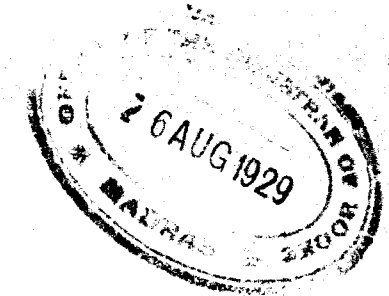


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THE VEDANTA KESARI

"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XVI, No. 4 : AUGUST, 1929.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PRAYER	121
GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA	122
THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL INDIA—I	127
THE WAY TO REALIZE THE LORD	
<i>By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.</i>	134
AKBAR AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD	
<i>By Swami Nirlepananda</i>	137
CHITRAKETU	
<i>By Swami Atulananda</i>	146
NOTES AND COMMENTS	149
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	151
NEWS AND REPORTS	155

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Vol. XVI]

AUGUST 1929

[No. 4

PRAYER

ॐ

जगतामादिभूतस्त्वं जगत्त्वं जगदाश्रयः ।

सर्वभूतेष्वसंयुक्त एकोभाति भवान्परः ॥

आत्मशिवस्त्वं सर्वत्र वहिरंतर्गतोऽमलः ।

असंगोऽखचलो नित्यः शुद्धोऽबुद्धः सदव्ययः ॥

देव मे यत्रकुतापि स्थिताय अपि सर्वदा ।

त्वत्पादकमलेसक्ता भक्तिरेव सदाऽस्तु मे ।

नमस्ते पुरुषायैव नमस्ते भक्तवतसल ।

नमस्तेऽस्तु हृषीकेश नागायण नमोऽस्तुते ॥

Thou art, O Supreme Lord, the cause, the manifestation as well as the support of this universe; yet Thou shinest as the one existence unaffected by the changes of matter.

Stainless, Thou pervadest this universe both inside and outside like the sky; Thou art the uncontaminated, changeless, indestructible and untainted form of wisdom and truth, eternal.

Wherever I be, O Lord, may I have always an unflinching devotion to Thy lotus feet.

Salutation unto Thee, O Lord of all beings and Lover of devotees. Salutation unto Thee, O Narayana, who art the master of all senses.

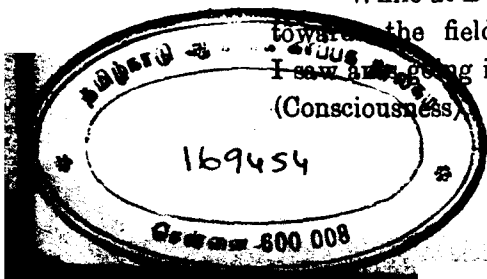
ADHYATMA RAMAYANA.

I

"While at Burdwan on my way from Kamarpukur, I ran towards the fields to see how creatures eat and live there. I saw ~~the~~ going in a long row. Every place is full of *Chaitanya* (Consciousness).

In the evening Mani was walking alone in the Temple, and thinking of the wonderful spiritual condition of the Master. Why did the Master say that that condition was reached when all mental

*When the Lord was born as Sri Krishna, Jatila and Kutila, the relatives of Radha had a strict eye on her.



disturbances and desires had been got rid of? Who was Sri Ramakrishna? Was he God Himself incarnate? He himself had said that none could return from the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* except the Divine Incarnations and *Iswara-Kotis*.

II

Next day at 8 in the morning Sri Ramakrishna was speaking with Mani at the *Jhau-tala*. It was winter. The sun had just risen. The Master stood facing the east. He said, "Both *Nirakara* and *Sakara* are true. The naked one (Totapuri) used to say that Brahman was like an infinite ocean with water everywhere, above and below, in the right and in the left. The Causal Essence is like calm water. When the water is agitated, there are waves. The waves in the Brahman are creation, maintenance and dissolution. He would also say that Brahman is where all reason stops, just as camphor when it is burnt consumes itself and leaves no ashes behind.

"Brahman is beyond word and mind. A salt doll went to measure the sea. It never returned to report. It had melted in the sea itself.

"The Rishis said to Rama, 'Bharadwaja and some other Rishis may call you a Divine Incarnation. But we do not. We worship the *Sabda Brahman* (the Word which is Brahman). We do not want to realise Brahman in the human form.' Rama smiled in pleasure and passed on after receiving their homage.

"But even He who is eternal is also the relative, just as I said that the roof and the stairs are the same substance.

"There are various kinds of *Lila*, Divine manifestation: *Iswara-lila* (manifestation as God), *Deva-lila* (manifestation as gods and goddesses), *Nara-lila* (manifestation as man), and *Jagat-lila* (manifestation as the universe). In His manifestation as man, He becomes the *Avatara*. Do you know how it is? It is like water falling torrentially through a pipe from a vast terraced roof. The Divine Incarnation is the channel through which the powers of Satchidananda manifest themselves. Only twelve Rishis including Bharadwaja could recognise Rama as the Divine Incarnation. All cannot know the *Avatara*.

"The Lord becomes the *Avatara* in order to teach men *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. Well, what do you think of me?

"My father went to Gaya. There Raghuvir appeared to him in a dream saying that He would become his son. Father said, 'Lord, I am a poor Brahmin. How shall I serve you?' Raghuvir said, 'It will be all right.'

"My elder sister, Hriday's mother, used to worship my feet with flowers and sandal-paste. One day Mother made me place my foot on her head and say that she would die in Benares.

"Sajo Babu (Mathuranath) said, 'Baba, there is nothing inside you except God. Your body is only a case just like a pumpkin with no pulp or seeds within. I saw you as if some one was going covering himself with a veil.'

"Everything is revealed to me beforehand. At Panchavati I saw the *Sankirtan* party of Sri Gauranga. I think I saw Balaram in that party and you too.

"Once I wanted to know the *Bhava* of Sri Gauranga. It was shown me in that village, Shyambazar. So many people came that some even found place on trees and walls. Day and night they remained with me. For seven days I had no time even to wash myself. Then I prayed to Mother, 'Mother, let this end. That is why I am calm now. I shall have to come again. Therefore I am not giving full knowledge to my intimate disciples. (Smiling) For if I do, you will not easily come to me.

"I recognised you by hearing your reading of the *Chaitanya-Bhagavatam*. You are my own. We are of the same substance like father and son. All are coming here like water-creeper. When you pull one end, the whole mass comes. You are all related to one another, like brothers. Suppose Rakhal and Harish have gone to Puri. You also have gone. Will you have separate lodgings?

"So long as you did not come here, you forgot yourself. Now you will know yourself. He comes in the form of Guru to make man know who he is.

"The naked one told the story of a tigress and a flock of goats. Once a tigress attacked a flock of goats. A hunter saw it from a distance and killed it. The tigress was big with a cub. It gave birth to it while dying. The cub grew with the goats. At first it sucked milk from the goats and then began to eat grass. It also learnt to bleat like a goat.

"Gradually it became quite big. But it still grazed and bleated; and when any animal attacked, it fled like the goats.

"One day a terrible tiger fell upon the flock of goats. It was astonished to see another tiger feeding upon grass like the goats and running with them. So it did not trouble the goats but caught hold of the tiger. It began to bleat and wanted to run away. The tiger then dragged it to the side of water and said, 'Just look at your face in the water. See, your face is also as big and round as mine.' He next thrust a bit of flesh into its mouth. At first the goat-tiger would not eat it. But when it tasted it a little, it began to eat. The tiger then said to it, 'you were living with goats and eating grass like them! Fie on you!' and it felt ashamed.

"What is 'eating grass'? It is living engrossed in woman and gold. To bleat like goats and run away is to behave like the ordinary man. To go away with the tiger is to take refuge in the Guru who imparts the true knowledge and to look upon him as one's own. To see one's real appearance is to know one's true self."

Having spoken thus he passed on towards the *Panchavati*. Mani followed him spell-bound. At *Panchavati*, the Master stopped where a big branch of the banyan tree had fallen down, and made a deep obeisance touching the terrace, built round the tree, with his forehead. Here he had practised *Sadhana*. Here he had cried disconsolate and agonisingly for the revelation of the Divine Mother. Here he had seen many Divine visions and had held many conversations with Divine Mother. Is that why whenever he came there, he saluted the place?

The Master passed on and met Hazra near the *Nahavat*. He said to Hazra, "Do not eat too much. And give up the mania for external purification. Those who are so fastidious about formal purity cannot have knowledge. Observe only that much of forms as is necessary, but do not do it too much."

The Master went into his room.

THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL INDIA—I

The corporate life of India is not to be considered as an isolated entity in the realm of human culture. As the world stands today, every force working in one part of the globe towards the evolution of one race-ideal, cannot but have, to some extent, its repercussion in the functionings of the rest of humanity. The world has reached a stage when exclusivism will be a fatal experiment. A process of assimilation of one another's culture has become a vital necessity. The dead wall of separation has been demolished and the tide of world-forces has been beating constantly on the shore of human experience. There is consequently a clash of ideals and interests, both material and spiritual, all over the world. India has also, of late, felt in no uncommon measure the impact of the wave of occidental civilisation. The indigenous notions and systems have come into conflict with the new ideas and processes. And in this ferment she is seeking a reformulation of her life-principle, and an adjustment that must suit her national individuality. But the problems of Indian life are so inter-related that any change wrought upon one department of life is sure to react upon the other. Even the rural well-being of the people cannot be sought to be advanced without an eye to the economic and social values of our organic life. The inter-relation of social and economic influences in rural progress is so persistent and obvious that an effective tackling of the problems of rural India demands an adequate understanding and appreciation of the true import of her economic and social issues along with their significant bearing on the spiritual life of the people. Naturally therefore, while dealing with the economic, rural, political or social life of our country one must as well possess a synthetic vision to realise the process that must tend to stimulate its all-round growth and produce a harmony between the apparently conflicting interests of the race. The modern clash of systems has brought into bold prominence the problems of India's rural life, and never did they so seriously force themselves upon our attention as they have done today. This aspect of India's problems has so long been scrupulously ignored in the rough and tumble of political agitation, though it is a truism that without a proper solution of her rural problems, the

salvation of India shall ever remain an empty dream. The painful spectacle of modern India, denuded of all her pristine glory and grandeur, cannot but fill every heart with profound indignation and sorrow. Once a land of fabulous wealth and a veritable El Dorado, India stands today a beggar before the bar of humanity ! It was the wealth of India that fed the greedy races of the world and tempted many a freebooter to pounce upon her from time to time and despoil her of all her priceless treasures. But the healthy rural life of India—a life of plenty and profusion built upon the unceasing toil of the bold peasantry of the land—has sunk into a vague tradition of the past. India has become the dumping-ground of the world's exploiting races. Subject to a ruthless policy of drainage, India has reached the lowest water-mark in the history of her economic life. The morale of the peasantry,—the backbone of the country,—has been ruined and along with it, her industrial possibilities have been shamelessly smothered under alien administration. Needless to point out that in a country like India where more than 72 p.c. of her population belong to the agricultural class, an adequate safeguard of the multiple interests of the peasantry is an indispensable condition of her healthy economic life. It cannot be gainsaid that this aspect of the national problem has, to our misfortune, failed to enlist the active services of our trusted leaders to the extent it should. And the result is that the vast mass of humanity still stands outside the pale of all political activities without sharing any kind of responsibility with them, though in fact it is the silent toil of the peasantry that furnishes the sinews of war in the struggle of the nation for political advance. The life of this mute section of India's population is a power which cannot be ignored without a serious detriment to the ultimate well-being of the country. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that the problems of rural India must be given a place of honour in all our schemes for national reconstruction.

