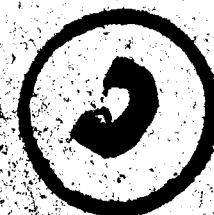


Vedanta Kesari.

Vol 16. No. 9. January 1930.



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## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA\*

## IV

ECSTASY AND SUSPENSION OF BREATH. ATTAINMENT OF  
DIVINE VISION ON THE RUSHING OF THE "GREAT ENERGY"

As the conversation is proceeding, there arrive a few invited Brahmo devotees among whom are some Pandits and high Government officials.

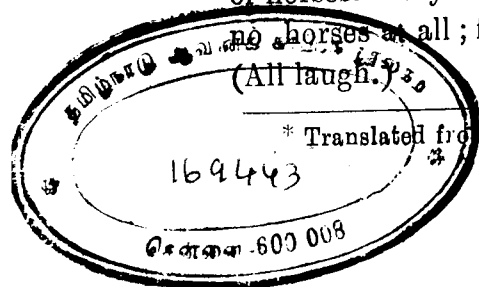
The Master is speaking on the suspension of breath. Continuing the topic he says, "When Arjuna pierced the target—the eye of a fish, his gaze was fixed on the eye alone and not on anything else. He did not even see any other part of the fish. In such a state of concentration one gets Kumbhaka—one's breath stops by itself. One of the signs of God-vision is the rushing of the "Great Energy" in the spinal chord to the brain. If a person then passes into Samadhi he comes to get a vision of God."

MERE LEARNING, MATERIAL PROSPERITY, POWER, FAME,  
POSITION—ALL FALSE

*Sri Ramakrishna* (looking at the newly arrived Brahmo devotees): Persons who are merely learned and possess no devotion for God speak in a confused way. A Pandit named Samadhyayi once said, 'God is without joy. You have to make him enjoyable with your love and devotion!' Just see, He who is described in the Vedas to be of the very nature of joy, is spoken of as joyless! These words indicate that the person who speaks thus has never known what God is. Hence he talks in such an incoherent manner.

"Once a person said, 'my uncle has got a cowshed full of horses.' By this we are to understand that there were no horses at all; for horses are never kept in a cowshed. (All laugh.)"

\* Translated from M.'s diary originally published in Bengali.



"There are persons who are proud of their material prosperity,—of power, fame, position and such other things. But all these are evanescent. None of these will follow one after death. There is a song to this effect:—

'Think over this, oh my soul, that there is none who is really thine own; and verily thou dost wander in the world for nothing. Being caught in the net of Maya, do not, therefore, forget the Divine Mother.

Will she for whom thou worriest thyself accompany thee (after death)? That very beloved of thine will sprinkle (cow-dung) and water (on the spot polluted by thy corpse) with a view to ward off evil.

For a few days only do others regard one as a master. But know this, the same master will be thrown away when the Lord of time (death) makes his appearance.'

## THE GREAT ANTIDOTE FOR PRIDE

"Again, one should not feel proud of wealth. If you think you are rich, know there are others richer than yourself, and others again still more rich than these. When the firefly makes its appearance in the evening, it thinks, 'I am giving light to the world.' But as soon as the stars make their appearance in the sky, its pride is humbled. And then the stars begin to think, 'We are illuminating the whole world.' A little later there rises the moon, the stars fade away as it were in shame. Then the moon thinks, 'The whole world is smiling in my light. I alone am the giver of light.' Soon after the dawn breaks and then rises the sun. The moon pales into insignificance and after a while it is seen no more.

"If the rich people think in this way they will no longer feel proud of their riches."

On the occasion of the festival, Manilal had arranged for various kinds of delicacies. He took great care in entertaining the Master and the assembled devotees sumptuously. It was very late at night when they all left for their homes, but none felt uncomfortable in any way.

## IN DEFENCE OF HINDUISM—III

In our defence of Hinduism we have hitherto confined ourselves to an analysis of the universal principles that stand as the background of Hindu religion and have also tried to meet the unwarranted charges laid at its door by some critics of the Christian fold. We shall close the subject with a succinct review of *the theory of reincarnation and the law of Karma* which form in fact the very corner-stone of Hindu philosophy. For the greatness of Hindu religion lies not in a blind belief in a certain set of dogmas or in the intricacies of ceremonial worship but in the logical consistency of *its essential doctrines* which have been made the target of persistent attack and ridicule by the orthodox Western theologians. The seers of ancient India went far beyond the surface of human existence and 'plumbed life's dim profound' in their quest after Truth. It was these seers of India who have solved once for all the problem of life and enlightened humanity on the mysteries of birth and death with the light of their spiritual knowledge. Nothing has indeed been more complex and elusive than the nature of man and nothing has been more persistent and real than the craving of the human soul to unravel the tangled skein of life. Though the findings of men have varied in different climes according to their spiritual capacity and genius, it cannot be denied that it is the resultant of their search for the ultimate reality of being, that forms the background of the religious systems of the world. Religion in its general concept has three component parts, *viz.*, philosophy, mythology and ritual; but in its highest sense it is nothing short of realisation of the fundamental verity of existence on the basis of which the philosophy of life has been attempted to be built by the great thinkers of the past and the present. The greatness of a religious system can therefore be judged in the light of the sublimity of its philosophical background as well as of the scope it provides for the play of human intelligence and the aspiration of the soul. As religion is the very vital sap of a race, its philosophical achievement may be reckoned as the touch-stone of its cultural greatness. For it has been our unfailing experience that a religion without a high standard of moral system and a rational philosophy as its background can hardly maintain its existence for long and its contribution, though not altogether useless, has been of very little permanent value and interest to mankind. The present political servitude of the Indians has been advanced by some Westerners as an argument against India's claim to the greatness of her philosophical or cultural achievement; for they hold that the robust nationalism or political virility is

the true index of the intrinsic worth of a culture and religion. And in their opinion, the law of Karma and the theory of reincarnation which are deemed by the Hindus as the most essential principles of their philosophy, have proved to be the *cause of their social debacle* as well as the greatest stumbling blocks in the path of India's national advancement. These doctrines, they say, have led to the *enfeeblement of her will* and to her eventual *political thralldom*: for their philosophy with its sombre note of pessimism is a purely *idealistic* one that takes no cognisance of the *realistic* aspect of life and characterises all struggle for freedom as unprofitable and vain as a search for water in a dreary desert. Thus the Hindu philosophy is nothing short of "an untutored savage fancy borrowed probably from aboriginal tribes!"

Most of the Western thinkers have thus been led to assume that the material prosperity is the only criterion of cultural greatness, and the country that lacks in it bears the eternal brand of inferiority in all other branches of life. Whatever grain of truth there may be in such a sweeping generalisation, it cannot be denied that this dismal conclusion is the result of their utilitarian conception of religious life and the ignorance of the cultural history of other races in the world. So far as India is concerned, the vision of the Western critics has hardly stretched beyond the span of the last one thousand years, and has thus left out of account the unbroken record of India's independent existence for countless years even before the birth of Christianity. India which is the very cradle of human civilisation and before whose cultural traditions the West is a mere child of yesterday has lived a life of glorious independence in the past and even now maintains her cultural integrity in spite of so many years of political subjection, persecution and changes, with the very same philosophy and religion which have now been stigmatised by some Western people as the product of the wild imagination of a savage race. But the history of human thought tells us that even the ancient Egyptians, the Persians, the Chaldeans and the Pharisees of the Hebrews held on, though in a crude form, to the theory of metempsychosis and were more or less influenced like some of the brightest intellectual luminaries of the ancient Greek world, by the very same philosophy of the Hindus. To crown all, even Christ himself on whose lips were re-echoed the fascinating figures of the Upanishads and the wise sayings of the Buddhists was a staunch believer in this doctrine of reincarnation. But after all 'modern' Christianity has outgrown that 'savage fancy' of its founder and has emerged out from the chrysalis of the past superstition as a 'virile' and 'living' force to serve the political and commercial interests of its adherents! But the inner craving of the human

soul can hardly be silenced for good by the pragmatic philosophy that obtains to-day in the West, and that is why many mighty intellects of the Occidental world have boldly shaken off the siren charm of this materialistic philosophy and ventured out into the virgin land of the spirit. By a comparative study of the religious systems of the world they have come to the conclusion that it is the theory of reincarnation which runs parallel with the doctrine of the eternity of the human soul, that has fewer difficulties to face than other rival hypotheses. It is an interesting phenomenon that some of the greatest thinkers of the modern age have accepted this doctrine as the basic principle of their philosophy. Schopenhauer, the great German thinker says, "As a matter of fact there does exist a connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and the death of those that are worn out..... Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift; but there is and can be nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen; they are one being." No less pregnant are the statements of Fichte, the celebrated German thinker. "Indeed," says he, "one needs only to understand the full meaning of the metaphysico-physiological axiom, that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognise that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a physical body." Hume the great English philosopher, though a nihilist, admits in his essay on Immortality: "The metempsychosis is there the only system of this kind that philosophy can listen to." So Mr. Lessing most pertinently asks: "Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? .....Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh existence?" Similar quotations can be furnished from the authoritative writings of such distinguished geniuses of the Western world as the great Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, the German philosophers Schelling and Leibnitz, the great German poets and writers Goethe and Herder, and also the French and English scientists Flammarion, Figuier and Brewster. While the great minds are thus gradually veering round to this conception of human existence, there is still no dearth of fanatical zealots in the West who have found in this theory nothing but the seeds of the national and moral degeneration of the Hindus!

The strongest argument that is generally advanced against the Hindu theory of metempsychosis is the *loss of memory* of the new-born soul regarding all its antenatal experiences. The orthodox Christian

theologians hold that the individual soul is the *creation* of God and *the soul's continued life after death* is a special reward of absolute faith in the Christ. There is a school of modern scientists who instead of admitting the theory of transmigration of the soul, posit that the sum-total of the experiences from the little protoplasm up to the highest human being is inherent in every man and it has come down from body to body through *hereditary transmission*. This class of materialists concede that no child is born with a clean, white page of a mind but each child comes to the world with a fund of manifold tendencies (Samskaras) acquired through past actions; but they persistently cling to the belief that these tendencies are transmitted through the law of heredity. Besides, there is another school of thought that attempts to explain away the diversities of tendencies manifest in man or animal by *instinct*. And we find also that every sort of anomaly in the world has been attempted to be explained away by *an appeal to the all-merciful God* who as the highest dispenser of justice lords over the universe. But a careful scrutiny of the above hypotheses proves the absurdity of the proposition of an absolute creation on which the whole fabric of the Western theological belief has been built. For creation is limitation and presupposes a combination that must end in dissolution. So, as a matter of fact a soul cannot, by its very nature, be created; for, in that case, the theory of the award of immortality by God as a result of faith in the Christ would stand self-contradicted. Moreover, the diversities of human experiences in this life cannot be justified without characterising God as cruel and partial. For if God is the creator, why should there be so much of suffering and misery among men for no fault of theirs? Why should some be born with a silver spoon in their mouth and some be doomed to drag on a miserable existence from the morning till the evening of their life? Besides, if this be the first birth the liberty of the man is altogether robbed of,—for his path would be marked out by the experience of others; there is thus no freedom of the man to build his own destiny. This kind of belief in the creation of the soul is the genesis of what is known in the Western world as fatalism or pre-ordination that has been responsible for all kinds of inhuman atrocities perpetrated by the Mussalmans and the Christians upon the so-called infidels or heathens; for this theory of fatalism has armed both the communities with the fantastic belief that the heathens are born to be eternal victims of their swords! Thus in the white heat of a holy enthusiasm, all sense of logical consistency has been sacrificed at the altar of fanaticism. For what philosophical justification can there be in the theory that a thing with a beginning shall not come to an end? In fact it is a truism that 'nothing which ends at

one point can be without a beginning and nothing that begins at one point can be without an end.' The theory of an absolute beginning is not only logically unsound but thrusts the entire burden of impurity in the world upon God. These are some of the anomalies which cannot be explained away simply by a mere childish appeal to God.

