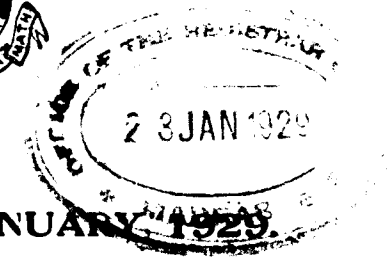


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THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XV, No. 9: JANUARY 1929.

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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. XV]

JANUARY 1929

[No. 9.

PRAYER

ॐ

देव्या यया ततमिदं जगदात्मशक्त्या

निःशेषदेवगणशक्तिसमृद्धमूर्त्या ।

तामम्बिकामखिलदेवमहर्षिपूज्यां

भक्त्यानताः स्म विदधातु शुभानि सा नः ॥

यस्याः प्रभावमनुलं भगवानन्तो

ब्रह्मा ह्यथ नहि वक्तुमलं वलंच ।

सा चण्डिकास्त्रिलजगत्परिपालनाय

नाशाय चाशुभभयस्य मतिं करोतु ॥

The Great Goddess who by her own strength pervades the whole universe ; She who is the embodiment of energy of gods and goddesses ; and who is adored by them all and the great sages alike ; to Her do we offer our salutations, humble and full of devotion. May She, the Mother Supreme do good to all !

That Terrible Woman whose infinite power and strength, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer cannot measure ; may She, the Mother Supreme protect the world and make it free of evils !

DEVIMAHATMYAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Gleanings from letters)

. . . Keep your mind always in holy communion with God, the ideal; then shall vanish all depravity of the mind. Select a room for daily worship; and every morning and evening retire there, and sit on your Ashanam; then in the fragrance of incense perform Japam and meditation and prayer, etc., regularly as long as you can. Born as a man here in this earth the more you can devote yourself to the contemplation of God, the more fruitful will your life become. And the more attached you are to the profanities of the world, the more peaceless you will feel in mind. I pray to the Almighty that out of His endless grace, may He lead you in the right path!

How do you fare in mind now? But know, without worshipping God you can never have peace of mind. Therefore suspending all activities completely, every day you should spend some time exclusively in the worship of God, in Japam and meditation, and in singing His name and glory and the like. True devotion and faith and knowledge are the results of a long and continued practice in Sadhana. Many people are often found to awfully lean towards agnosticism, when with their lukewarm attempt in Sadhana they cannot realise God or attain to the bliss Divine. The reason is not far to seek. These people do not possess a sincere attachment to God. And without this attachment they can only ill afford to persist and persevere in the path of Sadhana; thus Sadhana proves too hard an enterprise to them. Verily, without Divine attachment and Divine love the mind becomes dry and peaceless. But the more you suffer for God's sake, the more peaceful will you become in the end. "Persist in your attempt cheerfully, my friend," so has said Sri Ramakrishna, "then thou shalt succeed against all odds." So, plunge

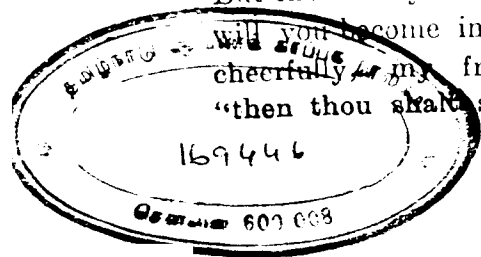
yourself headlong into Sadhana and do persevere in it; shrink not even if the very life is hazarded.

. . . I am very glad to learn that you have been carrying on your practices with great earnestness and regularity. If this state of things is continued for a couple of years without break, I assure you, my friend, your effort shall not go unrewarded. Let me also remind you that as you are weakly constituted, you need not at this stage sit for long at a stretch; but proceed slowly and steadily on and on.

. . . I propose to start on a pilgrimage for Kashi (Benares) and some other holy places early June next, and spend three or four months in visiting them and also in Sadhana; but the fruition rests with Him, the Lord.

It is indeed too difficult to have any thought of God within the human breast without the fire of Vairagya (renunciation) first set aglow. And this is my settled conviction that the more does a man possess this fire in him the greater is the peace that he enjoys. A true and living representation of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya we saw in Sri Ramakrishna, the Master. With the process of time we only know him more and more, who he was and how great! We read of Viveka and Vairagya in Scriptures but in the Master we saw them personified. It is our misfortune that sitting at the feet of such a unique personality, the embodiment of Viveka and Vairagya themselves, we could not make them our own.

. . . You want to go to Kashi for Sadhana; well, I permit you wholeheartedly. But one thing,—please do not forget to draw me there, that I may also live in the holy land with you. Oh, the sanctity of Kashi, the greatest and holiest of all places for Sadhana! Who is not tempted to go over to this sacred place and live? Whoever comes to me and seeks my counsel regarding a suitable place for carrying on Sadhana I at once suggest to him the sacred name of Kashi; I tell him to go over there and live in



continuous prayer and meditation. Whenever I am reminded of this holy of holiest places, I wish I could instantly go straight over there throwing off all engagements aside ; really then I find no joy in anything else. It is my strong desire to live the last days of my life in Kashi and I am certain if you only attract me, my desire will be surely fulfilled. And the noblest object of living in this blessed city of Kashi is well attained only when a man can lose himself entirely in the intoxication of love Divine in a lonely retreat quite undisturbed.

INDIA'S RELIGION OF POWER

In this great economy of nature every race has its peculiar characteristics and its distinctive line of progress and evolution.

And to this end the deep-seated instincts of race-culture are very often found to be working throughout the different phases of its career. The panorama of world-activity has conclusively demonstrated that what is cherished and styled as 'progress' in one hemisphere at a particular stage of a nation's evolution, may not be characterised as such with regard to another race or nation under quite a distinct condition of existence. With the march of time and unfoldment of human knowledge, the perspective of men changes, and the whole physiognomy of affairs necessarily assumes altogether a different aspect. In fact progress and evolution are relative terms, and they are appreciated or condemned in so far as they tally with or militate against our cherished notions and standard of progress. The perspective and the objective being thus different in different races, there cannot be any room for the enforcement of an absolute standard of judgment in matters like these, unless the whole humanity is attuned to one single idealism having the sanction of the ultimate verity of human destiny. This is why there is so much acrimony and hatred between the East and the West, between one nation and another. But these differences notwithstanding, progress and activity are held to constitute unfailing signs of growth in every living organism. In India the dawn of a spirit of Renaissance in the various phases of her collective life has unfolded a

new chapter in the history of the nation ; and this stimulus has ushered into being some very important phenomena that demand a careful consideration and attention.

It is now time for us to pause for a while to ascertain the nature of progress we have attained, in the light of our cultural bent and tradition, and see how far the method applied for the uplift of this sunken race has been conducive to its well-being. Indeed we have reached a stage when these principles must be clearly defined to preclude the possibility of any further misunderstanding. No doubt, there are some indications of a new awakening in the country, but we find to our disappointment that this ferment notwithstanding, the bulk of the Indian people still lie nonchalant to the principles of the neo-political philosophy spun out of late to wake up this dormant race ; and the results, so far achieved in the pursuit of our national end, do not, when judged from the standpoint of our ideal of progress, justify our expectations. One fundamental reason for this lack of adequate response from the people is that the vital issues of national life have been more or less brushed aside to make room for some outlandish ideas and principles that are not congenial to the temper and genius of the Indian people. Foreign ideals—some even Semetic in their origin—have been implanted and nurtured in the Indian soil, and have consequently failed to strike a deep root in the traditional instincts of the race. The lofty idealism as set forth in our scriptures—an idealism that, judged from the view-point of the Truth Eternal, has been the formative force in the moulding of Indian history and civilisation—has now been held at a discount by a certain section of Indian thinkers. Their unbalanced accentuation on the physical or material aspect of human life is no less erroneous and destructive of real cultural advancement in our country than the blind and exclusive emphasis given by some on matters spiritual to the negation of other possibilities of life. In fact a harmonious blending and application of the physical and the spiritual forces makes for a healthy growth in individual and collective existence. Blind imitation of everything foreign without due consideration of its intrinsic merit has, moreover, done its worst in our public life, and reduced many great souls into so many life-less automata and gramophone-records of alien habits and ideas. Such a

slavish mentality and narrow-minded outlook which is destitute of independence and vitality, is revolting to every sense of humanity,—evoking that feeling of disgust which every truly living being feels for any form of servience and parasitism. Sir John Woodroffe, one of the best students of Indian culture, seems to be perfectly right when he says: “Here are persons who think that this country must be westernized, that its natural collectivist spirit must go, yielding to Western Individualism and so on. But how do you know with certainty what the future will bring? The great war has upset many fancies concerning the future.....I clearly see that if the governing principles of Indian civilisation productive of the essentials of Indian character suffer defeat in the country of their origin, it will be at its own. Never has it been in such a danger as at the present time, when disruptive forces alien to the true Indian spirit have commenced their work.”

