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THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XV, No. 12: APRIL, 1929

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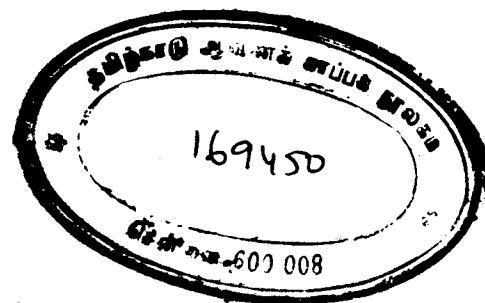
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THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ 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]

APRIL 1929

[No. 12

PRAYER

ॐ

नान्यद् वदामि न शृणोमि न चिन्तयामि
 नान्यत् स्मरामि न भजामि न चाश्रयामि ।
 भक्त्या त्वदीयचरणाम्बुजमन्तरेण
 श्रीश्रीनिवास पुरुषोत्तम देहि दास्यम् ॥
 नाथ योनिसहस्रेषु येषु येषु ब्रजाम्यहम्
 तेषु तेष्वचला भक्तिरच्युताऽस्तु सदा त्वयि ।
 या प्रीतिरशिवेकानां विषयेष्वनपायिनी
 त्वामनुस्मरतः सा मे हृदयान्माऽपसर्पतु ॥

Oh Lord, Thou Being supreme, I shall not speak anything, nor hear, nor think, nor even recall, nor adore, nor refuge, except the Lotus of Thy Feet in devotion ! Oh Lord, Thou seat of all virtue and majesty, do Thou grant Thy servitude unto me !

My Lord, whatever species I may be born in, may there I have my devotion unshakable unto Thee ! And as the ignorant have their mind firmly attached to possessions mundane, even so, Thou Being imperishable, my mind be attached unto Thee, and think on Thee alone. May not this love and attachment for Thee be ever taken away from unto me !

PRAPANNAGITA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

I

Disciple :—Maharaj, is grace conditional?

Swami :—(Figuratively) Sri Ramakrishna has said that man waves a fan to cool down heat, but when the cool breeze sets in to blow he stops fanning. (Even so with grace).

D. :—What is the distinction between the true vision of God and hallucination? How to demarcate them, sir?

S. :—From the true vision of God, does result a lasting bliss; one's own mind makes one know that.

D. :—Maharaj, what is the necessity of Mudra (position of fingers) and other rituals in formal worship?

S. :—The mind is disturbed by too many evil influences. Sometimes you may think that you are all right and that if you then meditate, your mind will soon get concentrated. But as you sit for meditation, within the five minutes of your attempt, various distractions crop up in the mind, and shake its balance. Once I myself did experience an evil thought in me, and as I met with the Master, from a distance could he divine it, and said: "Halloo, my boy, I see an evil thought disturbing your mind." So saying he placed his hand on my head in benediction and muttered some words inaudibly, and lo, within five minutes, I had it gone! Verily, when the mind moves in higher planes, no evil influence can reach there and agitate it.

II

Disciple :—Maharaj, I have heard that meditation should be preceded by the worship of Guru; but I do not know how to conduct it; pray do tell me this, sir!

Swami :—It is not essential; the worship of the Istam is enough.

D. :—No sir, pray do tell me this how to worship the Guru?

S. :—Very well, you can know it from Swami P.

D. :—No sir, yourself pray do tell me that; he may not tell me at all.

S. :—All right, at first like the Istam, you should meditate upon the Guru right in the heart, then after a while imagine him as merging himself in the Istam; then should you begin to repeat the sacred name of your Istam and meditate upon His blessed form, and thus continue.

III

Stray Talks

1. You must not divulge the secret of your Sadhana to all.

2. Verily, there is nothing without, everything is within. The music without is too trivial compared with the music within. Oh, the charm of it, and sweetness! Singing in the Panchavati, Sri Ramakrishna heard the music of Vina within.

3. God should be imagined as vast and infinite. To bring in this idea of vastness within, one should see the Himalayas, the ocean, etc. or gaze at the sky as the last alternative.

4. True character cannot be formed unless a man becomes God-fearing, i.e., unless he believes in God, the life hereafter and so on.

5. To conquer lust or control the mind by studying books is a task as impossible as walking through the air.

6. The water of the Ganges is verily the holiest of all waters; it fulfils one's desire and is a help to realise the Istam. Sri Ramakrishna has said: "The water of the Ganges, the holy Prasadam of Jagannath (at Puri), and the sacred dust of Vrindavan are verily the Brahman in reality."

7. So long Mother Kundalini keeps downward direction, the mind of man runs after things relating to the phallus, the anus and the navel. But as She rises up, the mind also rises; it then moves in things spiritual.

8. With the growth of Sattva in man, he feels inclined to see the vision of God; he then delights in singing His glory and meditating upon Him more and more.

9. The food of funeral ceremony should not be taken; it is so harmful.

10. While coming down from Mughal Sarai in a motor car through the vast open fields, the neighbouring scenery could not give me as much joy as did this holy land of Benares, when I crossed the bridge and entered its bounds. It was a joy simply unspeakable. Oh, the glory of the land, this blessed abode of Shiva, and the sweetness divine! Lord Shiva Himself is the supreme Teacher. In this hallowed land, on the one hand Mother Annapurna supplies man with his physical wants, and on the other Lord Viswanath ministers religion unto him. During our Master's visit in this holy land, a divine form exquisitely luminous and with beard on the chin appeared before him, and showed unto him everything worth-seeing. The Master's body was lying unconscious. This holy guide was none other than Kal Bhairava (the guardian angel of the city of Shiva.)

11. (After saluting Swami Vivekananda in honour and worship) "Whoever will go to imitate me in that land (America), he shall be bound up; verily shall he get ensnared!"—What a bold and prophetic pronouncement of Swamiji! Verily, great man is born, not made! In India who ever earned a greater name, and greater fame, and reputation than Swamiji? When he left America, along with it he also left all his costly robes he had there; and after reaching India, he at once took to his old habit—"Hath, Hath"—(The habit of a monktrotting bare footed

Barefooted would he go to Calcutta and come back, and like an ordinary man, in the public road, would he purchase Chanachur (a mixture of fried peas, grams, nuts, etc.—a very delicious preparation for the children-folk in particular). Sometimes we gave him a pair of shoes to wear and he would comply. What a tremendous fame, and a tremendous honour he did earn, but still more tremendous was the power he possessed to digest them wholesale! Reaching here, like an insignificant man, he roamed about and behaved: not the least trace of corruption could soil his mind! That is why it is said,—great man is born, not made!

12. Like Buddha one should behave. Behold, what a mighty renunciation he did make! For realising God he gave up all his royal comforts, quite unconcerned. What a severe course of discipline he had to undergo! When with all he could not realise God, he took a bath in the sacred Nirajana (a rivulet at Buddha Gaya), sat for the last time with this resolve: "Let this body go; but before self-illumination I will not leave my seat. This time I will be illumined and rise." And lo, the illumination came!

THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MOVEMENT—II

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement, as shown in the foregoing issue, is a spontaneous concrete expression of the cultural life of India, constituting a positive landmark in the history of human progress. Though born in India, it represents no parochialism but stands as the embodiment of the stimulating spiritual forces working towards the betterment of human lot in and outside India. Spirituality is the very soul of its existence and the indispensable condition of its growth and expansion. It is needless to point out that any movement in India, social or religious, which is not inspired by the universality of ideas and comprehensiveness of spiritual vision, stands *ipso facto* self-condemned and meets sooner or later with a natural death. But the movement that responds to the innate craving

of the human soul and the collective aspirations of men has a far-reaching historical implication and cannot exhaust its possibilities without fulfilling its noble destiny. The movement set on foot by Swami Vivekananda has already assumed unexpected proportions within a few years of his passing away and has given an unmistakable promise of a useful career in the moulding of human affairs for times to come. History stands witness to the fact that every great movement is to pass through the stages of opposition and indifference before it succeeds in compelling the admiration of the people and is eventually accepted as a living unit in the scheme of national reconstruction. Coming as it did at a time when all the channels of our national aspirations were silted up by the encrustations of ages and the whole humanity was wallowing in the filth of rank materialism, the movement has, within these few years of its inauguration, successfully arrested, in no small measure, the silent process of disintegration in the soil of its origin and has carried the message of spiritual consolation to many an anxious soul of the world outside. But the outlook and spirit of this movement was never so misunderstood as now; and many unthinking critics have in recent years run amuck at it in their frantic zeal to overhaul and pulverise all institutions, social or religious, into one single *political* organisation! Fanaticism in the realm of politics as in other spheres of life is the worst of all the evils that a national organism suffers from; for it poisons the whole system of national life and saps the spring of its manifold possibilities. Unfortunately the body-politic of India has of late developed symptoms of such a baneful disease. Modern India stands at the parting of the ways; the old values of life have in many cases been tested and found wanting. Under the stimulus of a new awakening she is seeking innate unity and strength to define the vague aspirations of her soul. The movements that have up till now sprung up and are still springing up from all sides are but the confused expressions of an awakened sense of India's latent capacities; but, to say the least, many of them have failed to satisfy the demands of human development. The age needed a movement that must assert what is India's soul, and collect the whole national being and swing it in a single act of self-realisation and universal redemption. Needless to say, the

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has been ushered into a spontaneous expression to meet these demands.

