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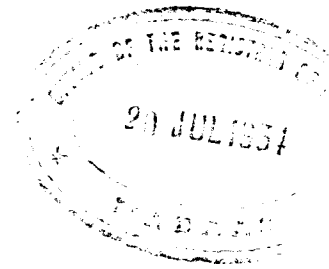
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# THE VEDANTA KESARI



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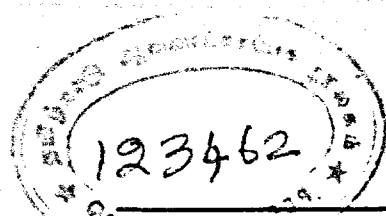
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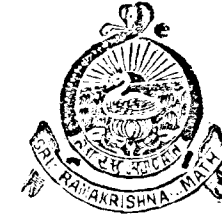
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

## THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

JULY, 1934

[No. 3

### HINDU ETHICS

ॐ

गगो द्वेपस्तया मोहो हर्षः शोकोऽभिमानिता ।

कामः क्रोधश्च दर्पश्च तन्द्रा चालस्यमेव च ॥

इच्छा द्वेपस्तया तापः परवृथुपतापिता ।

अज्ञानमेतन्निर्दिष्टं पापानाश्चैव याः क्रियाः ॥

उभावेतौ समफलौ समदोषौ च भारत ।

अज्ञानश्चातिलोभश्चाप्येकं जानीहि पार्थिव ॥

मूलं लोभस्य मोहो वै कालात्मगतिरेव च ।

द्वित्रे भिन्ने तया लोभे कारणं काल एव च ॥

Attachment, hate, loss of judgment, joy, sorrow, vanity, lust, wrath, pride, procrastination, idleness, desire, aversion, jealousy, envy and all other sinful acts are together known by the common name of ignorance. These two, ignorance and covetousness, know, O King, are the same in substance. Both are productive of the same fruits and the same faults, O Bharata.

The root of covetousness is loss of judgment. Loss of judgment, again, is its inseparable attribute. Eternity is ignorance's course. The time for the appearance of ignorance is when the objects of covetousness are not won.

SHANTI PARVA (Ch. CLIX, 6, 7, 9 and 11)

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

*The Attitude of the Guru manifested in the Master from the very Childhood*

THE manifestation of the attitude of the Guru is noticed in the Master from his very childhood. Nevertheless this attitude, it must be admitted, reached its fullest maturity only in the adult age, after his attaining the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This statement of ours regarding the early manifestation of the teacher aspect in the life of the Master should not lead one to think that we are indulging in exaggerations with a view to enhancing the glory of our Master. A truly impartial study of his life will prove beyond doubt the baselessness of imputations of this nature. Scrutinize, however much we may, the incidents of this superhuman life, in order to pick flaws therein, we are sure to find our intellect entirely baffled in the end, and ourselves lost in wonder and admiration. Our own minds, too, were not less suspicious in any way. Rather, nobody will perhaps nowadays even think of going as far as we did in order to correctly appraise the Master's greatness. Times without number, many of us proceeded to test him, with a suspicious heart, but were finally put to shame and compelled to admit utter defeat. With regard to this we have already given a few

hints. Many more will come later. After going through them all, our readers may form their own opinions. Therefore it is needless to dilate on this point any further.

*Fruits First; then Flowers: This is what happens in the Lives of All Divine Incarnations.*

'Fruits first; then flowers'—is a dictum, the Master was always wont to use with reference to the lives of the eternally free divine incarnations. The meaning is this: Whatever practices such great souls undergo are carried on merely with a view to demonstrating, before the common run of men, along which line one must strive to attain a particular result. For, an inquiry into their lives shows how they appear to make enormous efforts to attain perfect knowledge although from the very birth their behaviour at all times and in all respects is exactly as it ought to have been if they had already possessed such knowledge. They have made the result of this knowledge their own even before their birth, as it were. When such is the case even with the eternally free souls, how much more so it must be regarding divine incarnations! Manifestation of perfect knowledge is seen in their lives from the very start. The scriptures contain statements showing the universal applicability of this truth to all incarnations in all ages and

climes. Moreover many points of similarity are to be found in the behaviour of divine incarnations of different ages. For example, the act of transmitting spiritual energy through touch is found equally in the lives of Jesus Christ, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. Similarly, the birth of such incarnations being immediately known in some extraordinary way by some particular devout souls; the Guru aspect manifesting in them from their very childhood; their being conscious, from the very early days, of the fact that out of mercy they have incarnated on earth to uplift humanity by showing them special paths of progress; and things of like nature are perceived as common to them all. Hence there is nothing surprising in the manifestation of the Guru aspect in the Master from his very early days. Because, divine incarnations form a distinct class by themselves. It will be a serious blunder if we think that merely because such extraordinary events are not possible in the lives of average men, they must be equally impossible in the lives of divine incarnations too.

*The First Manifestation of the Guru Aspect in the Master's Life at Kamarpukur. Theological Discussions in an Assembly of Pundits.*

We meet with a glowing manifestation of the Guru-aspect for the first time in the Master's life at Kamarpukur, his native village. It was after his investiture with the sacred thread—a rite obligatory on

the grown-up boys of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas to make them competent to study the Vedas. He was then nine or ten years of age. In connection with a post-funeral ceremony all the renowned Pundits of the locality were invited to the house of the Lahas, the Zemindars of that village. Hot debate ensued among the Pundits, as was natural in a large gathering of this type. When a particular theological problem could not be solved in spite of prolonged discussions, the boy Ramakrishna, or Gadadhar, as he was then called, told one of the Pundits with whom he was more or less familiar, "Cannot the problem be solved in this way?" Many were the boys that were drawn from the village to the spot, through curiosity; but unable to make out anything of the verbal fight of the Pundits with their loud voice and thousand and one gestures, some of them took it to be a sort of fun, and began to laugh; some felt disgusted and began to create a lot of confusion by mimicking the Pundits; and some others were engaged in play with perfect unconcern regarding what was going on there. Therefore, Gadadhar's acquaintance was at first taken by surprise to find that, unlike others of his age, this wonderful boy had patiently listened to all the discussions, understood their meanings, pondered over them and finally arrived at an appropriate conclusion. However, he placed the solution of Gadadhar before the other Pundits. Finally all of them

unanimously accepted the solution as the only one possible and began to inquire as to who was the person whose keen intellect made the discovery for the first time. Their wonder knew no bounds when they came to know for certain that the unique person was none other than the boy, Gadadhar. Overwhelmed with surprise, some kept on staring at him, considering him to be possessed of divine powers. Others, filled with joy, took the boy up in their arms and began to shower their blessings on him.

#### *A Parallel Incident in the Life of Jesus Christ*

It is necessary to discuss this point a little further. We come across a parallel incident in the life of Jesus Christ, the originator of the Christian faith. He was ten years of age when his parents Joseph and Mary took him along with them on their journey from their native village, Nazareth, in Galilee to the holy land of Jerusalem in order to visit, and worship in, the famous temple there. This place of pilgrimage for the Jews was just like the holy places of the Hindus. Devout souls would consider themselves fortunate in feeling the presence of God here in a gold casket and worship Him with offerings of incense, fruits and flowers, and sacrificial birds and animals, at an altar in front of the casket. A similar custom of sacrificing pigeons and other birds is still in vogue among Hindus in such holy places as Kamakhya, Vindhya-vasini, etc.

#### *Pilgrimage of the Jews in those days*

After having accomplished their visit, and made offerings and sacrifices in accordance with the scriptures, Joseph and Mary began the return journey with their fellow-pilgrims. In those days the circumstances associated with this pilgrimage to Jerusalem from different quarters were much the same as those experienced by Indian pilgrims visiting on foot holy places like Puri, etc., before the advent of railroads. There were the same long roads with trees, wells, tanks and inns at various places on their sides; rest-houses (way-side houses built by pious men for the free use of pilgrims) too, we hear, were not at all scarce; the same class of guides accompanying the pilgrims; the same grocers' shops where rice, pulses, flour and other necessary foodstuffs could be purchased; the same clouds of dust; the same army of mosquitoes, friendly to the pilgrims inasmuch as they would scare away sleep and lethargy that make one forgetful of God; the same practice of the pilgrims of each place travelling in one group as a safeguard against the raids of highway men; and lastly, the same attitude of devotion and dependence on God on the part of the pilgrims.

#### *Jesus's Exposition of the Scriptures in the Temple*

When the parents of Jesus started on their return journey along with their own party, they did not find their boy near by and thought he was coming behind with other boys

of the same group. But they were very much perturbed when they could not see the boy even after covering a considerable distance. They began to search among the whole group thoroughly only to find that Jesus was not with them. Seized with anxiety they hurried back to Jerusalem and inquired in many places; but no clue of the boy was found. At last they went inside the temple itself to see if he was there, and to their great surprise, found him seated in the midst of learned Rabbis, engaged in scriptural discussions with them and astonishing every one of the audience with his unique exposition of most complicated problems, which baffled even the renowned scholars present there!

#### *A Reply to Prof. Maxmuller's Criticism*

Because of the striking similarity of this incident with the one men-

tioned above in connection with the early life of the Master, Prof. Maxmuller has expressed great doubt regarding its authenticity. Not this alone. He went so far as to remark somewhat sarcastically that with the set purpose of enhancing the glory of their Master, the English-knowing disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had foisted this event into his life. Undoubtedly, this judgment bears witness to the keenness of the learned professor's intellect. But nevertheless, we cannot help mentioning this fact in as much as we have heard of it from many old men of Kamarpukur, the Master's birth-place, and on several occasions the Master himself recounted it before some of us. However we think it desirable to rest content with this much about the controversy.

## BEHIND ANGELIC FORMS AND THE FORMLESS

**I**F a person meditates regularly for a fairly long period of time, is he not bound to develop higher states of awareness? Or are there chances of his getting stuck up anywhere or even side-tracked, in spite of such regularity? If so, what are they and what are the precautions to be taken, and what the wrong notions to be eliminated?

#### *Apparently a Question of Time only*

From one standpoint it looks as though the regular meditator has gone beyond the region of con-

founding lanes and cross-roads and entered upon the one straight path that leads to his cherished goal and nowhere else. The main difficulty in the initial stages is for the aspirant to keep up his interest in the practice. His mind will try to cheat him in a variety of ways; it will bring forward a hundred excuses calculated to make him first postpone, and then in due course stop altogether, the new irksome attempts at meditation. It may suggest to him perhaps that the day is too hot for comfortable practice,

or that there is a slight cold which the usual sitting would only aggravate, or that a friend is expected to come a couple of hours later and that every available minute should be spent in arranging for his stay, even if it comes to stopping a day's practice, which after all leads only to "selfish" gain! The aspirant who can detect such dodgings of the mind, overcome them with a sense of good humour and carry on his practice in conformity with his original programme, has certainly acquired a measure of vigilance and will power which must pave the way for his success. When such regularity has been attained, he has therefore apparently nothing to fear, nothing to worry about, nothing to guard against. Being on the right track, he has simply to continue his practice. Even if the pace is slow, he must surely approach the goal in proportion to the number of days he has practised, nay, to the number of hours he has sat : तत्त्वयं योगसिद्धिः काटेन तस्मिन् विन्दति ॥ "He that is perfected in Yoga finds it in the Self in due season" (Gita, iv, 38).

#### **Vigilance, not Paralysing Fear**

In reality, however, the region of lanes and cross-roads extends much farther ahead than is ordinarily imagined. It would be wiser for most of us to proceed rather on the assumption that to the very last day of our life we shall remain liable to go off the right track, and what is worse, fail to notice our deviation till we stray shamefully, and sometimes dangerously, far.

Such an attitude, it may be objected, will result in generating a host of fears in our otherwise free and balanced mind and in unnecessarily diverting our energy into a futile search for an enemy who exists nowhere. This objection can be easily got over if we remember that this attitude is adopted only as a precaution, and that the vigilance brought into play by it is quite different from the kind of fear that paralyses healthy activity. We cannot reasonably posit fear and paralysis where a person actually gains an insight into the causes of failure. It is on the other hand the function and privilege of a sharpened intelligence to see the unfavourable factors in any situation quite as much as it does the favourable; and part of the measures which it devises for achieving success must contain effective steps to neutralise the forces which tend to bring about failure. Far from begetting and rearing up fear, such remedial measures only help to sharpen the intelligence still further. On the contrary, by remaining blind to the dangers really awaiting him, no one has ever managed to enhance his courage and wisdom to any appreciable extent. Vigilance and the capacity to take adequate precautions must, therefore, form part of the normal mental equipment of every religious aspirant.

#### **Laziness in a Subtler Form**

Their need is particularly great when meditative exercises are being practised. To sit long and without a single day's break is no doubt good,

for inertia of one kind is overcome by such determined effort. But the same inertia can assume subtler disguises and possess the mind unawares. For after the first few days of regular practice the aspirant usually begins to feel a sense of triumph and security; and this is likely to make him take away the defences he had wisely set up at the start. The relaxation that follows has nothing in common with the absence of tension or the feeling of "release" and "let go" experienced when the aspirant has harmonised his personality and is gliding into the Fullness beyond. Immature relaxation should be promptly detected and replaced by activity. For the sense of rest which accompanies it, although pleasant, is really the outcome of a subtle and therefore dangerous type of mental laziness.

#### **Symbols of Unsatisfied Desires**

If the aspirant is careless, this standstill of the mind occurs invariably in his daily practice as well, after the enthusiasm and freshness of the first few minutes is spent up in a fruitless attempt to stop his internal cinema show. The stage that follows is one of semi-sleep, which would in the normal course develop into full sleep, were it not for the sitting posture the aspirant endeavours to maintain till he is satisfied his hour is struck. An exercise of this kind does not possess even ordinary sleep value; what need then to speak of meditation value? It is this semi-sleep that under certain conditions establishes connection with the plane of unsatisfied desires and

shows up wonderful, brilliant scenes of angels descending, bestowing boons, entrusting world-messages and the like. It is quite natural for the dreamer to mistake these for genuine visions. For they present the widest possible, and most refreshing, contrast to the shaky and flitting mental pictures which are usually realised to be "distractions" and hotly chased out in the earlier stages of the day's practice. What really happens is that pictures are coming before him throughout his sitting. Against some of these he does struggle manfully for a time; and that is of course solid work turned out, though to him it appears a relative failure. Then comes mental languor and an unconscious sheathing of his weapons of offence with it, with the consequence that the deeper layers of the mind emerge unobstructed with their welcome contributions of angelic donors and their long-looked for donations. As a matter of fact, these too are "distractions" as much as the earlier figures. But no resistance being offered to their drama, they get a relative permanence and splendour which, from the standpoint of the pleasure-seeking and ease-loving elements of the personality, happen to be conveniently dignified by the title "visions."

#### **Even Learned Men Deluded**

It is sad to see how people who have the requisite capacity to fence with skill and hold their own in many a field of wide awake mental life and of physical activity, get

slowly caught up in the fond imaginings of this so-called meditation and lose their practical ability in proportion to their entanglement in the symbolic figures of their repressed desires. Men with a brilliant record at the university, with a firm grounding in the different systems of philosophy, men who could give beautiful expositions on the wide awake, dream and deep sleep states,—even they, failing to educate their minds regarding this deceptive, half-awake stage of languor, come to attach more and more significance to these deluding symbols, invest them with the rank and power of genuine “visions” and as a result, unconsciously and helplessly take a downward curve not only in their meditative effort, but in their general mental and physical activities as well. It is true some angelic voices may seem to instruct some aspirant to do some positive things now and then; but his confidence and ability will undergo tangible development only to the extent that he puts forth the necessary energy and carries them out to perfection. More often, however, the sinking of the mental level, itself the result of overpowering laziness, brings up only symbols of *shirking*, only pictures asking him to be *passive* and to *avoid* situations and yet graciously *promising* him *all the satisfaction* which sincere struggle and eventual conquest alone merit. Persistence in this kind of Sadhana must lead to a dreamy state of existence, a state which bears some sort of

external resemblance to genuine devotion with its calmness and trust in the Divine, but is in reality one of intense hankering for the satisfaction of various desires, *minus* first the willingness, and in due course the courage and the capacity, to undergo any sustained mental and physical exertion. As days pass by, aspirants of this class feel more and more keenly the wide gap between “grim reality” and their own inner world of angels and boons, till at last they either experience a nervous breakdown and become forthwith a subject of research for doctors, or haply get into the company of those who can diagnose their case aright and guide them once again to the straight road from which they strayed during their regular practice of semi-sleep.

#### Preparation through Wider Interests

All those who sit with closed eyes, then, are not meditating. Meditation, properly speaking, comes when the aspirant is considerably advanced in his practices and can with ease make his mind flow in any given direction without the least break, as if it were oil being poured from one vessel into another. No one can get such mastery all on a sudden; and the books dealing with practical steps in mind control lay down an elaborate course of discipline to be gone through before an aspirant becomes fit to take it up. Says Patanjali after giving a detailed description of Yama, Niyama, Asana and Prana-

yama: ततः चीयते प्रकाशावरणम् ॥ धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः ॥ “As a result of these practices is destroyed the *covering* to the full functioning of awareness; and the mind *becomes fit for concentration*.” What is this *covering* which has to be removed? It is Karma, *i.e.*, the results of thoughts and actions awaiting fulfilment, in short, the myriad desires, a few of which only are recognised and admitted by the conscious mind, that struggle for satisfaction and silently manufacture the films which are unrolled according to an unknown order of precedence before the mental eye the moment the physical eye is closed in so-called meditation. Until their claims are heard and adequate settlements made with them through conquest, persuasion or neutralisation, they are certain to work behind the scenes and project on to the screen of the meditating mind innumerable symbolic pictures that will sorely tax the aspirant's patience and perseverance. How to deal with them is a vast subject and comprises the whole of Yoga. Here we shall state simply that they can be eliminated or sublimated, not by practising any type of *passivity* but only by the *expulsive force of deliberately cultivated superior, wider interests*.

#### The Lure of the Formless

The trouble with many aspirants is that they know too many scraps and too little correlation. They know, for example, that there are two stages of meditation, one with form as its basis and the other with form

outside its focus. But instead of understanding that the former has to be mastered scientifically before the mind can be made subtle enough for the second, they take them to be two different alternatives, one of which only need and can be taken, like the optional groups prescribed for university degrees. If then a choice has to be made, argues the profit-seeking mind, let us choose that which is superior, and of course less exacting! Here again we come upon the little seed which later on develops into the wonderful tree of laziness with its manifold branches and poisonous fruits.

#### Example of Arjuna

This type of erroneous distinction and conception of the superiority of one path over another is not the special feature of the mentality of the modern seeker alone. A sample of it we discover in the opening verse of the twelfth chapter of the Gita where Arjuna asks, “Of the two types, namely those devotees who, ever harmonised, worship Thee in Manifested Form, and those who worship the Indestructible and Unmanifest, which is *the more learned in Yoga*?” The motive that prompts the question is quite patent: he, Arjuna, the Lord's bosom friend, should belong to the superior set if there is one; else it would not be in keeping with the intimacy enjoyed, and known by others to be enjoyed, by him! But the Lord has not forgotten how his bosom friend, just a minute ago, was unable to stand the sight of the slightly magnified, glorious Univer-

sal Form which was shown him in a gracious mood in answer to his special request for a practical confirmation of the teachings given. Said this would-be aspirant after the Formless, gazing at It, quaking all the while and in stammering accents, "My heart faileth me for fear. Show me, Lord, Thy familiar Form again, armed with mace and discus, and with the daidem on Thy head"! The terrible aspects of this All-inclusive Form frightened even such a perfectly trained fighting personality like Arjuna. Curiously enough, his was an inside that could retain its balance only if it got the satisfaction of seeing Krishna's Form, sitting with him on his bed, jesting with him at meals and playing with him calling him by his pet names. No wonder that the Lord's comforting reply laid the fitting stress upon the worship of the Manifested Form, referring to the votaries of the Unmanifest in the simple yet significant terms that "they also reach Me only."

#### Wherein Superiority Lies

Spiritual path is one that must lead the aspirant steadily to the Lord. Superiority of one path over another can consist only in its being able to provide greater opportunities for the aspirant's self-expression and for a harmonisation of his personality, without subjecting him to unnecessary conflicts and violent departures. There cannot be any superiority in the sense that the followers of one path would mingle with the Lord to a greater extent and enjoy correspondingly greater

Illumination on that account, than those who rejected it in favour of other paths. Each path worth the name tackles the problem of personality and awareness in a particular order and leads up to complete synthesis and "release." A graded sequence appears among the various paths only when a particular aspirant with a particular unharmonised personality and dammed condition of awareness has to be diagnosed and given a prescription which will raise the level of his vitality and which, while ultimately effecting a thorough cure of his maladies, will at the same time give him immediate relief from his most distressing symptoms in the order of their intensity and painfulness. The criterion is: Which path removes which symptoms first, during the process of a complete cure? It is never: Which path offers better relief irrespective of the symptoms present before treatment and tolerated after it is supposed to be over? In the latter case it is not a cure but a mere patchwork, which may no doubt have some utility if it helps the patient to go about his daily duties without much inconvenience. Expansion and liberation of awareness, however, can never be attained by any kind of patchwork.

#### Depends on General Level of Life

Looked at from this standpoint, we see that an aspirant is already on the wrong track when he becomes eager to establish an order of precedence among the various paths first, so that he can after-

wards confidently fit himself into that one which seems most honourable, irrespective of the strong and weak points present in his existing mental make-up. It is profitless for him to settle beforehand whether God is with form or without form and whether meditation with form or without form will more accurately hit His Reality. It is more reasonable to commence repairing his instrument of perception and removing the stiffness and friction among its different parts, so that he can with the lightest effort focus it at will and catch the reflection of what Reality there is. The Gita has not told that meditation on the Unmanifest or the Formless is *more creditable* than that on the Manifest; it has told only that it is *more difficult* to accomplish. The reason is not far to seek. Most aspirants, like Arjuna, live in a plane of forms. They yearn to see, touch, hear, and make merry in a world of desirable forms. Terrible

forms repel them, frighten them and unnerve them completely. And an experience like the Universal Form, where forms are only magnified to include those at a distance in space as well as time, pleasant as well as unpleasant, just as a preparatory step to the All-inclusive Formless, suffocates them and brings them to the very verge of a thorough breakdown. And yet such people imagine that they ought to take up *Formless* meditation, that beings superior Sadhana in their eyes and themselves being ear-marked for superiority in every field of activity! Life, however, is one complete whole; and it cannot be cut up into compartments retaining contradictory attributes for long. Lovers of form in a thousand items that constitute life can never breathe freely and thrive by clinging to the Formless in meditation alone, which after all constitutes but one single item, and that by no means the main one, to the beginner in spiritual life.

#### REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

Kartik 1321, Bengal Era.

I went to see the Holy Mother in the evening. I had been residing at our Baghbazar house at that time and I visited her almost every day. Finding her alone I narrated to her a dream incident and said, "Mother, one night I saw Sri Ramakrishna in a dream. You had been living then at Jayrambati. I saluted him and asked, 'Where is the Mother?' He said, 'Follow that

lane and you will find a thatched cottage. She is seated in the front porch.' " The Holy Mother was in her bed. With great enthusiasm she sat up and said, "You are quite right. Your dream is true." "Is it, then, true?" I said in surprise. "I had the idea that your home at Jayrambati is a brick dwelling. But in the dream I saw the earthen floor, thatched roof, etc., and there-

fore concluded that it was all illusory."

In course of the conversation regarding austerity for the realisation of God, she said, "Golap-Ma and Yogin-Ma devoted a great deal of their time to meditation and the repetition of God's name. Yogin-Ma practised the greatest austerity. At one time she lived only on milk and fruits. Even now she spends much of her time in spiritual practices. The mind of Golap-Ma is hardly affected by external things. She does not even hesitate to eat cooked vegetables purchased from the market, which a Hindu Brahmin widow can never touch."

It was arranged that there would be some devotional songs about the Goddess Kali that evening, at the house of the Holy Mother. The monks of the Belur Math would take part in it. The music commenced at half-past eight in the evening. Many of the women devotees went to the verandah to hear the song. I was rubbing oil on her feet and could hear the songs from the room. I had heard those songs many a time before. But that day those songs, from the mouths of the devotees, appeared quite new. They were full of power and thrill. My eyes became moist. They were singing, now and then, those songs which Sri Ramakrishna had himself sung. At such times the Holy Mother would cry out with enthusiasm, "Yes, Sri Ramakrishna would sing this song!" They commenced the song whose first line ran thus: "The bee of my

mind has become fascinated with the blue lotus of the Divine Mother's feet!" The Holy Mother could not lie down any more. A few tear drops trickled down her cheeks. She said, "Come, darling, Let us go to the verandah." After the singing was over, I saluted the Mother and returned home.

\* \* \*

2nd Jyeshtha 1325 B. E.

The Holy Mother had returned to Calcutta from her country home. Her body was emaciated by protracted suffering from malaria. I did not go to her for a long time as I thought it would be proper to visit her when she was a little better, and as I knew that visitors were not allowed to see her on account of her illness. But I soon learnt that women devotees were allowed to see her. So one day I went to Baghbazar and found her lying in bed in the room adjacent to the chapel. Her body was pale and weak. No sooner did she see me than she exclaimed, "Come in, my child. You were so long in coming to see me!"

*Devotee:* Yes, Mother. I would have come before this, but I heard that the monks did not like our coming here on account of your illness. Therefore I did not come. I was extremely restless to see you. And you, too, perhaps forgot all about us in your country home. You have so many children everywhere.

*Mother:* No, my child, I did not forget any one. I always remembered you.

*Devotee:* We are almost half-dead in our anxiety about your illness. How are you now?

*Mother:* I am much better now. Look at my hands and feet. The skin has dried up and peeled off.

I noticed her words were true. I brought her a new piece of cloth. As soon as she saw it, she said, "That is fine. It is a nice cloth. I have only a few pieces with me. I was not here during the Durgapuja. Your sister-in-law was here the other day. How are they?

How is your brother managing his affairs now? Has he secured a job? Look at this wretched war! When will it come to an end? People have been suffering from want of food and clothing. What is the cause of this war, my child?" I narrated to her the origin of the Great War as I had gathered it from the newspaper reports. I hesitated to talk much lest it should aggravate her illness. I stayed for a little while and then took leave of her.

## BUDDHA AND SANKARACHARYA

By Swami Ranganathananda

**I**F the present generation looks upon Buddha as the greatest teacher and exemplar of morality, it looks upon Sankara as the boldest thinker and one of the profoundest philosophers any nation can be proud of having produced. The brilliance of his intellect and the sublimity of his philosophy are the wonders of the modern age. Like Sri Krishna and Buddha, he occupies a prominent place in the galaxy of Indian national heroes. His lasting contribution to the thought of the world is his system of Vedanta philosophy.

Until quite recently Sankara's real place among India's immortals has been underestimated and very often misunderstood. He is generally represented as a leader of a sect of Brahmins and of a certain order of Sannyasins. Some latter-day Puranas, imbued with sectarian prejudice, represented Sankara as

an incarnation, though of Siva Himself, yet seeking to lead men astray by teaching the delusive doctrine of Mayavada. The harm that has been, and is still being, done by such intentional or unintentional misrepresentations of the great men of our nation is incalculable. As with Buddha so with Sankara, the important cause for such misrepresentation was the decline of independent thought and judgment. Individuals, however great, are not accidents in a nation's career. They are the products of a changing and growing culture. The sectarian and the traditional view has done the greatest harm in looking upon them as mere individuals. The newly-developing historical or evolutionary view is seeking to correct many an old mistake. In this new perspective Sankara's per-

sonality, like that of Buddha, emerges in a new light.

It is generally accepted that Sankara was a great philosopher and dialectician. But many do not know that he was also a great organiser working for national unity in India. It is unfortunate that Indian history was never, until quite recently, and even now is not, very effectively taught from a cultural point of view, as the evolution of the mind of a living race, but from a political point of view, as a story of the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires. That India has got a real history and that it can and must be viewed from a "national" point of view has been vigorously proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda in an article written by him entitled "The Historical Evolution of India." Therein he discovers the thread and sets forth the real theme of our history as the unfoldment of an ancient culture and presents before our vision leaders of culture as heroes of the nation. And one such hero who led a great cultural movement, whose effect is working even today, is Sankara. "National union in India must always be the union of her scattered spiritual and cultural forces" says Swami Vivekananda. And in these days, when India is struggling to build up a nation out of her apparently incompatible elements, such as language, religion, culture and race, it is both interesting and instructive to know what attempts Sankara made in his time to achieve this national unity. Perhaps his efforts

and teachings may be of some guidance for us today.

When we look back to the times when Sankara was born, we find a state of disintegration and disunion which can be compared only to the anarchy and confusion that obtained in this country at the close of the eighteenth century. Politically, the country was broken up into a congeries of petty states each warring against the others, devoid of any national ties between them. King Harsha's empire had broken up and in Northern India the Rajputs were struggling for ascendancy. Buddhism was fast declining and in its wake innumerable sects sprang up with all kinds of debasing customs and crude practices. The pure religion of the Upanishads as well as of Buddha was forgotten. Various tribes and races with different degrees of culture and refinement had come and settled in India in the wake of the political confusion. What India required at that time was a strong rallying point for her cultural and religious forces. Indian culture must become dynamic and Indian society must become elastic in order to assimilate the various elements in a synthetic unity. The Upanishadic philosophy had to be restated and society had to be reorganised. This was the work which awaited the brilliance of a genius and India discovered such a genius in Sankara.

The first step in this direction was a restatement of India's ancient philosophy. With this end in view Sankara preached the Vedanta

philosophy. He popularised the Gita by writing one of the most beautiful commentaries on it and placed it before the Indian peoples as a book of practical philosophy. He took over the crude practices of the various sects and purified them as far as he could, instituted new modes of worship and brought them all under the spiritual hegemony of the Vedanta. He destroyed the virus of sectarian quarrel by composing thrilling devotional Stotras in praise of almost all the gods and goddesses of the time. Himself soaring above all sects and creeds and religions in virtue of his philosophy, he yet encouraged sects and religions through which the highest philosophy reached the common people. For this he deservedly bears the title of '*Shan-matha-sthapanacharya*.' Vaishnavism or Saivism, Mother-worship or the worship of the Formless Brahman—all these found a place in his catholic heart. But at the basis of it all was his philosophy whose motto was the inclusion of everything and the rejection of nothing. At the same time he preached against animal sacrifices and the degenerate practices of the Tantriks and provided a simple and attractive religion of love and devotion for the masses. The next step was the Aryanisation of the various tribes and races which had settled in India in the wake of the political confusion. Many were absorbed into the main body of the Hindus and given appropriate status in the social scheme.

Sankara was the first to conceive of a geographical unity of the whole

of India. He established four Mutts in the four corners of India for the effective propagation of his ideas and placed learned Sannyasins in charge of them. He himself travelled from one part of the country to the other, from south to north and east to west and made himself acquainted with various aspects of Indian culture. It evokes our wonder and admiration today how in those days a man could achieve so much in so short a time. It only shows what burning motives actuated him and what an active life he led. In this he was only exemplifying his own philosophy which teaches the ideal of self-effacement and active service for the good of others—*सर्वभूतहिते रतः* ॥

Today we are able to see and appreciate the immensity of his services for the cause of India and Hinduism. That Hinduism could survive the onslaughts of the Mussalman invasions was due in great part to the success of his mission as well as to that of many other reformers who came after him. Indian culture bears the ineffaceable marks of his genius.

Today we are faced with a new situation. Our problems are complex and are puzzling even great minds. India in modern times has become the meeting-place of most of the races, cultures and religions of the world and any mere communal or even national solution of her problems has become impossible. They have to be solved on international grounds only. And in the midst of the strife and confusion that are rampant both in India and

outside, the voice of Sankara is coming to us in whispers, inaudible to the many but caught by the discerning few—the truth of the Supreme Oneness of all Existence. This is the perennial message of the Vedanta philosophy that, in reality, we are all *one*. This whisper has to gather force and reverberate through the length and breadth of the land, nay, of the whole world,—this is the only panacea for the world's disease. The lion of Vedanta must roar. And the greatest medium through which this Vedanta roared in recent times was Swami Vivekananda, the paragon of Vedantists. Says he in his lecture on "The Mission of the Vedanta" delivered at Madura: "The other great idea that the world wants from us today, the thinking part of Europe, nay, the whole world—more, perhaps, the lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured, more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the strong—is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual Oneness of the whole universe..... There is but One Soul throughout the universe, all is but One Existence. This great idea of the real and basic solidarity of the whole universe has frightened many, even in this country; it even now finds sometimes more opponents than adherents; I tell you, nevertheless, that it is the one great life-giving idea which the world wants from us today, and which the mute masses of India

want for their uplifting, for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of things..... This oneness is the rationale of all ethics, and all spirituality."

Thus Buddha and Sankara are the two fairest flowers which historical India offers to an admiring yet critical world. In spite of various vicissitudes in their mutual relationships we are compelled to discern a supreme point of contact between them. What the world wants today is the brilliant intellect of Sankara to realise the supreme Oneness of all Existence and the all-inclusive heart of Buddha to embrace the whole existence in a sweeping effort of compassion and love. In India itself the solution of the most knotty national and social problems depends entirely on this one condition. Vedanta must become practical. The signs of the times point unmistakably to the fact that India has rediscovered the messages of Buddha and Sankara to her own salvation. And the world outside, owing to the changed outlook brought about by scientific knowledge, has begun to feel an attraction towards Indian thought, particularly the Vedanta philosophy. Thus it has begun to catch the spirit of Buddha and Sankara; and if the world looks up to India today it is because she has produced a Buddha and a Sankara.

