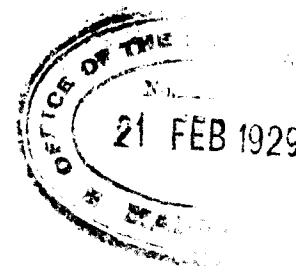


No. M. 1115]

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XV, No. 10: FEBRUARY, 1929.

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“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Vol. XV]

FEBRUARY 1929

[No. 10.

PRAYER

ॐ

न देहं न प्राणां च सुखमशेषाभिलषितं
न चात्मानं नान्यत् किमपि तव शेषत्वविभवात् ।
बहिर्भूतं नाथ क्षणमपि सहे यातु शतधा
विनाशं तत् सत्यं मधुमयन विज्ञापनामिदं ॥
दुरन्तस्यानादेरपरिहरणीयस्य महतो
निहीनाचारोऽहं नृपशुभस्यास्पदमपि ।
दयासिन्धो बन्धो निरवधिकबातसत्यजलधे
तव स्मरं स्मरं गुणगणमितीच्छामि गतभीः ॥

My Lord, I do not want the comfort of body ; nor long life ; nor enjoyments, so much hankered after by all ; nor even the knowledge of the Self ; I do not want anything even for a single moment. Let them all go in thousand ways ! But verily, do I want the blessed treasure of servitude, eternal to Thee !

My Friend, Thou boundless ocean of compassion and love divine, I am the seat of infinite evils—evils that are difficult to be crossed over, beginningless and irresistible ; I am devoid of all moral disciplines ; a beast among men ; but, my Lord, remembering the infinitude of Thy mercy over and over again, I do become fearless ; so I dare place this humble prayer in submission to Thee !

YAMUNACHARYA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(To a devotee)

Swami : Do you perform any prayer and meditation now ?

Devotee : No sir, nothing at all.

S. : But it is better to do a little every day. That shall give you peace of mind and steadiness. I am sure you have your family preceptor ; why did you not then take initiation so long ? You had better receive it from him by this time. However, every day you should perform a little of Japam and meditation. Purchase a rosary of Rudraksha ; bathe it in the holy waters of the Ganges and touch the sacred Feet of Lord Viswanath with it, and then perform Japam with that for a hundred and eight or a thousand times daily. And if you like to do more, you can safely do so ; and you should.

D. : What shall I repeat in Japam, sir ?

S. : Why, the blessed name of the Lord ! Out of His various names that which inspires greater faith and greater devotion in you,—that very name shall you choose for the purpose of performing Japam !

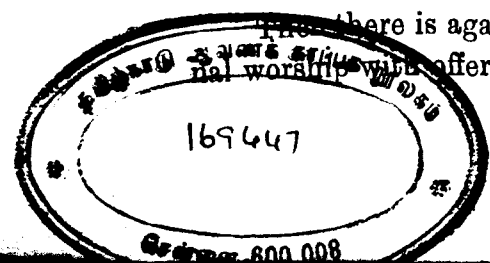
D. : Again, without a form meditation is not possible ; now, what form shall I meditate upon, and where ?

S. : Like Japam you shall meditate upon one of the many forms of Him you like best ; and that you can do right in the heart or outside of it. An expert preceptor, however, can understand the particular form of God that commands greater faith and regard from the disciple, and accordingly instructs him to meditate on that ; that is to say, what one likes best.

There is again mental worship. As you do external worship with offerings of flowers, sandal paste, burning

of camphor, etc., exactly so is the worship in the mind. Therein, in mind you have to picture the Deity you choose, in mind are you to offer all sacred things of worship and in mind again to adore Him with all the reverence and devotion of your heart and in humble supplication. You have heard enough ; now do something in practice and show the worthiness of yourself. No more waste of time ; begin from this day—this very evening. For the present do these two things : Japam and meditation every morning and evening without fail ; and continue this habit for a couple of years at least. Then shall you find great joy ; then shall you come to us more frequently, and shall know more and more of spiritual mysteries. Now this much and no further. Hereafter I shall tell you just in time what more practices are you to undergo in the future. Now you need not bother yourself for the mental worship ; leave it off at present ! After your formal initiation, if I think you should do this, then and then alone shall I ask you to do it. And regarding initiation itself, you need not worry over that at this stage. Now only do this much as instructed, and nothing more. No more wasting of time, my child, begin this very day, and proceed on and on.

Procure a new Asanam or blanket to sit upon, and keep it separate to be used solely for meditation, worship and work of kindred nature. Also choose a solitary retreat for carrying on your meditation and Sadhana ; your garden house, I suppose, stands in a very lonely place. If you feel inconvenient or disturbed at home, now and then you can better retire there at night. Mind, here in this sacred city of Kashi, spiritual realisation is so easily attainable. If you can carry on your Sadhana for two years at a stretch, I am sure, you shall have some sort of realisation at least. Some have attained still earlier—in a year even. So begin now, and after the lapse of some time you shall feel so much joy at heart that you shall not like to leave off your Sadhana—always feeling inclined to meditate more and more.



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In your meditation you must sit erect and cross-legged, and hold your hands near your chest or the upper abdomen. And frequent the place of the holy, study sacred books occasionally, and come to me now and then. And do not begin your meditation immediately after taking your Asanam, sit silently for a couple of minutes or so and try to make the mind 'blank,' so that no other foreign thoughts may cross there; and then only meditation is to be begun in right earnest. In the beginning for a year or two, you are to exert the strength of your mind; thereafter it shall become natural with you. If any day you are hard pressed with work, that day you may sit for meditation only once, or may finish it in a few minutes, say, in ten or fifteen minutes; again in the case of greater inconvenience remember Him once for a moment and then make a salutation to Him. In such a case that will do; but not always.

Before your morning service, cleanse your hands and face and dress yourself in clean washed cloths, and sit for your practices. You may also take a little of the sacred Ganges water. In the evening also, the same routine has to be followed. I assure you once more, if you do these things regularly, you shall enjoy great peace of mind and shall live quite joyfully. Regarding morality now observe these two rules only: speak the truth always, and honour and worship all women as one's mother. Nothing more are you to be troubled with now. The observance of these two moral codes shall make all other moral rules live and follow in your life as a matter of consequence. And ever believe in the existence of God, and never say He is not. I tell unto you, my child, God *is*. Therefore hold fast to Him in sincere devotion and in lowliness of spirit and pray and pray! No more speculations, no more waste of time, no more idleness; do begin now, this very day and advance on and on; and I will see to the rest.

SHAKTI-WORSHIP AND INDIAN WOMANHOOD

Nature has furnished every race with an abundant supply of materials for its healthy growth and expansion; and the proper utilisation of these multifold gifts is the *sine qua non* of the consummation of its living ideals. It is the standing testimony of history that Nature throws away whomsoever she finds delinquent in satisfactorily playing the parts assigned to them. The deep-seated instincts of a race can hardly find a spontaneous expression unless they are fed and kept alive by an unceasing stream of activity. But when the spirit of dynamism is gone and it makes room for a life of slavish imitation, the vitality of the people for self-expression and development is indeed stifled, and, what is worse, the nation is thrust into the background to drag a miserable existence in the society of Powers. The more we address ourselves to the task of taking stock of the world-situation and, especially, of the assets and liabilities of our national life, the more painfully do we become conscious of our helplessness in the various fields of our activity. The lurid picture of Indian life stands in sad contrast with the bright and iridescent life-history of the rest of humanity. So it has justly been remarked: "We talk vaingloriously of our immortal civilisation; but what does it consist of to-day so far as the common people are concerned? Our religion is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not to touch; of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks and fasts, and ceremonies that have lost all meaning; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England and Japan! Our artistic cravings are satisfied with hideous prints from Germany; our literature largely consists of sentimental and soppy effusions; in our thought there is little new, we merely repeat and paraphrase and expound 'ad nauseam' what was said ages ago or else we denounce it equally irrationally." In fact we have become strangers to the indigenous cultural ideal in the very land of our birth; and it would not be an idle inference to observe that, in our anxious craving for a new idealism, we have indiscriminately thrown away many of the sacred treasures of our life, and have thereby stifled the spontaneous growth of our national organism. Blind deification of modern materialism and an insistent striving for the

severance of our present life altogether from its ancient moorings. have become the order of the day; and the zealous 'reformers' of the land do not even pause to consider what value attaches to such a hybrid culture that has no moral sanction in the accumulated wisdom of the race. They moreover forget that India was great not on account of any cultural inspiration imported from without, but because of her steadfast adherence to the sacred ideal evolved and placed before humanity by the seers of the past. It is not gainsaid that the cultures of the outside world have values of their own, and cannot altogether be tabooed in the scheme of our national evolution; but what stinks in our nostrils is the blind and slavish imitation of outlandish practices that have, of late, found a right royal reception in the arena of our life and have created an unhealthy atmosphere in the country.

India is faced to-day with too many complicated problems, and to accentuate the one aspect of such problems to the negation of the other is indeed an impossibility in view of their equal demand for prompt solution. The growing tendency of the present progressivists has, to our misfortune, gravitated abnormally toward the modernisation of our social outlook in the light of Occidental social polity. One lamentable feature of this tendency is now noticeable in their active effort to lower down the sacred ideal of Indian womanhood, and to place it in step with that of the 'progressive' West. In their enthusiasm for reform and for the safeguard of woman's rights, they have gone to the length of invading the sanctity of domestic life and have totally blinked at the sacred idealism that has moulded our social destiny from time immemorial. Fascination for westernism has moreover blinded them to the fact that it was the distinct privilege of the Indian Rishi of old to look upon women as the veritable embodiments of Mother Divine; for, women in their eyes, were but emanations of the Eternal Being realised as Mother. This is the idea that has crystallised into a living principle in the philosophy of our life, and has become inextricably associated with the womanhood in India. The idea of the Motherhood of God is as old as creation itself, and this conception is one of the splendid contributions of the Indian sages to the world of philosophical thoughts; for it is in India that this idea reached its

highest culmination in long past years when many other races of the outside world were either not born at all, or rocking in the cradle of an infant culture, or were just stepping out into the light of a civilised life. It is, in short, the Indian seers who visualised in their spiritual ecstasy the manifestation of the Divine Mother in the person of a woman, and the idea of sanctity that attaches to the name of a woman is a living reality, that has ever since determined all our dealings and attitude towards the womanhood of the world at large.