As already pointed out the loss of memory has also been considered to be a distinctive proof against the theory of pre-existence of the soul. That this notion is based on an erroneous assumption is evident from the experiences of many great souls who after their spiritual illumination have been able to remember all about their past lives. For what comes to the brain is the resultant, the sum-total of the impressions acquired in the past, with which the mind comes to inhabit the new body. All the impressions of the past lie dormant in the subliminal self and can be discovered with the advance of spiritual knowledge. In Patanjali's Yoga aphorisms we find a distinct corroboration of this statement. He says: "संस्कारसाक्षात्करणतः पूर्वजानि-ज्ञानम् ॥ १८ ॥"—(By perceiving the Samskaras one acquires the knowledge of past lives). In short "each experience that we have, comes in the form of a wave in the Chitta, and this subsides and becomes finer and finer but is never lost. It remains there in minute form, and if we can bring this wave up again, it becomes memory. So if the Yogi can make a *Samyama* on these past impressions in the mind, he will begin to remember all his past lives."—So says Swami Vivekananda in his commentary on the aforesaid Yoga aphorism. The pictures of the events of our previous lives may be invisible to us at present but if we close the doors of our senses from outside contact, then by focussing the light of consciousness and concentrating the mental rays we shall be able to know and remember all about our past lives. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita emphatically declares to his friend, Arjuna, "ब्रह्मिणे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन । तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्स्य परंतप ॥"—(Unnumbered births were shed behind by Me and thee, O Arjuna. All these to me are present now, while thou, O friend, rememberest not). So also did Buddha the Light of Asia, know how many times he had to incarnate himself on earth for the redemption of humanity. Christ himself did once remark: "Before Abraham was, I am" and with reference to John the Baptist he said: "This is Elias who is said to have come." It is a sheer perversity of human intelligence to say that our childhood did not exist simply because we do not remember it at an advanced age. As a matter of fact we can no more negate our past existence than we can do our childhood. Indeed, memory revives only when one stands face to face with Truth, and with the spiritual

illumination when the memory brings back the past to men, they stand as a hero setting at defiance all the storms and frowns of the world and smile in the midst of the gravest calamities of life.

The anomaly that we meet with in this world of ours cannot be solved by an appeal to God. The diversities of tendencies and powers that are displayed by children or by men in general cannot be explained on any other ground than that of previous experiences with which the soul is born in the new body. This has been partially admitted by a school of modern scientists who while holding the view that every one is born with a fund of accumulated tendencies generated by past conscious actions, add that 'matter and its transformations answer for all that we have' and as such there is no necessity for supposing the existence of a soul. The results of actions, they say, are recorded in matter and it is by the law of heredity that the sum-total of the experiences of parents and forebears come down to us from body to body. This theory can be admitted to be valid in so far as it furnishes the material to the soul. For we by our past actions conform ourselves to a certain birth in a body that is the fittest instrument for the display of our tendencies. Even if it be argued that mental impression can at all be recorded in matter, it still remains a puzzle how it can be transmitted from father to son. In the words of Swami Vivekananda we may ask: "Through the bioplasmic cell? How could that be? because the father's body does not come to the child *in toto*. The same parents may have a number of children; then from the theory of hereditary transmission, where the impression and the impressed (material) are one, it rigorously follows that, by the birth of every child, the parents must lose a part of their own impression, or, if the parents would transmit the whole of their impressions, then, after the birth of the first child, their minds would be a vacuum." In short the theory does not stand a serious scrutiny. Even such a gigantic will as that of a Buddha or a Jesus remains quite unexplained. For if it be a case of hereditary transmission, the gulf between Joseph the carpenter and Jesus the Saviour or between Suddhodhan the king and Gautama the Enlightened (Buddha) still presents an insoluble enigma; for while Buddha and Jesus are worshipped by millions of souls, their parents could hardly secure a niche in the temple of fame even beyond the pale of their society. So the power manifested in a Buddha or a Jesus is not the result of hereditary transmission but has accumulated and grown bigger and bigger from age to age in the particular soul itself which has ultimately burst upon the human society in a Buddha or a Christ. Physical heredity can at most account for a man's physical configuration but not the differences in the mental qualities or aptitudes

between the parents and the children. This can only be explained by one's own Karma that leaves an indelible impression on the mind which with all its accumulated tendencies migrates and manufactures body after body. It is thus 'the mind that takes its birth and rebirth, and uses the material which is most proper for it, and the mind which has made itself fit for only a particular kind of body, will have to wait until it gets that material.'

Attempt has also been made to explain the diversities of tendencies and actions by instinct in man and animal. It has been urged that it is due to instinct that the ducks hatched even by hens fly to the water, the chickens learn to pick up food when they burst out of their eggs and it is through instinct alone that even the toddling children stumbling at the threshold of life fear death and cry for shelter. It may here be pointed out that it is on this very ground that the Hindus have built their theory of reincarnation. For what is instinct but a degenerated or involved reason? What is done with conscious efforts and attention becomes through constant practice instinctive or automatic *samskaras*. The fear of death in a child, the tendency of the new-born duckling for taking to water, and all involuntary actions in human being, which have become instinctive, are the outcome of past experiences. That is the reason why the child is instinctively afraid of death, for the experience of pain is already stored up there in the child and that is also the reason why there is so much clinging to life even witnessed in the wisest of souls in human society. Instinct, properly understood, instead of being an argument against the theory of reincarnation furnishes the real solution to Hindu theory of metempsychosis. Man is a combination of body, mind and Self (Atman). And it is the mind (soul) that, like a whirlwind, gathering the experiences from birth to birth goes on rotating until the whole momentum generated by the accumulated tendencies spends itself and the mind loses its identity in the Self. It is the Atman which is the only unchangeable Reality that has neither birth nor death, that stands as an eternal Witness of all the passing shows of human existence. It is Nature that moves and acts, creates and uncreates, builds and unbuilds its destiny. This Nature has, in the Hindu philosophy, been identified with Maya or mind and in the Western philosophy, with time, space and causation. When the Atman ignorantly thinks that it is moving and not Nature, it is in bondage, and this Atman in bondage is called Jiva. It is therefore this Jiva that acts and suffers and it is he alone who by his own Karma passes through the endless cycle of births and deaths and again it is he that by realising his real nature through knowledge can transcend all limitations and be established in its ineffable glory and

beauty. The idea that there are differentiations and consequently imperfections is, from the standpoint of the Absolute, a superimposition caused by ignorance or Maya; but there is still a reality upon which these mistaken notions appear. "Hence", as Mr. J. J. Goodwin has put it, "the Vedanta is neither pure realism nor pure idealism; and yet either of these is explicable in the light of Vedanta, in as much as it says there is a Reality which appears as material and yet is not material. In that appearance is all that is true of realism. In the statement that, given an infinite, there cannot also be an independent finite lies all that is true of idealism." Thus the charge against the Hindu philosophy that it is purely an idealistic one falls through when it is scrutinised with a dispassionate and unbiased mind from the standpoint of the Advaita philosophy.

From what has hitherto been said, it is now distinctly clear that without previous experience no knowledge is possible in this world, and that this experience is already stored up in the *mind* in a potential form and not in the *body*, and is transmitted through mind from birth to birth. Thus the assumption of the pre-existence of soul is a logical necessity and repudiates the theory of absolute creation by God. Besides, the totality of impressions that make up and determine the future birth is the result of one's own actions (Karma), otherwise, as previously pointed out, the All-merciful character of God stands hopelessly challenged. In short 'The human mind is a ball which is being hit about the room of the world all the time, and our passage out of it is determined by the force of all these blows.' Swami Vivekananda has compared human life to a chain with a black link and a white link alternately, without beginning and without end. "This infinite chain," says he, "is a repetition of the two links, black and white, and multiplied infinitely, becomes a whole chain. All our lives, past, present, and future, are one infinite chain, each link of which is one life, with two ends, birth and death without beginning and without end." So we see that the human life is a revolving process maintained by the momentum of our own impressions gathered through work. The man who sets the wheel in motion must therefore bear the consequences. Thus psychologically nothing can happen without a pre-existing cause and this causation is identical with Karma, and as such the law of Karma is tantamount to the law of causality, of inevitable cause and sequence. It is by the impulsion of this irresistible law of Karma that man acts and suffers. But the questions have been asked by saints and sinners: is there no way out of this interminable chain of birth and death? Is human life a helpless tiny boat tossed to and fro in the ocean of matter by the waves of cause and effect? "The heart sinks at the idea," says Swami Veka-

nanda, "yet this is the law of nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: 'Hear ye children of immortal Bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. Knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death once for all.'.....ye divinities on earth—sinners? It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, oh lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep. You are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; you are not matter, you are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter." "Thus it is," continues the Swami, "that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One, 'by whose command the wind blows the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth.' Thus it is that the sphere of operation of the law of causation is limited; it can hardly extend beyond the range of mind which has brought the universe into being. As man with his Jiva-consciousness lives in time and space he is therefore subject to the law of causation. But by knowing the secret of work he can even untie the gordian knot and transcend all laws however uncompromising and persistent they may seem, for the infinite potentiality is there in the man. The role of Karma properly understood is to discover the infinite source of this knowledge and power.

*Freedom is the ultimate goal of life. From freedom the world comes, in bondage it rests and to freedom it returns in the end. Such is also the destiny of man. He is the Absolute Omnipotent Being—the Uncreate Atman but through ignorance thinks himself to be in bondage, limited by time, space and causation, and it is he again, who knowing the Truth transcends all the trappings of the Self and becomes free. No other theory in the whole world of human thought proclaims so eloquently the freedom of the Soul than the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation that is inextricably blended up with the theory of Karma. Man himself is the builder of his own destiny. The sum-total of all the works man has done, of the thoughts he has thought gives the direction to the human soul when the body dies. 'From body to body, to heaven and back again to earth it shall go on until it has finished its experience and completed the circle.' Attachment to the fruits of one's own action is the cause of one's bondage, for it is this desire for results that keeps the wheel of life in perpetual motion.*

The balance of life—the perfect state of equilibrium—must therefore be attained to put a stop to this cycle of birth and death—the polarities of human existence, and this, the Scriptures say, can be consummated by self-abnegating devotion to works—works not motivated by any selfish desire for fruits. So declares the Bhagavad Gita :—

"Whoso, his deeds in Brahman merged,  
Works on, all thought of gain renounced,  
As lotus-leaf left dry when dew  
Rolls off,— is free from taint of sin."  
"The man made Whole, all 'gain' forsworn,  
Inherits Peace that naught can mar :  
The soul un-whole, that dreams of 'gain',—  
Its wish the bird-lime—traps itself."  
"Hence, ever heart-detached within,  
Do thou such work as needs be done :  
Indeed, while working thus detached,  
"Man grows into the Whole of man."