Indiscriminate criticisms are also being levelled now a days at the idea of compatibility of religion with politics without even realising the true import of religion and the importance of the Indian historical traditions. We have pointed out times without number that our idea and standard of progress materially differs from those of the Western nations, and that the genius of the Indian people is not on all fours with that of the West, and has therefore had its characteristic expression as a distinct phenomenon in the peculiar environments of its own. The religion we speak of, when truly lived, opens a new vision and adds a greater momentum to the otherwise humdrum and dull tenor of existence. A life of religion is but a life of continuous sacrifice whether it be in the field of politics or in the domain of social service. True religion does not signify merely an intellectual assent to some set form of dogma or ritual but the realisation of the divinity in man through the gradual unfoldment of his spiritual being. Vedanta, the crown of Hindu philosophy, proclaims in the most unambiguous terms that the human soul is identical with Brahman whose nature is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute, and as such beyond every form of change and destruction. He indeed is blessed who dares to gaze on the very face of the Reality, and realises the deeper significance of this bold message of the Upanishads. Deathless he stands on the shore of

the infinite ocean of life; fearless he marches on to the thick of the fray. For, neither the sword of an emperor nor the worldly misfortune can check the heroic pursuit of his cherished ideal. Time was when even a naked Brahmin sitting calm and unperturbed on a slab of stone could breathe defiance at the haughty and proud words of even Alexander the Great who held out the threat of death for non-compliance with his peremptory command. “You never told such a falsehood in your life,” quickly retorted the Brahmin, “as you tell just now. Who can kill me? Me you kill, emperor of the material world! Never! ‘For I am spirit unborn and undecaying; never was I born and never shall I cease to exist. I am the Eternal Ancient One; I am not killed even if the body is done to death?’ And you kill me, child that you are!” Mighty words they are, pregnant with the fire of spiritual realisation. Even now at this distant age they vibrate clear and distinct into our ears and remind us of the triumph that Knowledge scores over death in all ages and defies the rolling cataclysms of worldly misfortunes. But what an irony of fate this sublime idealism of the ancient Rishis has been trampled under foot in this age of materialism, and an imbecile theory of ‘passivity’ has taken the place of pristine heroism! Freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom—is the message of the Upanishads. It is the unyielding tenacity of a Nachiketa to stand face to face with death for the achievement of the desired end, that is the desideratum of the modern age. This is the religion of the Vedanta,—the religion that must form the groundwork of all our national activities and lead to the consummation of all our synthetic aspirations,—the only light that relumes India's path to Freedom.

It is in India and India alone that physical prowess has even been idealised into a spiritual potency, and utilised for the benefit of mankind. Forces, physical or spiritual, are but the different manifestations of the same eternal energy; it only assumes various forms according as it passes through different vehicles of expression. In fact it is the motive and the end of application that colour and change its character. The material achievements of the West—the unique contributions of science—are not bad in themselves in so far as they promote human happiness, but when they are

employed to pander to the diabolical instincts of human nature, they prove veritable engines of destruction and become subversive of the peace of the world. Force is one; man calls it by various names. The energy that struggled for expression in the Indian Yogi seated in the silent sanctum of a Himalayan recess, the energy that moved a Raphael or a Shakespeare to visions of beauty, is the very same energy that inspired a Caesar and a Napoleon, and even now prompts many an Indian youth to fling away his life in the service of the motherland. The energy is the same; but the outlook and application are different. When the motive is spiritualised the whole aspect of activity in both political and social spheres acquires a new significance. But it degenerates into "brute" force when the spiritual vision is not brought to bear on the whole trend of our activity. Moreover, in our enthusiasm we very often forget that what is held to be the ideal of an individual gifted with an uncommon spiritual nature and outlook, cannot be enforced as such for the guidance of the whole nation unless the grounds are quite prepared and its mental outlook sufficiently broadened to grasp the deeper import of such a spiritual message. Much mischief has already been done to the country by the promulgation of such an ideal before our countrymen who are grovelling in the slough of despond and inactivity. India to-day wants a Religion of Power that should accommodate a synthetic working of both the spiritual and physical forces in the achievement of human good.

Too much of sentimentalism and effeminacy have almost devitalised the once virile race into a lifeless mass. A lofty ideal of 'intense activity' (Rajas) must now be placed before all to stimulate their latent potency. But it is a pity that in spite of such a morbid inertia as exists among the masses, there has of late been a craze for the promulgation of a neo-political philosophy calculated to stamp out the lingering sparks of martial spirit from the heart of India!

Needless to say, the elimination of physical force from the sphere of human activity is as suicidal as the blind denial of spirituality in the multifold achievement of Indian life. Both have their due scope and utility in the comprehensive scheme of national well-being. Our history and Puranas furnish beautiful illustrations of how even in this physical plane of activity the

proper application of our martial strength tempered by our lofty spiritual ideal has been productive of incalculable good to humanity. Is it not a fact that Sri Ramachandra—one of the greatest incarnations in India—had to take to arms for the rescue of his beloved consort, Sita, from the clutches of the demon-king Ravana of Ceylon? Is it not also a fact that Sri Krishna, the most luminous personality in the age of Mahabharata, had to preach to his heroic disciple the virtue of fighting with the enemies when such a bold fight was absolutely necessary? Did he not thunder forth in the grim field of battle,—

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥

"Dedicating all the fruits of thy action to Me, with thy thought resting on the Self, being free from desire, free from selfishness and weakness, do thou fight." This is the ideal that was also taught by the Lord to the Sun at the commencement of Evolution in order to infuse strength into the Kshatriyas, the rulers of the world. It is only when possessed of the strength of this Yoga, that they can protect the Brahmanas, the spiritual class. *And when the spiritual and ruling classes are well maintained, it is possible to maintain the world.* (Vide Sankara's Commentary on the Gita, Chap. IV. Sloka I.) The history of India would have been written otherwise had there been no scope for the cultivation and manipulation of the Kshatra Dharma for the betterment of the human lot. The Puranas are also replete with many a fitting illustration of the very same principle. The Goddess of Power even incarnated Herself from time to time with deadly weapons to deliver the oppressed gods from the tyranny of the Asuras. The heroic feats of Asoka and Samudragupta, the Pala Kings of Bengal and the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Sikhs and the Mahrattas are but living instances of what is absolutely necessary for the palingenesis of the sunken souls of India. In short, the achievements of these Buddhist and Hindu monarchs of India stand as undying lessons to the children of the soil for ages to come. Our religion is thus a Religion of Power—both physical and spiritual, and has nothing to do with the philosophy that does not stimulate the martial instincts of the race but teaches a "gentle" submission to every form of insult

and tyranny—a mentality which is but another name for servility begotten of age-long subjection and insipid existence. “What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose *in any fashion*, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face.” This is the inexorable command of our Religion, and this is what Swami Vivekananda also demanded of every son of India.

The Hindu religion decries in no uncertain terms any misuse of that power—whether it be spiritual or physical. This energy is deified when it is pressed into the service of humanity for the achievement of common good. Every Indian must be physically and spiritually strong and make a proper use of the forces at his command whenever the country demands it. The virile idealism of the Vedantic religion—the religion of the Hindus—must again be lived; for it is the very life-blood of our race. The sublime conception of the Vedanta should no longer remain cooped up within the silent recesses of the caves or forests but must be brought out of seclusion and broadcasted amongst the dumb masses of India to dehypnotise them from their self-created delusion of weakness. “These truths must now come to work out at the Bar and the Bench, in the pulpit and the cottage of the poor, with the fishermen that are catching fish and with the students that are studying; for if the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman, if the lawyer thinks that he is the Soul, he will be a better lawyer: so the labourer, the student and the soldier”, says Swami Vivekananda. The Upanishads are the inexhaustible mine of strength and inspiration and call with the voice of a trumpet upon the weak, the miserable and the downtrodden to stand upon their feet and be free; for freedom is the watchword of our Religion.

The problems of India are too apparent to need any philosophical explanation. Ours is a land where religion has tintured every activity of life, as it has entered into the very foundation of our national being. The ideal that found a living utterance in Buddha and Sankara, Ramannuj and Nanaḥ, Chaitanya and Ramdas, has again met with a synthetic fulfilment in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The teachings of this galaxy of

saints and prophets are but the unmistakable echoes of the Supreme Truth embodied in the Vedas. Let this message of our holy scriptures—the message of strength—be promulgated from the platform and the press, in the schools and the colleges, and carried to every cottage-door of India to instil renewed life and vigour into the dormant masses of the country. They must be awakened to the consciousness of their infinite capacity and noble heritage, their ideal and achievements and be buoyed up to determine and shape the long-obscure destiny of their motherland. India is not dead. On the contrary she has survived all the great shocks of the shining centuries of the past. She is still a living force and is feared; for she is still potentially powerful to impose her ideas upon the world. She is still an antagonist to be reckoned with in the conflict of cultures. Rightly has Sir Arthur Avalon remarked in his *Bharat-Shakti*: “India is not a mere congeries of people. India is an Idea. It is a particular Shakti, the Bharat-Shakti distinguished from all others by Her own peculiar nature and qualities. The basis of all culture and the maker of all nationality is religion. This is the root and trunk of the great tree of life with many branches, amongst which the chief are those of Philosophy and Art, of Knowledge and Beauty.” Indeed, India is not dead; the signs of a re-awakening are already manifest on the horizon. It is only a question of time to see her once more firmly established on the pinnacle of her pristine glory, and occupy an honoured place in the vanguard of nations. “The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking; and a voice is coming unto us,—away back where history and tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected as it were, from peak to peak of this infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love, and of work, India, this motherland of ours—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterance and is gaining volume as days pass away, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away; the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more, no outward powers can hold her back any

more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet." Let us attune our voice to that of Swami Vivekananda and say unto Mother India:—

"Resume Thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever,
Forward! Speak thy stirring words."

FROM LIGHT UNTO MORE LIGHT

By Svami Nirlepananda

The other day we were going through a nice article on the present-day life of Great Britain from the lively pen of Mr. C. F. Andrews, who recently had enough experiences of it in London and adjacent places. The writer therein has painfully pointed out that England's engrossing attention has now been turned towards the production of wealth and national equipment—naval as well as military. All talk of a spiritual, altruistic outlook of life is thrown safely into the background. The epidemic germs of a vicious, virulent type of nationalism (rampant all over Europe) have caught her up in an iron clasp. There is no escaping it. A lamentable *madness* has come over her. And this spirited Englishman has rightly condemned it point-blank. England has roused and applied herself, heart and soul, towards her material betterment with a vengeance!