It is now an accepted theological belief that 'all our conceptions of God begin first with anthropomorphism and finally end with de-anthropomorphism'. The Hindu philosophy posits that the ultimate Reality is the Brahman—the Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute, and the Divine Energy with all the phenomenal forces lying dormant in it rests on the bosom of that ocean of Absolute Being in a potential form before the beginning of cosmic evolution. In fact this Impersonal Being is the Personal on account of that manifested energy and has assumed various forms in response, as it were, to spiritual needs of the different classes of human mind. So did the Sruti sing: एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति "That which exists is one; sages call it by various names." And far back from out of those dim centuries comes the hushed whisper of the Indian sages: "Look closer brother! They are not even two, but one! The One Existence is known as Purusha and Prakriti—Soul and Energy, in its undifferentiated and static aspect and the manifested kinetic form respectively." The findings of science are also on all fours with the conclusions of our philosophical thought; for, according to science the universe was in a potential state in that cosmic energy, and gradually through a process of evolution the whole potentiality has become kinetic or actual. In short this eternal energy is called the Mother of the universe and worshipped on earth under various names and forms. The Vedas are indeed the first recorded history of the revelation of the ultimate verity of existence, and it is in those sacred lores that we meet with a glimpse of the reality realised and worshipped as Mother. So runs the Devi Sukta in the Rig Veda: अहम् राष्ट्रो सङ्गमनी वसूनाम् चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञियायनाम। "I am the Ruler of the universe and the bestower of wealth. To me Brahman is known as my Self

and I am the foremost among those to whom offerings should be made." The Upanishads, the Samhitas, the Puranas and the Tantras,—all sing in the same strain the ubiquity of the Mother—the creatrix of the universe and the ultimate solace and refuge of all humanity. Night in and night out, day in and day out, did the sages of old pass their life in holy communion with the Omnipotent Mother, and the secrets of the universe were revealed to their vision. India embodies this Power-Reality, and she wants to-day a rehabilitation of this sacred ideal of Shakti-worship to infuse new vitality into the millions of her drooping souls and spiritualise all relations between men and women in and outside India.

India, as already remarked, has forgotten the lofty ideal of the Mother-worship and has consequently lost every respect for her womanhood. The pristine virility and robust patriotism that nerved the Indians to lion's courage have almost sunk into a vague tradition of the past. And it is indeed painful to see that in recent years there has been an organised attempt in some 'reformed' quarters to knock down to the dust the sacred ideal of Indian womanhood, and thereby to break the very plank on which the mighty fabric of our society stands. It is not an exaggeration to say that this studied ignorance of the cohesive forces that maintain the solidarity and sanctity of our social life has been one of the contributory causes of our national debacle. This is the land where humanity has first begun to look upon women as the earthly representatives of the Divine Energy; and this is the land where scriptures still proclaim:—
विद्या समस्तास्तव देवि भेदाः स्त्रियः समस्ताः सकला जगत्सु ॥

"The Vedas and women of this world, O Mother, are but Thy manifested forms." It is in India that the scriptures have condemned in thousand and one voice the land where women are not respected and honoured. So says the Manu Samhita:—

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते सर्वदेवताः । यत्र तास्तुन पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्ताफला क्रियाः ॥

"The gods are pleased where women are worshipped and venerated, and all the activities of the land where they are not duly honoured fail to produce their desired result." This is the exalted position the Indian women have ever occupied in the

comprehensive scheme of our social life. Even in their veneration for womanhood, the Shastras have mentioned with unfailing uniformity the name of a woman first whenever there was any occasion to allude to a compound name of a male and a female. The illustrious lives of Sita and Savitri, Droupadi and Damayanti, Gargi and Maitreyi, Padmini and Ahalya Bai, Durgavati and Lakshmi Bai furnish beautiful examples of what a glorious part each of them played in the moulding of human character and in the evolution of the lofty social ideal of the Hindus. Time was when in the West the very appearance and existence of woman on earth was considered to depend upon a man's rib. In India, on the other hand, every woman, like every man, has ever been regarded as the embodiment of infinite energy and entitled to spiritual liberation without even the ministration of any extraneous agency. Dr. A. C. Das of the Calcutta University points out in his Rig Vedic Culture that the influence of women in domestic, social and political matters were such as to bring forth vigorous progeny; that ladies could also become Rishis like men; and Ghosa, Lopamudra and Viswavara composed Vedic hymns. The last performed the duties of a 'Hotri' also at a sacrifice. The possibilities of a woman's life in short are as infinite and various as those of a man, and her contributions to the spiritual world have been as substantial and glorious as those of any man on the face of the earth.

In a recent speech Mr. Jaykar, the President of the All-India Social Conference pertinently remarked: "The student of the Vedic period finds scattered from place to place evidence that women occupied a very elevated place in the society of those days.....Even marriage does not appear to have been compulsory in those days, and women could remain unmarried either for the whole of their life or at least up to a very late age, devoting their time to learning and philanthropy.....There are instances on record of women who have been authors of Vedic teachings and held open discussions with learned men in the courts of enlightened kings. They joined in debates and held their own against eminent scholars. Women who remained unmarried for their life took their place side by side with men and enjoyed equal respect." But where is to-day the grace and respect that formerly attached to the name of Indian womanhood and where is that sober moral

urge for promoting the interests and position of women in India in the light of the lofty idealism of the past? We must remember that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, and that it is the mothers who, after all, hold the power in their hands to build a healthy and prosperous nation. But the nation that forgets the worship of the Mother can hardly be expected to entertain its pristine respect for womanhood. Our battle-field is now not the open arena where the warriors meet to pour down the 'sweet wine' of life for prestige and honour, for the safeguard of national interests,—but is the cozy corner of a downy bed where the clink of bangles lulls the puissant hero to rosy dreams and visionary ideals! We have ourselves forged fetters for us as much as for our women. The whole community of men in India stands self-condemned for the shabby treatment meted out to the woman-folk as well as for the indifference with which they have brushed aside their legitimate claims for self-expression in the social environments. There has consequently been an insistent cry for 'the vindication of the economic and social position of women,' and it has been urged that such 'vindication is dependent on the eschewing of obsolete ideas of outworn superstitions and upon the realisation of the value and beauty of each individual life and the complete elimination firstly of the theory of the inferiority of the women on the part of the men and even more perhaps the elimination of the inferiority complex on the part of the women themselves.'

It is admitted on all hands that the curse of exclusiveness that hangs as swords of Damocles over their devoted heads should be removed for a spontaneous growth of the 'better halves' of mankind. But in 'the vindication of their economic and social rights' they must not overstep the legitimate bounds of freedom conceded to their position in society by the ancient seers. We still fail to understand what principle of Hindu social polity has prompted a certain section of our 'reformed' brethren to drag down our mothers and sisters to public halls and theatres for a practical demonstration of their unique skill in dancing, acting and the like, unless it be an inordinate and criminal charm for Western social ideal. Is this the nature of freedom these advocates of woman's rights so loudly speak of from the platform and the press? The 'tableaux vivants' presented of late by 'the

advanced women' of our society on public stages in imitation of 'the most respectable members of English society' are unfailing indications of a peculiar mentality begotten of a blind fascination for Occidental social outlook; and this, in the opinion of some advanced thinkers, 'shall raise the character of our public stage in morals and respectability'! But these overzealous reformers of the country must bear in mind that this is not only *toto-caslo* opposed to the ancient ideals of Hindu social life but is calculated to open the gate for further demoralisation in society and to destroy the very foundation of domestic sanctity. Every right-thinking man should raise an indignant protest against such a rank prostitution of the sterling parts of our womanhood in professional theatrical stages. Indeed, the barge of Indian life has drifted a good deal from its ancient moorings, and we have all along impressed upon our countrymen the necessity of adjusting our modern life to the advancing ideas of the 'progressive' world in so far as it does not transcend the sacred bound of our ancient idealism.