As already remarked, intensity of spiritual culture is the very soul of its being, and the movement has received a new orientation with the blending of the national ideals of renunciation and service in the scope of its synthetic activity. The merit of the movement is therefore to be judged not from the standpoint of mere political utility but from the perspective of its spiritual contribution to the sum-total of human progress. The movement stands not so much for politics as for religion that constitutes the vitality of Indian nationalism. It has, in short, the whole humanity in its broad and catholic sweep. The question may reasonably be asked what then would be the *national* significance of the movement if it does not take an active part in the politics of the land. The reply was eloquently embodied in the pithy pronouncement of Swami Vivekananda, "we shall conquer our conquerors"—not indeed by sword or political camouflage but by the culture and spirituality of our race. The tremendous power which the West exerts over the world consists in its material development of the forces of nature through the application of science, in its organising ability and dexterity in action; whereas the East bent on realising the transcendental verities of life never developed the above traits to an appreciable extent. The West depends for its salvation as much upon the acceptance of the highest rationalistic principles of the Vedanta, as the East does for its growth and emancipation upon the learning and the practical application of sciences from the West. In matters religious, India must ever be the acknowledged Teacher to the West, and the latter should sit at her feet to imbibe spirituality to find a solution for all her complicated problems. India on the other hand must welcome the marvellous achievements of the material sciences of the Occidental world and thereby establish bonds of equality on a basis of mutual respect, faith and sympathy; for it is through a synthesis of culture and mutual respect that 'India would rise spontaneously, her political demands would receive respectful attention and compliance of the ruling powers, and not by mendicant policy and frothy agitation through lecturing and writing in newspapers.' Though the principal object of the

movement is to awaken the dormant spiritual sense of mankind' the social, economic and philanthropic services have also been integrated in the programme of its activity as contributory factors in the realisation of the idealism it stands for. Mass-education, female emancipation, poverty problem, social upliftment, preservation of indigenous culture and dissemination of the accumulated spiritual wisdom of the race have engaged the close attention of the leaders of the movement since its inauguration. In a land where society has been transformed into a theatre for a devil's dance and the voiceless millions are rolling in the mud-puddle of superstitious usages and customs, empty political schemes can hardly appeal to human imagination unless the actualities of life are boldly faced and the works of social usefulness are taken up in right earnest to prepare the ground for political renaissance. That politics has a value of its own no body can gainsay, but to judge and view everything through the prism of political consideration is nothing short of an obsession that a patriotic soul must get rid of to envisage the true import of our higher national idealism. The conception and the line of activity of this present movement are in many respects distinct from those of other institutions; for "the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement teaches us to do all works with the highest of motives. Are you a householder? Then look upon your wife and children as images of God and serve them with your whole heart. Are you a monk? Then look upon all human beings as incarnations of God and serve with all your might, and it will help you to rise to the super-conscious state. Are you a patriot? Then give up all petty jealousies and heart-burnings which limit your vision and work incessantly to make your country really great by helping her to stand on what is true and noble. Thus to reach the super-conscious goal by renunciation and service and to help others to do the same, are what the movement teaches every one of us."

More than thirty years have already elapsed since the origination of this sacred movement under the aegis of the great patriot-saint Swami Vivekananda, and it has become an imperative necessity to take stock of the actual work of positive advancement it has done in the interests of peace and goodwill. Some may reasonably ask: "*Are the followers and disciples of the great*

Swami still true to the sacred ideal placed before them by the heroic monk? Is the monastic life anti-social or anti-national? Do the monks stand as useless parasites in the country?"—these are some of the questions that should be weighed and analysed at this stage of progress and development of the movement. No doubt, a satisfactory answer to these questions requires a detailed narration of the various fields of activity already covered by the movement in and outside India. But suffice it to say that, in spite of innumerable odds and impediments, the movement has secured a strong foothold in the citadel of human aspiration during this short period of time and has thereby justified its existence as a governing force in the history of mankind. Every great movement, as already stated, is beset with numerous obstacles at its initial stages. "When the great ones of the world come," says Dr. Rabindranath, "they bring conflict with them; or their coming had no significance. The multitude which drifts down with the stream places its trust in the ebbing current of humanity. But, for him who would work the boat of life up the stream, there is unending toil." This is true not only of great souls but of every great movement that is initiated by them for the good of mankind. But the movement that has spirituality as its driving force ultimately triumphs over all obstacles and establishes its permanent sway in the thought-world of men. Naturally the progress of such a movement, instead of being a meteoric one, becomes a slow and gradual process. Both Buddhism and Christianity needed the support of kings and emperors and covered a long stretch of time for their propagation and acceptance; but the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has none of the extraneous agencies of State-support and the natural advantages of those preceding ages, but stands firmly on its own feet and has, moreover, to grapple with the age long ignorance, lethargy and apathy of the people at large. It is indeed a significant phenomenon that the country today stands dotted with a network of educational and philanthropic institutions, besides a number of monasteries for the training of the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins,—a feature not even witnessed in the history of India during the Mohammedan and the Christian supremacy. The movement has developed a rich store religious literature of its own, furnished the country with well-equipped libraries of inestimable worth and has got to its credit

some powerful journals to educate the opinions of the public. And it must be admitted that in the field of social or philanthropic service, it has done the work of a pioneer, and many other organisations that have come into existence are but treading on the lines chalked out by it.

For the education of the country, it was the plan of Swami Vivekananda to start different types of institutions on national lines and to establish a Hindu University on the models of the great universities of Nalanda, Taxilla, Odontapuri and Vikramashila; but though the religious and technical institutions of various degrees of usefulness are coming into being under the fostering care of his followers, the vision of such a university has not yet materialised. For to actualise this noble project *men* and money are sorely needed. Swamiji wanted a hundred thousand men and women fired with the zeal of holiness to effectuate his lofty ideal. But where is the response to the call of the Swami? The phenomenal extensivity that the work has already attained and the repeated call for men from the world outside, can only be met by the devoted service of at least an organised band of five thousand Sannyasins and not by such a handful of the consecrated souls that are now bearing the burden with slow but steady steps. Nevertheless, the Vedanta Societies at New York, San Francisco, La Crescenta, Boston, Portland and Providence, not to speak of such Societies at Singapore, F. M. S. and Brazil, are but distinct indications of the gradual penetration and crystallisation of the sublime principles of the Vedanta—the crown of Hindu thought and philosophy—in the life of the Western people. Hundreds of men and women in the Occidental world have embraced the Vedantic ideal as the solvent of the complex problems of life as well as the basis of future reconstruction of the social and economic aspirations of the different nations. As in the West so in India also the problems are so inter-related and inter-dependent that no definite line of demarcation can at all be drawn between them. The political regeneration of the land, as it has been repeatedly emphasised, depends upon the health and vigour of its social life, and this ideal condition can be created only through constructive works of village-organisation on the basis of religious education of the people. Today it is gratifying to note that this present movement has succeeded in no

small measure to rouse the social and spiritual consciousness of the country by placing before it the sacred heritage of Indian culture and the ideal of disinterested service.

But no movement, however great or significant, can claim perfection, and necessarily the history of the progressive realisation of its ideal is chequered by many ups and downs. Even the great Indian National Congress which has developed into such a powerful force in the country had to struggle up the gorge of opposition and indifference in its initial stages and the difficulties even today are nonetheless great and baffling. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement is not an exception to the universal law of nature. "Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blasts of trumpet and the march of cohort, gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword, but spiritual knowledge can only be given in silence, like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into blossom masses of rose." India has a great spiritual message to deliver to the world and this movement has taken up in right earnest the work of fulfilling the sacred task India has to discharge for the benefit of mankind. Madeline R. Harding rightly says: "The thinkers of India have a deep-rooted conviction that India is the spiritual storehouse of the world, and it is an oft-repeated saying that India has a message definitely of her own to give to the world. This view is not held by Indians only but by great Western students who have opened their minds to receive truth wherever found: foremost among them we may mention Max Muller, Paul Deussen, and Schopenhauer. Many believe that India's contribution will afford the key to most of the intricate problem of humanity, for it is the philosophy of India alone which teaches the great truth of Oneness—Oneness of God and man and the universe,—Oneness which embraces all living beings without distinction of race, colour or creed. Other countries emphasise variety; India teaches variety in unity." In fact the greatness of India's spiritual culture has been recognised in the world outside, and the importance of the part played by this new religious movement can hardly be overestimated. The literary, philosophic and scientific geniuses of almost all the countries have caught the spirit of the Vedantic conception of human life

and have zealously advocated this principle as the only panacea for all the corroding ills the modern world is subject to.

The magnitude of the sacred task the monks have undertaken shall appear in all its hallowed grandeur when the hard realities of the situation are envisaged with the frankness and candour of a practical idealist. The country paralysed with political and economic thralldom, has never been in so dire need of an organised attempt for rural and social reconstruction as it is now; but the materialisation of any such noble scheme for the healthy growth of social and religious life in the country presupposes a heroic band of workers whose whole life should be a burning instance of continued sacrifice,—of renunciation and service. Every village must be organised into a nerve-centre of culture and social polity from which will come forth a valiant band of workers, practical idealists, sufferers and sacrificers who will sweep and scour, polish and brighten, wash and clean till India shines like a plate of burnished gold. But have the leaders of the country taken the step in the right direction? Are they preparing the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere of the country for the production of such heroic souls? On the other hand there is a persistent and organised attempt in some interested influential quarters to cry down such a life of renunciation and to besmirch *the sacred ideal of spiritual life*. The modern literature of the country which is more of the nature of pornography for the filthy ideas and pictures it represents than of a powerful moral force to educate public opinions, has been injecting the virus of a demoralised ideal into the veins of our social organism; the fantastic philosophy of pragmatism as imported from the West has blinded the vision of many to the innate significance and potential glory of a life spiritual and has led them to label down any movement that is not distinctly political in its outlook as anti-national or a useless parasite sucking as it were the very life-blood of the social life! Such a queer and anti-Indian notion has in recent years crept into the land and has already obsessed many great Indian souls. From the platform and the press, there is a frenzied attempt to knock down the lofty ideal of India's spiritual life on which the entire structure of our society stands. There is still time to undo the mischief already done to the cause of India's freedom. It is not too much to expect that

if the leaders of the country who have the good of their land at heart realise the true drift of our national aspiration, the country shall not be in want of such self-sacrificing souls, and the organisation of the country into a nucleus of strength and vigour under the auspices of such devoted workers shall not remain an airy nothing but will be a *fait accompli* at no distant future.