Previous to this phase, just after the world war as a natural, immediate reaction, there *were* signs visible in British life-horizon—of a feeling of bitter hatred and repugnance towards the blood-stained business recently concluded. After a period of intensely artificial nerve-tension England's weary arms wanted rest very badly—rather *panted* for it. There was a stir for the better. Proposals were afloat for ending the nefarious, inhuman man-killing process. These were heard with befitting seriousness. A charitable *rapprochement*, love and a high-flown fellow-feeling—all seemed on the point of being realised, achieved. But now instead of all this there is a discreet silence!

Again and again in the history of modern Europe all peace pour-parlers have proved futile in effect before an insatiable, ever-increasing land-grab, a frenzy of economic exploitation and an attendant monopoly of world's wealth. Spain, England, France, Russia, Germany—

all have vied with one another in this big game of Imperialism. Hague Conferences have been held and held over again. International laws with all their arrays of little details have been framed; but after the lapse of a few years all established conventions were treated as so many scraps of paper and verbiage when the ghost of Imperialism possessed some powerful royal brain. Pacifism, Humanism—and all higher ideals have received rude shocks right and left.

Yet the peace-strain in European political life as evident from the recent activities of the League of Nations, has not altogether died out. There are yet rustlings from the Pacifists' Quarters. Visionaries are still trotting this globe, although their number has ever been very small, in fact—few and far between. They have ever been derided and laughed at. The belligerent mood of many European powers prompted them to put into prison some of these arch-pacifists so that they could freely pursue their last memorable feverish scramble through an unnumbered calvary fields! But we still read in the papers of the chequered career of the Kellogg Pact, upholding at any rate the principle of *lesser* arms and ammunitions.

To-day we have the privilege to remember a pithy, pregnant pronouncement from the mouth of one who had been in the thickest of the fight. It appears to us with new implications and added forces. Clemenceau, a prince among men, earned for himself the title of the Tiger, perhaps for some of his daring, brilliant achievements—his record of military feats. He still lives as a grandsire of eighty-six. An active personality who had been wide alert all through life is reported thus by an interviewer:

The following interrogation was put to the Tiger: "What is supreme human achievement, sir?"

A grave and direct answer came,—"*To be a Philosopher...Life is no longer worth living when one has exhausted its possibilities.*"

—This was evidently not from the proverbial Eastern day-dreamer, from the mouth of a habitually pacifist—an ochre-clad sannyasin. It neither signifies a total prohibition of war. But this ought to be an eye-opener to the military extremists and attract their supreme attention and cry halt for the time-being at least to the huge poison-gas and other untold scientific killing apparatus—arrangements afoot. It required all the sad series of experiences for the Tiger to come to the above conclusion.

Nobody believes in his heart of hearts a total disarmament *regime*—that all on a sudden one fine morning the whole world will be converted into the tenets of Pacifism and that arms and ammunitions

will for all ages to come be things of yesterday. So long as man is man this state of things will perhaps ever be far off. But the point is that in course of our material strivings (which are all too important) the *mantram* of amity must also have its sponsors, its votaries. A band of enthusiastic men in every nation with a higher vision, higher ideation, with power to give a leading to their countrymen is what this war-weary age requires. That high-pitch note must be kept up. This alone will enable the world to maintain its balance all right.

We have been informed that thirteen European powers have seen their way somehow to sign the Kellog Pact. It may not be heart deep. Many of the signatories themselves know this. We are told that even small, negligible powers (not to talk of the Bigger Ones) are all after secret mobilisations. Everybody smells danger every moment. Disbelief is the order of the day. And the too familiar, biological instinct of self-preservation is having its full, logical play. A few random figures will speak for themselves. Roumania, Poland and Czecho Slovakia have a total population of 60,000,000. These three countries which are living from hand to mouth have now a total of 51,700 army officers! But the brave ones who are up after international arbitration must not lose heart! There is laughing in the sleeves by many a Big Political Power of the world. The main stipulations of the Pact relate to the lessening of the weapons of warfare, etc. Anyway it is a piece of happy news. Paris, the mother city of the continent of Europe, her intellectual and cultural barometer, has the privilege to be the venue of this International Compromise Camp. If as a result of mutual discussions and deliberations the Powers see their way to agree to the establishment of an International Arbitration Court, the future world will hail it. But what about the subject-nations which form a very strong element of the world's population? The Big Five Powers must not safely forget that these latter ones also form an important part in Providence's Cosmos and unless their heart-burning is allayed—grievances heeded to in a spirit of fellowship, the festering wound of discontent would pollute the health of the whole organism.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the world statesmen are now too busy with their vaunted schemes to hear counsels printed in the pages of this journal. But what of that? Even from his circumscribed circle where he is posted by Providence, man must give good account of himself—study local as well as world-issues and keep his mind always awakened, always alert. Even the poor cultivator's thatched cottage-doors stand on the road to the Infinite. And the

conscious, living mind everywhere must try to read the world-situation. Parochial, water-tight compartments are fast vanishing away before our very eyes. Steam, electricity, wireless, airships are all respectively working miracles. The Vedantic doctrine of Unity is now having afresh its scientific, objective demonstrations. The world was as if awaiting for this material unfoldment, a novel exposition in a tangible, concrete garb. In course of the world's 'evolution' man in a sense is tending to become more gross,—highly hardened. We welcome with all earnestness these re-discoveries, swelling confirmations. For, from a special point of view what are *additions to knowledge* but mere *re-statements* in the light of newer needs, changed situations?

If the individual mind loses its hold amidst this heaped up, bewildering variety it has no right to live. Our respective observations must be knit together into proper sequences to form complete, whole, reasoned, thought-plexuses. Like a weaver's quick shuttle life is an eternal gliding process from the particular to the general, from the personal to the cosmopersonal planes. From wider, universal, big problems let us end in an individual note. For the two are never contradictory. The world needs once more the vigorous teachings of the Vedanta to bring about its regeneration in every respect,—social, economic and political. A strong, moral foundation has been scrupulously insisted upon. For our Religion is nothing but Applied Philosophy, if we may use the expression. But Vedanta never makes a fetish of the doctrine of Sin. Man errs every moment. There is back-sliding, derangement, derailment at every turn. Yet man must not lose hope. Neither must he justify these mishaps. It never means upholding of an antinomian philosophy. Like a bold soldier let him exclaim with a Vivekananda—Blessed Sin! Blessed Superstition!! *Blessed* not in themselves but because they are stepping-stones to greater, fuller truths. Let this series of iniquities burn up all our inner impurities and help us in regaining our much-prized poise. In a sense, from this newer point of view, we really never travel from darkness to light, but more properly from lesser light to more light.

We are essentially the children of Bliss. This has been over and over again emphasised by all our sacred texts. The line which every Hindu has been enjoined upon to repeat and think over, every morning before he stirs out, represents the acme of Vedic lore: *Sachchidananda-svarupam na Shokabhak*. My real identity is *Sat, Chit* and *Anandam*. I am not subject to little playthings of the world. These should not be allowed to create disturbance in my mental constitution.

In the pages of India's vast religious literature a systematic attempt may be detected to begin from the highest summit. In philo-

sophical phraseologies it has been termed the imposition of the *siddha* state even on a mind that is full of *asiddha samskaras*, imperfect habits and propensities. To put it in short, the aim and object of all our Mantra Shastras—Vedantic, Yogic, and the more recent Tantric, have been by a slow, assiduous process of mental cure or auto-suggestion or a practical course of spiritual training, to repeatedly harp on the full, perfection-aspect of life amidst all apparent faults, foibles and imperfections of man. The Jiva is to be finally killed and the inner Shiva brought out, manifested. I am He,—I am He,—Brahman, pure, unalloyed, spotless of all Samsara-Samskaras,—has been the mad cry of the Indian Sadhaka in every phase of our spiritual history—ancient, mediæval and modern. The strong momentum, force of Jiva-littleness, which has compelled us to assume many a garb with distinct names and forms in an endless chain of incarnations, must finally come to a stand-still. Our saints, one and all—from Buddha to Ramakrishna have proclaimed this supreme message which we have forgotten and are still forgetting—sometimes cared not to listen to it at all. They have known very intimately—they have been safely *confided with* all our littleness, imperfections, defects and shortcomings. Still they have reminded man of his greatness and magnanimity. Preposterous! We have strongly retorted. But they have smiled and led us to a realm of *being* and *becoming*, of *realisation*. They have given sufficient, demonstrable evidences in their own lines of their rare grit and genius, and specially their *genuineness*. In course of an enunciation of their teachings many a secret in the path of practical morality and well-being has been unfolded. Hinduism or more exactly Vedantism has evolved in its bosom a perfect science of mental hygiene. The conception of the Seven Planes of Vedanta (elaborated in Yoga-Vashistha) or the gradual ascent of the inner Light (Jyotih)—the Kundalini Shakti in every Jivatman are just cases in point. The Tantric *recipes* of different Pujas when viewed aright are nothing but the grand Advaita Philosophy concretised,—made more practical for the masses. The Tantras represent a glorious landmark in the evolution of our popular religion. Vedanta has been misconstrued to justify a doctrine of indifferent morality by the quacks. But its pronouncements are quite unclouded, definite on this point. In fact, the essence of Vedantic teachings is,—out of evil, through *good* only, can we transcend both good and evil. Anything which makes us *weak* is sin, is evil. And anything which makes us *strong* is good. The inner problem before man in every age is to get back the *balance*, the *equipoise* he has lost. Philosophically that is described as the equilibrium-stage of the three gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. This is symbolic and universal. If we have the eyes to detect we can see the working

of this truth, wherever we turn—to political, economic or social fields—this royal principle has fallen, *apparently* irretrievably into the gutter. And the best mind in every field is trying to undertake untold Rescue Works. Restoration of balances, as far as practicable has been and is the goal—the eternal Ideal.