Our actions are therefore the ultimate sources of our bondage and of freedom. We ourselves can reach to the Freedom—to the state of perfect balance the loss of which brings in the creation with all its limiting adjuncts that human life is heir to. Let not therefore the law of Karma as understood by the Hindus be branded as 'a savage fancy leading to the enfeeblement of will and the degeneration of the national life. This, on the contrary, is the only theory that with the greatest degree of logical consistency provides infinite scope for every individual to mould his own destiny and to attain Freedom—the cherished goal of human aspiration. It is this theory of Karma that most emphatically repudiates the doctrine of fatalism or pre-ordination which is the outgrowth of a fanciful notion of the creation of the world by God out of nothing. The bigoted theologians of the West have put quite a wrong interpretation upon the Hindu theory of Karma and have led, besides others, many of the Indians to look at their own philosophy of life through the coloured goggles of Western conception. It is the forgetfulness of the fundamental verity of our religion that has robbed Indian life of all its vigorous urge for freedom and has proved to be the source of all the ills of our national organism. Needless to say, it is the proper understanding of the true spirit of Hinduism that shall nerve the Indians to lion's courage and make them stand on their own feet with a grim determination to wring out freedom from the hands of Nature. The philosophic grandeur that surrounds the lofty crest of Hinduism is an undeniable proof of the greatness of Indian genius that far outshines the Western intellects in points of moral certitude and profundity of thought. The hypnotic

spell of Western materialism has blinded our vision to the sterling worth of our philosophy and has created in most minds a moral apathy towards every form of healthy activity and the indigenous culture and thought. From the platform and the press the blind zealots of the Christian fold have for centuries been trying to disfigure the face of India, and her religion, the very vital sap of her life, has been made the target of persistent attack and ridicule. It is time that she must take up the challenge and prove to the world at large by her life and action that Hinduism with its philosophy of Karma and reincarnation and the doctrine of freedom of the soul is not a dying religion but a dynamic force destined to mould and govern the aspirations of humanity as it did in the past, and that it is the only religion that with its broad outlook and dominant note of universalism and toleration can furnish the basic ground for a fuller synthesis of human thought and action, and link into harmony all the conflicting aspirations and interests of the struggling races of the world.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND INDIAN RANAISANCE

*By R. Ramakrishnan, B. A.*

'The very dust of India is holy to me ; the very air is to me holy.  
She is the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

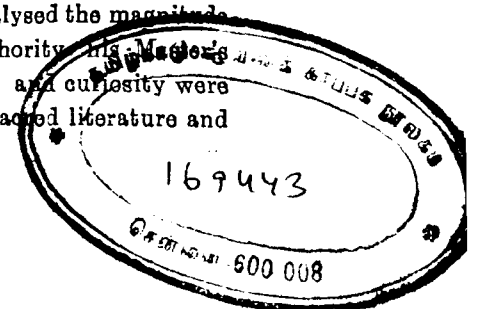
In response to the call of universal law India suffered a degeneration from her ancient glory and only lately has begun her Renaissance—new birth. We need labour under no fears about India's ascending to her rightful place in the federation of the world or about her sons' legitimate participation in the Parliament of men. In the immutable working of Providence the contribution of India to the world's progress is to be a very significant one. She is the life-giver to the wearied souls of the West, and to her resort the many souls in search of God. India is the custodian of the spirit-life of the world. Hence it is that while politics, sociology, abstract science and the like command the attention of the Western minds, religion is nearest and dearest to the Indian heart. In India everything should be connected with religion or the ordinary Indian mind throws it always as unworthy. To enforce social duties, political obligations, to drive such other things into the heart of the Indians, one should remember that one has to do it only in the name of religion, in the name of truth, in the name of the supernatural. Devoid of the touch of religion nothing has

any fascination for the Indian mind. As the Swami points out some where : Go to the English or American labourer and ask him what he knows of religion and the answer will be disappointing. His religion stops with Sunday Church attendance and he goes to Church because his father did the same. His is not to question why ! On the other hand question him of politics and he gives you a lengthy account of Parliaments and Governments. He has digested the newspapers well. But it is all the other way about the Indian peasant. He can tell you much of God, Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, Reincarnation, etc., but of the politics of his country he is mostly ignorant. The very breath of India is religion, the very blood of her veins is philosophy. Naturally enough the Indian Renaissance must have religion as its broad base and background. The forerunners of this new movement were all fully imbued with the spirit of India's past religious glory.

For one thing, Swamiji has greater claim to be regarded as the apostle of Indian Renaissance. He was a sanyasin, a philosopher, a wanderer without home or family, a perfect Brahmacharin, and his message found a ready response in the religiously moulded hearts of our people. As elucidated before, India has ever recognised them as leaders who have sacrificed everything and realised Godhead.

Swamiji came into the world at a most opportune moment and at a most critical period in our history. India was blindly sinking into the mire of materialism, and modern civilisation had then a peculiar fascination for our young men. This process, if it would have gone on unchecked, would have stifled our existence and defaced our importance. But the saviour was bound to come and very near the second greatest city of the Empire was born the Paramahansa whose teachings disillusioned the hearts of many. Drawn by an irresistible force towards him, Swamiji's restless mind ate of the Bread of Life and he was filled. Swamiji then retired for solitary study and practical realisation to the Himalayas. He was fully conscious of his mission to the world.

Swamiji has done much to get the greatness of India recognised overseas and kindle international interest in our literature and philosophy. He vividly laid bare before the West the glory of Hinduism and the antiquity of our past, the majesty of our traditions and the splendour of our heritage. He showed them how India must be the light-giver unto the wearied world. He analysed the magnitude of the Vedantic religion, and echoed with authority his Master's voice,—'All religions are one.' Western interest and curiosity were kindled and many scholars dived deep into our sacred literature and found solution to the problems of life.



His love of country has been unmatched. India was to him the mother Kali and her welfare was ever his chief concern. All her sons and daughters were his own brothers and sisters. He had no party interest to further, nor had he to work for any one community or sect. The very dust of India was holy to him. He worked for the revival of her glorious past. He bid our sleeping men rise, wake up, and never to stop till the goal was reached. He never cared for results. Service was his one aim. The ignorant masses of the country found in him a champion. Serve these *Daridra Narayanas*—these poor Gods and you serve God,—this was the watch-word of his life. He organised a band of youthful and enthusiastic sanyasins for social service and the uplift of the masses, and his mission of selfless workers has been doing splendid social and educational work ever since. For the education of the masses he pleaded strong. He defined education as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' If the poor millions of India cannot come to education, he said, education should go to them. Ignorance is at the root of misery. Our poverty, our political subjection, our lagging behind in the progress of nations—all these are because of this ignorance and to remove these Swamiji left no stone unturned.

The poor, the lowly, the oppressed—for all these the heart of Swamiji bled ever and anon. With his sincere love for all and his far-sightedness Swamiji saw how India could never prosper as long as 'Touch-me-not-ism' remained her creed. He exhorted his countrymen to embrace the down-trodden with love and affection and to work for the shortening of the gulf that separated the higher and the depressed classes. He pleaded for love, light and harmony into the homes of the poor. Educate them and civilise them and the economic problem of India is solved—is his ever-recurring word to his countrymen. He is the pioneer of the present-day agitation for the removal of untouchability.

Even as he realised the necessity for the solidarity of the Hindu community, this Patriot-Prophet did not overlook the necessity for Hindu-Muslim unity. He saw how India could prosper only when these two mighty communities would live together in concord. His vision of a united India was one that should have 'a Vedantic brain and an Islamic body.' He realised how *assimilation* has ever been the policy of India and understood clearly the contribution of Islam and of other civilisations to India's greatness. To effect this, he preached his Master's teaching—'All Religions are one,' and showed that the petty quarrels between religions were mere waste of energy. He also pointed out the catholicity and comprehensiveness of Hinduism under whose wide roof men of all creeds could take safe shelter. India has

never known religious persecution. A New York Daily wrote just after his immortal Chicago address, 'After hearing him, we think how foolish we are in sending our missionaries to that learned nation.' What a mighty change of outlook!

Swamiji was also a social reformer in the best and purest sense of the term. He stood for the uplift of our women and showed how half of India would be shut out if we neglected our women-folk. He distinguished between the Western and the Eastern ideal of woman—as *wife* in one case and as *mother* in the other. He cleared the misconception about the place of our women in society and showed how the Hindu house-wife's position is always the more enviable. Every woman was to him the Mother Incarnate. He was for giving them liberal education—not in mere imitation of the Western ideals but in the light of our ancient past. 'Remember', he told our women, 'you are the descendants of Sita, of Savitri, of Damayanthi and it is up to every one of you to live and do as these did. May you be the mothers of heroes. The future of India rests on you.' Amidst his band of faithful workers there were also many ladies from the West and East, of whom Miss Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita) is the best known.

To our young men also he had a message to deliver. He infused into them the spirit of broad outlook and of tolerance and patriotism. He created in them a passion for active service of humanity. He asked them to travel over foreign lands and assimilate all that was best in Western culture. Before his time there was a tendency to despise all that was Indian and the Swamiji gave a blow to this deep-gone disease. He told our young men: say with pride—I am an Indian. Say boldly and with strong conviction—every Indian is my brother. Sacrifice all for your dear mother. Live up, one and all of you, to the ideal of our epic heroes. Pray night and day to the Mother—make me a man. He also held before them the ideal of the Karma-yogin;—mere renouncing the world by running away from it won't do. 'I shall not enter Paradise' he said, 'even until one of these my brothers has to keep out of it.' He preached how Vedanta was practicable in daily life. He emphasised the divinity in man and showed how he was the controller of his own destinies. There is nothing that man cannot do. Fools are they who call us sinners.

The Swamiji's practical knowledge has been shown in other ways too. He realised that the East and the West were more complementary than contradictory and that the one would be incomplete without the other. There was no inseparable barrier between the East and the West. At the same time, he knew that each had got a separate mission to perform. Let the West sit at the feet of India—the mother of

religions and learn spirituality and in return teach to her how to attain material progress and economic prosperity. He bid Mother India awake from her long sleep and again assume her role of the light-bringer to the world.

