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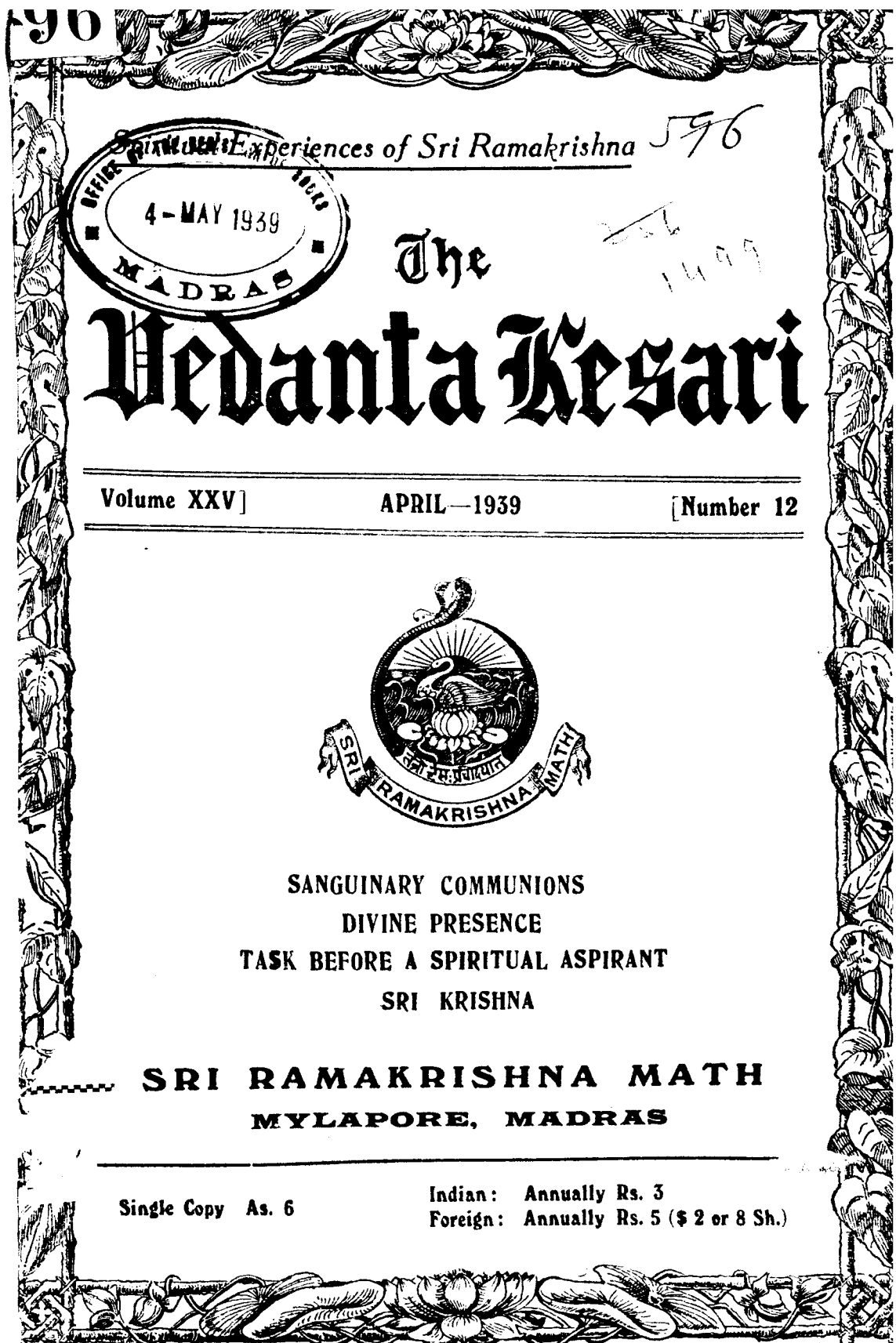
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Vedanta Kesari

Volume XXV]

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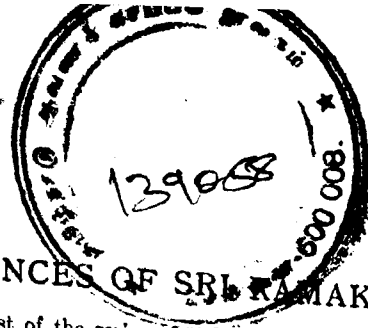
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बिह्वो वीर्यहीनो यः स देवमनुवर्तते । वीरः सम्भावित्मानो न देवं पर्युपासते ॥
देवं पुरुषकारेण यः समर्थः प्रवाधितुं । न देवेन विपन्नार्थः पुरुषः सोऽवसीदति ॥
विहाय तन्त्रीं शोकं च निद्रां चैव समुत्थिताम् । विचिनुष्व यथा सीतां पश्यामो जनकात्मजाम् ॥
अनिर्वेदं च दाक्ष्यं च मनसश्चापराजयम् । कार्यसिद्धिकराण्यहुः तस्मादेतद् ब्रवीम्यहम् ॥
अवश्यं क्रियमाणस्य दृश्यते कर्मणः फलम् । अलं निर्वेदमागम्य नहि नो मीलनं क्षमम् ॥
न विषादे मनः कार्यं विषादो दोषवत्तमः । विषादो हन्ति पुरुषं बालं क्रुद्ध इवोरगः ॥
विषादोऽयं प्रसहते विक्रमे पर्युपस्थिते । तेजसा तस्य हीनस्य पुरुषार्थो न सिध्यति ॥

He who is confused and has no vigour in him, alone will be depending upon Fate or good luck. Heroic, self-reliant men would not worship at the altar of Fate. He who has the capacity to overcome the freaks of Fate by personal endeavour can never be cowed down by a Fate that frustrates the hopes of men. Flinging aside laziness, fear and somnolence, push your quest onward, so that we find out Sita. An unvanquishable mind that knows no dejection, and great dexterity are the factors that ensure success in any endeavour. That is why I advise you thus. A deed, when it is done, must necessarily bear its fruit. Away with pessimism; it is improper to remain with our eyes closed to our duty. Let not the mind slip into grief; to be pining (over an event) is the worst evil. One is undone thereby, just as a child is undone by a snake. But where valour is present, sorrow can be checked effectively. None of the ends of human life can be achieved by a man who has no stamina in him.

Valmiki Ramayana, II: 30.17, 18; IV: 49.5, 6, 8; 64.11, 12.

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SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[This is the twelfth and the last of the series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna, that have been appearing in the course of this year.]

I

THE survey we have made of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings in this series of articles would have impressed the minds of our readers with one fundamental idea. It is this: Whatever the Master spoke on God and spiritual life, he spoke from experience, and not from mere book-knowledge. In fact, it was the test of experience that he always offered as the proof of his teachings. "I do see the Being as the veritable reality with my very eyes!" he says. "Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute who has become all things around us. It is He who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world!" And once when Swami Vivekananda asked him the pointed question, 'Sir, have you seen God?'—he replied unhesitatingly, "I have seen Him. Not only that, I see Him more intensely than I see you, and I can also show Him to you if you want." These are, no doubt, tremendous claims, and one may feel great difficulty in understanding their true significance, not to speak of accepting all their metaphysical and psychological implications. And yet, since the whole edifice of the Master's teachings rests on his claim to have seen the Divine face to face, it is very important to have a due appreciation of this supreme fact, if one is to enter into the true spirit of the teachings that have been set forth in this series of

articles. Therefore, in closing this series, we shall make a general review of the Master's spiritual experiences, and draw some general conclusions from the same.

From his very childhood, Sri Ramakrishna was inclined towards the life of the Spirit, and showed signs of a mystical temperament and great receptivity to higher experiences. As a boy, on seeing a number of snow-white cranes flying against a background of sombre rain clouds, he fell into an ecstasy, passing from the contemplation of Nature's beauty to absorption in Nature's Lord. Devotional music, recital of the lives of holy personages, worship, pilgrimages to shrines—these were the things that stirred his being to the deepest core from early days. This dominant trait of his character did not, however, find its fullest expression until he took up the work of a priest in the Kali temple of Dakshineswar, in the year 1855. The Master himself told his disciples that till then he had never thought of taking to an exclusively ascetic life, and that the ideal he cherished was of the pious householder that he had witnessed in his own father. But since that time the Divine Mother entered into his being, as it were, and caused such a revolution in his thought and outlook on life that a new spiritualised type of humanity has come to be revealed to us through his body and mind.

The beginnings of this transformation were characterised by deep absorption in meditation and devotional music, and the substitution of the rigid observance of rituals in worship by an informality of procedure that was born of a sense of intimacy with the object of worship. Soon after, there grew in his mind a passionate longing to know whether the Mother he worshipped was real or not, and in course of time this longing became so great that one day, despairing of all chances of its fulfilment, he was about to commit suicide. At that psychological moment he had a revelation of the Deity as 'a boundless, effulgent Ocean of Intelligence'. This first flight of the soul only went to whet his appetite for the Divine; for it brought on his mind only a feeling of temporary solace and not a permanent enrichment of consciousness. Hence in the period of dryness that soon followed, he was filled with a longing, even more powerful than the previous, to feel the presence of God everywhere and at all times. The intensity of it was so great that he practically lost all sense of reality for the external world. Without any thought of even food or sleep, he spent days and nights in prayer to the Divine Mother with an agonised heart. Often, in fits of desperate longing, he was seen to rub his face on the ground until it bled.

In later days, describing this insatiable craving of his soul for God, he said to his disciples that it was like the organic craving that a man kept under water felt for a breath of air. Or again one could have a hazy idea of its intensity if one could imagine a concentration of these three types of attachments—the miser's

fondness for his hoarded wealth, a noble lady's love for her husband, and a parent's affection for an only child. And it is said that whenever this longing was at its highest, revelations came to him, soothing the anguish of the soul and bestowing the indubitable conviction of the Divine presence.

Till 1861 his spiritual striving was more or less a solitary and unaided quest, but since then great teachers went to him, as if sent by Divine Providence, to help him in his search after God and guide him in the practice of spiritual disciplines enjoined by the scriptures. The first of these teachers to arrive was a middle-aged Brahmin woman of great learning and high spiritual attainments. Under her guidance he successfully underwent all the principal spiritual practices mentioned in the sixty-four Shakti Tantras dealing with the worship of God as the Divine Mother. Besides bestowing on him the realisation of the Divine Mother in diverse aspects, these disciplines of the Mother cult established him in the conviction that every woman is a manifestation and a symbol of the Divine Mother in a special sense.

Another form of spiritual discipline he practised was what are inculcated by the scriptures of the Vaishnava cult. The essential principle of these disciplines consists in cultivating various forms of personal relationship with the Deity, as those of a servant, a parent, a friend, and a sweet-heart. Sri Ramakrishna practised all of them, and had the realisation of the Deity in aspects that are special to these different relationships.

The spiritual disciplines he had undergone till now had the realisation

of the Deity in His personal aspect as their object. In 1864, Sri Ramakrishna took to the contemplation of the Impersonal Brahman of the Vedanta under the guidance of a great wandering Sannyasin named Tota Puri. This is the most difficult of all spiritual disciplines, as it requires the aspirant to liberate his mind from the mould of name, form and relativity—its natural environment for untold ages of evolution. Sri Ramakrishna attained perfection in this path, too, with astonishing rapidity, three days of practice being enough for him to attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the goal of Vedantic disciplines. Free as his mind was from all worldly taint, the only obstacle that stood in his way was the form of the Divine Mother, on which he had been contemplating devotedly all his life. To use his own words, he cut that form in two with the sword of discrimination, and his mind rose above the relative plane and was absorbed in unconditioned Samadhi. Sometime after that, he remained absorbed in the Nirvikalpa state for a continuous period of six months. During this time he had no physical consciousness, and except at brief intervals one could notice in him no sign of physical life even. The body was saved from death only due to artificial feeding of it by a Sadhu who was present at Dakshineswar at the time.

Within a few years after this, he had also occasion to practise spiritual disciplines according to Islam and Christianity. We have it from him that these paths also took him to the same goal as the various forms of spiritual practices inculcated by Hindu cults.

The long period of his spiritual practices came to a close in 1872 with the inspiring rite known as the Shodashi Pooja, when he worshipped his own wedded wife as the Deity. This symbolised his attainment of that state of spiritual consciousness in which the Divinity is recognised in every being. From this time onward the insatiable hankering he used to have for spiritual practices of diverse kinds subsided, and an intense spirit of redeeming love characteristic of world-teachers took possession of his soul.

II

This brief review of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual practices naturally raises the question as to what he actually gained by them, and how we are to arrive at a proper estimate of their value. To consider the former point first, we have it from Sri Ramakrishna that his spiritual strivings resulted in a permanent enrichment of consciousness—a state of mind which he described by the significant expression, *Bhava-mukha*. A study of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences cannot be complete without taking into account the deep metaphysical and psychological implications of this concept. The following is a brief consideration of this subject.

Our mind ordinarily dwells in the relative plane, and even of that, at the grossest levels. Indian psychologists have discovered seven centres at different levels of the spinal column as the loci of the mind at different stages of spiritual evolution. To enumerate these centres, they are the base of the spinal column, and the levels of the genitals,

of the navel, of the heart, of the throat, and of the eyebrows, and finally the crown of the head. The spiritual evolution of man consists in the shifting of the mind's centre of activity from the lower to the higher of these centres. For along with the rise of the mind, there takes place the awakening of the latent spiritual potentiality of man, known in mystic language as the Kundalini or the coiled-up energy. It is called coiled-up, because in the natural man Kundalini is 'asleep', i.e., dwells at the lowermost centre of the spinal column and hides from the vision of man the higher nature of himself as well as of the Reality of which he is a part. When the Kundalini is asleep, the mind of man is confined to the three lowermost centres of the spinal column, and the focus of its attention is limited to the gross objects of the physical plane that impinge on the five senses, and to the intellectual and aesthetic apprehensions that have their basis in physical life. At that stage, therefore, man feels a sense of reality only with regard to the gross world he sees around him, and the pursuit of selfish interests and the gratification of sensuous appetites form the only aim of his life. All his energies are wasted by vain struggles outside. Spiritual life begins when man feels sincerely dissatisfied with this type of life and in place of dissipating his energies, begins to conserve them.

As these energies gather themselves up at the third centre, the sleeping Kundalini in him wakes up and begins its upward march towards the centre in the crown of the head. When the energy rises to the fourth

centre at the heart, and the mind begins to dwell there, the aspirant becomes an ethical man. He develops an intense spirit of fellow-feeling and begins to feel genuine delight in relieving the sufferings of others without any consideration of selfish gain. He may also get the vision of a Divine effulgence. At this stage, the mind is always in danger of sliding down to the lower centres if the aspirant is not very alert. But in the case of a very sincere person, success is certain. He gradually begins to perceive that God is even higher than good works, that even the idea of doing good to others is a product of egotism, that God is in Himself competent to look after this creatures even without his aid, and that his supreme duty as man consists in seeking Him with a longing heart. When this longing for God becomes intense, the Kundalini, and along with it the mind, rise to the fifth centre at the level of the throat. Higher levels of Reality are now laid bare to man's vision, and it becomes possible for him to see the Deity in His various formful aspects. The state of his mind becomes such that he can neither talk nor hear about anything except God. Even from this condition a man may slip down to the three lower centres. But he is above all fear when the Kundalini rises to the sixth centre opposite the junction of the eyebrows. As the mind begins to dwell there, he gets the vision of the Paramatman, and he remains always absorbed in Samadhi. There is only a thin transparent veil between this centre and the seventh one in the head where the Divine manifests Himself in His fulness. Owing to this, the

aspirant feels that he has merged himself in the Deity, but really he has not. From this state too the mind can come down to the fifth or at the most to the fourth centre, but not below that. The ordinary aspirants, classed as Jivas, cannot however come down from that state. After remaining constantly in Samadhi for twenty-one days, they break that veil and become one with the Lord for ever.

Thus the spheres of Reality that an aspirant realises up to the fifth plane are within the realms of relativity, of which our present consciousness is the grossest. At the sixth centre alone the mind catches glimpses of the Absolute, and it is only in the seventh that the mind becomes one with the Absolute. As we have seen, in the case of ordinary aspirants the mind does not come to the relative plane after that, and the body therefore perishes before long. But there are some rare exceptions to this. These are the Divine Incarnations. In the case of such a one, the ego merges in the Absolute, but by the inscrutable Divine Will, which the Master terms the Mother, he regains the relative consciousness. Having experienced the Absolute, the state of his mind is in every way peculiar. He is like one sitting on the threshold of a room—he sees everything within the room as well as what is outside it. He has the experiences of the relative world, but at the same time he is in tune with the Absolute. It is therefore possible for him to engage himself in works of the relative world like any ordinary man, but the whole meaning and impulsion behind his activities is different. For the ordinary man, being without the knowledge of the Absolute, sees the world

only under the limitations of name and form, and is aware only of the promptings of the limited ego in his works. But to the incarnation, the Universe, including his own ego, is the expression of a Will that is identical with the Absolute itself. Thus, his little ego is completely identified with the Cosmic Ego, and in every action of his, he is conscious of the Divine Will working. As a consequence, his thoughts and works are charged with a power that makes them felt by large communities of men and by generations that are far removed from him in time. Being at one with the Universal Ego, he is able to attune his thoughts automatically to the needs and aspirations of men at every stage of spiritual development, however high or low they may be. Though it may appear contradictory, he can traverse all the gamuts of spiritual life from the crudest to the most sublime, and thus present in himself ideals and phases of character that appeal to men of divergent natures and levels of growth. Bhakti and Jnana, devotion to Personal Deity and absorption in the Absolute, dynamism of action and the calm of passivity—all harmoniously mingle in him without any trace of contradiction.

We referred to *Bhava-mukha* as the state of permanent enrichment of consciousness that Sri Ramakrishna attained by his spiritual practices. All that we have described above are the implication of that state. To put them briefly, *Bhava-mukha* is not the type of spiritual perfection attainable by the master of either the relative or the Absolute levels of reality, but that broadening and intensification of consciousness resulting

from the direct grasp of them both, and the consequent elimination of the limited individual ego and establishment in the Cosmic Ego—the one Will that is at the back of the whole Universe. Sri Ramakrishna was different from the ordinary run of men because of this attainment.

III

In conclusion, there are two aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life that bear witness to the truth of his experiences. The first relates to the nature of his quest itself. In the earlier part of this essay, we have described its nature and shown how it was a passion in which his whole body, mind and soul united, as in the panting of a drowning man for a breath of air. Now in Nature we find that wherever there is a craving of this kind affecting the whole man, there is also a close correspondence between it and his environment—in other words, there is something in his environment for satisfying a craving of this type. Thus hunger, thirst and other basic demands of man find their appropriate objects in his environment. If, then, the craving for God is also of this nature, only in a much more intense sense, as it undoubtedly was in the Master's case, we must naturally infer that it can find satisfaction only in a *real* object that corresponds to it, even as thirst and hunger can be satisfied only by water and food. And what has been revealed to humanity in Sri Ramakrishna's life is that man has the capacity to feel such a hankering for God, and that his environment is fully responsive to that craving. In other words, his life and experiences show us that God is an indubitable reality and

that man can realise Him in this very life.

The account we have already given of *Bhava-mukha* also testifies to the genuineness and worth-while-ness of this experience. For we have seen that it is a state of peace, bliss and power, and that it is not a passing mood but a permanent enrichment of personality. But the greatest assurance we have of its reality is the way in which God-consciousness remained an integral part of the Master's nature even at the times of the worst trials that life could offer. For example, the Master passed away of cancer in the throat—one of the most excruciating diseases known to medical science. The last strait to which a human being can be brought by a disease of this kind, is a condition that would wear out the faith and courage built on any illusory foundation. In Sri Ramakrishna we notice that even the worst sufferings could not in the least touch his basic convictions and the experience of peace and bliss that reigned in the mind. The body, no doubt, suffered terribly, but the mind floated above physical sufferings with its anchor secure in the Lord. And as soon as any Divine thought arose in his mind with vividness, he used to forget the body and get absorbed in Samadhi as in his healthy days. So vivid was his awareness of the Divine that when several of his followers used to request him to pray for his own recovery, he would say in reply, "How can I fix my mind, which I have dedicated to the Lord, upon this wretched cage of flesh and blood. When I think of my Mother, the physical body vanishes, and I am entirely out of it. So it is impossible

for me to pray for anything concerning the body....I am now speaking and eating through so many mouths. I am the Soul of all the souls. I have infinite mouths. I am the Infinite Spirit covered with a human skin which is wounded somewhere in the throat.....When the body is suffering from excruciating pain and starvation, and when it is beyond all human power to give any relief, even then the Mother shows me that spirit is master of the body. My Divine Mother has brought this illness upon this body to convince the sceptics

that the Atman is Divine, that God-consciousness is true, that when one reaches perfection, freedom from all bondage is attained."

The supreme message of Sri Ramakrishna to mankind, therefore, consists in the strength of his yearning for the Divine, in the example of the fulfilment of that yearning his life offers, and in the persistence with which this God-consciousness abides with him in all conditions of life. His life is a challenge to the scepticism and Godlessness of the modern age.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

THE Holy Mother was seated on a blanket in the room adjoining the Shrine in the Udbodhan Office. I was engaged in conversation with her.

Disciple: How long did you live at Dakshineswar?

Mother: Oh, for many years. I first went there at the age of sixteen. From then on I lived there as long as the Master lived at Dakshineswar. I used to go to our native village once every two or three years. I went to Kamarpukur at the time of Ramlal's marriage.

Disciple: Did you live all alone?

Mother: Now and then I would be alone; otherwise my mother-in-law was with me. Sometimes Golap-Ma, Gauri Dasi and other devotees used to stay with me. I lived in a very small room which was kitchen, living room and bed room, all in that tiny space. I used to cook for the Master. He had poor digestion; so he could not eat the food-offerings from the Kali Temple. I also had to cook for other devotees of the Master. Latu lived with him. After he quarrelled with Rama Dutta, he came away. The Master said to me, "He is a nice boy; he will knead your

flour." I had to cook day and night. When Rama Dutta used to come, he would shout after getting out of the carriage, "Today I shall eat *Ruti*¹ and Dal of gram." Then I would at once start cooking. I used to make bread out of three or four seers of flour. When Rakhai lived there, I often made *Khichuri* for him. Suren Mitra gave ten rupees a month for the expenses of the devotees. Gopal Senior did the marketting. Dancing, music, Kirtana, ecstacy and Samadhi went on day and night. I made apertures on a bamboo-mat screen, so that I could watch through it. My standing there continuously finally gave me this rheumatism.

For sometime I had a maid-servant, Jadu's mother. An old woman, too, used to visit me. She had led an immoral life during her younger days but during her old age she chanted the name of God. I lived all alone; so I used to pass some time in her company. One day the Master noticed her and said, "Why do you allow her to come here?" "She is now leading a good life," I said; "She talks about God. What's the harm in allowing her to come? A person does not always cherish in his mind the feelings of his earlier years." "What a shame!" exclaimed the Master, "she has been a prostitute, and you talk to her! Suppose she is pious now! Rama! Rama!" He forbade me even to speak to people of that ilk lest they should poison my mind. He protected me in this way.

Once Ramji Rai of Kamarpukur visited him. He was not a good man.

¹ Ruti — Thin, unleavened bread baked over charcoal.

After he had left, the Master called, "Hello! Who is there? Dig out a basketful of earth here!" As no one came, he himself took the spade and scraped up some earth. He remarked, "The place where a man like him sits, becomes impure."

Durgacharan of East Bengal used to visit the Master. What devotion he had for him! At the time of his illness, Durgacharan searched for Amalaki fruits for three days and at last procured them. The Master had expressed his desire for that fruit. For three days and nights, Durgacharan neither ate nor slept. Once I gave him Prasadam on a plate of Sal leaves. He ate even the plate. He had a black complexion and rather dry appearance. His eyes were big and bright and always moist with tears of divine love.

"How many people used to come then with such intense devotion! And those who come now constantly say, 'Please show us the Master!' They practise neither spiritual disciplines nor worship, neither Japam nor austerities! In previous births they committed many heinous crimes—murder of cows, Brahmins and children in the mothers' wombs. They must first reap the results of their wicked actions; then only they may get the vision of God. The moon in the sky is hidden under a cloud. The wind must first of all blow away the cloud and then alone the moon will appear. Can that happen so quickly? This is also true of the vision of God.

The effect of past actions comes to an end only slowly. When God reveals Himself to an aspirant, He also gives him inner knowledge and intuition through the help of which the

devotee becomes aware of his realization."

* * *

Girish Chandra Ghosh had given up his body on the previous night. Referring to him, I asked the Holy Mother, "Well, Mother, how do those who give up their bodies in a state of unconsciousness attain to a spiritual state afterwards?"

Mother: The thought that is uppermost in mind before one loses consciousness determines the course of his soul after death.

Disciple: Yes, that is true. A little after six o'clock in the evening Girish Babu exclaimed, "Jai Ramakrishna" and then fell unconscious. Afterwards he never regained his consciousness. A few minutes before that he had been constantly saying, "Let us go! Let us go!" "Hold me a little, my son!" and so forth. I said to him, "Why do you only say 'Let us go! Let us go!' You had better repeat the name of Sri Ramakrishna which will do you real good." I said that a couple of times when Girish Babu replied, "Do I not know that?" I said to myself, "Now see, he is fully conscious within."

Mother: He remained immersed in the thought which was in his mind when he became unconscious. They all have come from him (referring to Sri Ramakrishna) and will go back to him. They all have come from him—from his arms, feet, hair, and

so forth. They are his limbs, parts.

Gauri-Ma was present. She remarked in the course of the talk, "The Master said he would be born twice more—once as a Baul.²"

Mother: Yes, he said to me that when he would be born as a Baul, I would carry his smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot (Kalki) for him, and he would carry a broken tray of stone. His meals would be cooked in a broken pot. He would walk indifferently, without looking at anything in particular. Lakshmi³ heard it and said, "I am not coming back even if I am chopped to shreds like smoking tobacco." He replied with a smile, "Where will you stay if I come back to this earth? Your soul will pant for me. You all are like the Kalmi⁴ creeper. If one end is pulled the whole thing moves." One day, I was getting down from the railway train at Brindavan. The boys⁵ had already alighted. Golap was helping them take down our bags and baggage. The smoking-pipe and tobacco-pot belonging to Latu were handed to me. Lakshmi said, "Now, you have in your hands the smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot!" I also exclaimed, "O Master! O Master! Here I have fulfilled your words. I have the smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot in my hands," and dropped them on the ground.

2. Baul—A minstrel; a religious mendicant.

3. Lakshmi—A niece of the Master.

4. Kalmi—An aquatic plant which spreads far with numerous ramifications.

5. Boys—Swami Yogananda and other young disciples of the Master.

1. Let us go—Girish Babu had the intense desire to be taken to the Ganges at the time of death. Therefore he made those remarks. His brother said, "Does my brother need the Ganges for the welfare of his soul?"

SANGUINARY COMMUNIONS

By Dr. Charles Baudouin

[Dr. Charles Baudouin, is a well-known French author, scholar and philosopher. His works include studies on the lives and writings of Victor Hugo and Count Tolstoi, translations of important books from the Greek, German, Russian and other European languages and above all poems of rare beauty and charm. He is a recognised authority on modern psychology and his numerous works on that subject, especially his 'Suggestion and Auto-suggestion', have been translated into many languages.]

I

IT is not the instincts alone that are repressed; the mind also can be repressed. The repressed instinct does not disappear; it continues to have a subterranean existence; it brings about a regression to a primitive stage of religious life, wherefrom it calls forth unforeseen and barbarous explosions. It is this we desire to bring into prominence here by referring to the concrete examples of certain excitements and certain mystic systems of today.

The great collective excitements are always a shock for those who witness them dispassionately. Like passion, they are irrational and violent, and disconcert the spectator. We do not know whether we ought to admire, censure or pity them.

If possible, we shall neither praise nor blame. Let us seek to understand. For that, we should think for a moment with the historic sense. We shall then recognise in these modern excitements, survivals as old as human society. Here is the Dionysiac orgy the Bacchanal; there the totemic sacrifice. We have to go back to them for understanding the passion which animates the crowds.

The totemic sacrifice, especially must always be present before us. It

will give us the clue to a good many of the regressions of the crowd incomprehensible without it. We are familiar with the scenario; the primitive social group is gathered round the place of sacrifice, the place where the totem, the sacred animal, is killed; the totem is eaten and every one partakes of its flesh, blood and energy. Every one who is present there incorporates it and seals anew by it his organic union with the other members of the group, 'each to its part there and all to the whole.'

Let us go back to the scenario. The investigation of the unconscious shows that it lives profoundly inscribed in the substructure of the spirit of civilisation. It reawakens at the first call. Let us recognise this. Let us know that it is present more or less in the background of all the collective excitements where one sees a crowd which makes a circle, actually or figuratively, round a point where some sanguinary drama of mysterious fascination is played. It is but the accident of the street: the circle is immediately formed; the soul of the tribe is evoked; a little after, the architecture of the amphitheatre emerges anew from the ground. Let us compare these spectacles with the primitive sacrifice; then we understand something of the psychology of

the crowds, which is a scandal to reason.

It is then that we begin to understand profoundly the type of cruelty which lurks in every excited crowd and which according to the object of excitement bursts forth in a greater or lesser degree. Cruelty mixed with admiration; the ambivalence of the tribe which kills the sacred animal! Among the civilised, the sacred animal is perhaps figured by many emblems. It is quite recognisable in the bull-race; but its role is perhaps also taken by the gladiator in the arena and the motor-cyclist who, in his swift vehicle, crackles, spelling death. What does the blow matter when one is intoxicated: visible or latent, the presence of death alone brings about frenzy. It leaps up in military excitements; but there is no necessity to cite that extreme example. I was present at the spectacle of the people of Paris paying homage to the assassinated president Doumer; it was clear that day that the Parisians were performing an age-old rite and that they were eating the totem.

It is thus that we can understand something about the psychology of sport. I do not speak of sport so far as it is nothing but an exercise, enthusiasm, a physical pleasure. But it becomes very soon something else even when the sportsman is unconscious of it. It is collective excitement and in that we see another reproduction of the ancient scenario.

The spectator, through all his muscles, attempts to follow the movements of the boxer: this fact has been cited in support of psychology of imitation. But one does not imitate with such force in other cases. Imitation is not a sufficient explanation.

There is something else, the latent spirit of the scenario. We may speak of it as participation in the mystic sense of the word. The modern sport fever cannot be grasped unless we take it as a substitute for cult. But it is regressive cult and very close to the primitive scenario, for it smacks of blood.

"Can we not at least," so ask some good souls "diminish the risks of accidents from swift vehicles and soften the manners of boxers?" Who will not subscribe to this sentiment. But such an attempt will perhaps only augment the excitement of the crowds. "Are not bull-fights gratuitous cruelty?" asks another. Assuredly. But take care that the people, to whom this advice is offered, do not replace it by man-fight and human sacrifice. This is already an accomplished fact. Detestable though a thing may be, it is not enough merely to suppress it. We must always see what we have substituted for it, or what spontaneously rises to take its place.

We are blinded indeed by prejudice if we do not see that religious communions are the purest. The cautious eye of the historian will certainly detect here also traces of primitive mentality, for the simple reason that they are here as everywhere else, and the orthodox historian himself recognises them unmoved. The Christian eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the lamb killed in the sacrifice. But the primitive aspiration appears here in a highly sublimated form which commands respect at least. The whole question is truly one of the degree of sublimation. All human facts, no matter what they are, are

based upon some simple and primitive schemes which one can rediscover if one digs deep enough. Let us just note to what degree the fact in question has developed from that inevitable basis.

Certainly they are also to be respected, the scruples of honest souls—rationalists, calvisists, Jansenites—who do not see anything but idolatry and bad taste in certain more authentic collective manifestations of religion in the creeds which form themselves side by side with religion and which the Church tolerates or encourages, such as those of Lourdes, Joan of Arc, Saint Theresa of Lisieux. Certainly these waves are not the expressions of the purest spirituality. But let the critics be prudent. There is a necessity for these so far as the crowds are concerned. They have to consider conscientiously how they would satisfy those human needs.

It should not be thought from this that we are here taking into account the hypocritical and detestable formula—'some sort of religion for the crowd.' In place of congregational communion, suggest anything better that you have. But if you are content with merely rooting out that which they have because it does not satisfy your taste, see that they do not take up something much worse. It is like the question of dry regulation. Mere prohibition is not enough. The question is to know whether people will not demand more dangerous stuff. To our present question which concerns the frenzy of communions, the answer is clear. People who do not attend vespers go to the matches.

We can follow the history of the substitutes offered in place of religious

communion in the age of religious decline. First of all there is nationalism; then comes the sport. We have seen the bloody bacchanal to which the latter has led us. We begin to see to what foolish brutality the former can descend. I do not say that both are necessarily bad in themselves: but what a fall! And the mystic 'totalitarian' systems of recent times seem to contain the danger in a very great degree. A society cannot give up the cult of the idols with impunity.

II

Let us take the example of a collective passion which seems to belong to remote history and on which the present regression confers an unexpected aftermath of tragic actuality. I speak of anti-semitism. It deserves to be closely analysed.

The essential elements of anti-semitism certainly proceed from the most obscure sentiments. That is why we do not gain much by carrying on the discussion on a rational basis. On the contrary the psychology of the unconscious will perhaps help us here. The psycho-analysis of Freud has, in good time, presented us with curious accounts of the relations of anti-semitism with the complex of mutilation and pointed out unforeseen associations which exist in the unconscious among circumcision, castration and inferiority. This is the first group of facts we should take into account.

