that Ashrama.



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