The present atrophied state of India's economic life would hardly warrant any one to believe that she was the feeder of nations till the beginning of the 19th century. The history alone tells us how within a century and a half India like a milch cow, has been drained almost dry of all her boundless resources. Frederick John Shore (formerly, of

the Bengal Civil Service) has rightly remarked : "The halcyon days of India are over ; she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed, and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule, to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few." This has been fully corroborated by another high European functionary, Mr. John Sullivan, who was at one time a member of the Government of Madras. He says : "Under *their* own dynasties all revenue that was collected in the country was spent in the country ; but under *our* rule a large proportion of the revenue is annually drained away, and without any return being made of it. This drain has been going on, and it is rather increasing than the reverse.....Our system acts very much like a sponge drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames." This is the testimony, not of Indians but of accredited European officials holding responsible positions in the administration of British India. But persons are not still wanting who, in order to magnify the benefits of British rule in India, have gone the length of denying the soundness of her rural and economic system, so highly spoken of by the historians and foreign travellers. That an industrious and peaceful peasantry peopled the fair villages of India and cultivated and irrigated the endless expanse of fertile fields while the artisans in towns carried the various manufactures and arts of peace to a high state of excellence and that the manufactures of India were known to the merchants of Assyria and Babylon, Phoenicia and Egypt, Sumatra and Java and to the far-off lands of the western world is a fact testified to by a host of European travellers. Megasthenes who was for sometime an ambassador in the Court of Chandrugupta Maurya and had an ample opportunity of studying the condition of the then India remarks in the *Indica* : "There are many vast plains of great fertility, more or less beautiful, but all alike intersected by a multitude of rivers. The greater part of the soil moreover is under irrigation, and consequently bears two crops in the course of the year...In addition to cereals, there grows throughout India much millet which is kept well watered by the profusion of river streams, and much pulse of different sorts, and rice also, and what is called bosporum, as well as many other plants useful for food, of which most grow spontaneously..."

Famine has never visited India, and that there has never been general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food...The Indians are skilled in the arts, as might be expected of men who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water..... The soil has under ground numerous veins of all sorts of metals, for it contains much gold and silver, and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornaments, as well as the implements and accoutrements of war." The accounts of Arrian and Strabo, Pliny and the like testify also to the same effect. Besides, the celebrated Chinese travellers, Fahien and Hiuen Tsang, have laid us under a deep sense of obligation by leaving behind them priceless records of their varied experiences in India. They have given a pen-picture of the life and activities of the Indians of their time, and have clearly pointed out that India was a highly prosperous country and the arts and crafts attained to a high level of excellence. *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, an authoritative book on India's maritime activities, furnishes a glowing picture of her trading relations with the far-off lands of the West as well as of the precious articles exported from the Indian shores to the foreign territories.

The history of the Mahomedan period tells almost the very same tale. For, there was in fact no break in the continuity of India's cultural life. The Moslems accepted India as their motherland, and all their hopes and aspirations became inextricably blended up with the welfare of those over whom they were destined to rule in India; not a single farthing received from the Indian taxpayer, did ever go beyond the boundary of India to fill the coffers of the Muslims abroad. And so long as the integrity of Moslem sovereignty was maintained, the children of the soil did never experience the bitterness of economic atrophy which has become a veritable canker in our modern life. There are at present evident signs of decline in the various departments of our national life. The great majority of the industrial population of India lived in the villages, and most of them were artisans and plied their occupations uninfluenced by the outside world. In the bigger cities on the other hand each craft was organised into efficient guilds occupying an important position in India's economic activity. Indian urban industry reached a high standard of excellence and

maintained a world-wide reputation even till the beginning of the 19th century. But it must be remembered that the economic life of a town or city is meaningless without reference to the lands which furnish its food and raw materials, and the villages from which labour is imported. Prof. Gilbert Slater pertinently observes: "The importance of rural activities and of village life in India, in view of the enormous preponderance of its agricultural population over that engaged in mining, manufacturing, commerce and transport, is not to be overlooked." The records show that even at the beginning of the 19th century the chief industry was the textile handicrafts of which the cotton industry was the foremost. And this is also corroborated by Dr. J. F. Royle who observes: "Before the 19th century India was chiefly famous for exporting her elegant fabrics to the most civilised nations in the world." The muslin of Dacca (Bengal) is still a wonder in the realm of world's industrial life. Abbe de Guyon writing in 1774 says: "From Dacca comes the best and finest embroideries in gold, silver and silk, and those embroidered neck-cloths and fine muslins which are seen in France." Every student of the economic history of India naturally feels tempted to enquire where are today those finest products of Indian industry that excited the admiration of the world only a century and a half ago. The chintzes of Lucknow, palampore industry of Madras and fabrics of Madura have now become a rarity in the country. Murshidabad, Maldah and many other towns of Bengal are no longer the proud seats of pristine silk-manufactures. Kashmere and Amritsar, Ludhiana and other cities of the Punjab have lost all reputation for woollen products. The brass, copper and bell-metal wares of Benares, Nasik, Poona, Hyderabad, Vizagapatam and Tanjore were marvels in the pre-British rule, and the artistic works, especially enamelled jewellery, stone-carving, etc., of the different towns of Rajputana were objects of genuine pride and glory in the country. Is it not a wonder that a country which had the proud privilege of producing such finest industries even two centuries back, has, by a mysterious process, been made incapable of exhibiting their pristine skill and brought down to the lowest level of poverty? Famines which were never witnessed in the ancient and medieval ages in India began to visit the land at regular intervals with the advent of the European Imperialism!

And according to the official reckoning of the last 25 years of the 19th century, it is found that there were 18 famines and the estimated loss of life due to them totalled 26 million lives. To-day India has become a land of famines and scarcity, and 'the sole aspiration of the poor ryot in India is that he may not die of starvation before his next harvest be ripe.' Is it not a fact that the daily income per capita in India does not exceed As. 1-6 while in England and America it goes even beyond Rs. 6-12 and Rs. 9-8 respectively? Diseases of the most virulent type are taking a heavy toll of lives every year, and the statistics show that while death per thousand in India is 24.5, that in England and America is not more than 9.8 and 9.5 respectively. In fact people here are dying by millions of malaria, and other fell diseases, all brought about by insanitation, deep poverty, sloth, idleness and ignorance. In view of the existing state of things it would not be surprising to learn that the influenza epidemic of 1918 swept away 72 lacs of people within 6 months in British India alone!

This is the real India to-day, and very few even care to know the mysterious process that has transformed the *prosperous* India into a land of *poverty* and diseases. The black records of the East India Company reveal the horrible atrocities and cruelties perpetrated upon the peaceful agricultural and industrial population of India. The handicrafts were ruthlessly ruined, and the healthy village systems were broken down to make room for outlandish institutions. Mr. H. M. Howsin emphatically avers in *The Significance of Indian Nationalism*: "The genesis of this poverty in India may be traced to the early days of the Company's rule, when in addition to pillage and extortion, the rich manufactures of India were deliberately killed by excessive pro-British duties and unfair monopolies, and the surplus population thrown on the land in an utterly destitute condition, there to be subjected to severe and ceaseless taxation. The much augmented agricultural population have never had the opportunity to recuperate their exhausted energies and resources...The immediate cause of the awful poverty is the unrelenting pressure of the land tax, which prevents the accumulation of any capital wherewith to meet an unproductive season." An organised system of exploitation is even now being carried on in the country. India has now moreover to contend with the triple forces of imperialism, feudalism and

capitalism. Besides the huge amount paid in coin in the shape of imperial charges in and outside India, India is to export more than three quarters of her agricultural produce. Even if the exports of only a few staple articles of food of India are taken into consideration we will find to our surprise that every year about 40 crore rupees worth of rice, 14 crore rupees worth of wheat, 16 crore rupees worth of pulse and 9 crore rupees worth of ground-nut are exported from the shores of India. It would not therefore be an exaggeration to say that India is becoming feebler day by day. *The very life blood of the great multitude is slowly yet ever faster ebbing away.* The baneful effects of such economic drainage in India will be all the more patent when the exact nature of exports and imports is taken into consideration. "The story of India's exports," says Mahatma Gandhi, "is a story of our impotence and the criminal indifference of the Government to the well-being of the people." Imports include cotton manufactures of 65 crores, artificial silk 4 crores, sugar 18 crores, metals and their manufactures 23 crores, motor-vehicles 5 crores, liquors 3 crores, cigarettes nearly 2 crores of rupees. These imports too tell the same tale of our impotence where it is not worse. Imports of a country in a healthy state of progress should be such as the country may need for its growth. The imports mentioned here are not needed for our growth. Liquor and cigarettes promote our degradation. Cotton manufacture which is the largest item among the imports discovers our shame and wretchedness. They remind us of what *villagers* must have been when they were manufacturing all that cloth in their own homes with their own hands. The above figures thus reveal to us the festering sore that is eating into the vitals of the people and undoubtedly unfold before humanity the painful picture of India's life of shame and humiliation. But still India must live, and live to see her once more emancipated from the tentacles of foreign imperialism and restored to the pristine position of unchallenged material and spiritual greatness. The problems are so baffling and varied that it is quite impossible to make an exhaustive analysis of them here. The interaction of the different forces has moreover added to the complexity of the situation; but a way must be found out of this welter of chaos. A brief sketch of the present needs to cope with the problems of our rural life may be attempted in our next.

THE WAY TO REALIZE THE LORD

By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.