Later, Jung has drawn our attention to more complex elements (in his book *Psychological Types*). In the Christian society of the Middle Ages, strongly consolidated by severe orthodoxy, the Jew appears as the

rebel, one who has not become a member of the society. Since then a projection has intervened (projection is the mechanism by which we attribute to others the sentiments which we ourselves possess in an unconscious and suppressed state). Each man carries in himself, unconscious and suppressed, a rebel, a barbarian, who does not conform to the consciously adopted standards of the morale and the society surrounding him. The Jew (as also at certain epochs the heretic) furnishes for the conformist Christians, a type singularly favourable to the projection of the internal infidel. The Christian projects on the Jew a scape-goat, all that he feels confusedly in himself of the un-Christian in him. He commences to detest in the Jew somewhat as the American in the Negro—the living image of his own reprobate instincts. In this respect, the origin of anti-semitism is not unrelated to the genesis of the madness of persecution, which also is based on a projection. On that basis, we can understand that a particularly violent anti-semitism can exist among subjects who have or are believed to have a Jewish origin more or less distant.

But we cannot go to the root of the question without taking into consideration the region of the collective inconscient, wherefrom the ritualist theme of sacrifice quickens into life. Now in sacrifice, besides the victim and the circle of the faithful who participate in it, there is also a person who plays the very important role of the sacrificer. He plays the part of the murderer forbidden to all others and becomes at the same time 'sacred' though in the negative sense of sacred horror (taboo). Now the Jew in so

far as he represents the murderer of Jesus exactly takes this role of the ritual sacrificer in Christian thought. For example what is the foundation for the delirious, though magnificent, invectives of Leon Bloy, in his curious pamphlet, *Le Salut par Les Juifs* (Salvation through the Jews)? We find there visible traces of the Freudian elements we have noticed before. Thus, we see him writing: "Just as the Christians bear the miniature cross in their bosom and erect the cross in front of their churches, the Jews carry their symbol in the hollows in their devastated souls or the perilous caverns of their synagogues. That gaping imprint extends as the precipice of chaos. They have sought to collect money and they have not succeeded except in giving to this terrible cancer the appearance of a lurid star" (XXVI). But that which is predominantly perceptible throughout these absurd and eloquent pages is the current of thought we seek to define and which however irrational it may be, is charged with a strong affective power. It is clear that the Jew is for Bloy a combination of the execrable murderer and the venerable instrument of sacrifice—"they are forced by God, invincibly and supernaturally forced to accomplish the abominable beastliness necessary for establishing their dishonour of being the instruments of the redemption" . . . (X). Such is the impossible dilemma in which the Middle Age writhed itself as in the clutches of vice. Also it uninterruptedly curses or massacres the abominable antagonists except when they crawl at its feet soliciting the mercy of the suffering God.

The Jew plays this role of the sacrificer. We shall not be surprised if his image—a strange phenomenon—presents in the unconscious of the Christian people certain points of contact with the priest, the clergyman, who also plays an official part in the cult of sacrifices—the role of the sacrificer. This serves to explain why the clergyman is, in Christian folklore, often like the Jew, a negative force and a mysteriously redoubtable personage. We can conclude from this that anti-clericalism and anti-semitism are more than what they seem to be. They are allied sentiments. They shoot forth from the same ground. It is abundantly clear that anti-clericalism has no significance other than an intimate adhesion to the ritual of sacrifice and that, however atheistical they may be in their own conscience, the critics of the clergy as also of the Jews are dominated in their unconscious by the scenario of Christian sacrifice; their hunger for communion, if it refuses to touch the divine body, indemnifies itself with "eating" the sacrificer. It is a substitute for communion.

Such sentiments are distinguished broadly from other collective excitements by the fact that in the primitive scenario of ritual sacrifice, they stress another point. The sacred victim is no more the centre of attraction; he gives way to the sacrificer (as, in the lists, when the people work themselves up to such a condition that they no more see the bleeding bull, but the bull-fighter). The excitement recoils on the sacrificer and he is treated as the victim.

A curious fact; but we may explain it thus: the sentiment which addresses

itself to the totemic victim, to every divine victim, is ambivalent and contradictory: it is composed of two elements—adoration and the spirit of murder. It is an unstable equilibrium; it is not rarely that one sees the ambivalence and dissociates the positive and the negative elements of which it is constituted in their relation to two different objects. We have seen an example of this in our analysis of Victor Hugo. His ambivalence in regard to Napoleon breaks itself when Napoleon III, appearing now and again, furnishes him a means of catalysis—an object to suit the negative element—the execration; then he can be unreservedly idealistic as regards Napoleon I and the antithesis between "Napoleon the great" and "Napoleon the petty" and give to the sentiment a position of equilibrium. The logical thought thus throws in an internal "pre-logical" contribution which is an integral part of the primitive mystic scenario, a certain order which allows it to be more accommodating. It is small comfort for the civilised man to adore and to execrate the same being at one and the same time; that is doubtless why the "totalitarian" excitements imperiously need a scapegoat. Another solution is to arrange in time the two contradictory positions and to adore first all his ancestors so that he may afterwards burn the one whom he wishes to adore. One solution does not exclude the others and the deified chief who has been preserved at one time at the expense of a particular scapegoat runs the risk of being victimised in his turn. It is then said that the favour of the crowd is capricious; but "caprice" is a superficial expla-

nation as the example of the foolery cited before bears out. It is much more profound and serious.

Whatever that may be, these sentiments astonishingly disconcerting to reason—these caricatures, sometimes sinister, of the passion—are the survivals of primitive structures which have at their origin an undeniable function suited to the exigencies of the gregarious instinct for the purpose of assuring at all costs the strong cohesion of the clan. These attitudes revive in those moments and at those places where that cohesion is particularly compromised and the disorder threatens to install itself permanently. This is their biological excuse, their *raison d'être*. The infidel becomes the scapegoat and pays with his blood for the unity of the tribe. Each fagot thrown at the pyre of the heretic raises higher the flame of the fanatic communion. But it is quite clear that the society of to-day should assure their cohesion by less primitive methods.

III

Of course it is not enough to "analyse" and "reduce" (restrain) the forms of sacrilegious communion. The need of communion persists and should persist; the need for it is lodged in us; it is at the base of the humanity. The flame of this hearth demands its food. And if we refuse to offer human victims there and at the same time do not desire to burn the heretic, we must discover other combustibles which could be offered to keep up the fire of common fervour.

A very elevated communion is proposed by art and that is at least a valuable indication. The typical art,

from this point of view, whose development we can understand, is the Greek tragedy. That it is derived from the Dionysiac rites and cult is well-known. The tragic hero takes the place of the sacred animal. He is the scapegoat who falls struck by the blow of Destiny. Evoking "terror" and "pity", tragedy is not so much the "catharsis" (purifier) of passions in general as a collective excitement. It touches on one side the plays of the circus and on the other side the mystery of the Passion.

But it is not enough to speak of art and believe that everything has been said, as if it were a magic word. Art also is subject to all the regressions; it descends into all the depths, and collective art, the art of the theatre, about which we shall specially consider here, is more menacing than others by those rapid falls, precisely because it brings into play more than others the psychology of the crowd which remains a scandal to reason, as we have already remarked.

Through the films we can determine the myths of the public who hail them. Rapidity, deceit, machine, brutal force—these, diversely combined, constitute from all evidence the myth of the public. (By *myth* we mean a collective faith projected on some privileged symbols, which furnish for it the matter of its cults and its "sacrifices".)

Thus it does not seem wise to propose purely and simply as a substitute for a declining religion, the communions of the art under the idea that they will be, by definition, more elevated than the plays of the circus. The elevation of art depends on the elevation of the "myths" on which

it is built. The decline of the religious sentiment in a given group tends to the formation of a new myth; it is on this that the art of the group rests; if the myth is gross, the art cannot be less gross.

Of the myths of a people, of its excitements and communions, it can truly be said what one has said of the passion, of romanticism, mysticism and everything irrational. It is above and below the human. And when it is not above, it is necessarily below. One false step is enough. We have to ask sincerely whether our civilisation has taken this false step, and, if so, when and why.

The loss of faith in an individual is a crisis which does not come without repercussions and crashes of ruin prolonged in the caverns of the being. When it is a society which loses the faith on which it is constructed, we can gauge the dangers of the imminent fall. The new faiths, the new myths, on which that society then seeks to anchor itself and to accept as a substitute are, in nine cases out

of ten, very ancient faiths, very archaic and barbarous myths, of which the modern mask cannot long deceive a cautious eye. It is then that we should be vigilant.

It is then that the spiritual problem again comes to the forefront. It cannot be avoided by subterfuges, or patchings. Every 'new' ideal which is greatly attached to the old gods of the race and the blood is a false pretence. The affective regression, which explains the neurosis of the individual, explains also the collective neurosis. It is then that we should propose to the people a new way of sentimental elevation; it is then that we need an authentic spiritual creation, a very new and very pure appeal which draws the tribe far away from the fascination of the sanguinary scene around which it often secretly, in its ancestral memory, in its previously formed being, centres. When the altar is void, all the old idols are there, ready to remount grimacingly. And their grin once more reclaims the victims.

MEDITATIONS: DIVINE PRESENCE

By Anilbaran Ray

[Sj. Anilbaran Ray of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry gives herein his reflection on the subject from the point of view of a spiritual aspirant.]

THOU art so near to me, my Lord, living in the heart of my heart, yet in my ignorance I think Thee to be so distant, so far away separated from me.

Thou art with me every moment of my life, standing by me in my joy and my sorrow, in my glory and my shame, in my virtue and my sin. Thou art always supporting me,

cheering me, with the utmost care, leading me out of misery and darkness to joy and light, yet in my ignorance I think that I am a helpless mortal wandering alone on the earth, that Thou dost not at all care for me, dost not even think of me.

Thou art seeking my love and homage in infinite ways; Thou appearest before me in various guises in the

world and attractest me towards Thee; Whichever way I may turn, Thou always placest Thyself in my front, yet in my ignorance blindfolded, I can see Thee nowhere and live in misery.

Now I do realise that Thou art more near and dear to me than what I regard to be my own self, Thou takest more care of me than ever I can take of myself. In the form of the Divine Mother Thou hast come to me, my Lord, and openly declared Thy love—all my misery has ended. I consciously own Thee now as my best Beloved.

Mother is coming to you, my soul, give up all your preoccupations, clear away all obstacles, make your temple clean and pure. The queen of queens, the Supreme Mother is coming to you, my soul, welcome her with all the devotion of your heart.

Mother has given me her assurance, she has said to me in her divine voice, "Fear nothing, care for nothing, give your love and devotion to Me, I shall take care of you, I shall deliver you from all crises, I shall protect you absolutely from all danger and grief—I am coming to your heart, turn away from everything else and worship Me with your heart's devotion."

Yes, Mother, I shall be absolutely fearless and careless; I shall entrust my all, my life and soul into Thy hands and be delivered. Fill me with Thy presence, enter into every cell in my body, into every part of my consciousness, think with my every thought, move with my every movement, take up my whole being into Thy divine consciousness.

When will that day come, Mother, when I shall be a free, plastic, perfect channel of Thy divine play?

Thou art working wonders in me, Mother; I feel the greatness of Thy work though I am not fully conscious of the nature and the detail and though I may not be able adequately to express my experiences.

My defects and imperfections often come uppermost to my mind, whenever I try to speak to Thee; and it is right that it should be so as this is the only way of getting rid of them. By the touch of Thy Grace weakness turns into strength, defect turns into merit, pain turns into pleasure.

Thy work is becoming more and more evident in me as I steadily grow in faith and light, in peace and purity, in knowledge and power. But the great joy that arises from my personal devotion and love to Thee, Mother, where shall I find adequate words to describe it? But Thou Thyself art the source and knowest it too well—it gives me such an ecstasy as has absolutely no parallel on earth; Thy love is its own reward and I have not to wait for some future date for its fulfilment. It will sustain me in all my Sadhana and will carry me victoriously through all crises, all ordeals.

Thou art always with me, Mother, Thou art inside my heart and above my head; if ever I do not feel and realise Thy presence, that is entirely my fault due to a still lingering play of the old nature in me.

Thou art not only with me, but Thou art also helping me always to realise Thy presence and by all means trying to draw myself towards Thee.

Thou descendest into my mind in the form of luminous truths, Thou descendest into my work in the form of omnipotent will, Thou descendest into my heart removing all dryness from it, flooding it with the divine joy of Thy love. External nature, ever renewing its forms of beauty, indicates Thy play of self-manifestation in the universe. The infinite, immutable, silent sky pervading everything in nature takes me out of my finite ego and continually reminds me of my highest self from where I can truly realise Thy divine play. Thy Grace and protection is always with me, Mother, whether I am conscious of it or not.

If Thou hast given me so much, Mother, give me then the integral consciousness in which I shall be able always to feel Thy presence in me and make my whole life a conscious constant devotion to Thee.

I am emptying my heart and soul, Mother, so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self. Come to me in Thy fulness, come as Light, come as Power, come as Joy.

Descend into me as Light, dispel all darkness from me, fill me with the knowledge of truth, give me the insight by which I can always discriminate between truth and falsehood.

Come as power in the form of divine impulses, give me the strength to reject sternly all suggestions of falsehood, give me the power to execute only Thy will perfectly on earth.

Come as joy filling my heart with love and beauty. In all the sweetest sights and sounds on the earth let me recognise the expressions of Thy divine beauty.

That is how I shall recognise Thee everywhere, Mother, as light, as power, as pure and perfect joy; I shall persistently make myself free from all darkness and perversions so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self, Divine Mother.

Often I find Thee, Mother, more inside myself than outside; Thou enterest into me with all Thy majesty and grace filling me with Thy power and light and joy. It is then that my union with Thee becomes most intimate and Thou seemest to mingle with every part of my being.

This most happy state is to be made lasting and permanent; but the rushing out of my mind and the senses towards the external life is still a great obstacle and interruption. When I can withdraw myself from the outer consciousness and turn to the silent, Sakshi Purusha that is in me, when I find my real self to be delightful in its self-existence, wanting nothing, desiring nothing, then the disturbances of the lower life cease in me or appear to be quite outside myself, and established in the peace and the purity of the inner self, I can fully open my individual nature to Thee, Mother, and intimately receive Thee within me.

As Thy light dawns in me, my consciousness becomes more and more pure and peaceful and clear, and I am ceaselessly aspiring for the condition when I shall get Thee permanently inside myself, completely mingling with and transforming every part of my being.

Thou art continually working in and through me, Mother, Thou art always pressing upon me from above;

yet in my ignorance I think that Thou art far away from me, I fear Thou art not taking care of Thy child. Shut up in my egoism, I do not feel Thy presence and thus cannot live in direct and conscious union with Thee, though Thou art always with me.

When I feel great joy in my work, it is the expression of Thy will through me. When my whole being becomes filled with gladness, it is the touch of Thy love on me. When my darkness is dispelled by inner illumination, it is the appearance of Thy light in me. Yet I think that all these are only movements of my egoistic self; Thus I cannot live in direct and conscious union with Thee, Mother, though Thou art always working in me.

When I fall into error and yield to the suggestions of falsehood, when moments from the outside world move and disturb me, when my defects and imperfections rise up in magnified forms, it is only the result of the spirit of perfection working in me. Yet I fear Mother; thus I cannot live in conscious union with Thee, Mother, though Thou art always pressing upon me from above.

Remove this egoism and ignorance from me, Mother, let me tear away the veil that separates me from Thyself, let me feel Thy touch in all my movements, at every moment of my life, let me constantly live in Yoga with Thee, Mother, who art guiding my whole life seated within the heart of my heart.

THE TASK BEFORE A SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[These are the notes of the Class-talks given by Swami Yatiswarananda to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.]

“UNTIL you fall asleep or until you die, devote yourself to Vedantic thought.” Go on striving for the higher life. Do not give the slightest opportunity to your desires and passions for upsetting you and making your mind outgoing.

The greatest struggle is to maintain the steady flow of the undercurrent of thought, to keep one's mind fixed on the goal. The undercurrent always protects you. We may crack harmless jokes and all that, but always this undercurrent is to be maintained. Our jokes must never be immoral or loose or in any way of a doubtful nature, and we must never listen to

such jokes when other people indulge in them. We must always be dignified and not allow others to make dirty jokes. In this, we must learn to impose our will on others or leave the place. Listening to a joke of a doubtful or loose nature is very bad for all aspirants, and should be strictly avoided.

An atmosphere must be created that does not allow others to become intimate with us, which prevents them from doing or saying anything dirty in our presence, whatever they may do when they are left to themselves.

This gives us strength. Bad thoughts vitiate the air, and we must purify ourselves as well as others by good thoughts. This is never to be lost sight of. We have to shoulder that responsibility and cannot allow others to behave as they like so long as they are in our company. If they do not conform to our standards, we have to avoid them. Never pollute the mind of another with your bad sensual thoughts or bad sensual vibrations. Even if another person feels drawn towards you in a sensual way, you are responsible for it, and you will have to bear the reaction. So always be on your guard. If you are not fully guarded, you too will have to pay for it just as the other person,—you too will be subject to the reactions of those impure thoughts in him, of which you were the cause or the occasion.

Is Brahman altogether out of touch with us? Is it a fact that we know nothing of It, get no glimpse of It? So long as there is false identification and this false sense of personality, Brahman cannot be realized. There is this false identification, and during the time of this identification we see we are shifting our centre of consciousness continually. Sometimes we identify ourselves with the body and say, “O, I am hurt. I feel such pain (physical);” sometimes with the mind and say, “O, So-and-so was so rude to me. I feel so worried; I feel sorry; I feel interested.” All this is wrong identification with men and things and the ‘I’ is the common factor in this identification. ‘I’, ‘I’, ‘I’—always this ‘I’ comes in different forms. And so long as this ‘I’ lasts, we cannot get a glimpse of Brahman. But there is one point to note. Even at

the time of this wrong identification, we have the consciousness of something that abides. At the back of this wrong ‘I’, there is something that does not change. And it is the task of the spiritual man to find out what that really is. Everybody wants to live eternally, even people trying to commit suicide do not want to get rid of life but of all the anxieties and worries of life. What they really want is a pleasant life, not no-life. We want to live eternally and happily. Nobody wants to live eternally like stocks and stones, but wants to lead an intelligent life. Nobody has before him the ideal of living among sorrows and miseries. Inordinate craving for the pleasures of life makes people commit suicide. In everybody there is always this yearning for peace, for blessedness, for freedom. And we all do not want to be disturbed by cares and anxieties.

Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, says the seer, is the nature of our soul, not its attributes, not its Upadhis. These—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute—are the very essence of our soul, our true nature. And when we analyse the outside world, too, we find the same thing standing at the back of all phenomena. Everything, sentient and insentient, living and non-living, stands before us as an object of consciousness—as something that is. And every being and thing has the capacity to force itself on our consciousness, a sort of luminosity about it that illumines the sentient and the insentient. There is no difference in kind, but only of degree. So in the world inside and in the world outside, we find this abiding sense of consciousness, and thus a glimpse of the Reality. All

things more or less fulfil the want of every individual. We all run after the sense-objects, the things outside, for the satisfaction of our mind or in search of some particular sense-pleasure which we think we shall derive from the possession of that thing, whatever its nature may be. The sense of consciousness is always there. Sense-objects only draw our mind because of the idea that we are going to derive some enjoyment from them. It is because of this that we feel tempted, not because of the intrinsic value of that particular sense-object. Thus not merely in ourselves, but also in all outside objects, sentient and non-sentient, we get a glimpse of what may be called Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Name and form hide the face of Truth in ourselves and in all outside objects, but all names and forms reflect dimly the glory of the Reality at their back. Always there is a subconscious feeling with regard to this real existence. It may be very vague, very indefinite, but still it is there.

The task of all spiritual life is to make the indefinite consciousness definite, if we really want to come face to face with Truth. First we should begin with ourselves, find out that which exists in ourselves at the back of our ego.

There is such a thing as having one's centre of consciousness in the Transcendental even while working or living on the phenomenal plane, but this can never be done so long as all this wrong identification with our body and our mind lasts.

Very often we identify ourselves with the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts). We say or think: We are fat; we are lean; we are clever; we are poor; we

are rich; we walk; we sit; we are blind, deaf, dumb; we are men or women, etc.; or we identify ourselves with some feeling that rises in the lake of our mind. This is wrong, although we may note the one common factor, this 'I'. What is this 'I'? No thought of the finite is ever possible without the thought of the Infinite. Positing one, you posit the other, too. We cannot formulate the infinite Pure Consciousness, the Atman; It can never be formulated, but It can be realized.

"The Truth can be realized by him whom It chooses and to whom It reveals Itself." You are thus yourself your own chooser, as this Self, this Truth is not something distinct from you; and really if you go and choose yourself to be the knower of the Truth, strive for It, you become It. Spiritual realisation means self-realisation.

Only by rising above our lusts and passions can we become one with It. See that you get purity and dispassion. "Give me discrimination, give me renunciation, give me devotion and knowledge." This was Swamiji's prayer.

"Be bold and face the Truth." There must be merciless self-analysis. First of all try to find and to regain your own soul. Your soul is practically lost to you, and only after having found it again, the question of this higher realisation will arise, otherwise never.

Spiritual life begins with the recognition of the idea that we are neither men nor women but spiritual entities. And it is necessary to have this as the very basis of all our striving.

The path of self-analysis is always difficult but it is the most direct of all

the paths, and even the devotee (Bhakta) must practise self-analysis to a certain extent, though his Sadhana is sweetened through devotion.

It is necessary for us to have a true conception of freedom. Do we want freedom from the senses, or do we want freedom of the senses? Which is the right idea of freedom? Is it freedom to allow the mind to run after enjoyment, to be the slave of the senses? Is it freedom thus to dig our own graves? Or is it freedom to control all desires, to master all desires, and become free from the senses and their cravings? This alone is what is called 'attaining to the freedom of the Atman'; the freedom of license is no freedom at all. Do we really want freedom? That is the question.

The question of spiritual practice comes, when to some extent we become free agents. And as a matter of fact, with this alone does spiritual life begin.

"They are the killers of their own souls" (Upanishads). Those who forget their souls, their reality, are the killers of their souls, as it were, because they do not possess them. So long as we go on clinging to our slave-mentality and allow ourselves to be driven like slaves by our senses, we cannot progress. Only the life of sense-control and purity leads to freedom and no other life. There is no doubt about that, whatever the worldly-minded may say or think.

"Even if you doubt your own existence, the doubter is no other than yourself" (Sankara).

Descartes said, "*Cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am). Sankara

says, "Because I am, it becomes possible for me to think."

If you want Vedanta, then here it is, but then be bold and face the Truth. There is no romance and no place for romance in spiritual life, neither materially nor mentally; it is a hard life, a life of struggle and strain.

There are people who have the experience of the world, and others who have the experience of the Spirit. But can worldly-minded people, possessing only their experience of the world, talk about spiritual life and experience? They only rush headlong into sense-life and find some nice and plausible excuse for doing so.

Sri Ramakrishna says, "Blind faith? There are no such thing. There is only faith or experience."

There must be great intensity of feeling and will, and you must keep your fire burning with the bellows. Everyone has to do that. The moment there is no intensity nothing can be achieved. We are free agents and can choose ourselves for emancipation. Truth is realized when the mind is purified and the senses are stilled.

"Speak to my warring passions peace;

Let my trembling heart be still."
(Elliot)

When our will is weakened, then enemies come from all sides to play at tug-of-war with us. And then we are in great danger of being defeated.

Let us will that our passions may be stilled, that our desires may be controlled.

SRI KRISHNA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

By Swami Pranavesananda

[Swami Pranavesananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore shows herein how the teachings of these two great men of India are practically the same inspite of the great distance in time between them.]

INTRODUCTORY

BY a comparative study of the teachings of Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna one cannot but be impressed with certain remarkable resemblances between them both, although each of them played a different part in accordance with the needs of their respective times. For example, Sri Krishna sanctified all duties--from the duties of a learned Brahmin down to those of an illiterate Chandala. To work with non-attachment in their respective provinces of life was a peculiar demand of his age; for society was then entirely misguided by excessive emphasis laid on the injunctions of Mimamsa, viz., to work with an eye to material gain and heavenly rewards. Although Sri Ramakrishna also taught mankind to work in the world without attachment, he laid more stress on the harmonising of all sects and religions; for the quarrelling sects and warring nations of the world to-day have to be united in one bond of love and amity. He found that the practice of reverence and regard for every religion and spiritual culture of the world was the only sure way to re-establish peace in this world to-day. It is not that Sri Krishna did not preach this harmony; there is enough evidence in the Gita that he did so, which I shall presently show in the course of this article, but

the outstanding demand of his age was otherwise.

DESTROYING WEAKNESS

Both Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna destroyed all weakness in their disciples. When Arjuna, smitten with grief and sorrow at the impending danger of losing his kinsmen, refused to fight in the battle of Kurukshetra, Sri Krishna condemned his weakness masked over by religious expressions, and in order that his weakness may be destroyed for ever he gave him the highest knowledge of the Atman. Whereupon Arjuna giving up all fear and weakness, fought the battle and won a clear victory over his formidable foes. So also Sri Ramakrishna, whenever he detected any weakness on the part of his disciples, he dispelled it by the method of his unique training and also by imparting to them the knowledge of the Atman by mere touch, with the result that His disciples became spiritual heroes of a very high order and conquerors of hearts and founders of a world-wide organisation with its multifarious activities of public utility.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Sri Krishna says:

"One should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant attached to action. The wise, themselves steadily

acting, should engage the ignorant in all work. The Gunas of Prakriti perform all action. With the understanding deluded by egoism, man thinks 'I am the doer'. But one with true insight into the domain of Guna and Karma, knowing that Gunas as senses merely rest on Gunas as objects, does not become attached. Men of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the understanding of people of dull wit and imperfect knowledge, who, deluded by the Gunas of Prakriti, attach themselves to the functions of the Gunas." What the Lord means here is that every one should grow according to the law of one's own nature. The wise man has no right to hasten the steps of the ignorant by premature advice which, instead of doing good, may harm him. The only thing the wise man can do is to set an example himself, and by keeping his ideal before them help others to lift themselves from where they are.

The same characteristic was noticeable in Sri Ramakrishna who time and again asked his disciples not to disturb the faith of others in the same way as Sri Krishna did in his Gita. Let every one follow his own nature and work out his own Karma. A time will come when love of God will overtake him and break the barriers of nature. Sri Ramakrishna says: "When the hearing of the holy name of God makes one's hairs to stand on ends, one has no more work to do." It is in the very nature of one's being to realise God one day or other, if not in this birth, in some other birth. So there is no use of hurrying and thereby unsettling the understanding of another. When one day Swami Vivekananda, by a touch,

transferred his spiritual power prematurely to another, Sri Ramakrishna reprimanded him severely. The result was that the man had a premature growth and consequent disturbance of faith in his own line of Sadhana which he gave up immediately. Such a premature growth in religion is attended with disastrous results. Such a man not only loses his own ground but also will have the tendency to misguide others in the path of religion.

WORK FOR THE GUIDANCE
OF THE WORLD

Although Arjuna was a Jnanin and a man of purified intellect and wanted to renounce the world to avoid the horrible consequences of the war, Bhagavan Sri Krishna asked him to be a Karma Yogin and fight at least with a view to the guidance of this world; for says He: "Whatever the superior person does, that is followed by others; whatever a great man, a leader demonstrates by action, that people follow." He then cites His own example. Although He Himself had no duty to perform, had nothing to gain in all the three worlds by work, yet He continued doing actions; otherwise people would follow in His wake and the world would perish.

This sounds exactly like Sri Ramakrishna exhorting Swami Vivekananda to be up and doing. When Swamiji asked for the blessing of plunging himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi like another Suka Deva, Sri Ramakrishna dissuaded him from that self-seeking path, avoiding the good of the many. He definitely told him that the Divine Mother had commissioned him to do much work in the world. Swami Vivekananda,

although he had the highest realisation of a Jnani and could have easily merged himself in Samadhi, had to perform the work which marked him as one of the greatest Karma Yogins and won him the everlasting gratitude of humanity. Truly as Sri Ramakrishna prophesied, Swamiji became a huge banyan tree under whose shade many a weary soul is taking shelter to-day.

TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHERS

The same intense love for man is discerned in both. While reading that portion of the 12th Chapter of the Gita, wherein Bhagavan Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to fix his mind and place his intellect on Him in order that he may live in Him for ever, and gives him alternatives one after the other to enable him to do so, one is reminded of Sri Ramakrishna's taking the 'Power of Attorney' under similar circumstances from Girish Chandra Ghose, that great dramatist saint of Bengal, when the latter thought within himself that he would not be able to repeat the holy name of God as advised by Sri Ramakrishna even once in a day owing to his various pre-occupations of life and multifarious worldly entanglements. Says Sri Krishna to Arjuna, "If you are unable to fix your mind on me, do so through Abhyasa. If Abhyasa is not possible for you, do actions for Me. If you cannot do this also, then take refuge in Me and abandon the fruits of whatever actions you do to Me." This is the same as Sri Ramakrishna's saying to Girish Chandra Ghose, "Give me your Power of Attorney."

In another place Sri Krishna asks Arjuna:—

"Relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate Thee from all sins; grieve not."

It is only the Avatars like Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna that have this unique power of taking the whole responsibility of other souls on themselves; other spiritual teachers perhaps may, by their own example, lead others to the same path of Divinity, which they themselves tread.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREE GUNAS

Sri Krishna says: "Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—these Gunas, born of Prakriti, bind fast the Indestructible embodied in the body."

He also mentions the respective binding effects of these three Gunas. "Of them Tamas born of ignorance, delusive to all embodied beings, binds fast the Jiva with miscomprehension, indolence and sleep. Rajas, which is of the nature of passion giving rise to thirst and attachment, binds him to action. Sattva, which is of a luminous nature and free from evil and stainless, binds one to attachment to happiness and knowledge. Man becomes freed from birth, decay and pain, and attains to Immortality when he crosses beyond these Gunas."

In the same way Sri Ramakrishna, in one of his parables, compares these three Gunas of Nature to three robbers attacking a traveller in a thick forest. Jiva or the individual soul is the traveller, and this world is the wilderness; Self-knowledge is his treasure. Tamas tries to destroy the Jiva; Rajas binds him with the fetters of the world; but the Sattva protects him from the actions of Rajas and Tamas. By taking refuge

in Sattva, the Jiva becomes free from lust, anger and delusion which are the effects of Tamas; Sattva also emancipates the Jiva from the bondage of the world. But Sattva itself is also a robber. It cannot give divine wisdom or the knowledge of the Absolute. It leads one, however, up to the path of the Supreme Abode and then it says: "Behold, there is your home." Then it disappears. Even Sattva cannot enter the Absolute, that is to say, one has to go beyond these three Gunas in order to attain Immortality.

There is absolutely no difference in their views about these three Gunas and their binding effect. Only Sri Ramakrishna presents the fact in a very beautiful parable.

THE CAUSE OF BONDAGE

All great men trace the cause of worldly bondage to lust and greed. Says Sri Krishna: "Tripple is the gate to hell—lust, anger and greed. One should give them up." "The man who has gone beyond these three gates of darkness and practises what is good for himself, goes to the Supreme Goal." "It is desire—it is anger, born of Rajoguna, of great craving and sin; know this as the foe in this world." "As fire is enveloped by some, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo by the womb, this knowledge is covered by the unquenchable fire of desire—the constant foe of man." "The seat of desire is the senses, the mind and intellect. By controlling and fixing our mind on God, we can conquer desire."

Woman and gold, said Sri Ramakrishna, keep men immersed in worldliness and away from God. Those who have any wish to attain God and

make progress in religious devotion should particularly guard themselves against the snares of lust and wealth.

His method of conquering lust and gold was unique. He himself demonstrated in his own life how this practice of renunciation can be carried to its logical conclusion. At the touch of a coin his whole body would become paralysed as it were; the face of every woman to him was that of the Divine Mother. He would prostrate even before a woman whom society would consider lowest, and would cry: "O Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, in another form Thou art worshipped in the temple. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee."

Sri Krishna's method of conquest is through analysis of mind and meditation, but Sri Ramakrishna gives us a method whereby we can practise this renunciation of lust and gold in our work-a-day life and become divine.

BHAKTI AS THE EASIEST PATH

Sri Krishna says in Chapter XII of his Gita that the worship of the Personal God, i.e., the path of Bhakti, is easier than that of the Impersonal, i.e., the path of Jnana. No doubt the worshippers of both reach the same goal, but the trouble of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested is greater; for the goal of the Unmanifested is very hard for the embodied to reach. The Lord, therefore, advocates for the embodied beings the worship of the personal aspects of God. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna also teaches us likewise. "All Yogas—Karma, Jnana or Bhakti—lead to the same God; but the path of devotion or self-surren-

Similarly Sri Krishna harmonises the paths of Meditation, Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. He says: "Some by meditation behold the Self in their own intelligence by the purified heart, others by the path of Knowledge, others again by Karma Yoga. Others again not knowing thus, worship as they have heard from others. Even these cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as their Supreme Refuge."