But to realize this ideal in action, reverence for India's culture and the recognition of her spiritual genius are most essential. But it is painful to find that recently one rising political leader of Bengal has fallen foul of some religious institutions of the country such as the Pandicheri school of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh and the Sabarmati school of Mahatma Gandhi, and has even gone to the ridiculous length of levelling a most unwarranted and undignified attack against the practice of Yoga and the ideal of Sannyasa—the very salt of a life spiritual. Doubtless this kind of sentimental effusion does not comprehend the whole of the man, nor does it take away from his patriotism and love for the country. But is it not sheer Jingoism to rush to criticise an ideal to which one is a stranger? Nothing can be more ludicrous than the denunciation of the sacred idealism that has kept India still what she is even to-day in the realm of culture, on an imaginary ground of its failure to meet the national demands. The Sannyasa is a crystallised Hindu ideal and not a foreign importation; nor has it been foisted into the organic life of the nation through some fortuitous concourse of events; but it embodies the principle that has been governing the life and character of the Indian race since the dawn of their civilisation. Politics is not the be-all and end-all in the life of a nation though it has its own limited share of contribution to make to the evolution of its destiny. What is politics but one of the ancillary means to the attainment of collective social good? The forces of nationalism cannot be straitened to identify themselves with politics alone: for, Indian nationalism is the result of a synthetic working of its cosmic life-principles embracing all the aspects of our collective existence. And that it has not yet degenerated into narrow chauvinism is the proof positive that it is penetrated with the conception of a brotherhood transcending nationality—a broader conception of the great Society, as composed not of those alone who adhere to its particular creeds but of all 'the men of

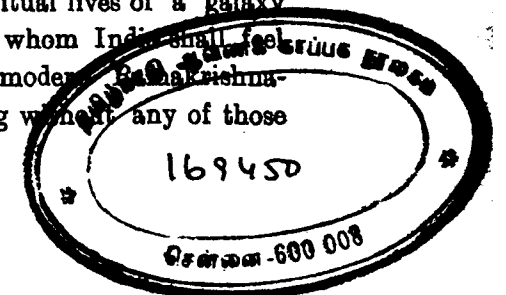
goodwill' who are conscious of a common humanity and devoted to the service of their kind.

Moreover such a lofty conception of a nation's outlook does not compromise itself with an ideal of *activism* divorced from spirituality. That is why Swami Vivekananda has repeatedly warned us against the false philosophy of aimless activism as well as of morbid quietism. "Rajas", he says, "is apt to die down as soon as it is up, like a fire of palm leaves. . . . The nation in which the quality of Rajas predominates is not so long-lived, but a nation with a preponderance of Sattva is, as it were, immortal. History is a witness to this." But the observation of the Swami is equally trenchant against a life of idleness masquerading under the cloak of Sattva. "Do you not see,—taking up this plea of Sattva, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their spirituality by covering it with a false desire for the highest knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one born and bred in life-long laziness wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness-for-work.....where knowledge consists in getting some books by heart, *genius consists in chewing the cud of others' thought*, and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors—do we require any other proof to show that country is being day by day drowned in utter Tamas?" But unfortunately we very often mistake one for the other and fail to appraise the real values of *spiritual* life in the heat of our *political* enthusiasm and run amuck at whatever does not feed our cherished philosophy of life, however narrow and suicidal it may be. Indeed we have reached a stage when *activism* in its most intense form is to be cultivated to arrest the silent process of demoralisation that is going on in the country. For this is not the time even to weep in joy. We have already been reduced to a mass of wax through sloppy sentimentalism. "What our country now wants is muscles of iron, nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the Universe, and will accomplish their purpose even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. This is what we want, and *that can only be created and strengthened by understanding and realising the ideal of*

Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all." India has again witnessed a tremendous spiritual upheaval in modern times through the consecration of the lives of a heroic band of Sannyasins who have gone over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social rising-up—the gospel of equality to the poor, the fallen and the down-trodden millions of their countrymen.

The contribution of monasticism to the growth of national well-being has been no less glorious than that of any other movement in the life-history of the people. The history of India is still a living witness to what the Buddhist monks of the past did in respect of the conservation of India's culture and the dissemination of the spiritual ideal before humanity. The remnants of Nalanda, Taxilla, Odontapuri and Vikramsila even now testify to the splendid service the Buddhist monks rendered to the world by their life of renunciation and poverty. India basked in the sunshine of an independent life, and the royal support to the spiritual movement of that distant age contributed not a little to the phenomenal propagation of the ideal under the auspices of the ochre-clad Sannyasins of the order. The monasteries became the living seats of learning and culture and ultimately developed into big universities, the relics of which even now extort the unstinted admiration of the world. History records a similar phenomenon in Europe in the Middle Ages. The Catholic monks stood as the torch-bearers of culture and spirituality. It was in the monasteries where the light of learning was kept burning undimmed when the whole of Europe was practically steeped in the darkness of ignorance. The friars and cenobites were indeed the evangelists of hope and inspiration to the people and were looked upon as the custodians of the moral and spiritual interests of men. It is the unflagging assiduity and spiritual enthusiasm of these Christian monks that saved the Greek literature and the ancient civilisation of Europe from complete annihilation, and imparted stimulus to the different fields of human activity. Again, the history of the Sikh and the Mahratta revival is the history of the spiritual lives of a galaxy of Sikh gurus and the Mahratta saints, of whom India shall feel proud for ages to come. In India the modern Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, though working without any of those

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natural advantages enjoyed by the Buddhist or the Christian monks, has stood for the emancipation of Indian life from its state of torpidity by means of a cultural awakening and the stimulation of the spiritual instincts of the race. It cannot be gainsaid that in spite of multifarious impediments, the movement has developed into a dynamic centre of culture and a nucleus of immense strength for the future guidance of human thought and activity. We must not be blind to the far-reaching implications of our historic evolution. History, if studied without prejudice, teaches the greatest lesson of all—to treat social life not as a mechanical combination, but an organic process. We are constantly striving to shape and improve it, but it cannot be pulled to pieces and re-settled at pleasure, because its roots are in the past and its functions stretch over centuries. Its growth and defects have to be studied in the light of social biology, social hygiene and social pathology, not in that of social mechanics. That is why we are instinctively or consciously attracted by the links with the past too numerous to be eliminated in our national life. The past and the present are organically connected and go up to fashion the future. Naturally the traditional instincts of our race-culture are too deep-seated in our collective life and any attempt to negate the governing forces of life in the heat of temporary enthusiasm is nothing short of suicide and is therefore bound to defeat the ends of our national undertaking.

The intensity of vigour that is palpably manifest at the initial stage of a movement is sure to be less prominent when transcending its original narrow bounds, it silently spreads through every limb of the national organism. But if the driving force of the movement is not properly nourished and kept alive by a ceaseless activity and spiritual culture, it is sure to stagnate into 'passivism more actual than philosophical' and its manifold possibilities stand in the danger of being nipped in the bud. The present movement has invaded almost all the legitimate fields of human thought in a way, suited to the temper and genius of the Indian race. And the success of the movement depends upon the concentration and mobilization of all the forces lying at the disposal of 'these sappers and miners of the army of religion.' They must forge ahead, sinking all their differences, fancied or real, with an indomitable courage of conviction and unity of purpose

for the fulfilment of the noble mission they have undertaken. "The trumpet blast of truth has been sounded in our midst. Once more is our country awakening to that renewed apprehension of her religious wealth which has been the forerunner of every impulse known to our history. In Vivekananda, we have a reformulation of the Vedas and the Upanishads, suited not only by its quality to meet the needs even of modern incredulity, but also universal in its appeal to be capable of opening the treasures of our literature to foreign peoples. The time may seem slow in coming, but it will assuredly arrive, when the influx of Oriental thought upon the modern consciousness will seem to historians and critics the great event of these passing centuries." The un-failing benedictions of the two mighty souls of India—Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda—are working behind the movement and they must ever be the guiding force in all our activities. "In you," said the Swami, "is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and the whole Universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, not matter." We must not forget that "*India shall be raised not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyasin; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging-bowl. Say not that you are weak. The spirit is omnipotent.....Call up the divinity within you, which will enable you to bear hunger, thirst, heat and cold. Sitting in luxurious homes, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and doing out a little amateur religion may be good for other lands, but India has a truer instinct. It instinctively detects the mask. You must give up. Be great. No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Pursha Himself sacrificed Himself to create this world. Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your name, fame or position, nay, even your lives, and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life.*" Let us therefore pursue *the life of intense spiritual culture* for 'self-realisation and universal redemption' and leave no stone unturned for the establishment of a fraternal understanding between man and man, nation and nation, through a co-ordination and synthesis of the cultural elements of the diverse races of the world. May the Lord bless all our honest efforts with success. And let us pray:—

वीर्यमसि वीर्यं बलमसि बलं ओजोऽसि ओजो सहोऽसि सहो मयि चेहि ।—“Thou art energy, impart energy unto me. Thou art strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art spirituality, impart spirituality unto me. Thou art fortitude, impart fortitude unto me.

Om Shantih ! Shantih ! Shantih !