### ANANDA-BRAHMA VADA—III

*By Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A.*

*(Continued from previous issue)*

#### **Rational Plane and Brahman's Self-Revelation as Universal Reason**

The conception of Supreme Mind as Brahman was not accepted as final by the sage, Varuna, and Bhṛigu had to devote himself to a still higher course of self-discipline and meditation for complete purification of his reason. His reason at last emancipated itself from the imperfections and limitations, which rendered it unfit to be a perfect mirror of the exact character of the Absolute Reality. In the Mental Plane, its own unrealised ideals were imposed upon the Reality, which was therefore conceived as progressively realising its ideals in and through the temporal world process. The universe appeared to be actually far short of what it ideally ought to be; it was found to be not thoroughly rational and moral, not perfectly true and beautiful, not fully good and blissful. The Reality was therefore a thinking and willing evolutionary principle, or a self-conscious and self-determining personality deliberately acting for the purpose of attaining some ulterior end. Brahman, so conceived, is obviously not perfect and infinite, but seeking perfection and infinity through a process. But when the knowing subject ascended to the

Rational Plane and reason became complete rational in its outlook, without any barrier between itself and its objects, when reason had not to borrow its materials of knowledge from the experiences of the imperfect organs and arrive at an indirect acquaintance with the Reality by an imperfect inferential process, it discovered that what it conceived to be the ideal constituted the essential character of the Reality,—that Truth, Beauty and Goodness, instead of being the ideal to be realised by a laborious world process, were the eternally realised characteristics of the Absolute Brahman. Brahman, the ground and substance of the universe, was a perfectly rational Being, was eternally true, good and beautiful, and manifested Himself in all His glory in the apparently pluralistic objective universe.

Reason in this plane transcends the differences of good and evil, beauty and deformity, the ideal and the actual, the end and the means. What ought not to be cannot have any real existence in a rational world, and what ought to be is always good and beautiful, is always enjoyable and blissful. The whole universe thus reveals itself as the self-expression of an actually self-existent, self-conscious, self-fulfilled and self-

enjoying Being, of an all-good, perfectly beautiful, absolutely blissful Spirit; and this Supreme Spirit, this absolutely perfect Being is Brahman. All orders of relative realities that are experienced in the lower planes of Knowledge, all kinds of phenomena,—physical, biological, mental, moral and spiritual, are the self-manifestations of Brahman, and there can be no irrational, immoral or inaesthetic element anywhere from this rational point of view. Brahman is all, and all is Brahman.

In the Mental Plane, the subject is characterised by three distinct kinds of functions, *viz.*, cognition, emotion and volition. It is divided within itself and does not realise its essential unitary character. Consequently, it apprehends the different aspects of Reality as really distinct from one another, and cannot form any definite conception of their unity, for which it has an inherent demand and which is therefore vaguely thought of as an ideal to be progressively realised. In the Rational Plane, the subject attains its own unity. Cognition, emotion and volition are merged together and unified in one undivided spiritual consciousness. Consequently, the Absolute Reality or Brahman reveals Himself to it as one Universal Reason, in whose character Truth, Beauty and Goodness—perfect Existence, perfect Self-consciousness and perfect Self-fulfilment—are essentially one and indistinguishable. As there is perfect unification of subjective consciousness, so there is perfect unification of objective

Reality. In this plane, Brahman is the universe, and the universe is Brahman. The subject, as pure spiritual consciousness, finds reflected upon itself one undivided universal consciousness which, alone and without a second, is the Absolute Reality, Brahman. He is the beginning, the middle and the end, the all in all, of existence.

#### **Plane of Ananda and Brahman's Perfect Self-revelation as Ananda**

This conception of Universal Reason as Brahman also falls short of Varuna's highest conception of the Absolute Reality, and he encourages his son to go on with the quest. Bhrigu has arrived at the stage from which he has to rise only one step higher. He has found out that Pure Rationality, in which truth, beauty and goodness are united, constitutes the essential character of Brahman. This character has been revealed to him, when his own reason has become pure and transparent. His reason in this pure state, as the subject, experiences the Universal Reason as its object. The subject and the object are wholly akin to each other, they are of the same stuff, there is nothing to differentiate the one from the other except that the one experiences as the subject and the other is experienced as the object. This pre-supposes the absolute unity of the two. It implies that Brahman, the Absolute Reality, is in His ultimate character above the subject and the object, the experiencer and the experienced. In the Rational

Plane, Brahman divides Himself, as it were, into the perfect subject and the perfect object in intimate relation,—almost a relation of identification—with each other. A sort of duality and relativity appears in this plane, but above this plane there must be a kind of supra-rational experience, in which there is no distinction between the subjective aspect and the objective aspect of the Absolute, but nevertheless there is the perfect realisation and enjoyment of His infinite differenceless Self. Herein there is the fulfilment of Knowledge in its identity with Truth, the fulfilment of Will in its identity with Goodness, the fulfilment of Love in its identity with Beauty. In this supra-rational state of existence, the Universal Reason is characterised by the effortless, processless, changeless enjoyment of His own absolute perfection. The subjective reason, having merged itself completely in the Universal Reason, participates in this eternal supra-rational experience, this characteristic self-enjoyment, of the Absolute. This state of perfect self-enjoyment is indicated by the category of *Ananda* or Bliss.

Bhrigu, having attained this plane of experience, comes to the conclusion that *Ananda* is the highest and the most comprehensive category by which the essential character of Brahman can be defined. All other categories imply partial aspects of the connotation of this all-comprehending and all-transcending category. The conception of *Ananda* involves that of self-consciousness,

and along with that, it involves the idea of self-enjoyment. Existence is implied by it as a matter of course. It necessarily implies the absence of all limitation, for every limitation would mean negation of *Ananda*. Thus infinity, eternity and perfection are involved in the nature of Absolute *Ananda*. There can be no desire unfulfilled, no good unrealised, no truth unmanifested, no beauty unenjoyed in the nature of this Reality, for any such element would put *Ananda* in the realm of the ideal and would make its present real character imperfect. Hence the highest truth is that Brahman or the Absolute Reality is perfect *Ananda*.

In addition to its revealing the one subject-object-less infinite, eternal, self-existent, self-conscious and self-fulfilled character of Brahman, this category of *Ananda* also unveils the mystery of the ultimate ground and reason and necessity for the self-manifestation of such a self-complete, self-perfect, self-enjoying Being, in diverse planes of relative and partial experience, as different orders of phenomenal realities, in which His essential character is concealed and distorted. The relations of the phenomenal universe to the noumenal Absolute and the innermost principle of creation are beautifully pointed out by this conception of *Ananda* as constituting the essential nature of Brahman. This point, however, there is no room to elucidate in the present article.

When the truth-seeking soul of Bhrigu arrived at this conception

and communicated it to his father and preceptor Varuna, the latter was perfectly satisfied and accepted it as the Ultimate Truth. This doctrine is known in the Upanishad as *Bhargavi-Varuni Vidya* after the names of the father and the son.

(Concluded)

## TRISHODADHI OR THE STORY OF A TAPASWI'S FALL \*

By Kaundinya

ONCE upon a time there was a Brahmin named Trishodadhi who was by hereditary descent the minister of a king named Ruru, a spoilt child. Being betrayed by his queen in his youth, he fell into a violent hatred of all women that exhibited itself in the form of love! Wishing to wreak his vengeance on the whole sex for the crime of one, he began like a mad bee, roving from flower, making love to every woman in the world that took his fancy and then throwing her away as soon as won, taking all possible pains to obtain the love of each, only to flout her the moment it was his. He was dreaded by the husbands and fathers of his kingdom, and above all by his minister Trishodadhi, who had a wife much younger than himself, and recently married, named Watsatari. Trishodadhi's natural jealousy which was extreme, was accentuated by her extraordinary beauty and his own age. He feared all men in the world; above all he feared the king, and passed his life perpetually trembling lest Ruru should set eyes on her; and he kept her very scrupulously hidden like a priceless pearl from all eyes save his own. And though he doted on her, yet against his will he was obliged to leave her much alone; for all the burden of the state was left on his shoulders by the king, who utterly neglected all affairs, intent on nothing but pursuing his amours. And being thus pre-occupied, Trishodadhi had only his intervals of leisure for his wife. And all the while that he was not near her, he was everlastingly tormented by his jealousy and fear. And in order to place her as far as possible beyond the reach of any danger, he kept her in a residence that resembled a fortress and shut her in a garden surrounded by a lofty wall. And he never went to see her without quivering with anxiety lest he should discover on arriving that what he was always fearing had actually come to pass. And so in fact it did. For one day, returning from his duties, long before he was accustomed to do, as if destiny had determined to fulfil his apprehensions, when he entered the garden where his wife was in the habit of wandering for her diversion, he looked and saw her in the company of the king!

\* Based on F. W. Eain's translation from the original Sanskrit.

So, when he saw it, Trishodadhi stood for a single instant silent, gazing at that pair with eyes that were suddenly filled to the brim, first with amazement and then with anguish, and next with anger and finally with ice. And then he turned away slowly telling to himself, "Miserable wretches, what, after all, is the use of astonishment or pity for myself or even wrath for you! It is not you that are to blame, obeying as you do the incorrigible instincts of your sex and your depravity, and rewarding with ingratitude one who has loaded both of you with benefits. It is rather I myself who am to blame for putting any faith whatever in this treacherous and unsubstantial world, filled to the very brim with lovers and women, snakes and tigers and betrayers and betrayed, on which I will this very instant turn my back for ever."

And as he said, so he did. Leaving his wife, his office and his home, he turned his steps without losing a single instant to the wilderness of the Vindhya hills. He said to himself with tears in his eyes, "Ha! What was the Creator about in creating such a world as this where evil-doers prosper and virtue comes to nought, and fidelity and service and devotion gain nothing in reward but villainous ingratitude and bitter disappointment?" All at once rage rushed into his soul against the very constitution of the world, as if that rather than himself was the author of his misery. He exclaimed, "Did not

Viswamitra acquire power by penance and asceticism? Did not he prove by his own example that nothing is impossible for perfect asceticism? Aye, my resolution is fixed. I will begin this moment and heap up for myself a very mountain of merit till its towering mass shall overbalance and obliterate the united forces of the inhabitants of heaven!" And going to the farthest recesses of the forest he discovered in its heart a lonely spot and dwelt there as motionless as a tree. Night and day, year after year, he continued lost in contemplation, living all the while, mainly on air like a serpent, and his own undaunted resolution.

Years passed and one day it happened that Matali, after roaming the earth, arrived at the court of Indra and said, "O Pākāri, what are you all about? Are you asleep or have you abandoned all care whether of your own pre-eminence or the established order of the world? Far away, on earth below, there is an old Brahmin in the forest of the Vindhya hills, who, by his interminable Tapas, is accumulating so gigantic a heap of merit that it threatens destruction to the three worlds; and unless something is done very speedily to stop him, this merit of his, beyond a doubt, will disturb the equilibrium of the universe and wreck the established order of the worlds, and hurl you from your throne." Indra was so upset by what he heard that he himself went down to the earth and tried various devices to tempt the

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Brahmin to desist from his penance. But finding all his efforts were in vain, Indra returned sorely mortified and ordered the heavenly nymphs, Menaka, Rambha, Tilottama and others to go to the earth and shake the resolution of the old Brahmin by exhibiting their charms. They also returned, having failed to achieve their object.

Finally Indra and the gods took counsel together and in utter despair went to Kalānidhi, one of the daughters of the Daitya, Aparapaksha. Kalānidhi gazed at them sleepily in wonder and murmured softly to herself, "What in the world can the gods want so badly as to bring them here all together in a body? Something must surely have gone amiss in heaven and beyond a doubt sore indeed must be the need that drives them hither." She then politely rose and listened in silence while Indra told her the whole story. And when he ended she said, "For centuries have we lived here in the bottom of the sea, my father, my sisters and myself; and yet not one of the gods ever visited us before. What honour for a daughter of the Daityas! But what could be the service of such a poor thing as me where even the heavenly maidens have failed? But as thou hast sought me and seekest my help, I will go and try my skill, such as it is. Yes, I will go this instant just to show that I can be of some use even when all the nymphs of heaven have failed. Come, now, Lord Indra. We will go together, for I shall need thee to assist me."

In the meantime, Trishodadhi continued his Tapas, and thought the mountain of his merit was everyday growing so much that even Meru would soon begin to shudder for his own pre-eminence! He said to himself, "I shall very soon have amassed sufficient stock of merit to enable me to commence operations against the citadel of heaven, whose inhabitants are now beginning to get alarmed at my Tapas. Did not Indra himself come here in person and endeavour unsuccessfully to turn me from my purpose by offering me every kind of bribe and did not heavenly maidens come one by one on a similar errand? O, let them come, even all together. They shall find my determination a rock against which the sea of feminine cajolery shall hurl itself in vain!" As he spoke thus, he raised his head, and cast a glance around him, and as he did so, he started and exclaimed within himself, "Ah! just as I anticipated! There is, as it seems, yet another of these snares in the form of a woman. I will not even look at her; and very soon, growing weary of her vain endeavour to attract my notice and distract my concentration, she will give it up and go back to her employers in disgust."

In the meanwhile, Kalānidhi—for she it was—approached him and began to examine him closely. She said to herself, "Fool, he is flattering to himself beforehand on his power of self-control and already triumphing at the prospect of my ignominious defeat. But he will

find himself very much mistaken. He has already become aware of my presence, and as his attitude shows, he is nerving himself for opposition and resistance, expecting me to assault him point blank like all those very silly nymphs by attitudinising and practising other such tricks of coquetry before him. No, I will take care to irritate and excite his *curiosity* by doing all behind his back, so that he will not be able to see anything at all except by turning round. And he shall be attacked, not as he anticipates, but by that very avenue along which he least looks for danger, and one which for all that, is weakest and least guarded—his ears. For sight can be assaulted only by what is present, but the ears are a passage by which I shall steal, like a snake, into the *past* and pierce his very heart." Kalānidhi then assumed the form of a Pippala tree, and stationed herself behind him.

The day wore on in this wise and in the stillness of the moonlit night the old Brahmin heard at a distance among the forest trees, the noise of breaking branches and the crashing of twigs and leaves. He listened and said to himself, "Some large animal is forcing, as it seems, a way through the denseness of the woods and coming gradually near." As he waited, he saw entering from out of the cluster of trees a tall royal elephant, who came towards him and passed him, not minding him at all, but went wandering about here and there in the moonlight as if he were looking for something he

could not find. And all at once he stopped as if he had found the object of his search and addressing the Pippala tree, spoke aloud in a human voice, "O Pippala, art thou at last the Pippala I am looking for, or only a common tree?" And as Trishodadhi heard him, stupor came upon him, as he said to himself in amazement, "Ha! What is this wonder that an elephant should speak with an intelligible voice, and that I should understand him! Ha! I understand the language of the beasts. Now beyond doubt this is the fruit of the tree of my asceticism!" And his heart swelled with vanity and triumph at the thought of his own forthcoming perfection. And as he listened eagerly for more, there came out of the Pippala tree a soft voice and it said, "Oh! King of elephants! And art thou then the elephant appointed to meet me?" The elephant exclaimed, "Oh! Long-expected Pippala! Can it be that I have found thee? Then listen while I tell thee my story and end it, and so at last free myself from the curse and the hateful body of an elephant in which I have been imprisoned so long." Said the Pippala in reply, "Oh elephant, thy voice is very loud. Dost thou not see that old ascetic sitting plunged in meditation? Know that I love him; for year by year have I watched him sitting by me as he grew almost as motionless as myself. And I will not have his contemplation disturbed. Come round me, therefore, to my other

side and let my trunk conceal thee and screen thy harsh voice; and do thou speak very low." And the elephant obeyed doing as the Pippala said. But Trishodadhi said to himself, "Out upon this Pippala and her affection for myself!" And yet he strained his ears to catch, if possible, their talk, utterly forgetting himself!

(To be concluded)

## LATER INDIAN METAPHYSICS

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

In the course of the later development of Indian metaphysics we see a stressing of the aspect of Bhakti (devotion) but not the formulation of any new great spiritual ideas. It may also be mentioned that after the impact of Islam on India, not only was Islam profoundly influenced by the higher Hindu metaphysics, but there was also a considerable influence exercised on Hindu metaphysics by Islamic thought. The religious movements headed by Kabir and Nanak show such influence of Islam, which was never very strong in metaphysics but contributed the great ideas of unity of God and brotherhood of man and stressed the value of alms-giving and prayer. The main body of the doctrines of these movements, however, is undoubtedly Hindu to the core. Nanak affirmed the unity of the Highest. He says: "Know that there are two ways, (i. e., of Hindus and of Mussalmans) but only One Lord." The Sikh view is that the soul is an immortal essence emanating from the Absolute. The goal is the reabsorption of the soul in the Fountain of Light. Kabir was a disciple of Ramananda and he realised the unity of the doctrines of the Bhakti cult and of Sufism. The impact of Christianity, which too was never very strong in metaphysics but contributed the great ideas of unity of God, brotherhood of man and redemption from sin, and emphasised the value of philanthropy and social service, brought about the Brahma Samaj movements inaugurated by Ram Mohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore and Keshab Chunder Sen. These movements were aimed at the caste system, at the doctrine of incarnation and at image worship and ceremonialism, and did not take their stand on any new metaphysic. They affirmed the unity of Godhead and inculcated the efficacy of faith, prayer and love. But after Keshab Chunder Sen came under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa he introduced a change in his Brahmoism. That change was known as the Nava Vidhan (New Dispensation). It was really a re-Hinduising of the movement. The concept of the Motherhood of God came in by the open door of the New Dispensation. The only Christian religious feature which still exists is the congregational worship.

The Brahma Samaj movement did not give birth to any great ideas in the realm of metaphysics.

The Arya Samaj was another protestant movement. It also was aimed at the caste system and at image worship. But instead of diluting Hinduism by Christianity it took its stand on the Rig Veda alone. It has also not made any notable contribution to metaphysics.

The Theosophical Society has tried to combine all religions and combine such combination with science and spiritualism. It is not necessary to go into its tenets and influence here as we are concerned only with Indian metaphysics and it has made no noteworthy contribution to metaphysics.

It is in the Ramakrishna movement that we find again a new forward flow of Indian metaphysics. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa realised the truth of all religions; he realised the Motherhood of God; and he realised that religion was a matter of deep inner spiritual experience. His greatest disciple, the famous Swami Vivekananda, broadcasted his master's ideas in the East and in the West. Sri Ramakrishna says:

"Pure knowledge and Pure Love are one and the same."

"When all personality is effaced, then one realises the knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi."

"The realisation of God is of two kinds: the one is of the unification of the Jivatman and the Paramatman; and the other is to see Him in His Personal Manifestation. The former is called Jnanam and the latter Bhakti."

"The same Being whom the Vedantists call Brahman is called Atman by the Yogins and Bhagavan by the Bhaktas."

"God is formless and God is possessed of form too. And He is also that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone knows what all He is."

"God the Absolute and the Personal are one and the same."

"He is the Absolute and again He is the Lila (Sport). This Lila is of four kinds—Iswara Lila, Deva Lila, Jagat Lila and Nara Lila."

"It is the sign of knowledge that when it dawns full on a man, he becomes silent. Then the salt-doll of 'I' melts away into the ocean, becoming one with it. There remains not even the lightest consciousness of separateness."

Thus here again we hear, after all, the sweet and synthetic note of the Bhagavad Gita.

In the next issue we propose to make a brief review of Indian Metaphysics as it stands today.

## THE IDEAL OF SIVA

By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.

THAT the great Governor of the universe is a Being devoid of qualities and limiting adjuncts is the lesson that philosophy teaches us. But yet from the very dawn of creation the human mind has been taking a supreme delight in endowing the Absolute with a name and a form and with a personal aspect. Man's mind, being utterly unable to fathom the mysteries of the Infinite or to gaze on the splendour of Its brilliance or to comprehend at one step the nature of the All-pervading, longs to look at that Being beyond the realm of expression through the comforting veil of personality and to throw over it a covering of time and space and limitation just to be able to experience a little of the bliss of contact with It. The Unconditioned Being has therefore been conceived of as a Superhuman Individual with pleasant characteristics, easy of approach and responsive to prayers. These conceptions of the Personal God are varied, and are grotesque or significant or mystic or poetical according to the culture and the needs and aspirations of the conceiving minds. But yet even as a person looking at the wide sky through a window perceives the sky still, though but a small portion of it, so too are these Personal Forms but 'windows unto

the Ultimate Being.' They too are true, though not the entire truth.

Siva, the God of the Saivites and the Goal of the Saivite philosophy, is one such personalised aspect of the Supreme Being. It may justly be said that the conception of Siva has been one of the most remarkable achievements of the Hindu mind. The Siva of Saivism is not one of the hierarchy of divinities, not even one of the Hindu Trinity (Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Rudra or Siva, the Destroyer), but the Highest, Omnipresent, All-powerful, Omniscient Being, free, blissful and immanent in the wide universe. It is necessary to lay emphasis on this point of Siva being a Transcendent Being, because the 'popular' conception of Siva often is that He is the chief and most powerful Being amidst a multiplicity of gods; and not infrequently do we find ignorant folk ranging themselves on the side of Siva or of Vishnu, and preparing, with the help of illustrations from the Puranas, to establish the superiority of the one or the other. Siva is the infinite and eternal God, inclusive of Brahma and Vishnu and the three-hundred and thirty million other gods. He is not a tribal chieftain or a disputant for divine supremacy, but the inner soul of all things.

The Ultimate Being is neither masculine nor feminine, nor neutral, and the minds that conceived the Personality of Siva have thought of Him also as purely masculine, as half-masculine and half-feminine (the form of *Ardhanari*) and as neutral (the form of the *Lingam*).

Siva has a unique grandeur and sublimity. He is portrayed as dwelling at the Mount Kailasa on the summits of the snow-clad Himalayas. The sun, the moon and fire function as His three eyes. The Ganges and the crescent give beauty to His matted locks of hair. His ears are ornamented with queer earrings. His whole body is besmeared with holy ashes. He has four hands. He wears the holy thread and garlands of bones and human skulls. He is clad in a coarse tiger-skin. His throat is blue with the poison which He tried to swallow in order to save the world, but which stuck to His throat because His Consort would not allow it to pass lower down. Venomous snakes coil round His person. In His hands He carries weird musical instruments. The Bull, His vehicle, attends on Him. He is always immersed in contemplation, perceiving His own Self. He loves to dwell in burial and cremation grounds. The ghosts are His army, and the demons His guards. Occasionally to the accompaniment of the drum and the resonant sound of His anklet, He dances the great dance of death and destruction. He is the Lord of Terror and Disaster, of Chaos and Deluge. And yet what

a benevolent aspect He possesses! He is also the Lord of Mercy and of Grace. And His chief Consort is the Goddess Uma Haimavati, the embodiment of all power and learning, the great Mother of the worlds, who by Her extraordinary love has become part and parcel of Her Lord's person. It is this Siva that is the God of the ascetics. He is the master-yogin, the Guru of Gurus, whose very silence is eloquent and effective teaching. He is the noblest, the most sublime and the loftiest of all the manifestations of the Supreme Being. He is the home of all blessedness. He is the great deliverer of mankind from the meshes of illusion. He is the conqueror of death and of passion, of Yama and of Kama. He is India's national God also. As Swami Vivekananda says, the God that India worships is the great ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma. Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India, and Siva is the embodiment of both. The lord of wealth and prosperity, He has shunned all pleasures and chosen to lead the most rigorous of lives. He is ever solicitous of the welfare of His devotees.

Siva has been adored in no less than twenty-five different forms. He has been portrayed as the Wandering Beggar, as the Eternal Bridegroom, as the Mighty Hero, as the Devourer of Poison, as the enjoyer of unruffled peace, as the Silent Teacher who bestows wisdom on all, and in many other aspects.

But one of the most brilliant conceptions of this Great God is peculiar to the Saivite faith and is teeming with spiritual and philosophical symbolism. It is the conception of Siva as the Eternal Dancer, Nataraja. In every temple of Siva may be found the image of Nataraja; but it is in Chidambaram that the worship of Nataraja has reached its climax. Foremost among the Saivite shrines of South India is Chidambaram known also as the Kailas of the South. It was here that the untouchable saint Nandanar attained unsurpassable glory. No Saivite considers his life well-lived if he has not at least once visited Chidambaram and feasted his eyes with the glorious vision of the God who dances there. It has been visited by unnumbered saints and sages, and is naturally surcharged with spiritual suggestions, the very atmosphere of the place breathing the loftiest philosophical ideas. Saivites give to Chidambaram a psychic importance. Philosophy has proved that the macrocosm is only the microcosm on a vast scale. Every feature in the microcosm must therefore have its counterpart in the macrocosm. Adepts in psychic control say that there are two nerve currents in man's spinal column, called Pingala and Ida, and a hollow canal called Sushumna running through the spinal cord. Of these the Sushumna is inactive in ordinary men, and when it begins to act, the man is on his way to liberation. Saivites say that Ceylon in the south is the Ida

in the macrocosm and that the Himalayas in the north are akin to the Pingala, while Chidambaram is the holy Sushumna on earth's body. Siva on Mount Kailas is believed to be dancing in sheer ecstasy of self-realisation, and to please His devotees He is also rehearsing eternally the same dance in Chidambaram, the queen among Saivite shrines. The word Chidambaram means the world of consciousness. In every man the Lord is seated in the innermost cavity of the heart, and the small region that is thus rendered luminous by the Divine presence is called Chidakasa or the plane of knowledge and illumination. Chidambaram is the physical external manifestation of that holy plane where the Lord ever shines. The form of Nataraja, the Ruler of Chidambaram, is a form of grace, taintless, bondageless, devoid of conditioning attributes. The formless God has confined Himself in a form just to provide an easy Ideal for the devotees to meditate on. Nataraja signifies in His form the five kinds of work that the Lord does, *viz.*, creation, protection, destruction, causing delusion and bestowal of grace; and at the same time by dancing in the Chidakasa or knowledge sphere He signifies His transcendental aspect also. In one of His hands He carries a tiny drum; this drum signifies His work of creation. For, creation means the projection into the plane of name and form; and every created thing must have a

corresponding word to denote it; in the beginning is the Word, and the Word is at first a part of God, and God is adored as Nāda Brahman (the Lord as sound). The drum thus stands for the production of sound which is the primary aspect of creation. With another of His hands Nataraja assures His devotees of protection from the contaminating influences of worldly life. In a third Hand He carries fire, the symbol of wholesale destruction. One of His legs is placed on a monster slain by Him, and that monster is the demon of ignorance. The other leg is uplifted and is suggestive of liberation and grace.

Again, Nataraja's form is also symbolic of the great Saivite *mantra* 'Namasivaya' consisting of five vowel sounds. His feet are suggestive of the first sound *Na*, in His stomach is located *Ma*, in His shoulder *Si*, in His face *Va*, and in His head *Ya*. His form in entirety is indicative of the basic symbol of all articulation, the Pranava, Aum. The object of Nataraja's dance is the enlightenment of man. The conception of Nataraja is indeed an achievement of mature philosophers who have compressed into one form a whole world of spiritual symbology.

Chidambaram is famous in another way too. Saivite philosophers say that in five shrines in South India the Lord Siva has manifested Himself in the form of the five elements in the universe, *viz.*, earth, water, fire, air and Akasa. Chidambaram represents Siva's manifestation as Akasa, the first

creation of God. And to the right of the image of Nataraja in Chidambaram is the well-known *sanctum sanctorum* (*Chidambara Rahasyam*) where the Lord is adored as the Pure Akasa of Consciousness. It may also be mentioned here that Kālahasti, Tiruvannāmalai, Jambukesvaram near Trichinopoly, and Conjeevaram are reputed to be respectively the seats of Siva's manifestation as air, fire and light, water, and earth.

In His neutral aspect Siva is worshipped as the Lingam, and Saivites believe that the adoration of the Lingam will lead to final beatitude. The explanation of the Lingam as the phallic emblem, which is often indulged in by thoughtless critics, is too ridiculous to need refutation. Swami Vivekananda has shown that the worship of the Siva Lingam originated from the adoration paid to the Yupa Stambha or sacrificial post by the ancient Aryans. The sacrificial post was regarded as representative of the eternal Brahman. Swami Vivekananda has also pointed out that the very conception of Siva was an evolution of the idea about sacrifices. The sacrificial fire, its smoke, ashes and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox used for carrying sacrificial wood gave place to the conceptions of Siva's bright body, His matted hair, blue throat, and of the ox as His vehicle. The Lingam therefore is the symbol of the God beyond all attributes. Other conceptions of Siva have at least represented Him as a Being *with form*. But the cylindrical

roundedness of the Lingam is symbolic of the Immutable Infinite Existence. Hence it is that the worship of the Lingam is a common feature in all Saivite temples. For taking the Lord Siva in a procession or honouring Him in other ways, the temples keep a separate metallic idol in human or superhuman form; but the central deity of the temple is always the Lingam whose depths no one can fathom.

Such indeed are the manifold glories of the Ideal of Siva. And it is this Siva Who is with form and without form at the same time and is personal as well as impersonal, Whom the sages have in mind when, sitting far away from human haunts amidst the immensity of Nature's solitude, and attuned to the inner life, they chant to themselves in half-audible voices *Sivo'ham! Sivo'-ham!*

## SONG OF THE SANNYASIN

By Swami Vivekananda

[सन्यासि-गीतिका\*]

(1)

Wake up the note! the song that had  
its birth  
Far off, where worldly taint could  
never reach—  
In mountain caves, and glades of  
forest deep;  
Whose calm no sigh for lust or  
wealth or fame  
Could ever dare to break; where  
rolled the stream  
Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that  
follows both.  
Sing high that note, Sannyasin  
bold! say  
"Om Tat Sat Om!"

गीतं गाय सुतुङ्गतानसहितं दूरात्सुदूरोत्थितं  
संसारोद्भवदोषलेखरहितप्रवेतादिगर्भोद्भवम् ।  
उत्पन्नं च वनस्थलेऽतिगहने,—तद्वयेव दोषन्यताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥ —ओ तत् सत् ओ ।  
शान्तिर्दस्य कदापि वै धनयशःकौमर्न संभिद्यते ।  
यस्मिंश्चापि सुमुक्तिदा प्रवहति ज्ञानस्य गंगा सदा ।  
सत्यानन्दविधारिणी भगवती,—तत्रोल्लिख्यतं गीय-  
ताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥ —ओ तत् सत् ओ ।

† दोषन्यताम्=पुनः पुनः ध्वन्यताम् ।

\* [Translated in Sardulavikridita metre by Srīmat Swami Nityananda Bharati Shastri, Vedacharya of Uttarakasi.]

(2)

Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that  
bind thee down,  
Of shining gold or darker, baser  
ore;  
Love, hate—good, bad—and all the  
dual throng.  
Know slave is slave, caressed or  
whipped, not free;  
For fetters, though of gold, are not  
less strong to bind;  
Then, off with them, Sannyasin  
bold! say  
"Om Tat Sat Om!"

पाशांश्छिन्धि ततः स्वकांश्च सततं ये त्वां निवध्नन्ति वै  
सौवर्णांश्च तथा चमत्कृतिमतो लोहादियुक्तांश्च वा ।  
रामद्वेषयुग्माशुभं च,—सकला द्वन्द्वावली दूयताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्यताम् ॥  
—ओ तत् सत् ओ ।  
संश्लिष्टोऽयं च दरिद्रतोऽपि कशया दागस्तु  
दासो हि सः  
सौवर्गस्य विघटितो यदि भवेत् पाशस्तु पाशो  
यतः ।  
वन्द्यायैव समर्थितः,—परमतः पाशश्च विच्छिद्य-  
ताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥ —ओ तत् सत् ओ ।

(3)

Let darkness go! The will-o'-  
the-wisp that leads  
With blinking light to pile more  
gloom on gloom—  
This thirst for life, for ever quench;  
it drags  
From birth to death, and death to  
birth, the soul.  
He conquers all who conquers self.  
Know this  
And never yield, Sannyasin bold!  
say  
"Om Tat Sat Om!"

दूरं गच्छतु मोहजालजटिलं तामिस्रभूतन्तमः  
येनैतद्वि सुदुर्ध्रविभ्रमकरैः संवर्धतेऽन्धन्तमः ।  
एवं मोहमयी हि जीवनतृषा—सा सर्वथा शम्यताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्यताम् ॥  
—ओ तत् सत् ओ ।  
उत्पत्तेश्च मृतिं मृतेश्च जननं जीवोऽनयाकृष्यते  
स्वात्मा येन जितः सरवे शृणु जगतेनैव संजीयते  
विद्धयेवं च सदैव मोक्षणविधौ धृत्या व्यवस्थीय-  
ताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥ —ओ तत् सत् ओ ।  
"वत्सा भुञ्जति निश्चितं फलमतः, कार्यं च वै  
कारणम्

(4)

"Who sows must reap," they say,  
and "cause must bring  
The sure effect; good, good; bad,  
bad; and none  
Escape the law. But whoso wears  
a form  
Must bear the chain." Too true;  
but far beyond  
Both name and form is Atman ever  
free.  
Know thou art That, Sannyasin  
bold! say  
"Om Tat Sat Om!"

भद्राद्भयमयागुभादशुभमभ्येतद्व्यवस्थापितम् ।  
शक्तः कोऽपि न लभितुं कथमपि" त्वेवं त्वया  
बुद्धयताम् ।  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्यताम् ॥  
—ओ तत् सत् ओ ।  
"यस्त्वाकारमवाप्त्यति ध्रुवमिदं बद्धो भविष्यत्यसौ"  
एतत्सत्यमयापि भो ! शृणु, सदा मुक्तः सदात्मा  
यतः ।  
नामाकारविवर्जितोऽस्ति च—ततः तत् त्वं हि  
निश्चीयताम्  
सन्यासिन् ! भव वीरभावभरितः सूक्ष्मीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥ —ओ तत् सत् ओ ।

(5)

They know no truth who dream  
such vacant dreams  
As father, mother, children, wife,  
and friend.