So Sri Krishna harmonised all these apparently conflicting statements and different paths to the one goal. But although during his life time he attempted to combine these different forces, as there was no practical sanction behind such unity, the sects went on with their campaign of mutual hatred and fight till India became hopelessly divided and fell an easy prey to foreign conquerors. In order to remedy this evil, immensely magnified by the passage of time, and to effect a solid unity among the different peoples of India, the merciful Sri Krishna came again in the form of Sri Ramakrishna and practically demonstrated the truth of his statements. It was Sri Ramakrishna who first exemplified it in his life and taught that not only these contradictory statements are meant

for different grades of aspirants but also showed by his own life that every religion is a path to God-head. He not only harmonised but also kept the door open for synthesising all religious ideas that might crop up in future; for human mind is ever progressing and broadening, and with a widened outlook of life the spiritual ideas must also advance with it. In the light of these teachings the followers of all religions of the world will recognise that all the Prophets reached the same truth, and as such the differences will be forgotten and unity will be established between the different creeds and sects not only in India but throughout the whole world. India to-day is the home of all religions, and in order to meet the demands of this age it looks as if the same Sri Krishna who united the different sects and aspects within the fold of Hinduism, came again as Sri Ramakrishna in order to show that the religion of the Hindus is universal, and has in it the monotheistic view of the Islamic religion and the dualistic aspect of the Christian religion, and can easily absorb all the religions in its fold, just as Sankara made it possible for Buddhism to be absorbed into Hinduism.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a Jnani and a Bhakta in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 39 TO 42

The last Sutra showed us how the grace of God acting through saints is necessary for spiritual culture. The topic is further continued in the next four Sutas.

महत्संगस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥ ३९ ॥

महत्संगः the company of the great men तु but दुर्लभः extremely difficult to obtain अगम्यः subtle and incomprehensible अमोघः unerringly effective or infallible च and

39. But it is extremely¹ difficult to come into contact with a great soul and to benefit by his company. His influence is subtle² and incomprehensible. Nevertheless it is unerringly³ infallible in its effect.

Notes 1. *Extremely difficult etc.*—The Sutra administers a warning to the unwary and the lazy-minded not to be misled, in their anxiety to avoid the trouble of strenuous Sadhana, into accepting anybody and everybody as a Guru and then leaving everything to his grace. For men of true spiritual enlightenment are indeed very rare. As the Gita puts it, it is only one in a thousand that struggles for realisation, and even among such aspirants only one in a thousand succeeds in realising God. Besides this paucity of these great men, other circumstances like distance, illness, poverty, opposition of other members of the family, add to the difficulties of the aspirants in coming into contact with them. In addition to these, just as there are great chances of a person being deceived by false Gurus, so too there is every likelihood of one failing to recognise the true worth of great men even after coming into contact with them. For they generally hide their greatness, and their behaviour may even repel one by its queerness, if, as stated in Sutra 6 of

these texts, they sometimes look like law breakers, fools, drunkards and lunatics. It is in view of these difficulties that contact with truly illuminated souls is said to accrue only from the religious merit earned by hard spiritual practices. *Vide* Gita VII. 28. Katha Up. III. 14. The lazy and indolent have therefore no chance, for contact with them is the legitimate consequence of earnest spiritual struggle.

2. *Subtle and incomprehensible.*—It is only very seldom that saints condescend to accept anybody consciously as a disciple and give him the necessary training. But they do exert a subtle kind of influence on all who come into contact with them knowingly or unknowingly. As Emerson puts it, "It costs a beautiful person no exertion to paint her image on our eyes. It costs no more for the wise soul to convey his quality to other men. With the great, our thoughts and manners become equally great. There needs but one wise man in a company and all are wise. Great men are a collyrium to clear one's eyes of egotism; this is the key to the power of great men—their power diffuses itself." This unconscious and unintentional conversion of one mind by another is something mysterious and miraculous. People are often surprised when an extremely wicked man is suddenly transformed into a good citizen for no apparent reason. Such things are possible because of this subtle influence of saints. Sometimes it is exerted through their writings or songs. Swami Vivekananda has told us how the spiritual waves set up by a saintly soul often travel long distances of time and space until it

der to God is the easiest of all paths, for pure work without attachment is exceedingly difficult in this age. In the first place there is hardly time in this age to do the various works laid upon us by the Scriptures. In the second place although one resolves in his mind to do work unattached without expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next, the chances are that, knowingly or unknowingly, he gets attached to the fruits of work unless of course he is a perfect man already. The path of Jnana is also exceedingly difficult, firstly our life is Annagata, i.e., depending entirely on material food; secondly the duration of life is too short for this purpose; and thirdly it is impossible to get rid of Dehabuddhi, i.e., the consciousness of this body. Hence the path of Bhakti is the easiest of all, for it reduces work to a minimum and teaches the necessity of prayer without cessation." Some are of opinion that the devotee is rather indifferent to the sufferings of the people. It is not so. Why? There are some earnest souls who are ideal devotees of the Gita in whom love bursts forth with an intense desire to suffer for humanity. Through Bhakti a devotee can also realise his identity with Brahman just like the Gopis.

PRACTICAL RELIGION

The Western people thought that India's religion was mainly responsible for India's general apathy to work. They thought that India's religion laid undue emphasis on renunciation and other-worldliness. The enjoyments of the world are only of two days' duration—why run after these ephemeral joys?

That is why they said that India had become proverbially inactive and devoid of all zeal for work. If we examine this statement in the light of the teachings of the Gita, we find that their notion is quite incorrect. The author of the Gita not only repeatedly goads us to work, but also teaches us how to work. Says he, "Yoga is dexterity in work." We have to work in this world without attachment to reward or punishment, with mastery over one's body, senses and mind. Sri Krishna himself demonstrates it in his own life that the ideal man is he who is intensely active within the body but is all calmness in his mind. Says Sri Krishna: "One who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, he is intelligent amongst men, he is a Yogi and doer of all actions."

Sri Ramakrishna also made Vedanta practical in all fields of life and planes of existence. Before his advent Vedanta was being worked out only by Sannyasins and recluses on the plane of spirituality in caves and forests. He on the other hand showed that the truths of religion can be practised by one and all, not only by Sannyasins but also by students and householders in the midst of their sorrows and troubles, in their happiness and misery, in their days of plenty and penury. Even his own spiritual practices were carried on by him not in a forest or any out of the way corner but in a temple where devotees throng in numbers daily to pay their homage to the Divine Mother, thus demonstrating to the world that one need not necessarily repair to the jungle for religious practices, and that these can safely and quietly be gone through in the

din and bustle of life. He was practical even to the minutest details of life. Although Samadhi was a natural state of his mind and would come over him several times a day, he would not forget to attend to the minor details of life with utmost carefulness. Indeed the great life of Sri Ramakrishna shows in unmistakable terms that even a man in the highest rung of the spiritual ladder is never a mass of inactivity but intensely practical in life.

HARMONY OF DIFFERENT FAITHS

Sri Krishna attempts to synthesise in the Gita the different schools of Vedanta philosophy, Sankhya doctrines, Mimamsa injunctions and Bhakti cults prevailing at his time, and correct their extravagances. That is why we find in it conflicting views about the means of discipline and end of freedom. Yet he harmonises them all and shows the exact place and value of each of them.

"In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires; It is my path, O son of Pritha, that men tread, in all ways."

"Even those devotees, who, endued with Shraddha, worship other gods, they too worship Me alone, but by the wrong method. For I alone am the Enjoyer, the Lord of all Yajnas, but because they do not know Me in reality they return to the mortal world."

The Gita recognises that the one Infinite God can be approached and worshipped through any of his aspects. Through this tolerant spirit, Sri Krishna has made Hinduism a synthesis of different kinds of worship and spiritual experience, a harmony of all cults, creeds and systems

of spiritual culture, based on the fact that the one Truth has many aspects.

In one verse, Bhagavan Sri Krishna harmonises all the three schools of Vedanta, viz., Advaita, Dvaita and Visishtadvaita:

"Others, too, sacrificing by the Yajna of knowledge (i.e., seeing the Self in all) worship Me the All-formed, as one, as distinct, as manifold."

"One" means here identifying himself with the All-formed; this is clearly an Advaitic view. "Distinct" means making a distinction between the worshipped (God) and the worshipper—this is the Dualistic view. "Manifold" means immanent in all beings—this is Visishtadvaitic view. There are other passages too which indicate clearly that the Lord in his Gita has preached a wonderful harmony between all these schools of philosophy.

Sri Ramakrishna beautifully reconciles in one illustration Advaita, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita viewpoints. Once Sri Ramachandra asked his devotee, Hanuman, how he looked upon him. Hanuman replied, "O Lord, when I think I am inseparable from the body, I regard myself as Thy servant and Thyself as my Divine Master. When I consider myself an individual soul separate from the body, I think I am a part of Thee, and Thou art the Whole. When I look upon myself as pure spirit beyond body and thought, I am no other than Thyself, the Eternal and the Infinite." In this one saying of Sri Ramakrishna is demonstrated how the idea of God evolves. They are not contradictory but complementary to each other.

gets a proper receiving instrument just as the ether waves wait for a radio. Instances also are not rare of people being influenced by a look or a touch of such saintly souls. It is beyond ordinary reason and common-sense to understand how even hard-hearted and perverse men could be moved by such innocent acts as the fasts of a man like Gandhiji.

3. *Unerringly infallible in effect*—No doubt it is difficult to come into contact with a saint, but once we come into contact either by chance or as a result of previous merits, something like spiritual gravitation drags our mind irresistibly higher and higher towards the centre of all attraction, viz., God. This influence may not be always consciously felt as in the case of a tonic. But one cannot help becoming a devotee in the long run. Thus unerringness need not necessarily mean an immediate transformation.

लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव ॥ ४० ॥

अपि Nevertheless लभ्यते is attained तत्कृपया by their grace एव only.

40. Nevertheless it is attainable by their grace alone.

Notes—One need not however despair of getting a proper Guru. For it is said that the Divine Power working everywhere in the world takes a Guru of the right type to a true spiritual aspirant as in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. Even if the aspirant is not able to find out the greatness of a realised man, the latter who has become one with God can easily find out a deserving disciple. Let the aspirant therefore do everything in his power to make himself deserving of such grace and then

make a sincere effort to seek out his saviour. In fact, it is the grace of God that makes the meeting of Guru and disciple possible. The same God is present in the hearts of both. It is he who makes the aspirant restlessly and sincerely active in his search for a Guru. It is He again who makes the saint restlessly active in going about in search of deserving disciples and bestow his blessings on all who are fit. He is the wire-puller behind the scenes, and the teacher and the disciple are somehow mysteriously brought together when the time is ripe, by His grace.

तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् ॥ ४१ ॥

तस्मिन् In Him तज्जने in His creatures भेदाभावात् because of absence of difference.

41. Because in Him there is no difference between any two objects of the universe.

Notes—We are all one in God, for everything is His manifestation. Looked at through the eyes of God or saints, all are God. He is present everywhere in all His glory, in lifeless matter and intelligent man, in saint and sinner. He cannot therefore be partial to anybody and His grace is available to all equally. It is always working in the hearts of everybody urging them to higher and higher perfection. It is we who put obstacles in the way of the natural working of His grace to its logical end. Let us be sincere in our aspiration for perfection, let us not intrude ourselves on His grace, let us surrender ourselves, heart and soul to it, and spiritual growth becomes natural and easy.

तदेव साध्यतां तदेवसाध्यताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

तत् that एव alone साध्यताम् is to be attained by practice.

42. That alone is to be effected by spiritual practice.

Notes—We have only to take our hands off, and refuse to put obstacle in the path of the Lord's grace by complete self-surrender. We have only to allow free play to it and it will guide us to our natural birth-right, with or without the mediation of an external stimulus. The external stimulus is only secondary and it may not work unless the primary condition of an unconditional and sincere acceptance of the guidance of the inner voice of God is accepted by complete surrender of individuality and egoistic impulses. On the other hand, if this self-surrender, known as Prapatti, is once effected, the whole world becomes a help to us in our spiritual life, and the whole of Nature will supply the necessary stimulus; for it is not different in any way from God to whose grace the aspirant has surrendered himself. Let the aspirant therefore see God in everything and serve everything as God Himself, and divine help and inspiration will come to him. The sincere aspirant does not therefore suffer for want of proper external stimulus in the form of a Guru. The whole of Nature is as Guru and he is always in the company of God. *Vide Bhagavatam XI. 14.13.*

दुःसंगः सर्वयैव त्याज्यः ॥ ४३ ॥

दुःसंगः Evil company सर्वया by all means त्याज्यः is to be shunned एव only.

43. Evil company however is fit only to be shunned by all means.

Notes—It is true that God is everywhere, even in an evil-minded man and in objects likely to excite passion. But this does not mean that one should voluntarily resort to such persons or things. Nor can one afford to be careless about one's surroundings and associations. In the early stages of the Sadhana one should not trust oneself in the midst of temptations. All times and places, persons and things that are likely to rouse selfish passions must be carefully avoided. Only when one finds it unavoidable, one may take shelter by seeing only God in them also.

कामक्रोधमोहस्मृतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाश-

कारणत्वात् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. For it leads to the rousing up of desire, anger and delusion, and to loss of memory¹ to loss of discrimination² and utter ruin in the end.

Notes.—*Vide Gita II. 62 and 63. Bhagavatam, XI. 14.27 to 30.*

1. *Loss of memory*—Refers to forgetfulness of one's object in life as well as one's duty.

2. *Loss of discrimination*—i.e., discrimination of right and wrong.

तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात्समुदायन्ति ॥ ४५ ॥

इमे These तरङ्गायिताः अपि though only of the form of ripples सङ्गात् by evil association समुदायन्ति become like a sea.

45. Though only in the form of ripples in the beginning, they

become like a veritable sea as a result of evil company.

Notes—In the beginning they may be easily controlled, but once they

become agitated like a stormy sea through the tempest of passion roused by evil company, there is no further hope of escape from being drowned in the ocean of Samsara.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Critical Examination of the Philosophy of Religion (in two Volumes): By Sadhu Santinath. Published by the Manager, Institute of Philosophy, P. O. Amalner (E. Kandesh).

It is with a sense of tragic gloom in our mind that we write these few lines by way of review of Sadhu Santinath's volumes. Here is a man who, as he says, began his spiritual career at the dawn of his youth; practised Bhakti Sadhana for ten years, Yoga Sadhana for three years and meditation according to non-dualistic method for about twelve years; attained Samadhi in which 'as I could remember or infer after waking, I became totally unaware of myself, the act of meditation and the said object'; then suffered from a severe pain in the head owing to excessive hardship and strain in the brain; as a result took to the study of philosophy as a diversion; found his philosophic studies unsettling the convictions he had previously attained through Samadhi and therefore lost faith in Samadhi as a means of attaining certainty; took to philosophic studies strenuously for long ten years in the belief that through logic, he could know truth positively and studied closely about a thousand original manuscripts from different libraries of different parts of India besides all available printed books; came to the conclusion that if one had no sectarian bias or dogmatic attitude, every metaphysical system would be found to be refuting every other system because of the logical fallacies inherent in all of them; became an inveterate agnostic; and then produced the present book, his *magnum opus* — a work of 1110 pages (Demi size) with the conclusion: "The inevitable destiny, to which the human understanding seems bound to submit is that it should stand amazed before the mysterious uni-

verse of experience; it should naturally feel an urge from within to attempt a rational solution of the mystery, and in this attempt it should be more and more deeply and widely acquainted with mysteries within mysteries and mysteries above mysteries, and that this acquaintance will tempt it for further and further search, and ultimately it should surrender itself to the consciousness that the mystery is insoluble."

This inability to reach any ultimate truth, Sadhuji maintains, has not created any despondency in his heart; he has come to the destined end of philosophical speculation, and he is fully satisfied with the result of his enquiry. However sure Sadhuji may now be with regard to the finality of his conclusion, we have a suspicion that sometime in the future he may feel dissatisfaction with regard to his present position as he once did with regard to his Samadhi intuitions, and then move on to convictions more positive in nature and more in agreement with results obtained by earnest spiritual aspirants all the world over.

With regard to the contents of these formidable volumes, we do not wish to say anything more than that it will form an excellent arsenal for the world's army of agnostics, atheists and naturalists to draw their weapons of offence from, in refuting and confuting every useful doctrine about the ultimate nature of things that has been bringing solace and illumination to spiritual aspirants through the ages. We do not want to insinuate that the author is in league with the said category of people; but we wonder why he felt called upon to offer the fruits of his labour to the world at large when he has really no fruits in stock, whether raw, ripe, rotten

or worm-eaten,—in other words why at all he felt so sure that mankind is in such urgent need of being informed of his feats of philosophical vandalism. The author's sincerity, earnestness, and vast learning are very patent all through the book, but these in themselves do not give one a right to disturb the world with the fulminations born of one's intellectual disquiet unless one has a plan of leading the readers to some constructive thought through all this account of the travails of one's mental life. Sadhu Santinath has no such plan, his position being that it is better to be an inveterate agnostic than to be an adherent of any logically defective doctrine.

We have also a few remarks to offer on the author's agnostic attitude. Agnosticism, like every other attitude towards the ultimate nature of things, must necessarily express itself in conduct if, of course, a person is sincere in regard to his convictions. We can think of three possible forms of conduct in honest agnostics. Defeated in arriving at metaphysical certainty, the first type may try to make the best use of the present life and turn into hedonists pursuing their own worldly interests, of which alone they feel any certainty. The second type consists of those who are endowed with an altruistic nature. From metaphysics they turn their attention to the service of country or humanity, evidently because of their strong faith in man's social destiny. Now in both these types there is, no doubt, an absence of certainty regarding the ultimate nature of things, but they are unanimous in having some convictions regarding this life and its possibilities. They cannot therefore be regarded as full-fledged agnostics. That epithet is applicable only to the third type that has no convictions regarding anything, either about the ultimate nature of things, or about themselves, the world and society in which they find themselves placed. Such men will find life purposeless and unintelligible, and if they are really earnest in their intellectual attitude, they will seek immediate relief in suicide rather than wait for the 'inevitable hour' and allow themselves to be caught up indefinitely in this vain, dreary, painful show.

Now Sadhu Santinath cannot be classified into any of these groups. His previous

career assures us that he has no charm for the lower life. And as far as we know, he has not yet turned into an active philanthropist, nor has he committed suicide. Until he follows one of these alternatives we cannot be convinced of his agnosticism. In fact deliberate suicide is the only conduct that we can expect of an earnest truth-seeker and acute logician like the Sadhuji, if he has *really* become an inveterate agnostic as he claims himself to be. Until he has done it his agnosticism is as unconvincing as the theories he has taken so much pains to refute. We, for our part, cannot take him to be an agnostic at all. He is yet a truth-seeker, temporarily caught up in a morass in the spiritual path, from which his own earnestness is ultimately bound to rescue him. But the tragedy of the situation is that he does not recognise this, and has thought it fit to place before the world the present book, offering it as his final conclusion, whereas it is really but an abortive product of his mental life.

Another factor that is responsible for the author's peculiar attitude is his feeling that he has experienced Samadhi. This, we should point out, is an illusion of his mind. We are led to this conclusion by the facts that the author himself gives about his Samadhi experience. He says that Samadhi intuition gave him conviction about the ultimate Reality for some length of time, but afterwards the study of philosophical books led him to doubt its validity. Now this is counter to all accepted notions regarding the effect of Samadhi on the mind of man. The conviction that an immediate experience leaves on the mind cannot be removed by anything other than a higher form of immediate experience. Thus no amount of intellectual proof can disabuse the mind of the sense of reality we have for the outer world, and that is why even Sadhu Santinath, in spite of his logical acumen and merciless spirit of criticism, speaks in season and out of season of 'extramental and independent object', 'object existing outside independently of the thinking mind', of 'psychological reality' as distinguished from 'metaphysical reality', etc. For in the last analysis such concepts are quite unintelligible to critical intelligence

except in so far as impressions that our mind cannot disabuse itself of in any way. Now the general notion about Samadhi is that it is a form of direct experience, far superior even to sense perception in its convincingness. The truth it reveals is so indubitable that no logical process can erase the conviction it leaves on the mind. A higher form of Samadhi intuition may sublate a lower form of it, but never mere logic chopping as in the case of Sadhuji. So the only conclusion we arrive at regarding Sadhu Santinath's Samadhi intuitions is that they were no Samadhi intuitions at all.

Before we leave this topic, we may also draw attention to the Sadhuji's contention that Samadhi experience is connected entirely with ideas that are subjective, internal and personal, and that it can give no knowledge having objective validity. To make such an absolute distinction is in the last resort unwarranted, but even taking it for granted, the Sadhuji's contention goes against the latest scientific evidence. Dr. Rhine's recent book on 'Extra-sensory Perception' has proved the facts of clairvoyance and thought-reading in the right orthodox scientific style. In both these types of experience the receiving mind falls into a state of abstraction, and comes to know facts outside without the aid of the sense organs or the inferential process, thus showing that the mind of man has some super-normal ways of knowing, and that these generally manifest themselves in a state of mental abstraction akin to Samadhi. This is a very important conclusion. For if it is once admitted, the possibility of gaining direct knowledge of even higher aspects of Reality in similar states of mind cannot be denied.

It has also to be noted that the state of Samadhi or trance is not to be equated with intuition. Samadhi is only a condition of the mental mechanism in which the higher powers of the mind will become operative, in case it has undergone the necessary preparation. We draw attention to this fact because it is possible to practise what we would call a merely mechanical form of Samadhi wherein all thought-waves are suspended, and yet no illumination is gained. Illumination will depend on the purity of mind attained previously through

perfect dispassion, keen discrimination and intense aspiration. A mere mechanical stilling of the mind, when devoid of this qualification, will not give the mind the receptivity required for intuiting the highest truth. We draw the author's pointed attention to this, because he seems to contend that if Samadhi reveals the truth, purity of mind need not be considered a necessary condition of it.

Our suspicion in this regard is further strengthened on reading the author's description of Samadhi from his own personal experience of it. He describes the highest Samadhi as merely a state in which objective experience, joy, calmness of beatitude and everything else lapses—and 'nothing more and nothing less' than that. Elsewhere he also says that the only difference between deep sleep and Samadhi is that after the latter an extraordinary calmness and tranquillity of mind are felt, which, according to him, are due to the long course of conscious and voluntary struggle for suppressing the distractions of the mind. But all who have experienced Samadhi maintain that in true experience of that state, consciousness does not shrink but attain to its maximum intensity beyond the polarities of subject and object. It is, above all, a state of illumination and enlightenment. Note also the grand description of it in the Mandukopaniṣad: "The Fourth, they say, is not inwardly cognitive, nor outwardly cognitive, nor cognitive both wise. It is not an indefinite mass of cognition, nor collective cognition, nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, uninferable, unimaginable, indescribable—to be traced only as the essence of the one Self experienced in all states of consciousness. All phenomena cease in it. It is peace, it is bliss, it is non-duality."

What we are led to conclude from this is that the author's so-called experience of Samadhi is only a self-induced state of mental blankness. It is ineffective because it is unaccompanied by all the preparation necessary for endowing the mind with the required receptivity for the highest experience.

Our impression in this respect is still more confirmed on noting that the after-

effect of this Samadhi on the author was a severe pain in the head. But those who can speak with authority on Samadhi maintain that one who had experience of Samadhi never suffers from any pain in the head—not even a headache—whatever other ailment his body may be suffering from. This is in striking contrast with the author's experience. The only conclusion we are led to arrive at from this difference is this: Without going through all the intermediary steps, the author must have practised higher forms of meditation unsuited to his spiritual and physical condition and reached a state of mental blankness accompanied by bad physiological effects in the brain. This unfortunate circumstance, we fear, has much to do with the author's distrust of Samadhi and that hyper-critical attitude, of which the pre-

sent book is the product. He has staked much for pursuing the call of the spirit, and he has perhaps some excuse for his present distrust of Samadhi and of every philosophical system. But he has to recognise his own mistakes and illusions if he is to extricate himself from this spiritual morass in which he finds himself at present. Our desire to impress this point on the author is our excuse in writing this rather unusual type of review—unusual because it reviews the author more than his book. We hope that so earnest an aspirant like the Sadhuji will, in course of time, get over his present outlook, gain illumination in place of mental blankness and cerebral complications, and then come forward with a book conveying a gospel more positive than his present work of philosophical vandalism.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday Celebration

Madras: The 104th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at Madras on the 26th of February. In the morning Bhajana was conducted in the Math premises and poor people were fed later at the Ramakrishna Students' Home. In the afternoon, Mr. Murthi Rao Bhagavathar of Saidapet performed a Harikatha on 'Ramadas Charitram'.

A public meeting was held in the evening with Mr. T. R. Venkatrama Sastriar in the chair. Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar and Mr. V. Venkatarajulu Reddiar spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. Venkatarajulu Reddiar stated that Sri Ramakrishna was a great Vaishnavite Bhakta, and compared the sayings of this great saint with the teachings of Nammalwar and other saints of South India to show how those religious leaders had laid stress on the importance of Bhakti Marga for the liberation of the soul.

Mr. K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar said that the world was now passing through a trying time, and this trouble with the world was something far more serious than they were apt to think. It went to the

very root of human nature. The remedy offered by political and economic reformers to solve it was not enough. The real remedy lay in building the mansion of humanity anew and in moulding human nature on the basis of the old spiritual foundation on which it was built and which they had now lost sight of. If they studied history carefully, he said, they would find that it was religion that had saved the nations of the world and not mere material prosperity. The life of Jesus Christ illustrated this idea and the life of Sri Ramakrishna in later years went to show that one's life would not be happy if it was not built on spiritual foundation.

After comparing the teachings of Jesus Christ and Sri Ramakrishna, the lecturer said that Christianity would not be intelligible without the background of Jewish culture. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings were not new but only reminded people of the fundamental principles of Hinduism. In simple language, Sri Ramakrishna taught the world the sublime ideal of toleration of all faiths—an ideal which was the glory of Hinduism. Hinduism was not a proselytising religion, because, according to Hindu conception, all were Hindus. There was no question of conversion to Hindu-

ism as was the case with Christianity or Islam. This great principle of Hinduism Sri Ramakrishna not only taught but also practised.

Proceeding, the lecturer said that Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated in his life that religion was not a mere question of dogma and belief or only an intellectual exercise, but that it was essentially a matter of experience and faith. It had to be experienced by each individual according to his light. The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were carrying out his teachings by doing humanitarian work. They had proved that it was not correct to say that Hinduism had a paralysing effect on individuals. The unity of Jeevatman and Paramatman, preached by Sri Ramakrishna, was being demonstrated by the members of the Ramakrishna Mission. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had shown that without piety and sincere conviction, none could reach the feet of the Lord. He had also shown that alleviation of suffering was a work of piety.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna to the world, the lecturer said, was that to realise the truth of the principles of equality and fraternity, one need not go to shifting sands of politics and that those ideals could be attained by following one's religion in a spirit of toleration and reverence. What was wanted at the present day was the spread of this message of Hinduism, expounded by Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. Venkatarama Sastriar said that Sri Ramakrishna represented the highest religious experience that could be reached by a Hindu. He had shown that a life of service was not foreign to Hinduism. This message was now being carried into practice by the Mission founded in his name. It was the duty of all to see that this Mission carried that message not only to every part of this country, but also throughout the world.

Swami Avinashananda proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturers and the chairman.

With the distribution of Prasadam the celebration came to a close.

Hardwar: The birthday was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal (Hardwar) with great enthu-

siasm for six days. On the 21st of February the function began with Tithi Puja, Sri Sri Chandi Path, Homam, Arati and Bhajan and was followed by Srimad Bhagavat Path, music by local musicians, Ramnam Sankirtan and Sadhuseva on which occasion copies of a Hindi booklet on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Dev were distributed among the Sadhus.

On the 26th of February a meeting was held at 4-30 p.m. under the presidency of Sri Mangal Girijee Maharaj, Mandaleshwar, S. H. D. Bahuguna, M.A., member of the Municipal Board, addressing the audience showed how even in his childhood Sri Ramakrishna, although belonging to an orthodox Brahmin family, could keep himself above caste distinction and said that the same ideal of his was inspiring the Ramakrishna Mission even now. Swami Muktananda referred to his visit to U.S.A. where he had seen the Vedanta Societies run by the Swamies of the Mission and said that it was the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna that was inspiring them to do philanthropic work in India and preach Vedanta in America. He exhorted all young men, especially of U.P. and the Punjab, to imbibe the spirit and take part in the activities of the Mission. Pandit Liladhar Shastri, Head-master of Rishikul Brahmacharya Vidyalaya, spoke eloquently on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and said that his advent was for the revival of the Sanatan Dharma and showed how since his arrival it was being preached and accepted in many places even outside India. Swami Devananda spoke on various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in general and Kankhal Sevashram in particular, and said that immense public service was being rendered by the Mission and it was the duty of the public to show their active sympathy to the Mission. Pandit Haribansa Shastri of Sindhi Pathshala, Brahmachari Darshananda of Chaitandeva Kutiya and S. J. Kishorilal Bajpayee of the Municipal H. E. School also spoke on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings, which, he said, conformed to the Shastras and were a source of inspiration to all classes of people in all countries.

The meeting which terminated late in the evening was attended by many Sadhus and gentlemen of the locality.

Shyamlatol: The Vivekananda Ashrama situated in the Himalayas at an elevation of 4,900 feet above the sea level, celebrated the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on the 26th of February. Besides devotional music, chanting of scriptures and discourses on holy themes, there was also the feeding of several hundreds of poor hill people on the occasion. In the evening there was a well-attended meeting presided over by Swami Lokeshanandaji, and thoughtful speeches were delivered by Swami Apurvanandaji and Pandit H. R. Dhasmana. Throughout the night there was a programme of devotional music.

Singapore: The celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth-day began with worship, prayer and the recitation of devotional songs by the students of the Mission schools. Afterwards the feeding of the children numbering over two hundred took place.

The most important item of the day was in the evening when several instructive and inspiring lectures were delivered at the Mission Hall explaining the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Brahmachari Kailasam spoke eloquently in Tamil on the "Message of Sri Ramakrishna" which was followed by a speech in English by Sodarar Ponudoray.

Swami Bhaswarananda who presided spoke next on the 'Human Aspect of the Life Divine' and explained in simple English how Sri Ramakrishna, who was himself an "Avatar" (an incarnation of God), showed to the world in a practical manner that Divine realisation was possible through meditation and devotion. Though a Divine Being himself, Sri Ramakrishna (the Swamiji said), did not lose the human aspect; but on the contrary, he lived a simple life dedicated to the service of humanity.

The function concluded with a lecture in Tamil by Brahmachari Kailasam who described at length the life history of Sri Ramakrishna with the aid of coloured slides which the large audience, especially the children, thoroughly enjoyed.

A great part of his speech was devoted to the work done by Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. It was Swami Vivekananda, he said, who

spread the message of his Master throughout the whole world and popularised the Ramakrishna Movement in America, Europe and other countries. It was he who in particular opened the eyes of the western people to a realisation of the greatness of Indian Philosophy and Hinduism.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre at Lahore

At the request of some local devotees interested in the ideals and activities of the Mission, the Governing Body of the Mission decided to open a Branch at Lahore at the beginning of the year, and deputed Swami Adyananda for the purpose.

The formal opening of the Centre took place on the 21st February 1939—the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. There was Puja, Homa and Path (chanting of the scripture) at the rented house at No. 3-A, Lodge Road, where the Mission is located at present. In the evening a public meeting was held at the Sanathan Dharam College Hall. The Hon'ble Justice Mr. M. V. Bhide presided. There was a good gathering and prominent ladies and gentlemen attended. Swami Adyananda, Sir Gokul Chand Narang, Prof. S. N. Das Gupta, Principal T. N. Maulick, Dr. T. N. Sita Ram, Prof. Hiralal Chopra and Prof. Teja Singh addressed the meeting on the ideas, ideals and activities of the Missions in the different parts of the world.

Sir Gokul Chand Narang, said, "Sri Ramakrishna was a great personality and a great force." He admired the great Guru and his disciple Swami Vivekananda. They have raised India and her prestige outside. After describing his personal reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda whom he had the privilege of meeting at Lahore, Sir Gokul Chand, concluded with the remarks that the presence of some Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission at Lahore, will not only inculcate high spiritual ideals and strong character in the people but also inspire them to disinterested service. The Speaker had no doubt that the necessary co-operation will be forthcoming for such a good cause.

Prof. S. N. Das Gupta described the philanthropic activities of the Mission during flood, famine and other calamities. Swami Adyananda described in brief

the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his spiritual experiences. He also spoke on the objects of the Mission and its gradual expansion in the different parts of the world and its present activities for moral and spiritual, intellectual and physical betterment of humanity.

The other speakers also dwelt on the different aspects of the ideals and activities of the Mission. The Hon'ble Justice Mr. Bhide remarked at the conclusion that it was a privilege for him to preside on the occasion. He hoped the people of the Punjab would draw their inspiration from the life and teachings of the Great Masters and co-operate with the Swamis in establishing the Mission Centre opened at Lahore.

Since the opening of the Centre, Swami Adyananda has begun his weekly religious classes at the Mission premises. Other activities will be gradually undertaken.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay:
Report for the years 1931-1937

The report under review is a brilliant record of services which the Institution rendered to the public of Bombay, through its multifarious humanitarian activities, missionary, educational and charitable.

Missionary: Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission popularised the principles of the universal religion of Vedanta by holding classes and delivering lectures in the city of Bombay and its suburbs as well as in the different parts of the Province and occasionally outside the Province. 525 weekly religious classes and discourses were held in and around the city of Bombay. Through private interviews Swamis promoted the spiritual welfare of earnest seekers of truth. By organising birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda when well-attended

public meetings are held to discuss the life and teachings of these two spiritual luminaries of Modern India, the institution is bringing the public in touch with the revitalizing doctrines of Hinduism for which the Mission stands.

Educational: Activities under this head comprise conducting a Students' Home, organising exhibitions of Arts and Industries and management of a free Reading Room and Library. This is being utilized by an ever-increasing number of interested readers.