We must learn to hate with all our heart a sham, showy, spurious type of Puritanism. With an artist's vision we have to try to evaluate humanity anew. Amidst all his *falls* we have to acquire the knack of looking beyond all outer crusts. Sympathy is the highest artist in human history. A Shakespeare or a Vivekananda, to speak in the same breath, respectively became what they were in their own fields, only because they had this rare treasure in an uncommon measure in the innermost, secret preserves of their hearts. In writing his immortal Macbeth a Shakespeare alone could entirely suppress—boldly *deny* the ordinary criminologist's point of view. A Christ—paragon among artists also trampled underneath his feet all fashionable, social opinions—formalisms, when he gave his grace to a Magdalene. A Ramakrishna could touch the much-maligned histrionic artist-women as manifestations of his Divine Mother. A Vivekananda kissed the Pariah and the Negro without the least wavering or compunction. A Ramachandra was too glad to institute a sacred, solemn, sweet friendship with a Chandala. All these personalities were adepts in the sublime art of reading between the lines.

The rankest sinner, apparently beyond all possibilities of redemption, we must not forget (and if he is frank enough he says so boldly) indulges in his evil practises just because he does not receive pleasure elsewhere. He is in a realm of lesser light. Of course we leave out of account what the legal practitioner has to say upon it as a professional man.

Finally, let us remember and act up to the supreme injunction of Vivekananda, the prophet of New Bengal and Newer Ind—say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is Divine.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA

By Swami Atulananda

The story of the life of the Swami Vivekananda is the story of the development of great ideas. It is the story of a soul groping struggling for light and self-realization; and finally of attainment. It is the story of the inner nature of man. First, intellectual

struggle, scepticism and doubt; then burning faith and illumination. These were the stages through which the Swami Vivekananda passed before he became the great exponent of the Vedanta Religion, the greatest of his time.

In the presence of the Swami Vivekananda we stand in the presence of spirit self-revealed, we stand face to face with Reality. Listening to his voice, we listen to a voice coming from afar, a voice reverberating through the ages, travelling in silence, recognized only by mystics and sages. Blessed are they who can hear that voice; twice blessed are they, who came under the spell of that voice when made audible to mortal hearing.

When we study the life of the Swami Vivekananda we study the book of life. For his was a life not only of divine revelations, but also of extraordinary human events.

Before his meeting with his divine Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami Vivekananda was known as a restless youth with a keen intellect, always in search of truth. Steeped in Western culture, he was constantly analyzing the religious and social conditions not only of his own land, but also of foreign nations. But when he met his Master a new thought-world opened up before him. For in the Temple-garden at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, he found a man, the living embodiment of the ancient wisdom and culture of the East. Nay, more! He found a man who could stand up and say, "I have seen God."

It was the blending of these two lives, of the mature sage at Dakshineswar and of the young college student, known as Noren, that produced the personality revered by the world today as the Swami Vivekananda.

It was as the spokesman of his Master's message that we knew the Swami in America. We knew him as the young prophet burning with zeal and enthusiasm, a magnetic personality, his eyes shining with a spiritual light. At the very beginning of his public career in America, at the opening of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the man stood revealed. At the very opening sentence of his short address six thousand men and women rose to their feet applauding the foreign monk. The audience was touched as no preceding speaker had been able to touch them. The Swami's masterly address on that occasion alone would have been sufficient to secure for him an exalted position in the American mind.

Swamiji's genius expressed itself in various ways. In his lectures in America he threw a new light on the Vedanta philosophy, he

breathed new life into the ancient scriptures, he made Vedanta a living, practical power in the lives of the people.

The Swami Vivekananda, as Sister Nivedita put it, came to us without credentials. He came as he had wandered in India from village to village, and with American hospitality he was welcomed and accorded an opportunity to speak. And when he spoke it was of the religious ideas of the Hindus. What Swamiji accomplished in his first address directed to the nations of the world at Chicago was a marvelous disclosure of his genius.

Not only the different Christian churches were represented, but also eight great non-Christian religions. These were Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism and Mazdaism. Each representative of these great faiths spoke from his own limited standpoint.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke a new atmosphere seemed to pour into the great Hall of Columbus. A new spirit took possession of the audience. Sectarianism, bigotry, superstition were swept aside to make room for the harmony of all religions. It was an overwhelming message of goodwill and brotherly love.

After addressing his audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' when at last the applause that greeted these words had subsided, the Swami began by thanking his audience for their cordial welcome. He thanked them in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; he thanked them in the name of the millions of Hindus of all classes and sects. "I am proud," he said, "to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance." And he closed by expressing his hope that the bell that tolled that morning in honor of the Convention might be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecution, and of all uncharitable feeling.

Here the religious consciousness of India spoke through the Swami Vivekananda, addressing itself to the religious consciousness of the West. Behind the Swami stretched a world that dated from the Vedic period, long ages of spiritual development. Facing him sat the new world, young, tumultuous, overflowing with energy and self-assurance, yet alert and inquisitive. Into the ears of the youngest among the nations he poured the wisdom of the ages. "We Hindus," he said, "do not merely tolerate, or unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling before the cross of the Christian. We gather the flowers of all religions, and binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a beautiful bouquet of

worships." And with the insight of the prophet he declared, "Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance, 'Help, and not fight, assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace, and not dissension.'"

Swamiji spoke to us of Mukti, the doctrine that man becomes divine by realizing the Divine. "Religion," he said, "reaches its perfection in us only when it leads us to 'Him who is the One life in a universe of death, to Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, to Him who is the only Soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations.'" And when he spoke of the doctrine of the Ishta Devata, the right of each soul to choose its own path, and to seek God in its own way, the West was startled by his catholicity. For such freedom in religion they had not even dreamt of. For divided as the numerous Christian churches may be, they all agree on this one point, that there is one path and one only, one Saviour, Jesus the Christ. And unless one believes in him there is no salvation.

But the Swami Vivekananda pointed out that such a narrow conception of religion invariably leads to fanaticism. And in his own humorous way he told the story of the frog who thought that his little well was the universe. "All isms," Swamiji said, "are little frogs hypnotised into the belief that their particular wells are the best and grandest. Fanatics refuse to listen to what other religions have to teach." And he chanted, 'Hear ye children of immortal bliss, even ye that dwell in the highest spheres, for I have found the Eternal One, and knowing Him ye also shall be freed from death.' "Then alone," he said, "can misery cease, when I am one with happiness; then alone can error cease, when I am one with wisdom; then alone can death cease, when I am one with life."

Swamiji had little patience with the constant harping on original sin, in the West. "Why do you dwell on sin so much," he exclaimed. "You are heirs of immortal bliss. We Hindus refuse to call you sinners! Ye are the children of God, holy and perfect beings. It is sin to call man a sinner, it is a libel on human nature." And straightening himself to his full length he called out, "Come, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep? You are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal! In the heart of every one of you the same truth reigns!" Thus swamiji cleared the theological atmosphere of the West. He sounded the trumpet-call of glad tidings, of hope, of cheer, of salvation for all. And a new thought-wave swept over America. Swamiji brought the Gospel of the Divinity of man.

At the Parliament of Religions the Swami Vivekananda had suddenly become a world-figure. The newspapers acclaimed him the

greatest figure at the Parliament, a noble, sincere man, learned beyond compare. The New York Critique spoke of him as an orator by Divine Right. The Hon'ble Mr. Snell wrote that on all occasions the Swami was received with the greatest enthusiasm. People thronged about him wherever he went, and hung with eagerness on his every word. The more liberal Christians confessed that he was 'a prince among men.'

Thus, through the newspapers the masses of America came to learn about the wonderful monk from India. Thus the Swami was introduced to the American nation, for every American even in the smallest villages reads his paper.

Thousands of enlightened persons felt that the Swami was, indeed, an Oriental prophet with a new message. And so meteoric was the transformation from obscurity to fame, that it can be truly said that Swamiji awoke one morning to find himself famous.

But to Swamiji all this glorification was as so much straw. It did not touch or elate him. He bowed down to that great, divine Power that stood behind him, that inspired him, that spoke and acted through him. He rather regretted, as his letters show, that the joy of the free life of the unknown Sannyasin was at an end. There was no more quiet, no more the peace of retirement. His life was now for the public, ceaseless labour, giving himself for the good of all.

Neither was his task always a pleasant one. Travelling from place to place, always lecturing, always teaching, taxed his strength to the utmost. Then, ignorant people plied him with stupid, irritating questions. Upon these he fell like a thunderbolt to defend his faith, to uphold the prestige of his motherland. His replies came as flashes of lightning, sometimes to the discomfort of the questioner.

Swamiji had come to speak the truth, not to flatter, to win applause. He had great reverence for Christ and his teaching, but he saw the flaws in Christianity as it was preached. He pointed out the defects in Christian doctrines, and in so-called Christian civilization. In Detroit, before a large audience he exclaimed, "You train and educate and pay men, to do what? To come over to our country and curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion, everything we hold sacred. These men come to us and say, 'You idolaters, you will go to hell?' If India stood up and threw at you all the mud of the Indian ocean she would not be doing the smallest part of what you are doing to us. And for what? Did we ever try to convert the West to our religion? Nay! We say to you,—Have your own religion and let us have ours. Neither have I come to make you Hindus. I have come to make you better Christians. Remember Christ's saying, 'Blessed

are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.' Everything that has selfishness for its basis must perish. If you want to live go back to Christ. Go back to him who had nowhere to rest his head. Go back to him, and give up your vain pursuits. Better live in rags with Christ than in palaces without him."

It is no wonder that some of Swamiji's utterances gave rise to opposition, and some tried to impair his reputation. But amidst all these distractions he remained simple and pure as a child, trusting in God.

On one occasion he said, "I am a plain-spoken man, but I mean well. I want to tell you the truth. You are my children. I want to show you the way to God by pointing out your errors. Therefore I do not flatter you, or always say fine things about your civilization. I point out to you what Christ taught." And when a distinguished clergyman asked him how he could understand Christ so well, Swamiji replied, "Why? Jesus was an Oriental. It is only natural for us Orientals to understand and love him."