Swamiji was also for encouraging Sanskrit study and Oriental research. Only by learning Sanskrit could we have a direct access to our literary and spiritual heritage. He emphasised the majesty and grandeur of the Upanishads and created in us a strong desire to dig up the neglected mines.

His whole life knew not a moment's rest. He sacrificed his health and life for the great cause. He was a veritable Titan and a Hercules at work. He contributed to journals, delivered lectures, undertook religious classes and personally attended to plague-stricken areas. He had the co-operation and help of princes and foreigners in this noble task. His personality and oratorical gifts attracted thousands to him. When he knew his mission was over this Hercules passed away. But the fire he kindled is kept unextinguished and unextinguishable and the flag he unfurled is flying afloat. His name and example are a treasure we have to bequeath to our future generations. In the name of this 'Hero' of ours, in the light of his guidance let us awake and bestir ourselves!

## THE ASHRAMAS

(Continued from the last issue)

By Sir John Woodroffe

There are different kinds of Yatis or Paramahamsas. The Sādhana ordained differs according to the class which is (a) the lower (Mandādhikāri), (b) medium (Madhyamādhikāri) and (c) highest (Uttamādhikāri) competency.

In the case of those of the last class who have in varying degrees attained there is practically no Sādhana other than meditation on the Vedantic Truth, that is, the Real. In the case of those whose progress is somewhat short of this there is little else. Such do not go to the river nor do they do Japam of Mantra or Nyāsa. These ponder upon the meaning (Anusandhāna) of the Pranava. The highest class have obtained external (Dama) and internal (Shama) control and know the full meaning of the Vaidik mantras and meditate thereon as upon the saying "Tat Tvam Asi" ('That thou art') and on such mantras as "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). (Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati) "The knower of Brahman is Brahman" and so forth. In the case however of the two lower classes there is

more and more ritualism and more in the lowest class than in the middle. In the second class certain details are dropped and for other, a particular Sādhana is substituted such as the reading of specific Vaidik texts. In both there is worship of the Saguna Brahman though the ordinary external Pūjā of Devatās is not followed in the form presented for men in the world. Yatidharmanirnaya p. 170 citing Sannyāsa Upanishad says,—"Na vāhyadevatābhyarchanam kuryāt" and p. 171 says there is no Devatārchanam.

Mistaken notions as to the life of the Yati however sometimes prevail. The Vedantic Yati or Dandins here described are communities which live under a rule which is said to have been prescribed by the great Shankarāchārya. They are so called because they carry a staff (Danda). It may well be that in earlier times as indeed happens to some extent at the present day persons of the fourth Ashrama led an independent life upon a self-prescribed rule. But these Vedantic Yatis of Shankara's School live in Mathas which they leave only to bathe and worship at the sacred river and to beg their food. A definite rule of life is prescribed for this class which has not unlikely taken the place of the Buddhist monks who preceded them. Shankara with a view to combat Buddhist ideas prescribed a ritual and Sādhana of a definite Hindu and "Tāntrik" type. Even men of highly advanced type require some ritual and discipline (Karma and Sādhana) for as Satyananda says in his commentary on the Upanishad: "If those who are fit for work (whose adhikāra is in work) cease from it then mental impurity actually increases." Shankara says that the Sandhyā is necessary for the Yati in order that thereby he may practise investigation, that is, his mind may be reminded of and continually stimulated to enquire into the supreme end of life (Paramārthanusandhānābhyāsa). As the Gītā says man until freed cannot by his nature cease from action. This action is however adapted to the stage of spiritual advance achieved. Thus the Vishnu-Dharmashāstrakāra says that the Sandhyā for Dandins is not the ordinary one but Dhyāna sandhyā: that is meditation (Dayānātmaka) devoid of bodily trouble or exercise (Kāyakleshavivarjita). Sandhyā=sandhini, i.e., joiner not of "times" but of Jīvātmā and Paramātmā. The notion that the Vedantik Yati moves about as a superior person beyond all discipline and doing nothing is incorrect. In the daily worship (Ahnikā kṛityā) Sandhyā is done.—(See Yatidharmanirnaya III 136 et seq.). Many nowadays in the East and West consider it a mark of the superior person that he follows no forms of worship or discipline. It is true that those who have achieved the Formless are beyond all forms, but the persons who so talk are not that. The "protestant" spirit is apt to overdo itself. It is not ritualism

which is to be avoided but mechanical unintelligent ritualism. Even the high Yati does not conceive himself as wholly beyond it. On the contrary Sādhana is present even for the Paramahansa (paramahangsānām sādhanam uktavantah.—Yatidharma III, 147. See Introduction to Mahānirvāna Tantra). Sandhyā is physically the junction of the times, morning, midday, evening. But Sandhyā is also Devatā and the Yati's Sandhyā is of a type conformable to his spiritual state. His is meditation (Anusandhāna) on the Supreme Brahman as being within the circle of the sun (Sūrya mandala). There is no restriction of place. To purify his Buddhi he meditates on Ishvara as the Pranava or Om (Sandhyāpranavamaya) which is the root of Veda. The Yati goes to the Ganges or other river, bathes, washes his loin cloth (Kaupṭa), gives offering (Argha), to the Sun thrice with the Pranava or Gāyatrīmantra. As the Dandins wear no sacred thread the Upāsana is done by simply holding the hands up in the same position as if the thread were held thereby. The morning Sandhyā is facing east and the evening the north. He sips the water (āchamanam). He makes a tilaka (mark) of earth or sacrificial ashes on the body. This is in the form of three lines (Tripundra) on the forehead, arms, chest and belly. He does Prāṇāyāma or he recites the mantra "Pavitra iti."—(See Mahānirvāna Tantra). The body (Pinda) is purified through Prāṇāyāma. "Whether pure or impure or whatever he be, he who remembers the lotus-eyed Nārāyaṇa is inwardly and outwardly pure." There is then prayer to Ganesha and meditation on Vishnu as moon-coloured, dressed in white with four arms. There is prayer to the ancient Vaidik Sarasvatī and salutation to the Gurus. "I salute Nārāyaṇa Shakti and Brahmā born of the lotus, Vashishtha, Parāshara, Vyāsa, Shuka, Gaudapādāchārya, Yogendra Govindachārya and his disciple Shri Shangkarāchārya, the latter's disciple Padmapādāchārya, his disciple Hastāmalaka, the Varttikakāra Totaka and other Gurus." A number of mantras follow to the founder of Brahmayidya Sampradaya and the Vangsha Rishis. Then the seat is purified (Asana-Shuddhi). Evil spirits are warned away (Bhūtāpasarana) with the mantras "Om Phat". There is salutation to Durgā, Sarasvatī, Lakshmi, and then follows Nyāsa, the peculiarity in the case of Yatis being that the Bija mantra used is Om with its constituents A, U, M. "Oh Earth (Prithivi), thou holdest all regions (Lokas) but thou art thyself held by Vishnu. Do thou purify this and sustain me thereby". Thus at the root of the left thumb 'Am namah' above, 'Um namah' at top 'Mam namah' and then over the whole 'Om namah'. Anganyāsa and Karanyāsa are each done. Both are forms of Shadanganyāsa; when the latter is done on the body it is called in short Anganyāsa, when

done with the hands only. Karanyāsa. Thus "Salutation to the thumb and Bhūh in the form of Agni to the first finger and Bhuvah in the form of Prajāpati; to the middle finger and Svah in the form of Sūrya; to the fourth finger and Bhūh, Bhūvah, Svah in the form of Brahmā; to the little finger in the form of consciousness (Jnānāt-maka); to the palm and back of the hands (Karatalaprishtha), and Truth (Satya)". The Nyāsa is thus adapted to the Vedantic meditation which carries the mind from the passing Earth, to the eternal changeless Truth through the mind region (Antariksha); heaven, the earth, antariksha, and heaven as one whole (samāshti), to that Consciousness (jnāna) by which all these worlds are thought (created). Nyāsa is done also on heart, head, crown-lock (Shikhā), breast (Kavacha), three eyes. These are the two physical eyes and the unseen eye of wisdom (Jnānachakshu) which is between them in the forehead. Then follows meditation (Dhyāna) on Vishnu brilliant as the rising sun in a lotus with his adornments of conchshell, discus, mace and lotus. The hand is placed in Ganges water and 108 Japa (mental recitations) of the Om mantra are done. Water is taken in the right hand. Japa is done twelve times and the head sprinkled thrice. Japa is then made of the mantras Yam, Vam, Ram. Water is sipped thrice and libation (Tarpana) is done with Ganges water thrice with the mantras: "Om all this is Atmā" "Om all this is Brahman", "Om all this is of a surety Brahman". "Om ātmaivedam sarvam; Om Brahmaivedam sarvam; Om sarvam khalvidam Brahma. (It will be observed that all the mantras are chosen as appropriate for the Vedantic life of the Yati.) Again follows Prāṇāyāma Karanyāsa, Anganyāsa and meditation (Dhyāna). Then Nyāsas are again done with the Mantra Om. Thus Om is said thrice on the heart, Mūlādhāra, navel, forehead, and crown of head (Brahmuraundhra).—(See A. Avalon's "Six Centres and the Serpent Power"). Instead of actual offering of flowers, lights and so forth to the Devatā as in ordinary gross worship these are imagined (Kālpanā) and offered to the Para Devatā with the mantras Om and the Bija mantras of the elements commencing with Ham (ether) and ending with Lam (earth) which are considered to be the flowers, incense, lights and so forth. The physical world, nectar and so forth, is thus offered to the Spirit (Atmā). Rishhyādi Nyāsa follows, that is, salutation is made to the Rishi of the Mantra and so forth.—(See Introduction to the Mahānirvāna Tantra CIX: now published in the 3rd edition of Shakti and Shakta.) With salutation to the Guru the Yati then goes to his study or other business whatever it be.

The Yatis of the first class practise their Mantra with Chhandas (metre), Rishi and Devata, do Dhyāna of Saguna Devatā, worship

Nārāyaṇa with form. When by means of meditation which commences with attributes (Upādhi) all such attributes are excluded and meditation becomes realisation itself (Jñānasvarūpa), then there is liberation (Moksha.) But until then meditation must have some form of mental object. As they are not perfect in Shama and Dama ritualism is still prescribed. Gradually they rise out of this ritual through the middle to the highest class the Sādhana of which is practically Vedāntic meditation only. Before the study of Vedānta the teacher and disciple say : "Om may He ( God ) protect us both. May He grant to us both aid. May we both work with all our strength. May our study be with understanding. May there be no dissension between us." There should be no squabbling on the subject of Vedāntic discussion and raising of passion which is far from those who are truly on the path.

Sā hā nāvavatu, Oṃ sa ha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam karavāvabai, tejasvināvadhītamastu, mā vidvishāvahai.