To-day the destiny of our social life is really in the melting pot. The age-long political subjection has devitalised the once heroic race of the country; and the annals of modern India present but a tragic record of the rank persecution of our helpless womanfolk. It is time to consider what practical step has up till now been taken for the stimulation of the noble instincts in our mothers and sisters and for the safeguard of their moral and spiritual interests against unbridled hooliganism except the empty cry for 'rights and privileges' and blind imitation of outlandish manners and customs in the name of the well-being of our society. Nobody can deny that we have gone down a great deal in the estimation of the world for our effeminacy and want of self-reliance. The spirit of purity and sacrifice that form the groundwork of our ideal must be brought to bear on all our activities, social or political, and the ancient ideal of Shakti-worship—the worship of the Mother Divine—must be revived and re-lived if we are again to stand as a full-fledged race before the bar of humanity. The spirit of heroic self-sacrifice is the indispensable condition of growth and salvation in human society, and when that spirit is gone, the whole structure of life topples down to the dust. Not many years back, Sri Ramakrishna,

the Saint of Dakshineswar, worshipped the Goddess of Power, and his illustrious life must be an eye-opener to the people in this age of Mammon-worship. The country needed again, as it had done before, the consecration of such a life at the altar of the Mother for the unfoldment of the spiritual vision of mankind. It was only when the spiritual agony of his heart was the most intense and he was prepared to put an end to his mortal frame for a vision of the Mother that She revealed Herself in all Her resplendence. In his own synthetic personality he has again vivified the ancient ideal of womanhood. "He realised God as a woman, and it was the flowering point of a certain tender chivalry that always marked him and makes his life the true emancipation of Indian women." Every one knows what his respect and veneration was for women who were to him so many manifestations of the Divine Mother. No less significant is the life of his illustrious consort Sarada Mani Devi at this psychological hour when the country has, through the glamour of Western culture, forgotten the ancient ideal of Indian woman. Her life was Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. No other finer instance of a harmonious blending of the nobler qualities of head and heart—of purity and devotion, modesty and heroism, renunciation and service—can ever be witnessed in the recent life-history of any nation of the world. Her whole life was a continuous prayer, and it serves as a mighty brake against the advancing tide of modern materialism beating upon the shore of our experience. Such a life of renunciation and spiritual wisdom is the priceless treasure to humanity in every age and clime; and the ideals that inspired this woman to a life of exalted sacrifice should be placed before every woman of our household to purify the atmosphere of Indian life.

The Mother revealed Herself to the seers not merely as the embodiment of tender affection but also as the symbol of the Terrible. But to our eternal disgrace our country has long ago given the go-by to the worship of the terrible aspect of the Mother and has slipped down to degeneracy and moral turpitude. The age-long subjection coupled with a woeful lack of proper cultivation of the heroic instincts of human nature has created a unique mentality that has not in it the promise of a heroic expansion and robust optimism. The country needs the worship of the "Terrible."

The voice of the Mother cries out over the teeming earth for lives, for the lives and blood of the crowned kings of men. "Remember," she calls out, "that I who cry have shown also the way to answer. For every kind, mother has been the first, for protection of her flock, to leap to death.....Religion has been ever the love of death. But to-day the flame of renunciation shall be lighted in my lands and consume men with a passion beyond control of thought. Then shall my people thirst for self-sacrifice as others for enjoyment. Then shall labour and suffering and service be counted sweet instead of bitter. For this age is great in time, and I, even I, Kali, am the Mother of the nations." Indeed nothing is impossible of accomplishment with sacrifice. It should therefore be our motto, as Sister Nivedita puts it, "not to shrink from defeat but to embrace despair. Pain is not different from pleasure; rejoice, therefore, when thou comest to the place of tears." False philosophies and religions have impeded India in the path of self-realisation. There is now a lack of dynamism in Indian life. In fact there is no other way out than the worship of Shakti—the worship of the Terrible.

To carry a whole race to a new rallying-place round a standard planted on the old frontier has been the peculiar mission of our great religious genius. With the advent of Renaissance in India the great souls of the land have pointed with unerring precision to the one universal need,—the need of worship of the Shakti and the respect for womanhood. In spite of the multiplicity of religious faiths, Bharat-Shakti is far above the petty denominations of religions and stands as the leveller of all artificial distinctions between humanity. Every true son of India, whether a Hindu or a Mussulman, Christian or Buddhist, Jaina or a Parsee, can, if he loves his country, rally round the Mother to safeguard her honour without any prejudice to his religious conviction. Swami Vivekananda—an intrepid worshipper of the Mother—boldly points out what is indispensably necessary to be blessed with the vision of the Mother :—

"Who can misery love,
Dance in destruction's dance,
And hug the form of Death,—
To him the Mother comes."

The vision of the Mother executing a wild dance of carnage, and breathing death and terror in every breath, says the Swami, is the only image that, of all others, should be implanted in the heart to sacrifice all our weakness and fear at her bloody altar. For without it the sleeping Leviathan shall not be roused from its deep slumber and the country saved from the cataclysm of outlandish ideas creeping into our sacred social idealism. "Forget not that the ideal of thy motherland is Sita, Savitri, and Damayanti—that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure—are not for thy individual happiness; forget not—that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother-altar and that thy social order is but the reflex of the infinite universal motherhood." Remember also that when we shall learn to honour our womanhood, we shall then alone be worthy votaries in the temple of the Mother Divine, and then alone our sacrifices at the altar of Mother-India—the Bharat-Shakti—shall be accepted for the good of ourselves as well as for humanity at large.

RECONCILIATION OF THE RACES AND RELIGIONS IN INDIA*

By Swami Ghanananda

Barriers to Reconciliation : It is a fact of unique importance in the history of the world to-day, that all the races and peoples have come together as they have never done before. Science has annihilated distance and removed our physical barriers. The mental barriers, too, are being removed by education and culture. And the world is waiting for the breaking of the spiritual barriers for its complete unification.

What is true of the world is true also of India. Her unification requires her mental and spiritual barriers to be demolished. The India of to-day is nearly all Aryan and Dravidian, "with a relatively small Mongolian or partly Mongolian element.....in the north and north-east, a slight Persian and Afghan element in the north-west, and a certain miscellaneous elements in the hills and remoter regions here and there, which are remnants of a primitive people or peoples". The Aryan and the Dravidian races have been amalgamated and belong to

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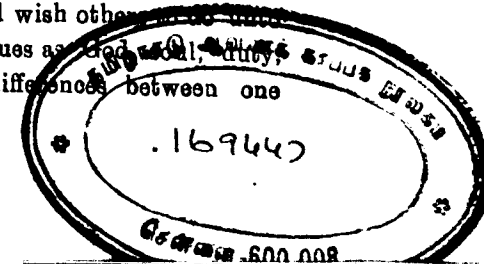
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the Hindu religion. The Moslems, most of whom were originally Hindus, the Jews and the Christians belong to the Semitic group of religions. The Zoroastrians, the Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs belong to the Aryan group. We have to bring about a reconciliation of these different racial elements and religions.

Eclecticism and Synthesis of Religions.—We shall first consider the reconciliation of the various religions in India, as it will furnish a basis for the reconciliation of the different communities. Religious conflicts always arise from narrow individualism which makes one believe that one's own religion is right and the religions of others are wrong. The blind bigot of every religion is very sincere but lacks in width. His conviction is intense but lacks in charity. To root out these evils, the method of Eclecticism has been suggested by many and adopted by few. Eclecticism undoubtedly presents a wide outlook, but it creates a new difficulty. The eclectic takes different elements from different religions, puts them together and forms a new religion of his own, adding perhaps to the already existing faiths of the world. Eclecticism cannot convince the critical. It has no divine sanction behind it, whereas all religions have been founded by Teachers and Prophets on the impregnable rock of their divine realisations.

As Eclecticism is unsatisfying, it has been supplanted by Synthesis or Harmony. This combines the depth and ardour of individualism with the width and catholicity of Eclecticism. It does not disturb any single faith but recognises the greatness and integrity of all faiths. It affirms that all religions are true—that they are all different paths to the same goal. It recognises that diversity is the law of nature and cannot be destroyed. Our aim should be to see unity through this diversity, not to effect uniformity through standardisation. Pound the crystals of different sweet substances and boil them down to form a single syrup: you effect uniformity. But set the syrup to cool: you will see different crystals of the original substances thrown out. The different religions are like these crystals—all having the sweetness of Divine Bliss, but having different forms.

Revelations of Comparative Religions.—Marvellous indeed are the revelations of comparative religion which is coming more and more into vogue at the present day. All religions contain such universal moral sentiments and precepts as truthfulness, temperance, justice, kindness to men and animals, patience, love, etc. They all teach men to strive after moral and spiritual perfection. They all inculcate the Golden Rule to do unto others what we would wish others to do unto us. They all deal with such fundamental issues as God, soul, duty, salvation, and so on. Wherein then lie the differences between one



religion and another? They are in the conception of God and in the means and methods of realising Him. Such differences are inevitable in the nature of things, because the One Truth can be realized in different aspects and viewed from different standpoints.

The Four Parts of a Religion.—Religion generally contains four parts—mythology, rituals, philosophy, and higher spiritual disciplines. Of these, mythology and rituals form the kindergarten of religion and are necessary for those who cannot understand the higher philosophy of their own religion, or practise the higher spiritual disciplines. We find concrete symbols are used to a greater or less extent, in some form or other, in all the religions of the world. Idolatry has been condemned by many iconoclasts, because they could not see the psychology behind it, viz., that the devotee worships the Ideal through the idol. Idols, images, pictures, symbols—all these remind the worshipper of his Ideal, and lead him to the higher path. They are like the husk of the paddy—not so valuable as the grain within, yet withal essential for the germination of the seed. The stone-emblem in the Hindu-temple, the Crescent in the Moslem-mosque, and the Cross and the Bible in the Christian church are all considered holy. If the Moslem does not use images, he turns towards Mecca during prayer, and looks upon the graves of his saints and martyrs with reverence. If Buddha did not permit the use of rituals and ceremonials, the Buddhists set up statues of the Enlightened One in their Viharas. In every religion, the psychology behind the use of some concrete symbol or other is the same, namely, to remind the devotee of God and evoke associations of holiness and purity. There is a difference, only in degree and not in kind, between the language of mythology and the language of philosophy and between abstract meditation and worship through rituals and ceremonials. Man progresses not from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth. This is a great lesson which we have to remember when we attempt at a reconciliation of religions.