And again, when he was asked if he did not resent the false reports circulated about him, he said very gently, "Not at all. This also is the voice of the Beloved. My Master would never recognize personal abuse or malice. 'Everything,' he said, 'comes from the Mother Divine.'"

During his first period in America, Swamiji found a life of constant change a great strain, mentally and physically. By nature he was meditative. His friends often found him wrapt in his own thoughts, hardly conscious of his surroundings. But the constant friction of alien thought, endless questioning, and the frequent clash of wits in the Western world, awoke in him a different spirit. He became as alert and wide-awake as the world in which he found himself. He began to study various problems. He compared Western and Eastern culture, and he investigated the industrial and economic systems of America, that he might apply these later to the wants of his own people. He visited museums, universities and art galleries. He became a keen student of American life. As the result of these observations he later declared, "As regards spirituality the Americans are far inferior to us, but their society is superior to ours. We will teach them spirituality, and assimilate what is best in their society."

Swamiji was now admitted into all classes of society, even the most exclusive. Thus he met the most brilliant intellects in America. The famous orator and agnostic, Ingersoll, himself a man of bold and fearless speech, once told the Swami, "If you had come forty years ago to

preach in this country, the people would have hanged you. But now the nation is somewhat prepared to accept you. Your ideas are most enlightening." And Mr. Tesla, the most distinguished scientist of his time, said, "Swamiji, I appreciate your lectures so much because they are so scientific."

But Swamiji was not satisfied with fame. He felt that the interest he had awakened was after all superficial. He desired earnest-minded disciples whom he could teach the deeper truths of Vedanta, who would follow his advice, and struggle for God-realization. He therefore began to hold private classes in New York city. There, in his own room, students came to him. They sat on the floor in Indian fashion. As one of these students has expressed it, "How intensely interesting were these classes! Those who were privileged to attend them can never forget it. We seemed to live in a different world, to be transplanted to a higher sphere, and when we went home we seemed to walk on air. Swamiji was so dignified, still so simple, so earnest, so eloquent."

In this humble way did the Swami Vivekananda inaugurate his work in New York. Thus he taught wealthy Americans of high position in the fashion of the ancient Rishis. He felt that now he was carrying on his work, slowly but surely, on the right footing. He gave himself in teaching and training these chosen disciples. He taught them how to calm the restless mind, how to control the senses, how to lead the natural desires into spiritual channels. He taught them to meditate and to form the habit of thinking spiritual thoughts. He explained that religion is not a question of belief, but of realization, and that realization comes only after earnest practice.

Swamiji lived not for himself, he lived for others. "I do not care for Bhakti or Mukti for myself," he declared. "May I be born again and again, and suffer a thousand miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, my God in the poor and the ignorant of all races and all creeds. I would go through a thousand hells to do good to others. This is my religion."

Swamiji taught from the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. He taught the different systems of Yoga as so many paths to realize God. He preached the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. His was a religion of strength and fearlessness. Fear, he declared to be the greatest sin. "Man is born to conquer nature. Faith in ourselves and faith in God, this is the secret of greatness. We are the Atman, deathless and free, pure by nature. Life is short, the vanities of the world are transient. Let us preach and live the Truth." And again he said, "Desire nothing, look for no return. It is desirelessness that brings results,

and remember, the stepping-stone, the real centre, the real heart of all spiritual culture is Renunciation. Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached."

Once Swamiji said, "If I succeed in helping one single person to realize God, I shall feel that my labor has not been in vain. I shall consider my work a success."

We tread here on sacred ground. We are not here at liberty to indulge in vain speculations. But, perhaps, I may be permitted to give it as my sincere conviction that this hope of Swamiji was more than fulfilled. Certain it is that the Swami Vivekananda has been a spiritual blessing in the lives of thousands of Americans.

Those of you who have watched the growth of the American mentality since Swamiji's advent in that country will agree with me that Swamiji's work has not been in vain.

To day in magazine articles and other publications; to day from platform and pulpit, ideas are promulgated akin to the teachings of Vedanta. For this broader outlook the Swami Vivekananda laid the foundation. To day science with its marvellous progress is approaching the ancient Truth, taught by the Indian Rishis, ages ago, the Truth that one Intelligence, one stable Consciousness is at the back of this ever-changing universe.

The American mind is in search of a final solution of the problem of life. This solution, so far as human speech can reveal it, has been placed before the Congress of nations by Swami Vivekananda, thirty-five years ago. Brother Sannyasins have followed Swamiji in the field. And at present seven trained Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission are in America, in different cities, preaching the life-giving truths of Vedanta.

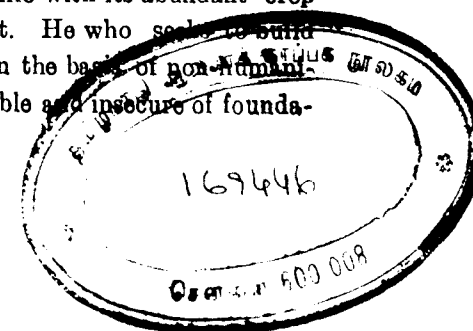
America is a vast country. The number of workers is small. The demand is great. But it is hoped some day Swamiji's vision will come true, and the West will be honeycombed with Sannyasins of our Mission. It is only the deeper truths of religion, as Swamiji has pointed out, that can bring harmony and understanding between the nations of the world. This harmony, this understanding, based on the divinity inherent in man, is the message Swami Vivekananda brought to the West.

HUMANITARIANISM IN FOOD AS THE BASIS OF HUMANITARIANISM IN LIFE

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

Human life on this planet, so far as it has been revealed by history, has been one long steep ascent up the narrow path of love and service and purity and renunciation. The ascent has not been continuous. There have been many descents on the way. But the trial and the travail—nay, even more important than those, the passion and the urge in the direction of the ascent of love have been there and have been powerful and plastic influences moulding and directing and leading the life of man in its path of evolution.

Why is it that the ascent has not been continuous! Why have there been so many deflections and deviations? It seems to me that the real cause has been man's indiscipline in food. Many of us are apt to think that food is only the fuel of vitality and that there is no connection between it and our intellectual and moral and social and spiritual life. It was and is the great glory of Hinduism and its sister faiths in Eastern Asia i.e., Jainism and Buddhism that they realised and proclaimed this connection in certain and unequivocal terms. Here was proclaimed the true and pure doctrine and gospel of mercy. and here and here alone was it acted upon. Here and here alone was it realised that it is food that determines the nature of the mind. The Upanishad declares—*Annamayam hi soumya manah* (Child! the mind is verily the manifestation of the food). It declares again—*Ahara sudhau sattwasudhik sattwasuddhau dhruva smriti* (purity of mind is the resultant of purity of food, and certitude of intuition is the result of purity of mind). The *Bhagavad Gita* impresses on us the need of offering food to God in a mood of prayerful devotion and says that only then it is *Amritam* (nectar i.e., the means of spiritual realisation), and that otherwise it is only sin *Agham*, in the form of victuals. The *Gita* points out also that purity and measure in food are the only effective means of the attainment of *Yoga*. It tells us further what are the pure and the impure forms of nutrition. It is the non-realisation of this fundamental truth which has led to animalism in food which in its turn has led to animalism in life with its abundant crop of misery for men and races on this planet. He who seeks to build human goodness and international amity on the basis of non-humanitarianism in food builds on the most unstable and insecure of foundations.



In modern times the medical and sanitary sciences look more and more to the prevention of diseases than to their diagnosis and remedy, though these branches have received extraordinary attention and advancement. The new school of nature cure, especially, concentrates on health, eschews drugs, prescribes right food and right thinking, and insists on a natural life. It affirms the unity of disease as clearly as it affirms the unity of health. If you cleanse the body, the disease disappears. Mere sanitation, which means only cleanliness and fresh air and sunlight, is not enough by itself to save us from disease. It is right food which is the secret of a long and healthy and righteous life. It has been well said that "the blood is the life". But the quality of the life depends upon the purity of the blood which in its turn depends mostly upon the purity of the food. It has been said that beauty is "skin deep". But beauty depends really on right food and pure soul, and may hence be said to be really based on food and to be as deep as the soul.

That vegetarian food contains all the elements of nutrition and does not contain any predisposing causes to disease is the declaration of the best doctors and is the experience of countless generations. The organic salt contained in vegetables and fruits is easily assimilable while common salt is not. The vitamins are quite essential to life. They occur in abundance in green vegetables, butter, grains, milk, and fruits. Tinned foods lose them and are thus worthless in comparison with fresh food, as tinned foods are cooked at high temperatures and thus lose the vitamins in the process of such cooking. The glands secrete humours which affect largely the functions of the body. Iodine is required by the thyroid glands which govern the kidneys and the intestines and the life-process generally. Milk and green vegetables contain organic iodine and are excellent in their food values. The value of food depends not so much on the weight of proteids and carbohydrates and hydrocarbons therein as on the organic salts and the vitamins and the humours contained in them. Dr. Muthu has well pointed out how the mill-husked paddy is injurious to health and is without elements of real nutrition. In the same manner bleached sugar is another enemy of man, coffee, tea and other stimulants are equally enemies of life though not in the same degree as alcohol and nicotine.

Quite as important as right food is measure in food. Manu condemns gormandising in terms of strong denunciation. He says, "Excessive eating is the cause of disease. It shortens life. It bars the doors to heaven. It is opposed to the ethical life. It is condemned by the world. Therefore let it be given up altogether." A.

well-regulated course of fasts is not only a means of holiness but is also a means of health as well.

Thus if we wish to have health and beauty and goodness, if our race is to be virile and longlived and pure, if we desire to realise God, we must learn the value of dietetics and take right foods in right ways and in right measure for right aims in life. Only on the basement of humanitarianism in food can be raised the palace of humanitarianism in life.