Charitable and other Humanitarian Activities: To alleviate the sufferings of the poor the Ashrama is maintaining an outdoor charitable dispensary which is being attended by a large number of patients of all classes and communities, creeds and colour. It may be recalled that no less than 93,440 patients took advantage of its medical help during the years under review. Both homoeopathic and allopathic ways of treatment are followed.

The Ashrama undertook relief operations in the district of Ratnagiri and spent Rs. 858-13-9 for the purpose. It spent Rs. 2867-12-0 for relief work at Dacca and other places and Rs. 2500 for Bhil Seva Mandal at Panch Mahals and rendered financial help during Behar earthquake relief and flood relief at Nowgong, Assam.

The management proposes to expand its scope of activities to make it more serviceable to the people of Western India, should necessary monetary help be forthcoming in an adequate measure. The contemplated scheme of placing the Students' Home on a wider basis requires Rs. 50,000 for land acquisition and construction work. The philanthropic public is requested to contribute liberally to make this highly commendable educational effort a success.

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OUR new year begins with this number. *The Vedanta Kesari* has been in existence now for a quarter of a century; and at this juncture we should be happy to send our most cordial greetings to the contributors, subscribers and readers whose share in promoting the objective of the monthly, we feel a pleasure to recognize thankfully. We have before us a definite objective from the start, which cannot be altered by the changing trends of political or social events, even though vicissitudes of times may demand re-statements of it in language easily understood by people of a different generation or country. This is natural because the above objective refers more strictly to man rather than to the conditions he creates for himself. In adopting such a fixed ideal and attitude, we may claim to represent the voice of the ancient sages who discovered the saving truth that the seat of freedom and bliss is the Divine essence in man. With them, our care is to know and promulgate the truth of man, what in reality he is, and not so much how he acts. To the Rishis of old, being was more fundamental than doing, because the latter was a concomitant of the former. The spiritual culture of India is permeated with this spirit. The wisest of our race found real freedom and the goal of all striving in realizing the Divine essence, which is the real being of man; and for scores of centuries this has remained the end and aspiration of millions of people. A shining example of this spirit we find again in

incarnate in one whose memory is still green with us, and in whom we have a brilliant pattern and an inspiring guide. Hardly has our world witnessed a more brave struggle for freedom, a constant effort to be and never to seem, than in that life. Sri Ramakrishna has illumined the whole vista of our past and has thrown a flood of light on our prospective path.

History is a phase in the grand process of spirit realizing itself through time; this indomitable urge of the spirit is the impulse of freedom that cuts right through the evolutionary process of the sentient world. The moral, intellectual and spiritual expressions of human civilization are but a conscious attempt to actualize that latent urge for freedom in aesthetic form, because the essence of civilization is moral and spiritual beauty. The significant content of the Upanishads and other scriptures are but the articulation of that supreme urge for freedom. Krishna and Buddha, Jesus and Ramakrishna, have made concrete for us this conscious striving for, and realization of, that freedom. Freedom occupies the top of our scale of values. To attempt for that climax value, or to be of service to attain that value, is certainly a glory of human life. This is the bold basic concept of Vedanta.

Vedanta is the science of Reality, and at the same time the gospel of freedom. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Our title is a symbolic reminder of this quest of freedom. Vedantic texts and commentaries are

precious as vehicles of spiritual intelligence; but a historic or linguistic interpretation cannot engross our attention. Just as language does not live in books but in the people who use it, Vedanta too lives in those who understand and live it. Scriptures do not exhaust spirituality. The real importance of Vedanta lies in the fact that it refers to the ascending level of consciousness. It is the ground of all values and the rendezvous of ramified spiritual ways. All the various modes of knowledge—physics and metaphysics, geology and biology—are not unconnected with it, it being the supreme art of life. All that enlarge human understanding and add to the stature of man's spiritual personality come under the purview of Vedanta, so broadly conceived. Those who have read not merely the words of old texts but learned with faith and sympathy the lives of prophets and sages, cannot hesitate to accept this truth basic to the Vedantic scheme of knowledge.

In thus explaining the ideal suggested by the title, it would also be interesting to note, in passing, the significance of the second term briefly. *Kesari*, the lion, is the very embodiment of power and freedom. In a metaphorical sense a common noun is compounded with "lion" to emphasise excellence, especially heroism. It is quite appropriate therefore to call one a "lion" when he embodies the highest freedom along with its attendant virtues. In so far as *The Vedanta Kesari* stands for the ideal of freedom and heroism that is taught in our lofty scriptures and exemplified in the lives of the foremost sages, that name also becomes a fitting suggestion for the ideal it constantly keeps in view.

Freedom is what every organism constantly pants for, and it is always correlated with the idea of power, the source of which is knowledge. Freedom is the gift of power at all levels; the weak must be contented with their lot of bondage. The key-note of Vedantic teaching is therefore strength and fearlessness. Misery and weakness lay us low because we are foolishly bound to the destructive wheels of ruthless Nature. Truly has Matthew Arnold portrayed:

"In harmony with Nature"? Restless fool,
Who with such heat doeth preach what were to thee,
When true the last impossibility.
To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool!—
Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,
And in that *more* lie all his hope for good.
Nature is cruel; man is sick of blood:
Nature is stubborn; man would fain adore:
Nature is fickle: man hath need of rest:
Nature forgives no debt and fears no grave:
Man would be mild and with safe conceit blest.
Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends;
Nature and man can never be fast friends.
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave!

We are to pass Nature, and the voice of freedom calls us away from her slavery. Vedanta emphasises that *more* in which the hope for all good lies; and its one enterprise is to lead

a powerful crusade against the wily hosts of ignorance and impotence entrenched in the dark passions implanted in us by Nature and the blind circumstances that thwart and crush even the noblest and best ambitions and aspirations which ever beckon us, and to recover knowledge and power, freedom and mastery, which are our birthright.

To secure freedom from the meshes of Nature with the weapon of power forged on the anvil of Nature, is the end of one and all. Here it is necessary to note that the content of the term "freedom" is different to varying groups and individuals. Evidently it is dependent upon the sense of bondage one experiences; a school-boy's freedom, an employee's freedom, a helot's freedom, a subject people's freedom and a saint's freedom are all conditioned by quite different sets of causes. Many a Dictator who has the power to mould like wax, opinions, environments, and men, and who ever enjoys the resultant freedom, has hardly the overruling passions of his heart under the dictates of that *more* in him. The noisy agitation for political, economic or social freedom with which every part of the globe simmers to day, is quite beyond the comprehension of a medieval visitor to our planet.

Take the case of the individual: there too the susceptibility to the pinch of slavery or consciousness of deadening limitation ranges very widely. Fear is the very antithesis of freedom, but it is a milestone on the road from inertness to freedom. As successive lairs of consciousness open up in the process of man's inner evolution, his conception of freedom widens more and more

until at last complete conquest of Nature internal and external, and the consequent enjoyment of the bliss of perfect emancipation, become the one idea that engages him. Then he begins to fulfill a new function in the world in which he is to take his place, and views all from an exalted spiritual altitude. The larger the number of people of this type a society could legitimately pride over, the farther advanced should that society be counted. Although this is the consummation of Vedānta it does not deny any of those urges for freedom that bubble up from the dark unfathomed depths of Nature rushing up for self-expression. Any struggle for freedom of some kind receives the sanction of the Vedāntic teaching with the following restrictions: Let it not oust the whole from consideration by an over-emphasis on the part; let there be no delusion that liberty to give free reigns to one's impulses is the enjoyment of freedom; and let not one in any way infringe on others' freedom. Of the latter two considerations, the first one positively and woefully pulls back one from one's progress towards freedom, and the second can never give one a start towards that valued goal. The real manifestation of power and freedom is the direct result of the victory one gains over the undisciplined mind and thwarting environments. The nobler the man, the greater he feels obliged to others. A true wayfarer on the route to freedom never practises the doctrine 'might is right'.

Is real freedom a cross-current in the joyous course of unfettered natural life? Is it a prospective gift of which even a foretaste is not possible here? True, it crosses life if one

lives only on the surface, caring for nothing except its big games. But in fact the quest of freedom is neither an antithesis to life nor a blank pursuit, because it is the essence of our existence; if it were not so, it could never be the highest value. As an instrumental value, freedom is a remedy, and every means, according to time, place and agent, must be considered as an end to assure an effective result. But an unbiassed perception and standard are always needed to avoid complete deflection from the goal. Man has a graduated scale of physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual values to round off his existence fruitfully. They are all related as means and ends so much so he denies the one or the other at his own risk. Nevertheless we should not be prone to take the patient's diet to be the normal food. The cure for the evils of alien subjection is political freedom won by persons worthy to hold it without abusing it; economic freedom is an imperative need to straighten up the stunted national growth; the strong distemper of neurotic caste divisions can be eased only by giving freedom to society. But one should not forget that these are but adjustments which must come slowly or speedily in the succession of events. They have, as Marx has pointed out, a dialectic of their own, inherent in society. A practical religion or philosophy is not oblivious of those facts, although it has to function in a different sphere. A stagnant nation cannot produce spiritual heroes, who alone are the really free; and so every kind of freedom is welcome that will help to produce such men. They are the last word of "evolution," and few though they are—for they are

never a mass product—they shed a magnetic influence which will act as a leaven on any society.

It has been suggested that freedom is the gift of power, whether it be of the muscles and nerves or intellect and spirit; but the power of the demon tightens the relentless grip of Nature, while the power of the god hastens the progress to the highest freedom. The one is a nuisance to the world, the other a balm and a bliss. The Upanishads, in presenting the one over against the other, brings home to us one notable idea, namely, that freedom does not dwell in inertia. The strength that is invoked by the Vedāntic religion is not that of the ape and tiger lodged in man. It is the strength of the divine type, a positive, constructive energy of the will and understanding—Vidyasakti — operating on the basis of a well laid-out personality. One who has an insight into the truth hidden in oneself and who cultivates assiduously the excellences and virtues of a higher life, such as purity, fearlessness, strength of will and the like, can alone hope to build such a personality. In the troubled waters of existence they are the captains of human destiny leading us to the haven of peace and safety. Their words and deeds edify, even when they have ceased to exist physically. The wisdom we need to-day to make our world a better place to live in, must be formulated in the light of their experience and counsel. Having got real freedom, they are full of compassion for the bound; their tenure of life is a ceaseless prayer for the happiness of every living thing. The soothing rays of their benign influence is ever on us, encouraging us to ascend to the heights

they have reached, to unfold the inner purity, knowledge and freedom which are ours always. In freedom alone there is happiness, and in a narrow limited mould freedom can never be cast. It has been, and will ever be, our endeavour to focus all light available from various sources, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental, to the best of our capacity on this central problem of existence, and be a constant source of help for appraising in that light the social and spiritual values for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many.

HOLY TALKS

BY SWAMI VIRAJANANDA

[His Holiness Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, arrived in Madras on the 20th of April, 1939. The following is the report of a conversation he held with devotees on 23rd of April at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.]

Question: Disappointments and sorrows of the past disturb concentration of mind. How can mind be controlled under such circumstances?

Answer: Disappointments and sorrows such as loss of honour, loss of relatives and so on break the peace of mind. They do come to every one. We can only try to minimise them, try to see that we do not get overpowered by them. Make yourselves so strong that you are not overwhelmed by them. The only way is to surrender yourselves to the Lord. Pray to Him that you may be strong enough to stand these. Find out what makes you feel so much depressed. By praying to the Lord, by taking refuge in Him, and by practising non-attachment you can conquer mental depression. Then, even if troubles come, they will not affect you. Pray to the Lord that you may be unattached to the world, and by and by you will get strength. Gradually you will find that you are strong enough not to be affected.

Q: Items of office work or household work intrude into the mind

during prayer and sometimes leave no time for prayer at all. Is there a way of combining efficient work with prayer?

A: You attend to office work or household work out of material needs. But there are spiritual needs also. You have made the material needs more urgent than spiritual needs. Material needs are more objective, while spiritual needs are felt only in our hearts. In spite of this difference, spiritual needs also have to be met. "Where there is a will, there is a way." The office work and household work exercise a sort of compulsion on you. Though you may not have any interest in them, you have to do them. But you know these needs are temporary and they pass away. Our real needs are spiritual needs, and so the more you interest yourselves with spiritual things, the more you will be devoting yourselves to them. The greater the interest in spiritual things, the less you will find other needs intruding on your thoughts. Later you will feel that the real need is spiritual.

If you have no time for practice, pray to the Lord to save you from encumbrances. Gradually, you will find that you are progressing in spiritual life.

Q: While praying we ask God for little things. Is it right or wrong?

A: God is our father, He is our mother. Why should you go to Him to pray for small things? Why should you pray for Mohars? Pray for Bhakti and Mukti. When there are higher needs, why should you pray for smaller things? If such thoughts come, then strengthen your minds with the thought, "There are higher things for me to pray for."

Q: Most Asuras like Hiranya Kashipu got God-vision by their Tapas. But they became more wicked and oppressive afterwards, and they hated the Lord. Can Tapas or concentration of mind increase not merely virtues but vices also?

A: Tapas may help in doing good or bad according to temperament. It is just like science. Those things that the Asuras had in mind, they got. They prayed for power to rule the universe. Looking upon God as one's enemy is also a path of realising God. By becoming His enemies they had constant remembrance of Him.

Q: We observe defects in our character. Are we to pray for God-vision first or for a good character?

A: We have to pray to God to destroy bad intentions so that we may have good character. First pray to God, "O God, please destroy my evil propensities and make my mind turn towards You." Naturally then good nature, purity, holiness—all these things will come.

Q: By sitting in the presence of holy men does one's character get moulded? If so, to what extent?

A: When you sit before a fire you get heat. So the presence of holy men helps one in Realisation. Sri Ramakrishna used to lay stress on the efficacy of Sadhu Sangam for getting purity and Realisation. When you seek the company of holy men, you may not feel the change at once. But there is an unconscious influence, and you will feel that your worldly desire or your lower nature disappears by and by.

Q: If my Guru loves me all along, what extra help does he give me by formal initiation?

A: The love of a holy man is a great help no doubt. But by initiation he puts you on the right path, so that you may, by following his instructions, gradually become purer and purer. Also initiation gives great strength. You may follow some kind of religious path, but who knows you are not following a wrong method, a path that is not true? You may be practising for several years but you may not progress and you may not know that it is a wrong path. The Guru puts you on the right path and you will have the conviction that you are following the right path. When you find that this conviction is there—namely, that you are following the right path—strength will come; purity and calmness of mind will follow. You must have infinite faith in his words. Again in times of difficulties you can always refer to him and know how to get over difficulties. His words help you a good deal. In our everyday life we are seeking Gurus. Guru's help is necessary even for worldly things. Spiritual matters

are more subtle than any of the material matters and so the need is greater. Hence Guru's help is needed.

Q : Is there any danger in meditating in the Muladhara and the lower centres? What are the relative benefits of meditating in the heart and the head?

A : Learn these from the Guru. This is not for a public meeting.

Q : There are many Avatars. Which of them are we to choose? Which are we to follow?

A : That depends upon your natural bent of mind. Study the Avatars one by one; and you will be spontaneously drawn to some one of them. The Avatars come according to the needs of the time. One teaches Jnanam and another Bhakti. There is no real difference between one Avatar and another. They only lay stress on one thing or another according to time and circumstances. Find out the bent of your mind and follow that which suits you best.

Q : How to realise the Self?

A : By dispassion (Vairagya) and discrimination (Viveka), we know what is Self and what is not-self. Think of the Higher self, and the lower self vanishes.

Q : Swamiji said to Ramakrishna, "I want to be immersed in meditation and Samadhi throughout." But Sri Ramakrishna said, "Fie on you. For you there is a higher state than even Samadhi." What is that state?

A : His case was a special case. He belonged to the class of Acharyakotis—he was a born teacher of the world. Such world Gurus come for giving Mukti to thousands of souls and they do not care for their own salvation. So when Swamiji said that he liked to be always in Samadhi, Sri Ramakrish-

na said, "You are thinking of this paltry thing; you are like a huge banian tree and will afford shelter to thousands of weary souls." But that paltry thing is a great thing for us.

Q : After concentrating for some time, the mind begins to wander. What alternatives are then to be tried?

A : As told in the Gita, we should constantly practise. Practice (Abhyasa) and dispassion (Vairagya) are needed. Contemplate often and have dispassion, else your mind will wander. If your mind is attached to hundreds of things, you cannot easily concentrate. If your mind is not attached to worldly things, you can concentrate easily. Practise constantly and do not give way to despondency. It is natural that your mind will wander, but still you should struggle. Spend some time in meditation every day. Your mind will gradually acquire skill in concentration. But you have to practise with infinite patience. Otherwise you cannot concentrate after practising for a few days or even a few months. It requires several years. You may be able to concentrate at first for one minute. This is itself a great achievement. And then you will be able to concentrate for 2 minutes, then 3 minutes, and so on. If you concentrate even for 2 minutes, it will help you immensely. Once I was feeling an urge to devote myself wholly to a life of concentration and meditation. At that time Swamiji pressed me to live a life of service, and rebuked me saying, "If you can concentrate for one minute, it is enough. Who can do it for 5 minutes at a time?" Practise concentration with regu-

larity and Nistha, even though it be for one minute or two minutes a day.

Q : What should we think of in meditation?

A : Think of the Lord—His qualities, His life, teachings, etc.

Q : Some people believe that mere repetition of God's name will give salvation. Is this quite true?

A : Yes, by repeating the name merely, you will think of His true nature by and by. There is a great power in the name of God. By constantly repeating the name you get something which makes you think of His inner nature. Constant repetition gives you concentration of mind or Bhakti. There is an inherent power in the utterance of the name mentally or by mouth.

Q : If the actions of our life are controlled by past Karma, then how can we overcome Karma? How to know our past Karma, in order to overcome it?

A : Our actions are no doubt controlled by the past Karma, but we are not mere machines. If we have no power to check our past Karma, there will be no Mukti. Again, you may be doing new Karma, but there is one thing which is above one's own previously acquired tendencies (Samskaras). There is the Self in us which can do and undo this Karma. You have to do good Karma and nullify past Samskaras. So exert your own power, and they will get attenuated. Do good works; they have power to overcome evil Karma, and you will feel you are prospering.

Q : If we do not know our past Karma, how to rectify ourselves?

A : Knowing our past Karma is not necessary. If you know all your past Karma, you will get mad.

Q : Are Bhakti and Jnana entirely separate paths? Or is each man to have a combined prescription of Bhakti, Jnana, Karma, etc., differences being only in the proportion for each?

A : Bhakti and Jnana, in their preparatory stages, are different. But afterwards they merge, and then it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. You should never think that because you are following Jnana or Bhakti, others following paths different from yours are mistaken. You should say, "This is my path, that is another's path." If, however, you have a harmonious development of all the paths, you will achieve an all-round life. The best thing is to harmonise all these paths into a form of discipline suited to your temperament. There must be one's own path, one's own discipline and Sadhanas, but one should also follow the general characteristics of other paths. Swamiji's ideal was to harmonise all these paths and not to follow only one to the exclusion of others. Follow your own path and absorb as much as possible from other paths. The best way of working is to work for others so that our selfishness may disappear.

Q : Why is it that some people get mad while practising religion? Is it due to unsublimated desires, or to misguided Pranayama, or to something inherent in the Mantras they take?

A : All these may lead to madness. If one does not follow the advice of the Guru properly, then he may get mad. So especially in practising Yoga, you must be strictly guided by the Guru's instructions. You must let him correct you. You must observe Shastras strictly. In Yoga you have

to follow a strict diet. If you practise Yoga without attention to these details, it may have an injurious effect on the nervous system. So Yoga practices are not suited to our present mode of living unless we control ourselves, practise Brahmacharya and possess other qualification. Otherwise you are sure to get your mind deranged.

Q : Some people see lights and hear sounds during concentration. What is one to do at such times—welcome them or ignore them?

A : It is better not to attach any importance to them. If they come try to discard them. Don't think they are big things and encourage them. Only follow the ideal and do not look for these experiences. Then they gradually disappear.

Q : If God is really in the hearts of everyone, why can He not lead everyone along the right path? Are we not His sons and daughters?

A : He can, and He will, if His sons and daughters recognise the Lord.

Q : If a vision comes, how is one to know that it is a genuine vision and not a mere imagination?

A : If the vision is pleasant and strengthening, then it is real. If the vision weakens you or leads to unpleasant results, then it is not real. That which is pleasant and strengthening is real. It must not also antagonise reason. If it is something that is not rational and is contrary to what is mentioned in Shastras or by the teachers, then it is false.

Q : Is search for Guru needed, or does a Guru come of his own accord?

A : It may happen both ways. If you have an intense desire, the Lord sends a proper Guru. If the Guru does what he professes, then you may

understand that he is a real Guru. If he is spiritually advanced, then you may accept him as your Guru and follow his instructions.

Q : Is God to be seen? Can we hear him also? If God is really spirit, are not the visibility and audibility of Him as of material things paradoxical?

A : Hearing or seeing God is in the consciousness. In spiritual consciousness you hear and see but that has got nothing to do with matter. It comes to your consciousness in that form, and there is nothing material in it. We can see God with the spiritual eye and not with the two material eyes. That third eye is developed by meditation. So also in the case of audibility, you get spiritual consciousness and hear the words of God. When you are intensely meditating, you have not the idea of the body or anything. But you may hear, see, and feel in that consciousness.

Q : Can Guru's grace act at a distance even in a case where the Guru and the disciple have not met at all. In other words, can one get a Guru by correspondence.

A : By correspondence you cannot know your Guru. That is something modern.

Q : Are Advaita, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita different paths leading to the same goal of realisation, or are they different rungs in the ladder of spiritual evolution?

A : They are different paths. But after reaching the goal one knows that all these paths lead to the same goal. Then a feeling of toleration comes and one knows that others are as good paths as one's own. From the highest goal you see that all converge to the same centre.

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA

BY G. R. MALKANI

[Suffering, including death, is a vital problem of philosophy and religion in general. With a rare logical thoroughness the Vedantic system furnishes its explanation of the cause, nature and remedy of suffering. These are lucidly summarized in this paper by Professor G. R. Malkani, who is a well-known philosophic thinker and the present Head of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner.—The Editors.]

SUFFERING is a patent fact of experience. The physical world is real to us. But even more real than it is the fact of suffering. We cannot escape from suffering of the one kind or another. It is automatically rejected by us. The moment we have any kind of suffering, we seek to escape from it. But this very effort to escape from suffering or to reject it gives suffering its reality and its sting. It makes suffering what it is. If we conceived a situation in which suffering was there but there was no resistance to it on our part, we should cease to suffer. It is our revolt against suffering that reacts upon us and makes us suffer. Resignation to suffering, which is so often advised by religion, has this much truth about it. It reduces suffering and in the end annuls it.

It may be that all is well with the world. If we took things in that spirit, we should not be worried and should not suffer. But our suffering is a fact. We somehow find ourselves in the midst of it. And being in it, we naturally seek to be free from it. This is the primary concern of all living beings. We may not have happiness. But at all costs, we must be free from suffering.

Can suffering be ended? Every one believes that it can be ended. But if suffering is real, how can it be

ended for good? Natural suffering comes naturally to an end. But it is invariably succeeded by another. We are heirs to suffering. We cannot be quite free from it. One suffering goes only to make room for another. We are helpless in a way. We have no means to end suffering for good.

Something can be ended for good only when it is not real but illusory. Can we, however, regard suffering as illusory? Vedanta says that it is nothing else. The prime cause of suffering is Avidya or ignorance of our true self. We mistakenly identify our self with the body. But once we take ourselves to be embodied, all forms of suffering follow. We can only suffer in the body. The pure spirit which is without a body is without suffering. It is in truth pure joy. Suffering comes only in the body; and this body is ours through mistaken identity or through ignorance. When this ignorance is dissipated, we are freed from the body and so freed from all suffering.

It might be thought that in this worldly existence, the self is really identified with the body; and if it is really identified, we cannot possibly escape from suffering until we die. This, however, is not the case. If the identity is real, even death cannot possibly end it. There is no

reason why it should not recur. The identity may be broken only to be reconstituted again in another form; and there will be no end to this reconstitution. Death by itself is not a solution. It cannot remove all our troubles. The truth is that we are not *really* identified with the body. Our identity with it is due to lack of discrimination, it is due to our ignorance. Once this false notion of identity is removed through knowledge of the Self as pure, intelligent, immutable and unrelated, the identity comes to an end of itself. It is seen to be no possible fact. We have not to wait for death to release us from this identity. The identity is due to a false notion and it can only be really ended when the false notion is corrected. Release from all suffering is a matter to be achieved in life.

We have many forms of suffering in the body. But perhaps the most potent form of suffering is due to our fear of death. All other forms of suffering are *in the body*, and we feel certain that they are remediable in the body. If only the body lasts sufficiently long, and we have patience, every suffering might be healed. Our basic love of our self is not rudely shaken. But the suffering which comes to us in the fear of death is in a class by itself. There is no cure for this suffering as long as life lasts. It only increases, the longer we live. For death is inevitable. There is no escape from it. And it evidently dashes to pieces all that we cherish and all that we value in life. There is darkness in front of us, the darkness of an unknown beyond, in which we ourselves are lost. Our self-love receives the rudest shock.

Many people are quite unconscious of this form of suffering. They do not seem to fear death at all. They take life and its problems so earnestly that they have no time to give thought to the end of life. But this merely proves their complete engrossment in the body. They have not conquered the fear of death. They have merely laid it to rest. They have not sufficiently roused themselves to face the most implacable of all realities during our life in the body. It is the cause of a form of suffering which is the ground of all other suffering. All other suffering is in a way remediable, given life. There is no remedy against death. It is a suffering which is given to few. But it is the noblest, and both physically and spiritually, the most potent. It upsets all our values of life. Love of our self is our greatest love, Death is a challenge to it. Can we answer this challenge? Vedanta shows the way. We have falsely identified our self with the body. The self and the not-self are in their own nature quite opposed. They are so opposed as is darkness to light. We do not confuse these or identify them. And yet we identify the self with the not-self, and carry on our activities of life on the basis of this false identification. We must remove this ignorance; we must, through discrimination, realise the non-connection of the self with the body which is of the nature of the not-self; and we must realise that the self is in its own inherent nature immortal. The fear of death is due to our identification with the body. Can this fear survive when we have rejected the body, and seen it to be no better than a corpse with which,

through our ignorance, we are claiming identity?

Death is distant. It does not bother us. We do not seem to have any suffering on its account. What seems undeniably real to us is our present suffering in the body. Can this suffering be illusory? Can we say that we do not suffer? Indeed, we do not say it. But still we mean it. We cannot conceive any suffering which is not in the body. There may be purely mental suffering, although we do not know what it will be like. But even this suffering will take the form of a certain mental state. This mental state is not the self. It is attributed to the self. It is said to belong to the self. The self is not the same thing as suffering. It remains self-identical through every mental state. It remains absolutely the same *in* suffering as it was *before* it. It remains unmodified and unaffected by any passing state. Can we say that the self *really* suffers? If it really suffered, it would not have the consciousness of suffering. It would have no sense of either suffering or of release. But if that is so, is not suffering really illusory? The self that does not suffer is believed through ignorance to have suffering. We have falsely identified the self with what is not the self.

We shall go further. Suffering is naturally disliked. It is rejected, not wanted. This is because it is opposed to the nature of the self which is one of bliss. The feeling of self-fulfilment is the basis of all suffering. There is the bliss of the

self even while we suffer. Our suffering would not be possible without it. It implies it.

It may be said that when I suffer, I do not feel happy or joyful at the same time. This is no doubt true in a certain sense. I do not have, at the time of suffering, a feeling of joy which would be incompatible with the feeling of suffering. But the joy which do have is not a matter of feeling. It is part of the very nature of the self, it is the essential joy of being. It comes out in our self-love which is not affected by any amount of suffering. My self is the highest object of love to me. I can never desire to lose my self or to cease to be my self. I desire above all to be my self. Other things, including the cessation of suffering and actual happiness, I desire for the sake of my self. I do not desire the self for the sake of anything beside it. Our love of it alone is unconditioned, absolute or *nirupadhi* as it is called. The joy of the self is not broken by suffering; it is evidenced by it.

If what we have said is true, then suffering is not real. What is real is the bliss of the self. We suffer, because we are not conscious of our true nature; and we accept for ourselves, through ignorance, a mixed nature, part matter and part Spirit. It is only as embodied self that we have suffering. But when we have distinguished and dissociated ourselves from the body, we have put an end to all suffering. We conclude that suffering can be cancelled or ended for good, because it is illusory.

INDIAN MYTHS

BY PROF. HEINRICH ZIMMER

[Dr. Zimmer, Professor of Sanskrit in the Heidelberg University, is a very distinguished Indologist of Europe. The following article is an abridgment of his illuminating and suggestive monograph on Indian myths in German. The English rendering is by Mr. P. Seshadry Iyer, B.A., M.L. of Trivandrum.—The Editors.]

INDIAN myths are very obscure. They seem to have had a past, no longer known, from which they have derived their meaning. What can now be learnt from them is that they have been recently stamped with a new meaning fit for the new epoch and show a turning point in their wanderings through time. Of course, there are other myths which have no secret behind, the meaning of which in their very origin could be grasped. But though they have apparently no perceptible past and seem not to have led to any future, they remain as relics of changed meanings.

From the time of the Vedas, there have been in Brahmanic India customs in full swing, which make a boy arrive at the status of a man; the beard is for the first time shaven and the boy who had hitherto roamed naked obtains a man's clothing. The Gods themselves present it to him to cover his nakedness. Regarding this, a myth tells why man stands in need of dress and the Gods send it to him. Man is in India a created being like any other—not an animal among animals because he can see further than they—but he is no unique image of the Divine as Adam is. Hence, is it surprising that he alone among all creatures wears clothing not provided for by Nature? This peculiarity has its history which is thus explained by the myth. What is now the skin

of the cow was originally that of men. The Gods said to the pastoral Aryans: "The cow, in sooth, sustains all here. We wish to lay the skin of men on the cow. Thanks to that, it will be able to endure rain, hoarfrost and heat." They then took off the skin of man and laid it on the cow. It is because of this that it is able to endure rain, hoarfrost and heat. Unskinned truly is man. Therefore it is that, when reed-grass or something else cuts him, blood always comes out. Then they put clothes on him. So no creature other than man wears clothes. Hence certainly shall he endeavour to be finely dressed. No more shall he be naked before the cow. Since the cattle know that they wear the skin of men, they disperse in fright, thinking that men may take back the skin. Such myths without any veil are innumerable throughout the world. They explain why and how the things took place. They have their history which we have to discover by intuition. Our surmise is valid if it makes many things plausible and probable. This myth explains what is not said here—why the skin of the cow, the hide, is so thick; it is indeed peculiarly doubled. For it is not said that the cows were without any skin when the Gods for the sake of the cows took away the skin of men. What is stated is merely that the all-nourishing cow

should be protected better than other creatures.

Thus the myths of the Brahmanas of the Vedas, in the beginning of Indian tradition, serve to explain nature and humanity. Imaginative and rationalistic at the same time, they trace the existence of things to their particular origin. The priestly omniscience of the time asserting that offerings and prayers can conjure, constrain, curse, bewitch, heal and rule over all living beings, powers, creatures and things with a similar living personality, has its basis in myths. The result of the magic rites confirms their practical value; the myths explain the coherence and the characteristics; they form the theoretic element. The myth gives a sense of assurance to the traditional practice of the customs and explains their origin; it gives them certainty through knowledge or appearance of knowledge of the secrets of the powers which are at play. It confirms the magical technique as our science attests the rational. Further, it certifies their procedure and its wisdom through their derivation from the Gods. Earlier than men, the Gods had recognised, known and performed these rites. They are the great magicians, the models of the Gods on earth—the Brahmins—who had learnt from them the all-powerfulness of the charms and now freely presume even to constrain the Gods.

Valid customs come from the Gods and the myths trace their origin from them. Fire had the power to carry the dead heavenward to a blessed life amongst the Gods. A blessed Gandharva—who else could do it?—

presented the fire in days of old to a King.

A heavenly damsel had associated with the King in love; her embrace was his heaven on earth. But the supermundane immortals envied the superhuman luck of the mortal. With set purpose they arranged so that the damsel saw her lover naked, as he was, an unclothed man; so she had to leave him and march to heaven. He however went in pursuit of her. In the end, he found her, but she refused his request. After some time she came back once more to comfort him, gave him the son she had borne him, taught him to pray to the Blessed round the fire and told him how his son through the fire offering could help him after death to heaven where he will again find her and be with her for ever. But the King lost the fire which the heavenly damsel had given him. Then was he taught to produce it anew with twirling stick and piece of wood. And twirling stick and wood, whose friction brings about the fire of eternal life, were named after the lovers, as the son of their union, whose fire-offering gave eternal life to the father,—it was named Ayus, the power of life.

In the magical priest-lore, these rational myths served to explain the heavenly origin of fire which was pressed from wood, to create a belief in its wonderful efficacy and to show the origin of the name of firewood. But an ancient song in the Hymns of the Vedas gives a deeper meaning to this matter. When the heavenly damsel forbade her lover to follow her to renewed fellowship, she spoke thus: "I have stayed with the mortals and was united to you night

after night for three years and have partook of the unique butter during the day and still have not been satisfied thereby”.

An abyss separates Gods from men—death or destruction. And no willed darkness of favourable night can secure lasting companionship between the boundlessly different beings. A flash of the heavenly light on the lovers had the misfortune to bring to the light of day the dissimilarity of the couple. From the mouth of the beloved herself the man learnt the limits of his human nature and a possible victory through the magic of a Sacrament.