Tejasvinau adhitau svārthaprakāśhakam. (Yatidharma III, 130). According to the evening duties (sayantanavidhi) the Yati should do six Prāṇāyāmas, Śhaṅgānyāsa, mental (Mānasa) Japa of Pranava.—(Yatidharmanirnaya II. 430.) For Japa is either verbal (Vāchika) or murmured (Upāṅgshu) or mental (Mānasa). The last form in which no sound is heard is the highest. (See Introduction to the Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra LI). The following verse is then said : "Earth dissolves in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in the unmanifest (Avyakta Prakṛiti) and the latter in Puruṣa beyond whom there is nought. I am Mādhava (Vishnu) sleeping on the snake worshipped by Devas. I am the Atmā of all (Akhilātma). I am Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sachchidananda)." Having so thought the Yati then sleeps. This is the order of involution in Kundalī Yoga (See Avalon's "Six Centres and the Serpent Power.")

The fourth Ashrama is that of the Bhikshu or mendicant. In the previous Ashrama it was possible to have a home and fixed abode. In this Ashrama man is homeless (Aniketa) and a wanderer (Paryataka), whose life is spent in the perfecting of himself and the instruction, by preaching, of others. He should avoid large capital towns (Rājadhāni) or if there he should take no part in their life just as he avoids Hell (Kumbhīpāka). He should beg his food if possible in the villages. Indeed he should avoid all assemblies of men as he would a cemetery (Shmashāna).—(Yatidharma III, 170 *et seq.* "Sabhāsthalam shma-shānasthitam iva.") He must avoid being himself noticed and must not take pleasure in being honoured.—(ib. III, 160). He must give up every wordly thought (Prapanchavritti), and live without wife or house, without his crown lock (Shikhā), with his head shaved and

should be as regards sexual desire as though he were an eunuch (Kṛtya), as regards wordly things he should be as though blind, deaf and dumb. "Hṛidi sa snehabhāvena chedrakshet striyam ekadā koti dvayam brahmakalpam kumbhāpāki na sangshayah."—(If a Yati take to his heart once only a woman with love he will go to the Kumbhīpāka Hell for two crores (20 millions) of Brahma Kalpa periods. Of this there is no doubt. In Yatidharma II, 215 *et seq.* elsewhere III, 170, *et seq.* it is said "A woman should be avoided as a serpent" (Striyam ahimiva tyajet) and gold like a venomous serpent. "He should give up love for those dear to him and dislike for those not dear to him and attain the eternal Brahman by Dhyānayoga." Thus he may seem to some to be mad (Unmatta), enchanted and held in thrall as he is by his inner vision. Because he is spoken of as Bhikshu he must not be thought of as an ordinary beggar seeking to get as much as he can by gift without self-exertion. He is beggar only in this sense that being without home, family, trade, profession and forbidden to be accompanied or to take the help and enjoined to be detached from all pursuits he must in order to live beg his daily meal. He is forbidden to touch money or any metal. He must not remain in anyone's house for any greater length of time than it takes to milk a cow. He should not go to or stay in houses which are physically filthy, nor where the people are morally bad, nor where there is sickness or lamentation. From these various influences proceed what are evil for him. So he should not go to the house of a prostitute (Ganikā), wine merchant, the inflictor of punishments (Dandikā), a priest who does worship in others' houses for pay (Deva pūjaka or pūjari), unreligious infidel persons who have themselves no fixed belief but pretend to the beliefs of those with whom they consort (Pashandah sarvalinginah,—Amarakosha). He should go to the houses of persons free from blame (Anindya). That this is the ground of the injunction is shown by the fact that whilst the Yati is forbidden to take food even from a Shrotriya (one versed in Veda) if he be lacking in faith and devotion, he may take it even from a Brātya or Mlechchha if these have such qualities. A Brātya is one without the sacraments (Sangskārahīna) and a Mlechchha is a non-Hindu European and others. He must take what food whether it be good or bad other than wine or flesh which the householder gives him and must not eat off metals or carry a begging bowl (Bhikshā pātra). He must wander on foot and never ride or be carried. Usually a plantain leaf is used as a plate, but for a Yati stone utensils are considered good. But in the four months of the rains he should not wander because then there is the seed and its sprouting and small creeping creatures and his movements might cause harm to them.—(Yatidharmanirnaya II. 215.) For the same

reason he should strain the water he drinks through a cloth. It is better to eat food unbegged: that is, the Yati appears at the house door and says "Om Nārāyaṇa" on which the householder knows that a Yati has come and gives him his food. He must beg once only. He must not be sorrowful (*vishādi*) if he does not get food nor rejoice (*na harshayet*) if he gets it. He must take and eat only so much as is sufficient to maintain his life (*Prāṇayātrika mātṛah syat*). It is said that at the most food should be taken in such quantity as to leave  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of stomach empty for the movement of the vital digestive "air" (*vāyu sancharana*);  $\frac{1}{2}$  food and  $\frac{1}{4}$  water. He must take food for himself only. Certain kinds of food are forbidden as being productive of passion or other evil, e.g., ghee (*ghritta*), sweets (*madhu*), oil, onion.

His head should be shaved (*munda*) and his nails cut. He should be either naked or wear an old loin cloth (*Kaupīna*). He should bathe thrice a day and carry a staff (*Danda*). It is commonly said that by the taking of a staff a man becomes Nārāyaṇa (*Vishnu*): *Dandagrahana matrena naro nārāyaṇo bhavet*.—(86th Chapter: *Brahmavai-vartta Purāṇa*, *Shrikrishna-jauma-khanda*). At the same time it is recognised that it is not the external marks which make a man a Yati.—*Na lingam dharmakāraṇam*. Or as it is said in the West *cucullus non facit monachum*. He should not associate with others or have any habitation as in the Forest Ashrama for he must direct his mind to liberation only.—(*Yatidharma II*, 215 *et seq.* See *Brihaddharma Purāṇa*, *Ullasa Khanda 7 ch.*)

(To be concluded)

## THE NYAYA SYSTEM

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

Dealing with the Nyaya system, Dr. Radhakrishnan says about it and the cognate Vaiseshika system: "Applying the methods of logical enquiry and criticism, they endeavour to show that these do not warrant the conclusions which the Buddhist thinkers derived from them and that logic does not compel us to disperse the unity and pattern of life into its fleeting moments. They are interested mainly in averting the sceptical consequences of the Buddhist phenomenalism, which merged external reality in the ideas of mind. They seek to restore the traditional substances, the soul within and nature without but not on the basis of mere authority." These two systems discuss space, time, cause, matter, mind, knowledge and soul, and explore and reveal the mechanism of human knowledge. Both seek to prove a

probability of souls, a personal God, and an atomic universe. The Nyaya stresses logic while the Vaiseshika stresses the atomic constitution of the universe.

In the Nyaya system, analysis and dialectics occupy a prominent place. All knowledge implies the subject (*pramata*), the object (*prameya*), cognition (*pramiti*), and means of knowledge (*pramana*). It is one of the glories of Hindu thought that it has investigated the question of *pramanas* with the utmost care and precision. The Nyaya system discusses at length the fallacies of thought and shows the respective places of perception and inference and scripture and reveals the value and result of syllogisms. Its signal service was in the field of criticism of Buddhist thought. It points beyond the flux of sensations to the reality which is the permanent background of the sensations. "The Buddhist view that all universals are imagined, since specific individuals alone exist is rejected by the Naiyayikas, who hold that the universals are as real as the individuals in which they subsist by the relation of inherence (*Samavaya*)." The learned author deals in detail with the Nyaya exposition of the syllogism of which the five members are (1) *pratigna* or the proposition (2) *hetu* or the reason (3) *udaharana*, or the explanatory example, (4) *upanaya* or the application, and (5) *nigamana* or the statement of conclusion. Professor Max Muller shows how Indian syllogism is indigenous and is not a borrowing from Greece. While the Nyaya says that there are four *pramanas* i.e., *pratyaksha* (perception), *anumana* (inference), *upamana* (comparison) and *śabda* (verbal knowledge), the Mimamsas add also *arthapathi* (presumption) and the Vedantins further add *anubhava* or *anupalabdhi* (non-existence).

Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The Nyaya, which is anxious to save us from Buddhist subjectivism, has not provided us with a more satisfactory view of reality." He says further: "The main assumptions which vitiate the epistemology of the Nyaya are: (1) that self and not-self are sharply separated from one another, (2) that consciousness is the result of the causal action of the not-self on the self, (3) that knowledge is a property of the self..... So long as the Nyaya gives an account of what is immediately experienced in the act of knowledge, it is on secure ground; but when it tries to offer a metaphysical explanation, in terms which take us behind the ultimate fact of knowledge, it is open to criticism." The real weakness of the Nyaya system is in its inability to comprehend and express a reality higher than the dichotomy of subject and object. The ultimate universal reality is *chaitanya*. Bradley says well: "That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the

sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral wool of impalpable obstructions or unearthly ballot of bloodless categories." Further, in the Nyaya view the individual soul has got various qualities such as aversion, volition, pleasure, pain and cognition. The Nyaya has no doubt stated that the soul is different from the body and the senses and the mind; and it has declared the soul to be partless, immaterial and all-pervasive. But it has transferred to the soul many of the qualities and attributes of the mind. It postulates a plurality of souls. Nay, though it says that consciousness cannot exist apart from the self, it does not affirm that the soul itself is consciousness (Chit). Further, it defines Moksha as cessation of pain and not as the realisation of *Sachchidananda*. It is not a right view to urge that consciousness is a mere lightning glow resulting from the impact of two clouds, viz., soul and matter. Sri Sankaracharya has subjected the Naya doctrine to a searching and scathing criticism in his *Bhashya* on the Vedanta Sutas (II, 3, 5 0 to 53). The Nyaya has no doubt emphasised the existence and glory of God but it has kept him apart from and above the souls and nature.

I have indicated above the main features of the Nyaya philosophy. It is not possible to go here more deeply into it. I may however point out here that it deals with sixteen topics viz., Pramana (means of knowledge), Prameya (objects of knowledge), Samsaya (doubt), Prayojana (purpose), Drishtantha (illustration or instance), Siddhanta (demonstrated truth), Avayava (premises) Tarka (ratiocination), Nirnaya (conclusion), Vada (argumentation), Jalpa (sophistical reasoning), Vitanda (wrangling), Hetvavhasa (logical fallacy), Chohala (quibbling), Jati (false analogy), and Nigrahasathana (unfitness for arguing). The Sutra runs thus:

प्रमाण प्रमेय संशय प्रयोजन दृष्टान्त सिद्धान्तावयव तर्क निश्चय वाद जल्प वितंडा हेत्वाभास च्छल जाति निग्रहस्थानानां तत्त्वज्ञानानिःश्रेयसाधिगमः ॥

Gautama promises that by knowing the above things wrong knowledge will go; with it desires will disappear; with them karmas will vanish: with these births will cease; and with the cessation of births there will be cessation of pain. The Sutra runs thus:

दुःख जन्म प्रवृत्ति दोष मिथ्या शानानामुत्तरोत्तरापाये तदनन्तराभावादपवर्गः ।

Thus the Nyaya recaptured for the human mind from the nihilistic chaos of Buddhist philosophy, the individual soul, God, and the universe. But it failed to purgate from its description of the soul various qualities which really belong to the mind. It made God only the *Nimitta Karana* or the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) of the universe and not also the material cause of the universe, atoms (anus) being that material cause. It says that *adrishhta* bring spirit and matter together. Thus this function was not assigned to God, God was thus made an external

and extracosmic power who had nothing to do with the universe after its creation. The Nyaya did not affirm the immanence of God along with His transcendence. The atomic theory of the universe, though it is a great step forward, does not really take us far, and was superseded by the Vedantic theory of the universe. Further, as pointed out above, the bliss of beatitude, as expounded by the Nyaya, is of a negative character and is stated to be attainable by the removal of false knowledge (*Mithya jnana*). The word used for it is *Apavarga* and expresses the liberation aspect rather than the *Chaitanya* of the *Ananda* aspect of the beatitude. It is in these important respects that the Vedanta philosophy established itself firmly in the Indian heart as the *ne plus ultra* of spiritual truth.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

### BALAKANDA : CHAPTER II

#### BRAHMA'S PRAYER—THE GLORY OF BHAKTI

नतोऽस्मि ते पदं देव प्राणबुद्धीन्द्रियात्मभिः ॥  
यच्चित्यते कर्मपाशाददि नित्यं मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ १४ ॥

14. With my Prana (vital air), Buddhi (intellect), senses and mind I bow down, Oh Lord, to Thine feet which souls desiring liberation always meditate upon in their hearts to get rid of the bondage of actions.