The sexless Self—whose father He?  
Whose child?  
Whose friend, whose foe is He who  
is but One?  
The Self is all in all, none else  
exists;

And thou art That, Sannyasin bold!  
say  
“Om Tat Sat Om”!

(6)

There is but one—The Free—The  
knower—Self!  
Without a name, without a form, or  
stain.  
In Him is Maya, dreaming all this  
dream,  
The Witness, He appears as nature,  
soul.  
Know thou art That, Sannyasin  
bold! say  
“Om Tat Sat Om”!

(To be concluded)

ते जानन्ति न सत्यमेव नितरां ये स्वप्नसंकल्पितान्  
पश्यन्त्येव यथा—पिता च जननी पुत्राश्च पत्नी सखा  
आत्मा लिंगविवर्जितः शृणु सखे! व्यर्थं न वै  
कल्प्यताम्  
सन्त्यासिन्! भव वीरभावभरितः सृष्टीय उद्धोष्यताम् ॥

—ओं तत् सत् ओं ।  
आत्मा कस्य पिता? तथा कथय भो!—  
कस्यास्ति पुत्रश्च सः?  
बन्धुः कस्य? तथा रिपुश्च वद यस्त्वेको हि  
निर्लिङ्गकः ॥  
अन्यो नास्ति ततश्च सर्वमयतः,—तत् त्वं  
हि निश्चीयताम्  
सन्त्यासिन्! भव वीरभावभरितः सृष्टीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥

—ओं तत् सत् ओं ।  
एकस्तिष्ठति नित्यमुक्तविभवः ज्ञाता सदात्मा, मुने!  
नामाकारविकारकल्पनकलालेशो न तस्मिन् मुने!  
साक्षात्तत्त्वमसीति विद्धि सततं ज्ञाने च निष्ठीयताम्  
सन्त्यासिन्! भव वीरभावभरितः सृष्टीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥

—ओं तत् सत् ओं ।  
ते चाश्रित्य तनोति मोहघटितान् स्वप्नान् हि  
माया बहून्  
साक्षी दृश्यतया विभाति च तथा जीवस्वरूप-  
स्तदा ।  
साक्षात्तत्त्वमसीति विद्धि सततं ज्ञाने च निष्ठीयताम्  
सन्त्यासिन्! भव वीरभावभरितः सृष्टीय उद्धोष्य-  
ताम् ॥

—ओं तत् सत् ओं ।

## MANDUKYOPANISHAD

WITH GAUDAPADA'S KARIKA AND SANKARA'S COMMENTARY

By Dr. M. Srinivasa Rao

## Gaudapada's Karika

The mind is not attached to any objects: nor are these objects reflected in the mind. As these objects are unreal, there can be no separate reflection of them (in the mind). (26)

## Sankara's Commentary

As there are no external causes, the mind does not attach itself to any objects external to itself. The mind does not also reflect them and its action is like its action in dream. In the waking state also, the external objects are as unreal as those of a dream, for reasons given formerly. The reflections of objects in mind are not something different from the mind. For the mind alone externalises itself, as in dreams.

## Gaudapada's Karika

The mind is never in relation to any cause in the three periods of time. So without a cause (external object) how can it (the mind) come to have false knowledge? (27)

## Sankara's Commentary

(It is objected) When there are no jars, etc., nor any reflections of jars, etc., in the mind, their knowledge must be all false. If this is so, how can one speak of true knowledge? To this we reply: The mind is never in contact with any objects that may be thought of as causes, in the three periods of time, the past, the future and the present. If it does relate itself at any time (to any objects) that would form the truth or reality in reference to which, (the cognition of) non-existent jars and their reflections, may be des-

cribed as false. There is never at any place, such a (real) relation of objects to the mind. Therefore, without a cause (external objects) how can the mind come to have a false knowledge? The meaning is that there can never be false knowledge. Therefore, it is the nature of the mind to appear as jars (and other external objects), while in reality there are no jars (or other external objects) at all.

## Gaudapada's Karika

Therefore there is no such thing as the production (birth) of the mind or of the objects appearing before the mind. Those who are looking for such production may as well see foot-prints in the sky. (28)

## Sankara's Commentary

The discussion beginning with verse 21 and ending with 23, gives an account of the views of a sect of Bouddhas known as Vijñānavādins, as set forth against the views of those who believe in the reality of external objects. So far, the conclusions of the Buddhist sect, are approved by the teachers of Advaita. Taking that as the illustration, we proceed to controvert their other opinions.

The conclusions of Vijñānavādins that there are no external real objects such as jars, etc., and that the mind takes on the appearance of jars, etc., we accept, from the point of view of Reality, that is, the essence of things. The appearance of the mind taking on the shape of external objects is unreal and likewise the mind itself is not a thing produced (born). The Vijñānavādins believe that what is seen by the mind is not a product and yet say that the

mind is produced, is transitory and is of the nature of misery, non-entity and non-Atman. They try to understand the mind by the nature of the mind itself, which cannot be understood, and are therefore like those who try to see the foot-prints of birds, etc., in the sky. Therefore, they appear to be more enterprising than the dualists, their opponents. The Nihilists (Madhyamika Buddhists) who believe in absolute non-entity and, though aware of themselves (and their existence) all the time, profess to perceive void, are even more audacious (than the Vijnanavadins), trying to squeeze the whole sky in their fists.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

Though the nature of a thing is never to be born, the unborn is said to be born. Such a thing as acting against one's nature can never happen. (29)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

From all that has been said, it is settled that there is only one and unborn Brahman. This verse is intended to be the end of what we set out at first to settle. The mind is unborn and is Brahman, though disputants impute birth to it, saying that the unborn is born, contradicting its very nature. Therefore, birth never accrues to a thing which is of the nature of ever being unborn.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

To a world of Samsara, said to be without a beginning, there cannot but be endlessness. To liberation (Moksha) said to have a beginning, there cannot be endlessness. (30)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

Here is pointed out another error, which the believers in the reality of Moksha and of the world of Samsara, fall into.

To the world of Samsara which has no beginning and which is without any past excellence, reason cannot predicate any end. Our experience also does not point to anything which, having no beginning, is seen to have an end. If you say that it is seen in the succession of seed and sprout, we say no; for mere succession does not form a single entity. Similarly, liberation (Moksha), said to be produced at the moment of enlightenment and so, having a beginning, cannot be endless. We see an end in the case of products such as jars, etc. (which have a beginning). If you say that the illustration is not a suitable one, as Moksha is not a substance like jars, etc., you will be denying to Moksha a real objective existence and failing to prove the point you begin with. If it is non-existent like the horns of a hare, it can have no beginning.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

That which does not exist either in the beginning or end, does not also exist now (that is, when it appears). Though the objects that appear are unreal, they look as if they are real. (31)

That the objects of the waking state are found to be of use has to be construed differently in dream. Hence, as they both have a beginning and an end, they are both unreal. (32)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

These verses of Vaitathya Prakarana (6 and 7) have been commented on already. They are quoted here to strengthen our position as regards the non-existence of the world of Samsara and of liberation.

[The discussion of the point raised about waking and dream states will appear in the next issue.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*  
(Extracts from the Vedanta Bulletin)

### God and the World

As persons living in a house infested by venomous snakes are always alert and cautious, so should men living in the world be always on their guard against the allurements of lust and greed.

So long as the passions, lust, anger, etc., are directed towards the world and its objects, they are enemies; but when they are directed towards the Deity, they become the best friends of man, for they take him to the Godhead. Lust for worldly things must be changed to lust for God; the anger which you feel towards your fellow creatures must be directed towards God for not manifesting Himself to you, and so on with all your passions. The passions should not be eradicated but educated.

The snake is very venomous; it bites when any one approaches it to catch it. But the person who has learned the art of snake-charming can not only catch a snake, but carries about several of them hanging round his neck and arms like so many ornaments. Similarly, he who has acquired spiritual knowledge can never be polluted by lust and greed.

Unshod and with bare feet who will venture to walk upon thorns

and sharp stones? Shod with Divine wisdom (Tattwajñana) what thorn or sharp stone can harm you?

If you first smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open the jackfruit, the sticky milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to the hands and thus trouble you. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self and then live in the midst of wealth and women, they will affect you in no way.

Fastening in thy garment the knowledge of Advaita (one-ness or non-duality), do whatever thou wishest. Good and evil cannot bind him who has realised the oneness of nature and self with Brahman.

First gain God and then gain wealth, but do not do the contrary. If after acquiring spirituality you lead a worldly life, then you will never lose your peace of mind.

As a boy holding on to a post or pillar gyrates round it with headlong speed without fear of falling, so, fixing thy hold firmly on God, perform thy worldly duties, and thou shalt be free from all dangers.

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in its proper time and let your mind be always fixed on God.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**KABIR AND HIS FOLLOWERS:** By Rev. F. E. Keay, D. Litt. Published by the Association Press (Y. M. C. A.), 5, Russel St., Calcutta, and Humphrey Milford, O. U. P. Pages 186.

This book is an important addition to the fast growing literature in English on "The Religious Life of India". Some well known European Missionaries in India are now publishing a series of volumes on this subject with the object of supplying reliable information on the various leading forms which religious life has taken in India. In certain places, however, we do come upon notes indicating a desire to show up Christianity at the expense of the religions which had their birth in India.

The importance of the present volume depends upon two facts: First, it is the most complete account in English of Kabir and the Kabir Panth. Secondly, the author has taken enormous pains to make a special study of what to him is an 'alien faith.' The book is comprehensive and compact, historical, critical and lucid, and very rarely deviating from the original sources. The book is well planned, consisting as it does, of two main sections and a dozen illustrations. The first section deals with Kabir, his environments, the various legends concerning him, the historical sources on his life, his literary works and doctrines. From an examination of the historical sources the author comes to the conclusion that Kabir was a poor weaver of the 16th century, struggling hard to maintain his family but with a "deeply religious and earnest nature which longed for union with God." After a critical analysis of the literature, the author shows that Kabir was not only a great patriot and a religious leader but an enthusiastic social reformer. "There is probably no Indian writer whose verses are more on the lips of Northern Indians than those of Kabir unless it be Tulasidas." The second section deals with the Kabir Panth, its history and organisation, its literature, rituals and doctrines, and

the sects which drew their inspiration from Kabir and his followers. The chapter dealing with these sects will be read with interest by all. But ideas that find their culmination in the last chapter which speaks of Kabir as possessing to "a large extent 'a mind naturally Christian'", which draws a contrast between Hinduism and Christianity, dubbing the former as polytheistic, which affirms that Kabir or his followers have never anywhere emphasised, as the Christian does, "the duty and privilege of self sacrificing service for others" cannot hope to get the approval of critics who have no "Christ-complex".

The book has very valuable information for teachers and students of all types. The printing and get-up are good. S.M.

**THE TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION:** By Emanuel Swedenborg. (No. 893, Everyman's Library) Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., Aldine House, Bedford St., London, W. C. 2.

The book treats both of the philosophy and the practice of the Christian religion. The author points out the discrepancies in the conception of God the father, God the son and The Holy Ghost and ultimately proves that there is One God only, although with different aspects. The author calls Him God the Creator, God the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit. It agrees with the Hindu idea of the Trinity in a sense.

The ten commandments are explained with their natural, spiritual and celestial meanings in a very appealing manner. He tackles the problem of the Christian virtues, faith and charity, and here again he points out their essential unity. Throughout the author insists on the inner reformation and there are not a few hints for one who is earnest in his spiritual practices. The two sides of every act in every day life are presented in a beautiful and logical manner and the student can easily find out for himself, the right from the wrong. The "Memorabilia" at the end of every chapter is a valuable addition.

The book makes an exhaustive study of God and man in the light of the Christian scriptures. As both sides are presented in a logical manner the book must appeal to one and all. The universal interpretation is the true interpretation of every religion; and as tenets of the Christian religion are explained in an universal manner the book has been rightly called "The True Christian Religion."

**BRAHMANANDA KESHUB CHUNDER SEN:** By Lalit Mohan Chatterjee, M.A., Fellow Calcutta University and Syamprasad Mookerji, M.A., B.L., Fellow, Calcutta University.

This book is a reprint of the short sketch of Keshub's life from the book of "Representative Indians" by A.C. Dhar, B.A., published by the Popular Agency, 163, Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta. The object of this reprint seems to be to place through a cheap and consequently easily accessible edition, before the young men of today most of whom have little or no faith in God and are of a sceptical turn of mind, the example of such a pure and godly soul as Brahma-nanda Keshub Chunder Sen. The life, as appearing in this sketch portrays very vividly the various sides of Keshub's activities which were crowned with success, having been based upon his strong belief in the essentials of all religions and in the efficacy of prayer to God. Keshub's steadfast adherence to his cherished principles, his untiring attempt to regenerate India in matters religious and social, his favourite doctrines "God our father, every man our brother," his conception of Universal Religion as "assimilation into wide and spiritual culture of the special ideas of different religions," and his great self-sacrifice for serving his country, endeared him to the hearts of his foes and friends alike. He was, on account of these virtues the accredited leader of the people of his time. He spoke from the heart and exercised an irrepressible effect upon his hearers. These are some of his superb qualities, which those of our young men who are burning with a desire to serve India would do well to imbibe, digest, assimilate and make part and parcel of their nature. India is passing through a critical transition

stage bristling with varied and conflicting ideas, and it is the possession of the qualities and of the heart of Keshub that will enable young men to see India emerge gloriously. We wish the book a wide circulation and would recommend its introduction as a non-detailed text book in all national schools. The book can be had of Hakimatrai Hiras-ing, 62, Mission Road, Karachi and G. Prosad, 84, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta. P. M.

**THE PASSION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:** By the Most Reverend Archbishop Goodier, S. J. Published by Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., London.

To give an account of the Passion "as it really took place", as it affected the minds and hearts of those who underwent it and especially of Jesus himself, its Central Figure, is a difficult task. The Evangelists, as the author points out, have narrated all the incidents, as they occurred when the drama of the supreme sacrifice moved on from scene to scene; and although we are told much of the emotions of the other actors, of the mob, of the Jewish judges, of Herod or of Pilate, we hear comparatively little of the emotions of Jesus himself. Recent research has succeeded in revealing many things about the other parts of the Gospels, but about the Passion itself its contribution has not been very substantial. It is only "love, real and objective, and the insight and interpretation that come of love" that can make one enter into the true spirit of the final incidents in the ministry of Jesus on earth. And being possessed of these qualities in abundance, the author has been able to read "between the lines of the narrative" and give a very vivid presentation of what must have passed through the mind of Jesus prior to and during the actual crisis. From the Last Supper to the final "acceptance" of service, namely the drinking of the liquor the soldier held up to his lips, each incident and each word is commented upon with such deep psychological insight that the reader cannot help entering into a "real" world of feelings and emotions, irrespective of what scholars and critics of opposing

camps may have to tell about the historicity of Jesus himself. The grandeur of the personality of Jesus and the serenity of the heights from which he could view and act when confronted with the "failure" of his own dear disciples, with the betrayal, clearly foreseen, of Judas "one of the twelve", and with the humiliations and tortures of the court room and of the cross, have been brought out in a most impressive manner, and we are sure that they will have a purifying and elevating effect upon such minds as are free from dogmatism or from a spirit that looks upon religion, not as a matter for realisation, but as a field in which one group of people should endeavour to score a point or two over the rest. While commending this book to all devout hearts, we eagerly wish to see the publication of books written in a similar "sympathetic" vein on the life mission of the other great Teachers of the world.

CONFESSIONS OF AN UNBELIEVER:  
(Anonymous) Published by John Long,  
Ltd., 34 & 36, Paternoster Row, London.  
Pages 94. Price 2 Sh. 6 d. net.

Numerous forces have contributed to pull down "Religion" at the present time. Each religion is connected with a mythology or a story portion; and modern criticism has torn it to pieces from the standpoint of history or geography and concluded that religion itself is exploded. Each religion has prescribed some ritual or other, simple or elaborate, to give a "hand and eye and brain and heart training" to its votaries; and modern criticism has adopted a double argument to condemn them. It says that people without such rituals have attained greatness while those who clung to them have in the main failed. God too has been attacked from many standpoints. In India, however, there have been philosophies and schools of spiritual discipline which made aspirants evolve into illumined beings without introducing a God of the type the ordinary devotee has in mind. But to Christianised West it is unimaginable how any religion can survive when its mythology, rituals and even its "idea" of God are utterly demolished. This must be the explanation

for the cropping up of schools of thought that uphold Humanism or Duty and carry on a campaign *against* religion. To the Indian, religious life is built in agreement with and upon the very foundation of the spirit of Humanism or of Duty. His philosophy enables him to view Duty not as a *substitute* for religion, but as a *preparation* for the wider experience called religious realisation. The constructive side of the gospel of Duty, as explained by the author, is thus quite acceptable to the Indian mind. We can perfectly agree with him when he says that religion should not merely be "a matter for the expert or the learned" or that the creed of Duty "admits of little evasion and could not be practised just for one day in seven." We too admit, as he says, that the need is for "something now, at once, to bring some definite unselfish object in life to the evergrowing number of those who have no religious belief".

The trouble with the author, however, is that he is too much obsessed with some of the orthodox Christian doctrines. Says he: "I cannot conceive of the God of the Christian church, or indeed of any other, lending himself to a deliberate hiding of the fact of his existence and leaving mankind to search for him through a maze of obscure writings." And he childishly adds, "Therefore, as we may also assume that he is a righteous God, he cannot with any justice blame those who do not find him." The author is also troubled because some of those who have taken holy orders and joined the ranks of religious teachers do not, as he has found out, possess the strength or purity of character to deserve such a place. Some have also used their religion to maintain political authority. All this, however, does not form reason enough for concluding, as the author does, that God "is a farce" and for setting up the creed of Duty as a *rival* to the search for God. The author has spent a few years in faithful adherence to the methods which traditional Christianity prescribed; but religion, he complains, still stands unverified. True, but we have never come across any religious guarantee that after any particular period a particular experience of

Godhead should come as a matter of course.

Leaving aside the criticisms levelled at the belief in God—which we do not propose to refute in detail here—we wish that the book should be widely

read, first for the constructive aspect of its Creed of Duty, and secondly for its account of the directions in which the spirit of religion has almost everywhere become lost in its numerous non-essential, external observances.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### R. K. Math Charitable Dispensary, Mylapore, Madras

The Dispensary has now completed the eighth year of its existence. Its utility can be judged from the enormous rise in the number of patients from the second year onwards. From about 5,000 in 1926 it has now come up to more than 66,000.

The institution had been working in thatched sheds which could not accommodate all those who thronged for relief. Many were compelled through want of space to squat in the open space in the adjoining ground. Now, however, through the services of a staunch supporter, (the late Rao Bahadur S. Bhaskara Iyer, Retired Engineer, Madras) the institution has been freed from all difficulties regarding accommodation. On his suggestion, Dr. T. Ramachandran of Trichinopoly gave to the President of Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, a sum of Rs. 16,000 for the purchase of a building that could remove this drawback of the Dispensary. This donation was made to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. V. Subramaniam, B. A., son of Mr. R. Vaithinatha Iyer of Trichinopoly. Supplementing this amount by the Dispensary Building Fund already collected, a building with a small compound directly to the south of the Math was bought and steps taken to shift the work to its more spacious rooms.

### Needs of the Dispensary

The work of the Dispensary has increased by leaps and bounds during the brief period of its existence. The number of patients and consequently of workers attending on them, has gone up considerably, and the necessity is being daily felt for putting the institution on a sound basis financially and securing the

permanence of its work for the benefit of the poor. The following are some of its pressing needs.

### Up-To-Date Modern Appliances and Other Necessary Outfits

It is unfortunate that owing to the want of many modern appliances and outfits, the management has often to deny adequate service to a number of poor people and cannot fully utilise the talents and experience of the doctors in charge. This want should be removed for the sake of rendering more efficient relief to such patients.

The management appeals to the generous public, who feel for the poor and the sick, to continue the active sympathy and co-operation that they have all along been giving and to come forward with liberal contributions for fulfilling the immediate needs of the institution. Donors wishing to perpetuate the memory of their friends or relatives may do so by creating memorial endowments for the maintenance of the Charitable Dispensary. A tablet bearing the names of the persons whose memory is to be perpetuated will be fixed in a suitable part of the building.

### EARTHQUAKE RELIEF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S WORK

The Ramkrishna Mission is continuing its earthquake relief work in seven Districts of Bihar, viz., Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Darbhanga, Chapra, Patna, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. Four centres, viz. those at Sitamarhi, Gangeya, and Pupri, in the Muzaffarpur District, and at Jaynagar, in the Darbhanga District, have been closed after the completion of necessary relief work. Distribution of foodstuffs, etc., has been discontinued

except at Tateria. At present the Mission is engaged mainly in constructing semi-permanent cottages for the middle classes and supplying materials for the same purpose, repairing their damaged houses, and restoring or sinking wells. The following is a brief report of the activities of the different centres:

At Muzaffarpur 14 semi-permanent cottages have been completed, and 85 are under construction. From March 16 to April 30, 24½ mds. of foodstuffs, 110 pieces of clothes, 50 blankets, 83 utensils and 263 yds. of hessian were distributed to 12 families.

The centre at Sitamarhi (Muzaffarpur) was closed on May 6. Here 16 cottages were constructed, and materials for constructing 6 more were supplied. From April 1 to May 6, 178 pieces of clothes, 65 blankets, 293 utensils, 11 lanterns and 33 yds. of hessian were distributed.

The centre at Pupri, in the above Sub-division, was closed on March 15. Since February 27, 84 mds. 15 srs. of foodstuffs, 783 pieces of clothes, 10 durries, 161 blankets, 112 utensils and 450 yds. of hessian were distributed. Pecuniary help was given to construct 145 huts.

At Motihari (Champaran) 2 cottages have been completed and 8 are under construction. From March 12 to April 8, 53 mds. 8 srs. of foodstuffs, 236 pieces of clothes, 2 durries, 67 blankets, 129 utensils and 320 yds. of hessian have been distributed to 155 families.

The activities of the Tateria centre (Champaran) cover 30 villages. Owing to the prevalence of acute distress, distribution of foodstuffs, etc., will have to be continued here. From March 12 to April 30, 632 mds. 6 srs. of foodstuffs, 779 pieces of clothes, 51 blankets, 377

utensils, and 1508 yds. of hessian were distributed to 1020 families.

The rural centre of Manjha (Chapra) was opened on April 8. Up to April 30, 95 wells were restored or repaired, 44 were under restoration, and 7 were under construction.

At Laheria Sarai (Darbhanga) 15 cottages have been completed, and 5 are under construction. From March 14 to April 30, 4 mds. 18 srs. of foodstuffs, 131 pieces of clothes, 15 durries, 16 blankets, and 20 utensils have been distributed to 6 families.

At Samastipur (Dabhang) from April 1 to April 30, 3 cottages were constructed, and 7 were under construction, and 507 corrugated iron sheets were sold at half price. Besides, 7½ mds. of foodstuffs, 6 lanterns and 1 tarpaulin were distributed.

At Patna from March 16 to April 30, 21 mds. of foodstuffs were distributed. Materials for the construction of 11 cottages were supplied, 5 houses were repaired, and 3 more were under repair.

At Monghyr 13 cottages have been constructed, and others are under construction. At Jamalpur, in this District, 19 cottages have been constructed.

At Bhagalpur 3 cottages have been constructed, and 86 houses have been repaired.

We are grateful to the Mayor of Calcutta for allotting us from his Earthquake Relief Fund Rs. 60,000 for the above work.

Further contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address:

The President, Ramakrishna Mission,  
Belur Math P. O., Dt. Howrah.

15-5-1934 (Sd.) VIRAJANANDA,  
Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission.

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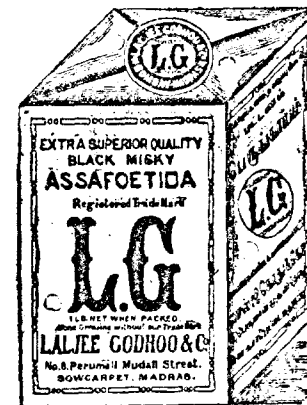
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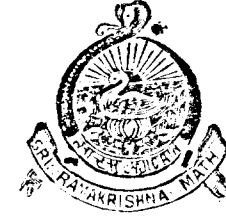
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—Swami Vivekananda

## THE VEDANTA KESARI

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### HINDU ETHICS

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धर्मस्य विधयो नैको ये वै प्रोक्ता महर्षिभिः ।

स्वं स्वं विज्ञानमाश्रित्य दमस्तेषां परायणम् ॥

दमं निश्चये प्राहुर्वृद्धा निश्चयेदर्शिनः ।

ब्राह्मणस्य विशेषेण दमो धर्मः सनातनः ॥

दमात्तस्य क्रियासिद्धिर्यथावदुपलभ्यते ।

दमो दानं तथा यज्ञानधीतं चातिवर्तते ॥

The rules of virtuous conduct taught by the great Seers, each of whom relied upon his own Illumination, are manifold. The highest among them all is self-control.

Those amongst the ancients that were acquainted with Truth said that self-control leads to the highest beatitude. As regards the Brahmana in particular, self-control is his eternal duty.

It is from self-control that this aspirant after the knowledge of Brahman obtains the due fruition of his efforts. In his case self-control surpasses (in merit) charity and sacrifice and study of the Vedas.

SHANTI PARVA (Ch. CLX, 6, 7 and 8)

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

*Why did the Master marry? Was it due to the Importunity of the Relatives?*

WHOEVER inquires about the life of the Master, is puzzled with the question, 'Why did the Master marry?' The thought of having physical relations with the wife never arose in his mind. What then was the reason? Indeed, it is very difficult to find out any. As soon as he came of age, it may be urged, he became almost mad after God; and that is why the relatives got him married perforce. But that, we think, is not at all likely. From the very earliest days none could make him do even a most unimportant thing against his own will. Whatever he resolved to do, he did accomplish invariably by some means or other. Take for instance his choosing Dhani, the blacksmith woman for his godmother (the lady who gets the honour and privilege of offering the first dole of alms to the neophyte) during the thread ceremony. Social customs in Kamarpukur were not at all loose, as in Calcutta, that one might do whatever one liked with them. The Master's parents, too, were not in the least indifferent regarding the strict observance of the obligatory rites to the very letter. According to the family practice also, only a Brahmin woman could be selected as the godmother. The guardians of Gadadhar, one and all,

were against the boy's accepting the first alms from the blacksmith woman. It is no small wonder that in spite of all these obstacles, Dhani was finally selected for the godmother, and that on account of the importunities of Gadadhar alone. Thus we find, in all matters the Master's will and determination would always carry the day when they came in conflict with those of other persons. Such being the case, how can we still maintain that an incident of vital importance as this marriage was in his life, is ascribable solely to the desires and importunities of the relatives?

*Was the marriage effected by his desire for sense enjoyment?*

Or again, it may be contended, what is the necessity of taking it for granted that the spirit of complete renunciation brought about by one-pointed love of God, was present in the Master from the very beginning? The problem can be easily solved, if only we hold, on the other hand, that like other normal human beings the Master, too, had in the beginning the desire for enjoyments of married life, but he had no sooner reached the adult age than a radical change appeared in his mind. A mighty storm of renunciation and God-intoxication came upon him, and swept clean all the early desires off his mind once for all. But the Master's marriage took place before the onslaught of

this hurricane. Apparently the argument is quite convincing, no doubt. But there are several unanswerable objections. First: He married when he was twenty-one years of age. During this period the spirit of renunciation was sweeping over him with full force. Moreover, averse as he had ever been to causing the slightest inconvenience to any being whatsoever, it is not at all likely that he proceeded quite thoughtlessly to do something which would possibly involve a girl in perpetual misery. Secondly: The more closely we ponder over the life of the Master the clearer it becomes to us that no event in the Master's life was without a deep significance of its own.

*The Master's Prophecy about his pre-ordained Bride*

His marriage was certainly not against his will. For, when his nephew Hriday and other members of the family were busy in their search for the bride, it was he who told them that it was pre-ordained that his marriage would take place with the daughter of Sjt. Ramachandra Mukherji of Jayrambati. This may seem quite surprising to the reader, and with a gesture of disbelief he will perhaps remark, "The author is too fond of bringing in unnatural events now and again. Who will believe these stories in this twentieth century!" In reply we are compelled to say, "You may or may not believe, as you please. But nevertheless it was an actual fact. There are many living to this day who bear witness to its truth.

Why don't you please inquire and see for yourself?" When the relatives failed to find a girl for his bride up to their choice, the Master himself told them, "Why! The girl is kept selected already\*, you will find." Therefore it is clear that the Master knew not only that he was to marry, but also where and whom to marry, and did not raise any objection to it. He had this foreknowledge, of course in a state of *Samadhi*.

*Was the Master's Marriage due to his Past Karma?*

What is the meaning then of the Master's marriage? Here our readers who are familiar with the scriptures will probably remark with great annoyance: "What a big fool the author is! Why does he make so much fuss about so simple a matter as this? No one should take to writing biographies of saints unless one has acquired some knowledge of the scriptures. God-realisation or perfect knowledge, as our scriptures hold, destroys all past *Karmas*, save the *Prarabdhas*, i.e. those that have already begun to bear fruit. The illustration is here given of the hunter in the process of hunting. He has some arrows stored in the quiver, one in the hand ready for use, and another just released at a bird on a tree.

\* Selected—literally it will be, 'marked with a straw'; i.e., his marriage with that girl is pre-ordained; or, the girl is destined by Providence to be his bride. The allusion is to a common practice in villages. When a peasant selects a particular fruit of a tree as the best offering to God, he keeps it marked with a straw tied to it lest he should forget and sell it away.

Suppose at this moment he is seized with the spirit of renunciation. He makes up his mind not to do harm to any creature hereafter. He casts aside the arrow in the hand. Those in the quiver, also, are similarly disposed of. But can he hold back the one he has already let off? The arrows in the quiver are the *Sanchita Karmas*, those that he has accumulated during his past lives. The one in the hand signifies the *Kriyamana Karmas*, those that are in the process of being accumulated. And the arrow already released is likened to the *Prarabdha Karmas*, those that have begun to bear fruit. The effect of the last mentioned group of actions must come. Great saints like Sri Ramakrishna suffer only the *Prarabdha Karma* in their lives. This is inevitable. They can know beforehand how in accordance with their *Prarabdha Karma* events will happen in their lives. Hence it is no wonder that Sri Ramakrishna could foretell who would be his bride and where the marriage was to take place."

*Prarabdha has no power over Truly Enlightened Souls; and much less over the Master. For, he would say, "The same Deity that appeared as Rama and Krishna, has now come as Ramakrishna."*

True, our knowledge of the scriptures is quite meagre. But nevertheless the little understanding that we possess shows clearly that a truly illumined soul is never dominated by *Prarabdha*. For, how is it possible for him to have joys and

sorrows when the mind through which these experiences are to come has been tied by him to the feet of God once for all? Again, it may be contended, it is his body that will enjoy or suffer according to *Prarabdha*. But how is that too possible? His *Prarabdha* can yield fruit only if he voluntarily retains a little trace of his ego for some special reason, say, for doing good to others; then alone can he have experiences of his body and mind and the *Prarabdha Karmas* bear fruit. Therefore it depends entirely upon the illumined soul himself whether he will accept or reject *Prarabdha*. He attains to perfect freedom as to the choice of either. That is why such persons are called 'the omniscient,' 'conquerors of death,' 'masters of desire' etc., etc.

Moreover, if the experience of the Master is to be relied upon, he cannot be called merely an illumined soul; he never comes under that class at all. For, we have heard him repeat time and again, "He who was Rama and Krishna, is now Ramakrishna," that is, the same Deity that incarnated as Rama and Krishna, has again appeared in the present age in the form of Ramakrishna. If we are to believe this statement, he must be accepted as an incarnation of God, eternally Pure, Illumined and Free by nature. Then we cannot again hold that he is under the sway of *Prarabdha*. Hence we think it proper to explain the Master's marriage in a different way; and that is what we propose to do next.

## UNDER THE FOREST TREES

### Withdrawal Usual

**H**IRANYAKASIPU, so the story goes, asked his son, Prahlad, to describe the best lesson he had learnt. Straight came the reply, "I think, father, that men ought to abandon the blinding pit of domestic relationships, ruinous to Atman, and *repair to the forest* to remain devoted to the Lord." Boy Prahlad, it is true, had the rare privilege of being initiated into the Highest Wisdom by the most venerable Narada himself, even prior to his birth. But this attitude of looking upon the forest as a place helpful to spiritual practice was not a special virtue impossible to acquire without such a sage's blessing and instruction. For every sincere seeker of those ancient days, who effected some substantial development of his personality by the proper discharge of the functions of a husband, father and citizen, had before him the possibility of a further expansion and of freedom from rigidity if he went to the forest and joined the group of the higher grade aspirants residing there. Manu's syllabus accordingly contained the injunction that "after having duly fulfilled the duties of a householder,

a Snataka Brahmin, with all the passions of his heart sobered and calmed, *shall live in the forest, self-controlled.*"<sup>2</sup> Even there, however, the necessity would sooner or later arise for a more thorough exploration of the deeper layers of the mind. The aspirant then would be obliged to leave all companions behind and embark upon a more rigorous discipline absolutely *alone*. It was for this reason that not only Jesus but all seekers as well as teachers often withdrew "a stone's cast" from their fellow-strugglers or followers and went up into the wilderness for silent communion with the Nameless.