The man with an evolved mind is not satisfied with rituals and mythology. He wants to question, analyse, dissect. This need of the evolved man is fulfilled by all the religions of the world. Often a religion has many systems of philosophy propounded from different standpoints. It is well known that India has produced six systems, and the Vedanta, one of these systems, has three aspects. Thus there are Dwaitic or Dualistic, or Visishta-Adwaitic, or Qualified-Monistic, and Adwaitic or Monistic systems of philosophy, all belonging to Hinduism. The different systems explaining the religious truths of various religions are not speculative like modern Western philosophy but intuitive. They are based on the spiritual experiences recorded in the respective

scriptures to which they belong and point to them as the goal to be attained.

A question may be raised: what is the soundness of the philosophy of a religion when it differs from that of other religions? Could Dwaita, Visishta-Adwaita and Adwaita in Hinduism be all true? Could the systems of philosophy as propounded by Islam, Christianity and Buddhism be all true? The answer is simple. Practise the spiritual disciplines as enjoined in the different scriptures and see if you do not arrive at the experiences which their systems of philosophy respectively uphold. This, then, is the greatest challenge which every religion throws out to the world in general and to its adverse critics in particular. Religion is realisation. The realisations of the ancient Vedic Seers and the later Incarnations, Teachers and Saints of Hinduism, of Buddha, of Mahavira, of Moses, of Christ, of Mohammed and others, form the eternal and adamant bedrock on which the different religions of the world have been built. Spiritual experience is the criterion of every religion, and every religion has stood this test according to the testimony of its founder and saints.

Catholicity of Every Religion:—It is a matter for agreeable surprise that comparative religion proves beyond doubt that every religion possesses an unmistakable sentiment of catholicity or broad-mindedness,—a generous hospitable attitude towards other religions. All the different scriptures of the world bear testimony to this.

Beginning with the Hindu scriptures we read, "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti"—"Truth is one; sages call it variously". "Who-soever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him. Oh, Partha! All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me." Says the Prophet of Islam, "There is no compulsion in religion; the right way is in itself distinguished from the wrong." "Say thou, oh ye who disbelieve, I do not worship what ye worship, nor do ye worship what I worship, neither will I worship what ye worship, neither will ye worship what I worship—ye have your religion and I have my religion." A passage from the Buddhist scriptures reads: "The root of religion is to reverence one's own faith and never to revile the faith of others. My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky; it has room for all, and like water it washes all alike." Judaism also teaches the same religious broad-mindedness. It says: "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?" "Thou shalt not vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." The Zoroastrian religion has the self-same sentiment: "Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Is there not everywhere the same

enrapturing beauty? Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread, and many are the colours which he has given it. Whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to the Divine." In the Christian scriptures it is written: "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that revereth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, says: "He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure. Be true and thou shalt be free.....God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done." "Love the saints of every faith. Put away your pride. Remember, the essence of religion is meakness and sympathy." "To him the delusion of whose heart is gone, Hindus and Mussulmans are the same." In fact there are so many points of similarity between the teachings of the world's different Prophets and Teachers that one is inclined to think that, if they were to meet to-day, they would embrace one another in mutual love and respect, and pass into a state of God-consciousness at their ecstatic joy. They would certainly be shocked at the religious feuds and dissensions between their various followers.

The Harmony of Religions :—It was given to India to produce an Akbar who dreamt a beautiful dream—the harmony of all religions—which he wanted to realize by convening a Parliament of Religions at Agra 352 years ago. It was given again to India to evolve a seer in Sri Ramakrishna in the nineteenth century, who was a veritable embodiment of the harmony of religions. Whereas Akbar attempted his glorious task by studying the great religions of India with the help of their accredited delegates, Sri Ramakrishna solved the problem by *living* the different religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Protap Chandra Mozumdar in an article entitled "Paramahansa Ramakrishna," which he contributed to the Theistic Quarterly Review says: "And what is his religion? It is orthodox Hinduism, but Hinduism of a strange type. Ramakrishna Paramahansa (for that is the name of this saint) is the worshipper of no particular Hindu God. He is not a Saiva, he is not a Sakta, he is not a Vaisnava, he is not a Vedantist; yet he is *all these*. He worships Shiva, he worships Kali, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna, and is a confirmed advocate of Vedanta doctrines. He accepts all the doctrines, all the embodiments, usages and devotional practices of every religious cult. Each in turn is infallible to him. He is an idolator, yet is a faithful and most devoted meditator of the perfections of the One Formless, Infinite Deity—whom he calls *Akhanda Sachchidananda* (Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). Continuing the same writer says: "For

long days he subjected himself to various disciplines to realise the Mohammedan idea of an all-powerful Allah...His reverence for Christ is deep and genuine. He bows his head at the name of Jesus, honours the doctrine of his Son-ship, and we believe he once or twice attended Christian places of worship."

Such was Sri Ramakrishna. His Hindu-Sadhanas (spiritual disciplines) and realisations of God with form and God without form—of the Impersonal Absolute as well as the Personal God in the forms of Shakti, Shiva, Rama, Krishna and so on; his Islamic Sadhana (spiritual disciplines) and realisation of Allah as Saguna-Nirakara (God without form but with attributes); his reverence for Christ and his vision of Him and realisation; and many such spiritual experiences relating to Buddha, Mahavira, the Sikh Gurus and the like, led him to the following results on which he based the grand harmony of religions, systems of philosophy, and means and methods of spiritual disciplines :—

1. All religions are true, they being different paths to the same goal of Super-consciousness.
2. The positive part of every religion in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that way, as well as the goal which a sincere follower of that way would reach in the end, is true. But the negative part which speaks of punishment and domination, eternal or otherwise, for the straggler, is not true, being added to the former, for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying into other folds.
3. Man begins his spiritual life with Dualism (Dwaita)—the idea that there is a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference between his own self and God. When he progresses in his path, he experiences the truth of Qualified-Monism (Vishista-Adwaita)—that God is the whole and he is a part of Him. And in the end, he realises the truth of Monism (Adwaita)—that the part is the same as the whole, for Infinity cannot be divided. In the first two positions of Dualism and Qualified-Monism, he realises the Personal God, with or without form, and in the last position of Monism, he realises the Impersonal Absolute.
4. There are many ways to lead men to Super-consciousness and all these ways will always fall under the general category of Jnana Yoga or the path of discrimination, Karma Yoga or the path of selfless work, Bhakti Yoga or the path of devotion, and Raja Yoga or the path of mental concentration. These paths provide scope for and methods of spiritual discipline for men in whom the intellectual, volitional, devotional and psychic tendencies preponderate.

5. Each man must have his own chosen path and must worship his own Ishta (chosen Ideal), be it Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Allah, Christ, or any other, as the case may be. Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

What will be the outcome of the grand harmony of religions as proclaimed by Sri Ramakrishna? All dissensions and conflicts between the different religions in India and the world will end once for all. All humanity will be drawn together in bonds of mutual love and sympathy. We often speak of tolerance, as if it is "the loveliest flower on the rose-bush of liberalism" but we do not see that tolerance has an air of patronising condescension about it. When we all recognise the truth and greatness of all religions, shall we be content merely with tolerating them? Shall we not take a reverential attitude towards them? Nay, we shall then be able even to actively help a man in his own religion. When a person appreciates any culture, philosophy and religion, other than his own, he may readily avail himself of the ennobling truths they contain; this may perhaps help him to understand his own religion and philosophy better; but he should never dream of giving up his own religion. Our duty then must consist not in converting a Hindu into a Christian or a Moslem, or a Christian or a Moslem into a Hindu, but help the Hindu to become a better Hindu, the Moslem a better Moslem, and the Christian a better Christian by placing more emphasis on the need for practising ethical virtues and spiritual discipline for God-realisation, and less emphasis on the differences in forms and philosophies.

Why is our vision of the harmony of religions dimmed? Once when a forester and a lion were walking together, they fell to discussing the inevitable question, "who is the stronger, a lion or a man?" Finding it utterly impossible to solve the problem to their mutual satisfaction, they came suddenly upon a piece of statuary representing a man in the act of throwing a lion. "There," exclaimed the forester, "you see the man is the stronger." "Ah! yes," said the lion, "but their positions would have been reverse if a lion had been the sculptor." Men usually portray the religions other than their own in ugly colours. Every mother thinks her own child is the most beautiful in the world.

To be concluded.

BASIS OF INDIAN NATIONAL AWAKENING

By Swami Devatmananda

A cursory glance at the history of Europe and America shows how the people have been marching forward with steady footsteps in the path of national prosperity and material well-being. In spite of occasional slips and hard knocks from inside and outside, they are progressing onward with indomitable energy and perseverance. Some idealistic philosopher may look askance at them and say that their so-called civilisation is not at all perfect, it has its foundation in a bed of sands and it is liable to be shattered to pieces at any moment. Hence it is not worth having. But whatever that be there is no denying the fact that those are certainly living peoples in the world. Like a living organism theirs is a dynamic society; hence there is struggle and growth. But how different is the picture our own country presents at the present day in spite of our glorious civilisation!

It is said that great and towering personalities are the makers of their own time and environment; but it must be admitted that they are the products of the peculiar time and condition of the society as well. The striking personality of Lord Buddha carried the society along with him. But the inevitable ebb set in and the whole land again became steeped in gloom and darkness. It was a period of inactivity and stagnation which necessitated the advent of another personality in the person of Lord Sankara who gave a tremendous impetus to the moribund state of society, thus facilitating the reign of happiness and peace, for another couple of centuries. But the inexorable law of nature is ever active: degeneration set in once more and the country glided into another period of lethargy and morbidity. Notwithstanding the fact that magnetic personalities like Lord Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramananda and a host of others,—a galaxy of pure souls—appeared on the horizon to clarify the atmosphere and instil new life and vigour into the spiritual ideas of the land, the political life grew darker, and the ordinary and simple life of the people grew more complex. They had to face and struggle with lots of difficulties that presented themselves with the change of political conditions coming in the train of foreign invasions, until the present day when the actions and reactions of diverse forces, the slavery of centuries and contact with various nationalities of diverse temperaments and ideals have contributed to the present degenerate and wretched state of the country—a state of poverty, illiteracy, disease, stagnation and slavish mentality.