ANCIENT AND MODERN THINKING

By Charles Johnston

I

.....The knowledge that we inhabit, not this green earth alone, set in shining seas, but the wide universe, is a rightful part of the heritage of man. It should be continuous and universal, keeping us alert to our high destiny. Among all living things in the world, it belongs so far as we can judge, to man alone. Beasts and birds rejoice in the sun light. Migrant warblers and terns and golden plovers follow the sun northward and southward every spring and autumn, catching the light upon their wings. While the morning star yet shines, robins herald the dawn with magnificent choral song. Tigers and owls, stalking in darkness, pay an inverted tribute to the light. But none of them, save man alone, looks beyond this earth to the outer immensities. Beasts and birds inhabit the world. Only man inhabits the universe.

It would seem to be the same with the immensities of time. Man looks with forward and reverted eye, but beast and bird, even when instinct impels them to lay up store for the future, live wholly in the moment. The bird's whole consciousness goes into his present song. The animal that has just escaped from imminent death is in a few minutes serene and happy again, with even pulse and quiet heart. But man broods over past and future, even though this may make him neither happier nor wiser.

If we compare to-day with even the recent past, five or six centuries back, we shall realize that our conception both of time and of space has expanded immensely, almost infinitely. The general human mind has gained the consciousness which for a few minutes brooded over the surprised watchers of the eclipse. The universe we inhabit has opened out, backward and forward, upward and downward, to a degree almost inconceivable.

Not so long ago, time began for Western thought in the year 4004 B. C. I remember my astonishment when, as a boy, I came upon

an Egyptian statue, in a museum, bearing the date 4150 B. C. It seemed to stick out into the void, a century and a half before the universe came into being. And, not so long ago, space was as constricted as time. With so great a mystic as Dante, it is rash to think that we have sounded to the depths of his meaning; but, taken literally, the universe he describes is a little one, with earth looming large in the centre of a star-flecked shell, in whose narrow spaces sun and moon and little planets whirl, all of them vassals of our central world. The whole of time, for that small earth-centred universe, was limited to scant six thousand years, before which time was not, after which time should be no more. Today we think of the age of our earth alone as not less than a billion years, and we use proportionate measures for star-strewn space. A marvellous release of pent-up thought, a splendid expansion of the universe and of the intelligence which seeks to fathom it.

Yet this modern opening of the universe is not altogether a conquest of new territories. It was preceded by an equal shrinkage. The date 4004 B. C., for the beginning of things, seemed to Archbishop Ussher a logical and certain deduction from the chronology of the Hebrews, with their tradition of the Flood and the ages of the patriarchs. But the older peoples of the Orient thought in ampler periods, and it seems likely that the Hebrew patriarchs, even with their long life spans, are abbreviated copies of the antediluvian kings of Babylonia, and that these were not persons but periods. Solon, when he visited the Egyptian temples, was told that the history of Hellas went back, not a mere thousand years, but ten thousand; the Greeks, like children, had forgotten.

As with the constricted centuries, so also with the small, earth-centred world. Dante followed Ptolemy, who, in the second century of our era, made our earth the hub of the solar system. But, long before Ptolemy, Pythagoras and his disciples had taught that the earth swings free around an orbit with a distant centre, and they also taught the movement of the sun in space. Copernicus and Galileo were not altogether pioneers of a new way. The great Samian had already said, "Eppure si muove."

Iamblichus tells us that Pythagoras, like his mentor, Thales, had learned much in Egypt, where he spent more than twenty years, studying astronomy and geometry in the recesses of the temples and being initiated into the divine mysteries. He adds that, when Pythagoras was taken by the army of Cambyes to Babylon, he gladly studied with the Magi, perfecting himself in their sacred knowledge, as well as in numbers and music, during twelve years. So Pythagoras, who

framed the great word 'philosophy' for our Western world, was a debtor to the ancients. And quite recently it has been shown that the Babylonian astronomer Kidinnu knew of the precession of the equinox; Hipparchus, hitherto held to be its discoverer, really borrowed the teaching ready made. Since a single precession covers nearly twenty-six thousand years, it is clear that the Magi thought in immense periods of time.

II

So the small earth-centered world lasting but six millenniums is comparatively modern. It marked an eclipse of thought, a shrinkage from an ampler past. But while it lasted the reign of this shrunken world was absolute. It bound the human mind with a band of steel, as Galileo could testify. And it endured in our general thinking until the day before yesterday; it even endures to-day.

Archbishop Ussher's chronology held sway over Western thought when our pioneers went to India to delve into Sanskrit lore, a century and a half ago. So far as the immensities of past time were concerned, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and their gifted fellow workers still wore the band of steel about their brows. Their thought and imagination were stereotyped in terms of 4004 B. C. for the beginning of all things. Ancient India was discovered too soon, before the key to the hieroglyphics and the chronology of Egypt had been found, before the long periods recorded on cuneiform tablets had been disclosed. So it unfortunately happened that the chronology of India was explored by men who thought only in terms of 4004 B. C. for the Creation, with the year 2349 B. C. punctiliously fixed for Noah's universal deluge. All post-diluvian history had to be crushed into that Procrustean frame. And the past of India was thus compressed by our unconscious disciples of Procrustes. Max Muller, who had a wholesome respect for Archbishop Ussher, accepted their conclusions, which overshadow all books dealing with India even to-day. So it happens that in an excellent book on India, just published, we are told that the Aryans entered India 'approximately in the year 2500 B. C.' Apart from Max Muller's fancy, there is no better evidence for that date than for 2349 B. C. as the date of a universal flood.

When our earliest Sanskritists began their invaluable work in India, they found in actual use an era, then approaching its five-thousandth year, which had its starting point in the year 3101 B. C.—the era of Kali Yuga, as it is called. It began, according to Indian tradition, at the end of the great war of the Mahabharata. Immediately, and quite inevitably, our scholars said: 'Impossible! Absurd! That is several centuries before the Flood!' So they set themselves to

'correct' this ridiculous error, and the chronology of India was telescoped from millenniums to centuries. If they had known something of the ancient history of Egypt and Babylonia, they would have been more cautious, less summary. Only the other day graves were unearthed at Ur of the Chaldees which were confidently assigned to the year 3100 B. C., and beneath them was another layer, many centuries earlier. No one then said, 'Impossible! Absurd! That would be before the Flood!' Yet it was exactly in that antediluvian mood that the foundations of our Western dates for India were laid, a century and a half since, when Warren Hastings was the great patron of Sanskrit learning. The docile followers of Archbishop Ussher were still unconsciously conspiring to dwarf the world in time, just as Galileo's judges contracted the universe in space. Indian chronology suffered a detriment which has not yet been repaired.

The wise men of India looked back, not to a few centuries of past history, but to many millenniums. And they also steadily contemplated epochs of man's existence, and of the world's, to be reckoned, not by thousands, but by many millions of years. The universe, for them, was beginningless in time, and infinite in extent.

And they had for their large calculations an admirable instrument which the West has only recently borrowed from them. We speak of the Arabic figures which displaced the clumsy reckoning of the Romans. They are not really Arabic, but Indian, and it seems likely that they were adapted from the initial letters of the Sanskrit numerals. To show the immense intellectual reach of these ancient Aryans, it is well worth while to cite their conception of the larger numbers, as they are set forth, for example, in the Buddhist scripture called *Abhidhamma*. The first large number is called a *laksha*, a hundred thousand; the modern form is *lakh* or *lac* and the treasury of British India still reckons in lacs of rupees. Then followed a *koti*, ten millions, modernized as a crore. But this is only the beginning. From the *koti* upward, each succeeding numeral is ten million times the preceding; they are, in fact, the square, the cube, and the higher powers of the crore. For these ascending numbers there are definite names up to the twentieth power of ten millions, or one followed by one hundred and forty ciphers. There is nothing constricted about that. It would be entirely easy to express either in Sanskrit or in Pali the vast distances of our modern astronomers; to translate the hundred million light years with which we measure the width of space, and to express the result in miles, or even in inches. We should still have a sheaf of numerals left unused.

Nor were these huge numbers mere playthings of the Aryan mathematicians. They were measuring sticks for their conceptions

both of time and of space. To begin with, they assigned to the antiquity of man a period so immense that even the Western science, a few short decades back, would have dismissed it as ridiculous and absurd, exactly as our early Sanskritists dismissed the very modest date, 3101 B. C., for the close of the Mahabharata war.

But our anthropologists are gaining courage. A dozen years ago Sir Arthur Keith ended his fine work on man's antiquity by saying that he knew of no facts which made impossible the existence of man in the Miocene Period. This would take us back not less than four or five million years. Only a few months back Henry Fairfield Osborn said that the prologue of human life must be sought even earlier, in the Oligocene, which preceded the Miocene, and he fixed that time as sixteen million years ago.

This in itself is sufficiently striking, and it involves a remarkable coincidence, for, some forty or fifty years back, certain of the Brahman computations were published in India which gave to our present mankind an antiquity of over eighteen million years. Forty or fifty years ago even our most liberal-minded anthropologists would have called this absurd and ridiculous. Only in 1927 have we ventured to approach the traditional Aryan figures for the immense antiquity of man.

We have our series of geological ages, Archaeozoic, Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, Cenozoic—often sub-divided into groups of four. It is interesting to note that ancient India had a somewhat similar system, consisting of Kalpas and Yugas, and also divided four-fold. Thus the Yugas are arranged in a series of four, in the proportion of one, two, three, four. This group makes a total of 4,320,000 years, called a great Yuga. But this is only the beginning. For two thousand of these great Yugas are needed to make up a Kalpa, which is thus a period of 8,640,000,000 years. This immense period of nearly nine billion years is but one day and night of the formative Power, whose life time one cosmic period, consists of a hundred years of such days and nights. So the ancient Aryans had plenty of scope for their big numerals.