### Different Needs of Beginner and Adept

If solitude, then, is a necessity for spiritual unfoldment should not all aspirants be encouraged to leave the haunts of men and retire into the jungle so that their practices can be rendered easy and quick in yielding fruits? It is only that person who has achieved a fair measure of mental control that can carry on his practice in whatever surroundings he finds himself to be. The common distractions ranging from whispers to shouts, consequent upon the activities of even the sym-

1. तत् साधु मन्येऽसुरव्ये ! देहिनां  
सदा समुद्रिमधियामसद्ग्रहात् ।  
हिवात्मपातं गृहमन्यकूपं  
वनं गतो यद् हरिमाश्रयेत् ॥

(Bhagavatam VII, v, 5)

2. एवं गृहाश्रमे स्थित्वा  
विधिवत्स्नातको द्विजः ।  
वने वसेत्तु नियतो  
यथावद्विजितेन्द्रियः ॥ (Manu VI, 1)

pathetic inmates of his household, would be too feeble to penetrate beyond the outermost fringes of his field of awareness. Even if there be important matters, kept pending, connected with the management of domestic affairs, they might sink into relative insignificance on the approach of the time set apart for daily practice. It might also be that every difficult situation arising from his contacts with people would only have the welcome effect of increasing his capacity to clear his mind at will and hold it steadily on the chosen track. What would baffle and upset an untrained mind would, in the case of such a person, enhance progressively his power of control and establish him in the inner plane from which he can operate the keys to balanced judgment and behaviour in the outer world. Our problem, however, is not about the steps such an advanced seeker has to take, but about the discipline the beginner must undergo. To him, his house with perhaps a hostile neighbour to be conciliated, or the legitimate income yet remaining uncollected, all educated youths unemployed or the baby crying because of ill-health, must be the least convenient place for any profitable attempt at mind control. He may no doubt manage to sit motionless and with closed eyes for a time, but he would find it a hopeless task to think steadily even about any one of the domestic difficulties themselves. What need then to speak of keeping all these powerful intruding thoughts at bay

and of a positive remembrance of holy things? Rather than attempt the impossible, it were better far he avoided them clean and wended his way to the secluded spots of the jungle whose serene air no human sighs ever defiled.

In reality, however, the retreat into solitude often proves a woefully inadequate solution of the problem. Such a precipitate withdrawal has many serious drawbacks a few of which we propose to take up for discussion here.

#### **Adaptability to be Gained at Home**

No one denies that spiritual practice requires a calm atmosphere and that the very familiarity of the home and its surroundings can act as a store-house of disturbing influences to the beginner. But what is the guarantee that the disturbances would disappear by a mere change of environment? Even viewing from the level where sights and sounds constitute the main obstacles to daily practice, we have to admit that nothing remarkable is gained by the device of shifting one's abode into the wilderness. For sights and sounds abound in the forest as well. And if the tall trees with their massive trunks and spreading branches can be suggestive of the broad-hearted sage wrapt in solemn meditation, what is there in the four-footed denizens of the jungle to facilitate the recollection of spiritual verities? The mind that could be unhinged by a preponderance of painful situations in human society has little chance

of remaining unruffled in the kingdom of brutes either. It might be argued that the fear of physical danger and the like would considerably be reduced as one gets more and more accustomed to forest life, till at last the time would come when the mind could with ease be fixed on holy thoughts. But on this hypothesis it should be equally possible for the aspirant to get similarly accustomed within a reasonable time to the sense of worry and insecurity arising from domestic or social relationships also. To feel accustomed to any given situation to such an extent that it cannot seriously interfere with one's daily devotions is itself an important stage of the desired control. And if an aspirant has not acquired this bare minimum of adaptability while in the midst of an environment containing a few friends at least, sympathetically disposed toward him, it is a vain hope to expect adaptability to develop in him somehow when tiger's claws and tiger's jaws display as much reality around him as has the tiger's skin he spreads beneath for a seat!

#### **Intermediate Stage of Company**

The advocates of retreat may reply by telling that the aspirant who leaves society does not directly get into the state of complete isolation, which to them looks like the state of complete freedom, but prepares himself for it by an intermediate stage of living in the company of the advanced aspirants of the forest. This arrangement has undoubtedly many points in its favour. For one

thing it is not a case of flying from the frying pan into the fire since the aspirant is not exchanging society's mixture of pain and pleasure for the unmixed terrors of the wilderness. While dwelling in groups the element of fear becomes negligible and the mental energy saved in this manner can be diverted for undergoing higher discipline. In the matter of such discipline itself, he need not grope and land himself in dangers; for he can get facilities for opening his mind to others who have been longer in the field and who would be prepared to help him ungrudgingly if approached for honest discussion and comparison of notes.

#### **What does Society Lack?**

To this altered form of the plaint let us in the first instance reply by asking what is gained by transferring this spiritual academy from the vicinity of human beings who form its present and prospective members, to the region of brutes. What are the special virtues of the forest-trees or of the forest air which can crown with success the practices carried on under their auspices; and what are the special defects of society which must doom identical practices to certain failure? What would be lost if associations for spiritual culture are started in society itself and so equipped as to provide all the advantages forest life is supposed to give, eliminating at the same time the dangers attendant upon it? What rare gift has the forest to confer, which society can never hope to give however much

it tries? Or, again, what serious obstacle to spiritual evolution is imbedded in the very structure of society and happily absent from the precincts of the forest?

### Helps to Meditation

There are many who believe, and experience too, that to the person who has risen above all apprehension of physical danger the forest can supply many a powerful stimulus for the awakening and retention of divine thoughts. In the presence of vastness and of grandeur the human mind has a natural tendency to drop all recollection of its petty worries and limitations and emerge into finer states of awareness where tension is lost and a sense of release takes its place. The glories of the sunset or the sunrise, the mighty ocean, dark-heaving and boundless, the starry expanse of the midnight sky, the solemn shade of forest trees, strains of distant music wafted by the gentle breeze,—these are charged with an unfailing power to soothe overstrung nerves and obliterate for a time the painful impressions occasioned by the struggles of life. Even in persons whom fortune has blessed with the best things of life and the contentment born therefrom, stimulus of this type (रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुरांश्च निशम्य शब्दान्) can arouse unique emotions accompanied sometimes by tears and always by a purifying and elevating sense of exquisite bliss, once theirs but now evidently lost. This chastening effect operates at first only for a time and is not recoverable at will; but continued practice

enables the earnest seeker to swing himself with ease into serene heights by focussing his thoughts on any of these symbols of vastness and splendour. Indeed, as the Yoga Shastra says, restlessness is overcome and posture steadied by contemplating on the limitless character of Akasa etc.,<sup>3</sup> leading for the time to the assimilation of their attributes and to non-identification with the body and its feelings of comfort and discomfort. The Gita too winds up its long list of divine manifestations suitable for meditation with the comprehensive statement that anything glorious, good, beautiful and mighty has sprung into existence from a fraction of the Lord's own energy. It is significant how the list itself includes, in addition to the sun and the moon, the Ganges and the ocean, also the Asvattha among trees, Meru among mountains and the Himalayas among massive immobile objects. Seated, then, under an Asvattha tree on a mountain slope, and contemplating on the glory of the Supreme Support<sup>4</sup> of the universe radiant with its heavenly orbs, any average

### 3. प्रयत्नशैथिल्यानन्तसमापत्तिभ्याम्

(Patanjali II, 47)

यदा चाऽऽकाशादिगत आनन्त्ये चेतसः समापत्तिः क्रियतेऽवधानेन तादात्म्यमापद्यते तदा देहाहंकाराभावात्ताऽसनं दुःखजनकं भवति ॥

(Bhoja)

4. The reading "अनन्तसमापत्तिः" bears the comment that the aspirant is to contemplate on Ananta, the Lord of serpents, who holds up the universe with his thousand hoods. "अनन्ते नागनायके स्थिरतरफणासहस्रविभूतविश्व-भरामण्डले समापन्नं चित्तं आसनं निर्वर्तयति ॥"

aspirant must find within him a spontaneous awakening of divine moods paving the way for ultimate illumination.

### Question of Special Aptitudes

In this course of reasoning, however, the main point is, to some extent, missed. For in meditations of this nature, forest life does not seem to be the decisive factor at all. The principle involved is rather that by prolonged contemplation of any object, the aspirant's mind acquires its virtues, first as they are conceived by him to be, but later on as they are in reality. Any beautiful scenery, not necessarily in a forest, would therefore do for the purpose; and it is clear that one need not literally quit society in order to get a view of sunset or the ocean or the starry heavens. Where a lake or a river or the sea happens to be in view, one can as well sit down, late at night if need be, and derive all the benefit the beauties of the forest can give.

It has thus become a simple question of the capacity to appreciate grandeur and of making it a means to control emotions. If an aspirant has had sufficient practice in this method of utilising his special aptitudes while in the midst of society, he will certainly find it possible to adopt the same device when seated beneath the forest trees. But without any previous training in this line the mind, although away from society, will still be entirely at the mercy of the disturbing influences acting on it hitherto. A certain

amount of detachment is necessary for fixing the attention upon beauties alone in a mixed environment of beauty and terror. This detachment, if acquired while in society, can be drawn upon at will when beyond it also; but it is risky to reserve it as the first lesson to be learnt on arriving at a forest. For physical distance does not automatically produce mental aloofness.

### Retreat Pattern would not do

Let us ask why it is that although the sun rises and sets every day we do not, even if instructed, lift our minds as often by contemplating on the splendour bathing "castle walls and snowy summits old in story". The answer is plain: Our minds are pre-occupied with other things. What Hamlet told with reference to a particular context, we use for a hundred others and excuse ourselves by telling, "Here is metal more attractive." Affairs whose unpleasant consequences we wish to avoid or whose delights we yearn for, exert silent, insistent pulls upon the fibres of our inner being and engage the conscious mind, making us blind and deaf to the sights and sounds that might prove suggestive of sacred things otherwise. What boils up in the mind and makes meditation impossible in one's own house with the midnight stars twinkling overhead, is certain to boil up in spite of any drastic change in the place of sitting. These deep-seated hindrances to spiritual practice have to be studied thoroughly, arranged in groups and

got rid of by persistent adoption of various methods.

Where we are likely to make a mistake is in the assumption that retreat from the field of battle is equivalent to a destruction of the enemy. Thoughts inimical to Yoga arise in the mind because the mind contains their seeds, namely the impressions of all we ever wished to achieve and the comments we have been making on the fractions gained or lost. And since this mind is carried by its owner wherever he goes, the seeds are bound to remain with him intact, until positive steps are taken to destroy their germinating power. Avoiding a tussle with them, thinking the process is inconvenient, will still leave them unaffected. "He who relinquishes an action from fear of physical suffering, saying 'Painful', performs a passionate relinquishment and obtains not the fruits of relinquishment." (Gita xviii, 8) They can however be overpowered by the cultivation of wider interests in life, by the employment of greater energy in particular virtuous directions, till the habit of *facing* troubles is acquired as a permanent possession. Spiritual conquests are similar to the conquests in other depart-

ments of life inasmuch as both come to him who knows what weapons to take and how to wield them to advantage. Retreat may sometimes be good as a step in the fight; but it is useless if thereby the enemy gets a chance to advance and reproduce the situation from which escape was sought. In such a case fight is the only remedy. And it is he alone, who has learnt to *conquer* a good many of the obstacles met with in daily life, that can make a healthy detachment, at will, from the intruding thoughts that mar his spiritual practice in the forest. On the other hand he who has made himself a slave to the retreating pattern of behaviour will find it hard to change into a fighting pattern after his flight from home. "Grim" reality has to be faced and a fair amount of skill acquired in the use of the weapons of fight and detachment, before any change of surroundings can be fruitful. Else the aspirant comes under the class of people who sit restraining their senses of action but remain inwardly drawn to the objects of enjoyment as well as pain.

*Solitude is helpful if one knows how and when to resort to it.*

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

6th Sravana, 1325 B.E.

**I**T was half-past-seven when I arrived at the house of the Holy Mother. She greeted me with her usual smile and said, "It is a very warm day. Take a little rest and refresh yourself. What about your sister? Has she reached home?"

Devotee: Yes, Mother. I started after she had reached home.

Mother: Take this fan for Radhu and rub this medicinal oil on my back. There are heat-blisters all over my body.

As I started rubbing the oil, the bell rang for the evening worship. The Holy Mother sat on her bed and saluted God with folded hands. Other devotees went to the Shrine room to witness the worship.

The Mother said, "Everybody says regretfully, 'There is so much misery in the world. We have prayed so much to God, but still there is no end of misery.' But misery is the only gift of God. It is the symbol of His compassion. Is it not so?"

That day my mind was greatly troubled. Did she really know it and therefore address those words to me? The Mother continuing said, "Who has not suffered from misery in this world? Brinde, the woman-devotee of Krishna, said to him: 'Who says that you are compassionate? In your incarna-

tion as Rama you made Sita weep for you all through her life. And in this incarnation as Krishna, Radha has been weeping on your account. Your parents suffered extreme agony in the prison of Kamsa and cried day and night uttering your name. Then why do I repeat your name? It is because your name removes all fear of death.'"

The conversation drifted to Sachin Maharaj and Devabrata Maharaj, the two monks of the Ramakrishna Mission who had died lately. The Mother said, "Sachin was a fortunate boy. It was a rainy and stormy night when Devabrata passed away in this house. There were only a few persons here. I was at Koalpara. Sachin gave up his body in the morning. The house was crowded. I was also there. Devabrata was a real Yogi."

Referring to a woman, the Holy Mother said, "People of that appearance are generally devoid of Bhakti, devotion to God. I heard it from Sri Ramakrishna."

Devotee: Yes, Mother. I read in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna that he used to say that some people who are not frank cannot make real spiritual progress.

Mother: Oh, you are referring to that? He said those words in the house of a devotee named Naran. A man had a mistress. She once

came to Sri Ramakrishna and said with repentance, "That man ruined me. Then he robbed me of my money and jewellery." Sri Ramakrishna was aware of the innermost contents of people's minds. But still he would like to hear about things from their mouth. He said to that woman, "Is it true? But he used to give us tall talks about devotion." Then he described those traits which stand in the way of spirituality. However, the woman confessed to him all her sins and was thus released from their evil effects.

Nalini: How is it possible, Mother? How can one absolve oneself from sin by simply expressing it in words? Is it possible to wash away sin in this manner?

Mother: Why not, my dear child? Sri Ramakrishna was a perfect soul. Certainly one can be free from sin by confessing it to him. Listen. If at a certain place people talk of virtue and vice, those present there must take a share of those qualities.

Nalini: How is it possible?

Mother: Let me explain. Imagine a man confessed to you his virtue or vice. Then whenever you will think of that man, you will remember his virtuous or sinful acts. And they will thus leave an impression upon your mind. Is it not true, my child?

Again the talk turned to human misery, affliction and worry.

The Mother said: "Many people come to me and confess their worries. They say, 'We have not

realised God. How can we attain to peace?' So on and so forth. I look at them and I think of myself. The thought flashes in my mind: Why do they say so? Am I then a superhuman being? I never knew what worry was. And the vision of God, it lies, as it were, in the palm of my hand. Whenever I like it I can have it."

We had read about the 'Robber Father' of the Holy Mother. I wanted to hear about the incident from the Mother herself and said to her, "Mother. I read in the book that once upon a time you were coming to Dakshineswar. Lakshmi Didi and others were with you. You could not keep pace with them. It was almost dusk. You had been following them when you met your Robber parents."

"It is not a fact," the Mother said, "that I was altogether alone. Two other old ladies were with me. Three of us lagged behind. Then I suddenly met with that man with curly hair and dark colour, carrying a big stick in his hands. I was simply stupefied at his sight. The man also understood the state of our mind and asked, 'Hallo! Who are you? Where are you going?' I said, 'We are going to the east.' 'This is not the way,' he remarked, 'follow that path.' Seeing me standing still, he said in re-assuring voice, 'Don't be afraid. There is a woman with me. She will be here in a moment.' I at once addressed him as my 'Father' and took shelter with him. I was not, then, so weak, my darling. I had physi-

cal strength. I walked on foot continually for three days. I never felt any difficulty in circumambulating round Brindavan on foot." Continuing she said, "Have you seen the Concert House at Dakshineswar? I used to stay there. The room was so low that at first I would knock my head against the upper frame of the door. One day I cut my head. Then I became accustomed to it. The head bent of itself as soon as I would approach the door. Many fat aristocratic women of Calcutta frequently came there. They did not enter the room. They would stand at the door leaning forward by placing their two hands on the two sides of the door frame. Peeping at the room they would often remark addressing me, "Ah, what a tiny room of our good girl! She is in exile, as it were." Then addressing her nieces, she said, "You could not stay at such a place, even for a day." "True, aunt," they ejaculated, "Everything is so different with you."

Devotee: We read in the Life of Sri Ramakrishna by Gurudas Barmann that they built a big house for you later on. It is also mentioned in the book that one day Sri Ramakrishna was in that house and that he could not return to his room on account of heavy rain.

Mother: That is not true, my child. Where is the big house? There was an ordinary small house. Sarat (Swami Saradananda) has recorded correctly the events of Sri Ramakrishna's life. The Gospel of

Sri Ramakrishna by 'M' is also nice. It is, as it were, because he has put down the exact words of the Master. How sweet are those words! I hear that he has enough material for four or five books like that. But now he is old. I doubt if he will be able to undertake the task. He has amassed a great deal of money from the sale of the book. That money has been kept on deposit. He has given one thousand rupees for building my house at Jayrambati and other incidental expenses. He also sends me ten rupees every month. He gives twenty rupees or more when I stay in Calcutta. Formerly he used to give me two rupees a month. He was then a school teacher.

Devotee: I hear that Girish Babu contributed in the beginning a large amount of money for the maintenance of the monks.

Mother: Not a large amount. Suresh Mitra was rather munificent in his contribution. Girish also gave money now and then. He at one time defrayed all my expenses for a year and a half. How can he have made a large contribution? He was never a rich man. The early part of his life was not very clean. He lived in bad company and acted on the stage. But he was a man of wonderful faith. Therefore he received such grace from Sri Ramakrishna. In this incarnation Sri Ramakrishna has redeemed Girish. Each incarnation of God is marked by an incident like this. Gauranga saved the two brothers Jagai and Madhai. Again,

Sri Ramakrishna once remarked that Girish has within him the trait of Siva. What is there in money, my child? Sri Ramakrishna could not touch it. His hand would recoil before money. He said, "This world is illusory. Had I known it to be otherwise, then I would have covered your Kamar-pukur with the leaf of gold. But I know it to be impermanent. God alone is real."

Maku, her niece, said sorrowfully, "I could not settle myself at one place!" The mother replied, "How is that? Wherever you live you must feel quite at home. You think that you will be happy at your husband's place. How is that possible? You are now staying with me. It is just like your father's place. Do not married girls, sometimes, live with their parents? Can't you practise renunciation a little?"

I requested the Holy Mother to speak a little more of Sri Ramakrishna. She said, "The events are often not correctly recorded in books. Rama (a household devotee

of Sri Ramakrishna) wrongly recorded the incident of the Master's worshipping me." She narrated the incident and then added, "This incident did not take place at Jayrambati, but at Dakshineswar, in his own room. Hriday, our nephew, made all arrangements for the ceremony."

Yogin-Ma, at that time, stood by the window, and I was talking to her. The Mother said, "Come in. I hardly see you nowadays." Yogin-Ma laughed and entered the room. Her foot touched my body. As she was about to salute me with folded hands, I interrupted her and prostrated myself before her. "What is this, Yogin-Ma?" said I, "I am not even fit to take the dust of your feet. Why should you salute me because your foot touched my body?" In reply Yogin-Ma said, "Why not? A snake, whether big or small, is a snake all the same. You are all devotees and therefore worthy of our respect." I looked at the Mother. The same kind smile lit her face. I took leave of her late at night.

## INDIAN METAPHYSICS TODAY

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

### Nowhere Self-contradictory

INDIAN metaphysics is today in a stronger position than ever before. Victor Cousin has said well: "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell." To outside students and uninformed inside students of our metaphysics with its harmonious affirmations in the realms of logic, cosmology, psychology, ethics, epistemology, eschatology and ontology, our metaphysical achievement appears as a bewildering and even self-contradictory and discordant variety. But a careful study will show the harmonious, grand and sublime design, proportion and construction of the palatial fabric of Indian thought. The Lord said in the Gita: अथात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवृत्तमहं (I am the science of spirituality among all sciences; and among utterers of truth I am the utterance of spiritual truth). The unity of all Indian metaphysics is in God.

### No Puerile Fights Again

Whatever the ebb and flow of metaphysical thought may have been in India, the Indian race has settled down in certain root-ideas; and he is no friend of India or of the world who stirs up the muddy waters of theological discussion again in India, creating a self-division in the national mind and making India unfit to achieve internal unity

and a re-attainment of the spiritual leadership of the world. The battles of gods and demons (देवसुरयुद्ध) are over; let us not fight all those battles over again. No more shall we fight over the Nirguna-Saguna controversy. No more shall we try to find out if Siva is Paramatman and Vishnu is a Jiva, or if Vishnu is Paramatman and Siva is a Jiva. No more shall we enter into the still more futile and puerile discussion as to whether Lakshmi belongs to the Brahma Koti or the Jiva Koti (God or soul). To one mind the name Ranganatha may appeal and to another the name Sabhapathi may appeal, though both the names mean etymologically the same thing. No longer can India tolerate such intellectual cobwebs as those found in Govindaraja's commentary on the Ramayana where he says that the name Visālākshi belongs to Lakshmi or Sita, and has been misappropriated by Parvathi; and that Ganga has, because she came from Vishnu's feet, managed to retain her purity though she touched the head of Siva!

### Not to be Partitioned

Some symbols and ideas are our precious and supreme common possession and let us not have a bitter partition suit over them. The concept of Brahma performing penance and uttering the Veda to guide

creation on its way; the concept of the white-robed Saraswathi with book and Vina and rosary; the concept of Lakshmi on the blossomed lotus; the concept of Narayana sleeping on the waters in *Yoga Sushupthi* (all-seeing Yogic sleep) with Lakshmi by His side and Brahma on His navel-lotus; the concept of Nataraja dancing the rhythmic dance of universal energy, now destructive and now constructive; the concept of Siva plunged in meditation on the Himalayas; the concept of Devi, now as a little girl performing penance, now as a bride, now as the universal Mother, now as the giver of rest to the universe in apparent destruction, and finally as the bestower of Brahma-Vidya; the concept of Nara and Narayana symbolising the comradeship of the individual soul and the Oversoul; the concept of the Eternal Archer, Rama, overthrowing the forces of Evil and establishing Dharma; the concept of the Eternal Musician, Krishna, overcoming the discords of life by the swelling strains of spirituality; the Eternal Charioteer, Krishna, teaching the soul (Arjuna) the way to the Supreme Paradise (Parama Vyoma); the eternal Dakshinamurthi facing the south and turning souls away from the Land of Death toward the Paradise of Immortality by showing the *Chinmudra*; the unity of soul and God; the Eternal Ardhanariswara revealing in His form the oneness of Law and Love, the divine Subrahmanya and the divine Gopala drawing our hearts to them by the appeal-

ing sweetness of child form and the child-love; and more than anything else, the glorious *Visvarupa* described in Chapter XI of the Gita—these and other concepts belong to all of us. Each belongs to all and all belong to each. Off with all dividing and desecrating hands!

#### Stress on Discipline

The next important thing to bear in mind is that modern Indian metaphysics is rooted in the great truth that *the Sadhana is a discipline of life* and not a mere intellectual ferment or an intellectual assent. The concept of Varna Dharmas and Ashrama Dharmas implies this concept of discipline. It does not imply any social superiority or inferiority or social cleavage and discord and hatred. The Dharma is the means—nay, is the sole means,—of *Viveka* (discrimination) and *Vairagya* (dispassion). The Indian mind does not like the life of sensualism and desire or the life of premature asceticism. It aims at rising by means of Karma Yoga to Raja Yoga and thence to the highest Bhakthi Yoga and Jnana Yoga and thence to the highest realisation (Anubhava).

#### Further Points of Agreement

There are other fundamental common ideas as well. The soul transcends mind and matter and is beyond the *Gunas*. It is immortal and is *Satchidananda* in its nature. About this the higher Indian metaphysics speaks with a single voice, whatever be the disputes among the schools of metaphysics as to whether the soul is

atomic or infinite, is one or many and is one with or different from the Oversoul. Indian Metaphysics affirms also the doctrines of Karma and transmigration. It affirms further that the supreme beatitude is in the deliverance from *Samsara* or the bonds of birth and death. This is not pessimism at all though it has been so stigmatised. It is rather a search for a permanent abode of bliss above and beyond this web of pain and pleasure which constitutes life in the universe. It affirms the *Pitriyāna* and the *Devayāna* and *Kramamukti* and *Jivanmukti* as different levels of the soul's attainment of bliss. Indian Metaphysics says also that the universe is composed of the three *Gunas*, that it is God's handiwork and not a self-created, self-active and self-directing, blind, unconscious material force. It affirms also the glory and majesty of God as *Satchidananda*, apart from all controversies about the *Nirguna* and *Saguna* aspects of God.

#### Illumination through Ishtam

The central truths of *Ishta Devata* and *Ishta Sadhana* discovered by the Indian intellect are also of very great importance. So far as we have faith and dispassion and devotion, God will accept us and give us the supreme realisation by leading us ever nearer to His lotus feet. The Lord says in the Gita: मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः "Men follow from all directions the path leading unto Me." (Gita III, 23) He says that if we love Him

He will light the lamp of knowledge in our heart and drive away all our inner darkness.

तेषामेवानुक्रमार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

(Gita, X, II.)

#### Behind the Different Systems

So far as the enormous variety of metaphysical affirmations already discussed are concerned, let us not forget that they are as old as the hills and that each system has its roots in the dim past. It is said in the *Anu Gita*, Chapter XXIV, of the *Mahabharata*: "Some say that everything is doubtful; and others that there is no doubt. Some say that the permanent entity is impermanent, and others say that it is permanent, and yet others say that it exists and does not exist. Some say that it is of one form or twofold in form, and others say that it is both. Some Brahmanas who know Brahman and perceive the truth believe that it is one; others that it is separate, and yet others that it is manifold." Here we have the seed of all the *Avaidika* and the *Vaidika Darsanas*. I have shown above the crescendo of thought in the six systems or *Darsanas*. Madhusudana Saraswati has uttered the same truth. He says in his *Prasthan Bheda*\* that the Munis

\* न हि ते मुनिनो भ्रान्ताः सर्वज्ञत्वात्तेषां । किंतु बहिर्विषयवर्णनमापाततः पुरुषार्थं प्रवेष्टो न सम्भवतीति नास्ति क्वचिद्वारणाय तैः प्रकारभेदाः दर्शिताः । तत्र तेषां तात्पर्यमनुबुद्ध्वा वेदविरुद्धेऽप्यर्थे तात्पर्यमुत्प्रेक्षमाणस्तन्मतमेवोपादेयत्वेन गृह्यन्तो जना नानापथयुगो भवन्तीति सर्वमनवद्यं ॥

(sages) cannot be in error, considering that they are omniscient. The different views have been propounded by them only in order to keep off all nihilistic theories, and because they were afraid that human beings, with their inclinations towards the objects of the world, could not be expected at once to know the true goal of man. Professor Max Muller says: The longer I have studied the various systems, the more have I become impressed with the truth of the view taken by Vijnana Bhikshu and others that there is behind the variety of the six systems a common fund of what may be called national or popular philosophy." The summation of all these views is given in the 23rd verse in Chapter XIII of the Gita:

उपद्रष्टुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥

This verse indicates also the supreme doctrine as given by God.

The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara gives us a complete system which gives full scope for the other systems also. A well-known verse says: विवेकिनः कुतः कोपः स्वदेहावयवेष्विव ॥ (Naishkarmyasiddhi). His doctrine of Paramarthika and Vyavaharika reality enables us to steer clear of all the ancient and terrible intellectual battles about the reality of the universe, the pluralism of souls, the nature of God, and the question as to whether Siva or Vishnu or Devi or some other deity is the Supreme God. No one need be shocked by the doctrine of the formlessness of God any more than he is or need be

shocked by his present experience of the formlessness of his own soul. The Absolute is not an abstraction but is the prius of subject and object. It is the deepest experience of bliss and has called forth rapturous descriptions which no abstraction can ever evoke. So long as the principle of individuation (Jivabhāva) subsists, the world is real and God is the Supreme Reality of Love, Beauty and Bliss. But the Upanishads and the Gita affirm the Advaita Anubhava. The highest western philosophy has affirmed the Absolute. Tennyson describes the experience when he says:

"The mortal limit of the Self was loosed  
And passed into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven. I touched my limbs—the limbs  
Were not mine,—and yet no shade of doubt  
But utter clearness, and through loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as, matched with ours,  
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,  
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world."

#### Must Meet New Forces

We have to realise that India is vibrant today with a new passion for social unity and political freedom. Though Indian metaphysics deals with the problems of all time, it must meet the new forces of modern science and modern democracy and Indian nationalism. It

must show that it is not, and cannot be, negated by modern science. It cannot afford to fold its robe about itself, scornful of science. Truth is one and there cannot be divided sovereignties in its domain. Hence Indian metaphysics must meet in a vital way the new passion for science. It must be able to meet in a vital way the new passion for equality and freedom surging throughout the modern world. It must meet in a vital way the new passion for unity and liberty that is especially surging throughout India. Such an integration is necessary in its interests, in the interests of India and the world, nay, in the interests of Truth for all time. If it does not, science and modernity and India will go their ways leaving Indian metaphysics to die in splendid and neglected isolation and inanity. It must point heavenward the eyes of man now gloating over the beauty

and joy of the earth. It must do this by leading the spirit of man to that noumenal Reality in the realisation of which lies infinite and eternal bliss. It must substitute desire by Dharma and lead to purity of mind and thence to meditation and devotion and wisdom, and thence to the highest realisation. It must not forget the base of morality and social service in its contemplation of the apex of spiritual bliss. It must boldly affirm that there cannot be any Eternal Hell, and that all are eligible for salvation. It must teach the way of Yoga to the modern man wandering in the gardens of Kama (desire), so that he might rise from plane to plane of spiritual realisation, loving and saving the world and not, as he is doing now, kissing it with the kiss of death. It must, in short, meet the present vitally and bring in the greater and happier future to be. Will it or will it not?

### THE PRAYER OF THE PRACHETAS

(Adapted from the Bhagavatam)

By Swami Prabhavananda

|                                        |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| WE bow down to Thee, O Lord.           | Words cannot express Thee.                            |
| Thou dost charm away                   | The way of the senses is not Thy way.                 |
| Life's long dream of sorrow.           |                                                       |
| With Thy Holy Name on the lips,        | Blessed are they who know Thy pure blissful Self      |
| Meditating upon Thy divine attributes  | For they shall be free from the bondage of the world. |
| Within the heart,                      |                                                       |
| One walks Thy Blessed Path.            | We bow down to Thee.                                  |
| Thou art beyond the reach of the mind, | Thou art the Lord of Love,                            |
|                                        | The Lord of Thy devotees,                             |

Thou dost deliver us from all evil.  
Blessed are those who know Thee  
as their very own  
For they shall find peace.

Thou art the innermost Self of all,  
Thou knowest our heart's desires.  
May we realise Thy love.  
Thou art limitless and Thy glories  
also.

For Thou art Infinite.  
If by reason of Karma  
We go through rounds of birth and  
death,  
May we in every life always have  
Association with Thy devotees.  
That we deem the greatest blessing.  
Thy devotees, the free souls, always  
speak Thy Word.  
They look with an equal eye upon  
all.

Free from all attachment,  
Their minds are united in Thee.  
They make this earth blessed by  
their living.  
They are the embodiment of purity.  
The least association with them  
Frees men from great terror.

Thou art indeed the Great Healer,  
The healer of worldliness and  
death,  
The giver of Eternal Life and  
Blessedness.

Who can sing Thy Infinite Glory?  
Thou art all and everywhere.  
We bow down to Thee again and  
again.

—Thus having praised the glory  
of the Infinite Lord, the Prachetas  
realised greater peace within their  
hearts.

After many fruitful years of acti-  
vity in the world, they assumed the

lives of Sannyasins to attain the  
highest knowledge, the knowledge  
of the One Divine Self in all beings  
and things.

They retired to a place of solitude,  
and began to practise meditation  
upon the Absolute Brahman. One  
day as they were seated for medita-  
tion, Narada, the great teacher ap-  
proached them. The Prachetas  
welcomed him with great reverence,  
beseeching him to teach them the  
highest truth, the truth that would  
make them free.

So Narada, uniting his heart in  
God, began:

"O Princes, blessed indeed is  
that birth, glorious indeed is that  
deed, true indeed is that life, lumin-  
ous indeed is that mind and fruitful  
indeed is that word, which is con-  
secrated to the loving service of God,  
the Self of the universe.

Man is born thrice: first he is  
born of parents; his next birth is  
baptism and his third birth is initia-  
tion. But all these births are indeed  
vain, if his life is not dedicated to  
the loving service of God.

Vain also are so called virtuous  
deeds and vain is our long life, if  
we live not in the service of God.

Love and Service,—these are the  
greatest ends of all the Vedas,  
all austerity, all learning and all  
science.

Useless and futile indeed are Yoga  
or Sannyas, scriptural study or  
virtuous deeds, if one has not love  
for God in his heart.

Of all that exist, the Self is the  
dearest. The Lord of love is our

very Self. Who then can be dearer  
than God?

As when water is poured at the  
root of a tree its branches are  
nourished, as when food is eaten  
the senses are strengthened, simi-  
larly when the Lord of the universe  
is loved and worshipped, the whole  
universe rejoices.

So, Oh Princes, worship Him  
within your hearts as one with the  
Self. He is the Self of all embodi-  
ed beings. He is the Supreme,—  
the Lord of the universe.

Love and charity toward all  
beings, contentment under all  
circumstances and the control of  
all senses and passions,—such is the  
way to the service of God. The  
practice of these virtues pleases the  
Lord.

The Lord is ever manifest in the  
pure hearts of His devotees."

Thus taught by Narada, the  
Prachetas united their hearts and  
minds with the Lord of Love  
and realised their unity with  
Him.

## PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH IN THE WORLD OF MODERN THOUGHT\*

By Swami Bhutesananda  
(An Appreciation)

### Need for Harmonisation with Science

A highly admirable enterprise as  
the present volume is, it is  
sure to awaken living interest in  
the hearts of those thinkers who  
hold religions in great esteem and  
are endeavouring to find for them a  
fitting place by the side of other  
universally recognised values of life.  
The author is an eminent scholar,  
vitally concerned with the subject  
of rational religion, not merely as a  
professional speculator but also as  
one of its ardent votaries. The pre-  
sent work has been inspired by his  
ambition to critically build up a  
universally acceptable system of  
theology which will be in perfect  
accord with the results of the  
sciences, the metaphysical inferences

derivable from all acknowledged  
values of life and scientifically veri-  
fiable elements of all experimental  
religions.

### Comparative Study and Discrimination

The author is well aware of the  
enormous difficulties that stand in  
the way. The kaleidoscopic variety  
of religious beliefs held by millions  
of people following different tradi-  
tional authorities and identifying  
themselves with different national,  
racial and social groups, makes a  
seeker after universality in religion  
lose himself helplessly in utter con-  
fusion. Nonetheless universal vali-  
dity is an indispensable requirement  
for religion, if it is to logically main-  
tain its ground for all times. Variety  
in the rituals, historic traditions and

\* *Pilgrimage of Faith in the World of Modern Thought*: (Mainly) the Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lectures in Comparative Religion delivered by Douglas Clyde Macintosh before the University of Calcutta. Published by the University of Calcutta.

imaginative elements in different religions are not to be done away with. But universal agreement must be reached regarding the fundamental points. The best method for achieving this end, our author suggests, is sympathetic and, at the same time, scientific self-criticism in order to discriminate the essential from the non-essential, and along with it, an unbiased comparative study of all religions.

Even persons gifted with rare intellectual acumen are often found to be but blind followers of their respective traditions inherited from their family surroundings. Sacred scriptures and their authoritative interpreters are generally accepted quite uncritically as final authorities, more or less in all religions. The author invites the votaries of all faiths to work unitedly to deliver humanity from the prison-house of traditionalism, but wisely enough hastens to add, in the best interests of religion, "Let us break definitively, then, not indeed with all tradition, but with traditionalism."

#### **Rebel Movements also Bound**

Consistently with his method of self-criticism the author exposes mercilessly the glaring inconsistencies and absurd superstitions taught in the so-called infallible Bible, and naively accepted by the majority of Christians. This, of course, is not a peculiarity of Christianity alone. Traditionalism holds its sway with more or less rigidity in all faiths. It is curious to note that even such recent movements as Mormonism and Christian Science, Bahaism and

Theosophy, that are the products of rebellion against traditionalism, are by no means wholly free from this intellectual servitude.

#### **Achievements of Each critically weighed**

If then we are to shake off once for all the pernicious fetters of traditionalism, what must we fall back upon in our pursuit after the essential truths in the field of religion? Here the author first passes in review the relevant records of the achievements that have already been made by independent investigators in the domain of philosophy. He then points out the partial inadequacy of their methods and the unsatisfactory nature of their conclusions, judged from the religious point of view. But despite all their imperfections, the author does not at all underrate the important truths that he has learnt from them,—the invaluable suggestions that have enabled him to arrive at conclusions which are quite satisfactory and entirely in keeping with his religious aspirations. We shall briefly refer here to our author's estimate of the different systems of thought built independently on rational grounds.

#### **Empiricism**

In spite of the dangerous leanings towards subjectivism on the one hand and radical scepticism on the other, Empiricism has been our most powerful ally in the crusade against traditionalism. It has implanted in us the scientific attitude which never allows us naively to accept anything from whatever source it may happen to come. We

have moreover learnt to employ the empirical method in theology, *i. e.*, to seek scientific verification of the hypotheses of faith in religious experience.

Kant's critical philosophy has been extremely disappointing as regards the knowability of religious truths. The sledge-hammer of pure reason has pulled to the ground, brick by brick, the whole edifice of metaphysics. Nothing can be known beyond the flitting phenomena. The *noumenon* will ever remain unknown and unknowable. Nevertheless, the Prussian thinker, a veteran agnostic though he was, has founded religion on the solid rock of morality. From the moral need of human nature he has drawn conclusions which will ever retain their supreme importance in the field of religion. Mention may be made of the following as examples. God is the moral law-giver; dictates of conscience are the commands of God; man is the absolutely free agent; salvation of man is his deliverance from moral evil; eternal existence of individual souls is a necessary requirement for infinite moral progress; and so on.

#### **Rationalism**

Rational idealism has been discussed at great length in its various phases. The author has attempted to show the logical fallacies that are involved in the arguments usually advanced in its support. Its ontological conclusions, pantheism and absolutism, are an offence to our moral and religious consciousness. But despite all his dissatisfaction

with regard to the conclusions of rationalism, the author has not overlooked its salutary contributions. Rationalism has brought into limelight the importance of the philosophical background of religion, rationality as a test of philosophical truth, a unitary view of reality, immanence of the Divine in nature and in man, and so on.

#### **Pragmatism**

An honest inquirer into the ultimate nature of things becomes oftentimes baffled in his attempt. His earnest endeavour to establish a satisfactory mental adjustment through the current systems of thought meets with repeated failures and disappointments. Finally he cannot but fall back upon pragmatism. Whatever works, a pragmatist declares boldly, is true. If God, immortality and other items of faith work satisfactorily by bringing peace of mind, they must be adhered to, however inconsistent or unprovable such beliefs may appear to be, judged from the intellectual point of view. There is some grain of truth in this attitude, no doubt. Nevertheless it tends to defend in its reactionary form the old traditionalism in toto. Rationally a practical religious man may not be able to justify his dogmatic faith. But, a pragmatist will argue, he has his peace of mind secured, so long as he is a believer rather than a thinker. Why then should he not continue to cherish the the self-same beliefs as though they were true? There may not be a God—and certainly there is no such entity as the majority of psycholo-

gists opine—other than a “wish-being”, a projection from the sub-conscious; but albeit, we shall continue to retain the term God and the idea of it as if there were some reality corresponding to them.

There can be nothing more disastrous than this conclusion of the radical pragmatists with regard to the truth-value of religious experiences. Sincerely religious souls are painfully aware of these unsatisfactory results of the metaphysical inquiries and some of them are of opinion that religion must be dissociated from intellectuality altogether. They would rather appeal straight to the heart and ignore the head completely. This attitude of sentimentalism, originated as it is from a deep sense of despondence, evokes our sympathy no doubt, but can never be justified as a sound policy. Religion, to be of any worth at all, must be founded on the solid basis of a rational metaphysic. Our quest for a wholly reliable basis for religion, although unsuccessful so far, is sure to yield satisfactory results, only if we proceed on with more caution.

#### Combine Representational Pragmatism and Moral Optimism

Pragmatism, as a reactionary attitude that denies ultimate truths altogether and reduces truth to the mere test of truth, *viz.*, workability, is no doubt wholly untenable. But if properly modified into what is called the representational form, our author thinks, it will be of immense help in the field of religion.

According to representational pragmatism, whatever works satisfactorily represents truth which may not be directly experienced otherwise. Thus scientific religious adjustment proves the truth of religion to the extent it works satisfactorily. Along with this representational pragmatism should be cherished, our author suggests, in the best interests of religion, moral optimism or the belief that if free human beings make due endeavour the whole world will become better and better day by day morally and spiritually.

Though the author, in agreement with Kant, bases religion entirely on moral grounds, he believes at the same time that religion is not merely a means but an end in itself, inasmuch as it has got a value characteristically its own, which is fundamentally different from moral values. This he calls by the term “divinity” or “holiness,” as Dr. Otto puts it.

#### God and the God-idea Distinct

The metaphysic that is to be the basis of the universal religion of the future will recommend, our author contends, critical monism or religious realism, accepting God as ontologically different from the God-idea. The idea only represents certain aspects of the Divine Reality and guides our right adjustment to It, but can never be equated with the Reality Itself. This satisfactory theory follows from moral optimism and the logical inferences deducible from them, *viz.*, free human agency, “conservation of the values of the

individual moral personality,” existence of God, the preserver of human values and the controller “of the course of events in nature and in history,” communion with God, and so forth.

#### Characteristics Needed

Finally the author lays down the characteristic features of the universal religion as follows:

(i) It must appreciate, and be conducive to, universally valid values, such as Truth or rationality, true and rational Beauty, moral Goodness, and unselfish Love and Holiness.

(ii) It must be scientific. That is to say, it must not contradict scientific knowledge of the world; it must be guided by scientific religious adjustment and lead to scientific knowledge of God of experimental religion—of His existence and nature.

(iii) It must provide for the creative freedom, the conservation of the eternal values of human personality, and the existence of a Cosmic God satisfying our religious needs.

(iv) It must develop a rational and universally valid religious philosophy.

(v) In order to maintain its vitality and efficiency it must make use of such ideas as are in agreement with its doctrines, and psychologically dynamic because of their appeal to the imagination and the heart. The picture of Jesus, our author thinks, can be of immense value in this respect. But Jesus should be looked upon not merely as the Son of God or an incarnation of God. For our greatest spiritual benefit, He should also be accepted as an ideal, a Guru, a spiritually and morally perfect being guiding other souls towards perfection through the example of His own life.

#### Contributions of East and West

The author thinks the East and West have got special contributions to make to the world-religion. “Moral optimism seems to be a contribution rather distinctive of the dynamic West. The immanence of God is the characteristic offering of the thoughtful East.” Finally the conclusion ends with the author’s suggestion of the formation of a “League of Religions” and an international and inter-religious organisation for mutual understanding and utilising the “spiritual dynamic of religion in the interests of” humanity.

*(To be concluded with a few critical remarks)*

## TRISHODADHI OR THE STORY OF A TAPASWI'S FALL\*

*By Kaundinya**(Continued from previous issue)***Curse and Absolution**

THE elephant stationed himself near the Pippala and said, "Oh Holy Tree, long ago when I fell into this form by reason of a curse pronounced upon me for a sin, this meeting with thyself was fixed as the termination of the curse. I have wandered up and down for long asking every Pippala that I saw the very question that never received an answer till this moment. Now listen; and so at last I shall again become a man, as soon as I have told thee of my crime, since this is the condition of the fulfilment and abolition of the curse.

"Oh Pippala, long ago in my former birth, I was a king named Ruru, and I had for my minister a Brahmin named Trishodadhi. He had an incomparable wife by name Watsatari, a very paragon of beauty and devotion to her husband. It was her virtue that was the cause of my falling into the body of an elephant by reason of a curse."

**Curiosity Replacing Concentration**

As he spoke, the heart of Trishodadhi almost jumped from his body in amazement, and like a flash of lightning he flew back into the past and murmured to himself, "Ah! What? Was she then after

all not guilty, but, as he says, virtuous?" And utterly forgetting all, he let his rosary suddenly drop out of his hand; and turned sharply round to see as well as hear. And when he looked, he saw the elephant standing still with drooping ears leaning against the Pippala trunk. And as the Brahmin sat listening, the Pippala said, "Oh king of elephants, why after beginning thy narration, hast thou suddenly broken off?"

Then the elephant sighed deeply and said, "Holy Tree, I stopped, as it were, against my will at the thought of her innocence and my own perfidy and the terrible retribution that overtook me in the shape of this curse. Oh Pippala, I was married in my youth to a queen with beauty that resembled the beauty of a panther; for it was fierce and spotted and treacherous and crafty. I was a prey to it, for I was young, and knew nothing of the ways of the world. But one evening, I detected her treachery and the shock was so unbearable that I rushed out and kept wandering up and down the streets in the darkness of the night, aimlessly. There I came across a miserable wretch to whom I gave my costly robes in exchange for

his loathsome rags. I then said to myself, 'Now I will leave my palace and my kingdom and become a Sannyasin, turning my back upon the world!' But almost as I spoke, a little, old Sadhu came suddenly upon me and eyeing me narrowly for a while, he said, 'Thou art young and handsome. And whence comes the trouble of the young but from love? Fool, art thou actually grieving for the loss of a woman? Dost thou not know that he who loses one, can find a hundred others just as good or even better?' 'I am obliged to thee,' I exclaimed, 'and like a good physician thou hast cured me of my malady.' I said to myself, 'I should have been a fool indeed to become a Sannyasin for such a thing as she!' I then entered the palace with the solemn determination to make all other women in the three worlds pay for the conduct of my life. And Oh Pippala, as I said, so I did.

**Story of First Meeting**

"One day returning weary after a hunt in the forest, I dismissed my attendants and came slowly home alone on foot. As I rambled on, it happened as if by destiny's decree that a necklace of great pearls that I always wore on my neck slipped off and fell upon the ground. A hawk suddenly pounced upon it and carried it away attracted by its glitter. I ran after the bird which, in fear, dropped the necklace from his claws and flew away. Seeing it fall I ran towards it, but I found my way blocked by a high wall on

the farther side of which the necklace fell. I looked about and seeing a tree standing near, I swung myself up by means of its branches upon the wall and looked over. And when I did so, there, below in the garden stood a young woman, looking up towards me; and on the ground was the necklace, lying at her very feet. She asked, 'Who art thou, if, as I guess, thou hast climbed upon the wall; and what is thy business?' And I said with confusion and surprise, 'I came upon the wall, O lady of the lovely eyes, to recover yonder necklace which is lying at thy feet.' Then she said, 'Dost thou see it lying?' I said, 'Surely, I see it very plainly as thou dost also.' Then she said, 'Come down and take it and begone. For I cannot do it for thee, since I am blind.' "

And Trishodadhi, as he listened, groaned within himself and murmured, "Aye, indeed, alas! So she was, and these were her very eyes. Now I see that the story of this elephant is true."

**Curiosity Further Aroused**

The elephant continued: 'Blind! Surely thou art jesting,' said I. She said, 'Since thy business is neither with my eyes nor with me, at all, but rather with thy necklace, come, take it quickly and begone; and cease talking nonsense on the wall.' And I said to her aloud, 'Since then I must, and thou permittest, I will descend and take the necklace and begone.' And I leaped from the wall falling heavily beside her, bruising my foot. I then said, 'Let

\*Based on F. W. Bain's translation from the original Sanskrit.

me rest for a moment; and I will depart.' She hesitated and said with indecision, 'This is a misfortune and a difficulty. For I know thee not, and I dare not stay beside thee, not knowing who thou art. And yet if thy voice is any indication of thy quality and rank, I think I need not fear thee.' I said hastily, 'Fear absolutely nothing, and I will tell thee my family and name in exchange for thy own.' Then she said, 'I am called Watsatari, and my husband is the minister of the king of whom doubtless thou hast heard.' And I started and exclaimed, 'What! The wife of Trishodadhi!' Then she said, 'I see you know.' And I said again, 'What, can it be Trishodadhi?' And as I spoke, I looked at her in dismay murmuring to myself, 'Alas, alas. Had she only been the wife of any other husband in the three wide worlds, only not of *him*!'

And Trishodadhi, as he listened, exclaimed within himself, "Ah, indeed, you are right." And he listened in agitation to the continuation of the tale.

#### Watsatari's Innocence Shown

The elephant continued: "When she heard my exclamation, she said, 'Who art thou to be so well acquainted, as it seems thou art, both with my husband and with myself?' I said in reply, 'I am the confidential agent of a neighbouring king, to whom thy husband lately rendered an inestimable service. And since he absolutely refused reward, the king, my master, said to

me: Since I may do nothing for Trishodadhi, I will do something at least for his wife. For I have heard that she is of incomparable beauty. Take then this necklace, go to the capital of Ruru, seek his minister and ask for Watsatari, his wife; and when she is actually before thee, put with thy own hands the necklace on her neck and say: This is the humble token of king Chandradatta's gratefulness for her husband's service.'

"She listened attentively and asked, 'Where then is the necklace?' And I placed it in the delicate hand she held towards me. She took it and felt it all over, telling every pearl. And she said, 'Surely these pearls are very large. Their beauty is for other eyes than mine.' And all at once, *half in derision, as I conjectured*, she took the necklace by both ends in her hands and hung it up around her neck. Instantly I forgot my self-control, and before she could prevent me, I made a move as if to clasp the two ends of the necklace behind her. I looked; lo! there at a distance in the garden stood Trishodadhi, her husband, looking at me with eyes that resembled caverns filled with black and shining water."

And Trishodadhi, as he listened, groaned eager to listen to the rest of the tale.

The elephant continued: And all at once he turned and went away without looking round. And at that very instant, Watsatari, all ignorant of her husband's presence

or his going away, pushed me suddenly with great force. I saw an angry flush upon her face; and standing like a queen that shook with indignation, she said 'Wretch, how darest thou take such cowardly advantage of my incapacity? Get thee gone! And removing the necklace from her neck, she threw it violently away, not caring where it fell. In utter confusion and agitation, I scaled over the wall and hastened home.' Reaching my palace, I hastily sent for Trishodadhi, but my messengers returned saying that he was nowhere to be found. In the meantime, Watsatari evidently found out who I was, and when I repeated my visits and pleaded for her love, I was repulsed with contempt.

#### Further Trapped

And Trishodadhi, as he listened, said softly to himself, "Out upon the husband who could doubt her, even in a dream!" And oblivious of his Tapas he listened on!

The elephant continued: I cried, 'Oh alas, alas, fie upon the husband who is my ruin and despair! And after all, what is this husband? Is he a husband who goes away and neglects thee like this?' She said, 'If he is really dead, it is my duty to follow him through the fire.'

And Trishodadhi, as he listened, said within himself, "Little does this elephant imagine who it is that sits and listens to him now."

#### The Climax

The elephant continued: She said, 'Oh king Ruru, thou seest

it is useless. Cease then thy pleading and persuasion and go away.' The more I was repulsed, the more intent did I become to gain her and used every artifice that I was capable of. One day, I scaled over the wall of her compound and hastily went towards her and said, 'Watsatari, thy husband has returned, for I have found him. And now I have him in my palace; and his life is in thy hands and mine. I have come myself with an escort to bring thee to him.' She sighed and said, 'How can I believe thee who hast lied to me so often and whose purpose I know only too well? And yet how can I resist one who can so easily effect by violence the end at which he aims, if I refuse? And yet I fear for my husband. Wilt thou swear thou wilt take me to him?'

And Trishodadhi murmured to himself, "Ah, liar, thou could'st prevail on her virtue only by making use of me against myself!"

The elephant went on: At last she consented to accompany me and said in a low voice, 'May my husband forgive me if my better judgment is in error overlooking my own danger for his sake.' I carried her away quickly to my palace, while all the time she lay as if her own soul had, abandoning its body, stayed behind her in the garden refusing to be a traitor to its trust.

#### Overwhelmed

Trishodadhi all at once rose to his feet and looked towards the

elephant; and lo! like a flash of lightning, the elephant suddenly disappeared and in his place he saw no elephant but king Ruru who exclaimed in delight, 'Ha, my story is concluded and the curse is ended! And I have escaped from the terrible body of an elephant to regain my own proper form of a man!' And as Trishodadhi looked towards him almost abandoning the body for the wonder of the thing he saw, all at once his eyes started from his head and every hair on his body stood erect. For, there close beside the Pippala tree, stood Watsatari herself, and her great eyes turned full upon Trishodadhi. And at that moment king Ruru shouted in amazement and intoxication, 'Watsatari, what? Have I regained thee also in addition to my life?'

As he listened, all at once, the heart of Trishodadhi bounded in his heart like a deer; and every vestige of his Tapasya vanished from his soul like a dream. He ran with feet that resembled wings straight towards them in agony and despair, not knowing what he said. "Ha! She is mine! Robber of a king, she is not thine!" He ran between them exclaiming to Wat-

satari, "Noble wife, forgive me, for I did not know!"

#### Chastening of Outlook

A peal of laughter rang in his face, and as he drew back in amazement he looked and lo! it was not Watsatari, but another, a stranger to him!—Kalānidhi!

Ruru also disappeared, and in his place stood Indra in the guise of a devotee, who addressed him and said, "Trishodadhi, the wise strive for wisdom and gain at least humility; but thine was a false devotion and could not stand the test. The mountain of merit had an existence only in thy imagination. Regret for objects of sense-pleasure was not extinct in thee; and the sparks of vanity, egoism and attachment to woman lay lurking under the white ashes of thy austerity, needing only a little breeze of recollection to fan them into flame. Aim not at heaping up a mountain of merit; for true devotion grows not where such motives exist. Love the Lord and yearn for His Grace alone. And to make thyself fit for it, try sincerely to effect a "release" from those emotions of joy and sorrow, mundane things were wont to awaken in thee in days gone by."

(Concluded)

## MANDUKYOPANISHAD

(WITH GAUDAPADA'S KARIKA AND SANKARA'S COMMENTARY)

By Dr. M. Srinivasa Rao

#### Gaudapada's Karika

All things seen in a dream are unreal, as they all appear inside the body. How can objects appear (in their natural state) when confined in such a small space? (33)

#### Sankara's Commentary

This and the following verses are intended to amplify what has been said in verse 25.

#### Gaudapada's Karika

Going (in no time) to a distant place and seeing objects there (are not possible in the waking state, as the time is so limited, but are possible in dream) where one is not limited by time (or space). On waking, the dreamer does not find himself in the place in which he dreamed himself to be. (34)

#### Sankara's Commentary

In the waking state, the times for going to and coming from, are limited by the distance to the country (to which we may wish to go). As there is no such limit in a dream, it is to be understood that there is no actual going to a (distant) country.

#### Gaudapada's Karika

On waking, one does not see any of his friends with whom he may have been conversing (during dream). Also, on waking, he does not find with him anything that he may have acquired (in the dream). (35)

#### Sankara's Commentary

(On waking) he does not see any friends and others with whom he may have been conversing during his dream. Also any gold, etc., he may have acquired during dream, is not found with him, when awake. Therefore there is no actual going to another country during dream.

#### Gaudapada's Karika

The body active in a dream is unreal, as one quite apart from that, is seen to be (sleeping). Like the body, everything else (seen in a dream) is unreal, being a mere appearance presented to the mind. (36)

#### Sankara's Commentary

The body seen to be moving about in a dream is unreal, as another body, quite apart from it, is seen to be resting in bed. Just as the body seen in a dream is unreal, so also everything presented to the mind is unreal. Similarly also, in the waking state, all the appearances presented to the mind (are unreal). The aim of this section is to show that waking experiences are on the same level of unreality as those of the dream.

#### Gaudapada's Karika

As (most of) the objects seen in the waking world are also seen in the dream, the former is spoken of as the cause of the latter. For that reason, to the dreamer, the waking world becomes real relatively. (37)

#### Sankara's Commentary

The unreality of waking experience is explained. As the experience of the

dreamer is similar to his own experience when awake, consisting of a perceiver, the object perceived and the act of perception, the experience of the dream is said to be the effect of waking experience. For the reason that the dream is the effect of waking, the waking experience is said to be real from the point of view of the dream. There is nothing else. The meaning is that the waking is as real as a dream. Just as to the dreamer, the phenomena of dream appear as real as the objects of ordinary experience (of course, while in the dreaming state), the existing objects of waking experience, being (supposed to be) the causes of dream experience, appear to be real to the person in the waking state. The meaning is that the objects of wakeful experience have no more reality than those of a dream.

#### *Gaudapada's. Karika*

The fact of experience not confirming the birth of anything, points to the non-production of everything. The production of the unreal from the real, is never found anywhere. (38)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

It may be objected that the waking world, though the cause of the dream, is not unreal like dream. Dream is very transitory but the waking world is seen to be permanent. (To this we reply) It may be so to the unenlightened. The enlightened people do not recognise the birth of anything. As it is not in conformity with experience, to them, all is Atman unborn, as described in Vedantic works. "It is without and within, unborn". If you think that from Atman in the waking state, the unreal dream arises, we say, no. It is against worldly experience, that anything real gives rise to an unreal non-entity. For, the production of an unreal

non-entity like the horns of a hare, is never seen anywhere.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

Constantly seeing the unreal (appearance) in the waking state the dreamer sees similar appearances, permeated by unreality. The unreal things seen in the dream, are not seen by the one awakened (from sleep). (39)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

(It may be objected :) You yourself said that the dream is the effect of the waking experience. Then how can you now assert that the birth (of anything) is not confirmed by experience? To this we reply. Listen, how the law of effect and cause is to be understood there. Seeing in the waking state, non-existing unreal things, like a snake superimposed on a rope, the same person in the dream superimposes (on himself) phenomena similar to those of the waking state and characterised by the perceiver, the object of perception and the act of perception. But on waking from sleep, he does not see the same unreal and fictitious objects of dream. Similarly, all the objects experienced in the waking condition are not always seen in the dream. Therefore, it is (from the worldly or Vyavaharic point of view) that the waking world is spoken of as the cause of the dream and not from the point of view of Absolute Reality.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

The unreal cannot have the unreal as its cause: nor can the real have the unreal as its cause. The real cannot have the real as its cause. How then, could the real be the cause of the unreal? (40)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

(Considered) from the point of view of Reality, there can be no relation of

effect and cause at any time and in any manner whatever. (If you ask) how? (we reply). An unreal (non-existing) thing like the horns of a hare, can never be the cause of the unreal flower in the sky. So an unreal is not known to be the cause of an unreal (thing). An existing thing, like a jar, cannot be the cause of non-existent horns of a hare. Also, a real object like a jar, cannot give rise to another real object (such as a jar, a piece of cloth etc). How can an unreal (non-existing) thing be the effect of a real thing? No other relation of cause and effect (beyond the four dealt with) exists or can be thought of. Therefore, to the enlightened persons, the relation of cause and effect does not exist at all.

#### *Gaudapada's Karika*

Through wrong knowledge, during the waking state, things beyond

the region of thought are felt as real. Similarly, through wrong knowledge, objects are seen peculiar to that state. (41)

#### *Sankara's Commentary*

This is said again to show that there is not the least tinge of relation of effect and cause between the unreal worlds of waking and dream. Through wrong knowledge, which is due to want of discrimination, objects of the waking world which are beyond the reach of thought and experience, like the snake superimposed on a rope, are considered to be and even felt to be real. Similarly in dream, objects such as an elephant etc, are through false knowledge superimposed on himself. The objects of the dream are peculiar to the state only and do not stand in the relation of effects produced from the percepts of the waking state.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### **Honest Pictures of Indian Life**

WE have much pleasure in extracting the following account of Master Mahasaya given by Mr. Paul Brunton in his book, "A Search in Secret India", published recently by Messrs. Rider & Co. The author's visit to the well-known writer of "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna" has given us a charming portrayal of the sage in his residence. The refreshingly sincere and honest pictures of Indian life the author paints, mark him out to be a genuine student of the precious elements of Indian culture; and in this book we have an earnest of what true understanding and sympathy, unwarped through prejudice, can achieve. As we review the book in a subsequent issue, we expect to give more of Mr. Brunton's

impressions. Meanwhile, we are happy to introduce to our readers this friend of India through the following excerpts from his very interesting book:

#### **From Lawyer to the Master**

BUT in the onward-rushing train I have picked up another thread of guidance in this quest. Like most main-line trains in India, it is packed to the point of fullness. The compartment in which I have been fortunate enough to find a berth—for all trains carry sleeping berths, except in the lowest class—contains a mixed crew. They discuss their affairs so openly that soon one learns who and what they are. There is a venerable son of Islam who is attired in the long, black silk coat, which is buttoned

around his neck. A round black cap, neatly embroidered in gold, rests on his thinly thatched head. White Pyjama trousers are gathered around his legs, while his shoes provide an artistic finish to his dress, for they are daintily made with red and green threadwork. There is a beetle-browed Mahratti from Western India; a gold-turbaned Marwari who, like many members of his race, is a money-lender; and a stout Brahmin lawyer from the South. They are all men of some wealth for they are attended by personal servants who dart out of their third-class carriages at most stopping-places, to inquire after their masters' welfare.

The Muhammadan gives me a single glance, closes his eyes, and drifts off into vacuous sleep. The Mahratti busies himself in conversation with the Marwari. The Brahmin has recently entered the train; he has yet to settle down.

I am in one of my talkative moods, but there is no one to whom I can talk. The invisible barrier between West and East seems to divide me from all the others. I feel cheered, therefore, when the rubicund Brahmin pulls out a book whose English title, *Life of Ramakrishna*, I cannot help seeing, so boldly is it printed upon the cover. I seize the bait and bring him into conversation. Has not some one once told me that Ramakrishna was the last of the Rishees, those spiritual supermen? Upon this point I engage my fellow-traveller, and he is eager to respond. We ascend the heights of philosophical discussion and descend into talk on the homelier aspects of Indian life.

Whenever he mentions the name of the Rishee, his voice fills with love and awe and his eyes

light up. The reality of his devotion to this long-passed man is indubitable. Within two hours I learn that the Brahmin has a master who is one of the two or three surviving disciples of the great Ramakrishna himself. This master of his is nearly eighty years old and lives, not in some lonely retreat, but in the heart of Calcutta's Indian quarter.

Of course, I beg for the address and it is freely given.

"You will need no introduction other than your desire to see him," says the lawyer. \* \* \*

#### At His Residence

And so I am now in Calcutta itself, searching for the house of the Master Mahasaya, the aged disciple of Ramakrishna.

Passing through an open courtyard which adjoins the street, I reach a steep flight of steps leading into a large, rambling old house. I climb up a dark stairway and pass through a low door on the top storey. I find myself in a small room, which opens out on to the flat, terraced roof of the house. Two of its walls are lined with low divans. Save for the lamp and a small pile of books and papers, the room is otherwise bare. A young man enters and bids me wait for the coming of his master, who is on a lower floor.

Ten minutes pass. I hear the sound of someone stirring from a room on the floor below out into the stairway. Immediately there is a tingling sensation in my head and the idea suddenly grips me that the man downstairs has fixed his thoughts upon me. I hear the man's footsteps going up the stairs. When at last—for he moves with extreme slowness—he enters the room, I need no one to announce his name. A venerable patriarch has stepped from the pages of the Bible,

and a figure from Mosaic times has turned to flesh. This man with bald head, long white beard, and white moustache, grave countenance, and large, reflective eyes; this man whose shoulders are slightly bent with the burden of nearly eighty years of mundane existence, can be none other than the Master Mahasaya.

#### Dignified Welcome

He takes his seat on a divan and then turns his face towards mine. In that grave, sober presence I realise instantly that there can be no light persiflage, no bandying of wit or humour, no utterance even of the harsh cynicism and dark scepticism which overshadow my soul from time to time. His character, with its commingling of perfect faith in God and nobility of conduct, is written in his appearance for all to see.

He addresses me in perfectly accented English.

"You are welcome here."

He bids me come closer and take my seat on the same divan. He holds my hand for a few moments. I deem it expedient to introduce myself and explain the object of my visit. When I have concluded speaking, he presses my hand again in a kindly manner and says:

"It is a higher power which has stirred you to come to India and which is bringing you in contact with the holy men of our land. There is a real purpose behind that, and the future will surely reveal it. Await it patiently."

"Will you tell me something about your Master Ramakrishna?"

#### Transforming Influence

"Ah, now you raise a subject about which I love best to talk. It is nearly half a century since he left us, but his blessed memory can never leave me; always it remains

fresh and fragrant in my heart. I was twenty-seven when I met him and was constantly in his society for the last five years of his life. The result was that I became a changed man; my whole attitude towards life was reversed. Such was the strange influence of this godman Ramakrishna. He threw a spiritual spell upon all who visited him. He literally charmed them, fascinated them. Even materialistic persons who came to scoff became dumb in his presence."

"But how can such persons feel reverence for spirituality—a quality in which they do not believe?" I interpose slightly puzzled.

The corners of Mahasaya's mouth pull up in a half smile. He answers:

"Two persons taste red pepper. One does not know its name; perhaps he has never even seen it before. The other is well acquainted with it and recognizes it immediately. Will it not taste the same to both? Will not both of them have a burning sensation on the tongue? In the same way, ignorance of Ramakrishna's spiritual greatness did not debar materialistic persons from 'tasting' the radiant influence of spirituality which emanated from him."

"Then he really was a spiritual superman?"

#### Spiritual Power Unique

"Yes, and in my belief even more than that. Ramakrishna was a simple man, illiterate and uneducated—he was so illiterate that he could not even sign his name, let alone write a letter. He was humble in appearance and humbler still in mode of living, yet he commanded the allegiance of some of the best educated and most cultured men of the time in India. They had to bow before his tremendous spiri-

tuality which was so real that it could be felt. He taught us that pride, riches, wealth, worldly honours, wordly position are trivialities in comparison with that spirituality, are fleeting illusions which deceive men. Ah, those were wonderful days! Often he would pass into trances of so palpably divine a nature that we who were gathered around him then would feel that he was a god, rather than a man. Strangely, too, he possessed the power of inducing a similar state in his disciples by means of a single touch; in this state they could understand the deep mysteries of God by means of direct perception. But let me tell you how he affected me.

#### Lured like the Peacock

"I had been educated along Western lines. My head was filled with intellectual pride. I had served in Calcutta colleges as Professor of English Literature, History and Political Economy at different times. Ramakrishna was living in the temple of Dakshineswar, which is only a few miles up the river from Calcutta. There I found him one unforgettable spring day and listened to his simple expression of spiritual ideas born of his own experience. I made a feeble attempt to argue with him but soon became tongue-tied in that sacred presence, whose effect on me was too deep for words. Again and again I visited him, unable to stay away from this poor, humble but divine person, until Ramakrishna one day humorously remarked:

"A peacock was given a dose of opium at four o'clock. The next day it appeared again exactly at that hour. It was under the spell of opium and came for another dose."