Brahman, the Lord, the Cause of the Universe, has been described in the Upanishads as incomprehensible and as having infinite forms :—
“अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपम्” (Who is incomprehensible, unspeakable and infinite in form),—Kaivalyopanishad. Part 1, 6. To think of such an inconceivable and infinite Being with our finite mind is to make the perceiving mind itself infinite and inconceivable also, which means the total suspension of the operations of the mind. This total suspension of the operations of the mind has been described in the Patanjali Yoga-Sutra as union with the Lord, and such a state, as recovering one's own real self. Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna told a parable to his disciples that once an idol made of salt went to measure the depth of the ocean ; it dived for the purpose; the consequence was that it melted in the ocean. Similar becomes the state of our limited intellect in attempting to gauge the limitless Lord.

The illustrious Sankara, in reiterating Vedanta in his Nirvana Shataka, says that the mind, the intellect, the ego and the like are not the Soul :—“ॐ मनोबुद्धयहङ्कारचित्तादिनाहम्” (I am not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the thoughtful mind and the like),—Nirvana Shataka, I. So the activities of the mind, the intellect and the ego are to be ignored with a view to reach the Soul; which can be done only by suspending the operations of the mind, that is, by being relieved of all cares and anxieties. One may apprehend that to remain in such a state in total suspension of the functions of the mind is to become perfectly inert without any sense of joy or sorrow ; but those who have experiences of these matters bear witness that there is immense bliss in such a state. The following few quotations, among many, from the Sruti will bear out the truth :—

“प्रशान्तवृत्तिकं चित्तं परमानन्ददीपकम्

असम्प्रज्ञात नामायै समाधिर्योगिनां प्रियः”

(The pacified state of the mind affording extreme bliss, known as Asamprajnata Samadhi or complete abstraction, is dear to the ascetic).

“तयात् संप्राप्यते सौख्यं स्वात्मानन्दं परं पदम्” (From dissolution of the mind arise joy and the highest desirable thing, the bliss inherent in Self),—Yoga Sishupanishad, Chap. I, 136. “सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिप्राप्तमतीन्द्रियम्” (Where there is extreme bliss, revealed only to the intellect and transcending the senses),—Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Chap. VI, 21.

There is no hope of emancipation unless and until the limited soul is brought into tune with the limitless everlasting Universal Soul, Brahman ; in case of such a harmony, the attributes of the Universal Soul, such as, omnipresence, omniscience and bliss unmixed begin to manifest themselves even while in this mortal body (*vide* Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 15-16 and 21). This harmony can be effected only by bringing the mind to perfect stillness by quenching all desires ; but there is no hope so long as there remains the least desire for sense enjoyments in the mind ; the mind should be made completely free from all thoughts ; that is, there should be complete resignation to the Lord, the Universal Soul, in body and mind, by perfect relaxation of all the limbs and total suspension of the operations of the mind. Passionlessness, desirelessness and thoughtlessness are the landmarks of this pilgrimage.

All the worldly sorrows and pleasures are but the creations of the mind ; these joys and sorrows depend on the characteristics of one's own thought. A man may be happy if he thinks himself so even in the midst of sorrows and *vice versa*. So to rise above all these worldly joys and sorrows is to suspend the functions of the mind ; and then only does the unparalleled Bliss of Brahman glimpse forth.

A man, whose mind has become tranquillised and has been trained to be concentrated in one thing, is qualified to meditate on Brahman. Control of the mind arises from absence of all anxieties. To conquer the whole world is trivial to a man who can conquer the mind. To conquer the mind, as said by the renowned Trailanga Swami of Benares to his beloved disciple, Uma Churan Mukhopadhyaya, is nothing else but to remain in the state of Brahman, that is, to keep in suspension the functions of the mind. The inherent attribute of the mind is changefulness ; to reach Brahman is to cease this continuous rippling of the mind. There is no other means to realise the Soul except by conquering the mind, or in other words by bringing the mind to perfect stillness by calming down all thoughts. It is the mind which suffers the consequences of all actions and enjoys the joys or sorrows ; and strictly speaking it is also the mind which attains emancipation. In the very attempt to bring the mind to perfect stillness with a view to realize the limitless Lord, Brahman, the breath comes to a standstill and the functions of the mind are arrested. This automatic suspension of the breath leads to salvation :—“वायुं निरुध्य मेधावी जीवन्मुक्तो भवत्ययम्”—(The wise man by suspending the breath becomes liberated even while living),—Yogatattvopanishad, Chap. I, 106.

Constant practice of cessation of all thoughts or in other words, of suspension of the operations of the mind, in the above way, leads

one to a state of perfect abstraction, known as Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where there is no distinction between the subject and the object, where the finite soul becomes totally absorbed in the Universal Soul, where the mind and ego, all relativity and dualism disappear and absolute monism prevails, where neither the sun nor the moon shines, where neither star nor lightning flashes, where perfect serenity prevails without any disturbance from the bustles and tumults of the world which is a state of repose, a sense of perfect fullness and of pure self-existence, consciousness and bliss absolute, and not of non-existence nor of total annihilation; even the seers who have experienced such a state cannot describe it fully but conclude by saying that it is unspeakable and inexpressible by means of any linguistic medium; this is a state where no worldly joys and sorrows, no atmospheric heat and cold can disturb the nerve-centres, but absolute bliss predominates; where the mind and intellect remain in suspension in a state beyond wakefulness, beyond dream and beyond even dreamless sleep; where Self, the Supreme Ruler, shines alone in Its pristine glory. This state of perfect abstraction is not a wakeful nor a dreaming state, as there is no exercise of the volition in it; it is neither a state of dreamless sleep, as the latter is only a state of dull nescience while the former rises superior to such dullness and acts like fire burning down countless desires to ashes; but it is a superconscious state, known as the Turia or the fourth state, where the finite self is in communion, or rather in union, with the Infinite Self, the Lord; it is a state of refuge of the former in the latter. It is a state where the mind serenely rests in the Lord alone, freed from all longings of the heart and cravings of the flesh, just like a lamp burning steadily on, sheltered from the gusts of the wind; where the mind, absolutely restrained by the practice of concentration or rather by habitual relaxation, attains stillness, and where seeing the Self by the self, one is satisfied with one's own Self; where one experiences that immense bliss which is revealed only to the intellect but which transcends the senses; established wherein, the Yogin never departs from his real state; and having obtained which, he regards no other acquisition superior; and seated wherein he is not moved even by the heaviest sorrow (*vide* Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Chap. VI, 18-22). To remove the apprehension that this is only a state of unconsciousness, it will not be out of place to mention here that Acharya Badarayana Vyasa shows in his Brahma Sutra (Chap. IV, IV, 16) by citing different Srutis that what is stated in Sruti about specific non-cognition or total unconsciousness on the part of the finite soul, while in union with the Lord, is either regarding deep sleep or regarding death, but not regarding the state of the released soul who still retains full consciousness.

This is our goal; this is the *summum bonum* of our existence; and every one should stake all that he holds dear to attain this end.

AKBAR AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

(From a Comparative Perspective)

(Continued from the last issue)

By Svami Nirlepananda

The Problem of Religions.—Let us next revert to religion. It has been very well said that to the sixteenth century statesman, this had been a problem of problems. Akbar himself was just appearing before the Indian population after a vehement storm of Muslim intolerance and persecution (*viz.*, Feroj Tuglak's policy). He had to put forth all his tact in tackling this burning question. The Hindu-Muslim misunderstanding of those days had also attained an acute stage. Contemporary European statesmen also were just on the threshold of a new age of Reformed Faith and rational points of views. The heat and animation of a struggle between the conservative Catholics and the rational Protestants, was keenly felt by every one of them; in each particular people there could be viewed a special expression. It was an intensely determinate, pregnant moment. A universal spirit was working uniformly in the arena of human history. The age of Reformation had already ushered into prominence a ring of illustrious and zealous reformers like Luther, Calvin and Knox. It must not be forgotten that there was a fundamental difference between the Indian and the European situations. The struggle between Islamism and Hinduisim was marked inherently throughout by a far greater rancour and intolerance and was attendant consequently with enormous difficulties than its prototype-dispute between Protestantism and Catholicism. There was a greater possibility of Catholicism meeting half-way with Protestantism. Comparatively speaking Akbar's problem was more complex and studded with misunderstanding at every step.

So Akbar must be allotted the greater credit for the admirable way in which he solved the problem. He had always an open heart, susceptible of receiving liberal sentiments in religion. Sufism which was an adaptation of Vedantic doctrines in an Islamic garb found him as its first, sincere, royal patron. He was a true upholder of Eclecticism. Although he was himself of Islamic persuasion he sometimes dressed himself like a devout Hindu and practised Hindu systems of

worship and prayers. It bore great spectacular and practically healthy effects.

He gave a patient ear to the apologists of every faith and finally reached his own conclusions. The faith which he established had its firm basis on the strong ground of non-sectarianism. The "Din Illahi," although a mere collection of excellent moral rules from almost all the then extant faiths, produced admirable results. It sounded a new era of religious toleration long unheard of by the Indians. The invidious Jiziah and Pilgrim Taxes were events of yesterday. He hated class-divisions, mutual clashes and the fanning of feelings of communalism. Speaking generally the baneful doctrine of 'Divide and Rule' had no place in his governmental institute. Every one was free to pursue his own faith unmolested by governmental regulations. Much was done to precipitate loving feelings between the rulers and the ruled. There was not the least bloodshed anywhere on the score of religion. We may find fault with the inherent weaknesses of his scheme of faith discursively, dialectically or metaphysically. It could not offer *bona fide* lives of prophets and saints behind its teachings. These *living sermons* alone can help to make a religion stay in human society. All this is true. Yet we cannot deny the practical results of his scheme so long as Akbar was there.

Now, let us turn to his contemporaries so that we may ascertain his real place in their rank. They produced quite a different picture and the contrast is quite marked. Wherever we turn—towards French, English or Germanic rulers, we are sure to meet with bloodshed. A host of Cranmers and Latimers had literally to offer their life-blood to justify the right of independent thought in matters of faith. Religious *fracas* curdle our blood. Gradually and systematically they reached a gruesome point later on in the cursed stakes which ended many a sincere soul. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was just an extreme type in which untold assassinations and persecutions reached their zenith. Even Elizabeth who at first solved the problem on a non-sectarian basis by her "*via media*" policy, had later on to champion a partisan cause: earlier than this she stained her fame by the shedding of blood. The French potentates, beginning from Francis I up to Charles IX without exception adopted a persecuting policy against the Protestants. Many of the European rulers were persons of not much religious conviction (viz, Elizabeth). They mostly cared for power and material gain and to them religion was only an instrument for serving political ends. Catherine de Medici, the moving figure in the sixteenth century French politics, the illustrious Elizabeth and Emperor Maximilian II are cases in point. Maurice of Saxony shone so nobly in his religious championship just because his self-interest

accidentally coincided with a particular faith. Of Akbar such a remark can never be hazarded. Of course we cannot say of Charles V that he too had no religious conviction specially when we know that he had an idea of purging Catholicism of its evils and abuses by summoning a General Council. His attempt to enforce the "*Interim*" by arms shows him also in his true colour. Owing to enormous physical power at its back royal opinion is thus prone to become obtrusive and shall we say, *painfully* assertive too? It seldom can resist the temptation of *exact*ing conformity at the point of bayonet. The doctrines comprised in Charles' scheme were mainly Catholic with certain tinges of toleration. "The *Interim* shows clearly how Charles' head had been turned by his success and how little conception he had of the real meaning and force of religious belief" (Lodge). On the whole, it must be admitted that Charles failed in his solution of the religious problem. With his son Philip II the failure was still more shameful.