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

By Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer

“Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that has come to birth,” declared an Irish poet. Just as viewing the sea you notice the waves surging forward one higher than the other and breaking the shores, but as the waves after coasting the shore retreat, there is a draught, a hollow which represents the ebb tide, the retreat of the physical sea ; so likewise in the history of nations, as in the history of individuals, there is a flow, an ebb and a retreat. There is a time when the spirit is resurged and retaliates sometimes. There are occasions and times when the spirit seems dead, nay, half dead and alive with that deadness more sad than absolute death, that deadens just like death. That does happen to individuals as it happens to nations and civilizations. And so when the poet said that each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth, he embodied in those imperishable words, the following few ideas : In the first place, it was his concern to point out that the outer happenings of the world matter very little to the man personally for the rest ; excepting in so far as he embodies an idea or an ideal—the dream—excepting to the extent to which he gets some glimpses of the stars, the sunshine and the moonshine has no difference to us who are his own. That is the first idea conveyed in these words—each age is a dream. And that dream cannot long continue. Whether pleasurable or painful, these dreams are transitory and so also the going back of the dream and the coming with the broad casual vicissitudes of the life or the dream. So each age is a dream that is varying, one that is born. When Swami Vivekananda was born we had died in every sense. For, look back as you will upon the history—intellectual and speculative—of India ; what lesson do you derive, what significance do you get from the history of the Indian thought and Indian life? If India meant anything in the

* Extract from the Presidential Address delivered on the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, at the Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah.

past, it meant courage—courage, fortitude and the ability to declare to the world what the spirit held without equivocation. Atheism is not easily associated with Hinduism and yet the atheistic school of thought and the pantheistic, the monistic, dualistic, etc., schools of thought—all found expression in the systems,—Vaiseshika, etc. Whatever the conditions may be and whatever the obstacles, physical or otherwise may be, the realm and system of thought of India knew no boundaries and flinched at nothing. Hence it was that when Rigveda was sung, those hymns captured and raptured the world, and later on when Buddha rose and proclaimed the very opposite of the accepted beliefs, after the first clash and conflict, you accepted the rebel as a divinity and Buddha became another Avatar. Such is the history of India. As the waves first break in the shores, it is resisted, then oppressed, then accepted, then cannonised, and so the infinite adaptability of the Indian mind to new ideas that have been hammering at her doors has been more a boon to her.

That was India of old, and when our Mussalman brethren came, they came in through the Afgans, the Mongolians ; they came, they conquered and they were content to be conquered and assimilated. Look at the Taj. What is it ? What does it mean ? It means assimilation. It means catholicity. Indian ideas, Indian ideals, the outpourings of the spirit with the offerings of Central Asia have found expression in the furnace—aspiring and assimilating and adopting.

Unfortunately the time came when the dream seemed to be dying. Another race, competitive, individualistic and essentially aggressive, appeared in our midst with a civilization different in so many respects from ours,—not framed in terms of the family, of the community, of the village, but framed in terms of the individual, and competition. Spirit of the West came upon us and we assimilated it imperfectly. The late lamented Surendranath Banerjee has described in his autobiography the beginnings of the making of Western civilization and Western life upon the life-spirit of Bengal. What is it that Bengal did? The Bengali is the standard-bearer of India, full of emotion, easily adaptable to ideas, perhaps a little dictatable as well. When the ideals were in the furnace and when to the Bengali the life of the West came, it came in a crude way. The young men of Bengal as soon as they went to Europe and returned had copied all the features of the West. One of these features is a little brandy and whisky. Another of these features was beef ; especially beef was not considered worthy without its counterpart liquor, and so Surendranath Banerjee says of educated boys bringing beef into their houses in

order to shock their people and in order to show how emancipated they were! That was how reaction began. The story of new wine in old bottles is known to all. That was what took place in India. The spirit of the West is manifest in its literature, in its music, in its painting and in its sculpture. But the difference between the two types of culture is sharply marked. Contrast, for instance, the sculptures of the West,—with Nataraja or Kanyakumari. The contrast is more beautifully illustrated in the monumental poem in the English language, *Paradise Lost*, where Satan is represented as fighting against odds with the powers on high showing a spirit that will not be curbed. That is the spirit of the West. What is the culture of the East? It represents the clash and conflict of spirit with the world, the conflict, the fight with the destiny. Nataraja instances the absorption in the cosmic dance, despite the improper proportion of the limbs; the one (West) lives in the outer world and is in conflict with the orders of the true world, that is essentially different; while the other (East) lives in the spirit.

Having regard to the very great and fundamental difference between the two civilizations, it is not easy to assimilate these two. When Swami Vivekananda was born we were passing to a stage when the old ideas of Ashramas, the spiritual foundation of everything transcendental, had gone. We were seeking to assimilate the Western spirit and did assimilate it imperfectly. At this stage it looked very much as if without getting anything from the West we shall be losing all that was in us. And as the Gita says it is at these critical times, on these significant occasions, that God-head sends out its ministers amongst us. Swami Vivekananda came unto us with a message both of the East and the West. He spoke to us of the West because he had earned the right to speak to us of the West and he was an interpreter of us to the West and of the West to us and what he did was the dream that was coming to birth.

There is one thing that is requisite amongst us—that is the desideratum amongst us to-day. It is that old Indian habit of courage—unflinching and sacrificing courage, absorbing and wholly renouncing courage and that courage was the message of Swami Vivekananda. He has told us that we have made a religion of the kitchen. He has asked us to forget the kitchen for a while and has pleaded for self-respect and self-realization. Unless the Indian is sure of himself and unless he is satisfied that he has got a right to live and to exist and to function and to evolve his own idea, he will never be able to live. So the Swami has given us the message that the spirit

which has made so much in the past can never wholly die. This race will never perish. Fancy and remember your heritage. That is his first message. But it is not worth while living if you merely exist without spirit, and without giving something to the world you had better not live. But the respect in which Sri Ramakrishna and his disciple Swami Vivekananda differed from Sankara and others was in this, viz., that they consciously or unconsciously assimilated from the West. Our Ashramas were fleeing away from the world. A man lived his first three Ashramas, and after having done his duty to his family, he resorted to the last Ashrama to commune himself with God and Heaven. There was an illustrious exception commencing from Buddha. But elsewhere in other countries, it was considered the right thing for a man at the stage of emancipation not to cut away from the world but to come into it. Plato in one of his dialogues refers to this. There are two ways in which to serve the world, either by running away into mountain tops or by coming down from the mountain tops. Swami Vivekananda betook himself unto the second. He was a democratic saint. He revived for us the idea of nationhood. He was the first of those, who made it possible to think of India as a whole irrespective of the existing differences of class, creed, colour and custom. He pleaded for the driving away of everything that would prevent the union of India. He knew that unless India was one spiritually and intellectually, India could not step into the outer world. A distracted, quarrelsome, feeble-minded India would not be of any assistance in the world and therefore he said, "unite". And if the union means the discipline of orthodoxy of forms which had outlived their existence, he flew in the face of such orthodoxy not because he was not one of the long line of saints but because it is necessary to throw aside the cargo, so that the ship may go. Our ship of Religion and of State is now laden full of many cargoes, precious, some by no means precious, some wholly nugatory. We must throw aside such cargo. The storm is there. The great winds are blowing and unless the useless cargo is thrown aside, the ship will sink. The Swami asked of us to sink the unnecessary cargo. And unless we get that lesson, and unless resolutely and without pausing or looking away we throw aside the worthless cargo, India will perish as the several nations have perished. Take for instance Egypt, where one can even now feast his eyes with the relics of that Egyptian civilization. But where has that civilization gone? Why should we not take the lessons of some other countries—Mexico for instance. The Swami was one of the first to preach to us to cut asunder the ridges and classes between communities and communities, to cut away all

the excrescences that have unfortunately crept into our religion and are eating away our vitality. His gospel was the gospel of courage, his gospel was the gospel of hope and admiration, his gospel was the gospel of assimilation, the gospel of eschewal and assimilation—that is the gospel for which we shall live and without getting which we shall allow ourselves to die.

EARLY MARRIAGE OR BRAHMACHARYA

By Swami Iswarananda

The Hindu society is confronted to-day with many a serious problem that awaits a sober and skilful tackling at the hands of the sincere well-wishers of the land. The Hindus are just now greatly agitated over the knotty problem of child-marriage, and one is really dumb-founded at the stout opposition the question of its abolition has received from men who are expected to know better. The institution of pre-puberty marriage is, to say the least, a long-standing evil in as much as it has been eating away for centuries the vitality of the nation. What strikes us as very curious and surprising in this opposition campaign against the reform-measure is the ignorant 'hue and cry' that has been raised from the orthodox circle, viz., the cry of "Religion in danger." That has been the slogan in their mouth, sung in season and out of season whenever any change in the existing order of things has been proposed. We are indeed tired of hearing from these wiseacres how the Varnashrama Dharma will be totally annihilated if the Panchamas and others are given equality of privileges and rights in the Hindu society, or if a reconvert to the Hindu faith is admitted into the fold, and how all spirituality and divine presence will take to wings if the *devadasis* are not retained in the temples! The country has borne patiently for some years past with this cry of "Varnashrama in danger" until that word has been made to nauseate in the mouths of its votaries. The masses have been kept in ignorance of the principles of their religion for such a length of time that they now get frightened at every silly nonsense in the name of Varnashrama Dharma. But the nation is slowly waking up from this age-long hypnotism and coming to its own and has begun to realize what is the indispensable desideratum of the modern age, however much the orthodox section may cry at the top of their voice.

The so-called custodians of the society lay a vigorous stress on the four Ashramas for the attainment of the four Purusharthas; but one really fails to understand which of the four Purusharthas, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, is attained by one tied down to a boy

or girl of five. The kernel of their entire philosophy seems to be that he or she can never discharge the duties of the four Ashramas of Brahmacharya, Garbhashtya, Vanaprastha or Sannyasa, without becoming a husband or a wife! Is not that the meaning of the cry "Varnashrama in danger"? We admire this temerity of theirs, but humbly submit that it is not, certainly, sanctioned by the scriptures of the Hindus. On the other hand, the Vedas and the Upanishads have all laid down Brahmacharyam as the *sine qua non* of a religious life. It is enjoined as the first of the Ashramas, the rigorous discipline of which is the only passport to enter either the *grihastha* or *sannyasa ashrama*. Does not the institution of child-marriage go entirely against this Vedic injunction of *brahmacharyam*? Surely, no quotation from the Smritis can be allowed to stand against the injunctions of the Upanishads.