“So speak the Gods to thee: thou art related to death. Thy descendants shall make offerings to the Gods and thou thyself shalt be blessed in Heaven.” In this hymn we find the old myth full of melancholy renunciation and consolation to the faithful. In it rests an exalted parting-look of men to the past possibilities of the first mythical ages of the world, when men as priests and kings, helpers and companions of the Gods, were fighting for the preservation of the world-order, and when the high among them with the power of the seer and the nature of a hero were the comrades of the Gods in heaven and the heaven-dwellers truly visited the huts of men. That age is irretrievably gone—this is the sense of the song. Magic and sacrament sent by the Gods and the belief therein alone inform the latter generation of a bridge over the abyss between heaven and earth. The poet of the songs of this old myth of the heavenly damsel and the mortal man stamps this meaning; no one can venture to say that it is its original sense. It is only, so far

as our tradition reaches, the earliest explanation of the sense, a reading of the old hieroglyph in India. Elsewhere it has antique relations with other old meanings.

It is manifestly the poets, the true poets alone, as those of the old hymns, not ritual teachers or piece-writers, who can give a glorious life to changing myths—bird-free as they are with all the past spiritual heritage. Their world-feeling or sense of nature, their function to be the mouth-piece of the vicissitudes of man can enliven with the stamp of new meaning the motive-web that lies always ready. They tear the secrets from the dim and dark forms in which they are hidden. Their experiences reveal the soul of the time. Then the myth grows up and the fate of man along with it to formful lives—then comes the myth out of half light and stupor to clear light and shine—as bearer of a high meaning, and the formless feeling of the poets finds in it the matter to incarnate.

A thousand years later, some centuries before the beginning of the Christian Era, we find the old myth in the hands of the Buddhist monks. Meanwhile, it had changed its old form, then unreadable, and become a fictitious tale. The ugliest Indian Prince married, the most beautiful princess. She is a Goddess in a human form; there is only discord between the pair. She could not bear his sight and fled away from him till a miracle happened and the godly beauty possessed by him from the beginning took the place of the disparity and the ugliness. The role is changed; at the core both are gods.

But the myth has become a miracle story from which one can scarcely

understand the inner meaning—at least as transformed by the Buddhist monks who took it up. It would have been well if a poet had utilised it. But the monks laid hold of it as it was in swing—flat and dull—and employed it, poor in sense and childish, poorer than when it was used by the ritual priest of olden days, in the embroidery of the Buddha legends. The Prince was the Buddha in a former life, and a slight change made the story rhyme in with an adventure of Buddha in his previous existence. Here the

myth lived even farther from its inner sense, closed to a possible deep meaning behind its obscure texture.

More than two thousand years later, as in the beginning of the visible period of tradition, a poet—Tagore—in his “King of the Dark Chamber” seized it and treated it not as of old as the story of a mortal king of bygone times but represented the king as a prototype of the Gods, and the beloved, the goddess of old, as the soul of men.

GURU NANAK: MONISM TRANSLATED INTO LIFE

BY S. K. MAITRA, M.A., Ph.D.

[Sikhism stands for loyalty and sacrifice. Its founder translated into daily life the full implications of a monistic philosophy. His teachings, when truly understood and practised, is potent enough to build a united India, in which one shall no more hear about communal skirmishes. Professor Maitra throws much light on the excellences of the faith and the greatness of its founder in this article.—The Editors.]

THE greatness of Guru Nanak lies not so much in the fact that he founded a new religion as in the fact that he created a new nation. There was nothing strikingly original either in his conception of God or in any other religious conceptions of his. What he did was to gather together all the threads of the great monistic upheavels, of which the great leaders were Namadeva, Ramananda and Kabir, and the roots of which go to very ancient times, to the age of the Vedas and the Upanishads themselves.

But the originality of Guru Nanak lay in what he made of this monism, which we may regard as the greatest heritage of our country. He applied it to all departments of life, and was not contented to consider it as a mere

logical or metaphysical doctrine. It is thus that he succeeded in creating a new nation. The fact can never be too strongly emphasized, that there is a world of difference between holding the monistic doctrine as a metaphysical concept and accepting it as a living principle to be applied to all departments of practical life. As the history of our country has shown only too well, it is possible to hold the Advaita doctrine and regard all differences as illusory, and yet at the same time cling to those very differences which the metaphysical doctrine denies. It is possible, in fact, to be metaphysically an absolute monist and practically an almost equally absolute dualist or pluralist.

This distinction between the domains of theory and practice has in fact been the bane of our culture. It has acted as a kind of opiate which has prevented many eminent religious teachers and philosophers from perceiving that there is any inconsistency in holding, in the domain of pure thought, the loftiest conceptions of absolute monism and yet supporting in the region of practice the most iniquitous distinctions. It is mainly on account of this that our world-shaking ideas in the domain of pure thought have not had that effect upon our social and religious life which they otherwise would have had.

There was, of course, one good result of this. It made one thing possible: for the most revolutionary doctrines of metaphysics flourished without causing any disturbance to our social structure. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, but for this, it would have been possible for us to be as tolerant towards widely divergent opinions as we have been. It is because we took good care to see that no metaphysical views, however extreme they might be, could have any effect upon our practical life, that we could practise almost unlimited toleration. This was what made it possible for the Vedanta and the Sankhya, and even the extremely materialistic Charvaka doctrines to exist side by side. The only exception that was made was in the case of Buddhism and Jainism; but this was due to the fact that these were far more than metaphysical doctrines and wanted to introduce fundamental changes in the social structure.

The greatness of Guru Nanak and his originality lay in his perception

that there must be no distinction between theory and practice, that if monism was to be accepted as a principle, it must be accepted wholeheartedly and applied to all the departments of our life. This is why he used frequently to say, "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman." By this he meant that neither the Hindu nor the Mussalman lived up to the monistic doctrine which they professed. What was necessary was that monism should not be merely an intellectual doctrine but that it should pervade the whole of our life.

It is here, I think, that one finds the secret of the success of Guru Nanak. For him monism was not merely an intellectual doctrine, to which one could give a logical justification, but an object of living faith to which one could pour out the whole of one's being.

"A man is as his faith is." Guru Nanak's faith in monism had that rare dynamic quality in it which all builders of nations have. It is this which, above everything else, enabled him to build out of the dying and decaying elements of a worn-out culture an extraordinarily virile nation. It is this which distinguished Guru Nanak's approach to monism from that of so many other great thinkers of our country to whom monism was only a pastime for the intellect.

No one, I believe, has been more true to the monistic doctrine, even in the minutest details of his life, than Guru Nanak. His whole life was in perfect tune with this doctrine. There are numerous incidents which his biographers have recorded, which illustrate this fact. One incident especially may be quoted in this connection. During his visit to Mecca,

he was one day sleeping with his feet in the direction of the sacred black stone in the famous mosque of Mecca. A pious Mussalman saw it and considered it nothing less than a sacrilege, and so he rudely awoke him and turned his feet in the opposite direction. At this, Guru Nanak said, "Show me the direction in which God is not, and I will turn my feet in that direction". And it is narrated that the whole mosque moved and turned in the direction in which Guru Nanak's feet were turned.

He also showed for the same reason his abhorrence for all customs and usages whose meaning was not clear and which could not be reconciled with the monistic principle. Thus it is narrated that one day while taking his bath at Hardwar in the Ganges, he saw a number of people facing the sun and making offerings of water to the spirits of their departed ancestors. Guru Nanak, turning his back towards them, began to throw water in the opposite direction. When asked to explain his strange behaviour, he replied that he was throwing water for the purpose of irrigating his field which was miles away. When asked how he could possibly irrigate his field when it was at a great distance, his reply was that if the offerings of water could reach the dead ancestors, there was no reason why they should not reach his field which was infinitely nearer. His real object was to show that a ritual which was blindly followed without knowing its meaning acted as a hindrance rather than a help to religion.

The one endeavour of his life was to do away with all meaningless ritual and to present the religion of absolute monism in its pure form. This was

the great work of religious reform which he achieved, and the Sikhs have loyally followed the spirit of the Master throughout. This has given them a courage of conviction which has enabled them to face all manner of oppression and suffering.

The other Sikh Gurus followed in the footsteps of the founder. They all shared his absolute monism and his burning zeal for the cause of religion. Two of them, Guru Arjun Deva and Guru Tej Bahadur, suffered martyrdom. The martyrdom of the first, indeed, transformed the Sikhs from a religious into a political and military order. But it was the genius of the tenth and last Guru, Guru Govind Singh, that completed the process, and really made the Sikhs what they are to-day, one of the noblest specimens of humanity from every point of view, moral, physical and intellectual.

There are three great features which distinguish the noble race of men which Guru Nanak and his successors created. In the first place, it is true to the great name it bears, Sikh, which etymologically means a Sishya or disciple. It has been conspicuous for its loyalty and devotion to its Gurus and to the great principles enunciated by them. Its loyalty was not merely a loyalty to the persons of the Gurus—though there was enough of that also—but it was a loyalty first and foremost to the great ideals which the Gurus inculcated. There was no danger, therefore, of its loyalty degenerating into those grotesque forms of hero-worship which the history of many sects in India had, unfortunately, very often exhibited.

Secondly, the Sikhs have exhibited throughout their history a wonderful spirit of discipline. They are, in fact, a living example of what it is possible to achieve through discipline. Unfortunately for our country, this is a virtue which as a nation we sadly lack, and we have paid dearly—I should say too dearly—for this. The Sikhs, however, have been pre-eminent throughout their history for their possession of this quality in abundance. They are a wonderfully disciplined community, and their remarkable achievements have been due in no small measure to the presence of this great virtue.

Thirdly—and as a consequence of the possession of these great qualities—the Sikhs have been distinguished by their wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice. I think no community, with the possible exception of the Christians in the early days of Roman persecution, has shown such a wonderful record of martyrdom for the cause of their religion as the Sikhs have done. If for no other reason, for this alone, their name will ever live in the annals of the world. Indeed not until the whole race of mankind is wiped out, can their record of martyrdom die. It is hard to express the feeling that may be aroused in one when one contemplates the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Deva or Guru Tej Bahadur or Bhai Mani Singh, the devoted disciple of Guru Govind, who, when he was subjected to the most cruel torture that human ingenuity could devise, when his body was sawed in two, silently bore all his pain, uttering only the words, "Sri Kartar". There is something really superhuman in this heroic suffering and sacrifice.

Such suffering and sacrifice can never go in vain, as the poet puts:

Say not the struggle nought
availeth,
The labour and the wounds are
vain;
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been, they
remain.

We shall derive hope and consolation, in the present gloom that surrounds us, from the thought that a nation which is capable of such wonderful self sacrifice has a great future before it. Indeed, the best remedy that can be suggested, when we feel depressed and our minds are assailed by gloomy thoughts about the future of our country, is to contemplate the martyrdom of these Sikh saints. All our gloom and despair will vanish, and we will feel, that a nation which could produce martyrs like these can never die.

What are the services which the Sikhs have rendered to our country? They have taught us three things, loyalty, discipline and sacrifice. These are the most essential virtues that a nation should possess. At a time when the whole structure of our society was crumbling to pieces at the shock of foreign invasion, the Sikhs infused a new spirit which checked this disruption. Theirs is a wonderfully vitalizing influence. No religion in modern times has produced such a rejuvenating effect as theirs has done. They have succeeded, where others have failed, in galvanizing into activity an old and decrepit nation.

Three centuries after the birth of Guru Nanak, India again produced in the person of Raja Rammohan Ray

an equally zealous champion of absolute monism and an equally uncompromising opponent of all superstition. But Rammohan Ray could not leave behind such a trained band of workers as Guru Nank did. Here we see the value of loyalty and discipline. The history of the Sikhs presents to us the unique spectacle of a great reformer's work being carried on by nine successive masters who, far from allowing the original founder's work to deteriorate, added each his own contribution. The result is what we see today, the birth of a nation which has left a unique record on the pages of history.

In this respect there is a good deal of resemblance between the Sikh Order and the Order founded by Sri Ramakrishna. Both have the fortune of having their Founder's work carried on faithfully by a band of devoted disciples. There is also another and a deeper resemblance between the great religious movement started by

Guru Nanak and that inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna. Both are animated by the same fundamental ideas of faith, discipline and service. Both believe that a religion worth the name should be one which must pervade the whole of one's life. Both have faith in the possibility of building up a race through intense religious devotion. But while the Sikh Gurus have concentrated themselves mainly upon the development of what may be called the heroic qualities of the race, the followers of Sri Ramakrishna have directed their efforts chiefly to the creation of a band of ideal Sevakas, selfless men whose only religion is service of mankind. What India requires today is both these types of men—the virile Sikh who is prepared to lay down his life for the sake of his country and religion, and the meek, selfless Sevaka who knows only one way of serving God, and that is through the service of humanity.

THE SAVING SPIRIT IN THE STORIES

BY R. RAMAKRISHNAN, M.A., L.T.

[Not merely men of letters, but even statesmen and scientists, have mostly derived, in their childhood, an impetus to their future achievements from mythology and biography. Eminence in any walk of life is not for those whose imaginative faculty has not been properly developed; and there is no better device to gain this end than by treating children to a rich repast of healthy stories culled from every source. Mr. Ramakrishnan draws pointed attention to this question with special reference to our own country and times.—The Editors.]

I remember to have come across, some time ago, a news item which is very revealing of the times we live in. A certain Christian divine went into a Christian school for the young, and put a question to the assembled children: "Tell me the name of the

noblest personality in the world's history. The name begins with the letter J." The pious divine naturally expected that a hundred voices would cry out "Jesus" in answer. He was disappointed. There was silence for a minute, and then a bright boy stood

up, and shouted out a name beginning with J. It was not the Christ's name, but the name of a cinema "star" or a record breaker (I do not recollect which) who was just then the talk of the world and the craze of the daily press. And the divine walked out in sober melancholy. The pupils had certainly heard about Jesus, but the Christ was not uppermost in their apperception mass.

If anyone walks into one of our own Indian schools today and puts a question to the pupils about our epic heroes like Karna and Arjuna and Bhishma, or about our ancient seekers after wisdom like Nachiketas and Satyakama Jabala, or about the circumstances in which the Gita was recited, the response would be equally disastrous. Perhaps Rama and Krishna are familiar names to the children, but not many others.

It is true that the situation is slightly improving now, thanks to the growth of the film industry in our land. Many of the talkies have for their plots incidents from the Puranas. But God forbid that we should ever learn our Puranas from the silver screen of today. None denies that the film industry has great educational possibilities, and that it may be used as a potent instrument of mass education. But it is an acknowledged fact that our film industry is nowhere near perfection at present, and more often than not, the representation of Puranic themes on the screen gives the audience a wrong impression and a distorted picture of the ancient age; our gods on the screen have no halo of divinity, our heroes are not even manly and our women are devoid of that adorable innocence and that quiet spiritual

strength which constitute the essence of Indian womanhood.

This state of affairs, this ignorance of the future citizens of the land in the matter of the nature of the contribution to our progress by our ancient national leaders, this absence of a vital association with the genius of the makers of Mother India—this is a disquieting situation indeed. It is all true to say that a mere brooding over past greatness, or a proud recollection of vanished glories does not help us very much. But still if the present is an evolution, a continuation, a result, of the past, we must in our own interests, have a knowledge of the forces, and an adequate appreciation of the personalities that made the past what it was. We read in history of a Shivaji who founded a kingdom; and we read too, of how his mother Jiji Bai fed him on epic and Puranic lore in his boyhood, and how she was thereby able to kindle in him a passion for the resuscitation of Dharma. How many among our modern mothers are qualified to be Jiji Bais—makers of heroes?

Even a generation or two ago the situation was not so bad as now. Mothers in the quiet Indian village homes were unlettered then, but they knew all the old stories by heart, and as their children lay in bed or sat for meals they told the wondering little ones these stories. Almost throughout the year in the villages there was the recitation of the Puranas by a Pandit who translated them to the masses. Frequently there were Harikatha performances too. But times are changing, have changed. And a something that was golden, a something that contributed to the simple joy of the villagers of the previous generations,

has now disappeared. We of today are often merry, but rarely joyful. The daily newspaper with its nerve-shaking tidings of wars and betrayals, accidents and assaults, has gained possession of us. We are getting more of knowledge but less of wisdom. The daily trifles of the world are too much with us. We feed our senses and our intellect, but starve our noble emotions and our soul.

Every religion, it has been said, has three parts—philosophy, ritual, mythology. Mythology is concretised philosophy. Instead of expounding abstract principles to the people, mythology presents before them personalities who are the embodiment of those principles. We refer to the Ramayana in the history class in the school and hasten to add that it is mythology, not history, and that India's history begins from 600 B.C.! And the little boys and girls wonder what a land India was before 600 B.C.! There may be exaggerations in the old stories, but boys and girls have the capacity to sort the wheat from the chaff. And what if a man called Rama did not actually exist? The person who created "Rama" must himself have been a Rama. It is not you and I that can create a Falstaff or an Othello; only a Shakespeare can. And then there is a tendency in man to measure everything by the yardstick of his own miserably poor achievement and apperception. Perhaps in 2000 A.D. when people read of a period in Sri Ramakrishna's life when he was not able to touch metal, or of the epic fast of Gandhi for three weeks, they will smile and regard it all as exaggeration, as the outcome of the well-meaning desire of devoted disciples to glorify their masters!

Let us therefore keep our children in the warm, sunny storyland. Let us save the stories and the stories will save us!

The child is the father of the man, says the poet. So any reform of man must first touch the child. And the child can be touched effectively only at school. Our schools must take on themselves the responsibility of preserving our ancient stories and of infusing the spirit of the stories into the souls of children. Nothing pleases children so much as stories. Nothing brings light to their eyes and glow to their faces so readily as stories do. Children's imagination is more fertile than ours. They can "hold infinity in the palm of a hand and eternity in an hour." They can visualise narrated incidents more truthfully than elders can. The dusty accretions of ages petrify and dwarf the elders' powers of fancy and imagination. A good story-teller can kindle storms in the child's soul, elicit sympathy for suffering, rouse indignation over wrongs done, create satisfaction at the intervention of divine justice. When we do not feed children on stories, we put fish on land and we plant rice in the Sahara.

Indian culture especially owes a good deal to stories. Stories have, so to say, interwoven themselves into Indian social life. Our ancient heroic figure in our common talk and in most of our proverbs. Not to be acquainted with the content of the stories is therefore to fail to understand the inner significance of Indian modes of thought and expression.

It is the duty of the educationist therefore, to include stories in the school syllabus and in a curriculum of adult or mass education. Can a

one regard himself as an Indian, if he does not know of the perseverance of Viswamitra, of the exploits of Parasurama, of the endeavours of Bhagiratha, of the suffering in the cause of truth of Harischandra? Swami Vivekananda exhorts our women to hold Sita, Savitri and Damayanti as their ideals. How can our women follow their footsteps without knowing their lives? Without the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Indian literature will shrink to very small proportions, and yet how many of us can honestly say we have read through the seven cantos of the one or the eighteen chapters of the other? We have no time to go through their unending pages. And yet in days not very distant from now, lived people who could recite long passages of the epics from memory. We are busy with too many nothings now, and the epics have no part or lot with our scheme of earthly existence. And we pride ourselves on our progress!

Walk into any school or college in the land, and meet any Hindu student who reads Greek and Roman history, and ask him who Patanjali is, or what are the Prasthanas-traya, or who wrote the Vivekachudamani, or what is the main theme of the Katha Upanishad—and you will have an idea of our cultural decline.

Of course the argument will be advanced that India being a land of many faiths, and our schools having to cater to the needs of many sects of pupils, any attempt to teach Hindu stories will lead to difficulties. For goodness' sake, let us, in this twentieth century, transcend the bondage of sects and communities and be simple Men. The story of young Nachiketas going to the

very door of death to gain wisdom, spurning the lordship over the universe that was offered to him instead of the wisdom he sought—has this story no significance, no lessons for those who happen to be non-Hindus? The generosity of a Karna, the sacrifice of a Sibi, the passion for truth of a Harischandra, the goodness of a Bharata, the supreme realisation of a Jada Bharata, the righteousness of a Yudhishtira, the manliness of an Arjuna, the heroism of a Savitri—have these no appeal to non-Hindus? Do not non-Christians find solace in the Bible? Are the teachings of the Gita limited to the four corners of the land of its origin? There is an inner essence in our scriptures and stories, which has an universal appeal. And so, even cosmopolitan schools need not fight shy of Hindu stories. It is high time that people belonging to a particular sect or faith realise that they are the heirs to all the wisdom of all the lands.

It is also desirable that the birth-days of our most illustrious ancestors are celebrated in home and schools. The occasions will serve as reminders to us to be worthy of our heroes.

Numerous schemes are being tried and talked of in the matter of building a glorious new India. Wisdom lies in our utilising to the maximum advantage the legacy of the past that has come down to us through our stories.

There is a saving spirit in our stories which may advantageously be used for holding aloft before the people's vision a great ideal progressively. And a clear comprehension of the ideal to be reached is the first step in the way of its realisation.

CONDITIONS OF HIGHER LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

I

SRI Ramakrishna has shown us all the different steps of spiritual life. All work that can be done, can be done only through that which we ourselves have actually become, never through fine words and sermons. We must observe perfect Brahmacharya, for without perfect Brahmacharya no lasting work can be done. Work is never a question of eloquence, of high philosophy, of superfine thoughts and sermons, but of actual living. And if there is no perfect Brahmacharya at the back of our work and our words, nothing we do can ever produce any lasting effect.

The stronger the disease, the stronger must be the medicines. And in the West this terrible disease of "Woman and Gold" has become most virulent. So, very strong injections are needed to cure people and make them regain consciousness. In this age small doses no longer suffice. In the beginning smaller doses may be given, just to prepare the system, but the strongest dose must be taken by all of us some day. And these high doses will have to be taken for a long time if the germ is really to be killed. Different crises will come. In the case of every disease there is a curative crisis, and even this curative crisis is one of the necessary steps leading to the perfect cure. Through all our innumerable previous lives we have enjoyed these things;

we have been fathers and mothers and friends and children, have undergone birth and death. Why not see this time, just as an experiment, what a real life of renunciation is like and compare the two kinds of lives. Let us see, out of sheer inquisitiveness, what the higher life of perfect purity is like.

Ramprasad sings, "O my mind, why art thou lying fallow when thou canst raise crops of gold if thou wishest, out of thyself?"

Never use the violent method with your mind. Try to cajole it into reason. Try to persuade it with quiet, calm and reasonable words. Our whole evolution becomes easier if it becomes a conscious evolution. Your power of determination must be made stronger day by day through different spiritual practices. Because we are not able to get the higher thing, why should we take the lower one instead? Fasting is always better than taking filth. Die for the higher ideal. Swamiji once said to his brother-disciples, "If I wish to get a certain thing, and do not get it, does this mean that I should run after something else?"

II

Real silence is the silence of the mind. It is stilling the mind and freeing it from all unwelcome thoughts. First attain the thought of the Divine, and then try to eliminate all other thoughts that cannot

be directly connected with the Divine thought. "Mere external solitude will not make one forget the world, and that alone is real solitude in which one merges oneself in Brahman." We do not enter into solitude by merely getting into the forest or the monastery. We must know how to annihilate the world in our mind. When you sit for meditation, erase all ideas of the world in your mind and think of the Lord alone.

If we possess anything we must possess it as trustees, not as owners, administering it on behalf of the Lord alone. There must never be any sense of personal possession, however much we may happen to possess.

Faith in oneself is absolutely necessary in spiritual life. But in the case of the really spiritual man faith in himself means, at the same time, faith in God, because he has realized that his essence is the Divine and nothing but the Divine. "By thinking that we are the Atman we gain infinite strength. Then through the highest knowledge we attain to Immortality".

All Great Ones stress Brahmacharya in all its aspects again and again. The Atman is ever pure and sexless. All our troubles arise through this clinging to a false personality. Spiritual life is blasting of this false personality, the pulverising of the ego, of all our littleness and limitedness. And the thought of the Atman shakes the very foundations of this false personality and of all our false relations with others.

Think deeply on this conception of the Atman before beginning your meditation. Think that you are spiritual entities freed from the body,

mind, passions, desires and all the rest. If there be such a thing as sin at all, it is this clinging to creation and to the personality.

That alone is moral and spiritual which helps us in purifying our heart and our mind, and in attaining the goal. Everything else, whatever it be, is immoral. Purity alone is the condition of the Lord's grace.

Renunciation—mental and physical renunciation—is the central theme of all spiritual life and of all those who have really followed it. Renunciation of wealth and greed, renunciation of all forms and aspects of sex and lust, renunciation of the ego—when these three things are achieved, spiritual life becomes natural and unstrained, and then God-vision comes to a person as a matter of course.

This is the ideal of the threefold renunciation for this sense-bound ego-centric age of ours in which we are all running after the vanities and will-o'-the-wisps of life. It is the redemption from the trammels of "Woman and Gold" that is salvation. As Swamiji said in his "Song of the Sannyasin,"

"Truth never comes where lust and
fame and greed of gain reside;
No man who thinks of woman as
his wife can ever perfect be;
Nor he who owns however little,
nor he
Whom anger chains, can ever pass
through Maya's gates.
So give these up, Sannyasin bold,
say—Om Tat Sat Om!"

This is the great unchanging Truth proclaimed by all the Great Ones, and this Truth includes the threefold renunciation without which there can never be any spiritual life.

In every country we need just a few sincere individuals who strive for the highest ideal, for this ideal of perfect purity in thought, word and deed, who are prepared to give their all for this ideal, who are prepared to suffer anything for its realisation. We can influence other people to the extent to which we succeed in influencing ourselves for the better, we can never convert the masses. We can never make the masses spiritual, but we can change the lives of a few sincere individuals whose time has come.

III

In the streets you see such a lot of hideousness and perversity on the faces of people. Painted woman, nicely shaved men, all beautifully dressed, but on their faces there is nothing but greed and sex. As soon as you become a little more introspective and sensitive, you, too, will see, how hideous all this is. Rarely do you come across a face in the streets that has not got "beast" and "lust" clearly written over it. All this is a sign of degeneration. This makes the leading of a pure life so difficult for the beginner. So long as this beastliness is not dropped, and they are content to remain beasts all their life, degeneration cannot be stopped in anyway. Beware of being stained and polluted by the thoughts of these beasts poisoning the air all around you.

And if you cannot redeem this degenerate society, then redeem yourselves, but realize how miserable all these brutes are. They themselves are miserable and they create misery for others, they soil others, poison others through their dirty vibrations. All their dirty thoughts can be read

clearly on their faces. That is what makes it so very unpleasant to walk in the streets. You see that all the talks of these worldly people turn round and round the topics of money-making, politics and sex in all their most dirty aspects. What do you see in your theatres, cinemas, novels, songs, etc.? Sex, politics, money-making.

We are not yet sensitive enough. We do not yet clearly recognise our own motives. Sometimes our mind is allowed to find nice plausible explanations for our doings and thoughts, just to deceive us as is always the case in the untrained person. Tell your mind: "Let me see that you break down," if it complains against the great strain of the practices. If we try to lead the higher life, we should not mind our dying even if we die in the attempt. And the mind will go on revolting and complaining for a long time. It says, "Look here, to-day you have had very little sleep. This may be bad for your nerves. Take care that you do not get a nervous breakdown. Stop your practices for a day or two." Just give it some good kicks in such a case, whip it nicely, be very hard with this bad mind. Just as a horse gets whipped when it lies down with its rider, so you must give your mind a good thrashing if it revolts.

There must be a fixed daily routine. Repeat the name of God as many number of times as possible. You must have a minimum, and that minimum is to be done and finished under all circumstances. In the morning never touch food before having done this minimum of your spiritual practice. On no plea whatsoever should we stop doing it.

"Think of Me and fight, carry on your fight, and through My grace you will be able to vanquish the enemy and find peace," says Sri Krishna. And this fight takes subtler and subtler forms as we progress, and thereby becomes all the more difficult and relentless. It must be fought till the very end. The subtler the world, the subtler and greater the struggle. If a bad thought rises even in dream, you must find no excuse for yourselves.

IV

At the beginning, when we are given the seed, we cannot yet know its potentiality; but as we advance we find that the seed contains a mighty tree, but it must be properly watered and manured. Have some holy picture as the first thing and the last thing, directly after awakening and directly before falling asleep. Never think of other people or objects before having had this holy picture before you and filled your mind with it. This is very necessary for the beginner. Ramprasad sings, "O my mind, why do you not put up a fence round the tree with the Mother's Name?" First we take it to be just a name and nothing more, but this name has its subtler aspect and takes us to the Divine. We cannot recognise its infinite potentiality in the beginning. When we do our practices regularly for some time, this mind of ours becomes tutored, trained; but even then, at times, just like a trained horse, it tries to bolt.

Regarding Asana (posture) you should have two different ones, so that you can change it as soon as your body begins to hurt you. The central theme of Sadhana is medita-

tion, and everything else is but a preparation for the mind to have the right mood. When the right mood comes, meditation becomes very easy. In India there is now a revival of practising the different Asanas. But it is not at all necessary for spiritual life. The ease of an Asana can only be realized after sufficient practice.

Five to six hours of sleep is enough for the spiritual aspirant. Eight hours is generally too much. Sleep, as such, is not so necessary as the conscious minimising of our nervous and mental tension at all times of the day. In order to be able to meditate, we must be able to relax, we should first learn how to decrease the tension of our nerves. Very nervous people can never meditate. After that we should get control over our sentiments and feelings, even if they be good and pure or elevated ones. By developing the spirit of self-surrender we should make the mind passive, attuned to the Infinite, and thereby minimise all anxiety and our terrible nervous and mental tension. If we are able to do this, we feel a sort of peace, even long before being able really to meditate. We should make it a point to relax our nerves as much as possible before we attempt meditation.

Everything must be definite, clear. You must know how to sleep and what to do with your waking time, how to awake, how to fall asleep, what thoughts to have while awakening, and what thoughts to have just before falling asleep. The life of the spiritual aspirant must be conscious and regulated in all its phases and aspects. Before sleep, make your mind passive by filling it with some very holy and pure thoughts of the Divine

or of a Great Spiritual Personality in a wholly dispassionate and unstrained way.

Everything depends on the purity and absolute chastity of thought; and unless this is brought about, our tension can never be reduced. Our sleep is undisturbed only if we know how to think and feel properly in the waking state. Let all those who lead the spiritual life not be bothered about the animal existence. Body-worship and sex-worship are the most vicious and degenerating forms of idolatry that can ever exist and ever existed.

V

Our heart is to be made consciously a cremation-ground—the cremation-ground of all our attachments, of all our impurities, of our whole personality. This eternal struggle is the worship of the Lord, the only true worship there is, and it should never unnerve us. Our trouble is that we worship only a God who gives us pleasure and sense-satisfaction and blessings. But is not also misery His? Everywhere we worship the God who is full of boons and the Giver of boons. And as soon as we think of a Thunderer we are afraid. Shiva as Giver of boons is all right. Shiva dancing the mad dance of destruction is horrible! Why? There is no rhyme and reason in our attitude. God is God only when there is creation, when there is preservation; but when there is destruction, God has no hand in it! No. God is God only when He is God in all aspects. When He is the God of creation, preservation and destruction, and above all the God who is none of all these. So the present-day reaction against the religion of a merely good God is

to be welcomed. When you give the modern mind a kind and good God, it will throw Him overboard; but when you give the modern mind the whole, it will, in most cases, accept Him.

God in His aspect of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer is Mother. Mother again in Her absolute aspect, beyond all these, is Shiva. Thus the relative aspect of God, as it were, is Mother; the absolute aspect of God, i.e., the same Mother in Her state beyond creation, preservation and destruction, is Shiva. Mother is dancing Her mad play of creation, preservation and destruction on Shiva who is lying under Her feet, motionless and unconcerned, appearing to be dead. What wonderful, infinitely deep symbols of Truth all these are!

Why be afraid of death? Death can be glorious. Where do we find the greatest play of Mother? Only in the cremation-ground, and the cremation-ground is as real and true as the nursery is. In life and in death the aspirant should cling to the Mother, and the Mother alone, giving up both.

It always so happens that he who has a great clinging for pleasant things gets misery. Physical distress is nothing compared with the mental distress; and suffering we all have to pass through in life. So we should always know that Truth is beyond happiness and misery, and can only be attained by transcending them both.

Ramprasad sings, "O my fickle mind, never stop taking the name of the Mother at all times, come what may. You pass through misery. You

may have more. What does it matter?"

No physical suffering can ever be compared with the terrible tempests raging in the human mind, and all these tempests can never be transcended so long as we cling to life in its pleasant aspect and deny or try to deny its terrible aspect. We must be fully prepared to transcend both the good and the terrible aspects of God, if we really wish to reach Him and to attain to peace and blessedness.

THOUGHT GEMS

As long as I live, so long do I learn.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

Ignorance is the first penalty of pride.—*Proverb*.

The grain of guilt planted by pride ripens to a harvest of tears.—*Anonymous*.

There is more hope for a fool than he that is wise in his own conceit.—*Proverb*.

Such as give ear to slanders, are worse than slanderers themselves.—*Domitian*.

The first and last thing that is demanded of genius is love of truth.—*Goethe*.

Nothing is profitable which is dishonest.—*Cicero*.

Nature has given us two ears, two eyes, and but one tongue, to the end we should hear and see more than we speak.—*Socrates*.

Nothing more precious than time, yet nothing less valued.—*St. Bernard*.