Statesmen as Social Reformers.—Now, let us consider the statesmen as social reformers. Like Elizabeth, Akbar also showed zeal in matters of 'social reform'. The former by passing measures like Poor Laws showed her keen interest to free the social body of its evils and the latter by his discouragement of the practices of early marriage and Suttee (compulsory self-immolation of widows). We may also say that Akbar by his personal example encouraged inter-caste or more properly inter-communal marriage. Of course it cannot be denied that his matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs were mostly dictated by political considerations, much more than social aims. One point is to be clearly remembered in this connection. Akbar's attempts in these directions were marked throughout by the total absence of radicalism. Therefore he never had recourse to state regulations by the passing of compulsory laws. He knew where the susceptibilities of his subjects lay and his method was one of peace and moderation. There was more of constructive genius in Akbar than mere destructive criticism. Many of his contemporaries do not at all appear in their role as social reformers; even in those few who do so we seek in vain for Akbar's tact.

Administrative Problems: (a) Law.—Next let us see the statesmen as administrators when they had to tackle problems such as army, navy, finance, legislation and provincial Government. Excepting legislation Akbar showed his pre-eminence more or less in all these matters. Solyman, the Magnificent, whose military genius and exploits are made much of by European historians, is praised specially the more by his countrymen as one who reformed and reconstructed their legal system. To them he is fondly termed as "Kanuni"

or Lawgiver. Akbar cannot claim praises like him on this ground.

(b) *Army*.—Elizabeth reformed her army and improved the navy. The supremacy of Britain as a first class maritime power dates from her reign. A golden chapter of British History begins after the famous Spanish Armada was ousted. The territorial expansion of England came in its wake. The first charter to the East India Company was granted by her. Henceforth England becomes a colonial power. She wakes up to build gradually an Empire on the Eastern waters. These are some of the unparalleled, almost brightest features of Elizabethan England from her national point of view.

Every statesman who had to do the fighting business had as a rule to look after army efficiency. But probably none had to combat against age-long abuses of a military system which in itself was inherently, constitutionally weak and effete. Yet such exactly was the lot of Akbar. The Mughal military system was a mere transplantation of the Central Asian system of Tamerlane in its entirety,—taking no consequence of the immediate difficulties of the Indian environment. The atmosphere, condition and soil were all different. Therefore the growth of the plant was stunted and it had to be kept alive by a great many artificial stimulants. Consequently in course of time the vicious practice of estimating men's worth in terms of cavalry gave birth to untold abuses. The Mansabdary system came to mean an organised treachery. In state-papers the Mansabdars were supposed to keep and maintain a certain number of soldiers (for which they used to draw big sums). Actually they kept a far less number than that. At the time of inspection or *leves* a good many bogus soldiers were hired and set up. By this dangerous artifice Mansabdars faced the trials all right. The task of reforming such a system was stupendous and its exact parallel cannot be met with. Akbar made a personal supervision of the whole matter and introduced many far-reaching reforms which saved for the time-being at least the tottering Mughal military system. His enormous credit lies in the fact that with such an essentially weak superstructure he worked miracles. A regular system of registers containing details about every individual soldier was enforced. He very strenuously pressed for it. Henceforth payment was made direct from the Government treasury. The practice of branding every horse checked cavalry abuses. Akbar also maintained an elephantry. Artillery also helped him henceforth in his battles and sieges.

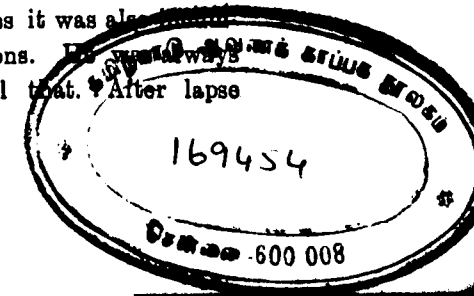
(c) *Revenue*.—Akbar's revenue reforms were no less noted than his army reconstruction. There had been a repeated outcry on the part of the Indian peasantry from a long time for unjust taxation. Akbar tried his best to remove fiscal grievances. A regular survey of

land was carried on. Lands were differentiated into three classes according to fertility. Average produce of each class was also taken into account and taxation was adjusted accordingly. It satisfied all parties concerned. The subjects henceforth came to have lesser grounds of objections, and dissatisfaction was on the wane. The Government gained because it got a possibility of a definite, fixed income. The Mughal Exchequer which was in a deplorable state on the accession of Akbar now recouped a good deal. Perhaps this isolated cause, namely, an ordered finance contributed most to the success of Akbar's governmental schemes. The British Exchequer when Elizabeth ascended the throne was also in a tottering condition and the Queen showed much tact in recovering it. But Charles V was in a quite different position as we have already said. Yet he had to mourn his unsuccess during his solitary days in the monastery of Sans Juste!

(d) *Provincial Administration*.—Now let us look into the administrator's arrangements of provincial Government. Akbar showed his rare ability as an organiser by evolving an efficient machinery of Government by Subas. The different state-officials had their respective, distinct, allotted works. Local self-government was instituted in many parts of the land and the huge structure was set on running on the principle of division of labour. Villages were left to themselves in most cases. The provinces of Emperor Charles V (*viz.*, the Netherlands) were hotbeds of rebellion and discontent. The situation became much more desperate and deplorable in the reign of his successor Philip II.

Extent of Territory: Its Difficulty.—Next let us consider the question of territorial area of different governments. Physical geography has ever put some obstacles on the rulers of the world. Charles V's dominions were severed from one another by great distances. The central authority could not consequently be felt equally over every part. Communication was definitely difficult in those days. So he had to combat great disadvantages with his scattered lands. It must be admitted however to his eternal credit that so long as Charles V lived he did maintain his scattered dominions as a compact unit. Akbar was not spared from similar difficulties. He had to tackle such a vast land like India but he was equal to the task. Had there been a less able man at the helm of affairs he would have lost his equipoise at the disquieting, loud cries of revolt from different parts of the great land. Akbar had sufficient strength of mind to hold on and remain unmoved. At times it was almost bent upon him to adopt necessary strong actions. He was always up and doing, altogether very prompt for all that. After lapse

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of years finally, it was his privilege to see every dissentient voice silenced.

Territorial Consolidation: Ultimate success or failure.—Statesmen may also be examined from the point of view of their ultimate success or failure. The best opportunity to study this is to examine their own death-bed pronouncements (if any). One becomes at that supreme moment one's own witness, own judge. Therefrom we become acquainted with their own respective mental feeling on their past careers. Akbar knew (as we know quite well) before he breathed his last that his work of consolidating the Indian Empire was excellently performed and he died a *happy death*. And that was a prerogative granted only to the few. Among English rulers we may mention Henry VIII and Elizabeth who were quite successful in this respect. The Emperor Charles V had to face an ultimate failure as also his son. Philip II was far from successful. Francis I of France helped a good deal in the extension of the French frontier. None of his sixteenth century successors (Henry IV should be considered properly as belonging to the next century) had the satisfaction of seeing a fully pacified and consolidated France. Solyman undoubtedly must be counted as a great builder of Modern Turkey. Although in his later years he had to face reverses yet he did much for his country. Ivan, the Terrible, extended the Russian frontier and in that sense certainly furthered the territorial consolidation of his country. We also know very well that it is not every ruler's privilege to see fruition before their final exit from the world-stage. But here we are more precisely concerned with the mental feeling of sovereigns in asserting and claiming a just pride over their share of intense labours in helping or setting their kingdoms on to the forward-movement of greater progress and brighter achievements. When passing judgment on different rulers from this stand-point we must not forget that there are statesmen who are really *successful* and worth our adoration amidst all their apparent failures. This point of view is not absolutely infallible and has its pitfalls.

Conceptions of noble Ideals Honesty about means.—Now, let us consider statesmen in their aspect of great conceptions and the capability of realizing them in actuality. In this role the statesman's political garb falls off and he wears the mantle of a prophet. He is able to have a vivid picture of the future in imagination. The statesman becomes an idealist. The Great Mughal, Akbar, presents altogether an admirable picture when viewed thus. Unique among all and unlike all previous Muslim rulers he wanted to turn the extra-Indian mental outlook of his countrymen towards the

land of their adoption by creating a net-work of abiding, permanent interest that would hold them up here. Students of history having sufficient historical imagination very often can see Akbar on beautiful moonlit nights in his magnificent palace at Fatepur Sikri after state-business,—sitting all alone in silence rapt in his vision of a United, India,—when all the jarring elements have been pacified—silenced, and unity brought about,—when the yawning gulf between the rulers and the ruled has been made up! Elizabeth may be said to be equally great; she too had visions of a united and glorious England, raised to an honoured eminence above all continental powers. The other rulers had visions, their cherished ideals each in his own way. Rulers like Philip wanted to see the supremacy of a particular faith, sovereigns like Solyman cherished the extension of Turkish influence on Europe.