"That was true symbolically speaking. I had never enjoyed

such blissful experiences as when I was in the presence of Ramakrishna, so can you wonder why I came again and again? And so I became one of his group of intimate disciples, as distinguished from merely occasional visitors. One day the Master said to me:

#### Example of the Tortoise

"I can see from the signs of your eyes, brow and face that you are a Yogi. Do all your work then, but keep your mind on God. Wife, children, father and mother, live with all and serve them as if they are your own. The tortoise swims about in the waters of the lake, but her mind is fixed to where her eggs are laid on the banks. So, do all the work of the world but keep the mind in God."

"And so, after the passing away of our Master, when most of the other disciples voluntarily renounced the world, adopted the yellow robe, and trained themselves to spread Ramakrishna's message through India, I did not give up my profession but carried on with my work in education. Nevertheless, such was my determination not to be of the world although I was in it that on some nights I would retire at dead of night to the open veranda before the Senate House and sleep among the homeless beggars of the city, who usually collected there to spend the night. This used to make me feel temporarily at least, that I was a man with no possessions.

#### Spread of Message

"Ramakrishna has gone, but as you travel through India you will see something of the social, philanthropic, medical and educational work being done throughout the country under the inspiration of those early disciples of his, most of whom alas! have now passed away too. What

you will not see so easily is the number of changed hearts and changed lives primarily due to this wonderful man. For his message has been handed down from disciple to disciple, who have spread it as widely as they could. And I have been privileged to take down many of his sayings in Bengali; the published record has entered almost every household in Bengal, while translations have also gone into other parts of India. So you see how Ramakrishna's influence has spread far beyond the immediate circle of his little group of disciples."

#### Like One of Israel's Prophets

Mahasaya finishes his long recital and relapses into silence. As I look at his face anew, I am struck by the non-Hindu colour and cast of his face. Again I am wafted back to a little kingdom in Asia Minor, where the children of Israel find a temporary respite from their hard fortunes. I picture Mahasaya among them as a venerable prophet speaking to his people. How noble and dignified the man looks! His goodness, honesty, virtue, piety and sincerity are transparent. He possesses that self-respect of a man who has lived a long life in utter obedience to the voice of conscience.

#### Force of Prayer

"I wonder what Ramakrishna would say to a man who cannot live by faith alone, who must satisfy reason and intellect?" I murmur questioningly.

"He would tell the man to pray. Prayer is a tremendous force. Ramakrishna himself prayed to God to send him spiritually inclined people, and soon after that those who later became his disciples or devotees began to appear."

"But if one has never prayed—what then?"

"Prayer is the last resort. It is the ultimate resource left to man. Prayer will help a man where the intellect may fail."

#### Company of the Holy

"But if some one came to you and said that prayer did not appeal to his temperament, what counsel would you give him?" I persist gently.

"Then let him associate frequently with truly holy men who have had real spiritual experience. Constant contact with them will assist him to bring out his latent spirituality. Higher men turn our minds and wills towards divine objects. Above all they stimulate an intense longing for the spiritual life. Therefore, the society of such men is very important as the first step, and often it is also the last, as Ramakrishna himself used to say."

Thus we discourse of things high and holy, and how man can find no peace save in the Eternal God. Throughout the evening different visitors make their arrival until the modest room is packed with Indians—disciples of the Master Mahasaya. They come nightly and climb the stairs of this four-storeyed house to listen intently to every word uttered by their teacher.

And for a while I too, join them. Night after night I come, less to hear the pious utterances of Mahasaya than to bask in the spiritual sunshine of his presence. The atmosphere around him is tender and beautiful, gentle and loving; he has found some inner bliss and the radiation of it seems palpable. Often I forget his words, but I cannot forget his benignant personality. That which drew him again and again to Ramakrishna seems to draw me to Mahasaya also, and I begin to understand how potent must have been the influence of the tea-

cher when the pupil exercises such a fascination upon me.

### Parting Benediction

When our last evening comes, I forget the passage of time, as I sit happily at his side upon the divan. Hour after hour has flown by: our talk has had no interlude of silence, but at length it comes. And then the good Master takes my hand and leads me out to the terraced roof of his house where, in the vivid moonlight, I see a circling array of tall plants growing in pots and tubs. Down below a thousand lights gleamed from the houses of Calcutta.

The moon is at its full. Mahasaya points up towards its round face and then passes into silent prayer for a brief while. I wait patiently at his side until he

finishes. He turns, raises his hand in benediction and lightly touches my head.

I bow humbly before this angelic man, unreligious though I am. After a few more moments of continued silence, he says softly:

"My task has almost come to an end. This body has nearly finished what God sent here to do. Accept my blessing before I go."

He has strangely stirred me. I banish the thought of sleep and wander through many streets. When, at length, I reach a great mosque and hear the solemn chant, "*God is most great!*" break forth upon the midnight stillness, I reflect that if any one could free me from intellectual scepticism to which I cling and attach me to a life of simple faith, it is undoubtedly the Master Mahasaya.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE BRAHMA SUTRAS:** *Edited with short and easy Sanskrit annotations and an English commentary giving an expository and critical summary of the contents by Sitānāth Tattvabhūṣaṇ and Satish Chandra Chakravarty, M. A. Published by the Brahma Mission Press, 211, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 4.*

Philosophy of Vedānta or Uttara Mimāṃsā is the most popular, prominent and powerful philosophy of India, having a large following among all classes of people. It is regarded in high esteem by all schools of thought, dualists, non-dualists, qualified monists and pure monists, like Sāṅkara, Rāmanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and other great teachers of India. Rāja Rām Mohan Roy, the great revivalist, reformer and patriot-saint of modern India, also wrote a commentary of the same Sūtras in Bengali. The present writers are devout and ardent followers of the Rāja and preachers of his philosophy. They have done an immense, invaluable good to the English-knowing public by translating

the same in simple and unambiguous English. Although they have taken profusely words, phrases and sentences from Sāṅkara to elucidate the meaning of the aphorisms, they have not followed him through and through. They are not strict and orthodox adherents of the monistic school of philosophy inculcated by the great commentator. They have deviated from him in many ways and have tried to establish a new view, steering clear of Sāṅkara's fundamental doctrine of "illusion" which seems to them "often forced and biased." We appreciate the originality and critical spirit of independence of the Rāja and his followers. We wish the book a wide circulation and would recommend it to all lovers of knowledge who are eager to have the main and principal tenets and fundamental teachings of Vedānta in a small and handy treatise of about five hundred pages without undergoing the laborious task of reading the orthodox commentaries abounding in controversial and intricate dialectics. S. A.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Vedanta Society of Washington, D. C.

The nucleus of the Society was started by Swami Akhilananda in April, 1930, when he came from Providence to Washington and gave a series of lectures at one of the Capital's principal hotels. The lectures were well attended and appreciated, so he continued the work by regular visits and in June, 1931, rented a house on N. Street, N. W., to put the work on a permanent basis.

In November, 1932, Swami Vividishananda, who had been in San Francisco, was placed in charge of the work, and since then he has been trying to organise and build it up. During the current season, in addition to Sunday lectures, classes are being held explaining the texts of the Upanishads and giving short courses of lessons on the different Yogas—the classical mystic paths—preceded by a short meditation. Besides, the Society celebrated the Christmas and the Birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and had the pleasure of having guest speakers like Swami Akhilananda and Swami Gnaneshwarananda, who spoke before quite large and appreciative audiences.

Over and above the regular work, Swami Vividishananda had several outside engagements which contributed not a little to the spreading of the message of Vedānta. In May, 1933, as well as in May, 1934, he spoke at the Unity Centre at one of the conventions of the International Truth Alliance, and in the beginning of the current season he spoke twice before the League for Larger Life. He also spoke once at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York and several times at the Vedanta Society of Providence. At the time of the last World's Fair held in Chicago, the Vedanta Society there

organized a series of lectures, inviting the different Swamis of America to speak. Swami Vividishananda was one of the speakers, lecturing twice before large audiences.

The Society owes a great deal to Swami Akhilananda, who has been an unfailing source of encouragement by his frequent visits, and who has helped the work in many ways.

### R. K. Mission's Relief Work and Appeal

#### (a) BEHAR EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

This year is singularly marked by numerous calamities. Six months ago the sister province of Behar was afflicted by nature's cruelties in the form of one of the severest and most dangerous earthquakes ever recorded in history. Today the people of Assam are faced with the disastrous effects of sudden and unprecedented floods which have devastated several hundreds of square miles. We were hoping to close the earthquake relief work in Behar in about a month, but before finishing it, we have had to start flood relief work in Assam. The centres of relief at Sitamarhi, Pupri and Gangeya in the district of Muzaffarpore, the centres at Jaynagar, Lahiriāsarai and Samastipur in the District of Darbhanga, Manjha Estate in Chapra, Tetaria in Champaran and at Patna have been closed after the necessary relief. The relief centres at Muzaffarpore, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Motihari will have to be continued for about a month more. The total receipts for the earthquake relief so far are Rs. 1,12,721-5-6, the total expenditure up-to-date being Rs. 1,10,067-2-0. We hope that with the balance of Rs. 2654-3-6, the remaining work can be finished.

#### (b) ASSAM FLOOD RELIEF

It is indeed unfortunate that hardly had the people of Behar been beginning to feel relieved of the distress caused by the earthquake than the floods caused terrible havoc in the province of Assam. The whole length of sixty miles between Jagiro and Jumnāmkh Railway Stations, covering an area of not

less than 1600 square miles, was a vast sheet of water wherein many villages were swept away by the sudden and strong current, leaving the villagers on tree tops and at the hills and on the railway bunds, where possible. 23 out of 43 mouzas in Nowgong District and 12 mouzas in the District of Kamrup have been inundated. In Nowgong Dt. alone about 10 villages were under water and more than two lakhs of people were affected. The flood-affected areas were scattered over in many parts with dead bodies, mainly of cattle. Human lives also were reported to have been lost. Dwelling houses, granaries with paddy, and cattle in thousands were washed away. The nearly ripe standing crops have been totally destroyed. Thousands of people are suffering from starvation for want of food. To add to their misery, fever, dysentery and cholera have broken out in some of the affected areas.

Immediately on receipt of the information our Mission Branch at Sylhet sent two batches of workers to the affected area as early as the 24th June. Subsequent to preliminary relief they started two centres at Jhingabari and Bholagang after personally inspecting the villages of Dhargram, Plainkul, Ichchkalash and Parhna Parganas and other places. Distribution of rice and other food-stuffs has been going on from all these centres.

Our workers report from Sylhet District that about 500 head of cattle were washed away by the floods from Comilla, Meghergaon and other villages, and of these only about 50 were saved by the people of Chhatak, a village about eight miles away. Paddy, oil-seeds, and other articles have also been carried off by the water. The floods have now subsided, but most of the houses are extremely damp and partly filled with the alluvium borne in by the floods, and many houses have been practically destroyed. In some parts half the number of houses and in other parts more than three-fourths will have to be thoroughly repaired to render them fit for rehabilitation. 90% of the villagers are quite poor and form the worst

sufferers. Some of them are too weak to walk or even to talk as they have been without any morsel of food for a long time.

Our representatives from Nowgong District have also reported the enormous damages caused by the floods, the death of cattle in large numbers as well as the loss of human lives. The misery and sufferings of the people are indeed heart-rending. Our workers have started two centres at Fulaguri and Dharamtul and from these have been steadily extending their activities.

In all the affected areas rice and other food-stuffs, clothes and house-building materials are needed.

The continuation of the work in Nowgong and Sylhet Districts will require a large sum of money. As the crops have been ruined by the floods, the relief will have to be continued till October when the people will have a chance of reaping the fresh harvest. Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500 are needed per week. New centres will have to be started, if possible, in other affected areas.

The earthquake relief work of the Mission in Behar is not yet finished. Considering the enormous distress caused by the floods in Assam we have ventured to start work in that province also, with the small balance of money left of the Provident Fund, which will soon be exhausted. Unless the charitable public who have all along been helping us with their kind contributions once again come forward with their generous aid, the work taken up for the alleviation of the misery and sufferings of the poor sisters and brothers of Assam will be seriously handicapped. We therefore earnestly appeal to the kind-hearted and generous public to send us their kind help in the form of money or new clothes, which will be thankfully received and acknowledged by

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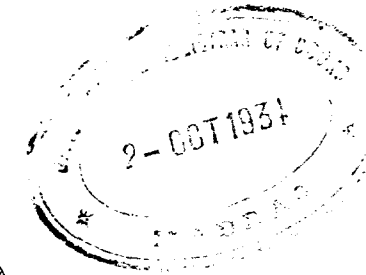
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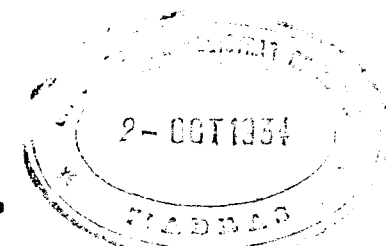
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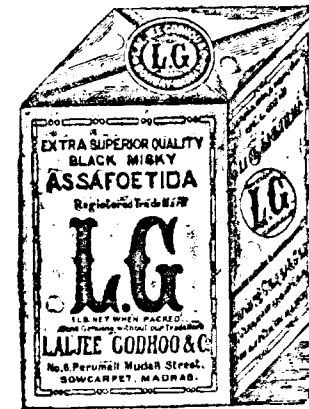
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

## THE VEDANTA KESARI

**VOL. XXI]**

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### HINDU ETHICS



दमस्तेजो वर्द्धयति पवित्रश्च दमः परम् ।

विषाम्मा तेजसा युक्तः पुरुषो विन्दते महत् ॥

सुखं दान्तः प्रस्वपिति सुखश्च प्रतिबुध्यते ।

सुखं पर्येति लोकांश्च मनश्चास्य प्रसीदति ॥

अदान्तः पुरुषः क्लेशमभीक्ष्णं प्रतिपद्यते ।

अनर्थाश्च बहूनन्यान् प्रसृजत्यात्मदोषजान् ॥

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The man of self-control sleeps in felicity, awakes in felicity and moves through the various planes of awareness in felicity. His mind is always cheerful.

The man without self-control suffers misery at all times. Such a man brings upon himself many calamities, all born of his own faults.

SHANTI PARVA (CH. CLX, 9, 12 and 13)

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

*The Master's Humorous Remarks on His Marriage*

AT times the Master would indulge in much fun over his marriage. Indeed, how amusing they were! We shall present the reader with a sample here. One day at Dakshineswar the Master was sitting at his noon-meal and talking in a light vein with Sjt. Balaram and a few other devotees. The Holy Mother had started that day for Kamarpukur, to spend a few months there on the occasion of the marriage of Ramlal, the Master's nephew. The Master (to Sjt. Balaram): What is the meaning of the (my) marriage? What is the use of the wife when I cannot keep in order even the cloth on the loins?

Balaram smiled a little and kept silent.

The Master: Indeed! I have now understood. (Showing a little curry picked up from the plate). It is for this only. Otherwise who else would cook for me with so much care? (Sjt. Balaram and the other devotees burst into laughter.) Really, who else will take care of my food with so much interest? They have all gone away today; (The disciples failed to understand whom he meant.) I mean Ramlal's aunt (the Holy Mother). She has left for Kamarpukur on account of Ramlal's marriage. I stood quite

unconcerned and saw the party going. Truly, the mind was not in the least affected on this account, as if they had no connection whatsoever with me. But a little later, the anxiety came as to who would hereafter cook for me. You see all sorts of things do not agree with me. Nor can I myself always be sufficiently attentive to my food. She knew which things would be agreeable and would prepare different courses accordingly. That is why the thought came as to who would now take her place.

*Ordinary Teachers have to marry to complete their Ten Purificatory Ceremonies. Was the Master's marriage, too, for that purpose? No.*

Another day at Dakshineswar the Master remarked with reference to his marriage, "Do you know why marriage is necessary? For a Brahmin's body there are ten purificatory ceremonies; and marriage is one of them. A person is entitled to be a teacher only when he has observed all these ceremonies." Or again, he would sometimes say, "A *Paramahansa*, a perfect *Jnani*, must pass through all the stages of life—from the lowly condition of a sweeper to the exalted position of an emperor. How can he have true renunciation otherwise? For his mind may be disturbed by its hankering after

things which he has not yet enjoyed."

*To a Hindu, marriage is a means to attaining Renunciation through Enjoyments which are not incompatible with Spiritual Life.*

We shall state the special reason for the Master's marriage in so far as we ourselves have understood it, although the Master would give the above explanation for the marriage of ordinary teachers. Our scriptures teach us at every step that our marriage is not for the sake of enjoyment. They reiterate again and again that the aim of our marriage should be the observance of the rule of the continuance of God's creation and the rearing up of virtuous children for the well-being of society.

Should our marriage, then, be wholly freed from all thoughts of enjoyment? Certainly we are not asked to go so far. The ancient seers, the authors of our scriptures, saw through the innermost depth of our beings and were well acquainted with the inherent weakness of human character. They were fully convinced about the fact that man, morally weak as he is, does not understand anything but his personal interest; he does not proceed to do anything whatever without duly calculating his own profit and loss. In spite of all this, the above injunction was laid down with the idea that true good can be attained by us, only if our mean selfish pursuit can be inseparably combined with sublime ideals. Otherwise, bereft of all noble idea-

lism man will be inevitably subjected to endless miseries under the bondage of ceaseless births and deaths.

*Through Enjoyments combined with Discrimination the Truth Gradually Dawns that Joy comes to us with a Crown of Sorrow on its head.*

Oblivious of the true nature of the eternally free Self, man runs after the enjoyment of external objects through the senses and considers this as exceedingly sweet and charming. But, alas, very few people can realise that every bit of joy is inseparably coupled together with misery; and accepting the one means simultaneously accepting the other too. "Joy appears before man," Swami Vivekananda used to say, "with a crown of sorrow on its head." Ordinary people become too much engrossed with the joy alone and find no opportunity for the consideration that the crown of sorrow, too, is there; and that if the one is accepted, the other too must come along with it. Hence it is that our scriptures sound the note of warning: "Beware, O man! Do not consider your enjoyments to be the highest good. For, suffering is its inseparable companion. Rather, look upon both of them from a higher point of view as your teachers, and embrace that alone as the goal of life whereby you can free yourself from their clutches once for all." The aim of the scriptures, therefore, is to teach people how in married

life, through the inevitable experiences of joys and sorrows and with proper discrimination, they can gradually develop the spirit of renunciation, consider all the pleasures of the world as unreal and evanescent, so that they may know God alone as the only essential Reality and strive for communion with Him in right earnest.

*The Master's Instructions as to how the Mind should be Trained to Renounce all Worldly Pleasures*

It is a fact beyond doubt that the mind will invariably give up an object of enjoyment if one proceeds to enjoy it with proper discrimination. That is why the Master would say repeatedly: Discrimination between the real and the unreal is an essential necessity. One should always discriminate and suggest to the mind, 'Well, my mind, you are hankering so much after this food, that dress and so on. But don't you see that all kinds of food, quite ordinary courses as well as the finest delicacies, are made of the same constituents—the five elements? Similarly the same component parts of blood and flesh, of bone and marrow, which are themselves but compounds of the five elements, build the forms of beautiful women as well as of any other creature. Why should there be then such intense longing particularly for these objects? Will they ever help you

to attain the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute?'

But if inspite of these arguments the mind does not yield at all, one should then enjoy the object of desire once or twice along with discrimination and finally give it up once for all. Suppose, for instance, that the mind has got an uncontrollable desire for sweets and all arguments for resisting the temptation prove futile. Take some sweets then and suggest to the mind, 'Well this is called sweetmeat—merely a modification of the five elements just like all other material things. Like any other kind of food, it becomes transformed into the component parts of the body. Its sweetness lasts only so long as it is in contact with the palate. Nothing of the pleasurable sensation persists when the thing passes down the throat. Moreover, if swallowed in large quantity, the consequence will be indisposition. Yet my mind hankers so much after this paltry thing! Fie on me: Let this desire end here once for all.'

(To the monastic disciples) Petty things can be renounced in this way after enjoying them with discrimination. But bigger desires cannot be dealt with in the same manner. For, the moment an aspirant goes to enjoy them, he gets entangled in the trap. Therefore these desires have to be rooted out from the mind *only through discrimination*, by considering the defect inhering in them.

## ADVERTISEMENT AND ITS CHALLENGE

### Why Retain Baits?

IS chanting or reading a mere pleasing diversion, in the course of which one is certain to fish up some verse or other whose reminding power, after passing through many unseen coils and accumulators, would discharge itself into some equally unseen connections and bring about the Highest Illumination? If so, should we not see that the passages selected for this exercise are all of a highly spiritual character, with nothing in them to remind the devotee of mundane things and their worthless acquisition? Should we not ensure a straight and speedy spiritual flight for all by re-editing our books and eliminating from them all portions which seem to guarantee worldly satisfactions, and which thereby exert a downward pull on the devotee who utilises them for daily reading?

### Worldly and Childish

Let us, for example, take the instance of the Chandi or Devimahatmyam, which many a sincere worshipper would continue to read and recite daily during the coming festival in honour of the Divine Mother. The Chandi is a collection of seven hundred verses describing how the Mother manifested Herself on numerous occasions for the welfare of Her devotees and overcame in battle all the wicked demons who had deemed them-

selves invincible and oppressed the worlds. The recital of this narrative is to be preceded not only by a brief meditation and worship, but also by a reading of three peculiar chapters called Argala, Kilaka and Kavacha. Each school of devotees may have its own order in the chanting of these three<sup>1</sup>; but no chapter is to be omitted. In very general terms the sages have summed up their utility by means of some rather jingling lines which tell that when the heart is open to receive the Argala, the devotee is "freed from all obstacles," that the Kilaka "binds securely" the objects of his desires, and that the Kavacha serves him like an armour under all unfavourable circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Entering into details, we find in them an astonishing variety of invocations and prayers which—after due allowance is made for differences in reading in the various manuscripts used for printing—are patently worldly, and often childish in tone.

Spiritual life, the scriptures point out, can begin only when the attachment to sense-objects wanes and the aspirant banishes the usual feverish anxiety to procure them,

1. अर्गलं कीलकश्चादौ पठित्वा कवचं पठेत् ।  
जपेत् सप्तशतिं पञ्चात् क्रम एवः शिवोदितः॥
2. अर्गलं हृदये यस्य तस्याऽनर्गलवानसौ ।  
कीलकं हृदये यस्य स कीलितमनोरथः ॥  
कवचं हृदये यस्य सर्वत्र कवची खलु ।

or to retain them when won. He has also to realise intellectually that he is an immortal essence distinct from the body and mind which are but material instruments destined to perish when the forces that brought them into existence get spent up. But how can such a noble attitude be engendered in an aspirant who fervently chants prayers that can only increase his clinging to life and thirst for pleasures?

### An Exhaustive List

"Oh Thou fair-complexioned Mother of the three worlds," says one profusely alliterative invocation, "charm, charm all minds (to my advantage); kill, kill my enemies forthwith; and in my wide awake, dream and deep sleep states save, save me and mine from dangers and troubles due to kings and thieves (significant proximity, to be sure!); fires and floods; poisons, ghosts and enemies in general; fevers, tumours and various other diseases; magical spells; scandals and all possible vile and crooked designs of my opponents."<sup>3</sup>

Says the Argala in the latter half of almost all its verses, "Mother, give me beauty, give me success, give me fame and vanquish my

3. तैलोक्यवरवर्णिनि ! समस्तचित्तं वशीकुरु वशीकुरु; मम शत्रून् शीघ्रं मारय मारय; जायतु स्वप्न-सुषुप्त्यावस्थासु अस्मान् राज-चोर-अग्नि-जल-वात - विष-भूत-शत्रु - मृत्यु-ज्वरादि - स्फोटकादि-नानारोगेभ्यो, नानाभिचारेभ्यो, नानापवादेभ्यो, परकर्म - मन्त्र-तन्त्र यन्त्र - औषध - शल्य - शून्य-क्षुद्रेभ्यः सम्यग्रक्षं रक्ष ॥-

enemies."<sup>4</sup> It varies this single note by adding in other places such requests as for example, "Procure for me a wife who will delight my mind," and "Bestow on me sons and wealth, and the objects of every other desire arising in my heart."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the last clause covers any item that may have been omitted due to oversight!

The Kilaka makes various comforting affirmations. Composed by the Great God Himself, it is capable of giving, among other things, complete freedom from fear, a normal death and salvation afterwards.<sup>6</sup> Destruction of enemies falls within its scope along with the neutralisation of magical spells. Is it therefore any wonder that people accord it unstinted praise?

### A Wholly Divine Guard

The Kavacha is of a slightly different order. After a preliminary promise of prosperity and safety from fires and weapons, it proceeds to invoke diverse goddesses, who are but different aspects of the Mother, and request them to station themselves fully armed at various strategic and vital points, physical and mental, for warding off the blows that might fall in those quarters. Thus, for example, the Sword-wielding Mother is to guard the two shoulders and the Vajra-

4. रूपं देहि जयं देहि यशो देहि द्विशो जहि ।

5. पत्नीं मनोरमां देहि मनोवृत्ताऽनुसारिणीम् ।

पुत्रान् देहि, धनं देहि, सर्वकामांश्च देहि मे ॥

6. ....मयं क्वापि न जायते ।

नापमृत्युवशं याति, मृतो मोक्षमवाप्नुयात् ॥

holding Mother the arms, while the cheeks or the roots of the ears are placed under the charge of Kalika and the Consort of Siva. Sons and grandchildren are entrusted significantly to the care of the Mother of Prosperity, the wife to that of Bhairavi, the Terrible, and cattle to that of Chandika. And if any point has been left out in this fortification, let Jayanti, the Remover of sin, cover it up and afford protection.<sup>7</sup> After this elaborate invocation, the Kavacha also, like the other two, gives a list of the benefits derivable by a repetition of it, beginning from power and fame in the three worlds, a long life of one hundred years for the devotee himself and the continuation of the line of his descendants so long as the earth remains supporting the mountains, hills and forests.<sup>8</sup>

### Ruinous in Every Respect

Name, fame, clinging to life, relatives and wealth—these are the things to be avoided by the spiritual aspirant. Yet, here, curiously enough,

7. खड्गधारिण्युभौ स्कन्धौ बाहू मे वज्रधारिणी ।  
कपोलौ कालिका रक्षेत् कर्णमूले तु शंकरौ ॥  
पुत्रान् पौत्रान् महालक्ष्मीभार्या रक्षतु भैरवी ।  
.....पद्मन् मे रक्ष चण्डिके ॥  
रक्षाहीनं च यस्त्यागं वर्जितं कवचेन तु ।  
तत्सर्वं रक्ष मे देवी जयन्ती पापनाशिनी ॥

8. तैलोक्येऽपि भवेत् पूज्यः कवचेनावृतः  
पुमान् ।  
परमैश्वर्यमतुलं प्राप्यते भूतले पुमान् ।  
जीवेद्वर्षात् विद्वानपमृत्युविवर्जितः ।  
यावद्भूमण्डले तिष्ठेत् सशैलवनकाननं ।  
तावत्तिष्ठति मेदिन्यां सन्ततिः पुत्रपौत्रिकी ॥

are scores of prayers almost the whole of which elaborately advertise these very dangerous items as supplied either gratis, or as material equivalents of the worship performed! Is there any justification for the inclusion of these unsurpassed reminders of sensual pleasures in the passages to be selected for *daily* recital? Only one consequence is to be expected: The little dispassion with which the well-meaning man begins his spiritual pilgrimage would be slowly rubbed out of him by the persistent use of this unique advertisement file!

### Where Our Normality Really Stands

To this formidable array of facts and argument, let us reply in the first instance by viewing some of the psychological changes involved in the spiritual evolution of an aspirant. No one denies that all hankering after pleasures, here or hereafter, should be rooted out before he can hope to attain higher states of awareness. But how can such a stage itself be reached? Leaving aside all theory, when we get into actual practice and impartially proceed to take stock of our mental equipment, what do we find? There may be a faint glow of dispassion, no doubt. But what about our arbitrary distinction between a religious field in which we believe we *ought to behave* towards one another like mutually-loving children of an All-loving God, and a secular field in which we consider it legitimate to enlarge our poss-

essions at the expense of our "neighbour-brothers" and "stranger-brothers" by the application of every conceivable law, self-made and other made, but all breakable if we can avoid detection? What also about our numerous desires which are kept repressed only, not sublimated; or which, we actually know in our heart of hearts, are the foundations for our actions as well as our rationalisations? Enemies, misunderstandings on the part of others, and scandals are the common lot of all, the most highly advanced sage forming no exception. And if the hostilities may not always culminate in a crucifixion, they will yet be potent enough to create painful conflicts, and not unoften a most human yearning that "the cup" may "pass" from us. "Lord," says even the sincere aspirant very often, noticing the undesirable workings of his mind, "I know what virtue is, though my deeds are not in accord with it; but neither can I refrain from what I am certain is evil." 9

It is true that when the power of self-analysis is not sufficiently developed, a person may not be able to detect the hidden motives and training formulas on which his very character is built. He may even protest violently if any one suggests the existence of such motives and formulas in what he considers his quite normal impulses and behaviour. Yet formulas do exist,

9. जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः ।

जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ॥

even as poetic and self-flattering ones as, "When I ope my mouth, let no dogs bark!" And as for death wishes, we have to think ourselves blessed that there is no deity to take us seriously at all times and fulfil them as soon as they are discharged at our numerous enemies. Else all human beings would have compassed one another's death in no time during their *secular* moments and a good many of our destructive thought-missiles would have run into sheer waste due to overlapping!

#### Wherein the Genuinely Spiritual Differ

Analysis would thus reveal that even in the minds of those who appear to be too spiritually advanced to need the Kavacha stage of Sadhana, there persist training formulas based upon the hankering after pleasures and the desire to destroy obstacles. Men, after all, differ only in the range of their desires, in the field of activities in which they cannot brook rivals and the methods they would consider just in disposing of their opponents. To a person who has acquired riches and who looks upon political leadership as his next objective, the plane of enemies has undoubtedly shifted from the competitors for an ordinary clerk's post; and it might appear to most onlookers as if he is generous and incapable of descending to low levels. But what has happened is that with the change of his immediate goal, the group of possible enemies too has undergone a change; and we may reasonably expect him to utilise

against his new enemies all the weapons that have helped him to achieve success in his earlier battles. People are thus friends, chiefly because their interests do not clash. It is only genuinely spiritual persons who refrain from starting clashes for selfish aggrandisement. Even they, however, draw on them the wrath and enmity of others whenever they uphold vigorously the cause of truth and justice. It is, again, they alone whose fights are carried on, not for the destruction of the physical bodies of those who oppose them, but for a bliss-giving substitution of all erroneous ideas by correct ones, and thus for the removal of the principle of opposition itself.

Viewed from this standpoint, then, spiritual culture is a disciplining of the individual till his desires, conception of enemies and methods of fighting undergo a progressive purification. Advance remains proportionate to the extent that he succeeds in attaching himself not to a perishable ego-consciousness, but to a clarified idea of truth and justice, of *Satyam*, of Reality. In its maintenance on the mental and physical plane, it is only prejudices and selfish motives that would become the targets of attack, but never the bodies of the persons involved. There are other views of spiritual life possible, based upon the harmonisation of the personality, or even the transcending of it into an Indefinable yet Blissful Fulness. But for the present we restrict our discussion to that aspect of spiritual development

which consists in the re-education of thoughts and feelings, and is therefore observable and "definable".

#### Is Any One to be Shut Out?

The question now resolves into this: The principle of desires and removal of enemies persists in howsoever purified and sublimated a condition in the mental make-up of the *wide awake* state of even spiritually advanced persons who suffer martyrdom for the "redemption of others." Where, then, is the lowest limit at which individuals can be admitted for this supremely valuable and covetable of disciplines? Is there any minimum sublimation at all, to be effected by a *non-religious* training, *after which alone* persons may expect to be allowed the benefit of religious training as such? In other words, are we going to tell people, "Somehow or other purify yourself to this particular extent; from there onwards 'our religion' will undertake to purify you?" Evidently such a stipulation is meaningless, as the very methods that helped to wash away the grossest impurities of the earlier stages must have in them the potentialities for further chastening, and can by no means be styled "*non-religious*".

#### Provision for All

In the Hindu methods of worship and chant, therefore, we come across various devices calculated to give an initial lift to individuals in whatever gross form of "selfishness" they may happen to be at

the time. None is to be neglected on the ground of his existing training formulas; for they are all capable of being replaced by better and more virtuous ones. And religion, if it is worth the name, must be able to handle such cases also and prescribe mixtures which can remove some of the unbearable symptoms much in advance of the expected complete cure.

### Fear, No Plan to Plunder

Looked at in this way the Argala, Kilaka and Kavacha are admirably suited for the initial discipline of even the grossest mind. A careful analysis will reveal to any unprejudiced person that they do not contain a single prayer asking for divine intervention to further selfish aggrandisement. Sensual pleasures, health, fame, progeny and wealth are no doubt sought as the means for the fulfilment of life. But there is not the slightest suggestion that any of these is to be secured at the expense of other people's legitimate claims. The enemies mentioned so often in the prayers are not enemies in the sense that they have wealth which the devotee now seeks to snatch away unlawfully, pitching a favourable deity's divine aggressiveness against the flimsy fortifications erected by the humanly limited shrewdness of his victims.

### A Comprehensive Appeal

The devotee envisaged by the chants has emerged from that plundering mentality altogether, and is suffering rather from a wildly ab-

normal sense of fear and insecurity which makes him fancy *himself* to be the victim, surrounded by a host of adversaries including kings, thieves and magicians representing roughly lawful force, unlawful force and witchcraft. Modern analytical doctors know the paralysing properties of Fear with the numerous forms of disguise it can adopt to retain its sway over the man with "persecution" and other manias. The only way of combating Fear is to introduce the sense of "Security" in as many imperceptible ways as possible into the mind of the sufferer. We have to comfort him and assure him in a general way as well as in a most detailed way, regarding the points on which he feels himself unsafe. If an appeal in the name of medical science, legal rights and popular support will not succeed in allaying his apprehensions, the last resort (not, however in point of efficacy and truth value) must be an appeal in the name of an All-powerful Entity, gracious towards His devotees and terrible towards their oppressors. It is such a comprehensive appeal that the passages in question convey to the worshipper by means of an exhaustive list of earthly and heavenly rewards.