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.—*R. W. Emerson*.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA : A VINDICATION OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

[The following is the text of a lecture which swami Siddheswarananda delivered on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at Paris.—The Editors.]

THREE years back, during the time of Sri Ramakrishna's birth centenary, a celebration of that occasion was held under the auspices of the Institute of Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne. All over India, wherever the name of the Master is revered, there was a feeling of legitimate pride that within the portals of one of the premier universities of the world, in the heart of Paris, which Swami Vivekananda considered as the centre of European civilisation and culture, the ideas and ideals for which Sri Ramakrishna stood were given the respect and veneration that they have commanded all the world over. The existence of the *Centre Vedantique* here is the direct result of that celebration of the centenary in Paris. And on this occasion may I take the liberty to thank all who had made this possible, as also you who have assembled here to-day in response to our invitation to celebrate this yearly function.

Sri Ramakrishna we consider not merely as a personality but a principle. And that principle is the spiritual value the world has ever recognised from times immemorial. Sri Ramakrishna came not to show us anything new; but his life is an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one can have true perspective of these very eternal values we have dreamed as the culmination of spiritual experience. And herein lies the universal importance of the teachings of the Master exemplified through his life. "*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadantai*—Truth is one; sages call it by various names." This is one of the greatest discoveries made by the Upanishadic Sages. Herein we get the most literal charter of spiritual freedom and tolerance the world has ever known; and the life of Sri Ramakrishna is a manifestation of the possibilities of concretising in actual life the spiritual treasures enshrined in these Vedic utterances.

Religious truths have come to mankind in various epochs under various forms. But often in the hands of the followers of the Masters to whom came the rich revelation, these truths assumed the prerogative of monopolies. Truth got institutionalised. It became a prisoner and thereby lost its value. There is the possibility of understanding the same truth in multiple ways. The Vedic seers recognised this cosmopolitan character of truth. In Gita we find Krishna teaching the same ideal when there was a crying need of its re-formulation. Right through the corridor of time we had great, broad, ideals in religion. In India we make a distinction between *Mata* and *Tattva*; *Mata* is religion but *Tattva* is Truth. All *Matas* lead one to the same *Tattva*. And that mental reading of *Tattva* through one's faith towards the ultimate realities of life is one's

religion. From this point of view there can be many religions as there are individuals; but the Truth to which they take us is always *One*, whose multiple expressions the religions are. Lack of comprehension of this has created the greatest misery in the world. True civilisation is always a "co-operative endeavour"; but instead of this attitude when sectarianism and a feeling of monopoly to hold and propagate truth seizes human mind, it is worse than insanity. And our earth instead of becoming a haven of peace is turned into a valley of tears. To restate the true value of religion as paths leading to Truth, great Masters bless this world of ours. The hates and passions of men prevent their acceptance. Still they come, and give us their life-giving messages. The life of Sri Ramakrishna is one such cry in the wilderness. Will the world harken to the understanding of these messages which alone can enfranchise man from the thralldom of the senses and slavery to passion? Perhaps at no other epoch there is a pressing need to gain this understanding; today under the guise of the war of ideologies we are once again in the grip of a wave of hatred which recalls to us the wars of religions in the Middle Ages with its history of persecutions, inquisition and massacres; if the future of humanity is a "federation of the world in the parliament of Man" as poet Tennyson has put it, then that can be inaugurated only by an understanding of each other's ideologies. The life of Sri Ramakrishna, as we understand, is a living

commentary on this phase of truth and today as we celebrate his birthday anniversary, let us pay heed to this vital point in his message.

France had the honour of bringing to Europe the light of the Orient in philosophy and religion. It was Anketil Dupéron in the 18th century that for the first time, published a translation of the Upanishads. Study of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy has now become a feature of almost all the universities in the Occident. And outside the universities men of great reputation—to mention only the names Mon. Rene Genon and Mon. Romain Rolland in France—have brought through translations and expositions the knowledge of Oriental things to the doors of the ordinary man. East and West stand once more united as in the Hellenic period when there was deep cultural contact between the two continents. If today we meet here, it is not only to pay our homage to one of the master-minds of modern Indian Renaissance, but it is also to bring our offerings to the temple of true culture and civilisation that we by our united efforts have to build, so that humanity may be saved from a second lapse into barbarism and savagery. In these days of despair when we doubt the foundations of human culture, the memory of the great ones gives us cheer and hope and makes us feel that *all* is not lost. The sleeping forces of good once more revive in us; and again we hear the Upanishads murmur:— "*Uttishthata jagrata prapavaran nibodhata.*" Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakata* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 46 TO 50

The main principles of spiritual Sadhana have been dealt with in the previous eight Sutas. In the next five Sutas Narada points out how all practices must inevitably lead to love of God before they can give Mukti. Sandilya goes to the extent of saying that Samsara is due only to want of Bhakti and not to lack of Jnana (Vide Sutra 98). The Bhakti-sutras however has no quarrel with Jnana and Dharma as such, and the two latter are also pressed into service as handmaids of Bhakti. On a careful study of the teachings of the various schools of spiritual culture, we find a wonderful similarity in the exercises prescribed, the differences being only in relative emphasis. There can be really no question of superiority or inferiority, nor can there be any question of priority or posteriority of one practice over another, as such. Superiority or priority depends on nothing else than differences in temperaments, capacities and opportunities. Different writers have given different orders of precedence, and have described the various Bhuktikas or stages through which the aspirant has to pass before he reaches the goal; but each aspirant is free to take up such of these practices as appeal to him according to his tastes and conveniences. (Vide Sandilya Sutra 62.) In fact spiritual practice

cannot be divided into watertight compartments, and each one of them shade off inevitably into the others. Sandilya reminds us that each one of them is capable of leading to God by itself unaided by others. But the truth may be better expressed by saying that each one of them is an epitome in itself of all spiritual practice.

Thus Bhagavata gives an exhaustive list of spiritual practices in the words of Bhagavan himself in Book, XI: chapter 19, verses 20-24. Narada himself gives another list in Bk. XI ch. 2 to 5. Sandilya refers to them in Sutas 27 and 28 as well as in Sutas 56 and 57. The Gita refers to them in its ninth chapter. Ramananda Roy expounds to Sri Chaitanyadeva the following steps in spiritual practice:— (1) Swadharmacharana or performance of one's own duties as prescribed in Vishnu-purana III: 8.8. (2) Krishnarpana or dedication of one's actions and their fruits to God as mentioned in Gita IX: 27.3. (3) Swadharmatyaga or renunciation of one's duties as mentioned in Gita, XVIII: 66. and Bhagavata, XI: 11.32. (4) Jnanamisra-bhakti or love mixed with knowledge, as referred to in Gita, XVIII: 54. (5) Jnanasunya-bhakti or love devoid of knowledge as mentioned in Bhagavata, X: 14.3. (6) Prema-bhakti. (7) Dasya-bhakti or the devotion of a servant.

(8) Sakhya-bhakti or devotion of a friend. (9) Vatsalya-bhakti or devotion of a parent and (10) Kanta-bhakti or the devotion of a wife to her husband. (11) Radha-bhakti or the devotion of a mistress to her paramour. In the Bhakti-rasarnava-sindhu, Rupa-Goswami describes the various stages as consisting of Srad-dha, Sanga, Bhajana-kriya, Anartha-nivritti, Nistha-ruchi, Asakti, Bhava and Prema. Madhusudana Saraswati in Bhakti Rasayana, 1.32 and 34, describes the various Bhumi-kas as consisting in Mahat-seva, Tad-daya-patrata, Sraddha, Hari-guna-sruti, Raty-ankuro'tpatti, Swarupa-dhigati and Prema. In Bengal Vaishnavaites poems the love itself is said to pass through the stages of Purva-raga, Milana, Sambhoga, Viraha and Bhava-sammilana. The Yogavasishtha enumerates the following seven Bhumikas, viz, Subheccha, Vicharana, Tanu-mansa, Satvapatti, Asamsakti Padartha-bhavana and Turyaga. Saint Augustine has seven steps consisting of Fear of God, reverent study of the divine revelation, love of God and fellowmen, steadfast self-discipline, soul-cleaning, soul-enlightenment and bliss. St. Teresa's seven steps are Recollection, Quiet, Union, Ecstasy, Rapt, the Pain of God, and Spiritual Marriage. The neo-platonists speak of three stages, viz, purgation, illumination and ecstasy. Richard of St. Victor speaks of dilation of the mind, elevation of the mind and ecstasy. Jacopone da Todi speaks of self-conquest, loving intuition and ecstasy. Dionysius, the Areopagite, speaks of Purification, Illumination and Union.

In the following Sūtras Narada gives us his own classification. He

begins with giving up of all contact with objects of senses such as are likely to inflame passion and tempt the aspirant from his path to the goal, and through twelve stages takes the aspirant up to the love of God which alone can save him finally from Samsara.

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् ?

यः सङ्गं त्यजति, यो महानुभावः सेवते,
निर्ममो भवति ॥ ४६ ॥

कः Who? मायाम् the world of senses with all its troubles and tribulations तरति crosses. यः He who सङ्गं contacts with objects which are likely to inflame passions त्यजति gives up. महानुभावः spiritually great soul सेवते resorts to and serves निर्ममः free from all possessions भवति becomes.

46. Who crosses, who crosses the Maya? He who avoids all contact with such objects of the senses as are likely to inflame passions, and resorts to spiritually great souls and serves them, and gets rid of his possessions in their service.

Notes.—Just as a man hankering after perfection in physical health has to give up all kinds of food and other objects of enjoyment which are likely to be injurious to the body, and should get away from all insanitary surroundings, so the spiritual aspirant must first avoid all enjoyments and surroundings as are likely to tempt him from the path of righteousness and lead him to perdition. Just as the former has to attend a gymnasium and take physical exercises under the inspiration and guidance of physical culture experts, the latter has to re-

sort to a Guru, and serve him, and in the light of his example and precepts do such exercises as would develop him spiritually. The immediate result of such contact with a spiritually great man will be his readiness to give up everything he holds dear for the service of such Guru and thus free himself of all properties and possessions. As Christ says, he has to go and sell all that he has and give to the poor before he can follow him. When one has to swim across the bottomless ocean of Samsara it is better to reduce as much weight as possible by ridding oneself of all one's belongings. This is easily achieved in the process of serving one's Guru. He considers all his properties as belonging to God and feels that he holds them only in trust for Him and His devotees and spends them in their service. He leaves even his family and becomes completely care-free. He feels with Thoreau that property is theft, with Count Tolstoy that it is smeared with the blood of the poor, and would have none of it for his own use.

यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते, यो लोकबन्धमुन्मूलयति,
निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति, यो योगक्षेमं त्यजति ॥ ४७ ॥

यः Who विविक्तस्थानम् lonely place सेवते resorts to यः who लोकबन्धम् the bondage to the pleasures of the three worlds उन्मूलयति roots out निस्त्रैगुण्यः free from the effects of the three Gunas भवति becomes यः who योगक्षेमम् all ideas of acquisition and preservation त्यजति gives up.

47. He who resorts to a solitary place, roots out his bondage to the pleasures of the three

worlds, gets free from the effects of the three Gunas and gives up all ideas of acquisition and preservation.

Notes.—Renouncing one's family as well as properties, one has to betake oneself to a place free from all distractions, and giving up even the company of the saints, one has to retire into the secret recesses of one's heart and there one has to meditate on the blissful form of the Lord who has taken his seat in the lotus of his heart, without allowing any other thought to enter therein. By long uninterrupted practice of this meditation, without making a show of it to anyone, all the bondages of the heart are rent asunder. He attains that dispassion which is referred to in Patanjali, I: 15, as Vasikara. By constant practice of this he is able to get over all his egoistic impulses and be free from the effects of all the three Gunas. He is not only not affected by Tamas and Rajas and their effects, but even by those of Sattya. Thus, he reaches a stage of dispassion, associated only with the state of freedom from the bondage of the three Gunas, which is known as Para-vairagya. Vide Patanjali, 1.16. When that stage is reached there is no more any desire in the heart, because there is no feeling of limitations or imperfections caused by the Gunas. Hence no thought arises as to how to get on in this world. The Lord indeed promises such a man in Gita, IX: 22, that he need not worry himself about such things, as He would take that responsibility upon Himself. So again says Christ in his sermon on the mount, St. Mathew, Ch. VI: 25 to 34. See for example how during

the whole of Sri Ramakrishna's life his welfare was looked after by Rani Rasmani and Mathurnath.

यः कर्मफलं त्यजति, कर्माणि सन्न्यस्यति, ततो निर्द्वन्द्वो भवति ॥ ४८ ॥

यः Who कर्मफलम् the fruits of work त्यजति gives up कर्माणि works सन्न्यस्यति renounces ततः thereby निर्द्वन्द्वः free from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain भवति becomes.

48. He who gives up the fruits of all work, renounces all selfish activities and passes beyond all pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain.

Notes.—When he reaches this stage he avoids everything which is the product of work, for everything that is produced by mere human effort, even if it be enjoyment in heaven, is worthless because of its impermanence. He is attracted only to God who is the only permanent being among all that is impermanent. Therefore, he does not attend to any work for his own sake, although God makes use of him as an instrument for carrying out his inscrutable purposes. He does not feel that he is the agent and as such he is free from the results of all works which take the form of pleasure and pain. All Punya and Papa fall away from him. Vide Brahmasutara, IV: 1.13 and 14. Also Chand. Up. IV: 14.3. and V: 24.3. Mundaka Up. II: 2.8., Br. Up. IV: 4.22 etc. See also Patanjali, IV: 7.

यो वेदानपि सन्न्यस्यति, केवलमविच्छिन्नानुरागं लभते ॥ ४९ ॥

यः Who वेदान् the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the

Vedas अपि even सन्न्यस्यति renounces. केवलम् unalloyed अविच्छिन्नानुरागम् unintermittent love लभते obtains.

49. He who gives up even the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Vedas and obtains unalloyed and unintermittent love.

Notes.—Rites and rituals are required only in the early stages; they form the kindergarten of religion. There is no more necessity for them when the spiritual practices, of which they are external symbols, are taken up in real earnest and practised internally. So the advanced Sadhaka feels no necessity for them and gives them up. But he may continue to do them as worship to set an example to others, although he has no sense of agency as in the case of other activities. Vide Brahmasutras, IV: 1.16 and 17, as well as Bhagavata, XI: 7.11 which says, "Beyond the reach of both merit and demerit, such a man will like a child desist from prohibited actions but not through a sense of evil, and perform enjoined actions but not through an idea that it will conduce to merit." He simply is contented with immersing himself continuously in his love of God. It is this love that finally saves man from Samsara as noted in the next Sutra.

सः तरति स तरति लोकांस्तारयति ॥ ५० ॥

सः He तरति crosses लोकान् the world तारयति carries across.

50. He crosses indeed, he crosses this Maya, and carries also the whole world across it.

Notes.—It is this man, who has obtained this unalloyed love for God,

that crosses the ocean of Samsara. It is only he who can help others to cross.

It will be seen, from a perusal of the above account of Narada of the

various practices necessary for crossing the ocean of Samsara, that it practically follows the order given by Bhagavan towards the end of the Bhagavadgita, XVIII: 51 to 54.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Hindu Scriptures: Edited by Nichol Macnicol. Everyman's Library. Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 10-13 Bedford Street, London W.C. 2, England. Pages 287.

This edition of Hindu Scriptures comprises the English translations of select hymns from the Rigveda, of five Upanishads—the Brihadaranyaka, the Chandogya, the Katha, the Isa, and the Svetasvatara—and of the Bhagavad Gita. These translations are taken from well-known publications like the Sacred Books of the East, and have been done by well-known orientalists of Europe. There is also a Foreward by Rabindra Nath Tagore, and an instructive Introduction by the Editor.

The value of the book consists in its bringing together many of the important Hindu Scriptures in a single attractive, handy and cheap volume.

Prayers, Praises and Psalms: Translated by Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A. Ph.D. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 612. Price Re. 1-4-0.

We have in the volume under review well-selected and representative collection of devotional verses from Sanskrit literature with English translations. The selections are drawn from the whole field of Sanskrit literature—Vedic, Epic, Puranic, Tantric, Kavya poetry, and the compositions of Acharyas and individual devotee singers. The translations are accurate and make pleasant reading.

The special value of the book lies in that it brings together into one handy volume, a vast number of devotional verses that are otherwise inaccessible to general readers since they lie scattered in a vast body of literature dealing with a variety of subjects. It will therefore be found very useful by Hindu devotees, while non-Hindu students of religion will find in it a good help to come into contact with the spirit

and quality of Hindu devotion. The value of the volume is enhanced by an exhaustive Index and informative Glossary.

Srividya Saparya Paddhati: (Sanskrit) Compiled by Brahmashri N. Subramania Iyer. Published by Sri Brahma Vidya Vimarsini Sabha, Madras. Pages 168. Price Rs. 2-0-0.

This book gives a detailed account of the procedure to be followed and the Mantras and the hymns to be chanted in connection with the worship of Sri Vidya. Sri Vidya is only another name for the Divine Mother, Who is the same as the non-dual Reality in its relative aspect. The spiritual tradition of India maintains that the worship of the Divine Mother with faith and devotion is an unfailing means of attaining both the material and spiritual ends of life.

The heartfelt gratitude of all devotees of the Divine Mother, especially of those who worship Her daily according to strict ritualistic procedure, will be with the learned editor who has spared no pains in collating rare manuscripts and presenting for the first time, a reliable and well-arranged printed edition of Srividya Saparya Paddhati. He has done well in adding to this edition, the famous Lalita Sahasranama, which is perhaps the most beautiful and inspiring among the Sahasranamas. The printing and get-up of the book are quite nice.

The Songs of Thyagaraja: By Dr. C. Narayana Rao. Copies can be had at Atreya Rama, Anantapur. Price Rs. 2-0-0. Pages 165.

Thyagaraja is one of the greatest of geniuses and benefactors of humanity that India has ever produced. He lived in the early half of the 18th century, and devoted his whole life to the service of God and

culture of devotion through music. He was a saint, a composer and singer in one, and consequently his life's Sadhana through the composition and singing of devotional songs in Telugu, one of the most musical languages of India, resulted not only in the development of his own spiritual life, but in creating a rich heritage of soul-stirring devotional songs and a valuable musical tradition for the people of South India. He is the one living force in the musical life of South India even today, and few cultured men of South India will disown the part he has played in educating their mind in higher ideals of life.

Mr. Narayana Rao's translation of seventy-seven select songs of Thyagaraja into English will be highly appreciated by all lovers of Indian culture who have no access to the Telugu original. He has done well in giving also the original songs in Roman characters with diacritical marks.

The Religions of the World. Vols. I & II. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Calcutta, 15, College Square, Calcutta. Copies can be had of Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pages 1044. Price Vols. I & II, Rs. 10.

These two volumes give us a permanent record of all the proceedings of the memorable Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta in March, 1937, in connection with the first birth centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides the programme of the Parliament, the address of the chairman of the Reception Committee, greetings from the delegates, messages from distinguished philosophers and religious heads, and farewell addresses, the volumes contain the fifteen presidential addresses delivered at the different sessions, and either the full text or resumes of one hundred and ten papers presented and lectures delivered in the course of the different sittings of the Parliament. These lectures are classified into eight groups: (1) The Ideas of Religion, (2) Religion and culture, (3) The Religious systems of the World, (4) Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, (5) Religion and Philosophy, (6) Religion and Social Service, (7) Historical, Comparative and other Studies of Religion, and (8) Religion and Current Problems.

Among the writers one comes across the names of distinguished scholars belonging to different countries and universities of the world, and of the representatives of all the important world religions and religious movements of today.

A book of this kind, in which the best men of different countries and cultures have pooled their mental resources with a view to solve the ultimate riddle of existence and promote the cause of the 'good life' on earth, is indeed a genuine form of intellectual co-operation, of which we hear so much now-a-days. Men all the world over are today looking for a new lead in their collective life. They feel that statesmen and economists have miserably failed them. Ever since the modern scientific era began, people had transferred their faith and allegiance from religious to secular leadership, in the hope that the latter will rectify the ills that the fanaticism and narrowness of priests and churches had wrought in the days of their supremacy. But the selfishness and blind folly of nationalists and imperialists, as well as the constant state of unrest and nervous tension to which the conflicting political ideologies of our times have reduced the world, are forcing thoughtful minds everywhere to look to religion once again for a new light and a new inspiration.

But the old fanaticism and narrowness of the churches and dogmas will not do for the new age. Enlightened minds will have no charm for them. Only a study of comparative religion and philosophy, not from a mere academic interest but with faith in the divinity of man and the living truth of all the religions, will suit the needs of our times.

The volumes under review form a substantial contribution in this respect. Few publications in modern times are so useful as these in promoting world understanding and spiritual leaderships through a study of comparative religion. They meet the needs of all who are interested in religion, whether it be from an intellectual or practical point of view.

The Gita Rahasya or The Fundamental of Life and Living: By a Sadhu. Published by the Sanathana Dharma Publishing House Ltd., Ernakulam. Price: Rs. 1-8-0. Pages 116+418.

This exhaustive work is an illuminating presentation of the teachings of the Gita. Within the first 175 pages the author gives the translation of the texts with elaborate foot notes; then follows the exposition of the teachings of the Gita bringing out at the same time their practical bearings on the present-day problems of the world. One chapter is devoted to the appropriate sayings of Sri Ramakrishna on various problems of spiritual life. The glossary at the end is very helpful.

My Father in Heaven: By Narayana Kausika. To be had of N. G. V. Aiyar, Nemmara (Cochin) South India. Price Rs. 2-4-0 (India), 5 sh. net. (Foreign). Pp. 269.

Mr. Kausika's work, *The New Evolution*—the first of a well-planned series—was reviewed sometime back in these pages. The book under review is the second one of the series. Herein, some ways and means have been suggested to ensure the evolution of human civilization to a higher stage when much of the anomalies, stress and strain and conflicts of interests of the modern world can be eliminated. He hopes to achieve success mainly through universal religion or Dharma suited to our age and through world-state organisation controlling national and racial ideals and activities.

The Gospel of the Gita: By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. To be had of the author or the Dharmarajya office, Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Price, annas three; annas two (for students). Pages 54.

In this brochure the learned writer has narrated the superb story of the Gita in a very lucid style so as to make its message accessible to the Hindu boys and girls. He has therefore given due emphasis on all the salient points in that inspiring dialogue between Sri Krishna, the divine man, and Arjuna, the great warrior. We wish this booklet a wide circulation.

The Heart Doctrine of Sri Bhagavad Gita and its Message: By R. Vasudeva Row, assisted by T. M. Janardanam. Published for Suddha Dharma Mandal Association. To be had of Suddha Dharma Office, Mylapore, Madras.

In the compass of this small book an attempt has been made by the author to summarise the view-point of the Suddha School of Elders in respect of Sri Bhagavad Gita. The notable feature of the presentation is that the original Slokas have been classified under several topical heads bearing on some of the outstanding problems of spiritual enquiry.

The book is available free to one and all on payment of four annas stamps as postage.

1. *Sai Baba*; 2. *Sage of Sakori* (2nd Ed.): By B.V. Narasimhaswami. Copies to be had at Sunday Times Bookshop 21, Errabalu Chetty Street, Broadway, Madras. Pages 128 & 248; Price 6 annas and 8 annas (wrapper) respectively.

The first of these books deals with the life of a sage of Western India, who passed away a few years back. The second deals with another living saint, the disciple of the first. Besides the life sketch, character portrayal, and essential teachings of these sages, these books, especially the first, contain a vast collection of the experiences and reminiscences of the devotees of the sages. These are no doubt, given for strengthening the faith and devotion of the readers, and to present an impressive picture of the personages dealt with.

The most striking feature of these books is the abundance of miracles in them, and the queerness and sometimes the repulsiveness of certain aspects of the lives represented therein. India has from time immemorial been the land of saints and sages, and Indians generally venerate men who are considered to be of this category without applying their critical intelligence. This has got its good as well as bad effects, and both these are certainly visible in the books under review. One feels, however, grateful to Sri Narasimhaswamy for all the pains he has taken to investigate into the facts relating to the lives of these personages and to popularise these figures so little known in several parts of the country, as well as for providing the scholars with material for a study of contemporary Indian mysticism in its strength as well as weakness.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon.

The report of the Society from September, 1937 to August, 1938: The Season's activities were resumed with the opening of the Sunday services in the Vedic Temple in the evening, on September 12, 1937. In the mornings, Swami Devatmananda spoke on practical and devotional subjects, and in the evenings, he dwelt on general psychological and metaphysical topics. The regular half-hour meditation before the sermons were also duly conducted as an important feature of the Sunday Services. The Swami gave the following course of ten lectures on Ethics, on Sunday Evening: (1) Ethics, Its Scope and Relations to Sciences, (2) The Moral Standard as Law, (3) The Supremacy of the Moral Standard, (4) Virtue and Wisdom, (5) Moral Sentiments and Sanctions, (6) Is Pleasure our highest Good? (7) The Ethical Standard of Perfection, (8) Supreme Happiness as the Ideal of Life, (9) The Critical Ethics of Kant and Vedanta, and (10) Morality, In Theory and Practice.

The weekly study classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays were also held at 8 o'clock, in the Vedic Temple, "Sri Krishna and Uddhava," being studied on Tuesdays and "Vivekachudamani" on Thursdays. The regular half-hour meditation before the Thursday class was also conducted. Besides these Services and classes, Durga Puja, the Birth anniversaries of Jesus Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Lord Buddha were fittingly observed with special devotional Services. The New Year's Eve midnight Service also was duly conducted with meditation and silent communion. The Twelfth Anniversary of the founding of the Society was marked with the presentation of a playlet entitled "The Pilgrim Returns" written and managed by the friends and members of the Society. The Annual General meeting of the Society was held in October, 1937, when the Board of Trustees was elected for the ensuing year.

The Women's League met from time to time, and conducted their meetings. The added feature of the League is the study

circle, in which various members present short notes on topics of current interest, such as, music, art, travel, social welfare, science, etc. Speakers also are invited to address the League on instructive subjects.

The work of the Ashrama has been steadily progressing with the generous help rendered by the friends and members. One member is staying there and looking after it, while others make frequent trips and execute various large-scale improvements. Thus, in the year under review, a permanent water-system with a pipe lay-out of about 1,500 ft. has been completed, and a twelve-feet wide road covering a total length of about 1,500 ft. has been cleared, graded and gravelled. Besides, a new cabin for the use of the Swamis has been built. All the labour for such improvements is being kindly and voluntarily given by the members and friends of the Society. Special mention has to be made of the generous help the county is rendering by building the County Road (leading from the Highway) with the help of thousands of dollars of the Federal Fund.

On the 4th of July, an oak tree was dedicated with special ceremony, in memory of late Swami Gnaneshwarananda, who, with Swami Vividishananda, visited the Society as also the Ashrama, in the summer of 1937. This year, the activities of the society were suspended for a summer recess, one month ahead of time, enabling Swami Devatmananda to make a trip to Hollywood and San Francisco, and attend the dedications of the new Temple of the Master in Hollywood, and the Ashrama at Lake Tahoe, Calif.

The most pleasant event that brought the season's activities to a successful close, was the visit of Swami Prabhavananda, the Founder-Head of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood and also the Founder of the Portland Centre. He paid a short visit to Portland, after an absence of more than six years. He spoke twice, once in the Masonic Temple before a large and appreciative audience, and another time at the Ashrama in connection with its third Anniversary celebration.

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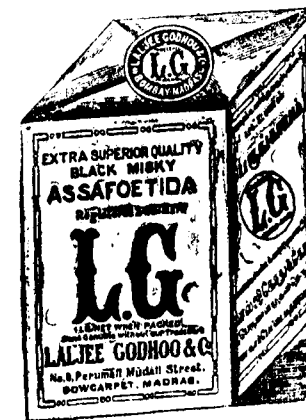
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THE VEDANTA KESARI

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THE HINDU IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

ALONG with other ancient people the Hindus also believed in the divinity of kings; but no other nation has such an exalted ethical ideal of kingship. The following extracts give a fairly good picture of that ideal. They are instructive and interesting to us of present-day India.

सक्तं ग्राम्येषु भोगेषु कामवृत्तं महीपतिम् । लुब्धं न बहु मन्यन्ते ममशानाम्निव प्रजाः ॥
स्वयं कार्याणि यः काले नावृत्तिरिति पार्थिवः । स तु वै सह राज्येन तैश्च कार्यैर्विनश्यति ॥
ये न रक्षन्ति विषयमस्वाधीना नराधिपाः । ते न वृद्ध्या प्रकाशन्ते गिरयः सागरे यथा ॥
यस्मात् पश्यन्ति दूरस्थान् सर्वानर्यान् नराधिपाः । चारेण तस्मादुच्यन्ते राजानो दीर्घचक्षुषः ॥
तीक्ष्णमल्पप्रदातारं प्रमत्तं गर्वितं शठम् । व्यसने सर्वभूतानि नाभिधावन्ति पार्थिवम् ॥
अतिमानिनमग्राह्यमात्मसंभावितं नरम् । क्रोधनं व्यसने हन्ति स्वजनोऽपि महीपतिम् ॥
उपभुक्तं यथा वासः स्रजो वा मृदिता यथा । एवं राज्यत् परिभ्रष्टः समर्थोऽपि निरर्थकः ॥
अप्रमत्तश्च यो राजा सर्वज्ञो विजितेन्द्रियः । कृतज्ञो धर्मशीलश्च स राजा तिष्ठते चिरम् ॥

A greedy ruler who is given to sensual pleasures and who acts at his own sweet-will is detested by the subjects just like a cremation fire. A king who does not personally attend to his duties soon sees the end of himself and his plans. Having lost the power for self-determination, the king who does not take proper care of his kingdom cannot shine in prosperity, even as a chain of mountains submerged in the ocean. It is said, kings have a far-reaching vision. Why? Because they could foresee distant calamities with the aid of spies. To a harsh, stingy, careless, arrogant, stubborn king nobody would flee for help even at the time of consuming anxiety. A ruler who is overbearing, evasive, conceited and habitually wrathful is exposed to mortal danger even from his very kinsmen. And a ruler bereft of rulership, although he may possess abilities, is as worthless as a rejected cloth or used garland of flowers. That ruler alone can be stable in his State, who is full of zeal, who understands all, who controls his senses, who is grateful to others and who abides in divine Law.

From Valmiki's Ramayana, Bk. III, Ch. 33.

AN ADDRESS

BY SWAMI VIRAJANANDA*

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer, Friends and Fellow Workers of Madras,

It is a source of genuine joy to me to be in your midst to-day and participate in this function of the opening of the Ramakrishna Centenary Library.

A living tree puts forth fresh leaves every day; so a living organisation never stops work but ever strives onward in deeds of service. The mighty tree of the Ramakrishna Order, which we of this generation have been privileged to watch growing under our eyes, and which we in our own way have been privileged to water and nourish—this tree is putting forth new shoots, day after day, in the shape of increasingly useful institutions for the service of man.

Said Sri Krishna to his comrades, while walking through a lovely forest, "Look at these trees. Don't they seem to live for the single object of doing good to others? Themselves bearing heat and cold, wind and rain, and never complaining, they stand there ever ready to comfort those who seek their shelter. They afford sustenance to numerous creatures, and none ever goes away from them disappointed. With leaves, blossoms, fruit, shade, root, bark, branches, sprout, shoot and seed, they fulfil the varied desires of various beings. Such doing of good with body, mind and soul and all that belongs to one is the 'summum bonum' of life on earth."

It is the cherished aim of the Ramakrishna Mission to serve humanity like the tree pictured by Sri Krishna. You will again recall how with the Vedic seers He likens Life to a tree with root at the top and branches at the bottom. These various institutions bearing the name of Sri Ramakrishna, which we see sprouting up and flourishing around us, have their root all above in Him; and so long as they draw sustenance from that Source, they are sure to prosper and grow from more to more.

That is the idea we have to bear in mind in all our work. When works of service are understood and carried on in that spirit, the worker need not be apologetic for the littleness of his efforts, or be frightened by the magnitude of other undertakings around him, compared with which, his own might seem to sink into insignificance. Our work is a love offering to the God in man; and that is our justification for opening this small library in the premier city of the Presidency which has got many big and up-to-date libraries. I hope, in spite of its smallness, this small library will have an individuality of its own and will carve out a distinct place for itself in this part of the city. This library will not only afford book-learning but will also inspire its readers to seek the end of all learning. If it is for one's own salvation—to kill one's own Ahankara—one word, one saying, one sign in proper time and place is enough; but when it is a question of carrying conviction to others, of building up an organisation for team work, for common spiritual striving, books, lectures and libraries become indispensable. As Sri

Ramakrishna used to say, to kill oneself, a pin would do, but to conquer others, swords and arms become necessary. This library, I am sure, will fulfil a real want, and it will not only prove a source of unfailing joy, comfort and guidance to numerous seekers on the path of Truth, but also serve as an armoury to the soldiers of peace who belong to the Order. Its setting between a monastery and a dispensary, signifying inward meditation fructifying in acts of outward service, may not be a mere accident but perhaps the fulfilment of a divine plan, thereby not only to inspire those who enter its precincts with noble thoughts but also to impart to them the courage to live up to those thoughts through deeds of service.

It occurs to me also that this library may be the starting ground for the realization of yet another of Swami Vivekananda's cherished dreams to which he gave fervent expression while addressing audiences in this city forty years ago. He wanted a well-established and well-equipped training centre for workers aspiring to serve mankind. Though numerous Homes and orphanages, hospitals and dispensaries, Maths and Ashrams, have sprung up in response to his clarion call, the idea of the kind of training centre for young workers he had in mind is yet unrealised. In Mysore, in Bhubaneswar, in Calcutta and other places, efforts are in various stages of progress in this direction; Study Circles have been started for Brahmacharins and Sannyasins, libraries of choice books are being built up, and men of deep learning and experience are being invited to guide these undertakings.