The condition of society with its complexity of life is anything but satisfactory. The high and lofty ideals of the land have been banished. The worship of the all-sacrificing God-head has given place to the worship of Mammon ; and envy and jealousy have become the household deities instead. The so-called ethics of other peoples are being imitated and followed. The children—ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-educated,—instead of becoming wholesome and useful citizens, are becoming no better than burdens of the country. In the name of education fetters are being forged in the furnace of academic halls. Abject poverty is cankering the very vitals of the people. To crown all, they have lost their courage to protect and safeguard their own hearths and homes, their ancestral religion, their own self-respect and prestige. And lastly, the problem of Hindu-Moslem unity,—the most pressing of all the present-day problems, which weigh heavily upon every soul,—stands out as the most urgent call for solution and redress. In short the country has become the homeland, as it were, of all kinds of misery and sorrow.

A comparative study of the different periods of history of the country reveals the fact that inspite of the repeated attacks of the marauding forces of foreign invaders this nation still exists, whereas some of the most magnificent empires of the past have been blotted out from the map of the world. It is therefore natural to seek for an explanation for this strange phenomenon. Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-saint of modern India, declares with a seer's voice, "Understand that India is still living because she has her own quota yet to give to the general store of the world's civilisation. For a complete civilisation the world is waiting,—waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race." People of a different angle of vision, specially those whose eyes have been dazzled by the glamour of Western civilisation and culture, may cry out saying that India has no salvation unless and until she picks up the crumbs of what the Westerners may be pleased to throw at her and assimilates it in her body-politic and that, as regards politics and political organisations at least, India must sit at the feet of the Western people to learn them ; for the Indians are still in their infancy in these respects ! But these critics must bear in mind that though in scientific matters India has many things yet to learn from the West, yet in respect of political organisations India has very little or nothing to learn from the outside world. The ancient books of the land throw a flood of light upon the Hindu Monarchies and Republics that were in existence in most developed forms since the time of the Vedas down to the 7th century A.D. Panini gives a most valuable information about Hindu Republics of his time.

Says Mr. K. P. Jayswal in his admirable researches recorded in *Hindu Polity*, "Hindu Republics existed and flourished as early as the age of the Aitareya Brahmana. Ancient Hindus had already developed technical constitutions of various classes with special procedures of *Abhisheka* for each class." "Thus," continues Mr. Jayswal, "they must have experimented in those systems for some centuries before the composition of the Aitareya Brahmana. Now, the date of this Vedic work is to be regarded as Cir. 1000 B.C.....According to the Aitareya, the greater portion of Aryan India—North, West and South—was covered with Republican constitution." (*Hindu Polity*: II, pp. 137). "And it is a fact of history that some Republican Governments lasted in unbroken continuity for 500 to 800 years. Again, socialism even, an extreme form of democracy, almost Tolstoian in ideal, called *Arajaka* or non-ruler-State was experimented upon and had its existence in some States, though they were very small in extent ; and it was a 'living institution,' too." (Vide: *Jaina Sutra*: Jacobi: II, 3.1.10). "Hindu Polity...had a free career of at least thirty centuries of history," thus sums up Mr. Jayswal, "a career longer than that of all the politics known to history. Babylon might have lived a few centuries longer, but unfortunately Babylon is no more. Against this we have India still existing, and in this respect China—another civil polity—is her only parallel." (II. 709.) Thus, in olden times the Hindus had their Mazzinis, Tolstois and Lenins as well ; in fact such theories are not innovations but evidently the most ancient in the world.

Hence the ill-informed critics should be totally disillusioned in their idea that the Hindu lacked in political culture and capabilities. It is not an exaggeration to say that the systems and methods of organisations were certainly nothing short of perfection ; for, their outstanding merit is proved by their continuous life. Such being the case those old experimental results can, very well, be used as materials for our future guidance and procedure though evidently they are to be modified according to the changed time, condition and needs of the country. And the task of discovering and fully utilising the above rightful inheritance of the land and culture devolves upon the patriotic souls and experts upon whom depends the whole future glory and honour of the ill-fated land of ours.

Last but not the least important point to note here is that though the ancient Hindus experimented so boldly and also so successfully on the matters of politics, their whole aim of life was not centred in that alone ; they early discovered that the whole process of human evolution, individual and collective, including Society and State, has

an ultimate divine purpose,—a purpose for the full manifestation of the divinity in man. At that hoary antiquity of the early Rig Veda where mythology dares not peep, the Aryans discovered that immortal goal supreme which was latterly developed into a full-fledged philosophy in the Upanishads. And since then with the rolling of time those people have formed and developed all their life's activities in consonance and harmony with that supreme end embodied in them. Hence, not by an accretion of external parts, but by way of natural growth this huge machinery of Aryan life has come down through many a vicissitude until the present state of temporary morbidity and degeneration. Religious life has formed the very backbone of the same organic Aryan race, for this race cannot move, nay, cannot live even, without the help of religion and spirituality. But her future growth and progress must be a readjustment of her national life with the changing and advancing spirit of the time without engrafting any uncongenial element in her national body. Thus declares Swami Vivekananda with a clarion voice, "Religion and religion alone is the life of India and when that goes, India will die, inspite of politics, inspite of social reforms, inspite of Kuvera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children." Consequently, it is clear once for all, that political regeneration, if it comes,—and come it must,—will come in and through the upheaval of religious ideas and ideals alone; and the fabric of political life built anew without religion as its basis, will prove as unstable as a house made of cards.

It is stated that she lives, because she has a part to play in the world-drama: she has a spiritual mission, yet to fulfil. But is it not madness, pure and simple, on the part of a slavish degenerate nation to assert that it has a mission to the world and that mission is nothing but light spiritual? The only answer lies with her history. Whenever the country, as also the world, required spiritual food it was supplied out of this very soil and it gave peace and spiritual comfort to thirsty millions. These spiritual upheavals carrying with them material prosperity and happiness of the masses in general, are the main and important chapters of her history. And the historic success of the Hindu monk of India at the Parliament of Religions in the World Fair held at Chicago marked the beginning of another such epoch-making revival which is gathering its indomitable force with the passing of days only to flood the surface of the globe once more with the ideas of brotherhood and fraternity, of peace and happiness, and of spirituality and salvation.

But the economic and, following close to the heels, the social problems also press hard upon us for redress. They are so much

inter-related that one cannot safely isolate one from the other. To crown all, there is the political problem which stands in the way of a dynamic progress in any sphere whatsoever. What is the way out from this medley of complicated conditions of our present life? What will become of "half the agricultural population who do not know from half year's end to another what it is to have a full meal"?—(Sir Charles Elliot). And according to Mr. Gokhale "60 to 70 millions of the people of India do not know what it is to have their hunger satisfied even once in the year." What will become of the seething mass of 95 per cent. of the illiterates of the land, and of the socially suppressed womankind thereof? What will become of the famines, epidemics, etc., which have become regular visitors to our land?

Hence our paramount duty is to 'feed India' first. But as has been said already the economic and social problems including sanitary, educational and the like are so very interrelated and interdependent that to handle a particular one isolatedly is not so very safe and easy. Hence is the necessity of attacking the problems from all sides and simultaneously, so that there will be a harmonious and all-round progress. Renaissance followed by reformation has been afoot in our country for about a century; but very little genuine progress has been made in respect of social and economic amelioration of the people at large. For, if we strike a balance of the account of the progress and regress of the country during the century in question, perhaps, the negative side will appear heavier. Undoubtedly, there has been some progress and gain also in different respects in the country through its contact with the Western civilisation and culture; but side by side it has lost much of its native worth at the same time as well.

There are some who in their enthusiasm for foreign culture forget the goal they strive for. The so-called reformers fail to realise that a nation like a living being is an organic whole with a number of limbs subservient to and acting harmoniously with the vital part of the live body, and that to bring about an all-round development of that body the vitality alone has to be purified and strengthened so that, the other parts may automatically be supplied with fresh vigour. The credit of the discovery of the above great truth lies with the Swami Vivekananda, who some 30 years back saw with the keen and penetrating eyes of a seer that "in each nation, as in music, there is a main note, a central theme, upon which all others turn. Each nation has a theme; everything else is secondary. India's theme is religion: social reform and everything else is secondary." He exhorted the people to revitalise the main theme of the national

life, so that all other parts might be purged of all poisonous germs. In short keeping the central point firm and steady, the circle can be extended to any degree and the remedies of the social and economic life must be prescribed not according to individual whims and caprices but in the light of the eternal national principle, conducive to the commonweal—temporal and spiritual—of the people.

But who is to take up the task of reforming a country so vast and with problems so varied and complicated? Where is the true reformer and leader? There are plenty of reformers but where are those to be reformed? Where are those patriots whose heart bleeds for the down-trodden millions and whose very being has become saturated with the idea of service to humanity? Where are those fresh and untainted youths with 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel, and a heart adamant', who are ready to make a bridge of their bodies, in the service of their brethren, upon which the nation shall pass? The country has had enough of so-called self-constituted leaders and reformers. It is now in need of a handful of genuine, pure-hearted, self-sacrificing men and women imbued with a burning patriotic spirit, and consecrated to serve humbly the innumerable images of the Lord—the dumb millions of the land.