मायया गुणमय्या त्वं सृजस्यवसिलुपसि ॥  
जगत्तेन न ते लेप आनन्दानुभवात्मनः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Through Thine Maya (inscrutable power) consisting of the Gunas<sup>1</sup> Thou createst supportest and destroyest the universe and yet Thou being the (Supreme) Atman immersed in Thine own blissful Self remainest untainted.

[1. The Satwa, Rajas and Tamas—the constituent elements of Maya.]

तथाशुद्धिर्न दुष्टानां दानाध्ययनकर्मभिः  
शुद्धात्मता ते यशसि सदा भक्तिमता यथा ॥ १६ ॥

16. People of impure mind cannot, with all their charity, scriptural study and performance of actions, attain, Oh the Immaculate Atman, to the same purity as the constant devotees to Thine glory do.

अतस्तवांग्रिमं दृष्टश्चित्तदोषापनुत्तये ॥  
सद्योऽतर्हृदये नित्यं मुनिभिः सात्वतवृत्तः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Therefore may the sight to-day of Thine feet which are ever worshipped by devout saints in their inmost heart, remove the impurity from my heart.

ब्रह्माद्यैः स्वार्थसिद्धययमस्माभिः पूर्वसेवितः ॥

अपरोक्षानुभूत्यर्थं ज्ञानिभिः हृदि भावितः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Formerly Thine feet were adored by us including myself and others for the fulfilment of our desires and these (very) feet are meditated upon by the Jnanis in their heart for the realization of their self.

तवाग्निपूजानीर्मात्यतुलसीमालया विभो ॥

स्पन्दते वक्षसि पदं लब्ध्वापि श्रीः सपत्नितः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Oh Omnipresent Lord! Though Lakshmi (the Goddess of fortune) has her abode in Thine breast, yet like a co-wife she is jealous of the Tulsi garland offered at Thine feet.

अतस्त्वत्पादभक्तेषु तव भक्तिः श्रियोधिका ॥

भक्तिमेवाभिवाञ्छन्ति त्वद्भक्ताः सारवेदिनः ॥ २० ॥

20. Hence, because Thy love for the worshippers of Thine feet is greater than that for Sri (Lakshmi), Thine devotees who have understood this truth rightly aspire after Bhakti (devotion) only.

अतस्त्वत्पादकमले भक्तिरेव सदाऽस्तु मे ॥

संसारमयतप्तानां भेषजं भक्तिरेवते ॥ २१ ॥

21. Therefore Bhakti (devotion) alone being the remedy for those who are afflicted in the world, let me ever have devotion at Thine lotus feet.

### CHAPTER III

KAUSALYA'S GLORIFICATION OF HER SON SRI RAMA JUST AFTER HIS BIRTH

देवदेव नमस्तेऽस्तु शंखचक्रगदाधर ॥

परमात्माऽच्युतोऽनंतः पूर्णस्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ २० ॥

20. Salutations unto Thee, Oh God of gods, who art equipped with conch, discus and mace. Thou art the supreme Self, indestructible, infinite, perfect and the Supreme Purusha.

वदंत्यगोचरं वाचां बुद्ध्यादीनामतीन्द्रियं ॥

त्वावेदवादिनः सत्तामात्रं ज्ञानैकविग्रहं ॥ २१ ॥

21. Thou art beyond speech, beyond the comprehension of intellect and other senses, pure existence and embodiment of consciousness alone,—so say those well-versed in the Vedas.

त्वमेव मायया विश्वेष्टजस्यवसि हंसि च ॥

सत्त्वादिगुणसंयुक्तस्तुर्य एवामलः सदा ॥ २२ ॥

22. Thou, through (Thy) Maya (inscrutable power) createst, maintainest and destroyest the universe. Thou art endowed with Gunas such as Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas and art verily the Super-conscious state<sup>1</sup> and hence ever untainted (by Maya)

[ (1) i.e. The transcendental state beyond the three ordinary states of wakefulness, dream and sound sleep ]

करोषीव न कर्तृत्वं गच्छसीव न गच्छसि ॥

न शृणोषि शृणोषीव पश्यसीव न पश्यसि ॥ २३ ॥

23. Thou actest not, yet Thou appearest to act; Thou walkest not, yet Thou appearest to move; Thou hearest not, yet Thou appearest to hear; Thou seest not, yet Thou appearest to see.

अप्राणोद्यमनाः शुद्ध इत्यादि श्रुतिरब्रवीत् ॥

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्पि न लक्ष्यसे ॥ २४ ॥

अज्ञानध्वांतचित्तानां व्यक्त एव सुमेधसां

जटेरे तव दृश्यंते ब्रह्मांडाः परमाणवः ॥ २५ ॥

24-25. The Vedas declare Thee to be beyond the Pranas (Vital energy) and the mind, the (ever) Pure. Though Thou art uniformly existing in all beings, Thou art not perceived by men whose mind is shrouded with the darkness of ignorance, but art visible to the wise. All the worlds appear as so many atoms in Thee.

त्वं समोदरसंभृत इति लोकान्विडंसे ॥

भक्तेषु पारवश्यं ते दृष्टं मेऽद्यगृह्यतम ॥ २६ ॥

(Such a being as) Thou art born in my womb: thus Thou deceiveth the people. So to-day, Oh the chief of the Raghus, do I realise Thy subserviency to Thy devotees.

संसारसागरे मग्ना पतिपुत्रधनादिषु ॥

अमामि माययातेऽद्य पादमूलमुपागता ॥ २७ ॥

27. Though plunged in the ocean of Samsara (worldly life) and attached to the husband, children, property, etc., and tossed about by Thy Maya, I have attained to Thy feet this day.

देवत्वद्रूपमेतन्मे सदातिष्ठतु मानसे ॥

अवृणोतु न मां माया तव विश्वविमोहिनी ॥ २८ ॥

28. May this form of Thine, Oh Lord, ever remain (fixed) in my heart and may Thy maya which deludes the whole universe not enshroud me.

उपसंहर विश्वात्मन्नदो रूपमलौकिकं ॥

दर्शयस्व मद्भानंदबालभावं सुकोमलं ॥

ललितालिगनालापं स्तरिष्याम्युक्तदतमः ॥ २९ ॥

29. Retract this supernatural form of Thine, Oh the Universal Atman, and show Thy tendermost child form instead, Oh the Supreme Bliss ! so that by the sweet embraces and talks I may cross the dire darkness (of ignorance).

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY'S DEFENCE OF INDIA

Ever since western nations came into contact with India she has been a favourite theme for many a European author who desires to produce startling books concerning the 'barbarous customs' and 'pagan worship' prevailing in the East. A few decades ago it was Christian missionaries who used to carry on this libellous propaganda in foreign lands ; for they found in it the best means for enlisting the sympathies of Christian Europe in their evangelical activities in India. But of late a different type of writers have taken up the cudgel and of these Miss Mayo, a cold weather tourist, has made herself most notorious by her performance in her two well-known books "Mother India" and "The Slaves of Gods." Christian missionaries have however changed their former tactic of wholesale condemnation either because they have found it inexpedient or because they have realised its unfairness. And at the present day when Miss Mayo and her supporters are relentlessly attacking India by their scurrilous writings, many prominent Christian missionaries are found taking up the cause of India and contradicting the exaggerated half-truths and lies circulated by these libellous writers. As an instance we give below an extract from a strong letter of protest from Mr. John Meckenzie, a member of the Scottish Mission and Principal of the Wilson College, Bombay, addressed to the Editor of "The British Weekly" which recently published an article by 'Lorna' justifying the attitude of Miss Mayo and her supporters.

"I feel particularly that the position which has been taken up by the great majority of Indian missionaries should be explained with a little more clearness than has yet been done to the supporters of missionary work in Great Britain.....In the first place, would it not be a very extraordinary thing if, after our long connection with India through trade and Government and missionary work, we were dependent for the last word or truth regarding India on the writings of a cold weather visitor?.....'Lorna' says, on what authority I do not know, that "Mother India" has stood the test of fiercest and most relentless criticism. This is not an accurate statement. There are throughout the book statements, well documented, which show that in the particular places with which the authorities are familiar certain kinds of barbarous customs and practices are prevalent. Whenever Miss Mayo begins to generalise she goes completely astray. For example, I have talked with European doctors working in different parts of India who have told me that this and that practice described in the book has never come under their notice. India is a very large country. The man with the muck-rake has a large field of work and if he works assiduously he can gather an imposing heap.

"It is not difficult to illustrate the fallacy which Miss Mayo has committed. Indian writers have been quick to detect it, and some of

the answers which have been written have largely taken the form of a "tu quoque". One writer, for example, has put together a considerable amount of material, as full documented as any of Miss Mayo's, in which some terrible features of modern American life are exposed. On the basis of it as strong an indictment of American life can be framed as Miss Mayo has framed on the life of India. But the whole procedure is futile. Imagine an Oriental coming to Europe, which in point of population is comparable with India, and travelling over the length and breadth of it, from Moscow to Madrid, and from London to Constantinople, in search of moral and physical filth ; and imagine him dishing up the results of his investigations as the truth about Europe. It would be no more monstrous a piece of work than Miss Mayo has given us on India.

"Having said all this, I wish to make it clear that I do not deny that there is in India an enormous amount of poverty and ignorance and disease and general ill-health, more perhaps than in any other land in the world.....Regarding them I wish to say three things and in saying them I believe I represent the mind of a great many missionaries.

"Firstly the evils that afflict India can only be removed through the self-sacrificing service of those who have it in their power to help. No facile, heartless journalism will move them one inch. I have not yet been able to discover what Miss Mayo proposes to do about them. Her manifest unfairness has embittered the minds of some of the finest people in India, while the people who are responsible for the abuses which she condemns have, most of them, not yet heard that there is such a person as Miss Mayo.