There is now-a-days a good deal of glib talk about Varnashrama Dharma, without the Varnas or the Ashramas. Is it not a fact that this Varnashrama Dharma has absolutely no foundation and is a meaningless jargon in the absence of the first Ashrama which forms the training ground for and the happy prelude to all the other Ashramas? May we not reasonably ask how many among the professed Varnashramites take to or are prepared to take to the last two Ashramas, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa, in pursuance of the holy injunctions of the Shastras?

Perhaps we will be told that the boys and girls observe Brahmacharyam till they attain maturity and that the child-marriage is a mere betrothal without any of the implications of the married life. We must emphatically say that it is nothing but a travesty of what is meant by true Brahmacharyam. Brahmacharyam implies the control and manipulation of the sexual forces and transmutation of them into spiritual energy for the realization of Brahman. But there is practically nothing to conquer, to control, and to sublimate in a boy or a girl before he or she has attained maturity and puberty. Any talk of Brahmacharyam, therefore, in the case of a boy, say approximately before fifteen, or of a girl before twelve, is meaningless. It is only the beginning of the Brahmacharya Ashrama. Therefore the sort of Brahmacharyam now obtaining is not true Brahmacharyam and it is far, far from the conception of the Brahmacharyam which the Rishis of the Vedic period had intended. Thus, we find here only one Ashrama in the place of the *chaturashramas*, viz., that of the *grihastha* which has swallowed up all the other three and it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Hindu now walks straight from

the nursery to the marriage-randal; and as the Grihasthasrama has absorbed all the other three, he must fulfil the Dharma of all the others in this one Ashrama! Let there be no wonder at this; for where is the power for abstinence and self-control required for the last two Ashramas in the absence of the first Ashrama in which the youth formerly learned to subordinate and subjugate all lower passions and thoughts in the interest of a higher spiritual ideal, so that he or she could steer safe and fast through the stormy sea of the Grihastha's life without getting sunk in the eddies and whirls of worldliness and sensuality? The result is that with those who are most vociferous about this Varnashrama we find only the *ekashrama* of the householder covering the whole of his life from the cradle to the grave. Verily, this is a headache without a head! We still do not know which "Ashrama" is in danger. Certainly not that of the Brahmacharya, or Vanaprastha, or Sannyasa, for none of them requires the companionship of a husband or a wife. No Dharma of the Brahmacharin, or Vanaprasthain, or Sannyasin is going to suffer if the marriageable age of boys and girls is raised. And we are yet to learn how the duties of the married householder's life cannot be discharged properly if the parties are allowed to grow up to maturity with a sense of responsibility.

Social slavery is no less galling than political subjection. The orthodox section dug their own grave when they formulated for ever and for all that one and all, male or female, should without exception lead the married householder's life. The present unbending attitude of these people has been rendered all the more ridiculous inasmuch as they have not either the heart or the intelligence to recognise the force of the healthy dynamic changes that have come over the entire outlook of social life. We do not understand what right the parents have to decide that their sons or daughters should have a married life, whether they would like it or not when they come to their own. What Dharma is it that keeps down any one from aspiring for a higher ideal of life if he or she so desires? Why should the whole world be thrust, without their knowledge of its consequences and significance, into the "mill of the Grihastha's life"? There are some reformers with whom the life of Brahmacharyam with its chastity and purity, physical and mental, is out of court. So long as the reformer sets up this world as all in all, as the ideal for society to strive after, it is no wonder that he finds it so difficult to lift it out of the mire in which he has himself got stuck up. But thanks to the great seers and Acharyas of India, the Hindu society had held before it a higher ideal than this silly liberty of

merely marrying whomsoever and whenever we like. It is indeed high time that we should struggle for this ancient noble ideal; let there be room and freedom for one and all to choose a higher ideal if he or she can do it; let them grow up into self-conscious thinking men and women, so that they can decide it for themselves, for why should any one take to a lower ideal, if one can try something better? There must be sufficient freedom to live a higher and nobler life and liberty to lead a life of *akhanda brahmacharyam* of the Naishtika Brahmacharin or Brahmacharini.

Aye, Brahmacharyam for women!! We know that that would sound very strange in the ears of the modern Varnashrami and frighten him out of his wits. He may not perhaps mind much if that "freak of nature" were once in a while to affect a male, but for girls, it is something unnecessary, nay, something dangerous and unthinkable. To him, she is nothing but one fated to be the companion of the male in this wild goose chase of the enjoyment of the flesh. She can be only a Sahadharmini and she should not stand aside to have her own Dharma!

Let no one think that we are unaware of the awful fear and anxiety that the guardians feel in keeping grown up girls unmarried at home. It is an open secret that it is this fear that is at the root of this pre-puberty marriage, and not the requirements of Varnashrama Dharma. Let the defenders of this custom come out to face the facts as they are; for a sincere approach can alone give the proper solution for this problem. Medieval India tried to solve the problem by introducing child-marriage in the society and the result was the terrible degeneration of the physique and moral strength and virility of the race that we see in modern India. Shall we wash mud with mud? Shall we prop up weakness with weakness? Or shall India go back to the virile ancient Aryan system of Brahmacharya Vidyalayas for girls as well as for boys? The orthodox section are to weigh these pressing questions with an open and unprejudiced mind and must not forget that India is now passing through a crisis unprecedented in the history of the land. It should therefore be the look-out of all, orthodox or otherwise, to see India again a free country socially, politically and spiritually; and in the grim struggle for the regeneration of this fallen race, the noble idealism of the ancient seers and prophets must be always kept in the forefront of our thoughts, and all selfish interests and even this blind orthodoxy must be sacrificed at the altar of national good. The country demands an immediate response from all responsible thinkers of Indian society; for the future welfare of the nation depends entirely upon the proper

solution of these social problems. Let us not also forget what the Upanishads declare:—

न प्रजया धनेन न वैज्या त्यागेनैकेन अमृतत्वमानुः—“Neither through wealth, nor through progeny, nor through sacrifices, but by renunciation and renunciation alone is immortality attained.”

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसाद्येव आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम्—“This Atam is to be attained by truthfulness, self-concentration, true knowledge, and by unbroken continence.”

THE POWER OF WORD IN SOCIETY

By Prof. Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M. A.

We speak to convey our ideas to other minds—this is the primary motive of speech. If there were no other man on earth besides myself, there would be no necessity for words, which are merely the vehicles of our thoughts. Words are the main social ties—the physical symbols of our individual sentiments—that bind us together and help us into one organised whole. If this be the integrating and binding power of words, the importance of cultivating the power of speech as an art in human society cannot be exaggerated. Words unite, words also sever, they make friends, they also create enemies. We know how the most dreadful foe is sometimes won over by sweet words and how even the most loving friend is distanced by harsh and unkind words. It may be urged by some that sweet words may very often be hypocritical cloaks to cover our inward malice and hatred and may thus mislead and that we should not overrate their importance. It is better—these people argue—to be always frank and candid and chastise with our tongue, when the heart feels inclined to it. But if such chastisement were normal in society and the importance of sweet behaviour ignored, man would prefer to go back to his jungle life far away from the bickerings and taunts of his fellow-men. Civilised society is thus based on mutual toleration and forgiveness. I may feel angry with another but that is no reason for me to burst into a fit of indignation and address a homily on better conduct to my fellow-man. A man who behaves thus will be at once dubbed quixotic. It was no more possible for Don Quixote to cure the social evils of his day, by his knight-errantry than it is for a man with a bitter tongue to cure the foibles of his fellow-men.

The very soul of society lies in a spirit of mirth and that man is most fitted for life in it who knows by his sweet behaviour how best to foster that spirit. The melancholy Jacques by his invectives against the society certainly does not succeed in “cleaning the infected body

of this world”—he only makes himself ludicrous and contents himself with his solitude. We want the sunny sparkle of a brilliant wit to make us happy and those who will only whine and grumble or rail and inveigh against others are backnumbers in a progressive society. It was indeed a wise remark of Abraham Lincoln when he said, “Laugh, the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone”. Here we have in a nutshell the social instincts which bind man with man. To be able to enjoy a hearty laugh in a friend's company, while exchanging our ideas and sentiments, really makes the foundations of our true fellowship deeper and stronger. The egotistic who do not feel the impact of a wider life beyond the hard crusts of their own little selves are deprived of the cheering and cementing power of a sweet friendly discourse—such people casting a gloom wherever they go only choke up social life. A weeping philosopher holding himself at a distance from his less gifted fellow-men may leave behind precious saws and maxims, but his rare words of advice do not spread themselves to “the wider commonalty” and do not touch and mould the social consciousness so much, as our utterances while we are in the best of spirits and moods, feeling the mutual vibrations of our souls as blending themselves into one harmony.

It will thus be seen how great is the importance of the right choice of words while communicating our ideas to others. Our words and expressions must convey to our fellows that we love them, we like them and are of them and that however much our differences in thought or customs may be, we are all members of one society and that is the society of men. We must, if we want to shine as popular figures in society and help it by our separate individualities, forget local prejudices and passions as far as possible and take the greatest-common measure of human likes or dislikes as the basis of our conversations or speeches. There must of course be reformers and teachers who from time to time would shake us up, while we are getting torpid and the very sharpness of their tongue would only help the injection of new and progressive ideas into the social body. But such talkers only appear to give a leaven to the society and then leave it to the mass to carry it on to the fulfilment of their ideas and it is the many who by their mutual toleration and good understanding keep the society going, and must, therefore, remember the value of sweet behaviour towards one another, if they want to truly prosper and profit by living together. True culture aims at imparting a certain degree of sweetness to our conduct and the different relationships of life, and that sweetness best shows itself in the way we talk to or address our fellow-men. Generally speaking, the following hints may

be profitably remembered, if we want to develop the right habit of speech as members of a good society:—

1. The heart must have charity, while the tongue wants to speak. Man is not a talking machine but the word that he utters should have the sweet breath of life in it. He must not in the words of St. Paul, degenerate into a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

2. While speaking, remember the company you are in and shape your utterances accordingly.

3. All that concerns man is to be taken with the seriousness that it may demand; while dealing with something solemn or sacred, the jesting mood must be avoided.