This country stands as an eternal illustration of purity and self-sacrifice. And it has never been in dearth of such brave and stout hearts who can sacrifice their all for the starving Narayanas. There are some sincere few who in their humble way are doing their best. Mahatmaji is one of such luminous stars in the Indian firmament. He is a living example of purity, patriotism and self-sacrifice. But he is only a drop in the ocean and many more are still required to carry the banner on.

Denunciation never helped any progress. Help, if you can; if not, for Heaven's sake do not stand in the way. Sink all differences fancied or real for the cause; for, the time wants it, the country is in need of it and the people are waiting for it. Let us be sincere to the backbone, in thought, deed and word. It is thousand times better to die struggling for a high and noble cause than to wear the life out like cats and dogs. Hence let such patriots, and sincere souls of the country come out of their narrow nooks and corners and keeping the ideal of renunciation and service constantly before their eyes let them advance forward with a bold heart and stout steps for the rejuvenation of Mother India.

KABIR DAS

By. T. S. Avinashilingam, B.A., B.L.

Kabir is the tallest tree in the luxuriant forest of medieval poesy. He is the most predominant figure in the poetry and religious history of medieval India. His influence has been vast and has lasted for well-nigh five centuries and will last for many centuries more. We know very little of his life. Except what we come to know from his own songs there is little else we learn from any other sources. Around his life a vast mass of popular legends has grown, and it is immensely difficult to decipher among that huge mass the truth from the untruth, the probable from the improbable. Of two facts we are certain; and those are that he was born at Benares and died at Maghar. All the other details of his life that we know of, we get either from his own lyrics or from popular legends.

Nevertheless his influence was great. That was the time when Northern India was responding to the trumpet-call of reviving Hinduism. Sri Ramanuja had brought the living spirit of religion to the form-ridden Hinduism of the South and that was taken to Northern India through the great sage Ramananda. Thus the forms of religion were giving way to the spirit of religion. The Orthodox form-ridden Brahmins were asked to look behind the rights and ceremonies and learn their real significance. That was again the time when the great Sufis of Persia were flourishing and the influence of Jallaludin Rumi, Alauddin Attar and others was strong on India and the result was the rise of a poet-saint, who embodied within himself the sublime spirit of the Sufi mystics and Hinduism, who set at naught the superstitions of the age and personified within himself the real spirit of the times. That saint was Kabir.

He was born at Benares of poor Hindu parents, but bred up in a Mohammedan family. He was quite unlettered. The religious influence of the place must have begun to tell upon his boyish mind, which was by nature pure and devoted towards God. He had early contracted a wish to lead a spiritual life. For that he wanted a Guru and a Guide who would lead him through the mystic paths of religion. He had chosen a master under whose feet it was his ardent desire to sit and learn. The master that he had chosen in his heart was the great sage Ramananda, a learned Hindu and he himself was a Mohammedan by adoption. On many an occasion he tried to approach the master, but the disciples of the sage would not allow him access, as being of the forbidden caste. He pleaded much with them, but to no

purpose. His obvious sincerity of heart and yearning had no influence over them. At last Kabir hit upon an original and ingenious plan to get the blessings of the revered master.

He knew that the master was going to the Ganges to take his bath early every morning. He also knew that it would then be so dark as not to make visible clearly anything that would be on the steps of the banks of the river. He determined to lie on the banks of the river just at the place where Ramananda used to pass every morning on his way to the sacred river. While he was so lying Ramananda unconsciously stepping upon him, found to his great surprise that he had trampled over a man, and cried aloud " Rama, Rama " his favourite Manthram. Kabir took that as his initiation. Ramananda enquired after the man who had laid himself in his path. Kabir told him of his yearning to lead a spiritual life, and how the disciples had refused him access to the master. Ramananda found the spiritual genius of Kabir and embraced him as his disciple.

We know very little about the later life of Kabir. That he must have attended many discussions, philosophical and religious, along with his master is fairly certain as he shows an intimate knowledge of the Hindu Philosophy. He was a weaver by caste and by weaving he made his livelihood. He was one of those rare individuals who made their professions their Sadhana. He had to work and weave every day in order to procure the livelihood for himself and his family, and while doing his work, he meditated upon the Lord. Work was not a hindrance to him. As he worked he prayed, and as he prayed he worked. Just as when the fingers count the beads the devotee tries to concentrate his mind on his Ishtam, Kabir meditated as his hands and feet were working at his loom. With Paul the tent-maker, Boehme the cobbler, and Bunyan the tinker, Kabir proved how a highly spiritual life might be led along with the daily duties of a family man.

A Hindu by birth and a Mohammedan by adoption, he combined within himself the best traditions of both the communities. He saw with his great spiritual eye the absurd notions of the followers of both the faiths, their great superstitions, and the weight that they attached to lifeless ceremonials. He called himself " The Child of both Alla and Rama " and proclaimed that God is " neither in the temple nor in the mosque, neither in the Kaaba nor in Kailas ". All the ceremonials, he declared, were useless without devotion, love, and renunciation. He says again and again that God is nearer than the nearest, to us and that we can feel Him if we had the requisite love for Him.

One who was giving free vent to such opinions could not have been popular among the orthodox sections of both the communities.

Once he was even hauled up before Sikander Lodi on an accusation of heresy. But that great Prince perceiving the real spiritual genius of Kabir left him unhampered and untouched. As time passed Kabir's spirituality asserted itself and slowly a large band of devotees and disciples gathered around him. At last at the ripe old age of about 78 he passed away at Maghar amidst the singing of Bhajan, mourned by both Mohammedans and Hindus.

" A beautiful legend tells us that after his death his Mohammedan and Hindu disciples disputed the possession of his body, which the Mohammedans wished to bury, the Hindus to burn. As they argued together Kabir appeared before them and told them to lift the shroud and look at that which lay beneath. They did so, and found in the place of the corpse a heap of flowers; half of which were buried by the Mohammedans at Maghar, and half carried by the Hindus to the holy city of Benares to be burned—a fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the most beautiful doctrines of the two great creeds."

The sublimity and grandeur of his thoughts, his passionate appeals for the realisation of God, and his absolute freedom from any sort of prejudice or superstition can be appreciated and enjoyed only by going through his wonderful lyrics. And a few of them are produced herewith:

I.

O Servant, where dost thou seek Me ?

Lo! I am beside thee.

I am neither in temple nor in mosque : I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash :

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation.

If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me In a moment of time.

Kabir says, " O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath."

II.

It is the mercy of my true Guru that has made me know the unknown ;

I have learned from Him how to walk without feet, to see without eyes, to hear without ears, to drink without mouth, to fly without wings ;

I have brought my love and my meditation into the land where there is no sun and moon, nor day and night.

Without eating, I have tasted of the sweetness of nectar ; and without water, I have quenched my thirst.

Where there is the response of delight, there is the fullness of joy.
Before whom can that joy be uttered ?

Kabir says : " The Guru is great beyond words, and great is the good fortune of the disciple."

III.

My body and my mind are grieved for the want of Thee ;

O my Beloved ! come to my house.

When people say I am Thy bride, I am ashamed ; for I have not touched Thy heart with my heart.

Then what is this love of mine ? I have no taste for food, I have no sleep ; my heart is ever restless within doors and without.

As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover to the bride. Who is there that will carry my news to my Beloved ?

Kabir is restless : he is dying for sight of Him.

IV.

Where is the night, when the sun is shining ? If it is night then the sun withdraws its light.

Where knowledge is, can ignorance endure ? If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die.

If there be lust, how can love be there ? Where there is love, there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight. Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.

Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him quickly : then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.

He who is brave, never forsakes the battle : he who flies from it is no true fighter.

In the field of this body a great war goes forward against passion, anger, pride, and greed :

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this battle is raging ; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name.

Kabir says : " When a brave knight takes the field, a host of cowards is put to flight.

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker : for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband.

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended :

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases."

V.

O Sadhu ! the simple union is the best.

Since the day when I met with my Lord, there has been no end to the sport of our love.

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body ;

I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere :

I utter His name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him ; whatever I do, it becomes His worship.

The rising and the setting are one to me ; all contradictions are solved.

Wherever I go, I move round Him,

All I achieve is His service :

When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

VI.

Have you not heard the tune which the unstruck Music is playing ?

In the midst of the chamber the harp of joy is gently and sweetly played ; and where is the need of going without to hear it ?

If you have not drunk of the nectar of that One Love, what boots it though you should purge yourself of all stains ?

The Kazi is searching the words of the Koran, and instructing others : but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does it avail, though he be a teacher of men ?

The Yogi dyes his garments with red : but if he knows nought of that colour of love, what does it avail though his garments be tinted ?

Kabir says : " Whether I be in the temple or the balcony, in the camp or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment my Lord is taking His delight in me."

VII.

SUBTLE is the path of love !

Therein there is no asking and no not-asking,

There one loses one's self at His feet,

There one is immersed in the joy of the seeking : plunged in the deeps of love as the fish in the water.

The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord's service.

Kabir declares the secret of this love.

VIII.

O SADHU ! my land is a sorrowless land.

I cry aloud to all, to the king and the beggar, the emperor and the fakir—

Whosoever seeks for shelter in the Highest, let all come and settle in my land !

Let the weary come and lay his burdens here !

So live here, my brother, that you may cross with ease to that other shore.

It is a land without earth or sky, without moon or stars ;

For only the radiance of Truth shines in my LORD'S DURBAR.