### Superstition, Normal and Efficacious

Is this not superstition? Yes, if we like to brand it so; it is as much a superstition as is the equator we draw across the entire sphere of life's activities for maintaining an artificial distinction between a secular zone as opposed to a religious

one. It is also as much a superstition as is the sense of insecurity that the aspirant finds within himself but, unlike most of us, does not deem it a shame to confess. It is, at any rate, deadly to the feeling of fear and therein lies its efficacy. It is, besides, a superstition that contains the seeds that can later develop into the tree of spirituality, ready to expose itself to the inclemencies of the weather in order to afford shelter to many a suffering creature beneath its spreading branches.

### Device to Arouse Healthy Questioning

To lure people, by a promise of earthly and heavenly rewards, to take up a discipline calculated to work up their reasoning power to such a height as to make them question, and ultimately disregard all advertisements, is a common method employed by our religious books. The dispassion that comes out of one's own direct experience of the transience of advertised rewards,

has got an abiding value and forms the ideal foundation for the rearing up of a spiritual edifice.<sup>10</sup> Advertisement as we meet with in our books is helpful also because it is so framed as to compel the aspirant to attempt a few meditations, although of course the standard expected of him in the beginning may not be high enough for the use of so dignified a term. But if he once enters upon it, he is bound sooner or later to find it a *challenge* that can be met only by a searching enquiry into the nature of the strands composing his personality and by an honest effort to set right what is amiss therein.

As to how far the Argala and the other two as well as the Chandi prepare the ground for higher meditations, we propose to discuss in the next issue.

<sup>10</sup>. परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो निर्वन्द-  
मायात् ॥

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

13th SRAVANA, 1325 B. E.

### The Light of the Math

SWAMI Premananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, had passed away in the evening. I went to see the Mother at dusk. The mother said, "Come in, my child. Take your seat. Today my Baburam (Swami Premananda) has passed away. I have been weeping since

the morning." She again burst into tears. Continuing she said, "Baburam was dearest to my heart. The strength, devotion, reason and all the virtues of the Belur Math were embodied in him. He was the very light of the Math. His mother had inherited her father's property. She became a little proud about it. She herself confessed to me, 'I had some

gold ornaments and I thought of the world as a mere mud-puddle.' She has left behind four children. Only one child had died before her."

After a while I saw the Holy Mother placing her head at the feet of the picture of Sri Ramakrishna hung from the southern wall of the room and uttering in a heart-rending voice, "Oh Lord! You have taken away my Baburam." I could hardly restrain my tears. Golap-Ma was also seriously ill of blood-dysentery. She was almost on her death-bed.

14th SRAVANA, 1325 B. E.

### Ever Mindful of Others' Interests

It was half-past seven in the evening. The Holy Mother was seated in the Shrine room. No sooner had I saluted her than she said, "Please spread my carpet in the verandah and roll my bed which is lying on the floor near the bedstead. The devotees will sit there at the time of the evening service." Vilas Maharaj had been making arrangements for the service. I spread the carpet on the porch. The Mother said, "There is Ganges water in the bowl. Please bring it here, my child." She washed her face and hands with the water and sat on the carpet for meditation. She gave the fan to me. I began to move it gently over her body. A little later the evening service commenced. The Holy Mother saluted the image of Sri Ramakrishna with folded hands, and witnessed the evening service. After the service was over, Vilas Maharaj prostrated before the Holy

Mother and said, "Mother, it is a very hot day."

Mother (anxiously): Do you require a little fanning?

Vilas Maharaj: Who will do it?

Mother: Why? Here is my child. She will do it.

I fanned him for a few minutes when he remarked, "Mother, she was fanning you. Let her continue to do so. I do not require it any more." He left the room.

### Blessed in Serving a Devotee

Again the Mother referred to Swami Premananda and said, "My child, in the body of Baburam there was neither flesh nor blood. It was a mere skeleton." Chandra Babu came to the room and joined in our talk. He told the Mother that some devotees gave sandal-wood, butter, flowers, incense, etc., for the cremation of the Swami's body. The Mother remarked, "Their money is, indeed, blessed. They have spent it for a devotee. God has given them abundantly and will give them more." Chandra Babu left the room.

### Where the Great Differ

"Listen, my child," she continued, "However spiritual a man may be he must pay the tax for the body to its last farthing. But the difference between a great soul and an ordinary man is this: The latter weeps while leaving this body whereas the former laughs. Death seems to them mere play.

### The Master's Jokes

"Ah, my dear Baburam came to Sri Ramakrishna while he was a

mere boy. Sri Ramakrishna used to make great fun with them. Naren (Swami Vivekananda) and Baburam would roll on the ground with laughter. Once, while living in the Cossipore garden, I had been climbing the steps carrying a pitcher with five pounds of milk. I felt giddy and the milk spilt on the ground. My heels were dislocated. Naren and Baburam ran there and took care of me. There was a great inflammation of the feet. Sri Ramakrishna heard of the accident and said to Baburam, 'Well, Baburam! It is a nice mess I am in. Who will cook my food? Who will feed me now?' He was then ill of the cancer in the throat and lived only on farina pudding. I used to make the pudding and feed him in his room in the upper storey of the house. I had, then, a ring in my nose. Sri Ramakrishna touched his nose and made the sign of the ring by describing a circle with his finger, in order to indicate me. He then said, 'Baburam, can you put her (making the sign) in a basket and carry her on your shoulder to this room?' Naren and Baburam were convulsed with side-splitting laughter. Thus he used to cut jokes with them. After three days the swelling subsided. Then they helped me to go upstairs with his meals.

### Extent of Love

"Baburam used to tell his mother, 'How little you love me! Do you love me as Sri Ramakrishna does?' 'How foolish!' she would reply, 'I am your mother, and I do not love you! What do you mean?'

Such was the depth of Sri Ramakrishna's love! While four years old, Baburam would say, 'I will not marry, or I will die.' When Sri Ramakrishna was suffering from the throat cancer and could not swallow his food, he said one day, 'I shall eat later on in my subtle body through a million mouths.' Baburam replying said, 'I do not care for your million mouths or your subtle body. What I want is that you should eat through this mouth and that I should see this gross body.'

"Sri Ramakrishna never accepted anyone with numerous children. A man begets twenty-five children! What a shame! Is he a man! No self-control! He is a veritable beast!"

### Right Persons at the Right Time

Golap-Ma had been suffering from an attack of blood-dysentery. She was slightly better today. The doctor said that it would take three months to come round completely. The Holy Mother said: "Blood-dysentery is not a simple disease. Sri Ramakrishna would often be down with that disease. It happened frequently during the rainy season. At one time he was rather seriously ill. I used to attend him. A woman from Benares came to Dakshineswar. She suggested a remedy. I followed her directions and the Master was soon cured. The woman also disappeared. I never met her again. She had really helped me a great deal. I inquired about her at Benares but could not find her. We have often seen that at the time of Sri Ramakrishna's greatest necessity people

would come of themselves to Dakshin-  
neswar and then disappeared just  
as suddenly.

"I also suffered from dysentery,  
my child. The body became a mere  
skeleton. I would lay myself down  
near the tank. One day I saw my  
reflection in the water and noticed  
that all that remained of my body

were only a few bones. I thought,  
'Dear me! What is the use of this  
body? Let me give it up. Let me  
leave it here.' A woman came and  
said, 'Hallo, Mother! Why are you  
here? Come, let us go home.' She  
took me home."

Late at night I took leave of the  
Holy Mother.

## CONCEPT AND REALITY

*By Anagarica Govinda*

[This short article contains a forcible plea for the rooting out of all sense of 'separateness' and for the realisation of the 'unlimited' within us. What is gained, we are asked, by breaking images of clay, if we are going to be caught by 'definitions' and 'conceptual' images which, like parasites, live at the expense of their owners.—*Ed.*]

**From Experience to Philosophy**  
**I**F we study the history of reli-  
gion we find that a very simple  
but profound experience stands at  
the beginning and that the wish to  
express and to preserve this experi-  
ence in words, led to the formation  
of systems, creeds and dogmas. As  
the common language was unable to  
interpret adequately the visions of  
reality, people took refuge in the  
symbolic language of poetry. This  
was handed down from generation  
to generation either orally or in  
writing; but even though the words  
remained the same, the people who  
repeated them through the cen-  
turies did not. They changed slowly  
but steadily and thus the distance  
between men and words became  
greater and greater, until they had  
lost all connections with the living  
generation and it became necessary

to imbue them with new life by suit-  
able interpretation. But soon it was  
discovered that various interpreta-  
tions were possible, and therefore  
the interpreters were compelled to  
demonstrate the superiority of their  
respective systems. This was the  
birth of logic and the foundation of  
philosophy.

At first this logic worked merely  
with the more poetical or symboli-  
cal concepts of the earlier stages of  
religious experience and grew into a  
kind of theological philosophy, the  
function of which was simply to  
support some existing tradition and  
to convert it into a solid dogmatical  
system. Later on, after this logic  
had proved useful as a spiritual sup-  
port, it was believed that the method  
itself would be able to lead to the  
discovery of Absolute Truth, if only  
such presuppositions would be

chosen which were universally ac-  
knowledgeed as true. This was the  
stage of independent, or let us say  
relatively independent, philosophy  
(because nobody can entirely free  
himself from the paths).

### Limitations of Logic

If logic had really been what it  
was expected to be, all the thinkers,  
at least those who started from uni-  
versally acknowledged facts, would  
ultimately have reached the same  
result. There would no longer have  
been any doubt about what is right  
and what is wrong. In short, truth  
would have been established at last.  
But just the contrary happened.  
Even where thinkers started from  
the same presuppositions and pro-  
ceeded with the same kind of logic,  
results differed. The problems,  
instead of being simplified became  
more and more complicated. Yet  
there is no reason to blame logic  
for this failure. That would be  
just as foolish as blaming a knife  
for not being able to cut water into  
pieces. Every instrument has its  
limitation and is useful only for  
those things or conditions for which  
it is planned.

Logic is of great help in all prac-  
tical questions in the realm of solid  
things and that type of thinking  
derived from them; and if we exa-  
mine it critically, all thinking  
is a mental process of handling  
"things." Thinking means to divide  
the floor of reality into things. In  
the interest of experience, and in  
order to grasp perceptions, the in-  
tellect breaks up experience which

is in reality a continuous stream and  
incessant process of change and res-  
ponse with no separate parts, into  
purely conventional "moments",  
"periods", or psychic "states."  
It picks out from the floor of reality  
these bits which are significant for  
human life, which "interest" it,  
catch its attention. From these it  
makes up a mechanical world in  
which it dwells, and which seems  
quite real until it is subjected to  
criticism. It does, says Bergson,  
in an apt and already celebrated  
simile, the work of a cinemato-  
graph, takes snapshots of some  
thing which is always moving, and  
by means of these successive static  
representations—none of which are  
real, because life, the object photo-  
graphed, never was at rest—it re-  
creates a picture of life, of motion.  
This picture, this rather jerky re-  
presentation of divine harmony,  
from which innumerable moments  
are left out, is very useful for practi-  
cal purposes; but it is not reality,  
because it is not alive.

### If Time and Rhythm Change

This "real world," then, is the  
result of your selective activity,  
and the nature of your selection is  
largely outside your control. Your  
cinematographic machine goes at a  
certain place, takes its snapshots at  
certain intervals. Anything which  
goes too quickly for those intervals,  
it either fails to catch, or merges  
with preceding and succeeding  
movements to form a picture with  
which it can deal. Thus we treat,  
for instance, a storm of vibrations  
which we convert into "sound" and

"light". Slacken or accelerate its clock-time, change its rhythmic activity and at once you take a different series of snapshots, and have as a result a different picture of the world. Thanks to the time at which the normal human machine is set, it registers for us what we call, in our simple way, "the natural world." A slight accession of humility or common sense might teach us that a better title would be "our natural world".

Now let human consciousness change or transcend its rhythm,\* and any other aspect of any other world may be ours as a result. Hence the mystics' claim that in their ecstasies they change the conditions of consciousness and apprehend a deeper reality which is unrelated to human speech, cannot be dismissed as unreasonable. Do not then confuse that intellect, that surface consciousness which man has trained to be an organ of utility and nothing more, and which therefore can only tackle adequately only the "given" world of sense, with that mysterious Something in you—inarticulate but inextinguishable—by which you are aware that a greater truth exists.† We usually replace the continuity of movement by the relations of its elementary faces. But as the plurality of relations, existing in every face, is a hindrance to logical operations, which are based on the laws of identity and

\*As it is done in meditation, specially in its higher stages.

† Evelyn Underhill: "Mysticism". P. 35 f.

non-identity, and therefore deal with absolute units and not with groups of relations—all those relations are abstracted from the group, until nothing but a "pure concept" remains.

#### Experience Versus Definition

In this way the divine experience of what is noble and good within us leads to the absolute concept of goodness, of "the good" as such, from which the term "good" is derived. As soon as the term was there, people did not care more for the reality within themselves but began to speculate about the term. They believed to have found God while actually they had lost Him. God just as Love, denotes a relation towards something beyond the limits of our known little personality. Without this relation there is neither God (goodness) nor Love, whether we believe in them or not. The most elaborate definition of Love cannot help us, if we are not able to feel it.

There is a beautiful saying of Sri Ramakrishna about Love towards God. One of his hearers confessed that he was not able to love. "If that is so," said Ramakrishna, "try to love your fellow men." "No, I cannot!" But is there not somebody whom you like?" insisted Ramakrishna. "Yes, my nephew." "Well, then love your nephew!" The quintessence of this little dialogue is that it does not matter so much what the object of our love is (as long as it is real love) but that it is the experience of love that matters. It is just the same with

God whatever we may understand by this term, it is only the experience that counts. And the more profound the experience is, the less room is there for definitions, because definitions mean limitations, and the experience of God is the experience of the limitless, the unlimited within ourselves.

When Bahava was questioned by Vaskali, he expounded the nature of Brahman to him by maintaining silence. "Teach me," said Vaskali, "most Reverent Sir, the nature of Brahman." Bahava however remained silent. But when the question was put forth a second and a third time he answered, "I teach you indeed, you do not understand; the Atman is silence."\*

#### Concept Image Worse than Clay Image

This is exactly the Buddha's attitude. How much bloodshed and misery would have been avoided if the world would have followed his example, if humanity would have understood the value of silence. Jews, Christians, and Mohamedans were taught not to make any image of God, but they did not know that worse than any sculptured or painted image are those images which are made of dead concepts and empty words. No intelligent man will take a picture or a brazen image for "God," but there are millions who believe in concepts, worship principles and sacrifice the happiness of their fellow-beings for word fetishes. But what about those who

are not intelligent, who are in a child-like state, what about them, somebody may ask. Have you never seen a little girl playing with dolls? The doll means a real child to her even if it is ugly and crude, and she feels herself as a little mother. We say the doll is not a child and the girl is no mother, both are illusions. Well but the love which the little girl experienced and which made her heart beat with joy was no illusion. That is the point. But, for abstract concepts we cannot even feel love, they neither have reality nor do they lead to reality and mostly they are misleading. They are like vampires who themselves are bloodless shadows and suck the blood from the living. What is worse, a clay image is easy to break, but a concept is such a dead thing that we cannot even kill it. The child will grow beyond the doll and will forget or break it, after it served its purpose; but concepts the older they grow the more powerful they become. They live like parasites at the expense of their owners.

Better let savages have their fetishes, children their dolls and idol worshippers their idols. As long as they have the power to fill the objects of their devotion with life there will be more reality in them than in all the philosophy about God and soul. Woe to those, who in their foolish arrogance break idols and images of others in order to impose on them their brain-manufactured "God" and cheap prayer books. It needs much more creative imagination and concentra-

\* Dasgupta "History of Indian Philosophy," p. 45.

tion to worship an idol than to read ready-made prayers. There is more idealism (in the most literal sense of the word) in those people who are able to see a higher reality in the beauty of an image or a representation of higher forces even in the form of a crude stone, than in those "intellectuals" who reduce the world to a system of formulas and believe only in principles.

### Oneness, Not Conceptual Separateness

If anybody has fought against such mental stagnation, it was the Buddha. He was the first among the great leaders of humanity who recognised the danger of conceptual thought and philosophical abstractions. His anatta-(and anicca) doctrine was the greatest protest ever made against conceptualism and dogmatism. He knew that as long as we believe in an absolute self (atman) i.e., in a mere abstraction, which has no reality, no con-

nection with life nor with anything else, we would never escape the jungle of theories, never be able to experience the "unlimited" within us. "Even were a permanent individuality to be possible it would not be desirable, for it is not desirable to be separate. The effort to keep oneself separately may succeed indeed for a time, but so long as it is successful it involves limitation, and therefore ignorance, and therefore pain. No! it is not separateness you should hope and long for, says the Buddhist, it is union, the sense of oneness with all that now is, that has ever been, that can ever be—the sense that shall enlarge the horizon of your being to the limits of the Universe, to the boundaries of time and space, that shall lift you up into a new place far beyond, outside all mean and miserable care for self."\*

\*T. W. Rhys Davids, cit. in "The Dhamma", p. 47 by Dr. Paul Carus.

## WHAT INDIA HAS MEANT TO ME\*

*By Sister Christine*

INDIA possesses a peculiar fascination. Sooner or later all fall under its spell; some immediately, some like Hegel, who never having seen, yet have loved it and said: "It has always been the land of one's longings; it seems to us a fairy realm, a fairy world." Even those who have for years called it the land of regrets find in the end

that they cannot shake off the spell of its glamour.

What is the secret of this fascination? Is it the white wonder of the Taj, or the jewelled palaces of the Moguls? Is it the sculptured cave Temples hidden in lonely ravines and deserted mountain ridges? Some will say it is the ruins that lie scattered upon the sites of

ancient capitals that recall the lines: "So fleet the works of men, back to their earth again. Ancient and holy things fade like a dream." Others will say it is the country itself, with its mighty rivers flowing through vast opalescent plains, with its towering Himalayas, looking into the very mysteries of Heaven. Others again may think it is the romance of its ancient civilisation extending back into the dim twilight of prehistoric ages which still lives today, for here one may wander through cities more ancient than Rome, cities not of the dead as Pompeii, but of the living.

It is all this, it is the sum-total of all this, it is more—it is the call of the soul of man whether he knows it or not. All this external beauty is but a fragment, a reflection, a ray of that beauty which is invisible, unseen, eternal. Beyond it, behind it, shining through it is the Great Reality. This is the secret of the fascination, of the glamour, of the irresistible attraction, for India's gift to the world is the Light Spiritual. This spirituality is represented on the material plain by majesty, beauty, charm, by mighty citadels of snow standing guard over radiant plains and majestic rivers.

An Artist perhaps will think it is the picturesque villages, the winding lanes, the brilliant colours and graceful draperies.

India is the land of introspection and spirituality, the land of the Avatars and founders of religion,—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sankaracharya, and others from the most ancient times, down to the present day, an unbroken line of luminous souls.

If the 'wealth of Ind' is now only a memory of the past, she still has those more precious treasures of which she cannot be despoiled.

Inexhaustible mines of spiritual riches still remain to bless not only her children but the whole world. Of all the gems in this vast treasure house, there is one peerless, precious beyond price, the Koh-i-noor of the collection, and that is the teaching of the Atman, the revelation of the glory and divinity of man, the knowledge of his heritage through which he knows himself to be immortal, to be one whom death and sorrow cannot touch, without beginning and without end, before whose magnitude the suns and moons and stars and all their systems appear like drops in the ocean, before whose glory universes crumble into nothingness and space and time vanish. This is the wondrous "Evangel of the Self".

The Realisation of This is the Final Achievement, Moksha, Nirvana, Samadhi. Reaching That and That alone, the Supreme Goal is reached. Never is this Transcendent Truth quite forgotten in India.

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## PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH IN THE WORLD OF MODERN THOUGHT\*

By Swami Bhutesananda

(A Criticism)

WE express our most cordial sympathy and appreciation for the author's vital interest in religion, his liberal attitude towards other faiths and his special recognition of the philosophical contributions of India to the future world religion. But with all respects for the author's sentiments we feel constrained to refer to some of his views which seem to us unjustifiable.

The author is a Christian by birth as well as by adoption. He has openly stated in the opening chapter of the book that he will proceed with the inquiry from the Christian point of view. Therefore it is quite natural that his theistic preconceptions did not allow him to fully understand and appreciate other angles of vision which make things appear in somewhat different lights. We shall briefly mention below only a few of the points which are significant in this respect.

### I. Definition of Religion

To define religion is perhaps one of the most difficult feats which a writer on theology has to perform. Our author offers here the following as the definition of religion. "Reli-

gion, presupposing and involving the pursuit of values regarded as of supreme importance, is essentially a conscious relation of dependence on and adjustment to a higher Reality or Power, upon which man's highest values are believed ultimately to depend; also when the result of the adjustment is satisfactory, an experience of deliverance or achievement, interpreted as due to the agency of that higher Reality or religious Object; and finally a more or less mystical contemplation of, and a willed co-operation with the religious Object or higher Power to which in the first place conscious adjustment was made."

This may suffice as a definition of the dualistic forms of religion but can never be adopted as one covering other varieties of religious pursuits such as those followed by some sects of Buddhists and the Vedantins of the Advaita school. According to them religion does by no means necessarily involve any 'relation of dependence on' or 'deliverance by' or 'contemplation of' any religious Object that is believed by dualists to be different from the aspirant's own self. More-

over among dualists too, there are many characters decidedly religious in whom this attitude of dependence on God is wholly absent.

### II. The Doctrine of Karma

The author is one of the few Western scholars who have made any serious efforts to understand the true significance of the doctrine of Karma, although he too has fallen into the common error of confusing Karma with fatalism. The grand doctrine of Karma might have in some rare instances degenerated into dangerous and absurd fatalism no doubt. But that does not mean that it is often accepted here in that sense. Very far from it, Karma is just the opposite of fate. It boldly declares that every individual is the maker of his own destiny; he has every power to build his future in any form he likes. Complete reign of law does not by any freak of reason mean complete determination. It is a wonder why Eastern thinkers are so often branded as hopelessly deterministic simply because they believe in the law of Karma.

Continued existence of the individual soul after its bodily death has been accepted by East on the basis of the law of Karma long before the advent of Kant, and this is the only rationally sound outlook of an orderly nature. But we do not understand why the application of this law should be restricted to the life after death only as Western theologians have done without any cogent reason for this arbitrary

limitation. Christian theology will not permit its adherents to accept the antenatal existence of the soul, a necessary corollary of the law of Karma which the author too has agreed to in its partial application. Is God so very whimsical and guided by His likes and dislikes as to place different souls without any rhyme and reason into different circumstances at the very beginning of their existence and thereby give some of them a very favourable start while others are doomed to set out on their journey with miserably inadequate equipments? What explanation of this anomaly is possible other than either that the coming into existence of individual souls is not within the province of law but guided by mere chance, or that the favourable or unfavourable circumstances at the initial stage also are determined by Karma and necessarily by the Karma of one's own past lives?

### III. The Individual and the Absolute \*

Interminable continuance of the existence of individual souls as such, and of the physical nature as real external entities, forms the other deep-seated complex which it is extremely difficult for dualistic thinkers like our author to get rid of. If they object to the absorption of nature and the limited souls into the Absolute on practical grounds, the objection is quite

\* *Pilgrimage of Faith in the World of Modern Thought*: (Mainly) the Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lectures in Comparative Religion delivered by Douglas Clyde Macintosh before the University of Calcutta. Published by the University of Calcutta.

\* We use the term 'Absolute' here to mean the non-dualism of the Advaita Vedanta which holds that the non-dual Principle is the only Reality and the substratum on which all phenomena are superimposed.

legitimate and they have every right to retain their views so far as the practical adjustments to the environment require them. But we fail to see why this practical necessity should be equated with theoretical certainty. We know fully well, and modern science too has proved beyond doubt, that our senses do not give us correct readings of things. What right have we then to take them as they are? But the illusory nature of the phenomena we have to deal with constantly in our every-day life does not very much interfere with our practical adjustment to them. Even the distinction of reality and appearance among phenomena themselves is maintained intact for all practical purposes. But nonetheless they are all reduced to the level of unreality from a higher standpoint—the standpoint of the illumined soul. Failing to deny the reality of all entities save the Supreme Deity, theists reduce him to a limited creature with mortal imperfections like ours; while in the system of Absolutism the personal God will remain for all practical purposes as real as, nay, more real than, this phenomenal world of our experience, including our individual selves, although viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*. He will be merged, not into nothingness, but into the Absolute Ground of all existence. The saying of Sri Ramakrishna quoted disapprovingly by the author, that the same God manifests in the saint and the sinner alike can be justified from this standpoint alone. This

does not by any means do away with all differences in the practical field, thereby leaving no scope for morality as the author apprehends. On the other hand teachers of this sublime truth have one and all given all possible stress on strict moral life as the *sine-qua-non* for attaining this knowledge of complete divine immanence. And even after the dawn of light, the illumined soul can be known by others only by the life he lives—a life which never falls short of the highest ethical standards. Only his moral behaviour is quite spontaneous, flowing from his very nature while for an ordinary moralist ethical life means a ceaseless struggle.

As for the author's contention that personal God is a fact of experience and that the burden of proof to the contrary lies on those who object to it, we wonder how he fails to notice that a similar appeal to experience is made by the mystics too. How can he solve this conflict between the two types of experience? It is futile to attempt, as the author has done, to explain away the undesirable type of experience of the mystics as due to "auto-suggestion." For, the same theory of "auto-suggestion" has been applied to all religious events, including the theistic experiences, by the majority of psychologists. Therefore theists have to maintain their ground either by theoretical proof or by pragmatic argument either of which does not give theism any covetable advantage over its rival theories. On the other hand

Absolutism, if properly construed, is in a better position in so far as it can accommodate theism as well as other useful theories within its pale as so many working hypotheses, which, though not ultimate realities, may nevertheless be as much necessary for the spiritual growth of different individuals as food and drink for the maintenance of our physical existence.

#### IV. Salvation Of the World and Salvation From the World

Along with the conviction of the unreality of the world goes the other attitude—contempt for the world and therefore a longing for salvation from the world. This is according to our author a type of pessimism, though he agrees with Dr. Dasgupta in holding it to be "no ordinary form of pessimism." Temperamentally optimistic as our author is, he cannot allow this fatal anti-social tendency, a morbid symptom of the Eastern mind, a place in his ideal religion of the future. He cannot agree with Sri Ramakrishna when the latter teaches one of his devotees to pray to God that his work in and for the world may be less, inasmuch as it makes him lose sight of God.

If work for humanity and communion with God do not seem compatible for some aspirants, what else can they do but give up one of the two pursuits? Perhaps our author will insist on the continuance of humanitarian activities even by sacrificing all religious aspiration whenever necessary. But if religion has a value distinctively its own—

and the author himself has admitted such a value—then why should not one pursue that even at the cost of the other values *in case of a conflict*? The entire history of religion all over the world, however, tells us that this withdrawal from the society is prescribed only as a *temporary measure*, necessary at the *stage of preparation*. That is why we find Buddha resorting to solitude, Jesus retiring into the wilderness, and almost all prophets and saints spending *at least a period of their life* in strict seclusion. But was not this temporary aloofness on their part, as a rule, for the better service of the world although these God-intoxicated souls might not have always been conscious of this ideal of service from the very start?

We like to draw our author's attention to the other side of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. When Swami Vivekananda, his dearest disciple, expressed his desire to remain constantly absorbed in divine communion, the Master's sharp rebuke was, "Fie on you! I took you to be of much better stuff. But you too are so very self-seeking as to enjoy the bliss all alone rather than making others also sharers of it!" The world is well aware of the result of this reproof. Jesus's life-incidents, in so far as they are known, do not show that he was filled with the same spirit of service which became an outstanding feature of his later life after being possessed by the Holy Ghost. Service of humanity, nay,

of all beings, has been insisted upon by Hindu religion in all its phases as a necessary means to spiritual attainments. Again, it has been mentioned in the Hindu scriptures as a characteristic trait of all illumined souls. Even then why the Hindus are despised as pessimistic and anti-social is really an enigma. Perhaps the critics judge the faith by its degenerate forms only. But is it fair and honest? Where is an ideal in this world that has never been degraded?

### V. The Christ-ideal

As regards the author's reference to the Christ-ideal as the best contribution to the future world religion we gladly acknowledge our deepest regards for such a noble ideal as this. Though the historicity of Jesus may never be freed from controversy, nay, may be disproved altogether, yet the ideal will ever remain as a beacon-light guiding travellers in the field of spirituality. But at the same time it must be pointed out that other religions also are not entirely deprived of such grand ideals. Rare specimens of humanity like these, whatever be their historical and geographical settings, will always infuse dynamic vitality into our religious life and remain worthy objects of our worship. But let us not forget for a

moment, that there is ample space in the firmament of religion for more than one such star to shine forth side by side, so long as there remains an endless variety of human temperaments. In the light of pragmatism in its representational form, as accepted by the author, we may say, the various ideals represent the truth in its different aspects or degrees, or in other words, they reveal different paths leading to the same goal, *i.e.*, perfect religious adjustment inasmuch as they have proved their worth in this respect by producing characters which are living symbols of spirituality.

The most perfect picture of a universal religion will therefore be one which will adequately provide for all our reasonable spiritual aspiration in all its richness of variety. Finally, it is, no doubt, our own religious life that will be the best guide to the better understanding of this vast region which is as yet so dimly perceived. What we desire to emphasise here is not "intellectual inertia or irresponsibility," but breadth of vision and openness of mind for receiving new truths and being aware of our own limitations, which alone can foster sympathy and spur us on towards further enlightenment.

## A HOUSEHOLDER SAINT AND POET OF KERALA

By M. S. Krishna Aiyar, B.A., B.L.

HERE is the story of a householder saint who had very little of scholarship and much less of scriptural learning, who yet by "blind faith" and intense devotion realised God. To him Lord Krishna was always present in person and him the Lord saved from every difficulty and disgrace. Through his Bhakti he composed verses praising the Lord and inculcating the fundamental truths of the Vedanta. This Grihasta, Poonthānath Nambudiri, had his Illam<sup>1</sup> in a little village called Angādipuram near the famous Sri Krishna temple of Guruvāyur. He was a Nambudiri Brahmin belonging to the section not entitled to study and recite the Vedas<sup>2</sup>. He was a contemporary of Mepathur Bhattatiripad, the renowned author of the devotional poem "Narayaneeya." Poonthānam's life and work and especially his devotional experiences were closely associated with those of Bhattatiripad.

### Baby's Tragic End

As in the life of several other saints, it was a domestic calamity that made him a Virakta (renunciant) over and above his being by nature a Vishnu Bhakta. A long-

coveted first son was born to him. For the Annaprāsana ceremony<sup>3</sup> of the child several Antharjanams<sup>4</sup> had come on invitation. The child was sleeping in a dark corner and the ladies without noticing this, spread their portmanteaus over the bed of the child. When the auspicious hour for the ceremony approached, the mother with the idea of bathing the baby first, went to the spot and to her great sorrow and confusion picked up the child dead. The child had died of hard-breathing. The father's sorrow knew no bounds and he then composed the soul-stirring "Jnānappāna" (poem enabling one to acquire knowledge or Jnāna) in Malayalam. This poem is written in such sweet and simple style and with the heart of a true Virakta that it gives today solace to many a sorrow-stricken soul.

### Humbling of Scholar's Pride

After this misfortune Poonthānam spent most of his time in the Guruvāyur temple with his daily Snāna (bath), constant Japa, Pradakshina, and Namaskāra. Of this period of his life and his companionship with the Lord, many a story is being told today. It was at this time that Mepathur Bhattatiripad

1. The name by which a Nambudiri's house is known in Malabar.

2. Among Nambudiris there are two classes, the *Adhyans* and the *Anadhyans*, the former alone being considered fit to study and recite the Vedas.

3. The ceremony of the first feeding of the child with rice.

4. Name by which the Nambudiri ladies are called owing to their observance of the *Purdah*.

came to the Guruvāyur temple for worship and meditation. When the learned Bhattatiri began to compose his "Narayaneeyam," Poonthānam began his poem "Santhānagopālam" in Malayalam. Bhattatiri, the great scholar and the Ādhyān Nambudiri that he was, had a secret contempt towards the unschooled Anādhyan Poonthānam, and Malayalam poetry in general. The innocent Poonthānam, unaware of this, one day placed his half-finished "Santhānagopālam" before Bhattatiri for perusal and correction of mistakes, if any. Bhattatiri exclaimed, "What is there for perusal or examination in Malayalam poetry? Can any one expect to see in it anything but mistakes? Moreover, Poonthānam, you have also no Vibhakti jñana (knowledge of the case endings) and so your poem must be full of mistakes only." When Bhattatiri said so much, in the presence and hearing of several others, Poonthānam out of sorrow and shame wept aloud and ran away to a corner of the temple. Suddenly a voice from the Garbhagriha (the sanctum sanctorum) was heard to say, "Though Poonthānam has not as much grasp of Vibhakti as Bhattatiri, yet he has in him greater Bhakti than the Bhattatiri." At this unexpected revelation Bhattatiripad hung down his head in shame and cursed himself for his egotism and went in search of the sorrow-stricken Nambudiri. Finding him out, Bhattatiri said consoling him, "Friend! are you weeping because I gave you

offence? At that time my mind was not free. I was thinking of other things. That you are a poet and your poetry is good have been amply proved and universally admitted when you composed your 'Jñānappāna' itself. Then, why take offence at my simply jocular remarks? Please give me your poem, I will certainly make the necessary corrections." Thus saying Bhattatiri read through the poem as far as it went, commended it and gladdened the heart of the Nambudiri.