"Secondly, you can never serve a people to any purpose unless you respect them. Indian readers of Miss Mayo feel that she had insulted them as a people, that she has treated them as a race of vermin. It is this that has rankled more than anything else. It was this chiefly, I believe, that determined the executive committee of the National Christian Council to protest against her first book.....If India is to be raised it must be through service, and through the service of men and women who regard the most unfortunate and the most degraded as their brothers and sisters.

"Thirdly, there is in India a great and growing band of men and women who in a multitude of ways are seeking to raise their motherland. There are earnest social reformers who, working quietly and unobtrusively, are yet deeply influencing the whole life of India. Miss Mayo does not seem to have heard much of them. There are many of them who are seeking for firmer foundations for their schemes of social reform.....These people feel that Miss Mayo has stabbed them in the back....."

This trenchant criticism of Mr. Mackenzie on behalf of the Christian missionaries in this country reflects also the Indian opinion on a large extent about the activities of these foreign calumniators. All liberal-minded Indians now-a-days admit that in the present-day Hindu society there are many evils which are largely the result of the stagnation that the society suffered during national calamities in the shape of many foreign conquests and rule that India was subjected to for the past so many centuries. But we maintain that such evils are not due to any defect in the religious conceptions of India or any inferiority in the standard of Indian morals. They are largely the result of the sense of exclusiveness, narrowness and conservatism which the Hindu society as a whole developed in the course of that

shrinking of communal consciousness which it experienced as a natural reaction to the threatening influence of alien rule and alien ideas. Indians themselves are now quite aware of the failings of their society and many organisations, exclusively Indian, are at present actively engaged in remedying them. We do not in any way refuse to accept the help of friendly foreigners, but we can assure Miss Mayo and persons of her ilk, as our missionary friend has done, that if their objective is to uplift India, the sort of mendacious propaganda that they are conducting against her in the West, vilifying her people and her ideals, is not the best means of accomplishing it; for the only result of this false representation of India will be to lower her prestige in the eyes of foreign nations and also to wound the feelings of Indians themselves in such a way as to shake their confidence in the sympathy and good will of westerners in general. If any body of foreigners want to do real service to India, let them come out into this country in the spirit of such illustrious westerners as Sister Nivedita, C. F. Andrews, Mrs. Annie Besant, etc., as humble students of the ancient culture of this land, and having imbibed the spirit of it let them inculcate the same into the Indian masses along with the best of western ideals that are suited to the genius of the Indian nation. Service rendered in such a way and in such a spirit will result in real benefit to India and call forth the lasting gratitude of this nation.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Philosophy of Union by Devotion :** by Swami Nityapadananda Abadhut; published by Pramatheswar Lahiri, M. A., Mahanirban Math, Klighat, Calcutta ; Pages 192 ; price Re. 1.8-0.

The book is an English translation of Abadhut Jnanananda Deva's Bhakti-yoga Darsana in Bengali. It gives, as the title indicates, a detailed account of the nature of devotion, of its various aspects, of the means of acquiring it, etc. The opinions expressed in the book are supported by frequent quotations from standard Bhakti scriptures like Narada Bhakti Sutras, Shandilya Bhakti Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, etc. While it speaks of all aspects of Bhakti, the peculiar form of devotion that the Gopis of Brindavan had for Sri Krishna is specially expounded in a few illuminating chapters wherein the sublimity and mystic beauty of that form of devotion are very successfully depicted by the author. One of the most commendable features of the book is that though it treats of Bhakti and therefore advocates the worship of God as a personality, it has no quarrel with the Gnanins who are devoted to the impersonal aspect of God-head. In fact the author regards the realisation of the identity of the individual with the universal Self as the goal of spiritual life while he prescribes Bhakti as the easiest means of attaining it. To him there is no distinction between a real Gnanin and a real Bhakta. This universal and non-sectarian note so remarkably presented through every page of the book is in itself a sufficient indication that the book is the out-come of the mature insight and reflection of a great soul. Besides, while it is full of tender emotionalism of the Bhakta, it is in no way lacking in erudition

and logical consistency. This combination of fervency, scholarship, cogency and non sectarianism entitles the book to a high place in Bhakti literature. A close study of it will benefit all spiritual aspirants. The style of translation is simple and forceful. The get-up is neat and handy.

**First Steps on the Path:** by Geoffrey Hodson; Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras; 132 pages.

This book is a collection of the author's talks to a group of fellow-students who met for study, meditation and self-training. It is divided into three parts: the first on 'Meditation' gives many useful and practical hints on the topic: the second under the title 'The Path' deals with purity of life and other moral virtues that an aspirant has to cultivate; and the last section on 'The Masters' gives the usual ideas of the Theosophists regarding the *Mahatmas*. The book is neatly got up and is written in simple and following English. It will be found useful by persons who are interested in the doctrines of the Theosophists.

**The other side of Death** by the Rt. Rev. C.W. Leadbeater; published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

This book, as the title indicates, is an attempt at exploring the mysteries of death and of the life of the soul in the spirit worlds. The phenomenon of death is analysed from the psychological point of view, and innumerable pieces of evidence derived from observation, inference and practical experience are given in proof of the continued existence of the spirit after death. A chapter on clairvoyance and the methods of developing it is given, and the author who professes himself to have practised those methods and attained success in them gives, from personal experience, innumerable facts about after-death life, about the progress of the soul in the spirit worlds, about the phenomena of apparitions and many other things of similar nature. A section is devoted to a consideration of spiritualism and psychical research. The book, containing over 847 pages, will provide a very interesting and instructive reading for those who are interested in astral life and psychic phenomena.

**Bodhi Dharma :** by T. L. Vaswani ; published by Genesh & Co., 39, Thambu Chetty Street, Madras ; price annas 12.

This booklet contains some illuminating reflections of T. L. Vaswani on Lord Buddha and his Message. The author has given also a valuable introduction wherein a theistic interpretation of the Buddha's teachings is attempted.

**The Vision of Life :** by A. H. Jaisingani; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

The book is written in the form of an allegory in which life is compared to a lady residing in a mansion and the soul to an occasional visitor to the place. The author describes the various aspects of life as fine halls in the mansion—the Hall of Beauty, the Hall of Joy, the Hall of Misery, the Hall of Virtue, the Hall of Sin and the Hall of Creation. In the second half of the book the author puts forth his views regarding salvation and perpetual rest for the soul. He wonders 'how a sensible man can wish for himself a life of eternal rest which would be no better than death' and thinks that an eternity of rest will be 'eternally tiresome'. According to him creation or work and love of life are the only things conducive to happiness.

We fail to understand the full significance of these points as the author has not explained them fully. But we feel that the idea behind his mind is the modern idea of activism which considers life, and a state of eternal peace and calm as incompatible. This is due to the mistaken conception that the whole of life consists in the senses. By becoming one with the substratum of which life is a mere shadow or a manifestation we are not surely entering into a state of tedious rest. Though we differ from the author in some of the fundamental points he is driving at, we have no hesitation to say that the book is charming and suggestive.

**Women in Hindu Law :** by K. T. Bhashyam Aiyangar ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras ; pages 48.

Mr. Bhashyam Aiyangar gives in a nut-shell the history of the position of women in Hindu Law and society from the Vedic times up to the present day. He shows that in Vedic times women were the equals of men in every respect, and he traces the steps by which their position was lowered during the age of the Sutras. He notices a revival of women's rights at the hands of Mediaeval Hindu law-givers ; but the administration of Hindu Law and its interpretation by European judges in the light of the law books of the Sutra period checked the growth of this progressive movement. The book is full of quotations from authoritative sources and is written in a clear and convincing manner. A perusal of it will be helpful to all students of Hindu Law.

**Satyagraha in Champaran :** by Babu Rajendra Prasad ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 2-8 ; pages 281.

This is an English translation of the author's original book in Hindi. It gives a very vivid account of the long struggle that the ryots of Champarn had to carry on with the European indigo planters who had managed to reduce them into a hopeless state of economic thralldom for over a century. With elaborate and interesting details the author narrates how the peasants tried for a long time to get their grievances redressed by sending petitions to the Government, how the Government often viewed these with indifference and apathy, how the ryots were in course of time driven to commit murders, incendiarism and even to break the peace and how the Government at such times came to the rescue of the planters by ruthlessly putting down the peasants instead of removing the root causes of such disturbances. It also gives an account of the last phase of the struggle in 1917 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The agitation was carried on so intelligently and peacefully under Mahatmaji's guidance that the Government was forced to institute an elaborate enquiry which resulted in a legislation redressing at least a part of the tenants' grievances. A perusal of the book will give one an idea of the hopeless state of subjection in which Indian peasantry is ordinarily labouring, and will impress one with the thought that unless their conditions are ameliorated Indian national life will not be placed on secure foundations.

**Vivekananda, the Nation Builder :** by Swami Avyakta-nanda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipore, Patna ; pages 139 ; price. Rs. 1.

The life and works of Swami Vivekananda have received wide publicity all through the world, and as far as India is concerned they have already received their due recognition as a great national

treasure. But as yet very few attempts have been made to make a systematic collection and study of Swamiji's opinions regarding the great problems of life that lie scattered through the pages of his voluminous works. Swami Avyaktanada has attempted this work in the present book as far as Indian national reconstruction is concerned.

The key-note of Swamiji's plan is spirituality. He held that it is the dominant note in the music of India's national life and that an effective solution of the problems of India can be accomplished only by intensifying her spiritual life. He always warned his countrymen against the blind imitation of Westerners, for the aims and ideals of Western society are different from those of India and a blind imitation therefore may cause death to India's nationality. These as well as Swamiji's views on social questions like Varnashrama, untouchability, Brahmin and the non-Brahmin problem, food question, etc., are presented in clear and lucid language. In the section on "The Spiritual Basis" the author deals with Swamiji's spiritual message as far as it touches Indian nationalism and shows how he reconciles the conflicting religions and philosophies of India and spiritualises social and political activities by his new conception of man and India. We must however add in this connection that we do not find in Swamiji's works any such elaborate scheme of political reconstruction as the author has designed in the chapter under that heading.

Nevertheless the book is on the whole a true exposition of Swamiji's views. It reveals the genius of India's social life in its true perspective and will act as a panacea for the rage for westernisation which still lingers in the minds of some sections of our countrymen. It gives the right direction in which our society ought to move for healthy progress. We wish the book a wide circulation in these days of national awakening in India.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-eighth Birthday of Swami Vivekananda comes off on the 21st of January, 1930. The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Broadie's Road, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 26th January.