Kabir says : " O beloved brother ! naught is essential save Truth." †

DR. RADHAKRISHNAN'S INDIAN PHILOSOPHY*

(A REVIEW)

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

Dr. Radhakrishnan is now one of the leading figures in the world of philosophy and specially in the world of Indian Philosophy. He is a keen and critical student of Western philosophy, and he is charting the ocean of Indian Philosophy as well. To master the philosophies of the world even a first-rate mind endowed with subtle and comprehensive powers of analysis and synthesis would require many decades of devoted and strenuous life. Even if depth and breadth could not be combined fully till the evening of life, the attempt to take broad surveys is itself a process of liberal education and is a creator and conveyer of the higher enlightenment.

To pass under review here all the topics dealt with in these big volumes is obviously impossible, because if the learned author found it difficult to compress many centuries of philosophic thought into two volumes each running into nearly eight hundred pages, it would be absolutely beyond the limits of possibility to compress them into the petty limits of a small review. I shall therefore assay here only the simpler and humbler of task of indicating the procession of

† Selections from Kabir's poems, translated by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.

* Indian Philosophy, Vol. II ; by S. Radhakrishnan, King George V Professor of Philosophy, University of Calcutta. Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London, Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W.C.1. New York : The Macmillan Company.

Indian philosophic thought as dealt with by the learned author and hinting at what are the deficiencies in his stupendous and magnificent attempt. Such deficiencies are unavoidable in a first attempt of such a colossal magnitude. In a further and later and greater synthesis to which it is a prelude, we can have an even finer and more accurate and architectonic presentation.

Dr. Radhakrishnan has done India and the world the great service of presenting the panorama of Indian philosophical evolution in a clear and fascinating style. The pageant of Indian thought glitters brightly and vividly in his pages. An adequacy of equipment for such a tremendous task is hard to secure by ordinary men. Dr. Radhakrishnan shows such inadequacy in various places. If we refer to them it is not because our equipment is more or we have a cavilling spirit. Our object in this critical review is rather a desire to get an even fine pageant of Indian thought from the author's hands.

In his earlier volume on Indian Philosophy, Dr. Radhakrishnan has discussed the Big Veda, the Upanishads, Indian Materialism, the pluralistic realism of the Jains, the ethical idealism of early Buddhism, epic philosophy, the theism of the Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism as a religion, and the schools of Buddhism. The wide range traversed by him in the first volume is itself refreshing and exhilarating. The work deals with the fountains of Indian Philosophy and also the early portion of the great river of Indian thought. Dr. Radhakrishnan has however been in error in taking up a scoffing attitude as regards the commentators. He says : " Many Indian scholars dread opening their tomes ; which more often confuse than enlighten." Whatever their demerits be, they were men of clear thought and clear expression, using a language which of all the languages of the world is the one most perfectly adapted for philosophic thought and expression. Yet Dr. Radhakrishnan says : " Obscurity of thought, subtlety of logic, and intolerance of disposition mark the worst type of commentators." Further, the learned author has accepted the view of the Western savants that the Vedas contain crude and primitive philosophic notions and merely deify the powers of nature. But the traditional Indian view is that the Vedas are eternal and are merely *revealed* by God to Man and are not the creation of men, and that they reveal to man the Supreme Godhead in itself and in its manifestations. The sounds of the Vedas are eternal and the Karma Kanda deals with the Karmas (acts) leading to the auspiciousness of the soul while the Jnana Kanda deals with the nature and the beatific realisation of the soul. Whether such a view will be accepted by Western savants or not, an Indian thinker may well

be expected to realise and express and stress the Indian attitude on this point. The learned author has further erred in his estimate of Buddhism and of the attitude of Hinduism towards Buddhism. He says that the Hindu quarrels not so much with the metaphysics of Buddha as with his programme of human conduct. The truth is rather the reverse. The Vedanta Sutras fought a terrific battle against the various subjectivistic and nihilistic ideas of the various schools of Buddhist thought and drove Buddhism from the life and mind of India for ever. Further, in trying to put the Upanishadic concepts into the pigeon-holes of Western philosophical terminology, we find the learned author involved in many puzzling situations. The philosophy of the West has been often shipwrecked on the insufficiently-realised and inadequately-expressed conception of the Absolute. The Absolute of the Western philosophy has been a source of interminable confusion, and Western philosophy never strove to relate itself to life and broke away from religion. In India the concept of the Nirguna Brahman relates to the deepest fact of human experience, and Indian philosophy walked hand in hand with religion and life.

The Brahman of the Upanishads is noumenal, infinite, eternal Being and Bliss. The learned author has stumbled over the Advaita doctrine of Maya in his earlier volume as well as in his later volume on Indian Philosophy. I shall refer to this feature later on.

The stupendous character of the reconstruction of the Vedic philosophy becomes apparent only when we evaluate the six systems of philosophy (the Darsanas) in the light of the Buddhist philosophy. But for the Darsanas it would not have been possible to achieve the overthrow of the Buddhist doctrine. By a systematic and logical and comprehensive appeal to the intellect, the sages who wrote the Darsanas achieved the overthrow of Buddhism and the reassertion and re-enthronement of the Vedic philosophy and religion. The obvious divergences of doctrine as amongst the Darsanas themselves may easily be magnified. Even those differences were only meant to magnify one or another aspect of departure from the pessimistic and nihilistic and sceptical schools of Buddhist thought. The Darsanas really show a crescendo of the genuine and ancient Hindu philosophic and religious doctrine. All the other Darsanas or systems of the re-asserted Hindu philosophic thought were summed up and included and transcended in the Uttara Mimamsa or the Vedanta Sutras which contain the highest Indian thought that lives to this day.

Dr. Radhakrishnan describes in his second volume on Indian Philosophy the Darsanas as the six Brahminical systems. Why

should the systems be called Brahminical? They are all systems of Indian thought, and have influenced the thought of all class and communities in India and might well be called by the generic name of the six systems of Indian Philosophy—which, by the way, was the appropriate designation adopted by Professor Max Muller. The author deals in this work with the Logical Realism of the Nyaya, the Atomic Pluralism of the Vaisesika, the Samkhya system, the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Purva-Mimamsa, the Vedanta Sutra, the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, the Theism of Ramanuja, and Saiva-Sakta and later Vaishnava Theism. It is difficult to realise why he calls the Nyaya as Logical Realism and the Vaisesika as Atomic Pluralism. Both are realistic and pluralistic systems in one sense, though they have differences of tenets and doctrines as among themselves.

Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly points out the inter-connectedness of the six systems or *darsanas*. He says: "All logical attempts to gather the floating conceptions of the world into some great general ideas were regarded as *darsanas*. They all help us to see some aspect of the truth. This conception led to the view that the apparently isolated and independent systems were really members of a larger historical plan. Their nature would not be completely understood so long as they were viewed as self-dependent, without regard to their place in the historic inter-connection."

It is not possible to go here in detail into the learned author's brilliant and comprehensive exposition of the six systems of Indian philosophy. But I shall refer briefly to one or two points in regard to his exposition of the systems of Advaita Vedanta. Dr. Radhakrishnan has been at pains to prove that Brahman is not a metaphysical abstraction but is "a living dynamic spirit, the source and container of the infinitely varied forms of reality." He hints that Sri Sankaracharya tries to make out that Brahman is an abstraction. In short he tries to bring the Upanishadic thought into line with Bergsonianism! According to Sri Sankara's exposition of the highest Upanishadic thought, Brahman is *Anubhava* or realisation as *Sachchidananda*, i.e., the Blissful Absolute. Such a Blissful Absolute or Noumenon is not a mere metaphysical abstraction unrelated to experience. On the other hand it is the deepest and most fundamental experience. Because the West is unable to get out of its entanglements of pluralistic notions even when groping towards the Absolute, does it follow that Sri Sankara's clear and unwavering idea should be diluted or coloured in a form suitable to the West, or ridiculed or damned with faint praise? In his first volume Dr. Radhakrishnan

says: "If we insist on some explanation, the most satisfactory one is to make the absolute a unity with a difference or a concrete dynamic spirit. We then reach the self and the not-self which interact and develop the whole universe." Here we can easily detect an apparent confusion of thought. Dr. Radhakrishnan is either puzzled by the doctrine of Maya or Adhyasa, or he presents it in a ridiculous light to show that Upanishadic thought is really abreast of modern European thought. Sri Sankara says that knowledge (*Jnana*) is *Vasthutantra* (dependent on the object) and thus emphasises the objective element in knowledge, and combats the view of the idealists that there is no object apart from the sensation of the object. *Maya* is not illusion. *Maya* has been defined as *Bhava Swarupa*. *Maya* is the cause of the universe but is stultified in the case of one who attains *Brahma-sakshatkara* but continues for all other souls. It is in this sense that the world is unreal, or rather, of phenomenal reality (*जगन्मिथ्या*). Dr. Radhakrishnan falls foul of "the false imitators of the Upanishad ideal, who with an extreme of arrogant audacity declare that Brahman is an absolutely homogeneous impersonal intelligence—a most dogmatic declaration akin to the true spirit of the Upanishads." This bitterness is absolutely unwarranted if he had the *Adwaitins* in view. He says in Volume I: "As a matter of fact such an *Adwaitic* philosophy seems to be only a revised version of the *Madhymika* metaphysics in Vedic terminology." This is an unfair characterisation of the *Adwaitins* who fought and overthrew the *Buddhists* and re-established the eternal Vedic religion. Dr. Radhakrishnan is equally in error in saying that "attempts to gain solitary salvation embodying the view that one's soul is more precious than all the world's souls put together are not the expression of any genuine modesty of spirit." He says again: "As a matter of fact the Upanishads hold that we can be free from Karma only by social service." This is a travesty of the Upanishadic doctrine. The *Kathopanishad* and other Upanishads declare the importance of moral purity and social love and social service. But they state also that the culmination and consummation of a life of love for men and God is that state of existence where the trammels of the flesh cease to be and the soul is self-poised in its glory of bliss (*स्वे महिम्नि प्रतिष्ठितः*). What social service could be done when a man is in a state of *Samadhi* here or has attained the bliss of *Jivanmukti* and is full of that joy of release? Again, Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his Volume I: "It (*Moksha*) is a state of activity full of freedom and perfection." "The *Jivanmukta's* joy of immortality realises itself in the freedom of movement." Here again is a confusion of thought due to an attempt to bring the Indian idea of the nature of the soul into line with the manifold and mutually

conflicting confusions of modern European thought on the point. What is the content of the idea of *activity* in a state of *Moksha*? We may as well as speak of the martial campaigns of the seven sleepers? We may as well talk of the daily activities of the polar star? To say that the bliss of the soul in the state of liberation and self-realisation is the state of quiescence of a stone or to find in it an identity with or a resemblance to the state of deep sleep (apart from using this as an analogical state to have an intellectual apprehension of the state of the bliss of self-realisation resulting in the cessation of *Samsara* or cycle of births and deaths) is surely a piece of fatuous error and self-delusion, because such bliss of self-realisation is the fruit of a life of unselfish love and service and, of moral purity and spiritual endeavour, and because a *trans-sattwic* state cannot have anything in common with a *tamasic* state.