But then comes the question of practicality, of achievements—the respective means adopted by each to actualise their dreams. When compared with Akbar in this respect most of them pale into insignificance. To most like Charles V, his son, or Francis I *aggression merely* was the watchword. The palliating, soothing and unifying measures which succeed strong military actions demonstrate full well that the latter were a mere means for realising something higher. Although Akbar had to fight, yet in his long career he has shown satisfactorily that really speaking the sword did nothing for him or at most merely the spidework. Conciliation and moral influence, the air of impartiality and equal treatment, the message of hope and toleration—all these really did win the Empire for him. In matters of faith he wanted to follow the path chalked out by Nanak, Dadu, Kabir and other prophets. Like them he also wanted to amicably unify all. In the language of figures Inidan Islam's body merely so long was lying in this land but the face of its inner mind was always turned towards Mecca, Medina, Samarkand, Bagdad and Khiva with many a fond dream. The Great Akbar was extraordinarily ambitious in one way. He was almost heroic. He for the first time as a ruler attempted the as yet untried task of giving it a newer turn towards Delhi, Agra and Lucknow. Thus Akbar shone in splendour both as an idealist as well as a practical statesman. His reading of the situation was exceedingly correct. This is evident equally both in his scrupulous attention to big issues as well as small contingencies. Nothing was too petty for his consideration. Let us say again of Akbar as has been remarked of Lord Kitchener, that he had the knack of knowing just the man for the job and the job for the man. This is very excellently illustrated by his allotment of respective provinces to able officers just after conquests. Then again, speaking of practicality

we must not omit to note a distinct point that becomes prominent through all actions of Emperor Akbar. To many of the European contemporary statesmen (specially with Queen Elizabeth) the end justified the means. This Jesuitical doctrine swayed and still sways the political atmosphere supreme. For the realization of this ultimate object they were quite willing to sacrifice every honest principle and high ideal. Some one has nicely said that *expediency* is a dangerous term in politics. Viewed in this colour a vicious success psychology is uppermost in those mental constitutions that have the privilege to control state-machineries. Nothing succeeds like success. In every age, in every land this temperamental affinity is observed in all these people. Romain Rolland has somewhere ecstatically but too truly exclaimed,—“*History?—What is History?—The History of Success, the demonstration of the accomplished fact, be it just or unjust.*”

Elizabeth “lied, plotted and quibbled.” Although idealism cannot (specially in the political arena) always be maintained, yet if we find two rulers both equally badly situated adopting fair and foul means respectively (from a general, total standpoint) and attaining success, we are bound to bestow more praises on the former. We may justify the latter case by the exhaustion of all our historical phraseologies ending with such remarks as “these actions were politically *expedients*.” After all the world is a graduated and a contrasted scale. Of Akbar taken as a totality in contrast with Elizabeth specially, we may say, that he seldom adopted systematic dishonest means. His means were always noble, generally speaking—(cf. Elizabeth’s *Underhand* help to Frenchmen, Scotchmen and Netherlanders). Not that Akbar was wholly devoid of state-duplicities. His achievements fully illustrate the message of Edmund Burke that “Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom and a great Empire and little minds go ill together.” To a fallen enemy, as we have said, Akbar was always magnanimous. This feature of his character raised him very high in men’s estimation. To them sometimes the *Master of Delhi* was the *Master of the World*,—extremely generous. “*Dillisvaro ba Jagadisvaroba*”—became almost a very sacred *mantram* in men’s lips. The atmosphere was surcharged with its reverberation. It was almost a catchword repeated by the distant village ploughman plodding through his open fields and the city carpenter too in his closed, stuffed, workshop-cells. For this was no mean a laurel to be won by a king from his subjects,—perhaps it is the highest testimonial that has ever flowed spontaneously from the heart-spring of a subject race! It was out and out a piece of genuine, natural outburst and not *exacted* at the point of fire-arms.

A historian of Elizabeth has written,—“Her policy was not noble nor magnanimous, but with an impoverished kingdom, a ruined navy, a feeble army and an insecure position, *noble policy was impossible*” (Creighton). But we think that by his own example Akbar has proved just the opposite and his greatness definitely lies here. Akbar’s difficulties were none the less in magnitude than those here enumerated by the learned author, yet he showed that in spite of them, *noble policy was possible*.

Cultural aspects.—Let us now look at statesmen as patrons of Art and Literature. Many of these personalities created in their respective realms an atmosphere of intense intellectuality—a really high cultural *regime*. Akbar and Elizabeth were equally noble in this respect. This is not the place to enumerate details. Both the ages of Akbar and Elizabeth were glorious from artistic and sculptural points of view. The Elizabethan Age in English Literature is a famous age. It is a history of rare, brilliant achievements. It produced men who transcend their own age and are for all ages. Shakespeare, the uncrowned king of the realm of Elizabethan genius, is a name to conjure with. He has won for himself an abiding place in universal mind.

Akbar’s reign produced *literateurs* like Faizi, musicians like Tansen, artists like Abdas Samed, architectural monuments like the palace at Fatepur Sikri. Henceforth under his encouragement illumination of manuscripts came very much into vogue. Books were multiplied. Several newer modes, methods and tastes in social finery, dress, ornament, gardening, cooking, etc., cropped up. Music, instrumental and vocal, was directed to distinct directions, ways and styles,—made fuller and more perfect. There was peace under a long reign. And these had all their hey-days. A study of these aspects of his reign has ever been a great fascination to us all. Yet the most wonderful thing about Akbar was that he himself could not read or write. Amidst all the multifarious state-activities he found sufficient time to indulge in conversation with the learned society of the age. Solyman, the Magnificent, exceeds all in one unique feature. He was himself well-educated and a brilliant poet too.

Akbar of course, did not encourage discovery of newer lands like Emperor Charles V or send distant expeditions like Queen-Elizabeth. His reign lacks these features.

Finis.—We have one word more before we close. The aim of the present short paper has been to study a topic in its comparative aspect. We have tried to see how Akbar solved the various state-problems in comparison with his contemporary statesmen and the reader is to judge how far we have been successful. Akbar’s shortcomings as well as his merits have both been alluded to. We have used the racial

terms *European* or *Asiatic* for the convenience of easier understanding bereft of all sinister implications. (Concluded)

CHITRAKETU*

By Swami Atulananda

Long, long ago, in days of yore, in the country of Surasena, there lived a king, Chitraketu by name. He was a mighty ruler, conqueror of his foes, wealthy beyond compare, learned and of excellent qualities. During his reign—so it is written—there was in all his dominion no theft, no cheating, no murder, no adultery. For this the people knew well, as the king was ever generous and ready to award virtue, he was no less severe in the punishment of crime. And they loved him for his justice.

The king had a loving, faithful wife of great beauty and queenly bearing. Fortune, indeed, had smiled upon this happy pair.

And still! one long shadow lingered across their path—a single misfortune to darken all their happiness. There was no child.

Now it happened one day, that during his wanderings the worshipful sage Angira entered the capital of Surasena and according to the custom of those days the king invited the venerable sage to visit his palace. When Angira arrived, the king rising from his seat, welcomed him with great hospitality, and paid him the homage due to a holy guest. Then when both were comfortably seated and they had exchanged the courtesies of the day the sage observing the cloud of discontent covering the king's brow addressed him thus:

Your majesty, you have acquired great wealth and power; your country is flourishing and your subjects are prosperous and happy. Still, your mind seems filled with anxiety. Is there still some desire that you have not attained? It seems you are not as satisfied as one in your position might be.

Thus questioned, the king replied respectfully, "O illustrious sir! all things are known to you. But as you have asked me to unfold the cause of my anxiety I freely reveal it to you. With all my prosperity I am not happy, for I am childless. Who will inherit my wealth when I pass from here? Who will protect my subjects when I am gone? As an army without a leader thus is a nation without a king. Enemies will take possession of the land and the people will suffer oppression. My life and labor will have been in vain if at my demise no legal successor mounts the throne. To one of

*Adapted from the "Srimad Bhagavatam."

your austerity, holiness and goodness, all things are possible. O mighty lord, bless me with an heir who may succeed me on the throne."

Angira touched by the sorrow of the noble king, and realizing that his earnest desire was justifiable, sat silent in thoughtful mood. At last he replied, "Oh king! I have considered your request. It will not be as you hope. But you will have a son. That son, however, will be to you a cause of sorrow as well as of happiness. Let the queen live in abstinence for three days, worshipping the gods. Let her subsist on water and fruits only."

Having spoken thus Angira rose from his seat and left the court. Then, with prescribed rites and ceremonies, he performed a great sacrifice, and he prepared a sacred dish the secret of which was known to him. Now when three days had passed and the food had been duly offered to the God of Fire he gave it to the queen to eat. In due time a son was born, and there was great rejoicing in the kingdom. In the capital triumphant arches were erected festooned with flowers; banners were raised; flags unfurled. The roads were sprinkled with scented water, public festivals were arranged and music and song filled the air. And at the palace numerous guests were entertained. Brahmins performed special ceremonies and blessed the new-born babe, and the king rewarded them with gold and silver and precious gems. And great wealth was distributed among the poor. Naturally the parents doted on the child. And this new blessing tightened the cords of love between the king and the queen.

Now, there lived at the court a woman who, as time went on, considered herself neglected by the royal pair after the child had been born. She became jealous, and this jealousy increased as the boy growing in loveliness, more and more absorbed the affection of his parents. At last unable to bear this any longer, the woman secretly administered poison to the child.

One day the queen entered her little son's apartment to feed him. But thinking that the child was soundly sleeping, she went away. However, after some time thinking that he had now slept long enough she told the nurse to awaken her son, and bring him to her.

Accordingly the nurse went to bring the boy. But when she lifted him in her arms the child did not awaken. Then a sudden fear came over her, and placing the boy on his bed again, she ran for the queen. The queen came trembling, thinking that the child might be ill. But when she touched the little body the truth sprang upon her. The boy was dead!

The king being informed, staggered towards his son's apartment, and seeing the dead body he sank weeping to his knees beside the

queen. The mother, bending over the prostrate little body sobbed and wailed, "O my darling, do not forsake your mother, look at the grief of your father. O, sleep no more, wake up my child. Smile once at your mother. You are not dead! It is not possible! O God! is there no justice, no mercy! Why do the old live and my baby dies?"

The sad news spread quickly through the kingdom, and so it reached the ears of the sage Angira. He, accompanied by another sage, Narada, hastened to the palace to console the bereaved parents.

Finding the king almost senseless with grief, Angira spoke, "O king, does it become you thus to give way to sorrow? You are a man well versed in sacred lore. You believe in a Supreme Being who regulates the events of this universe. Trust in God who knows no injustice. All things happen according to sacred law. When I first came to you I wished to instil in you divine knowledge. But finding you interested in other things I granted your desire for a son. Now, O king, alas! you experience the distress of those who lose a child. Death is inevitable in every family. Life is fleeting, death swallows all. Friends and relatives, husband, wife and child, wealth, your kingdom, nay even this earth will pass away. Thus all life is beset with sorrow. Therefore put your mind at peace by meditating Him who is eternal, who knows no change and no decay. He is your own soul, the soul of all existence. Realizing Him you will enter into the realm of tranquillity."

Sadly, with downcast eyes, the king replied, "Oh greatest of sages, I have listened to your words. What you have told me is true, but my heart is set on my boy. After long years of prayer this child at last was granted me to gladden my heart. Without my son I cannot live. Day and night I shall be thinking of him. I shall know no peace. Better that I die this moment and follow my boy to regions unknown." Having spoken thus the king broke out in tears, his head bent, his body shaking.

Then the sage Narada seeing the king still dejected, in great compassion of heart invoked the departed spirit and when the spirit appeared called out, "Behold your son! O king!" and the king looking up, beheld an effulgent spirit.