In Madras itself, no conscious effort in that direction was made till now, though this Math has sponsored and helped in bringing into existence several institutions in Madras and the neighbouring States, in Ceylon, Burma and F.M.S., and has served as the training ground for nearly half of our Sannyasins working in far off places in Europe and the Americas. And now with a purposeful planning, with the possession of a good library and with the co-operation of men of light and learning, I hope the day may not be far off when Madras will have a Vedanta College for training future workers.

The pursuit of truth and the imparting of knowledge is according to the Gita, 'jnana-yajna,' and that is the highest form of sacrifice. Those who write and publish books, those who collect and spread their use, those who teach and explain them, those who study them with devotion to truth and those who help by gifts in cash or kind to make the undertaking prosper—all are participants in this 'yajna'; and Bhagavan says that every work inspired by such a spirit becomes a sacrifice more acceptable to God than offering of oblations in the fire or bringing of gifts to an altar.

With these brief observations, I accept the gift of this Centenary Library from the citizens of Madras as represented by the Centenary Celebration Committee, and declare the new building open, invoking the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on all.

MAY HE LEAD US FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL,
FROM DARKNESS UNTO LIGHT,
FROM DEATH UNTO IMMORTALITY.

*This forms the speech delivered by the Swamiji on the occasion of the opening of the Centenary Library, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

[In these reminiscences of this great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life.—The Editors.]

It was seven o'clock in the morning. The Holy Mother was seated on the floor near her couch. Swami Nirbhayananda who had gone to Dwaraka on pilgrimage, sent the Mother the *prasadam* from the shrine of Dattatreya in the Girnar Hills. The Mother asked, "Who was Dattatreya?"

Disciple: He, like Jada-Bharata and others, was a great sage (Brahmarshi), an Iswarakoti.

Mother: Like the children of the Master? These devotees are also Iswarakotis, are they not? The Master pointed out Yogin as Arjuna. He brought Swamiji down from the plane of the "Seven Sages." About Baburam he said that he had an unstained noble lineage. He made similar remarks about Niranjana, Purna and Rakhali.

Disciple: And also about Tarak of Belgharia.

Mother: Yes. And also about Bhavanath. He used to speak of him as the female counterpart (Prakriti) of Narendra (Swami Vivekananda). Did he say anything about Sarat?

Disciple: I do not know. Tell me about the other disciples of the Master.

Mother: I do not know more. He did not speak of Sarat as an Iswarakoti.

Disciple: But you once said, "Sarat and Yogin belong to my inner circle." Well, how is it that some of

the Iswarakotis are thus immersed in worldliness with their wives and children?

Mother: Yes, they are rotting there. Purna was forced to marry. His relatives threatened him, saying, "If you go to him (referring to Sri Ramakrishna) we will smash his carriage with stones and brick-bats when he comes to Calcutta."

Disciple: Well, they might have married. Nag Mahasaya also married. But to have children and lead a worldly life!

Mother: Perhaps they had some such desires. Let me tell you one thing. There is a great complexity in this creation. The Master does one thing through one man and another thing through another person. Oh, it is so inscrutable! But even a householder can be an Iswarakoti. What is the harm?

Radhu was ill. She had pain and fever. The Mother was worried about her. She said, "She cannot get well, when I am alive. Who will look after her when I am gone? Will she live then?"

Disciple: What a crowd of devotees for the whole day! You could not get a moment's respite.

Mother: Day and night I say to the Master, "Please lessen this rush. Let me have a little rest." But I hardly get it. It will be like this for the few days I am in this body. The message of the Master has spread

everywhere; therefore so many people come here. What a crowd I met in Bangalore. People began to shower flowers as I got down from the train. Flowers lay high on the road. Such a crowd used to visit the Master also during his last days. I try to persuade people so earnestly, saying, "Have your initiation from the family preceptor (Kula-Guru). They expect something from you. I do not expect anything." But they will not leave me. They weep and it moves my heart. Well, I am nearing the end; the few days I shall live will be spent like this.

Disciple: O Mother! No, no. Why should you say that? You are well. You have no particular ailment. Why do you, then, want to leave this world? Never say that again.

At that time the Mother appeared very sad and indifferent about things.

Downstairs Golap-Ma was arguing with someone.

Mother: What is the discussion going on downstairs?

Disciple: It is Golap-Ma who is shouting.

Mother: One should not lose oneself in discussion. One suffers if one reflects on evil alone. Golap has lost her delicacy by insisting on truth-telling. But I can never give up my delicacy. "One must never speak an unpleasant truth."

On another occasion, Golap-Ma had told someone an unpleasant truth. The Holy Mother had said to her, "How is that, Golap? What a nature you have!"

During the noon-time a hot-headed man had come to the Holy Mother and created a row. Referring to this, she said, "The Master did not let anybody know of my existence. He

protected me always with infinite care. Now the thing has gone to the other extreme; they are advertising me, as if by the beat of a drum in a market-place. M—is at the root of it all. People are beside themselves after reading the "Kathamrita" ("The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna"). Girish Babu enforced his demands upon the Master and abused him; even so people are doing the same thing to me.

"Why should they always bother me about initiation? There are my children (referring to the direct disciples of the Master) in the Belur Math. Have they no power? Everyone is being sent here. I went so far as to tell people that they would be incurring great sin in giving up their hereditary preceptor. But still they would not leave me alone."

Disciple: You initiate the devotees because you desire to do so.

Mother: No, I do so out of compassion. They won't leave me. They weep. I feel compassion for them. Out of kindness I give them initiation. Besides, what do I gain by it? When I initiate devotees, I have to accept their sins. Then I think, "Well, this body will die any way, let them realize Truth."

It was half-past one in the afternoon. After the midday meal, I went upstairs to get the betel-leaf when I heard the Holy Mother repeating a verse with reference to someone.

Disciple: Mother! What does it mean?

Mother: Man cannot change his nature. Chaitanya Deva said, "I adore him who worships me having given up his old nature."

Disciple: Once you remarked at Jayramvati referring to a devotee, "One should try to change his old nature." Another day you said, "Some people have such sweet natures that I feel like loving them at the very first sight. But towards some I have no positive feeling."

Mother: You are right, my child. It is true. Inborn nature is everything. What else is there?

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj said referring to Golap-Ma, "If she wants to talk to a man, she shouts as loudly as if she were talking to the entire house."

Mother: Yes. What a strange nature they have developed. Even a trifle makes them cry and shout. Everybody is disturbed. Yogin-Ma was a different person before. She was steady and patient. But how she has changed! My child! Patience is the greatest virtue. There is nothing greater than patience.

I had a bad headache and I went upstairs at four o'clock in the afternoon to tell the Holy Mother about the headache. "Perhaps", she remarked, "it is due to heat." She quickly mixed clarified butter and camphor with water on a leaf and began to rub it on my entire forehead. She said, "When the Master had a headache he used to apply this medicine." I also felt better after a few minutes' rubbing. I came downstairs. Very shortly, I was relieved of the pain and reported it to her.

A white woman, from Poland, came to the Udbodhan office to visit the Holy Mother. She had come to India

to learn the Vedanta philosophy. She had learned about the Holy Mother in Calcutta and therefore came to pay her respects to her. They talked together for a few minutes. Referring to the Bahai sect, the woman said that its teachings regarding the harmony of religions, resembled that of Sri Ramakrishna. It appeared to us that she was a Bahai.

After the Polish woman had taken leave, I said to the Mother, "How did you find her?"

Mother: Very nice, indeed.

Disciple: She has come from a great distance. Poland belongs to Russia. You have heard about the Russo-Japanese war. Poland is under Russia.

Mother: Does she then belong to Russia? I have heard that the Russians are great fighters. She has come here to learn religion. She spent three or four months in Ceylon.

Disciple: Now the news of the Master has spread everywhere. Where is Poland and where is the Udbodhan office! You can hardly comprehend it, Mother!

Mother: The Master said in a state of ecstasy, "Hereafter I shall be worshipped in every house. There is no limit or end to my devotees." Nivedita once said to me, "Mother! We are also Bengalees. Only through the misfortune of bad Karma we have been born in another country. You will see that we too shall be exactly like the Bengalees." It is their (referring to Nivedita and others) last birth.

THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

BY PROF. JADUNATH SINHA, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

[Dr. Sinha is the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception and Indian Realism* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London), the two outstanding books on those respective subjects. A lucid and delightful study of the devotional and ethical import of the Gita, with some interesting reference to modern Ethics forms the theme of the present article.]

IMMANENCE OF GOD IN MAN—No HUMAN FREEDOM

THE Mahabharata teaches the immanence of God in man and Nature. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches more emphatically that God is the all pervading Spirit in the whole universe. He resides in the hearts of all creatures as their inner Soul. They are mere instruments of His will. He uses them as He pleases. He sets them going by His own Maya or creative power. (xiii, 61.) He is the immanent spirit in man. He is the only agent who acts in all our actions. He is the creator of Sattva (illumination), Rajas (energy), and Tamas (inertia), which constitute the innate nature of man. These natural 'drives' are the only springs of human actions. There is no freedom of human will. The sense of human freedom is due to egoism, Ahamkara. We are deluded by egoism and look upon ourselves as free agents (xiii, 27). But, in fact, we have no creative power. We cannot freely initiate any of our actions. All our actions are actuated by natural impulses. And these spring from the inscrutable nature (Maya) of God. So ultimately God is the real agent of all our actions. No one can remain inactive even for a single moment. But all his actions are beyond his control; they spring out of his

natural impulses (Gunas) which are implanted in him by God. (iii, 5.)

COMPLETE SURRENDER TO GOD

We have no freedom of will. Our vaunted freedom is mere self-conceit due to egoism. So the paramount duty of an aspirant is to purge himself of his egoism and become a *conscious* instrument of the Divine Will. We are instruments of the Divine Will. But we do not know it owing to ignorance (Avidya). Our ignorance is due to egoism (Ahamkara). Egoism clings to human nature. It assumes subtler and subtler forms in the course of our spiritual progress and tries to deceive us. This almost ineradicable egoism stands in the way of our realisation of the Divine power within us. Egoism is a barrier between man and God. It obstructs the flow of Divine power into men. It obstructs perfect communion of the human spirit with the Divine. Shake off egoism and realise your unison with God.

We must purge off this egoism and merge our will completely in the Divine Will. We must have no will of our own apart from the will of God. We must surrender our will completely to the Divine Will. Our whole being must pulsate with the Divine will. We must negate our merely individual will and be a conscious instrument of the Divine Will. We must

live, move, and have our being in God. We must cease to live our own individual life so that the Lord may live in us. The human will thus attuned to the Divine Will moves with the spontaneity of Divine life.¹

PRAPATTI OR COMPLETE RESIGNATION TO GOD

Complete resignation to God or taking refuge in Him is the easiest means of self-control and attainment of holiness. It is not mere passive surrender to the inevitable. It is not blind fatalism. It is knowing and loving surrender to the God of light and love. It is taking shelter in Him (Prapatti). It is opening the soul to His wisdom and love. When we lose ourselves in God and seek His light, love and guidance, our intellect is enlightened by His wisdom, our heart is flooded by His love and we become conscious instruments of His will.

There is no human freedom. How, then, can we control our passions? The Bhagavad-Gita teaches that taking refuge in God (Prapatti) is the easiest and most effective means of self-control. "Many aspirants, taking refuge in God, and being suffused with His spirit, shake off all attachment, fear and anger, and being purified by true knowledge, attain kinship with Him" (iv, 10). It is difficult to control our passions, directly. If we concentrate our attention on them and try to suppress them directly, they

¹ "It is a Divine Spirit which animates and inspires it. In all its activities it is a Divine Will that moves it. Every pulse beat of its life is the expression and realisation of the life of God." (John Caird: *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 288).

may gather volume and strength and overpower our mind and invade the whole field of consciousness. So our attention should be fixed on God, the holiest, the noblest, and the best, so that the baser passions of our nature may gradually be transformed into a passion for the Holy. The teaching of the Gita is in perfect accord with the teaching of modern psychology and ethics. Mackenzie says: "It is generally better to escape from our defects, not by thinking about them and trying to elude them, but by fixing our attention on the opposite excellences (cf. *pratipakshabhavana*). It certainly seems to be a more effectual method, as a rule, to expel our evil propensities by developing good ones rather than by seeking directly to crush the evil ones." (*A Manual of Ethics*, p. 341.) "The effort to suppress all natural desires (directly) frequently defeats its own aim. It concentrates attention on the objects of desire, and in a sense makes a man the slave of his desires as truly as in the case of him who yields to them. The best way to free ourselves from our lower desires is to interest ourselves in something better. It is only into a mind swept and garnished that the devils can enter. When it is well furnished and occupied they can find no room." (*Ibid*, pp. 358-59). God is the noblest and the best. So if we fix our minds on Him and seek shelter in Him, our passions will lose their strength and easily submit to our will.

Sattva (purity), Rajas (energy), and Tamas (inertia) constitute human nature. No one can completely transcend these natural impulses (Gunas) because they form our innate nature. No one can transcend them

and attain liberation by his own efforts. "They alone can transcend Maya with its threefold qualities of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, who take refuge in Me." (vii, 14). Self-surrender to God is the easiest means of overcoming the inherent limitations of human nature. "One who serves God with undivided devotion and love completely transcends the three-fold innate nature and acquires fitness for attaining kinship with Divine nature, for He alone is immortal, immutable, and the eternal fountain of transcendental bliss." (xv, 26-27). Narada also enjoins the same method of self-conquest. "We should dedicate all our actions to God, and divert the course of all our passions, desire, anger, egoism, and the like to Him." (Narada Sutras 64.) "It is almost impossible to suppress all desires and passions. We can only divert their course. Naturally they are directed towards earthly objects. But they should be directed towards God. When they are directed to God they are transformed by the magic touch of God. Desires should not be suppressed or extinguished. They should be fulfilled in God. God alone should be the object of all our desires."²

Prapatti or taking refuge in God is the easiest means of attaining beatitude. The Lord says: "God dwells in the hearts of all creatures and revolves them as His instruments by His Maya or inscrutable power. So throw yourself with all your being on Him for shelter. By His grace you shall obtain supreme peace and the ever-lasting place or

² Author's article on "Bhagavata Religion: Cult of Bhakti" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 53.

beatitude." (xviii, 61-62.) "Fix thy mind on Me, be my devotee, sacrifice unto me, prostrate thyself to me; and thou shalt come to Me; I give thee my word of promise, thou art dear to me. Give up all thy duties, (dharma) and come unto Me for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins." (xviii, 65-66.)

LIFE OF ACTION DEDICATED TO GOD

"A life of devotion is not necessarily a life of inaction. The Gita calls upon us to give up weakness of the heart, shake off lethargy and impotency, and do our duties in the world. (ii, 3.) We must not give up all actions. In fact we can never do it; we are driven to act by natural inclination. (iii, 5.) We cannot even maintain our life without actions. (iii, 8.) We should do our duties without attachment. (iii, 19). We should not care for success or failure. (ii, 38.) We have right to actions, but not to their fruits or consequences which are beyond our control. (ii, 47.) We should surrender the fruits of actions to God. Whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we give in charity, whatever sacrifices we make, and whatever penances we undergo, we must dedicate all these to God. (ix, 27.) We must live an active life completely dedicated to God."³

No one can remain inactive even for a single moment. He is driven to activity by his natural impulses. (iii, 5). He cannot even maintain his life without actions. (xviii, 11.) Action is better than inaction. (iii, 8.) Quietism is not necessarily a life of piety. Inaction is very often mistaken for a life of spiritual elevation.

³ *Ibid*, p. 55.

But inaction is not a manifestation of Sattva (purity). It is a sign of Tamas, lethargy or inertia. Tamas should be overcome by Rajas; and then Rajas should be overcome by Sattva. Sloth, indolence, and inertia should be overcome by energy and activity. Then all actions should be dedicated to God; and gradually the life of Sattva or purity should be attained.

All actions should be done without attachment. They should not be actuated by any feelings or emotions. (ii, 47; iii, 9, 19.) They should not be performed with any end in view. Duties should not be performed with a view to attaining success or failure, gain or loss, pleasure or pain. (ii, 38, 48.) Duties should be performed for the sake of duty. So far the teaching of the Gita resembles the teaching of Kant. But it differs from it in an essential point. All duties should be dedicated to God. The fruits of all actions should be surrendered to God. Moral life is a life of action completely dedicated to God. Thus the moral life inculcated by the Gita is transformed into a spiritual life based on the firm bed-rock of God. (iii, 30; iv, 24; v, 2, 10-12; vi, 1, 4; ix, 27; xviii, 2, 11, 56.)

The Gita enjoins different kinds of duties in different stations of life. So far its teaching resembles that of Plato. Every one is born in a sphere of moral life. He is born to it and lives in it. He lives, moves, and has his being in a sphere of social organisation. This constitutes his moral universe. His duties are relative to his station in life in this universe. They are strictly determined by his place in the society. His duties are

the duties of the class to which he belongs. If he tries to usurp the duties relating to another sphere of society, his efforts will be in vain, and his moral life will be a life in a vacuum. His moral life is strictly determined by his own aptitudes, heredity, and his immediate social environment. His duties must be in harmony with his inner dispositions, and his station in the social life. (xviii, 41-47.)

The duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras have been distributed according to their qualities born of their own natures. (xviii, 41.) The four classes have been created according to their inherent qualities and function in the society. (iv, 13.) Every man reaches perfection by performing his own duty determined by his station in life. (xviii, 45.) Every one worships God by performing his own duty and attains perfection. (xviii, 46.) The Lord emphatically says: "Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the well-executed duty of another. He who performs his duty determined by his own nature does not incur sin." (xviii, 47.) "Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another, well-performed. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (iii, 35.)

Thus the Gita strikes an important note of modern Ethics. Bradley has emphasised the conception of "My Station and its Duties."

He says, "To know what a man is we must not take him in isolation. He is one of a people, he was born in a family, he lives in a certain society, in a certain state. What he has to do de-

Mackenzie explains it in a popular way thus: "Human beings do not drop from the clouds. Men are born with particular aptitudes and in a particular environment; and they generally find their sphere of activity marked out for them, within pretty narrow limits. They find themselves fixed in a particular station, helping to carry forward a general system of life; and their chief duties are connected with the effective execution of their work." Hence the force of Carlyle's great principle, "Do the Duty that lies nearest thee." (*Manual of Ethics*, p. 323.) "Thou shalt labour, within thy particular province, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. Work is Worship." (*Ibid*, p. 309.) Carlyle rightly has said: "All true work is religion."

Action is better than inaction. The Lord Himself sets the goal of action before us. He acts incessantly to set

an example to humanity. He has no goal to achieve. He has no desire to fulfil. He is the eternal embodiment of all perfection, still he acts for the good of mankind. He always acts so that humanity may follow in His footsteps. He is every moment alive to His duties. (iii, 22-23.) He always acts to fight unrighteousness and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. (iv, 7-8.) He invites us all to co-operate with Him in conquering evil and bringing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Let us all fulfil the mission of our life by playing our part well in the world-drama. Let us all be conscious instruments in the hand of God and play in tune with His divine flute and transform this mortal earth into a Divine Order.

pendes on what his place is, what his function is, and that all comes from his station in the organism." (*Ethical Studies*, p. 173.) "There is nothing better than my station and its duties, nor anything higher or more truly beautiful." (*Ibid*, p. 201.)

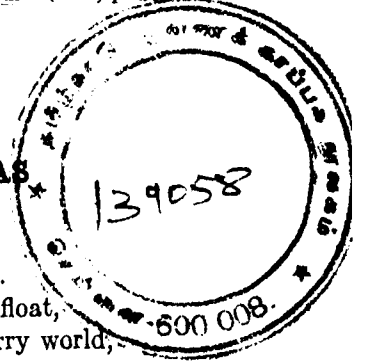
(Not concluded)

THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS

BY DAYAMOY MITRA, M.A.

No sun, no glow of light, no radiant moon I see.
The world and heavens all in shadow-shape doth float,
O'er mind so faint they float;—this earth and starry world,
They rise and dive below, 'gain sink and rise in 'me'.
Now slow the shadows fade, in one deep void they close,
But 'me' and 'me' it runs—all other strains are mute,
When that too ceases, lo! the silence silence weds
Which word nor thought can plumb—He only knows who knows.

This is an English version of Swami Vivekananda's famous Bengali song 'Nahi Surya, Nahi Jyoti' etc. Swamijee describes in it the feeling that the saint has on his way to deep 'Samadhi,' the highest ecstatic bliss, when his senses are in-gathered and a reflux sets on consciousness. Here is poetry of the void—the *vox nihil* of the aspiring soul—so contrary to all that our poets adore of this lovable sensuous world!—Translator.



THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

[Swami Vividishananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Order is in the United States of America for the past few years as a representative of Vedanta and Indian Culture. The salient features of Hinduism are lucidly discussed by him in the following article.—The Editors.]

How old is the religion of the Hindus? It is hard to answer. Historians differ on this point, but they generally agree that it is very very old. Perhaps it is the mother of all religions and dates as far back as prehistoric times when the Aryans migrated from their original home in Central Asia and settled in the fertile valley of the Indus.

The religion of the Hindus draws its inspiration from the Vedas, the most ancient scriptures the world possesses. Literally the word 'Veda' means wisdom, and as wisdom is eternal and universal the Hindus believe that the Vedas are not man-made. They do not come from an individual author or authors. The Vedic sages were but those highly developed souls to whom the Vedic wisdom was revealed.

The Vedas recording the mystic experiences of the ancient seers, furnish the most precious documents which throw a flood of light on these eternal questions which have baffled the human intellect since the dawn of civilization. From a study of the Vedas we find that the ancient seers had a wonderful understanding of the spiritual, moral and physical laws which rule this universe. The origin and nature of man, the origin of the world he sees around him, the idea of God, the relation of man to

God and the world,—all these and other similar questions have been discussed by the seers, and one cannot help admiring the vastness and sublimity of their wisdom and the depth of their spiritual perception.

As the art of writing was unknown in that dim antiquity, the wisdom embodied in the Vedas was handed down from generation to generation by memory, and it was restated and revived time and again by a galaxy of saints, sages and Divine Incarnations.

As distinguished from other religions, the religion of the Hindus, we must note here, is impersonal, for it does not depend upon a person or persons whose historicity can be doubted; it stands upon the firm foundation of eternal truths. The Vedic sages and the subsequent spiritual leaders of Hinduism are not the founders, giving something new and original, but the discoverers and teachers of eternal truths.

The Hindu religion, like all other religions of the world, had had to pass through several stages of evolution before it attained its present form, and we notice three distinct channels of its expression, namely, philosophy, mythology and ritual. It has a deep philosophical background, a rich fund of mythology and an elaborate system of rituals.

A religion that is not philosophical becomes narrow, fanatical and dogmatic. It cannot stand the scrutiny of reason and is in constant conflict with the other branches of knowledge, namely, the sciences. Similarly, a religion that lacks a mythology becomes too abstract and fails to attract the mass-mind which understands the principles better illustrated by stories and fables. Again, a religion which has a dearth of rituals lacks applicability in life and as such becomes meaningless. Hinduism, because of its wonderful philosophy, mythology and ritual, has been rational, scientific and practical, satisfying all types of human minds. Any unbiased student of the sacred books of the Hindus will bear this out.

The Upanishads, the philosophical portion of the Vedas marking the highest flight of speculation, gave birth to six schools of thought which have become the marvel of scholars. Among others, the ultra-monism of Vedanta and its doctrine of the Divinity of human personality, the pluralism of the Sankhya and its theory of evolution, the higher psychology of the Yoga system, with its technique of spiritual unfoldment through concentration and meditation, and the atomism of Kanada are indeed something that is unique in the history of philosophy.

Let us see what Hinduism has to say about God—the Ultimate Reality, the central theme of every religion. In the Upanishads God has at first been described in a language of negation, for, how can He who is infinite, unconditioned and absolute be at all spoken of by our limited language?

The eyes cannot see Him, nor can the ears hear Him. Beyond the ken of sense-perception, He is also beyond speech and thought. He is above space and time. He is nameless and formless. Yet He is not a non-entity, for He is the substratum of this universe and reveals Himself to a soul purified of all taints. He is our life and soul. He is immanent and transcendent—the Cause of all causes, the One without a second. "The Eternal among non-eternals, the Intelligence of the intelligent, He, though one, fulfills the desires of many. Those wise men who perceive Him through intuition as existing within their own self—to them belongs the peace supreme, and to none else!"

In view of the fact that men representing different stages of evolution and types of temperaments can conceive of God and try to realize Him in their own limited ways, Hinduism recognizes and has room for all phases of religious belief from the Absolutism of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, down to the worship of God in images and symbols. It makes Hinduism extremely tolerant and broad and accounts for the absence of religious fanaticism and persecution in its fold.

Says a great sage: "O Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains run, crooked or straight, towards one ocean, so all these different religions, sects and creeds, rising from different points of view, flow crooked or straight toward Thee, the Infinite Ocean of existence, which is intelligence, bliss and love."

We shall specially note here the three standpoints or approaches to God accepted by Hinduism. They are

but three successive landmarks in the growth of a spiritual aspirant.

In the first stage the aspirant, because of his limited vision and understanding, conceives of God as an extra-cosmic being, far and distant, commanding admiration and worship. This stage marking as it does the spiritual childhood of man leads to the next stage, where there is no distance or separation. God, the Ideal, is no longer separate from the universe and the aspirant. He is the stupendous whole, we are parts. He is, as it were, the living flame, we are so many sparks. He is the total organism, we are the limbs. The universe is His body. He covers everything, interpenetrating every atom of this universe, and yet He is beyond. The second stage admitting unity in variety has its culmination in a final experience where there is absolute unity and identity. The aspirant in that exalted state loses his individuality in God and becomes one with Him. He realizes that he is in essence Divine, omnipotent and omniscient, eternally free and ever-blissful. This experience is the last word of spiritual realization. It is vouchsafed only to a blessed few. Perhaps Christ speaks of this experience of identity when He says: "I and my Father are one."

These three viewpoints have given birth to three distinct schools of philosophy with many subdivisions.

In the West there is the idea that the Hindus are polytheists and idolators. Hinduism does not advocate the worship of many gods, but of one God Who is called by many names under different aspects, and He appears to His worshippers taking forms in order to satisfy their

individual desires and needs. Regarding the charge of idolatry we can say that it is wholly a case of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The worship of God in images and symbols prevalent in almost all the great religions of the world is not synonymous with idolatry. It is the kindergarten of the spiritual aspirant. Nobody worships the idol or image as God, but God in and through the idol or image. All the Divine attributes the human intellect cannot comprehend. Some of them are therefore superimposed on the image which is taken as a concrete help for concentrating the mind upon God.

We shall now discuss briefly the doctrine of Karma, the law of cause and effect, or compensation and retribution, and its corollary, the theory of reincarnation. It is one of the fundamentals of Hinduism accepted by all schools of thought. It is a law that accounts for the differences in human nature. It explains the apparent injustices and inequalities we see in this world. As we sow, so we reap. Our present condition, good or bad, is the result of our past actions, and our future will be determined by our present. We are the architects of our own destiny. For our present sufferings let us not throw the blame upon God, calling Him unjust and unkind but take the responsibility upon our own shoulders, facing trials and difficulties in a spirit of resignation and trying to undo the undesirable reactions of our past misdeeds by living here and now a better life. The human soul in its journey towards perfection has to pass through many stages full of varied experiences being incarnated again and again

till it realizes its oneness with God. We lived many many times before, and we shall live many many times hereafter. We had opportunities in the past, and if we could not avail of them and work out our salvation, we shall be given countless opportunities in the future but never condemned to eternal hell-fire.

The masses in India may not understand all the fine metaphysical points involved in their religion, but they live the life and manifest in their actions the virtues religion teaches man to practise. They are truth-loving, self-denying, in-drawn and poised; and thus better fitted to face the problems of life with a philosophic calmness. Although innocent of the letters, they are not uncultured.

They have a spiritual background which is enviable. They are familiar with the fundamentals of morality and religion by hearing about God, His incarnations, saints and sages from the professional dramatic troupes giving out religious performances and from individual story-tellers and wandering monks. They are conscious of the transitoriness of this mundane world and look for God-realization as the ultimate object of life. Anyone who is conversant with Indian history and the mystic folk-lyrics sung by peasants and craftsmen will bear witness to this statement.

The following folksong brings out remarkably the spiritual attitude of the Indian masses:

O my mind, let us go back to our own abode.
In the foreign land of this world of change
Why roam in vain in garments strange?
Sense-objects and things material—all aliens.
In the love of those who are not thy own
Thou shouldst not forsake thy real kith and kin.
The path of truth, though rough, steep and dark,
Is the path for thee, pilgrim, march on steadily.
Let discrimination be the burning torch to guide thy steps,
And be sustained by love, pure, true and selfless.
It is a treasure that will never fail thee.

.....
When dangers and difficulties beset thy path, do not be afraid.
Humbly seek the protection of God—the King of kings,
Whose sceptre of justice drives Death himself away.

THE KEY-NOTE OF EASTERN CULTURE

BY BHIKSHU VAJRABUDDHI

[Rev. Vajrabuddhi is a Buddhist Monk of Ceylon belonging to German nationality. He writes on the distinctive features of Eastern Culture, especially that of India, and draws an interesting contrast with the Culture of the West.]

I

LIFE as manifested in this world of sound and colour moves on and is never at rest. Therefore world's history represents a varied, living picture of many cultures. Just as the plants, living beings and cultures rise out of the darkness, bloom and laugh in the glimmering light, and disappear, all life is change and novelty—a creative evolution. The fickle dance of life resembles an ever-surging, never-ending sea waving up and down, intensely jubilant, mortally grieved.

Oswald Spengler, the great German historical writer of world-wide fame, studied the various cultures in this light and wrote his well-known book "*The Decline of the West*." If we make a comparative study of the history of the East and the West as two organic cultural entities, it will be perfectly clear to us that this decline is imminent in the process of evolution. But all the same we do not see a great historical philosopher, (I lay stress upon the word 'great') who has earnestly spoken or written anything about a similar, definite, decay or fall of the East and its hoary culture, especially of India and China. Let us critically investigate this point.

It was a doom for Europe and the West that suddenly, more than a thousand years ago, its own hereditary religious and cultural development was arrested almost complete-

ly. By it the whole organic, cultural evolution was disturbed. A quite foreign and heterogeneous church-doctrine—a full distortion of Christ's original, pure and simple message from the East, was intruded on the West and its surprised nations. As history plainly shows us, the new un-Aryan religion has always remained among the Western Aryans a mere external fashion and label. It never struck deep root, never was it able to produce in the West an essentially religious, Christian disposition in the sense of the Great Nazarene. Since that time the soul of the Western culture is disintegrated and unorganic, and naturally, on the whole, became materialistic, violent and practically soulless. That could not be otherwise.

II

On the other hand it was very fortunate for the East, and India especially, that it had from the very outset its own original, hereditary religion and organic culture in a straight descent. In India the great illuminators and reformers, in most cases, found suitable conditions awaiting them. The generation to which they came were prepared to respond to their teachings. Indian culture has its foundation in this primeval spiritual wealth which has an unbroken history. Sheltered under

the immortal tree of Vedic thought the Indo-Aryans saw nations and cultures coming and going. There is nothing in the world like the creative and dynamic Sun of Hindustan, the eternal fountain-head of all light, wisdom and love for all. The golden thread of Vedic Idealism runs not only right across Hindu and Buddhist cultures but also the whole of Asiatic thought.

We can almost say that India's civilising power dates, comparatively speaking, not from time but from eternity; India is very ancient and yet young. India is modern and also creative. At present India is passing through a period of revival. For me, as an European, it is very interesting to see. Very often in Ceylon, and generally in the East, I am gladly reminded of the time-honoured, everyday life and its characteristic features as described plainly and simply in the Christian Bible. It is my firm belief that India and Ceylon preserve great values; they are not without a deep root; they do not live exclusively on the superficial aspects of the modern life. The best men in the East are not dazzled by the mere material glitter of the West. The whole, undivided culture of the East cannot be uprooted so long as it is rooted firmly in the eternal Dharma, which comprehends the modern also. Hence in every century, with no exception of our modern age, the vigorous life of Vedic culture has produced spiritual geniuses, not to speak of leading men in secular fields. The Vedic genius seems to stand in symbolic relation to the high, snow-capped, giant-like peaks of the Himalayas from whose silent

heights the supreme vision of the Oneness of Truth or ultimate Reality has spread throughout the land as the lofty revelations of the Vedas.

The radiant light of universal sympathy and sympathising wisdom of the ancient Rishis and the Great Buddha, brings me to this question: What is the secret of Vedic culture which, sun-like, illuminates mankind in general with a veritable blaze of the Divine Light? What made it possible for India's Message of hope and spiritual dynamism to go out and conquer the vast Asia and impress its stamp on the whole East up to Japan?

One-sided criticism and even censure cannot destroy the imperishable values of a given culture. The spiritual urge of the Indians, like the mental urge of the Greeks has been many-sided, creating relationships between man and his total, rather than merely social, environment, directed by the single purpose of the attainment of a universal point of view. The relationships are not limited to the material world; they extend to the ideal world. There are distinctions in the matter of emphasis over ideas; but the culture of India is ampler, more inward and inclusive, while that of Europe is narrower, more outward, more intellectual and exclusive. Thus the Indian equivalent of 'culture', i.e., Dharma, possesses a wider significance. If European culture may be called primarily social, and practical and rational, Indian culture and art may be considered primarily spiritual and intuitional.