I have only indicated above the wide range and wonderful erudition which characterise Dr. Radhakrishnan's two works on Indian Philosophy. I shall present elsewhere in my *Indian Metaphysics* my views about the procession of Indian philosophic thought. In the meanwhile we must record our deep and sincere admiration of the great work done by Dr. Radhakrishnan. He has not only presented with remarkable precision and in a remarkable and graceful literary style the wonderful panorama of Indian thought but has also helped to lift up India to an honoured seat in the Durbar of Universal thought by the lucidity and thoroughness.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-seventh Birthday of Swami Vivekananda comes off on the 1st of February, 1929. The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodie's Road, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday the 3rd February.

BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Ninety-fourth Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Wednesday, the 13th of March next. The Anniversary celebration takes place at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on Sunday, the 17th of March, 1929. The usual feeding of poor-Narayanans will form the special feature of the functions on both the Anniversary days.

The Annual Report on the works of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapeeth, Deoghar, Behar, for the year 1927, is to hand. The public are already aware that this Vidyapeeth is a residential High School for Hindu boys, and it has been trying to help each of its pupils to grow up a healthy and efficient citizen by taking special care to develop the physique and culture the heart. The curriculum generally followed is that of the Calcutta University with a slight variation in the lower forms. Particular stress is laid on the study of Sanskrit, History and Elementary Science as well as on Music, First Aid, Hand-work, Nature-study and other allied subjects. Religious, physical and practical training forms an important part of their education also. To stimulate a spirit of social service among the boys a Night School was run during the year for the neighbouring labour class boys through the co-operation of the teachers and the older boys of the Vidyapeeth. The formation of the "Boys' Sevak Sangha" by the Vidyapeeth boys also proved a great success. The boys were taught up to the 2nd class with a competent staff of teachers and the number of the alumni rose from 53 to 60 in the year. The construction of a dormitory and a dining hall was completed at a cost of Rs. 5,489-2-9. The Vidyapeeth is now seriously handicapped for want of up-to-date educational equipments and permanent funds for engaging a number of paid teachers with special qualifications and for maintaining indigent students. We sincerely hope that the appeal of the Secretary for adequate financial support will not go in vain.

The First General Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon for the year 1927 gives a brief account of the works done from its different centres in the Island. (i) The monastic members of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Trincomalie carried on their preaching and educational work. The management of the Trincomalie Hindu Boys' English School and the Trincomalie Hindu Boys' Tamil School was transferred to Swami Vipulananda in June 1925. Moreover, an Association known as "The Sri Ramakrishna Educational Association" was organised to render all possible assistance in this educational work. Under the present management, the schools have made rapid progress, and the English School has now been registered as a Higher Grade School working up to the Cambridge Senior School Certificate Examination and Matriculation Examination of London. To provide better accommodation, the work of extending the buildings has been taken up. Besides furniture and general equipment, a laboratory for the teaching of elementary experimental science is now urgently needed. We hope the public would respond to the appeal for funds.

(ii) The activities of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Batticoloa have evoked much public interest and sympathy as well. The Management of five Vernacular Schools in the Batticoloa District was transferred to Swami Vipulananda in 1925. At present all the schools are self-supporting and have on their rolls an aggregate of 914 pupils and 26 teachers. A separate Girls' School under the designation of the Sri Sarada Vidyalaya was also started in October last. It is gratifying to note that Swami Vipulananda has received a gift of a building known as "the Vivekananda Hall" and the land on which it stands, of an aggregate value of Rs. 10,000. A Hindu English School has been proposed to be opened in the Batticoloa town and a strongly Executive Committee has been formed to collect funds and to carry on all work in connection with this proposed educational institution.

(iii) The educational and preaching work of the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Jaffna is none the less satisfactory. With a view to provide facilities for a more complete and fuller training of the youth of the island, it has been proposed to work up the existing Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai, to a full-pledged free residential educational institution. A Students' Home for orphans and poor students was started in 1926. The report of its activities for nine months from June 6th, 1926 to March 6th, 1927 is also to our hand. Boarding, lodging, tuition fees, and other educational facilities are provided free. The boys are taught to be manly and self-reliant. Attention is paid to their physical, moral and spiritual growth. The Managing Committee intends to provide accommodation for at least 100 students. It conveys its heart-felt thanks to all friends and well-wishers for the kind support extended to the Home and hopes that such support will continue in future.

The Biennial Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Karimganj, Sylhet, for the years 1332 and 1333 B.S. is to our hand. It shows a good record of its philanthropic works during the years under review. The Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary of the Samity treated 841 and 955 patients, of whom 430 and 520 were new cases respectively, during the years. The Samity, moreover, rendered house to house relief during the cholera and the small-pox epidemics in the town and sent pecuniary aids on the occasion of the Midnapore flood. Besides, it ran one Library consisting of about 464 books and held Sunday sittings for the study of the Bhagavad Gita and the lives of various saints of India. The night-school for the depressed classes had to be abandoned for various local disadvantages, but the Samity proposes to restart the same in a more convenient place. The Samity

stands in need of more lands and houses for the extension of its sphere of philanthropic works and a permanent fund for the maintenance of its workers. The public, we doubt not, will substantially help this useful institution by their contributions.

We have received a copy of the Annual Report of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, for the year 1927 from its Hon. Secretary, and we are glad to find that during the twenty-five years of its existence, the Society has grown to be one of the most useful institutions in Ceylon. The Society's Library consisted of a number of 1,055 books, and the reading public were afforded ample opportunity to read the Monthlies, Weeklies and Dailies in the Society's Reading Room. The Society, moreover, conducted a monthly magazine of its own, named "The Vivekanandan". Besides lectures on various topics, the usual classes for the study of *Thirukkural* and *Nannool* and the classes started by Swami Avinashananda were held regularly on Saturdays and Sunday-mornings respectively. The Vidyalayam run by the Society is one of the most flourishing institutions with which the name of Swami Vivekananda is associated. But the School-hall is uncomfortably crowded, and apart from the need for more furniture, a separate building for the school is absolutely necessary. Moreover, the present building of the Society itself is too old and funds are immediately needed for a building worthy of the position the Society occupies in the public life of the Hindus of Ceylon. We are indeed glad to learn that the Society rendered useful service to the Kathirgama pilgrims, and presented Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his visit to the Society with a decent purse of Rs. 2,178 and odd. The Society appeals to the members, subscribers and the sympathisers to contribute their quota of pecuniary help for a smooth working of this institution and we hope the appeal would be generously responded to.

The Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar, for the year 1927 shows a good record of work done by its workers. The total number of in-door patients admitted into the Sevashrama Hospital during the year under review was 781, of whom 748 were cured and discharged; 8 left treatment, 2 were taken by I. D. H., 29 died and 12 were under treatment at the close of the year. Altogether 46,852 patients of whom 25,715 were old cases, were treated in the Outdoor Dispensary of the Sevashrama. It further conducted a free Night School attached to it for the local depressed classes. The Library contained a total number of 1,828 religious books, 28 Monthlies, 6 Weeklies and two Dailies and was open to all. The Sevashrama organised a relief-work during the last Kumbha-Mela held at Hardwar in the month of April, 1927 and rendered splendid service towards the mitigation of the sufferings of the sick and the pilgrims. In short the importance of such a philanthropic institution in one of the most sacred places of India can hardly be exaggerated. The following are the urgent needs of the Sevashrama:—(1) Workers' quarters. (2) A Building for the night school for the depressed classes, attached to the Sevashrama. (3) A Guest House or Dharmasala. (4) A Rest House for the friends and relations of pilgrim-in-door patients. (5) A permanent endowment Fund for the Sevashrama. (6) Resources for equipment and general maintenance of the Sevashrama. We hope the Secretary's appeal for funds would not

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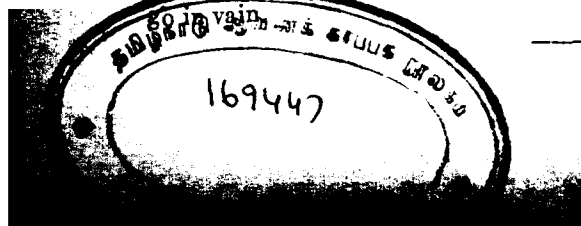
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