4. Logical precision and accuracy of thought must mark the outpourings of a rational mind. All random talk, which is in no way connected with the topic of conversation or discourse, must be avoided.

5. The first person singular—unless required for an occasional emphasis of your point—should, as a rule, be avoided, or you will soon be regarded as a bore.

6. No community or society should ever be indicated as a class.

7. Never indulge in a joke simply to tickle or titillate. Experiments with the human mind must be religiously avoided like those with the living human body.

8. But try to introduce as much liveliness and innocent wit into your speech as you can and so capture your audience. Let your wit be "like summer lightning which would dazzle, but never strike".

9. Talk with a true sincerity of purpose, not simply to produce an effect. Be not only theatrical, but be straight forward, remembering the Sanskrit adage सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् मा ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् । "Speak the truth, the sweet truth and not the bitter truth".

10. Aim at the expression or diction which would bring out the true essence of your thoughts.

11. The right word in the right place is the golden motto. Avoid all personalities in your talk.

12. If you are annoyed at an evil conduct, draw attention to it tactfully, expressing your resentment in a firm, unequivocal but gentle tone, showing that while you hate the evil, you care for the person who indulges in it. But never assume superior airs.

13. Do not aim at cheap popularity. Nothing truly great or genuine was ever achieved by one who simply wanted to cater to popular tastes, sacrificing his own judgments.

14. You must be able to convince your fellow-men, if you want to be any body in your society, that you have your own way of thinking. But you must not be forcing your opinion on others obtrusively.

15. Let sobriety and suavity always mark your conversations or speeches.

THE REVOLT OF ASIA

By A. Lobanov Rostovsky

It is becoming more and more apparent that in the decades to come the paramount political problem of the world will be the relations between Europe and Asia. The questions which confronted the anxious minds of the pre-war generation and were considered sufficient to bring on a world war, such as the rise of German power and the disintegration of Turkey, are completely dwarfed by this gigantic new issue raised by the violent push of eight hundred million Asiatics who, rightly or wrongly, considered that Europe has robbed them of their place in the sun. It becomes, therefore, supremely important to have a correct vision of the problem and to clear it of the distortions apt to be produced by insufficient or superficial knowledge.

The general public is under the impression that the present unrest in Asia is due to its violent and sudden awakening after a long sleep, as a result of contact with European civilisation. A closer scrutiny of Asiatic history will show that this view is widely off the mark. To get a really comprehensive view of the present stage in the development of Asia we must go back to the middle and end of the seventeenth century. At that time European civilisation had not yet embarked on the tremendous technical and industrial developments that were to revolutionise the world. Though Europe had achieved a state of power and brilliancy not known since Roman days, the exterior aspects of life had not been much modified since then, and the citizen of Charles the Second's day did not enjoy more comforts or amenities in travel or at home than did the contemporary of Ovid. For Asia, on the other hand, this period marks a climax in cultural and political development.

At the end of the seventeenth century China is enjoying a long spell of peace and prosperity under the powerful Ching dynasty, and the reigning Emperor Kanghsi is the second greatest ruler the country has known throughout its long history. He conquers Turkestan, brings Tibet under his sway, and with his son and grandson will achieve the greatest territorial expansion the Empire has known. Technical and cultural progress is encouraged under his broad-minded leadership. He protects the Jesuits, has the famous Imperial dictionary and the great encyclopaedia of 16,000 volumes compiled, and promotes the building of canals and roads.

It is a brilliant reign, and when he dies in 1723, as Professor Soothill puts it, he leaves "the greatest contemporary Empire in the world in the combination of extent, ordered government and culture".

In India it is the reign of the last of the Great Moguls, Aurangzeb. Though it has not the glory and the brilliancy of the days of Akbar, still well within living memory, yet it is a very great reign. Under this magnificent dynasty India, after centuries of anarchy and bloodshed, knows a degree of prosperity and might unheard of since the distant days of the Gupta Empire.

In Persia, Abbas the Great, the Louis the Fourteenth of Iran, has just died, and Nadir Shah, its Napoleon who was to conquer Delhi, is coming. Phoenix-like, the Empire of the Shahs has once more and for the last time risen to the splendour and glory of the Sasanides. Finally Turkey, though its expansion has been checked under the walls of Vienna in 1683, is still at the height of its destiny.

Thus we see that the great Empires of Asia were at their climax, whereas the Asiatic civilisations, though they had been sometimes deeper in the past, had also reached their zenith. To-day only two centuries have elapsed since those times, and that is not sufficient to stamp out of the consciousness of the people of Asia the resplendent memories of this glorious past, to be replaced by the inferiority complex resulting from their increasing contact with Europe.

It must be noted that at approximately the same time the first definite connections between Europe and Asia were established. Though the East India Company began trading in India in 1612, the settlement at Madras dates from 1640, the settlement of Calcutta from 1690, and only in 1699 did the English secure a hold in Canton. In 1689 the first treaty stipulating extra-territoriality was signed between Russia and China. We are now able to get a general idea of how the problem of relations between the two continents stood in those days. The least that may be said is that the balance of cultures between

them was equal. In reality Asia was somewhat in advance of Europe, but the civilisations, though dissimilar, were on the whole developing at an equal speed and on parallel lines. This made for stability, and there was no reason for a clash. An Asiatic envoy in Europe would not have felt himself inferior to what he saw around him, and likewise a European ambassador at Delhi or the Chinese Court would have had no reason to consider his hosts as barbarians. If behind the splendours of Asiatic civilisations there was much blood, Europe herself had just seen St. Bartholomew, the Inquisition, the Massacre of the Jews, the Sack of Rome and of Magdeburg, the Borgias and John the Terrible. It must also be remembered that the distinctions were not so much between continents as between civilisations. For the Emperor at Delhi the Chinese envoy appeared as alien as the Portuguese ambassador. What happened further? Nothing abnormal or irregular as regards Asia, which continued its slow steady pace of development. China, under the able rulers of the Manchu dynasty, of which the last but not least was the Dowager Empress Tsu Hsi, continued doing well. India, in accordance with a curious rhythm of its history which we find repeated to a certain extent also in Persia, fell into a period of disintegration and recuperation of forces for a new productive period. Persia and Turkey gradually moved towards their decline, the first to rebloom again perhaps, the latter, having produced nothing, to follow the fate of many of the great military Empires which rose only to vanish completely in the vastness of Asia.

What confused the issues so completely in the relations between the continents, awakened the antagonism of Asia and was to act as a disruptive force there, was the marvellous changes which occurred in Europe as a result of the industrial and technical revolutions. Nothing of the sort had ever been witnessed before throughout the whole history of humanity, especially as regards the speed and size of the transformations which took place. It also produced a moral revolution in Europe, giving birth to application on a large scale of the ideas of democracy and freedom—in other words, giving rights to the individual and making him the fundamental unit of society without regard to his real intrinsic value.

The balance of forces between the continents was now completely broken, and far-reaching consequences arose. The victories of rational science in Europe, resulting in the advent of materialism and commercialism, were achieved at the expense of many deeper and more idealistic sides of its civilisation. The ideal of Europe evolved in a few centuries from that of a monk to a knight and from a knight to a

salesman. The resulting economic development made colonial expansion in Asia and overseas an imperious necessity for Europe. It was particularly unfortunate for the harmony between the continents that the first intimate acquaintance with European civilisation came to Asia just when Europe had evolved to this stage. The result was that the cultures clashed and revealed their fundamental difference. It may be said, subject to all reservations implied by such generalisations, that the European civilisation was extensive and quantitative whereas the Asiatic was intensive and qualitative. The culture of Europe addresses itself to the masses, and in doing so has to level itself down to the general comprehension at the expense of certain higher qualities. In Asia the masses are not taken into consideration; life is left to follow its natural course, and just as any other force of nature, its growth remains wild. The death of a man is not more important than the death of a tree. The individual is nothing, but the caste, the race, the tradition, is everything. This explains the persistence of practice such as the Sutee which rightly horrified Europeans. The indifference with which Chinese historians record the death of millions of people in the civil wars which at regular intervals marked the end of a dynasty in China is amazing. In both cases it was only the abstract idea behind the concrete fact of human life that mattered.

This was the dark side of the Asiatic civilisations, but curiously enough it was also a reason for their spiritual power. Even in periods of the greatest literary brilliancy there were 97 per cent. illiterate in China, and sweeping across the map of Asia to another great centre of learning Samarcand, we also find only 3 per cent. literate in the population of present-day Bokhara and Ferghana. It was to this small select mass that the cultures of Asia spoke. They became therefore infinitely eclectic and spiritually aristocratic. Freed as they were from the levelling weight of the masses and working only through the highest intellects for the highest intellects, they grew in height, depth and beauty. Such was their profundity that only after four centuries of direct contact is the hasty and superficial European at last beginning to discover their towering spiritual revelations. The conditions of Asia, its vastness, its silence and infinitely measured rhythm gave the sages in their peace and seclusion the possibility of building beyond space and time. Such monuments as the Rig Vedas, the Upanishads the teachings of the Philosopher of the Way, Lao Tseu, all that esoteric Hinduism and Buddhism or even Sufism has produced, the grandiose balance of Heaven, Earth and Man of Confucius, not to mention the Caballa, also of Asiatic inspiration, are by far the highest spiritual achievements of humanity.