Then Narada addressing the spirit spoke, "O spirit, see here your father and your mother, sorely afflicted with grief for your departure. I grant you the power to re-enter your body and to revive it. Enjoy a long life with your parents if you choose, and being in course of time installed on the throne enjoy a prosperous kingdom."

But the spirit spoke, "What shall I do with life, I, who have known freedom from the bondage of body. Does the bird freed from the cage wish to enter it again? Bodily existence is a delusion caused by ignorance. That ignorance is destroyed by true knowledge, the knowledge that the soul is divine and forever free. One who realizes his divine nature is delivered from bondage; he rises beyond birth and death, and enjoys eternal peace.

"O father! O mother! many parents have I had in previous births. Fostered by them in helpless youth, each time I became greatly attached to them, and they to me. Where now are those parents? Where is my attachment to them? You also have lived many times in the past. You have had sons and daughters in those previous existences. You have rejoiced at their birth, and you have lamented at their demise even as now you lament at separation from me. The past is forgotten; all has vanished like a dream. Even so this life will soon belong to the past and will be forgotten. As prayer beads are strung on a thread, thus these lives are strung on the passage of time. As stage actors change their parts, so we act different parts in succeeding births. Birth is followed by death and death is followed by new birth. Grieve not then for the unavoidable. Worship Him who is the cause of all causes, and realizing Him live happily.

"This misfortune that has befallen you is but an angel in disguise. Dear parents, having no son to worship now, your hearts will turn towards God, and realizing Him you will attain the supreme object of life. To teach you this I was born as your son."

Having uttered these words of wisdom, the spirit departed.

The parents greatly consoled had the dead body buried and having duly performed the last rites, freed from the fetters of attachment, the source of all sorrow, found solace in a holy life, and the Almighty Hari, pleased with their devotion, when they left this world, granted them that emancipation which is the end of all sorrow and the fountain-head of all bliss.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

APPRECIATION OF EASTERN CULTURE IN THE WEST

One of the most distinguishing features of the modern era is the great facilities for communication and transport that the advancement of science has afforded and the consequent linking up of the destinies of nations separated by thousands of miles of land and sea. The nations of the East and the West and the cultures they represent have been brought into closer contact than ever before in world's history, and a mutual exchange and assimilation of ideas have been going on for over a century. This new state of affairs has in the beginning

been largely due to the enterprise and initiative of the Western nations, and coming as they did into the East for purposes of exploitations and conquest, they were prone to regard the Eastern races and their culture as backward and unworthy of imitation. But the East possessing a culture far more ancient and equally virile though not so aggressive as that of the West, did not fail to cast its silent but overpowering fascination on the Western imagination, and even as Greece conquered her conquerors, has been making her influence felt on the trend of modern thought in the West. There is at present in the West an ever-increasing appreciation of Eastern ideals, and the following remarks of 'The Spectator' is a clear indication of the same :—

"The dramas that unfold themselves throughout Asia, where nations are being re-born and philosophies re-considered, are on a scale so vast that they have received insufficient attention in the West. We notice political changes, for they are definite and describable, but changes in the mind of man, more important in their effect upon humanity, are on a scale so vast that they stretch beyond living sight.

"Yet never was the need for sympathy and information between the East and West more urgent than to-day. Eight hundred million people—the greater part of the earth—are in process of reorganisation and readjustment. They have acquired, to a greater or less extent, the weapons and conveniences of the West, but not our traditions. Their own traditions are valuable and indigenous. Many of them have been shaken by the new ideas and are in danger of being forgotten. Before the War, Westernisation was hated alike by the orthodox Hindu and the orthodox Moham-medan. Now that it has come more suddenly and fully than we ever believed possible, the best minds in the East are saying in effect: "If we are to have the West let us have the real thing; let us learn from the scientist and social worker as well as from the demagogue and salesman." And we, on our side, now that the East is becoming disconcertingly like ourselves, begin to wonder whether something will not be lost to world-civilisation, if the countries that were crucibles of thought became centres of industry instead.

"...Perhaps Asia would have been happier working out her own destinies in her own way, the spawning-ground of millions of contented, unlearned people, the nursery of a few Lao Tsies, Gautamas, Mahommeds, Hafizes, Babers. It profits nothing to speculate on this. The sands have run. We must turn the hour-glass of a new dispensation. Europe and Asia have come together in a clash.

"...Whatever the awakened East does, whatever new synthesis in art or ethics comes from the meeting of the two civilisations, our path in the West is clear. We are great enough in our own standards to be receptive. We must welcome the philosophies of the East, not as the whole of truth, but as facets of a diamond of which only a very small part has been polished by our scholars.

"...The spiritual riches of Asia are not contained in dead languages from the Greeks and Romans. The creeds and ideals of Asia are living forces to-day—men and women are striving for them as we strive for ours.

"What India can teach us in philosophy will certainly leave us more sympathetic towards the outlook of other races towards whom we have assumed great responsibilities. Even if we are not convinced

of the personal value to ourselves of Indian philosophy, that will be an incalculable gain. On the other hand, we may find that the ancient Sanskrit writings, when interpreted by humane and not scholastic standards, will give us wider outlook on our own faith and reveal once again the interdependence of all humanity striving towards the light. The Vedas are, in fact, as much the property of the West as the East. For our own profit as much as for the sake of India we should keep alive the flame that was lit in Aryavarta so many centuries ago. From California to Iceland, and from England across Europe to Calcutta, one word is used by the races of mankind to denote kinship. It is 'brother'—a Sanskrit word."

These remarks of the Spectator are significant in two ways. In the first place it reveals the attitude of the broad-minded section of Westerners towards the culture of the East. In the second place it is an eye-opener to our own people, especially to radical reformers who in their zeal for reorganising their people and reinstating their land in the comity of nations consider that the only hope of the East lies in a total demolition of her ancient traditions and imitating the culture and institutions of the West. We have of course to learn and assimilate many things from the West; but what is required more than that for a healthy growth is to preserve intact the spirit and aspirations of our own ideals and devise a new application of them to solve the problems of modern life.

PHYSICAL TRAINING OF WOMEN

We are glad to note that in a physical culture tournament held under the auspices of the Hindu Samaj Sammilan, a batch of girls, trained in athletic feats gave an exhilarating demonstration of lathi, dagger and sword play. This interest which Indian women are now beginning to show in physical culture is one of the happy signs of the day. The health of the mothers of a country is undoubtedly one of the most important factors that contribute to the vigour and vitality of a nation. A sound training of the womenfolk in various branches of physical culture had been a principal concern of educationist in ancient states like Sparta, and it is still so in most countries of modern Europe. In ancient days in various parts of India also women were given training in the use of arms, and the names of noble ladies like Padmini, Durgavati, Chandbibi and Lakshmibai will stand comparison with heroic women of any other part of the world. In modern times too we must produce women of similar mould, strong, brave and intrepid, and the organisation of physical culture tournaments as the present one will be one of the effective means for doing the same.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Zoroastrian Religion and Customs: By Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha; published by Messrs. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Kitab Mahal, Hornby Road, Bombay Price Rs. 3/—; pages 210.

This is the third edition of Bharucha's book "Zoroastrian Religion and Customs". It gives a clear and lucid statement of the important tenets of this ancient religion and brief descriptions of the various rites and ceremonies observed by the Zoroastrians in their daily life.

The career and date of the Prophet Zoroaster are also briefly dealt with. The author disproves the widely prevailing misconception that Zoroastrian Religion advocates a theory of dualism in which Ahura Mazda (God) is opposed by an equally powerful spirit of evil, Ahriman. He shows that Zoroastrianism is a religion of virile monotheism, admitting the supremacy of no other being except Ahura Mazda. He denies the allegation that Zoroastrians are fire worshippers and interprets many of their socio-religious customs and purificatory rites in the light of hygienic and sanitary laws. The book contains also a short analysis of the Avesta, the Zoroastrian sacred book, and a brief history of the religion in Persia and India. The book is scholarly without at the same time being in any way abstruse and difficult of comprehension. It will be found useful by the Zoroastrians as well as by others who desire to know something authentic and first-hand about this ancient religion.

Wisdom of the Prophets : By Khaja Khan, 69, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Madras. Price Rs. 2/- ; 202 pages.

The present work is a close translation of *Fusus ul-Hikam*, a standard work on Tasawwuf, by Shayk Ibn' Arabi, a renowned master of Sufi mysticism and philosophy. The book is divided into 27 chapters, each chapter being named after the particular prophet whose wisdom it seeks to expound. A brief life sketch of the Shayk is also given. The frequent use of technical terms, perhaps unavoidable, will be felt as a formidable difficulty by a casual reader who has no previous grounding in the subject. The valuable glossary explaining the technical terms may, however, go a great way in removing this difficulty. A student of Sufism who has no access to the writings of the Shayk in Arabic will find the book very useful.

Hindu Ethics : By Babu Govinda Das ; published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price Rs. 2.

'Hindu Ethics' is a searching and critical enquiry into the social and religious problems that confront the Hindus in modern times. The author has ably shown in this volume how the grip of ecclesiastical authority and the putrefying bondage of the dead past over the Hindu society have been the main reasons for its degeneration and decay. In some of the important chapters of the book as Hindu Nationalism, Marriage Laws and Customs, and Personal Law of the Hindus, the author beautifully illustrates how these factors have driven all commonsense from the Hindu mind, and in its place enthroned superstition and slavishness to an extent not only ridiculous but even suicidal. He points out that the popular belief in the inalterable nature of the scriptural texts relating to social life is absolutely unfounded, as they have, as a matter of fact, changed with the progress of time, and, what is more, differ even at present in different parts of the country.

This in short is the purport of the book, and so far as the main outline is concerned few people, with liberal views, will have to say anything against the author's conclusions. But it must be remarked that the author would have done well to devote a fair portion of the book towards constructive suggestions. Of course he has mentioned that right education is the only way for freeing the Indian mind from the thralldom of custom and priesthood. This however is too general a remark ; the author would have done a great service to his country if he had given a detailed scheme of this right sort of education he has in mind. His scheme for effecting a sort of uniformity in the customs,

manners, language, etc., of the Hindus of the different parts of India, and for absorbing the critical and scientific spirit of the West will surely help in the emancipation of the Indian mind. But in our opinion something more is required, and that is a wide dissemination of the spiritual culture of India. To demonstrate practically before the people the sublimity of the true spiritual ideal is the most important and the only constructive method for driving away superstition from their mind, and the unavoidable requisite for this purpose is a band of men in whose lives the truths of the scriptures are exemplified. We do not understand why the author has depreciated the value of Sanskrit in bringing about a renaissance in India. Although we concur with the author in his view that Sanskrit will never become the spoken language of all Hindus, there is no reason why every Hindu, who undergoes a course of liberal education, should not be given facilities for learning that language. As all Hindu scriptures are written in that language, a working knowledge of it will be highly useful in acquiring a real knowledge of the Hindu Shastras which in itself is a very effective way of combating superstition in the minds of men. However, we recommend the book to the public and wish it a wide circulation.

Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy : By Swami Bodhananda, President, Vedanta Society, 34, West 71st Street, New York.

This book of which one chapter on Hindu women had already been reprinted in the *Vedanta Kesari*, July 1928, is a collection of a series of lectures delivered by the Swami before the congregation of the Vedanta Society of New York during the season of 1924-25. Speaking, as he does, to an audience unfamiliar with the metaphysical subtleties of the Vedanta, the Swami has made his exposition as simple and lucid as it possibly could be done. It deals with important Vedantic scriptures like the Gita and the Upanishads ; and the Hindu view of Karma, of immortality, of practical spirituality, of devotion, etc., are ably discussed in it. As a book for popularising the principles of Vedanta it will be found highly useful.

Young India Vol. II : By Mahatma Gandhi ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Pages 1352. Price Rs. 4.

This book is an exhaustive collection of the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in his journal, the *Young India*, from the year 1924 to 1926. The articles are not arranged in a wholly chronological order, but are sorted and grouped under suggestive headings, so as to facilitate the study of particular subjects, and, within these sections, they are arranged exactly as they appeared in *Young India*. The headings are as follows : —(1) National Unity, (2) Non-co-operation, Congress and Swaraj, (3) Constructive Programme, (4) Satyagraha and Non-violence, (5) Miscellaneous (6) Some other Dicta.

This attempt on the editor's part to compile the writings of the Mahatma in a systematic form is sure to result in immense benefit to all who are interested in Indian national life. Herein do we get a most vivid account of India's struggle for unity and freedom in the course of these three years, not marred by the monotony of a historian's narrative, but rendered radiant and bright with all the fervour and enthusiasm of a prophet and a patriot. It contains a complete scheme, as evolved by one of the master-minds of this land, for the political and economic amelioration of India. The creed of non-violence which forms the basis of Gandhiji's ethical and religious

teachings is expounded on rational lines, and many a knotty problem relating to Hindu society and religion is elaborately discussed and wholesome conclusions are arrived at.

We do not, however, say that all the views of Mahatmaji will meet with universal approval. Economists might differ from the opinion that the Charka is the panacea for the problem of India's poverty; politicians may consider that to swear by passive resistance in political matters may not always be wise; and men versed in Hindu scriptures might disagree with his views regarding non-violence. For, the practice of non-violence, except as the result of the realisation of the fundamental unity of life, is not considered to be of great value by many important Hindu scriptures. Bhagavad Gita, which is one of the most authoritative texts on Hindu religion, and on which a lengthy article with regard to this very point appears in this book, is an illustration in point. Mere abstinence from animal diet, which forms the whole of Ahimsa in popular opinion, and which according to Gandhiji forms an important part, though not the whole of it, is the result of an abiding influence of Buddhist and Jain faiths on Hindu religion. Even on Gandhiji's authority the entire avoidance of Himsa is an impossibility, and as such a man who does a little of Himsa in the matter of food need not on that account be regarded as a loathsome or degraded creature. It is not abstinence from meat or otherwise that determines a man's fitness for salvation, and hence it should not be given as it is done nowadays, such an undue importance in the moral code of the Hindus. There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that a large section of India's population is strictly vegetarian, and advocates Ahimsa, and for them this aspect of Gandhiji's teaching will stand as a guidance and inspiration. These differences of opinion, inevitable in their nature, do not in any way mar the usefulness of the book as a whole. A politician or a statesman will find in it plenty of matter for guidance; a moralist or a truth seeker will find in it much spiritual food; and the succeeding generations of India will turn to it for an inspiring treatise on their country's struggle for national freedom. Undoubtedly it is a classic of Indian national literature.

(i) On Genius (in English). Price As. 3 only.

(ii) Garland of Ramakrishna Homa-mantram (Sanskrit mantram in Bengali character). Price As. 4 only. By Svami Nirlepananda, Saradananda Kutir, Khatra, Bankura, Bengal.

(i) In this booklet of 22 pages the Svami speaks of the characteristics that distinguish a man of genius from the ordinary run of mankind. In his opinion genius is not the outcome of industry alone, but the result of the intervention of an unknown factor which is manifested in the super-man in the shape of an intense self-belief that exerts an irresistible influence on all who come into contact with him. He has profusely illustrated his ideas by examples from history. The book though small in size is illuminating and scholarly and written in a style that is both lucid and forceful.

(ii) This booklet, as the title signifies, contains a graphic account of the ritualistic procedure to be followed in the performance of Homa in the sacred name of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. One hundred and eight mantrams in Sanskrit composed by the author himself with a literal Bengali rendering thereof have been appended at the end.

The brochure is interspersed with some choice sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Deva and Swami Vivekananda and is enriched with a few beautiful songs of the writer himself. The contents are highly instructive and their perusal never fails to rouse devotional feelings in the heart. We wish it a wide circulation.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SIVANANDA VIDYALAYA, CEYLON

The Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon, has started a new English School named 'the Sivananda Vidyalayam' in the village of Kallady-Uppodai near the Batticaloa town. The opening ceremony was performed on the 25th of April, 1928, by Mr. Harrison-Jones, the Government Agent. The proceedings began with prayer and a speech by Swami Avinashananda. In the course of the speech the Swami said that the institution has been named after the revered President of the Mission, His Holiness Srmat Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He emphasised on the harmony of religions which forms the central point of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings as well as one of the main objects of the Mission started under his name. He also referred to Swami Vivekananda's scheme of man-making education which he assured the audience would be the earnest endeavour of the school authorities to follow. He finally appealed to all present, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian, to consider the school as their own and co-operate with the authorities in making it a success. The Government Agent then declared the school open by cutting a ribbon with a pair of scissors, and delivered a speech appreciating the educational activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. He said that he had realised how great the strength and progress of the Ramakrishna Mission was in Ceylon, and what good work it had done in the large towns of Jaffna, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. He had been told that the Mission had been working for less than 4 years, and within that short period it had established many schools, that being the 3rd English School, and there were also many Vernacular schools in the field. It was a great thing that owing to the generosity of two excellent headmen, viz., the late Messrs. Kathiramtamby Udayar and Sabapathy Udayar whom many of them remembered, and whom unfortunately he came to Batticaloa too late to know of, it had been possible to begin the school in time. It was owing to them and to their relatives who took a great interest, and others, that the school was going to be a great blessing to the teeming population, if he might say so of that area. To the children it would mean that their parents who contributed to it had been making a great sacrifice. He was glad to hear that, to begin with, there were a hundred, or more than a hundred, children likely to attend that school. He was sure that the education imparted by the Mission would be of high quality. He would like them to bear in mind, in this connexion, the famous saying of the founder of that Mission—"Knowledge is Unity, Ignorance is Diversity." In conclusion he pointed out that although people thought that knowledge made people restless, true knowledge always brought about love, and hatred proceeded from ignorance of others. He hoped that true knowledge would teach their boys and girls social and religious tolerance. This was followed by a short speech in Tamil by Swami Vipulananda. With a vote of thanks

to the Government Agent, proposed by Mr. J. T. Thambyrajah, the proceedings terminated.

ACTIVITIES OF THE R. K. ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot the 94th birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 28th and 29th April. On the 28th before a large gathering, under the presidentship of Mr. D. B. Sukla, Bar-at-Law, addresses were delivered on the life and teachings of the Great Master. In his opening speech in English, the President dwelt upon the various aims and activities of the Ashrama, particularly on the spirit of service and the gospel of toleration. The President's speech was translated in Gujarati by Mr. H. D. Raval. Swami Visvananda, the President of the Khar Ashrama, Bombay, was the principal speaker of the day. In a most eloquent speech delivered *extempore* in English, he spoke on the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. H. N. Pandya explained in Gujarati the principal points in the Swamiji's address. Mr. A. N. Baxi, B. Sc., L.L.B., spoke at length in Gujarati on the various incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna referring particularly to his doctrine of the universality of all religions. The proceedings then terminated with a song by Manjula Ben Mehta, Lady Superintendent, Barton Female Training College. On this occasion on the 29th about 600 poor people were fed in the Ashrama premises. The Ashrama further celebrated with due solemnity the Ramnavami on Thursday the 18th of April as well as the Hanuman Jayanti on the 23rd April last at the Ashrama premises. Many devotees took part in the functions.

Swami Visvanandaji, President of the R. K. Ashram, Bombay, visited Rajkot in May and stayed in the Ashrama there for about a month. He delivered five lectures at Rajkot on (i) the need of toleration, (ii) the place of religion in national life, (iii) Bhakti, (iv) the path to God-realisation as taught in the Gita in Hindi and (v) the life of Sankaracharya on the occasion of his birthday. He delivered three lectures at Porebander. He returned to Bombay on the 26th of May. The Rajkot Ashrama celebrated the Buddha Jayanti on the Vaishaka Purnima. In the Ashrama premises a beautiful picture of Buddha adorned with flowers was kept on a decorated platform. A large number of people, men and women, gathered at 6-30 P.M., and Swami Nishkamananda delivered an impressive lecture on Lord Buddha and his teachings.

Mr. Jayanti Lal, M.A., a Professor of the Rajkumar College, spoke in Gujarati. The meeting ended with the distribution of Prasadam.

THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, POONA

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Poona, the 94th birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated on the 17th March, 1929, at the Sardar Moodaliar Club, Rasthas Peth. After some preliminary religious ceremonies were performed, there was Bhajan, lasting till about 9-30 A.M., in which several local Bhajan Melas had joined and in course of which a number of Abhangas and other songs in praise of God were sung, which were much appreciated by the audience.

After this, there were three religious sermons delivered by Mr. S. N. Karnatki, Professor Dandekar and Swami Visvananda. Aratrik and distribution of Prasadam terminated the proceedings. In the evening on the same day at 6 P.M. Swami Visvananda

delivered a most eloquent lecture on "Bhakti" in course of which he spoke on several forms of Bhakti illustrating his remarks by citing incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The Swamiji's lecture was greatly appreciated.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN BUDDHA AT THE DACCA R. K. MISSION

The birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Buddha was celebrated with due solemnity on Thursday, the 23rd May, 1929, in the Dacca Ramakrishna Mission premises at about 5-30 P.M. A portrait of Lord Buddha was tastefully decorated on a dais erected for the occasion. An atmosphere of serenity prevailed over the whole ground and charmed the audience till the close of the day.