It is difficult to say whether these Aryan periods are based on geological or on astronomical thinking, but there is at least a suggestion that they are the former. The ancient Aryans spoke of a succession of Avatars, or 'Descents of Life'. So we have the fish-descent, the tortoise-descent, the man-lion-descent, and then the human incarnations. And this succession immediately suggests the age of fish, the age of reptiles, the age of mammals, and the age of man.

But we need not lay too much stress on the details. It is enough for us to realize that only in the last few decades has Western thought

approached the vast reach of ancient Aryan thought. For our early Orientalists, in the days of Warren Hastings, these long periods were simply unthinkable and meaningless. So they blandly discarded them and made up, for India, a chronology more in harmony with the civilized views of Archbishop Ussher.

III

.....We are interested, not so much in the details, but in the general conception. In the Buddhist scripture, the teaching is attributed to Buddha himself. This would make it at least twenty-five centuries old, long antedating the small, constricted universe of Ptolemy. And in this scripture there is a notable phrase which brings out with singular force and clearness the largeness of these ancient conceptions. That phrase is 'one hundred thousand times ten million worlds'—or, to express it in our figures, 1,000,000,000,000 worlds.

How did the ancient Aryans arrive at this figure? By gazing into the skies on a clear, moonless night? But our books on astronomy tell us that, on the clearest nights, only some five thousand stars are distinguishable by the naked eye. Perhaps, in the deserts of Egypt or Arabia, primitive stargazers might make out twice as many. And it is worth remembering that in those low latitudes nearly the whole of the stellar sphere is visible night after night. The sun descends almost vertically in the west. Within an hour it is nearly dark, and in the east stars are already visible. The great star-dotted shell above turns on its axis, so that an hour before sunrise it has almost completely revealed a new hemisphere of stars, from one stellar pole to the other. But even this admirable opportunity for observation will reveal, at the most, only ten thousand visible stars. From this to the million million worlds which we have quoted, there is an unbridged chasm. It may be said that the Milky Way, like a golden sash about the sphere, reveals millions upon millions of worlds. But how did these ancient observers know that that faint 'band of luminous cloud was made up of worlds? How did they anticipate, perhaps by two millennia, our modern observations, to be made only with immense telescopes? 'The stars are large,' says the Mahabharata, 'though they appear so small in consequence of their distance.' Heraclides almost echoed this when he said, 'Each star is a world.'

So that, as regards both the immensities of time and the immensities of space, our newest conceptions are rather reconquests than a winning of fresh territories from the unknown. The small, earth-centred universe, lasting in all six thousand years, was but an interlude, a temporary shrinkage of the vast conceptions of the past. The

constricted universe has vanished, but it lasted long enough, at least so far as time was concerned, to go with our first Orientalists to India. And even in those days the ban of the Index still lay on the heliocentric system. The simple truth is that, because of the stereotyped narrowness of their thinking, our first Orientalists were utterly unable to appraise, or even to grasp, the grand conceptions they encountered. So they said, 'Absurd! Ridiculous!' Only now, a century and a half later, have we Westerners thought ourselves up to the point where we can understand what the Aryans were thinking at least two millennia back, and perhaps millennia earlier. Only in the spring of 1927 have our anthropologists ventured to name, for the antiquity of man, a period nearly equal to that of the Brahmanical computations.

IV

If, then, these old Aryan thinkers were so far ahead, when the West discovered them, as to be unintelligible, so that a century and a half were needed before we could attain to conceptions of a like immensity; if they had thought to such good purpose thousands of years ago, is it not worth while to ask whether other departments of their thinking, as recorded in their ancient books, may not contain treasures of wisdom for us, elements of thought that are still in advance of the point we have attained?

There is at least one such conception, which we may call, 'the continuity of consciousness,' a parallel, on the spiritual side, of the conservation of energy. And one may say that, for the whole realm of consciousness and all that concerns it. Western thinking still seems rather vague. Our biologists and geologists face the perpetual puzzle of the beginning of life on our small globe. One of them, in his mental distress, has even suggested that life made the voyage hither with a colony of microbes riding on a meteor. But, if this were true, it would only postpone the difficulty, to be raised again for the putative port of departure of that meteor. But the ancient Aryans solved the problem magisterially. Life, they said, had no beginning. It has been from everlasting, inherent in Being itself; only the successive vestures of life, the forms of matter which make life manifest, have a beginning and an end. So with consciousness. Consciousness, in a latent form still inconceivable for us, is from everlasting, as it is infinite in its expanse. Only the vestures it wears have their beginning and their end. Here, say the ancient Aryans, is our way of salvation, of immortality: to make ourselves progressively more like in nature to the primal consciousness, whose inherent nature is eternity, wisdom, joy. Goodness is thus a form of wisdom, a wise

conforming of our acts and thoughts to the Real of the real, as the fine phrase of the Upanishads goes.

Certain sides of this wide view of consciousness may be suggested. First, the eternity of consciousness. Clearly it is not the personal consciousness of our present bodies that is everlasting, but the greater primal consciousness, the boundless deep from which we drew out at birth, and whither we are to turn again home. Nevertheless, even in our personal consciousness, there is the seed, the intuition, of eternity. And it is precisely this living intuition that sends the intellect forth, to plumb the vast depths of geological time, and also to look forward to like aeons in the future. The materialistic geologist finds the source both of life and of our consciousness in a pin point of protoplasm, a blend of chemicals, each a pattern of electrons. How can a pinch of carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen have the intuition of eternity, unless, as we are quite willing to admit, they also have the germ of consciousness, some small spark of the primal consciousness? It is, then, this eternalness inherent in all consciousness that sets us to measure the vast darkness of the past. What else could make us believe in the past? In perfect strictness, it is always to-day, always 'now.' The geologist, standing before a cliff built up of successive layers of limestone, sees the whole in to-day, in the present moment. But the divine intelligence in him translates that 'now' into tens or hundreds of thousands of years, seeing in the successive layers the record of an ocean at work for ages, piling up the bodies of small sea lives. It is really a tremendous transformation, which converts the present cliff face into almost endless ages of past time, and it is the pressure of the eternal in his consciousness that constrains him to do this, even though he may believe himself a sheer materialist. The cliff swallow that constructs his gourd-shaped home of clay on the face of the rock lives wholly in to-day, in each moment. For him it is always here and now. The hour has not yet struck for his consciousness to make the great projection into the past, into the future. There is, in geology, something bigger than geologists. Geology is the true science of the immensities of time.

Another thing is not less notable. No single geologist can see with his own eyes and competently examine more than a few patches of the earth with its rock garments. The fossils of a single period are a life-study for any man who would know them well. Yet geology is not a congeries of patches. It is a consistent whole. The consciousness of each geologist dovetails into the consciousness of all other geologists, not by a happy accident, but because the primal consciousness underlies them all. So with every science. Its true home is not in

books, nor in laboratories, but in consciousness; not the consciousness of one man, but the larger general consciousness, from which all flow, and into which all may enter. Without consciousness, there might conceivably be rocks and fossils, but there would be no geology. This, like all sciences, dwells in consciousness, and lives only in consciousness.

And the impulse of order in consciousness is as imperative as the impulse to swing backward into the unfathomed past. When the geologists came upon the rocks, what was their first impulse? What have they been doing ever since? Discerning the dominion of order, the long unrolling of causal forces, which have built up the vesture of our world. Once more, whence comes the impulsion? Surely from the very nature of consciousness, in which law and order are inherent, have been inherent from everlasting. If these were not in consciousness, how could we find them elsewhere? How should we ever set forth to seek them or recognize them when found?

So with astronomy, the science of the immensities of space, as geology is the science of the immensities of time. When our astronomers eagerly await the hours of darkness, in order that they may peer forth into the depths among the stars, they are obeying like a imperative power of consciousness, which claims its kinship with infinities. Once again they seek and find, even in the farthest nebula, a unity of law, a unity of substance, which are inherent in consciousness itself.

So we have regained in part our ancient heritage, the intuition of infinite space, of boundless time. We also may recover, if we will, that other intuition, even more vital, of the continuity of consciousness, which in its own nature is eternity, wisdom, joy. So we shall begin to inhabit the universe.—*Extracted from "The Atlantic Monthly," Boston, U. S. A.*

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

The New Civilization : by Annie Besant, D. Lit; published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

Dr. Annie Besant has laid the world under a debt of obligation by allowing the four lectures she delivered at the Queen's Hall, London, in June 1927, to be published in a book form under the title "New Civilization." Her handling of the subject, it is needless to say, is masterly in that she having surveyed the forces that have given birth to the present civilization and explained the character of the various departments of human life all the world over, has indicated

the line on which all especially the educated and intelligent men, thinkers and philosophers, should direct their activity to make the coming New Civilization redound to their credit. The lectures are full of deep erudition based as they are upon a wide knowledge of the history of Nations of the world and specially upon her knowledge of the economic and humane conditions prevalent in the United States of America which she had ample opportunity of studying during her recent sojourn in that land—the land where poverty is conspicuous by its absence among the nature-born Americans. The thought-provoking ideas which are strongly set forth in her lectures on "Education in the New Civilization" and on "Economics of the New Civilization" which appear just at the end of her book deserve to be read and re-read by all those who wish the welfare of humanity at large. Whatever may be the misgivings which the reader may entertain regarding the formation of a sub-race in which the New Civilization which will be one "of practical Brotherhand, of love to all the nations of the earth" is expected to have its embodiment and however utopian the reader may consider the experiment which the Theosophical Society is going to carry on in California to help in the formation of this sub-race or in the engendering of the New Civilization, there can be no doubt that many a reader of this interesting and instructive book will be influenced to not a little extent to look ahead of his time, and shape and mould not only his life but also that of others with whom he may come in contact in such a way as to deserve the appellation of a good citizen. This itself, we think, will be a sufficient reward for Dr. Besant's labours.