When the average Westerner visualises Asia he sees it either as the home of the great religious teachers or of the great conquerors. He sees on one hand Zoroaster lost in the dimness of myth; the sublime "enlightened" Prince Gautama the Buddha; the fiery Mohammed, merchant prophet and warrior; the twin teachers of China, Confucius, practical and dry, Lao Tseu, so deep and mystic as to provoke witchcraft by the misinterpretation of his teachings. To these he opposes the "Scourges of God," Attila, Chengis Khan and Tamerlane, whose boundless and solely destructive energy swept over the world like a cyclone. But except for what is revealed to him through popular editions of Omar Khayyam or of the *Thousand and One Nights* he knows very little of the less titanic but more human figures who reveal Asia in the complex fullness of its everyday life. He has scarcely heard of the saintly Buddhist Emperor Asoka, the purest and most lovable figure in India, of Babur who, while he was conquering what was to become the Great Mogul Empire, sang in most melodious verse of the roses of his native Ferghana. He cannot enumerate the great and highly cultured rulers who appeared at regular intervals in China at the beginning of each dynasty: Liu Pang the giver of laws, Tai Tsung the greatest monarch of the Yellow Empire and the splendid Kublai who constructed the Grand Canal 1,000 miles long and welcomed Marco Polo. Turning to lower and varied walks of life and choosing at random, what is known about the Chinese conquistador and explorer Pan Chao who in the first century A. D., reached the Pamir; and his lieutenant, Kang Yin, who went as far as the Persian Gulf, of the monk Hiuan Tsung who in 629 reached India through Chinese Turkestan in search of Buddhist books, of the Chinese admiral Cheng Ho who brought a fleet of sixty-two ships to Java and Ceylon, and later, in 1422, even reached Aden? In what way do these men not rank with the great European explorers such as Magellan or Marco Polo or Vasco de Gama? What do we know of the author of Arthashastra (Science of Ruling) the Indian Macchiavelli, of Kalidasa, India's greatest poet, of Jami, of Ibn Haldun the Arabic sociologist, of Mirkhond the Persian historian, of Omar Khayyam as a scientist and of Nizam-ul-Mulk, whose system of accountancy, dating from the eleventh century, is still in use in the East, and who developed throughout the Persian Empire such a perfect system of credit that it was possible to make payments in Turkestan by bills on Syria? Whereas in China Chu Hsi was making out of Confucianism the most positivist and rationalistic schools of thought the world was to know before Spencer and Auguste Comte, in another part of Asia Sufism was introducing Neo-Platonism and Vedic mysticism into Islam which it considered too materialistic. As late as the end of the eighteenth

century a complete religious reformation took place in Japan eliminating Confucianism and Taoism.

Enough has been said to show the moral life of Asia pulsating, following its rich course of evolutionary development, decay and regrowth, according to its own lines, undisturbed and ignorant of Europe.

The average European came into touch with this glowing life only in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the very breadth of its stride made it seem to the Westerner to be at a standstill. Besides, he was much too concerned with the commercial part of his colonisation to attempt to study the inner side of Asiatic culture. When he did look round, he naturally applied European standards, and therefore started his judgment of Asia from the wrong end. Rightly horrified at the appalling conditions in which the masses dwelt, the European decided that nations who take as a matter of course such conditions applied to the greater bulk of their citizens are barbaric. The cultured Asiatics on their side, seeing that the Westerner attached so much importance to the slums whereas the beautiful eclectic sides of their culture were disregarded in their turn, looked upon the newcomers as barbarians.

On the other hand, the prevalence of the greedy commercialism of the West was distasteful to the polished and literary-minded Asiatics. They sulkily submitted to force, but inwardly resolved to acquire it for themselves so as to deliver their culture from what they deemed the coarse and vulgar intrusion of the West. What these eclectic minds of Asia did not expect, what in fact no one foresaw, was that the importation into Asia of technical knowledge so badly needed to resist Europe would also contaminate the masses of Asia with the alien and indigestible Western spirit. In an effort to build up a force to hold back the material pressure of Europe, Asia allowed herself to be disrupted from within by the moral infection of the enemy. Thus sounded the death-knell of Asia as it had been known throughout human history, and the process of its rebirth under Western auspices or its ultimate disintegration began.

With the ever-increasing progress in means of communication the Europeanisation of Asia cannot be stoppped or reversed. The only thing to be done is to go through with it as quickly as possible in the hope that what can be saved of the beautiful achievements of Asiatic culture will eventually blend with what has been imported from Europe, to form a new original civilisation of its own. At present the two worlds meet so incongruously on Asiatic soil as to make the East even more picturesque than it was before. It is the writer's firm conviction that the world at large and Asia in particular would have been happier if the Asiatic people had been left to develop organically on their own lines, as they have done for thousands of years, without the interference of Europe; in other words, if the two civilisations had been left as formerly to run parallel without one attempting to dominate the other and thus force the pace of development by artificial pressure. Unfortunately the law of economic development of Europe decreed otherwise, the balance of forces was broken, and after having been in favour of Europe for a couple of centuries, it now looks as if the pendulum was gradually swinging to the opposite side.

* * * *

What appears to be paramount for the future welfare of humanity is the re-establishment of the balance between the two continents broken a couple of centuries ago. However, as the water-tight compartments which had enabled the various civilisations to grow side by side have been definitely swept away, the only basis on which this balance can be achieved is the more complete fusion of the civilisations concerned. In the case of Asia this will probably result in the speeding up of the process of Westernisation until a point of saturation is reached in two respects: technically, until the material force of Asia becomes proportionately equal to that of Europe, Japan being so far the only Asiatic power to have achieved this; morally, until the iconoclastic tendencies of modern Europe have done away with social or traditional barriers in Asia in the name of democracy and freedom, until possibly disillusion will bring a reversion to old ideals. It is to be hoped that this evolution will not make out of Asiatics only second-rate Europeans, but that the magnificent creative genius of Asia will adapt itself to novel conditions and on the basis of European cross-fertilisation will produce a synthesis of new cultural values.

As for Europe, the line to be followed in the face of this problem seems clear. She must acknowledge whole-heartedly the spiritual riches of Asia, not as museum curiosities, but as real living values to be absorbed into her own civilisation. She must rid herself of the enslavement to the Greco-Roman culture *alone*, which has so far obscured her vision of the world. There is no explanation but narrow-mindedness why the great Chinese or Persian classics do not form the everyday equipment of the European intellectual, why in textbooks of history the Emperors Akbar and Tai Tsung of China do not rank with Caesar and Charlemagne. They are far more important than the secondary Roman Emperors of the period of decline to whom so much attention is given. Europe must further learn to look upon history not merely from the point of view of its own civilisation but from a world viewpoint of inter-connected civilisations reacting on one another. In this respect Young Asia, which comes to Cambridge or Harvard to learn about the West after having had the background of its own culture, is distinctly in advance of our provincialism, and as far as knowledge is power it will have a serious advantage over us in the long run. They must also feel that we fully appreciate the value of their civilisation and that our own civilisation is sufficiently great to be receptive. Only the broadest mutual understanding will enable us to live in peace in a world which is already too small.—Extracted from *The Contemporary Review*, London, S. W. 1

NEWS AND REPORTS

FOUNDATION STONE OF BHAGAVAN RA MAKRISHNA'S TEMPLE AT BELUR

On the occasion of the Ninety-fourth Birthday of Bhagavan Ramakrishna the foundation stone of the proposed Temple of Sri Ramakrishna as planned by Swami Vivekananda was duly laid at the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Head Quarters, at Belur, near Calcutta. The first stone was laid by Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, the General President of the R. K. Math & Mission, and a direct disciple of the great Master. He was followed by his brother disciples, Srimat Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj, Swami Vijnanananda

and Ven. M. Many other devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, both lay and monastic, took part in the function. Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, another disciple of the Master sent a note regretting his inability to attend the holy ceremony. A short history of the R. K. Math and Mission inscribed in a copper plate in Bengali and English and fixed on a stone was also imbedded in the earth on the north-eastern corner of the proposed Temple. Another inscription in Sanskrit is also expected to be put likewise.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT MADRAS

The Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great eclat at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. On the Thithipooja day which fell on the 13th of March a large gathering of devotees and friends of the Math took part in the solemn functions of worship and Homa conducted by the Sadhus. A large number of them partook of the sacred Prasadam of Sri Guru Maharaj. The boys of the R. K. Mission Students' Home added to the spiritual exaltation of the assembled guests by their devotional music and Vedic songs.

The Public Celebration took place on the 17th of March. The Math building was splendidly decorated, and at the gate was hung a screen with paintings of a temple, a Buddhist fane, a mosque and a church, symbolising thereby the unity of all religions. In the spacious hall of the Math, on a dais exquisitely decorated with ferns, flowers and screens, was placed a large photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna for the adoration of the public. From early morning Bhajana parties from various parts of the city sang devotional songs to the great edification of the audience. As usual about four thousands of poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed at the Students' Home premises. At the Muth more than four hundred devotees partook of the Prasadam.

In the evening there was a Harikatha Kalakshepam which was followed by a public meeting held under the Presidency of Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, Ex-minister to the Government of Madras. After an eloquent speech in Tamil by Mr. S. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, Mr. Sitaramiah, Retired Law Secretary to the Government of Madras, gave a most impressive and inspiring discourse in English on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. At the outset the lecturer remarked that the test of greatness in a man lies in the usefulness of his life to society, and that applying this standard of test, the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna will not be found deficient in the qualities that make for greatness. By a short review of Sri Ramakrishna's life he showed how it demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that spiritual life was a reality and not a figment of idle imaginations. He then proceeded into an elaborate enquiry into Sri Ramakrishna's relationship with womankind, and showed how it gave a wonderful solution of the problems of the sexes, confronting mankind at the present day. These two aspects of his teachings, the lecturer remarked, were by way of confirmation of the ancient ideals of India. But there was, in the lecturer's opinion, a unique feature in Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, and that was the reconciliation of the various religions of the world. This reconciliation did not consist in platform speeches or a patronising sort of toleration, but was actually demonstrated in life and experience. This aspect of

Sri Ramakrishna's teachings was, according to the lecturer, specially fraught with potentialities which must one day or other shed their beneficial influence on the world in an overwhelming form. In concluding the day's proceedings the President exhorted the audience to practise in their lives the great ideals for which Sri Ramakrishna stood. With the usual vote of thanks by Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujacharya the meeting terminated. The finishing touch for the day's proceedings was given by Mr. T. M. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, Advocate, and his friends who by their devotional music held the audience spell-bound for a long time. The function terminated at about 9 P.M.