A meeting was held under the presidentship of Babu Bhavani Prasad Neogi, M.A., Retired Deputy Magistrate, to discuss the life and teachings of Buddha. There was a fairly large attendance of respectable ladies and gentlemen. The function began with an opening song. The chapter on "Vikshu Bagga" from the "Dhammapada" with a translation in Bengali verse and prose was read by a Brahmachari of Ramakrishna Math. Professor Radha Govinda Basak, M.A., read a very nice paper in which he explained lucidly the doctrine of work and its secret—Karma as propounded by the Great Buddha, and pointed out its difference with Hindu doctrine of "Karma." Professor Sudhendu Kumar Das, M.A., Ph.D., also read a learned paper in which he dwelt on the cultural atmosphere of India at the time of Buddha's advent and on the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism. Babu Nalinikanta Bhattasali, M.A., Curator, Dacca Museum spoke very feelingly on Buddha's birth, cycle of religion and his routine of daily life. Referring to Prof. Rysdavid's valuable American lectures on Buddhism, he pointed out the necessity on the part of the children of the soil, of studying the life, teachings and movement of Buddhism as a whole, in India.

Prof. Umesh Chandra Battacharya, M.A. B.L., in the course of his very interesting speech paid homage to Lord Buddha and very nicely dilated on Buddha's personality and his contribution to religion and culture all the world over, specially with reference to the following points: an excellent organisation of a regular monastic Order probably imitated later on by the founders of the Christian Churches in the middle ages in Europe, the Doctrines of Karma, Ahimsa, Universal Brotherhood and Non-violence. He drew a beautiful parallel between the glorious work done by the Buddhist monks and the invaluable work done by the monks of medieval Europe in the cause of suffering and ignorant humanity. Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, M.A. B.L., Munsiff, paid his homage to the Great Master by reading a poem of his own on the glories of Buddha. The President then said that the Great Buddha could not rightly be called an atheist, a non-believer in God only because he kept silent on God. He was rather worshipped as a God by his disciples and followers immediately after his Nirvan and is still being worshipped by the Hindus as an Avatar. The President remarked that the doctrine of Karma was not first preached by Lord Buddha as the Gita had propounded clearly the principle of work and its secret even before Buddha. The meeting terminated late in the evening with a song on Buddha specially composed for the occasion by Babu Phani Bhusan Mitra. The function which was on the whole an eminent success, closed with the distribution of Prasadam.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

Although the branch of the R. K. Mission in Madras has been doing a good deal of religious, educational and temporary relief work ever since its inception, it was only in September, 1925, that it started its first permanent philanthropic work in Madras in the shape of the charitable dispensary at Mylapore. The first report of this dispensary, recently published, dealing with its work from 1925 to 1928 shows that its presence in this part of the city is in no way superfluous; for the number and the nature of cases treated in these few years show a phenomenal increase and great variety respectively. In the first year the total number of cases treated was 970, in 1926 it was 5,109, in 1927 it rose to 9,414 and in 1928 it came to 18,222. It is to be noted that the number of patients is daily on the increase and that it is attracting patients even from such distant places as Saidapet and Royapuram where hospitals and out-door dispensaries are already in existence.

To meet this increasing work the dispensary requires more money and public support. The following are its most urgent needs: (1) A Pucca Dispensary Building—It is at present situated in a small thatched building which is found insufficient to accommodate the staff and the patients. So it is proposed to raise a pucca building at an estimated cost of Rs. 10,000. Anyone wishing to perpetuate the memory of his or her dear relation or friend can do so by contributing the amount required for erecting one or more rooms or the whole building. (2) A General Fund—The dispensary is at present managed by an honorary doctor assisted by a Swami whose whole time is spent in looking after the dispensary. At present the expenditure for medicines and the maintenance of a whole-time worker comes to Rs. 60 per month. To meet the growing demand on service more funds, workers and medicines are required. (3) Up-to-date Modern Appliances and Outfits—Many patients have to be denied service for want of appliances. This want has to be remedied for rendering the work more efficient. We hope the generous public would come forward with liberal contributions to support this philanthropic cause and place the institution on a sound financial footing. Contributions may be sent to Swami Yatiswarananda, President, R. K. Math, Mylapore, Madras.

R. K. MISSION RELIEF WORK IN BENGAL

During the recent famine in Bengal the Ramakrishna Mission conducted relief work on an extensive scale in the districts of Bankura and Dinajpur from May to November, 1928. In Bankura district there were 4 relief centres operating in 127 villages and affording relief to 5,618 persons while in Dinajpur 3 centres helped 3,852 persons in 139 villages. In Bankura medical aid was given to 1,700 patients suffering from malaria. As donations for relief, were received 229 Mds. 28 Srs. 14 Ch. of rice, 1,597 pieces of new cloth, 15½ bundles of old cloth, 12 new towels, 130 banians, 24 bottles of Edward's Tonic and 36 phials of germoline. On the whole the receipts amounted to Rs. 28,600 in cash and kind, and Rs. 24,700 were spent from the seven centres.

Owing to an outbreak of fire in the village of Ramakrishnapur (24 parganas) 40 families were rendered homeless and destitute. A sum of Rs. 100 was spent from the Provident Relief Fund of the

Mission through its branch centre at Sarisha which purchased building materials with the amount and distributed the same among 19 homeless families.

R. K. MISSION FIRE RELIEF WORK, MADRAS

On account of fire in July, 1928, in Kosapet, Mylapore, Madras, 195 huts were burnt and 952 persons rendered homeless. The R. K. Mission undertook the relief of the distressed. As the fire had consumed all their belongings, the homeless people were fed for three days in the morning, and cash doles given for evening meals. After investigation 65 men and 89 women were found to be in need of cloths, and they were supplied with the same without delay at a cost of Rs. 282-6-0. People who had been injured on account of the fire, and weavers whose looms had been destroyed were either rendered relief or provided with labour until they were in a position to look after themselves. For housing the distressed the Mission obtained a piece of Government land from the Collector of Madras, and plots for huts were allotted among 93 families, and housing materials to the value of Rs. 640-4-3 distributed among them free of cost. The new colony planned in consultation with the Town Planning Expert is provided with broad and well-levelled streets, and looks quite neat and sanitary. The receipts from public contributions amounted to Rs. 2,335-6-4 of which Rs. 1,155-8-5 were spent, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 179-11-11.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF IN ASSAM AND BURMA

In Assam though the water has subsided in many places, the sufferings of the people continue to be the same. Many people are still living under the open sky exposed to the rain and the sun and huddled together on high streets or by the side of hills. The preliminary relief necessary on such occasions has been given. Next we shall have to distribute rice and undertake the work of hut-building for the more needy till the situation improves. Cases of cholera, small-pox, etc., are visible in many places and we have to administer also medical relief. In some places cattle are dying of starvation and fodder also is very difficult to procure. In Cachar we have taken up 2 Parganas—Bikrampur and Jatrapur covering an area of 58 square miles. The place being inaccessible, work has been here all the more difficult. A new area near Silchar extending over 6 square miles and consisting of 10 villages has required help from us. In Karimgunj we have begun work with Bhangarpur as the centre. Here we are giving help to 2790 recipients belonging to 655 families in an area of 30 square miles. In Naogaon we are working with 'Kshetri' as the centre. In Akyab we are giving relief to 1545 recipients belonging to 620 families in an area of 20 villages. Prompt action being very urgently necessary in times of flood, we request all to rise equal to the occasion.

All contributions sent to either of the following will be thankfully received and acknowledged:—

1. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah Dt.
2. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A Mukhtaram Babu Street, Calcutta.

Sd. SUDDHANANDA,

Secretary, R. K. Mission.

10-7-29.

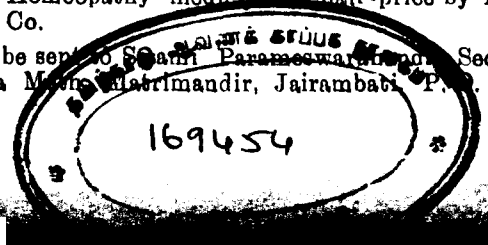
AN APPEAL FOR SRI SRI MATRIMANDIR, JAIRAMBATI.

Jairambati, a village in the district of Bankura, is the birth-place of the Holy Mother, the consort of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Dev, the world teacher who came to demonstrate the harmony of all religions. In this village was erected in the year 1330 B.S. a magnificent temple on the site where the Holy Mother was born. The temple has been named "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Math Matrimandir" where daily worship, annual festivals, including the feeding of Daridranarayans are being regularly held. Jairambati is only three miles distant from the birth-place of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Dev. In this poor and notoriously malarious place, a charitable dispensary and a free primary school have been established by the Ramakrishna Math. At present these are located in a hovel which is unfit for human habitation. Pilgrims from all parts of India eagerly come here to visit this sacred place and the Matrimandir. But unfortunately, in the absence of any suitable resting house these visitors have to undergo great hardship and inconvenience in the inclemency of the rains and storm and winter and summer. Sometimes the inconvenience and difficulty happen to be so great that the workers in the Matrimandir find themselves in great embarrassment. Many of the public who are eye-witnesses of these hardships have openly expressed their concern at the want of a proper rest-house. Mr. Guru Sadaya Dutt, I.C.S., late Magistrate and Collector of Bankura, showed practical sympathy by clearing the surrounding jungles and arranging for the purchase of additional lands for the temple. The District Board of Bankura is removing a long-felt want by constructing a road up to the temple. We now approach the public with the beggar's bowl for providing the aforesaid requirements. We hope all will help us in our noble mission and will thereby earn the blessings of the Lord. At least Rs. 30,000 will be needed for erecting a Dharamsala (rest-house) with an attached library, a charitable dispensary, a free school and adoption of measures for making the place healthy by driving out malaria. All subscriptions and donations for this philanthropic work will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Ramakrishna Math, Matrimandir. If so desired, any one may construct a building in his or her own name or in memory of a relative and dedicate it for the noble purpose.

We gratefully acknowledge with thanks the following help received by us:—

- (1) Rs. 10 a month from the District Board of Bankura.
- (2) Rs. 10 a month from S. N. Sundar Raja Ayengar, Assistant Commissioner, Bangalore.
- (3) Free supply of medicines (Malarino tablets, Laxin tablet and Pyrex) during malaria by B. C. P. W.
- (4) Free and plentiful supply of Edward's Tonic from Messrs. B. K. Paul and Co.
- (5) Free supply of the Homeopathy monthly journal and occasionally free supply of Homeopathy medicines from S. J. Profulla Ch. Bhur, Calcutta.
- (6) Supply of Homeopathy medicines at half-price by Messrs. M. Bhattacharyya & Co.

All help should be sent to **Swami Paramananda**, Secretary, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Math Matrimandir, Jairambati, P. O. Desra, District Bankura.



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