### SWAMI PARAMANDA'S WORK IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda's work in America has taken another forward step. Those who follow with devout satisfaction the widening influence of Sri Ramakrishna's message to the world cannot but review the Swami's growing achievement with deepest appreciation. In 1908 he established the Vedanta Centre of Boston ; in 1914 it was installed in large and imposing headquarters on one of the loveliest parkways of the city. In 1920 extensive additions were made to this spacious house. In 1923 further expansion carried the Swami across the continent to found an Ashrama in the milder climate of Southern California near Los Angeles. He procured 140 acres of richly planted land. On this he has erected gradually a Temple of the Universal Spirit, a large Library, living quarters and book-room, all joined by arched cloisters ; two large dwelling-houses, 14 cabins, a cottage, two garages and two

barns. In this mountain retreat lying in a crescent of hills belonging to the Sierra Madre range live twenty-five or thirty zealous devotees under the Swami's guidance.

Drawn by the power of the teaching and the rare beauty of the place, the public has invaded more and more the quiet of the Ashrama. To safeguard its character as a retreat the Swami has acquired now a town house in one of the finest residential sections of Los Angeles. Lovely gardens and handsome residences surround it on every side.

This new home will be dedicated by the Swami in December when he returns from Boston. Many of the public activities of the Ashrama will be transferred there. The Los Angeles Branch Library which has occupied rooms in a studio building down town for several years will be moved to the new quarters. The Pasadena Branch Library will continue as it is. Its large attractive studio offers a perfect background for the weekly class held there and for the sale of Vedanta literature and Ashrama Arts and Crafts.

The work at the Boston Volanta Centre is growing daily more fervent and vital. Its Temple of the Universal Spirit counts a numerous congregation every Sunday and Tuesday.

It requires tireless energy on Swami Paramananda's part to carry forward four Centres at such distant points. Nothing could testify more eloquently to his ardour than the fact that during the past year he made the four-day journey across the continent fourteen times.

#### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA SAMAJ, VELLORE

A few old students of the Ramakrishna Home, Madras and other admirers of Bagavan Sri Ramakrishna feeling the need of popularising the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna for a proper understanding of the spirit of Hinduism and promotion of true spiritual life formed themselves into an association by name 'Sri Ramakrishna Samajam, Vellore'. Mr. A. V. Gangadhara Sastriar, B.A., B.L., an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna was elected President of the Samajam. The organisers invited Swami Yatiswarananda, Head of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, to go over to Vellore to open the Samajam. The Swami accompanied by Mr. Appadurai, M.A., B.L. of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, reached Vellore on the 15th November last. On arrival, they were received and conducted to the residence of Mr. A. V. Gangadhara Sastriar. Friday night and Saturday were spent by the Swami in giving interviews to the eager devotees that sought him. The pleasant function of opening the Samajam was fixed at 9 A.M. on Sunday the 17th November in the Venkata Vedanta Ashrama, Nallampet, Vellore. The spacious hall of the Ashram was fully packed and the function commenced with prayer and worship of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna. Then the Swami in a short speech said that it was an auspicious day to have an association in Vellore to spread the ideas and ideals of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and declared the Samajam open. The Swami then delivered an inspiring address on the Ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Mission. In the course of the lecture he touched upon the supreme devotion of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and his realisation and the ardent piety and spirituality of Swami Vivekananda and illustrated his speech by narrating a number of incidents from the life of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna to the great edification of the audience. During the stay of the Swami at Vellore he delivered two more

lectures, one at the Town Hall on 'Hinduism and its Message' and another at the local High School for the benefit of the students.

The presence of Mr. Appadurai was also availed of by the public of Vellore to hear a Lantern Lecture from him on 'A New Experiment in Education' in the course of which the lecturer ably pointed out the aims and ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and Residential School and gave a correct idea of the daily life of the students in the Home and its spiritual background.

Swami Yatiswarananda and Mr. Appadurai reached Madras on the 18th after visiting the American Mission Hospital and Medical School.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE R. K. MATH, MADRAS IN ANDHRA DESA

Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras went to Andhra Desa in July and August last on two short tours with the object of raising donations in aid of the Telugu Section of the Publication Department of the Math. He visited Guntur, Tenali, Repalle, Nellore and other places in Guntur and Nellore districts, and also the towns of Bezvada and Ellore.

Besides explaining to a large number of devotees, friends and sympathisers the ideals and aims of Vedanta in all these places, he gave a discourse on Education and Illumination on the 30th August at Muthukur and delivered a public lecture on the objects and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission on the 7th September, at the Y. M. H. A. at Ellore. He was also requested to preside over a meeting at the Nellore Progressive Union on the 31st August, at which Mr. S. Venkatesaiah of the V. R. High School at Nellore spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and Bhakti Yoga.

The Swami received donations from many of those interested in the activities of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras. The latter takes this opportunity to express its thanks to them as well as to one and all of those who helped the Swami in various ways.

The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, acknowledges with thanks the following donation towards the Telugu Sections of its Publication Department:

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| Collections below rupees five                |              |   | 120     |
| Total Rs. 565                                |              |   |         |

KUMBHA MELA : APPEAL OF THE R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA,  
ALLAHABAD

Kumbha Mela is one of the greatest religious festivals of India attracting thousands of Sadhus and pilgrims from all parts of the country. Owing to over-crowding and inadequate sanitary arrangements epidemics often break out on such occasions and the condition of pilgrims coming from distant parts would indeed be very precarious if they do not get proper medical attendance in their illness. The branch of the Ramakrishna Mission at Allahabad therefore proposes to make special arrangements for rendering medical aid on this occasion and invites the cordial sympathy and financial support of the generous public. The appeal of the Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad is given below :—

DEAR SIR  
MADAM,

I presume you are already aware of the nature of work which the local Ramkrishna Mission has undertaken from 1910 to do in this sacred and ancient city of Prayag where during the month of Magh (January and February) there is an influx of pilgrims bringing in their train misery and sickness. Especially this is the year of 'Purna Kumbha', commencing from 13th January, 1930, and lasting for about one month and a half. The U. P. Government expects about thirty lakhs of pilgrims on the sacred occasion. We will hold our camp on the Triveni bank and will do our relief works there as well as here in our permanent Dispensary at Muthiganj. Our already slender resources are unable to cope with the demand and we shall fail to do our duty, if we do not bring the matter to the notice of the public for timely help. It is needless to add that any help, however small, will be of incalculable use for this noble purpose and will be gratefully received by the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,  
SWAMI BIGNANANANDA,  
Honorary Secretary,  
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA  
Muthiganj, Allahabad,

SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, DELHI

The Delhi centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been working in the metropolis of India for the past two years and a half. Ever since its inception the activities of the Mission have been rapidly increasing, and besides the Math and the charitable dispensary, a new Students' Home has been opened about a year back. It is situated on the banks of the Jumna river, close by the college and the University in a house given free of rent by a generous gentleman of the place. An influential committee consisting of many prominent citizens of Delhi has been formed to place the Home on a sound financial footing and to look after other matters connected with the expansion of the institution. Already the Home has become a place of attraction for many public spirited gentlemen, and a centre of social service and other forms of students' activities.

R. K. SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The eighth annual report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Hospital, Rangoon, shows a splendid record of work done by the Mission in the cause of suffering humanity. During the year 1928 the total attendance of patients was 1,16,954. A considerable number of these patients came from the suburbs of Rangoon and from some remote districts of Burma. The number of indoor patients admitted was 1,646. The aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 22,265 and the average daily attendance was 61. The average period of stay in the hospital in each case was 13 days. Some chronic cases, however, had to be kept for months. At the out-patients department the total number of attendance came up to 94,689 including men, women and children. The Corporation of Rangoon have added two new wards to the hospital for the treatment of women and children at a cost of about Rs. 21,000 and have thereby relieved the Sevashrama from the needs in which it stood before.

In the year under review the total receipts including the opening balance, was Rs. 32,644-2-6. The total amount incurred by expenditure was Rs. 26,584-10-6, thus leaving a credit balance of Rs. 6,059-8-0 as against the closing balance of Rs. 2,963-6-0 at the end of the previous year.

The hospital is a purely charitable institution; its existence depends mainly on the munificence of the public. As such the Sevashrama appeals to all for help.

RAMAKRISHNA TAPOVAN DISPENSARY, DHARCHULA, ALMORA

Situated in a remote district of the Himalayas, the Tapovan has been doing valuable service to the inhabitants of surrounding villages for the past five years. Its first Report shows that the dispensary treated 4,580 patients during the four years under review. At present it is also holding a coaching class for the benefit of the boys of the locality. Besides this the Tapovan renders all possible help to pilgrims going to the Holy Kailas. The institution at present stands in need of a workers' quarters, and two buildings for Indoor Hospital and a Rest House. The cost for these will come to Rs. 10,000. Contributions may be sent to Swami Anubhavananda, Sri R. K. Tapovan, Dharchula P.O., Almora, U.P.

The Society was formed in 1916 by the amalgamation of two associations which bore the name of Sri Ramakrishna and have been working in Rangoon for a considerable length of time. The Society was formally handed over to the Mission in December 1921. From 1922 the Society showed a continued record of progress. The visit of some of the elderly Swamis of the Mission like Swamis Sankarananda, Bodhananda, Nirmalananda and Paramananda added great impetus to the work and raised the Society in the estimate of the Rangoon public.

The activities of the Society include relief work, Students' Home, rest house, free library and reading room, birthday celebrations and public lectures, religious classes and collection of rice for Sevashram.

It was Swami Shyamananda who was then in Rangoon, that started the Amherst Relief Work about the end of 1919. Under his able direction similar flood relief works were carried on, in the Ramru Island, in 1923, at Alethangyaw and Maungdaw in the Arakan Coast in 1916 and in the close vicinity of Pegu in the latter part of 1926.

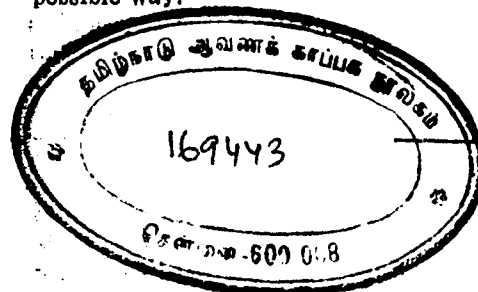
The Swamis and other workers of the Mission who were engaged in the relief works, now and then felt the necessity of starting a Students' Home in Rangoon for the benefit of the Burmese boys and this was brought into being only in 1926. At present there are 9 boys in the Home, out of whom 5 are Burmese. Students are admitted without any distinction of caste, creed or colour.

A free rest house known as "Shashiniketan", is managed by the Society for the benefit of the casual visitors to Rangoon, who are given accommodation for a period, free of charge, without any distinction of caste.

A free library and reading room forms one of the major activities of the Society. The average daily attendance for the past three years is 75. The library contains 2274 volumes on varied subjects and has on its reading table 160 periodicals in different languages.

In addition to study classes intended for a few zealous students, public lectures are frequently organised to educate the public. Birthday anniversaries of World Teachers are observed, and persons of outstanding abilities lecture upon the lives and teachings of such great personages.

A few boys brought under the influence of the Society have formed themselves into a band of workers to collect rice regularly from door to door every Sunday morning for the benefit of the Sevashrama Charitable Hospital, and also to help the librarian in every possible way.



(5)

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