CELEBRATION AT OTHER PLACES

The 94th Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavanagudi, Bangalore, on Sunday the 17th March 1929. As usual the function commenced with the arrival of Bhajana processions and Puja at the Ashrama in the morning and poor feeding at noon. In the afternoon a Harikatha in Kannada on Sri Ramakrishna himself was performed by Harikatha Vidvan S. Sesha Sarma of Kolar who had composed it himself with much pains, out of materials furnished to him by the Ashrama authorities. This is the first time that such a Harikatha was performed in those parts and it created a deep and profound impression on the audience. Then followed a Kannada lecture by Mr. N. Venkatesa Iyengar, B.A., Retired Meteorological Reporter to the Government on "Methods of Training of Sri Ramakrishna." The function was brought to a close with the usual thanksgiving and Mangalarathi at about 8 P. M.

We have received invitation from the following places :—

Vedanta Society, Bangalore; Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ootacamund; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Harippad; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandram; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Salem, in the Madras Presidency; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca, in the Bengal Presidency; Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares City; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Aminabad, Lucknow; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar; The citizens of Almora; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Craddock Town, Nagpur; The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon; Sri Ramakrishna Archanalay, Entaly, Calcutta; Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission Headquarters, Belur, Bengal.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN NEW YORK VEDANTA SOCIETY

The Sixty-sixth Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the New York Vedanta Society with due eclat on the 20th of January, 1929. The programme consisted of two services in the Society auditorium and a banquet in the Ceylon India Inn.

The Society chapel was duly decorated to suit the occasion and a big portrait of the Swami was nicely placed in a very prominent place amidst flowers and evergreens. A big tray of choicest apples was offered before the altar of Sree Ramakrishna and incense smell gave the whole place an atmosphere of holiness. At 11 A. M. Swami Bodhananda most feelingly fed the eager audience with the stories of his

own experiences with his Master—the great Swami Vivekananda. Pro-sadam was distributed amongst the devotees after the service. At 3 P.M. Swami Ganeswarananda spoke on the Life and Message of the Swami and flowers were distributed amongst the audience as a token of "Ashirvad" or blessings from the great Master, which everybody appreciated.

The banquet at the Ceylon India Inn marked the unique success of the occasion. Two big pictures of the Swami were tastefully decorated in the banquet hall and incense burnt. The hall was filled up before the appointed hour and provisions had to be made for an extra room to seat the overflowing guests. "The India America Friendship Dinner" began at 7 P. M. and it consisted of a vegetable menu cooked in the Hindu fashion. The dinner began with a chanting of "Brahmarpanam" during which all the guests stood up in spontaneous reverence. An American artist admirer of the Swami made a respectful gift of a beautiful picture of the Swami to each guest, which everybody highly appreciated.

The programme of the banquet consisted of Hindu music—vocal and instrumental—by Swami Ganeswarananda and Mrs. Kamala Mukerjee, recitation from the Swami's poems by Victor Junker, an American youth, and speeches by—Swami Bodhananda who presided over the functions, Swami Yogananda of "Yogoda Satsanga," Sreejuth Dhan Copal Mukerjee, the famous author and lecturer, Sreejuth Bashiswar Sen, an eminent Hindu scientist, Sreejuth Basanta Kumar Roy, humanist, as also by Mr. Hager and Mr. Goodyear, two American friends of the Swami who used to know him during his stay in New York. The speeches that were no less enjoyable than music were interspersed with many more songs and music. The function was declared closed at 11 o'clock at night but many of the guests were eager to hear more music and were not willing to go home. So musical recitals had to be continued till 10 o'clock in the morning. There was indeed an atmosphere of pure and serene joy and happiness during the entire programme and all were happy.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN INDIA

The 67th Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore, on Sunday the 3rd February 1929, with great eclat. The function commenced with the arrival of 8 or 9 Bhajana parties from different parts of the City, and Puja in the morning. At noon about 1,500 poor Narayanas were fed at Sowcar Siddaramanna's Chatram, Basavangudi. In the afternoon about 2000 people including a large number of ladies assembled at the temporary pandal in the Ashrama premises, to hear first the Harikatha on Gaya Charitra by Harikatha Vidwan Sri Ramakrishna Shastri of Mysore and then a lecture by Mr. S. Venkatapathaiya, B.A., L.L.B., on "Swami Vivekananda's Message to Young India" both in Kannda. Rao Sahib H. Chennaya, Retired Sub-Judge, Messrs. Narasaya, Deva Rao Shivaram and Cowsik of Mysore Electrical Department among many others took prominent part in making the ceremony a success.

The 67th Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great eclat at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, on the 23rd and 24th of February under the Presidentship of Rao Bahadur H. B. Kotak, the Ex-Dewan of Rajkot and Idar States. The President delivered a very fine and impressive speech quoting many lines from the Upanishads and Swamiji's writings and thus pointed out the basis of harmony and peace between the different sects of the existing Hindu religion. The special feature of this year's celebration is that there was a large audience of ladies present on the occasion and two of them spoke feelingly about Swamiji's opinion upon the ideals of Indian womanhood.

The Sixty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on Sunday, the 3rd February, 1929, with due eclat in the Dacca Ramakrishna Mission premises. In the morning there were "Aratrik," choral songs, readings from the Katha Upanishad, and Vaishnava Padabali dealing with Sri Chaitanya's renunciation of the world. At noon more than three thousand "Daridra Narayanas" were sumptuously fed. In the afternoon a big meeting was held presided over by Prof. R. C. Majumder, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S., of the University of Dacca. The meeting began with a musical concert followed by recitations from Swamiji's speeches and the Songs of the Sananyasin. Messrs. Kumudbandu Sen, Additional Judge, Dacca; Kazi Abdul Wadood, Lecturer, Dacca Intermediate College, and Girishchandra Nag, Retired Deputy Magistrate then spoke on the Swami.

In conclusion the President, Prof. Majumder made a very learned speech in course of which he paid a glowing tribute to the memory of the great Swami. He said that they had not been able to understand even a bit of the Himalayan personality of Vivekananda. If there were another Vivekananda, he would perhaps be able to make a true estimate of his personality. Vivekananda's was a life of diversified activities. In him combined the great philosopher, the great saint, the great nationalist, the great lover of humanity. His greatest achievement was the attainment of harmony of different religious creeds. Swamiji himself said that it was left for him to achieve this harmony. Vivekananda realised in his heart of hearts the supreme need of corporate life—organised life in India. His idea took practical shape in the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission, the successful world-wide organisation, doing yeoman's service to suffering humanity. The Ramakrishna Mission, in the opinion of the speaker, is the greatest organisation in the world that has succeeded in preaching the gospel of truth to the farthest corners of the globe without State help. It was only under the fostering care and patronage of kings like Asoka and Constantine that Buddhism and Christianity could flourish and be preached in foreign lands. But the Ramakrishna Mission is preaching the message of Vedanta even in distant corners of the world without any State help. This is really unique in the history of religion. It is indeed a marvel that the Mission has achieved such a phenomenal success in organisation within a brief period of 32 years. The remarkable features of the Mission are renunciation and service. The speaker opined that if the League of Nations were broad-based on the principles of Vedanta as preached by Swami Vivekananda, the orgies of

modern warfare would be things of the past, and peace would be the order of the day. The message of Vivekananda is universal—it is applicable to all ages and all climes. His is a man-making religion. Swamiji is the herald of a new era—to follow him is to find a solution of all the burning world problems of the day.

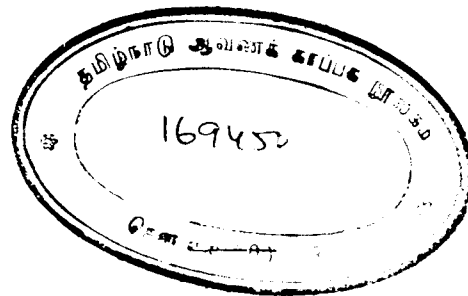
The Vivekananda Societies of Calcutta and Colombo and the Ramakrishna Ashrama of Cawnpore, U. P. have also sent us invitations.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT TRICHUR

At the invitation of the local Vivekodaya Samajam, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Branch, Madras, went to Trichur to preside over the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Samajam held in connection with the birthday celebration of Swami Vivekananda on Friday, the 22nd February and the two succeeding days. Besides giving short addresses in connection with the various functions connected with the conference, he spoke on the "Fundamental Unity of Hinduism" and on "The Ideals of the Students' Life" on the 23rd and 24th February. The Swami also opened the Flower Show and Exhibition, distributed prizes to the pupils of the Vivekodaya boys and girls schools and also spoke to the volunteers of the High school on the message of strength and service as embodied in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the illustrious patriot saint of Modern India. After visiting Coimbatore and Ootacamund in connection with the Mission work, he returned to Madras on the 3rd March.

AN ADDRESS TO MAHATMA GANDHI

The Ramakrishna Mission Branch of Rangoon has decided to present a Welcome Address to Mahatma Gandhi and give a feeding to the poor Narayanas in connection with the Mahatma's visit to the R. K. Mission Sevashrama during his tour in Burma.



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