#### Vision of Vishnu's Abode

One day Poonthānam went to bed thinking of the best way of describing in his above poem, 'Vaikunta' whereunto Sri Krishna and Arjuna went. In a dream Guruvāyurappan (the presiding deity of Guruvāyur, Lord Krishna) showed him Vaikunta itself, and it is said that it was according to this vision that appeared before him that he described Vaikunta in his poem. It is also believed that Bhattatiri's "Narayaneeya" and this poet's "Santhānagopālam" were finished on one and the same day. Many a legend is current as to how Guruvāyurappan made others eat the humble pie to please this prince of devotees and place him in a superior position.

#### Lord of Trees Too

Poonthānam was one day chanting "Vishnu Sahasranāma". As he was repeating the verse "Padmānābho' maraprabhuh," he broke the two portions and pronounced "Maraprabhuh" separately. A

learned Nambudiri who was close by, addressing Poonthānam said, "You fool! Repeat the verse coalescing the two portions properly. It is not 'Maraprabhuh', it is 'Amara-prabhuh'." To the utter dismay of this corrector a voice emanated from the Garbhagriha: "Then who is Maraprabhuh? I am Maraprabhuh too."\*

#### Attested by the Lord Himself

The Bhagavata used to be read and interpreted in the Guruvāyur temple by very many eminent scholars and the practice continues even today. Though Poonthānam had not much knowledge of Sanskrit, yet his constant hearing of the Bhagavata interpreted, enabled him to give the meaning of any portion of the work and explain the same in the inimitable style of a real Bhakta with illustrations of his own. His exemplification full of Bhakti Rasa (devotion) attracted many an eager devotee and it came to be that, whoever might read, the interpreter was to be Poonthānam only. This excited the jealousy of many scholars, but as a matter of regular practice he alone occupied the place of the interpreter. On one occasion, in a large assemblage of learned men, that portion of the story relating to the marriage of Rukmini began to be read, and Poonthānam as usual continued his explanations. He said, "Rukmini said such and such things to the Brahmin messenger and despatched a letter through him to Sri

Krishna." The letter not having been mentioned in the Bhagavata, one from the audience questioned, "Where, in which Sloka is it said that a letter was sent?" Poonthānam was flabbergasted and could not reply. But his never-failing companion, the Lord, came to his rescue. The voice from the Garbhagriha came out ringing, "In which Sloka is it said that no such letter was sent? When that Brahmin came to Me he had also brought a letter from Rukmini." At this the questioner was at his wit's end. Poonthānam was much pleased and the rest were surprised beyond measure.

#### Presence at Home henceforth

Poonthānam thereafter became the object of universal respect and he began to have the first place (the place of honour) in the temple feast held day by day, almost as a matter of right. One day a Nambudiripad, a renowned Vedādhyaī, had come to the temple, and the manager in charge of the temple festivities had decided to offer the first seat to him. Poonthānam, not knowing this, occupied the first place as usual. Then the manager came and addressing him said, "Today a very learned and pious Brahmin has come here. It is not proper for you to occupy the first seat and so you must vacate." Poonthānam who was occupying the seat unquestioned for such a long time and that, with the approval of eminent personages, was naturally not inclined to vacate the seat. So the manager came and forcibly removed him by the hand.

\*Maram in Malayalam means a tree.

Poonthānam thought that he was subjected to this insult because of the inferiority in his not being fit to study the Vedas and his not being a man of much learning. He wept bitterly and went out of the temple. But how could he go without being comforted by the Lord? Then again the voice from the Garbhagriha came, "Oh Poonthānam, you should not hereafter live with these wicked men, nor need you come here to see Me. Whenever you desire I will be present before you at your Illam". With unbounded joy Poonthānam returned to his Illam.

#### Grace from the Left

As soon as he went there, he resolved that he would not eat his meal without seeing the Lord and quietly sat there. Then Lord Krishna, the great lover of Bhaktas, presented Himself in person at the Illam. The prince of devotees, seeing the Lord in flesh and blood at his left side, immediately rose up and prostrated before Him. The Lord said, "Hereafter, you offer prayers to Me only from here. You will have

My presence here at all times," and then disappeared. At the spot where the Lord was seen, Poonthānam built a Garbhagriha and within it consecrated an idol of Sri Krishna and began to offer regular worship. As the place where the Lord was seen, and consequently the temple was built, was to the left of the spot where Poonthānam sat, the temple was called "Edathupurath Ambalam" (the temple on the left side).

His constant touch with the Bhagavata and his intense devotion to the Lord enabled him in course of time to compose verses in Sanskrit too. It is opined by some that the famous "Sri Krishna Karnāmrita" is his work and that it relates to the Krishna of his Edathupurath Ambalam.

Nothing more than what is stated above is known about this great saint and poet, except that after settling down in his Illam he had several long lived-children through the grace of the Lord and that he passed his days happily with unswerving Bhakti and intense love towards Him.

## MOMENTS OF INTENSITY

*By Chandra, M.A.*

### A Curious Test

I had once the privilege of hearing the head of a section of Buddhists. He was disclosing to us the rather strange methods of initiation in vogue among them. Citing his own experience as an example, he said that his master first gave him to solve what would seem to us an impossible problem, "Reproduce before me the facial outline of the seventy eighth ancestor of yours". Given a problem of this kind the would-be disciple has to ponder over it day and night for a solution; and till he hits at the real one the master will ward him off as unripe for discipleship. The lecturer continued that the solution may dawn on him when he was least worrying his mind about it. "It may burst on him with all the splendour of a new revelation when he is seated in a public conveyance and looks at a wayside lamp-post or when he comes upon a child amusing himself alone. The glory of such a revelation came over me while I was gazing on a solitary flower in the chink of a ruined wall." The shock of such a sudden lifting up of the veil is of the nature of a poignant bliss. This time he knows he is right and the Guru too welcomes him to his care and initiates him into the mysteries of divine lore.

### Value of Unique Moments

Granting a fundamental difference of kind, the difference between the physical and the spiritual planes is essentially one of degree. Both of them obey the same inner logic; and the laws of cause and effect and of the results of action and effort hold good as much in the one as in the other.

Such experiences referring themselves to particular unique moments in life, and forming as it were the bright spots in a life of monotonous grey, though rare, are not impossible. Every moment which culminates in an act of physical exertion or a tension of mood or which is lit up with a rare intensity of emotion is precisely analogous to the experience narrated above. The human mind is not a mere camera reacting faithfully to every experience that besets it. It has its own vagaries and indulges in its own choice idiosyncrasies of mood. The play of light and shade thus varies infinitely from person to person and though the common experiences of life are roughly the same in all cases, the life of each individual is a tangle of mixed yarn, an irregular mass with protruding angularities and outstanding experiences.

Thus the life of man is not of an even tenor, but is the result of a million separate and smaller expe-

riences, most of which, conforming as they do to the uninteresting monotony of a daily routine, are scarce worth remembering. The tendency therefore is to reckon up the final value of a life in the light of a few unique moments and outstanding achievements rather than by a scrutiny at the basic trifles that form the major share of our lives. In the realm of the spirit too, which is conterminous with our physical life, one judges a life-long spiritual career by referring to the unique moments in the journey of the spirit. It is not our task to decide whether such a reckoning is just. We are concerned with these moments alone. It is but logical to infer that the more intense and the more frequent such moments are, the greater has been the general rigour of the life.

#### Reminders of Our Distant Home

Such moments may savour either of joy or sorrow. They may intuitively refer us to an infinite good or a diabolic evil. For better or for worse they have in them sparks of a vital energy over which we have no control. Externally they may be of the smallest magnitude, mere trifles; but within them is shut up an almost volcanic power. They overwhelm us in their mighty swoop on us, and their power of transmutation is miraculous. Coming as they do with no effort on our part, and gripping us when we are least aware of them, these experiences are more or less divine visitations waking up memories of the

Distant Home in our minds. The voice is ringing in our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in the midst of worldly things we think that we have forgotten everything else; then comes a moment's pause and the voice rings in our ears 'Give up all that thou hast and follow Me, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.'

#### Experienced by the Ripe Alone

But such moments are not for every one. They dawn only on the select and chosen few. The crimson flush of the rose does not stir the same happy feelings in one and all. Only in the heart of a lonely poet does it set vibrating strange chords of harmony. So also, these moments carry their blessed power of redemption only to those who are ripe for being initiated into the divine mysteries. The power of the man and the power of the moment are full and all that is necessary is to join the two. To the man rushing at topspeed down a precipitous incline, the mere stumble over a stone is enough to hurl him headlong into certain death. These trifling external accidents form the proverbial last straw and set fire to mines and mines of explosives beneath.

One word of wondering and heartfelt counsel from the lips of his beloved was enough to transmute that arch-voluptuary, Leela Suka, into the most ardent devotee of the Lord!

The mere sight of old age and death was enough to rouse the latent divinity of the Buddha, and send him to grapple with the mystery of life, renouncing all the pleasures of the palace.

A few words of tolerance from the Godman of Dakshineswar turned that Bohemian and libertine, Girish Chandra Ghosh, into the greatest devotee.

A great monk's formal initiation into the life of the Sannyasin savours of the same simple yet mysterious touch. He saw an old beggar-woman weeping bitterly over a handful of rice scattered on the dust by an unheeding stranger who brushed past her carelessly. The experience was too much for him. The world appeared to him sheer devil's play, and in a short time he turned monk.

A still more amusing story is told of the person, who came to Swami Vivekananda and was feeling restless, from what cause he himself was not aware of. But the great moment had come for him. Swamiji clapped him on the shoulder and said simply, "You want to renounce the world and you don't know it." No doubt the person turned a monk.

It was the purest of chances that wrought the whole change in the life of Sister Christine. She had planned and made ready to go on a tour when through a pure whim she stayed to hear Swami Vivekananda. But for that moment!

Examples without number! They all alike show that the Lord's mercy droppeth where it 'listeth.'

#### Unlike Hedonists and Æsthetes

In talking of these single moments of rare experience it would seem as if we are treading the same ground as the Hedonists and the Æsthetes. Their aim in life too is to enjoy as many as possible of these exquisite moments at their sweetest. But really, these moments of sensual apprehension have nothing in common with those of the spiritual aspirant. The Æsthete enjoys such moments in and for themselves. They are ends in themselves and lead nowhere. Again the world of the Æsthete is circumscribed and bound up within the narrow limits of a human life. In contrast to these, the realm of the spirit is infinite, and these moments are only the means to a greater end.

The essential value of these single experiences lies in that they stabilise and increase the general intensity of our lives. They are of the nature of spiritual stimuli.

#### What Intensity Can Do

It is this question of the intensity of our normal life that Vivekananda deals with so often. The supreme message of the Upanishads to him is the one word 'strength' which is synonymous with what we have been calling 'Intensity.' He had greater hopes of those who live their lives intensely though badly, because there is a chance that in case any change for the better

dawns on them, the reformation in their lives will be as violent and thorough; whereas the white-livered person identifying himself half-heartedly to a thousand different details can be led nowhere. According to the Upanishads each soul is potentially divine, and sooner or later each particle must attain its liberation. It is only a question of time. But it is here that the question of intensity has such a great share of effect. The great prophets of the world in the span of a single life cover the same ground which the ordinary soul takes millions of cycles of births and deaths to cover, and all because of the unique intensity with which they live each moment of their lives.

Hence such moments find their logical culmination in the state of

final beatitude resulting from the realisation of the Supreme. A measure of the normal intensity of the daily life of such an one as Sri Ramakrishna can be had when we consider the trifling nature of the external factors that thrilled him into a superconscious state of God realisation. A song from Narendra, a look at a holy picture, the mere mention of the Divine Mother, the sight of a string of cranes winging across the blue—these were enough to throw him into Samadhi. And what is more wonderful still, this tremendous God-intensity was so much a part and parcel of his very physical frame, that the mere touch of a coin was sufficient to throw him into paroxysms of physical agony. Such a state reminds us of St. Francis of Assisi when he received the stigmata.

#### Answering Voice Within

|                                                         |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| WHY, Oh why hast Thou, my Lord,                         | Punishment, callest it, thou wayward mind?         |
| Deemed it fit to leave me thus                          | Can ever my Lord's gift a punishment be?           |
| Stranded alone in this barren land?                     | 'Tis but a blessing; and such true Faith mine      |
| E'en prisoners have claim to know their crime, my Lord, | That were He to put me e'en to the sorest trials,  |
| Why leavest me in ignorance if fault I have done?       | One and only one thought shall abide in my breast— |
| Knowing, Thy punishment shall I more meekly bear.       | Beloved, I am Thine, Thine ever, my own!           |

Infant

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS

##### A Note on Gita, Ch. I

Prof. D. S. Sarma, M.A., author of *A Primer of Hinduism* and of other valuable books on the Hindu religion, makes some interesting comments on Arjuna's arguments contained in the first chapter of the Gita.

"A casual reader of the Gita," writes he, "is apt to look upon the first chapter as a mere scaffolding and thus miss its true significance. But to understand the full import of the teaching that follows, we should clearly grasp the position of Arjuna and pay particular attention to the points that emerge out of his argument in the beginning." The points the Professor wishes to be noticed are these:—

(1) Arjuna speaks at first only of the consequences of his action and not of its inherent rightness. And when he does raise the question of rightness he uses specious arguments.

(2) He speaks constantly of his own clan. The word *Swajana* occurs four times in his speech. It is significant that he speaks of his duty to his clan but not of his duty to his country or to his subjects. He speaks like a communalist.

(3) His conception of Dharma is mechanical and lifeless and consists in mere external rules. In refreshing contrast is the conception of Dharma with its vast spiritual background that is revealed in the Gita.

(4) He does not raise the question of non-violence as a method of warfare. He raises only the ques-

tion of self-centred action and its consequences.

\* \* \*

##### Critical but not Hostile Eye

In our last issue we published a few excerpts from the book 'A Search in Secret India' \* by Paul Brunton, an English journalist who visited India to gain first-hand knowledge and experience of the spiritual wisdom of this country. Mr. Brunton paints fascinating pictures of Indian life and right through the book we find a sincerity of approach and a capacity to understand points of view, preferences and tastes that are often alien and at times antagonistic to an average Westerner's mental make-up. The author's scientific training and commonsense attitude compelled him, he says, 'to keep a critical but not hostile eye,' widely open wherever he went. His scepticism came often into sharp conflict with his spiritual sensitivity. Yet it did not blind him to facts of real experience.

##### Miracles Also Obey Laws

Mr. Brunton has observed many phenomena for scientists to investigate. Science does not ignore facts, but strange happenings are *also* facts; they are not to be thrust away as miracles. When we cannot explain a phenomenon under the known laws of nature we unfortunately damn it by labelling it as miracle. But in the words of St. Augustine, miracles do not happen 'in contradiction to nature, but only in contradiction to what is

\*Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., Paternoster House, London E. C. 4. Price 15sh.

known to us of nature.' A truly scientific person must keep an open mind and must be prepared to weigh all evidence, enlarge the scope of knowledge and arrive at generalisations that should take in *all* facts that are impartially observed, to determine the truth behind,—a truth that is not the private possession of a select few only but which can stand all tests of science.

### Emptiness Only in Him who Damns

Although Mr. Brunton had to wade through "a welter of crass superstition, incredible impostures, and ancient pretensions" he remarks:

"Those who close their minds to the entrance of all Eastern ideas, close them also to fine thoughts, deep truths and worthwhile psychological knowledge. Whoever will poke about this musty lore of the Orient in the hope of finding some precious gem of strange fact and stranger wisdom will find his quest no vain one."

"When Orientalists like Burnouf, Colebrooke and Max Muller appeared upon learning's scene and brought us some of the literary treasures of India, the savants of Europe began to understand that the heathens who inhabited that country were not so stupid as our own ignorance had presumed." "Those clever people who profess to find Asiatic learning empty of all useful thoughts for the West thereby prove their own emptiness. Those practical persons who fling the epithet 'stupid' at its study, succeed only in flinging it at their own narrow-mindedness. If our ideas about life are to be wholly determined by mere accident of space, by the chance that we were born in Bristol instead of Bombay, then we are

not worthy of the name of civilised man."

The Hatha Yogi of Madras, the magician from Egypt and the wonder-worker of Benares gave him sufficient intimations of an empire of reality that has yet to be annexed by the investigations of science. That men of science are not averse to meet this new situation which an array of facts observed by the *normally-minded* has brought to the forefront, is clearly evident from the new association formed in London for an impartial inquiry into psychic phenomena by persons who are scientists, doctors and professors of psychology. This new association is sponsored into activity in an informal manner by no less an academic body than the University of London. We trust that this book of Mr. Brunton will attract their attention.

### Possibilities of Hatha Yoga

From the anchorite of Adyar river Mr. Brunton learnt the secret of the Indian system of Hatha Yoga. "Our Yoga exercises," the hermit correctly informed his visitor, "are really poses and require no further movements after the pose has been taken up. Instead of seeking more energy with which to be active, we seek to increase the power of endurance," and he cautions Mr. Brunton, "These benefits come only if the exercise is done in *our* (italics are ours) way and not in your hasty Western manner." Mr. Brunton concludes his remarks on Hatha Yoga with an apt recognition of the value of a system that has only of late begun to attract votaries from the West. Even in India organised attempts are being made on laboratory research basis to study the system of Hatha Yoga. Swami Kunalayananda's institution at Lonavla, Prof. K. V. Iyer and

Mr. Sundaram of Bangalore and the Chief of Oundh are all names which every Indian interested in the modern developments of this indigenous system is well aware of. Very pertinently Mr. Brunton remarks:

"The average Englishman is so apt to regard the average Indian as a weakling, as an enervated product of tropical sun and underfeeding, that it surprises one to learn that such a carefully thought out native system of physical culture has existed in India since antiquity.....Perhaps if the West with its thorough methods of scientifically directed research, would pick some dust-covered practices out of the traditional teaching of Yoga, we might arrive at a completer knowledge of our bodies and a fuller regime of healthy life."

### Stress on Test of Personal Experience

From what has been said above one should not be under the impression that Mr. Brunton was attracted only by the physical endurance feats of Brahma, the psychic exhibits of Mohammed Bey and the miracles of Vishuddhananda. The author was out to discover and experience the still deeper side of life. Our thought-tortured brain creates numerous *meta*-physical problems and imprisons intellect within its own barricades of perpetual interrogations. In every Mumukshu there is an infinite yearning for the Infinite and he wants a way out. In the very beginning of the book the author has announced his plan of campaign. "What is the truth behind the fitful hints which reach us intimating that there exists in India an old wisdom that promises the most extraordinary development of mental powers to those who practise it?" He says he has a scientific

training and is as a matter of fact most rational in his outlook. He is not religious in the accepted sense of the term. Intellectual proofs of one system over another have made him tired and he has become sceptical of everything "which cannot be proved by personal experience." He does not want to be the depository of other people's doctrines.

Applying his tests he found that the Parsi Messiah, Meher Baba, was not up to his expectations. He devotes two chapters for Meher Baba. To him the story of Meher Baba provides a "handy illustration of the strength and defect in Indian character. India suffers from the defects of an illiterate and over-religious race, untrained in those scientific modes of thought which demand the divorce of emotion from reason, history from hearsay, and fact from imagination."

### Eulogy on Dayalbagh

Mr. Brunton, on the other hand, devotes a very informing chapter to describe his visit to Dayalbagh in Agra, the headquarters of the Sat-Sangis, of the Radhasoami cult. He was much impressed by the unique powers of organisation of Sahibji Maharaj, their leader, and in the growing industrial town of Dayalbagh he sees an answer to the economic problems of this country. He has not however critically gone into the problem and discussed how far a system, however much it might take after a Western pattern, can be a model for *all* India, if it is built on *theocratic* foundations. Anyway the experiment is really novel, and he finds in Dayalbagh "a curious mixture of American alertness and practicality, British predilection for correct conduct and Indian devoutness and contemplativeness."

### Most Impressed by Ramana Maharshi

For a person with the intellectual equipment and spiritual sensitiveness of Mr. Brunton, it is no wonder that the Sage of Tiruvannamalai made the strongest appeal. In the June issue of this magazine we had published portions from a letter of a friend who records his impressions of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Our friend's critical outlook and Mr. Brunton's are materially the same. We can unhesitatingly say that the three chapters he devotes to depict the character and personality of Ramana Maharshi form the most interesting portion of his travel diary. Sir Francis Young-husband who has written a nice foreword to the book has also drawn the reader's attention to this fact. The author makes an honest confession of faith when he says "I feel that in the Maharshi I have met the most mysterious personality whom life has yet brought within the orbit of my experience."

### Come to Reveal, not to Argue

Again in another place he says :

"It seems to me that the presence of men like Maharshi ensures the continuity down history of a divine message from regions not easily accessible to us all. It seems to me further that one must accept the fact that such a sage comes to reveal something to us, not to argue anything with us. At any rate his teachings make a strong appeal to me, for his personal attitude and practical method, when understood, are

quite *scientific* in their way. He brings no supernatural power and demands no blind religious faith. .... He avoids the dark and debatable waters of wizardry, in which so many promising voyages have ended in shipwreck. He simply puts forward a way of self-analysis, which can be practised irrespective of any ancient or modern theories or beliefs which one may hold, a way that will finally lead man to true self-understanding."

In another place he candidly remarks, "I have to admit, in answer to my inner questioner, that he is the one man, who has impressed me more than any other person I have ever met, whether in the East or West."

### Need for more of Honest Pictures

After a fruitful stay of some eventful weeks, Mr. Brunton returned to his native land and in his heart of hearts he yearns to come back to India and dedicate himself for a deeper understanding of the Self, and bask for some more time under the spiritual radiance of one who is recognised by many as a Jivanmukta and a Brahmajñani. Visits from men like our friend will undoubtedly go a long way to bridge these two mighty streams of culture, of the East and of the West. We have great pleasure in unhesitatingly recommending this brilliant record of Mr. Brunton's travels to be read by all lovers of India. As a piece of literature giving graphic pictures of Indian life, this book has few compeers.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: ARGUMENTS, TEACHINGS, PRACTICES:** By Michael D. Lyons L. G., *Light of the East Office, 30, Park Street, Calcutta.*

This booklet aims to be a skeleton outline "of the principal arguments for the truth of the Catholic Church, some of the most striking teachings and deeds of Jesus Christ and the main beliefs and practices of the Catholics." Such a short book as this will be gladly welcomed by the faithful Catholic population, especially at this time when many cannot expect to have the necessary leisure to master the voluminous literature that has sprung up round the "holy Church." How it will appeal to the non-Catholics and those Catholics who have disinherited all that Catholicism has offered except the denomination they chance to belong to by birth, we are not in a position to judge precisely. Critical literature brought out by innumerable counter-movements headed by men counted among the greatest of thinkers and reformers, has evaluated the claims of the "only infallible Church" within the last five centuries. It is not necessary here to examine the truth and excellence of the Catholic tenets; nor can the age-long quarrel existing between enlightened reason and sectarian dogma be settled in a trice.

Nevertheless we would like to make a note of the following facts that have struck us. History has given sufficient warnings to cry halt as soon as bigotry and fanaticism cease to afford any motive force for some universal good. It is a pity that in spite of these millenniums of enlightenment there are many who overlook this warning. Each and every one has full and legitimate right to "prove" the excellence of his faith in the light of his "Biblical Science." But when one tries to rate other's faiths by odious comparisons one forgets the demands of equity. The author of this booklet attributes the

reported miracles by Hindu ascetics to natural causes and Catholic miracles to suspension of laws by the power of God. But if natural causes explain a phenomenon why should it be counted a miracle at all? However, it may be remembered that Hinduism is not out on proving its truth by miracles and "registered cures." Miracles are cried down in Hindu scriptures as a stumbling block in the path of a religious aspirant.

At another place in the booklet, the author's incapacity to grasp the significance of the Maya doctrine of the Hindus is sadly evident. Christ, he says, was "not an Avatar bearing a form assumed in Maya to win love but a real man born as a tender infant feeling the cold of a winter's stable, thirsty and hungry, often despised and persecuted..... the true Kalki." Exactly because of this very nature, the Hindus would choose to call an Avatar a manifestation in the realm of Maya. The word "real" is understood by Hindus as beyond change and decay. The logical mind of a Hindu revolts at the idea of compromising between a mutable human form, heir to hunger and thirst, and the everlasting Reality. Hence the recognition of a relative Reality in the realm of cause and effect (Maya).

There are such other statements which the reader of this booklet may easily discover. None can be fair in making comparisons with a shallow and biased study of other scriptures.

However the reading public should be thankful to the learned author for the valuable contribution which he has laid within the reach of all so that those who are interested in the subject may easily get from it a very clear notion about Roman Catholicism.

T. C.

**INDIA IN THE MAKING:** By Swami Ayyakantananda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Patna. Pages 144.

The subject matter of this book originally appeared in the *Morning Star* of Patna and the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

India is passing through troubled days and very many schemes are in the air. Most of these are mainly imitative; for the glare of the West is too great to be resisted. "India in the Making" comes in time with a clear message. Though the author seems to advocate modern humanism as is practised in the West, still he has insisted on adhering to the spiritual ideal. Our religion and our social order, he rightly observes, have survived many a catastrophe and vicissitude because of the universal features latent in them. It would be foolishness on our part to give up all the achievements of the past and begin from the beginning.

For a book of its size, the present volume gives a vast amount of information and food for thought. There is not one aspect of life, spiritual or secular, which has not been touched by the author. A comparative study of Eastern and Western ideas on Religion, Philosophy, Art, Politics and Social Order has been made and their histories have been traced from very early times. In this respect it will prove a useful reference book. In the end the author gives his constructive programme after duly considering (1) the spiritual ideal, (2) the remnants of India's past institutions and (3) the noblest achievements and the new experiments of the modern West.

N. R.

**THE BHAMATI CATUSSUTRI:** (with *Sankara's Commentary*) Translated into English by Mr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, M. A., B. Sc. (Oxon), Bar-at-Law, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Mr. C. Kunhan Raja, M. A., D. Phil. (Oxon), Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

To get a clear idea of the knowledge of Brahman one should study the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras which give a synthetic and harmonious view of the teachings of the former. The aphorisms are too abstruse to be

comprehended by the independent labour of even the finest intellect. Acharya Sankara has therefore done a signal service to India and the world by writing a commentary, exhaustive, clear, forceful and rational at the same time—a commentary which has won for him the name of Bhashyakara and the approbation of Eastern and Western savants like Max Muller, Deussen and others. How unfathomably deep and grand—*Prasanta Gambhiram*—the intellect of Sankara was, is incomprehensible without diving into the ocean of his learned writings. And without the help of a diver it will be impossible for us to bring to the surface the peerless pearls that are contained within its vast bosom.

Among the many annotators of the Acharya, the name of Vachaspati Misra, the author of Bhamati, stands pre-eminent. With his far-reaching and searching intellect he has laid bare the full import of many difficult aspects of Sankara's wonderful philosophy. Catussutri, or the first four Sutras, form the keynote of his teachings. The first Sutra hints that the teachings of Vedanta would be fruitful only to those who have qualified themselves by rooting out worldly desires, and possess a sincere longing for the knowledge of Brahman, or the Absolute for its own sake. Those who want to make it a mere intellectual pastime are, so to say, debarred from entering the sanctum sanctorum of its magnificent temple. The remaining aphorisms deal with the nature of the Deity and with the ways and means of attaining Him and with His relation to the whole universe consisting of animate and inanimate objects. He is Eternal Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. All that we see within and without us spring out of Him and go back to Him at the time of dissolution. He is the *causa sui*. The scriptures, which are the storehouse of spiritual laws discovered by the seers, all point to Him who is One, but who is called differently. Scientists call It Matter, spiritual men call It Self or Brahman.

In translating Sankara's Commentary on these Sutras and side by side

presenting the work of Vachaspati Misra, in a clear, faithful and orthodox style, the Editors have done an invaluable service to the cause of Vedanta. The usefulness of the volume has been considerably enhanced by a learned and critical Introduction and by the addition of elaborate and exhaustive Notes. These reveal how vast and thorough is the knowledge of the translators in the domain of Eastern and Western philosophy. The fundamental ideas of Vachaspati on the authoritativeness of scripture without being detrimental to the interest of reason and science, have been dealt with in a masterly way with brilliant references

to the logical theory of Bradley, Bosanquet etc. Primal Nescience with its location, Isvara as the creator of the world, Release emotional and absolute, and lastly Jivanmukti or the nature of a realised soul, have all been discussed with remarkable clearness.

The arrangement of the Sanskrit texts and English translations, and indeed the entire got up, are praiseworthy, while the elaborate Notes at the end would be found highly useful by those who wish to make a detailed study. We heartily recommend the volume to all scholars and learners, both Oriental and Occidental.

S. A.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Opening of the Ramakrishna Ashram in Karachi

For some time past various Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order were visiting Karachi on lecture tours at the invitation of a few ardent devotees. Now owing to the philanthropy of some citizens of Karachi amongst whom are Principal Gokhale, Prof. Junnarkar, Seths Rochiram Thakurdas, Nanobhai Doongursee, Mr. Nagarkar and others, it has been possible to start an Ashram in a rented bungalow behind the Sind Tile Factory in the Garden Quarter. At present there are only two Swamis resident there, chief of them being Swami Sharvananda.

The opening ceremony of the Ashram took place on Friday the 15th June. The programme of the day was divided into two parts, viz: the religious observances in the morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. accompanied by Bhajan, Puja, etc., and public lectures by leading citizens of Karachi in the evening in the Theosophical Society's Hall.

After devotional songs sung by one of the monks of the Ashram the proceedings of the evening were opened by Mr. F. J. Ginwalla of Bombay with a short speech wherein he recounted the rise and development of the Bombay branch of the Ashram during the last

eleven years since its start by the same Swami. He hoped that the seed which was being planted that day in Karachi would in course of time grow into a tree of life and afford shelter to the weary seeking happiness and peace.

He was followed by Principal Gokhale who, referred to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission in America and appealed to the citizens of Karachi, especially the younger generation, to take full advantage of the presence of the Swamis amongst them.

Principal Butani, the next speaker narrated how he first made acquaintance of the Mission in Brindaban and Rishikesh, where he found "a few stalwart and tall Swamis engaged in the work of affording relief to the cholera and flood-stricken people of those parts." Referring to the universality of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's religion and his intense love of God, he said that an Ashram started under such auspices would not fail to radiate love, happiness and bliss in their city.

Professor Junnarkar in a telling and nice little speech referred to an incident in the lives of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Sadhu Hiranand, in which the Sadhu, while still a young man at the threshold of his public career, ran to Calcutta on hearing that Sri Rama-

krishna was lying ill on his death bed. Sadhu Hiranand had an interview with the Paramahansa at the end of which, as an unsophisticated child that he was, he desired to visit the country of Sadhu Hiranand. Although it was not possible for the Paramahansa to visit Sind when on this earth, the speaker was glad that it had been possible after a lapse of about 50 years to have his emissaries to fulfil the great wish of the Master before he passed into Samadhi.

Swami Sharvananda spoke next. He said that Sri Ramakrishna is not merely a personality but a principle. In this land God has from time to time sent Teachers who not only preached the eternal verities but showed by their example how to realise them. The fact that such Teachers have taken birth in India from time to time shows that our country is not dead as an entity although it has become a subject nation for centuries. India has still a mission to give to the world and it is to show how spiritual values are ultimately more important in the life of nations as well as in those of individuals. The West has no doubt conquered the East and has sought to master and domineer over it; but India has also her conquests to make. Unlike those of the West, however, her conquests are those of the brute in man. Today the world needs the teachings of India and that is why great minds of the West like Max Muller, Romain Rolland and others have not failed to appreciate our spiritual heritage. He then briefly referred to the part played by the various Math and Mission centres in spreading the cultural and spiritual mission of India.

Proceeding, the Swami said that the last time he went to Karachi, some of the prominent gentlemen impressed upon him the necessity of establishing an Ashram in Karachi. An Ashram was now an accomplished fact, and he was glad, he said, that in his efforts he was very much assisted by the co-operation and self-sacrifice of a few friends who were good enough to contribute financially for its upkeep.

### Ramakrishna Mission's Relief Work in Assam

We have opened three relief centres, viz., Jhingabari, Bilajuri, and Bangsikunda in the flood-affected areas in Sylhet, and two others, viz., Dharamtul and Fulaguri in the district of Nowgong. Pressing appeals for help have compelled us since then to increase considerably the number of villages within the jurisdiction of all our centres. Altogether 974 mds. 29 srs. 8 chs. of rice were distributed among 6248 recipients of 114 villages until August 7, besides 407 pieces of new clothes and 16 pieces of old ones. A small quantity of Chira and molasses was also distributed in some cases.

Along with the distribution of food-stuffs, distribution of cloth, paddy seeds and supply of capital money to the able-bodied youths and widows to help them to restart their hereditary occupations, have however now become an immediate necessity. Our small distributions in these directions are too inadequate to meet the urgent demands. Our funds are well-nigh exhausted.

Our relief work in Behar is still going on from Monghyr and Motihari. As the latter district has been recently subject to floods, we have to give fresh necessary relief there. We are also having petitions from other parts to start relief works. But the paucity of our funds does not allow us to undertake fresh work. Our total collection for this relief work is Rs. 1,12,950-13-9 and total disbursement Rs. 1,11,067-10-0 leaving only a small balance with us.

We therefore earnestly appeal to our generous friends to stretch their accustomed helping hands once again to relieve the sufferings of the people of Assam.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (Howrah).

(Sd.) VIRAJANANDA,

Secretary.

( 7 )

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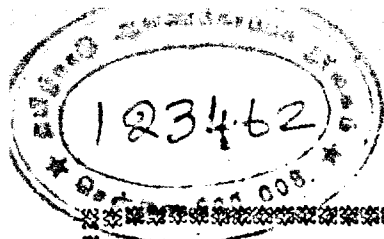
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