Little Essays in the Philosophy and Religion of Vedant or Vedant for the West : by Ganesh Prasad Gupta, Govt. Pensioner, Indian Army Service Corps, Lucknow, Husainganj (Barber Lane). Price 6 as.

This is a collection of 7 papers written by the author on the following subjects :—"The Problem of Free Will," "The Problem of the First Person," "The Truth about Happiness," "The Truth about Progress," "The Truth about Goodness," "Evolution and Destiny of Life," "Vedant and Mysticism." The subjects dealt with being abstruse and the papers written being short, the author's thoughts which have necessarily been condensed and couched in a terse language can at best be followed only by those who have had tolerably a good knowledge of the philosophies of the East and the West.

While it may be said to the credit of the author that the Essays are thought-provoking we would venture to observe that his idea of

the Absolute that it is the "Unchanging and Inert Witness," of the Turiya condition that it may "give a better and clearer manifestation of an ultra-mental sleep" than sleep but it can give no better proof of the unreality of the world, of mukti that "it is not even necessarily the cessation of the cycle of births and deaths," appears to be the outcome of a mind inebriated with Western Science and leaning too much towards ratiocination which alone will not enable a man to have either a direct experience of the Truth or enter into the Spirit of Hindu mysticism except through *Swambhudi* or right living. The Absolute, be it remembered, is not all-inertness but all-consciousness, all-sentiency; Turiya is not "ultra-mental Sleep" but intense activity finding its culmination in the union of the individual self with the Universal Self or Paramatman, and Mukti is not simply "a mental attitude of Self-hood" but is a state of ineffable joy in which desires of all kinds are completely extinct, the pairs of opposites are conspicuous by their absence and the seed for rebirth if it exists at all is bereft of all its virility.

As the papers are chiefly meant for the West, it is a pity that the author has not been able to present to them a more correct exposition of the Hindu view on the subjects dealt with.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The *Prathista* or Installation ceremony of The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Salem was performed by Srimat Swami Nirmalananda, President of The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore on Wednesday, the 14th November, 1928. The ceremony began with Pooja and *Bhajan* between 7 & 10 A. M., in the presence of a large assembly of ladies and gentlemen. After this was over the feeding of the poor who numbered about 2000 men, women and children took place at noon. There was again a meeting of the public at the Ashrama in the afternoon at 5 P. M. when lectures were delivered on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva; one lecture in Tamil by Swami Chitbhananda and another in English by Swami Yatiswarananda, which made a deep impression on the audience. Then Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer who was once such a prominent figure in the public life of the Madras Presidency and who is now leading a quiet retired life explained the circumstances which led to the establishment of the present Ashrama at Salem, the liberal and catholic spirit in which the Ramakrishna Ashramas are conducted and the responsibility of the Salem public to maintain and develop the work of the Ashrama. The proceedings came to a close with a few

remarks of Srimat. Swami Nirmalananda, who thanked all who helped in bringing the Ashrama into existence and who kindly responded to his invitation to attend the ceremony and wished them all happiness and prosperity. Under the auspices of the Ashrama Swami Yatiswarananda spoke on the Essentials of Hinduism in English, and Swami Chitbhavananda on the Ideal of Life in Tamil in the Municipal College Hall on the 17th and 18th November respectively.

The Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore, which was opened in 1925 has been feeling the need of a building of its own for the continuance and extension of its activities. The City Improvement Trust Board readily offered an extensive site in Vani Vilas Mohalla. A building committee with Dharmaprakasa D. Banumiah as President was formed in July last and the foundation-stone of the Ashrama was laid on Monday, 19th Nov. 1928 by Swami Sharvanandaji. Prominent amongst those present on that occasion were Rajasilpivisarada B. Subba Rao, Arthasastravisarada Dr. R. Shama Sastry, Messrs. T. S. Ali Khan, K. Dhanakoti Chetty, Prof. K. B. Madhawa, Viswanath Korve, Executive Engineer, B. Venkataramaiah, Palace contractor H. C. Dasappa, M.L.C., V. Subramania Iyer, Retired Registrar, Mysore University, M. Puttiaba, B.A., B.L., A. Vasudeva Rao of the Boy Scouts of Mysore and N. Narasimha Murty, Librarian, Mysore University, and many others. The members of the Ramakrishna Bhakta Mandal, an Association of the students of the City, did excellent volunteer service in arranging the function. An elaborate Pooja and Homa was performed, and thereafter at about 11-30 A.M., the foundation stone was laid by the Swami. After the close of the auspicious ceremony and the distribution of Prasadam the gathering dispersed.

GITA-DAY IN MADRAS

The Gita Day was for the first time celebrated in South India on Sunday the 23rd of December, 1928 in Madras under the auspices of the Sanskrit Academy. The function took place at the Madras Sanskrit College with Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar in the chair. After Puja and Prayer, several distinguished speakers of this locality delivered impressive speeches in Sanskrit, English and Tamil on the essentials of the Bhagavad Gita. The President in course of his address remarked that whereas the Bhagavad Gita was known only to a few Pundits about three or four decades back, now-a-days it was perhaps the most popular book in the country. This, in the Chairman's opinion, indicated the spiritual revival that was taking place in the land. With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated. A special feature of the function was the Competitive Recitation of the whole of the Bhagavad Gita, open to the students of all the local

schools and colleges. But only the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, took part in the competition and monopolised all the prizes, which called forth from the President the remark that, of all the institutions here, it was the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, that was run on truly national lines.

The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, has sent the following abstract of account of the R. K. Mission Famine Relief Work in Bankura and Balurghat: Receipts: Donations Rs. 24,874-5-0. Sale proceeds Rs. 296-13-3. Total Rs. 25,171-2-3. Payments: Rice for recipients Rs. 17,880-4-6. Salt Rs. 36-12-0. Cloths Rs. 651-6-0. Sacks Rs. 91-3-9. Transit charges (freight, cart, boat, cooly, etc.) Rs. 976-8-9. Travelling and inspection charges Rs. 552-15-6. Equipment (trunks, utensils, lanterns, curtains, bykes, etc.) Rs. 569-12-6. Establishment (lighting, salary, etc.) Rs. 343-3-9. Stationery Rs. 81-7-0. Postage, telegram, m. o. commission, etc. Rs. 131-8-6. Printing charges Rs. 23-4-0. Miscellaneous Rs. 19-14-6. Pecuniary help Rs. 219-0-0. Medical relief Rs. 34-4-6. Workers' expense (food, clothes, shoes, umbrellas, medicines, etc.) Rs. 569-12-6. (for 22 workers). Total Rs. 21,786-10-6. Balance Rs. 3,384-7-9. deposited to the Provident Relief Fund of the Mission.

The Annual Report of the R. K. Mission Ashrama, Baranagore, 24 Perganas, for the year 1927 is to our hand. The Ashrama conducted with success an Orphanage of 21 (twenty-one) boys. In addition to their general education in the Local High and Middle schools, the boys received a regular course of training in spinning, cane-work, carpentry and tailoring at the Ashrama during the year under review. The workers rendered medical aid to the sick and the helpless people of the locality in their respective homes. In the attached Outdoor Dispensary of the Ashrama altogether 3,970 patients received free Medical treatment in the year. Moreover, poor, helpless and needy widows of the place were the recipients of monthly and occasional gifts of rice from the Ashrama for their maintenance. The Ashrama secured a plot of land for the erection of a permanent house of its own thereon; and the cost of the proposed building was estimated at Rs. 3,5000 against which Rs. 4,462 had already been subscribed. The Secretary of the Ashrama appeals for funds to the generous public. The contribution in any form, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged.

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Gujrat Flood Relief Work shows a good record of philanthropic service rendered to the flood-affected areas by the workers of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay and Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Gujrat. The relief-work extended over a period of seven months from August, 1927

to February, 1928. The devastating floods in Gujrat and Kathiawad in July, 1927 rendered thousands of people homeless and absolutely stranded in life. The relief party had to work over an extensive area of about 600 sq. miles comprising 120 villages through the five centres,—Tarapur, Indernaj, Sayama, Golana and Cambay. In all 4,366 persons of 1953 families were helped with corn, cash and clothes as shown below:—Corn—774 mds. 23 seers. Seeds—143 mds. 20 seers. Corn (given as Tagavi)—1,343 mds. 30 seers. Clothes—10,763 pieces. Cotton blankets—230. Warm blankets—450. Houses built—920. The total receipts were Rs. 56,173-4-10 and the total expenditure was Rs. 48,820-15-7 leaving a balance of Rs. 7,352-5-3 which is deposited with the Bank of India, Bombay, for future emergencies.

A brief outline of the work of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Khar, Bombay, for the year 1927 is appended at the end of the Report of the R. K. Mission Gujrat Flood Relief Work. Regular scripture classes were conducted by Swami Viswananda and Swami Sambuddhananda at the Ashrama, Gamdevi, Matunga, Parel, Santra Cruz and Borvil. Swami Viswananda delivered a series of lectures in Bombay, Calcutta and Patna and Swami Sambuddhananda at Ahmedabad and Rajkot during the year, which were highly appreciated by the public. The Primary School and the Charitable Dispensary went on their normal course and the Birthday Anniversaries of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated. Feeding of the poor Narayanas formed an important feature of these celebrations. The main activity of the Ashrama during the year was the Flood Relief in Gujrat. The starting of a Students' Home and Industrial Home was under contemplation and the Committee decided to purchase about 6,000 sq. yards of land adjacent to the premises. The cost of this additional land including earth-filling was estimated at Rs. 20,000 against which a sum of Rs. 5,000 had already been contributed by a generous Parsco friend. The Committee appeals to the public of Bombay and elsewhere to make up the deficit and convey sincere thanks to all for their sympathy and co-operation extended in all its activities.



(5)
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