III

Unity is the keynote of Eastern culture, whether it be of Hinduism or

Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism. When I speak of Buddhism, I do not have in mind any secretarian religion of a separate order, of a new shed for the sheep. Hinduism and Buddhism are real sisters, off-shoots of the same tree of knowledge; they are essentially one and universal. The mighty, world-shaking spiritual energy and uniting sympathy of any Buddha can never brook any such heresy of separateness or new discrimination. The Buddhas and the Christs came 'not to destroy but to fulfil and to unify.' Even now, in this modern Age of synthesis and search for unity, there is no place for static and dogmatic conceptions of religion.

I repeat it: Unity on principle is the keynote of Eastern culture, especially of Hinduism of Vedanta. In music it has led to the unity of melody rather than the diversity of harmony. In painting it has encouraged the treatment of a single *motif* rather than the complexity of a large group. In the monistic philosophy it has emphasized the supreme vision of the 'One without a second' and the sense of Oneness—of the One undivided Reality and Truth. In poetry unity has found expression in the notion of 'Bhava,' and has therefore made the lyric and the lyric-epic of greater importance than the Drama. In religion it has knit philosophy and ritualism, aesthetics and ethics, in one. As a matter of course, one-pointedness plays an important part in the practice of direct and intuitive meditation. Concentration inspires religion and art; for art in itself is an act of creative meditation. Unity has led to an absence of distinctions, which is at once the strength

and weakness of Indian mode of thinking. It has encouraged the Indian mind to ignore the so-called contradictions and paradoxes, and thus miss the advantage of the analytical tradition of the West. But it has rescued the whole Hindu and Buddhist tradition from the internecine conflicts between religion and philosophy, philosophy and art, art and religion and philosophy and life. They are all but names for the One Truth. Therefore, never has India idolized a soulless, dead, world of bare matter and technique, deprived of spirit and spiritual ideals. The spirit of unity craves to contemplate on and to commune and to cooperate with, the One. The strenuous, intuitive contemplation enriches the intellectual, the communion chastens the emotional, and the cooperation with the One inspires the moral nature of man, until the whole personality reaches out for the blissful illumination which brings beauty, freedom and purpose into life.

IV

A living, creative religion having a universality of spirit and a culture equally wide, manifests itself in truth, goodness and beauty. A civilising religion must be a power that causes the manifestation of these. This inner urge for higher and higher levels of life which is natural and which never stops, is the cause of all evolution towards perfection. The person who is in possession of the absolute truth alone can be really good. The man who knows the truth realises that he is not an individual or a separate ego-self. He realises that the Soul of his soul is the One—the Nameless and Formless. And he

is therefore essentially one with all, that is, he is God. He will not therefore do what he would if he had thought of himself as an individual pitted against other individuals. He will not set any value on mean sense pleasures or attach any exaggerated importance to worldly possessions and actions. He is in tune with the infinite and must therefore be good. Possession of absolute truth is essential to absolute goodness. Again wherever there is goodness there is harmony, and harmony is the essence of beauty and perfection, lying deep in the hearts of even the worst sinners. Besides, truth is harmony with reality and must, therefore, possess beauty, affecting the mind in subtlest ways.

The intellectual and analytical tendency in the West influenced these three basic categories of *bonum*, *verum* and *pulchrum* to be treated as distinct, and as a result they even came to be looked upon as separate branches of investigation. In India the holy and blissful path to realization is expressed by a single term signifying the completely integrated personality through life, on the strength of goodness, achieved through knowledge or truth, and through joy or beauty. Direct experience and creative concentration has meant a great deal to the spiritual life of the Orient. It is a faculty in the intuitive mind which has inspired and still inspires men to accept life as a term of royal art and apprenticeship for Self-realization. A thoroughly cultured man is a perfect artist of life and has developed all the latent powers of his personality. Only such a man can, in Platonic phraseology, "be the Ideal man

and move with ease and grace in the world of being."

V

Therefore, wherever religion is a living force, and religion and life are really one, there it finds its natural expression in the full-bloom of a vigorous culture and a strong and healthy art. Nobody can deny that religion forms one of the most important ingredients in the composition of a culture. In fact, religion and life becomes art itself, just as art in its highest attainments becomes religion. Genuine art is the measure for the liveliness of a religion. The highest combination of art and religious life has been realised in past millenniums when artist Yogins and mystics of India materialized their brilliant vision in sculpture and painting, hymn and architecture, philosophy and poetry. So they carried the message of a new civilization all over Asia up to Japan. It is India's most precious heritage in stone dating from silence and eternity. Thereby the East has succeeded in what has never yet been reached by the West: the visible representation or incarnation of the Divine as such. This the well-known German philosopher, Count Kaiserling, had to concede: "I know nothing more grand in this world than the figure of Buddha; it is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain."

Unity is the keynote and the unshakable fundamental of Eastern culture, specially of India. One need not have read much of Indian thought in order to appreciate it in all its innermost meaning. It is quite sure, truth is more than what could be

thought, and the very living embodiment of Truth that manifested in its full brilliancy, 2500 years ago, was still greater and more splendid than what one can find in the compiled Pali books of monastic editors. The whole human race has produced but one such wonderful character. There is only one Truth and Ultimate Reality. Lord Buddha is the fulfilment of the Unity and Universalism of the all-embracing Sanatana-Dharma which embodies that Truth. The greatest man ever born, the Buddha was the most correct exponent of the spirit as distinct from the letter of the ancient Vedic religion. His living and dynamic spirit can only be understood by personal and direct experience. The Buddha does not live in books or Pali formulae. Therefore the most important and decisive factor in the Buddha's life is for me nothing but his unique spiritual experience and Enlightenment in the moonlit night of Uruvela. The same enlightenment can come to all, if they be strong and pure morally. The Eternal Light in which you take your refuge is within you. Buddha's spirit is in the very heart of man; it is the very essence, intrinsically pure, by which man rises above, transcends the 'Khandhas' and becomes Divine. Call this experience what you like; it matters not; the thing is to realize it. Practice, and not theory, counts in life; and the touchstone of living

philosophy and religion is, after all, action and realization.

It behoves the adherents of all religions to aspire to become more aware of their common source and to be in accord with the spirit of unity. All 'heresy of separateness' will then vanish. There is only one religion. The expansive power and contagious influence of a new affection is the most potent agent in ousting an old, unhealthy one. I should like to call it 'aggressiveness' in the spiritual sense. We can be united and yet have different opinions. The spiritual genius of the Hindu race—the great mother of many nations and cultures—alone has discovered and realized this important principle. Nothing else really exists but the one Truth. Strip it off the casual label and the personal-colouring of the teacher and then it is seen to be the same Truth.

In hoc signo vinces. In this sign the world will be victorious. Then the tree of mankind will produce a luxuriant foliage and plentiful fruitage of ideal characters. We shall be strong as adamant, pure as purity itself, invincible against all tyranny and wickedness. We shall be a power and blessing to the country and humanity, helping the evolution of life.

May we realize that light and wisdom inherent and hidden within us, and radiate it to our fellow-beings!

RENUNCIATION: A FUNDAMENTAL NEED OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

I

JIVAHOOD or the consciousness of being a self separate from God always means pain, bondage and limitation. Without getting rid of Jivahood by attaining Brahman, or realizing the Divine, none can become free. Jivahood brings attachment and all the different forms of so-called human love and hatred, which only mean pain and misery. The Jiva has to undergo the endless cycle of births and deaths so long as he does not realize his true eternal nature. We want freedom and fearlessness. We want to break the limitations of the body and the mind and be free. This we can never attain, so long as we cling to our different desires and passions and animal cravings. Self-realization cannot be obtained without the renunciation of all our clinging to body and mind—to our own bodies and minds, as well as to those of others.

Our great sage Sankaracharya says, "A human birth, desire for emancipation and contact with a holy man—these three are very rare and are attained only through the grace of the Lord." But then even these three advantages do not suffice. We must be eager to profit by these three and be willing to sacrifice everything for the higher life. Without paying the full price we cannot become free or fearless; and without fearlessness and freedom there is no happiness

for us neither in this life nor in any future life. All our petty human affections and aversions, all our desires for name and fame, all our clinging to the phenomenon, mean slavery and pain; and so long as we do not realize this clearly, we shall certainly remain the bond-slaves of our senses and passions. Think of Swami Vivekananda's wonderful spirit of renunciation! Try to follow him. Think of him and of all the struggles he had to undergo while his life was being moulded by his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna. All this cannot be gained for nothing. You must be eager to realize something. You must be prepared to sacrifice all your petty feelings and personal desires for the Highest; then alone, one day, the Highest will be yours. Struggle, struggle, struggle. This is the only way. Remember, salvation can be had only in this human birth. In no other birth is it possible to attain to salvation. So Sankara somewhere says, "It is not even desirable for man to attain to the state of a Deva, for even the Devas are slaves to their desires. Therefore the human birth is the best of all births."

In the Katha-Upanishad there is a fine passage that says, "Know that the Self is the master of the chariot—he who sits in it. The body is the chariot. Consider the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the reins. The senses, they say, are the

horses. The roads are the sense-objects. The wise call him the enjoyer when he is united with the body, senses and the mind." "He who is always of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, his senses become uncontrollable like the wicked horses of the charioteer."

Without practising strict continence in thought, word and deed,—without trying to purify your whole mind, feelings thoughts and actions, nothing will be of any avail. Even the Christian mystics put this period of what they called 'purgatio' first. Purity in body and mind is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual life, and whoever is not prepared to pay that price to the full, will fall away from the ideal, sooner or later. This is the relentless law, and it has always been so in all countries.

"He who is always of restrained mind and has right understanding, his senses are controllable like the good horses of the charioteer."

"And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtless and always impure, never attains that goal, and gets into the round of births and deaths."

"But he who is intelligent, ever pure and with the mind controlled, reaches that goal whence none is born again."

"The man who has intelligence for his charioteer and the mind as the well-controlled rein—he attains the end of the journey, that Supreme Place of the Divine." (Katha Upd.)

II

Renunciation and chastity are necessary. Without these, there is no spiritual life. And renunciation means not only outward renun-

ciation, but mental renunciation too. We must renounce all our clinging to our own bodies and minds and to those of others, becoming truly dispassionate and non-attached in every way. It is not enough if we do this with reference to certain things and persons, while trying to cling to others all the more. Why is renunciation necessary? Why should we have so much renunciation and non-attachment? Spiritual practice can never be successfully performed without giving up all old associations which are not helpful to the aspirants with reference to things and to people. Only to the extent to which we are prepared to renounce our desires and passions and our clinging to others, either in affection or in aversion, can we practise true religion with profit and can any progress be made. Never allow your mind to delude you on this point. The mind always tries to bring forward some plausible reason or other,—why we cannot renounce this or that thing, why we should be in the company of such and such a person, why it is our duty to talk to him or her etc. Never believe your mind in such cases. It is always out to deceive you and to become the spokesman for your subconscious or half-conscious desires. So we need not only do Japam and prayer and meditation and other spiritual practices but also have renunciation; and only to the extent to which we succeed in having more and more true renunciation and non-attachment, can all these have any effect. When these two are combined, spiritual practices and renunciation, it becomes possible for us to control the mind and begin cleaning

all its dirty nooks and crannies, where we have allowed all kinds of filth to accumulate for ages and ages, through countless births.

Things or persons whom we love, draw the mind, bring attachment, hatred and aversion—love and aversion are only the obverse and the reverse of the self-same coin. Never make any mistake as to this. So they come under the same category. Hatred or aversion is love or attachment turned upside down. It is not something essentially different. We must get rid of all forms of attachment and of all forms of fear by becoming dispassionate, and free from personal likes and dislikes. We must be kind without ever becoming personal, and there should never be any personal claim on anybody or anybody's love; nor should we under any circumstances ever allow anybody to have any personal claim on us or on our affection. Christ says, "He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," and there is nothing truer than that. But he who allows any other person to love him more than the Divine, is not worthy of the Divine either, and will never attain the Divine, however hard he may try. We only get what we sow, and so long as we go on sowing all these petty affections and hatreds, these likes and dislikes, fettering ourselves and others with the chains of so-called love etc., we shall remain bondslaves, eternally bringing misery on ourselves and on others. Misery will always come. In some cases it comes soon, in others late; but all have to pay for their folly.

Learn to develop the spirit of true non-attachment. Free the mind from

all old associations connected with purely human forms of love and aversion, connected with attachment and sex; for only then will spiritual practices become possible. Everything before that is just an attempt at spiritual practice, and nothing more.

Hatred is as bad as attachment. Hatred is as bad as love or personal affection, in fact, the same thing. Love and hatred are but the two sides of the same coin, as I said before. Never delude yourself into thinking that one is better than the other. Both are fetters and degrade the human being, preventing it from rising to its true stature.

And this is the secret which all who desire to lead a spiritual life should know. There is both love and hatred, and we cannot get rid of them all at once. So what to do? We may keep our love and we may keep our hatred, but we should consciously direct our love only to the Highest, to the Divine; never to any person or any thing; and our hatred should be directed towards everything that prevents us from realising our true nature and towards all obstacles, everything that stands in the way of our progress. And there may be an amount of healthy and manly self-condemnation, but it should never become destructive or end in negative emotionalism: "O what a sinner, what a despicable sinner I am!" If I have done wrong in the past, it is over. Let me know that I have done wrong, but let me not brood over it. Let me turn over a new leaf and do better in future; let me be more wide-awake in future and learn to be a human being instead of an animal. That is the proper way. Whether we are

young or old, we must all be reborn in the world of the spirit and begin our march towards Truth.

In the beginning spiritual practices produce both, good results and bad results. When you go and water the garden nicely, you will get fine fragrant roses, but at the same time all the weeds will grow in great abundance. So you will have to do a lot of cleaning and cutting and uprooting.

Too much worldliness is like fire. It burns the human heart. It makes it callous and unable to appreciate spiritual life or even come to know what real spiritual life means. The faculty of intuition becomes so dulled in the worldly person that he is no longer sensitive to higher vibrations and higher truths, but just goes on wallowing in the mire of his desires and sex-bound and sex-conditioned affections.

III

All earnest aspirants should observe strict chastity in thought, word and deed. True chastity can never be observed if we are careless in our company or allow old associations to come up in our mind through lack of discretion regarding our talks and the people we meet. It takes a long time to eradicate impure impressions, even when there is a sincere attempt to do so; and it can never be done if they do not avoid each others' company for a very long time. There should be no self-deception as to this.

Christ says, "For there are some eunuchs, which were born so from their mothers' womb: there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for

the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive, let him receive." This was the passage Sri Ramakrishna told the two boys, Sasi and Sarat, (who were later known as Swami Saradananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda) when they first went to see him. He remarked that marriage is the root of all bondage. All the Great Ones have been unanimous as to this fact, but worldly people are always so anxious to do something for God's creation, as if God needed their help! All hypocrisy and cant. God does not need anybody's help; God does not need anybody to help Him in His creation; neither do these people really care. What they want is their enjoyment, not God's creation. People who are able fully to control the sex-impulse for many years and to observe strict continence in thought, word and deed, gain incredible creative strength on a higher plane. They alone really enjoy life, even physically, because they alone are masters over their body and over their moods, and can direct them as they like. A good horseman has great pleasure in riding his horse and in making it follow his wishes. Worldly people do not know the amount of enjoyment a perfectly chaste person gets even out of his body, not to speak of his mind.

To think of one's own ancestors is out-and-out materialism. We alone are our ancestors, not our parents or forefathers. They have given us the instrument, but what we are we owe to ourselves. It is very wrong and very low to conceive life in terms of biological heredity.

Really speaking, the task of spiritual life is to find the radius that leads one to the centre. And here

the same coat cannot fit all, as Swami Vivekananda used to say. At the beginning there must be faith and strict obedience to the instructions given us by our teacher. But faith must never end in faith, but in actual living experience. And then, if you want signs,—signs there are many, if you only open your eyes and think.

IV

There should be faith—*Shraddha*—in the words of the Seers, faith in the words of the teachers and prophets, faith in one's own potential strength and purity. Without a working ideal spiritual life cannot begin. If we put this working ideal too high nothing can be achieved, but, at the same time, we should never lower the ideal as such, but rise to it step by step by taking higher and higher ideals.

Faith, as such, is not enough. You must strive your utmost. Ethical culture means chastity; purity in thought, word and deed; purity in food; purity in one's company and associations; purity in what one listens to. And purity of a chaste life is more important than any other of the spiritual practices. Without these, as a matter of fact, spiritual practice is useless and becomes a mockery.

First comes physical purity. Then the mind must be tackled and controlled. Then comes the control of speech which is most essential. We should never listen to anything that is not perfectly pure and should behave in such a manner that others will not dare to discuss anything impure in our presence. This is the first step. After that a new attitude has to be developed with regard to

all things or objects that tempt us in any way, till perfect indifference with reference to them all is reached. So we should keep strict watch over all the movements of our mind so as to become more and more conscious, more and more wide-awake and definite, in everything. There should not be any unconscious moment in our life.

You see, this is very, very, essential, because in the first period of spiritual life—and the first period may extend over many, many years—body-consciousness becomes stronger, and the mind tends to wander more than it used to do before any practices were taken up. At the same time, affections and aversions become more prominent and more dangerous if we do not scrupulously avoid coming into touch with their objects, either mentally or physically, or both. All who are not careful in this will one day have a nasty fall.

For a time the body becomes in a special way the centre of consciousness in the beginner as soon as he begins to try to draw the mind away. So we should not allow ourselves to be hoodwinked by the subtle desires of our body and our mind that may crop up and try to drag us away to their particular objects which they wish to enjoy. The aspirant can never be too careful in his associations and the company he keeps during the first years of his training for the higher life. Many do not realise this and then come to grief. So we should learn to be conscious, to be aware of our motives, and stop all forms of drifting and all expressions of a merely instinctive life.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 51 TO 55.

In the last five Sutas, Narada described to us the various steps in the ladder of love leading to the footstool of God. We have seen how Narada is very particular in insisting that the last and final step to which all others must lead must be *Prema* or undiluted love. Now the question arises as to how to satisfy oneself that this last step is reached through the various other practices. Narada points out that it is indeed impossible for him to give an adequate idea of love so as to enable one to identify it when it appears, as it is an inner experience which defies precise analysis and description. Nevertheless it would not at all be difficult to recognise it when one reaches that stage, inasmuch as it is self-evident and needs no external proof. One who calls for a previous description of this love so that it may be easily recognised and identified when it actually appears, is just like the child in Sri Ramakrishna's parable, who asks his mother to wake him up when he is hungry. Narada's reply to such a question is the same as the mother's reply to her child that there would arise no such necessity for her to wake him up, as the hunger itself will surely wake him up when the time comes.

अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् ॥ ५१ ॥

the intrinsic nature of love अनिर्वचनीयम् is incapable

of being described precisely.

51. The intrinsic nature of love in itself defies exact and precise analysis, definition or description.

Note.—Every verbal description has its own limitations. It can never be a perfect representation or substitute for the object itself. The description must necessarily be coloured by the defects of the observer, the limitations of language, etc. When such is the fact even in the case of an external object which can be easily analysed and scrutinised, how much more inadequate should be the description of an inner experience like love! The intellectual equipment necessary for such introspection and description is very rare. He who has such equipment has often no experience of love. Even if one is fortunate to have the experience itself as well as the intellectual equipment necessary, the moment the searchlight of the intellect is turned on the experience, the latter vanishes and becomes a thing of the past. Moreover, when the experience itself comes, the mind becomes so wholly absorbed in it that it is not possible for the mind to observe and study the experience critically. A third man, like the psychologist of religion, who pretends to give such a description, being an utter stranger to the experience itself, has to depend upon the

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THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

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secondary evidence afforded by the not un-often uncritical observations and analysis of the mystics or devotees; or he has to rely merely on the physical effects visible on the devotee, as the Behaviouristic School of Psychology does. In either case the account of devotion, as given by a psychologist of religion like Leuba, is quite unreliable and untrue.

In the next Sutra, Narada gives an analogy to illustrate his point.

मूकास्वादनवत् ॥ ५२ ॥

52. It is like the experience of joy which a dumb man has when he takes something sweet.

Note.—Nobody dares deny that the dumb man has his pleasures of the palate, merely because he is not able to describe it on account of the defects in his vocal organs. Similarly nobody should be foolish enough to deny the experience itself of the lover simply because it cannot be precisely described. Like the dumb man's joy which can be only felt by him, love is an inner experience only to be felt and not fit to be described.

In the next Sutra the author points out how even if it is not describable, love makes its presence felt by the devotee when the conditions are favourable.

प्रकाशते क्वापि पाले ॥ ५३ ॥

that love क्वापि anywhere पाले in what is made fit for its manifestation प्रकाशते manifests itself.

53. That love, nevertheless manifests itself in whosoever has made himself fit for such manifestation by constant *Sadhana*.

Note.—The moment the conditions are favourable and the mind becomes sufficiently pure as a result of the exercises prescribed before, the experience of love comes automatically, and makes itself felt by the devotee. This shows the intimate organic relation that exists between the various preliminary spiritual practices and love which forms the last rung in the ladder. Narada, who is both a *Jnani* and *Bhakta*, is in a peculiarly favourable position to proclaim to the world the reality of the experience of love, although he professes himself unable to do full justice to it in his attempts at description. He thus boldly challenges the uncritical opinions of western psychologists of Religion like Leuba who often relegates such experience to the same category as hallucination and hysteria, which are forms of mental diseases, often caused by over-wrought nerves or repression. Because these psychologists have not sufficiently purified their minds of the dirt of egoism, they could not have had the first-hand experience, and are therefore unreliable and dangerous guides.

The next Sutra points out why the experience is indescribable, and why such mistakes are made by psychologists.

गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणवर्धमानं अविद्धिम्
सूक्ष्मतरं अनुभवरूपम् ॥ ५४ ॥

गुणरहितम् devoid of all attributes कामनारहितम् devoid of all characteristic tendencies to selfish action प्रतिक्षणवर्धमानम् expanding every moment अविद्धिम् homogenous and integral सूक्ष्मतरम् subtler than the subtlest अनुभवरूपम् of the nature of an inner experience

manifesting itself in the wake of the fulfilment of certain definite condition.

54. Devoid of all attributes and free from all characteristic tendencies to selfish action, it is of the nature of a homogeneous and integral subjective experience, subtler than the subtlest, manifesting itself automatically in the wake of the fulfilment of certain conditions, and expanding every moment.

Notes.—1. *Devoid of attributes etc.* Mind and the senses can grasp and language can describe a substance only through its characteristic properties and tendencies to action. Devotion or Prema being devoid of such could not be described. No particular characteristic can be predicated as typical of a Bhakta as all such characteristics can be found associated with various other emotions also.

2. *Homogeneous etc.* The experience of love is one and indivisible. All the powers of the mind are so unified and integrated that it is not possible for the several functions such as the intellect, emotion and will to work separately. Even the subject-object relation, so necessary for observation and description, does not exist in that state. The logical and intellectual powers of the intellect are kept in abeyance at the time of experience. Hence, how to observe and describe?

3. *Subject to experience.* Not capable of being observed by an outsider and so defying description on the mere basis of its physical manifesta-

tions, as advocated by the Behaviouristic school of psychologists. These psychologists have not had sufficient spiritual training, and as the necessary conditions for the manifestation of religious devotion are not fulfilled in them, they cannot have the inner experience itself.

4. *Subtler etc.* It is so very elusive. The moment one tries to cognise it as an object, the experience itself vanishes.

5. *Expanding etc.* Ordinary emotions are dependent on certain causes and are therefore transitory. When the cause of the emotion disappears, the emotion also vanishes. One becomes satiated in a short time by sense enjoyments. But this devotion only becomes more and more enjoyable and gathers a greater strength with each experience. Thus one becomes never satiated, and thus it can be eternally enjoyed. Compare the modern Christian conception of eternally progressive enjoyment in heaven. Also Prof. Alexander's conception of deity itself as that higher life still waiting to be evolved.

तत् प्राप्य तदेवावलोकयति, तदेव शृणोति, तदेव भाषयति, तदेव चिन्तयति ॥ ५५ ॥

तत् That प्राप्य attaining तत् that एव only अवलोकयति sees शृणोति hears भाषयति speaks चिन्तयति thinks.

55. Attaining this love, one sees and hears only that, talks and thinks only that.

Note.—The whole mind is so absorbed in the experience that thought itself expires in the enjoyment. Every activity of the mind and sense will be redolent with the sweetness of love.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Hindu Civilisation: By Radha Kumud Mukherji, M.A., Ph.D., Published by Longman's Green & Co., 39, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Price 15 sh. Pages 351.

Among the modern historians of India Prof. Radha Kumud Mukherji has already distinguished himself by his many works on diverse subjects, such as Indian ship-ping, Hindu nationalism, local government in ancient India, and biographies of great Indian rulers like Harsha and Asoka. While most of his earlier books deal with some special aspect of Indian history, the present one under review is a general account of the growth of Indian civilisation up to the establishment of the Mauryan Empire. Besides its own excellence, the value of Prof. Mukherji's work is enhanced by the fact that barring the work of R. C. Dutt, which has now become somewhat out of date due to the progress of research, there is no other handbook specially devoted to the subject and suited to the needs of both the scholars and general readers.

In the case of India more than of any country, it is true to say that a historian has necessarily to be more a student of civilisation than of mere political and military events. Earlier to the writings of the Greeks recording the invasion of Alexander (330 B.C.), we have no source-book dealing exclusively with the political development of India. But yet the India of Alexander's time was the product of millenniums of political evolution beginning from 3,250 B.C., which is the date assigned to the earliest Indian civilisation, namely that of the Indus valley. Even to reconstruct the barest skeleton of India's political growth during this immense period of time, besides depending on the results of excavations, one has to have recourse largely to books like the Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas, grammatical works, and Buddhist Canonical writings. All these books are primarily of religious and cultural interest, the references to political and military events being either parenthetical in nature, or introduced as subservient to the religious themes

that formed the primary interest of their writers. Prof. Radha Kumud Mukherji's attempt to treat Hindu history as history of civilisation is, therefore, more in agreement with the spirit of our traditions than other works on Indian history that one usually comes across.

Prof. Mukherji does not, however, neglect the political aspect of Indian history. Indeed he gives us the outline, together with many details reconstructed by him of the growth of Indian political life from the time of the Mahenjo-Daro civilisation. But for him this is only the framework for presenting the real essence of Indian history—the growth of social institutions, the rise of religious theories and sects, the working of republican, monarchical and imperial traditions, the gradual fusion of diverse races and cultures into one common Hindu civilisation extending from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, the life and teachings of great spiritual leaders like Yajnavalkya, Mahavira and the Buddha, the evolution of art, and all other features of life that make the dry bones of history interesting and worth preserving.

The book is scholarly in as far as it seeks to avoid all wishful thinking and to utilise all available materials on the subject including the latest excavations of Mahenjo-Daro. But it is not too stiff or technical for the general reader. Any cultured person will find it absorbingly interesting. We wish it supplants all the other books dealing with the same period, that are at present recommended as text-books for students of Indian history in our Colleges.

(1) *Ancient Tales of Hindustan*; (2) *Dramatic Poems*: By A. Christiana Albers, P.O. Box 247, Calcutta. Pages 123 & 259 respectively.

In the first of these one gets accounts of the stories of famous epic figures like Ekalavya, Sri Krishna, Dhruva, Vikramaditya, Bhishma, and Chandrabasa. In the second one gets a dramatic presentation of the stories of well-known personages of Indian history or mythology like Nurjahan, Harischandra, Nala, Zeb-un-Nisa, Yogamaya, etc.

The books are mostly in blank verse. The author writes with much effect. She has been able to enter into the spirit of Hindu ideals of life and character, and reproduce them vigorously through the medium of English verse. The books make very pleasant reading.

Shells from the Sea-shore: By K. R. Menon, Ph. D., Published by the Greater Indian Publishing House, 80 Wilkie Road, Singapore. Price \$1.00. Pages 68.

This is a book of poems recording the suggestions that came to the author's mind at various moments and at the sight of various objects of every-day life. As examples of the themes dealt with we may mention the Moon, the Fallen Tree, the Cock, Diplomacy, Baby, Poverty, Peace, etc. Dr. Menon writes with much feeling and his verses suggest a deep understanding of life and Nature life.

Bhagavad-Gita: By a Sadhu, Sanatana Dharma Publishing House, Eranakulam. Second Edition; Price: annas 12.

This book contains English translation of the text of the Bhagavad-Gita with foot notes, forming the first part of Gita Rahasya by the same author.

(1) A Catechism of Instruction; (2) A Catechism of Enquiry: *Being instructions of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Published by Niranjanananda Swamy, Sri Ramanasramam, Thiruvannamalai, Pages 43 & 23; Price 6 as. or 10d., & 4 as. or 8d., respectively.*

Maha Yoga or The Upanishadic Lore: By Who, Published by The New Light Publishing House, Pudukotah. Pages 120. Price Re. 1, or 2 sh.

Although these books are brought out by two different publishers, they deal with one and the same subject, namely, the teachings of the well-known saint of our times, Sri Ramana Maharshi of Thiruvannamalai. Sri Ramana Maharshi stands for the highest ideals of Advaita Vedanta in their unsullied form. In his teachings he has divested Advaita of all the controversialist tendency, which even this transcendental Gospel has contracted on account of its association with Pundits and logicians during several centuries past. That Advaita is neither a dogma nor an intellectual theory but a simple system of experimental psychology that seeks for the innermost truth in man, and urges and helps him to proceed with this task in the midst of all the pre-occupations of life—is the impression one gains on reading Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. The chief task to which Advaita sets itself is the removal of the ego, which is the source of all ignorance and suffering. Sri Ramana Maharshi teaches the cause and cure of this disease of ego-sense in a manner that is at once clear, convincing and free from theological predilections. That is why his teachings have been very appealing to many modern men with a critical mind.

Of these books, the first two are the translations from Tamil of the instructions originally imparted by the sage. The Catechism of Instruction takes the form of questions and answers, and may therefore be found very convenient by people who want the teachings presented in a brief and pointed manner. The Maha Yoga is a more systematic and elaborate exposition of the sage's teachings. The learned and critical minded students will find it very helpful in understanding his message.

NEWS AND REPORTS

President's Sojourn

His Holiness Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, was on a tour for over a month in the South. Starting from the Headquarters on the 9th of April, he made brief stays in various centres of the Mission at Puri, Bhuvaneswar, Waltair, Madras and Ootacamund. He was received with due honour by the prominent citizens and admirers of the Mission in all these places, and was accorded public receptions at the important stations. Two important functions of permanent interest he went through at Madras: the one was the consecration of the New Shrine room dedicated to the Goddess of Learning at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and the other the inauguration of the Centenary Library at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. (We give below details of the second function). All through his tour, besides the impetus given to the various spiritual and philanthropic activities going on under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Movement in various centres, by his presence, the Swamiji was specially instrumental in giving a proper start to the practical spiritual life of several devotees by individual personal instruction and direct aid. After the strenuous tour of over a month on his spiritual mission the Swamiji has left for the Himalayas from Madras, on 15th May by the Grand Trunk Express.

Opening of the Centenary Library at Madras

The Centenary Library attached to the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore was declared open on the morning of 10th May by Swami Virajananda, head of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. There was a large gathering of the residents of the city and disciples of the Math.

The function commenced with a religious ritual and installation of a portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in the Library Hall after Puja. Special prayers

and invocation songs were sung by Srimati C. Saraswati Bai.

Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachari, Secretary of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Home, received the guests and led them to the hall where the opening ceremony took place.

On behalf of the Centenary Celebration Committee, Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, made a statement in regard to the library.

MR. C. R. SRINIVASAN'S STATEMENT

The Committee expected, Mr. Srinivasan said, to collect sufficient amount to be able, after meeting the celebration expenses, to create the nuclei for two permanent funds, one for relief work and another for publication and propaganda. But the collections not being sufficient for both the purposes contemplated, the Committee resolved to get at least one of the objects well started instead of dividing the collections between both with ineffective results. A sum, little over Rs. 5,000, was all that was left in the hands of the Committee available for permanent work. The Committee after deep consideration resolved that propaganda work must receive preferential attention, as with the brisk and steady dissemination of the gospel of service and sacrifice, faith in and goodwill towards the Order would follow in a true spirit of appreciation and sympathy; and prompt co-operation and help in respect of any schemes of humanitarian value undertaken would be a natural sequel.

The essential preliminary for effective propaganda, Mr. Srinivasan continued, should always be a good and well-equipped library at the headquarters, available both to the possible workers and to the public as indirectly forming part of propaganda work itself. The Math in Madras had since its inception been slowly building up a collection of choice books, which now numbered 2,500. These related not only to Hindu religion and philosophy but also to comparative religion and general cultural literature and in particular all the publications of the various centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. Want of space in

the precincts of the Math had till now been one of the contributory causes standing in the way of the development of a public library with the collection as the nucleus.

Acknowledging with gratitude the initial help rendered in this matter by the Centenary Committee, Mr. Srinivasan said that but for the help of the Committee, the scheme itself could not have been thought of. The authorities of the Math wished to give public expression to their abiding sense of thankfulness for the prompt, efficient and sympathetic assistance rendered to them in this matter by Engineering Contractors, Messrs. Gannon Dunkerley & Co., Ltd. They had by their uniform kindness and generous appreciation of the aims and objects of the Mission, not confined themselves to mere business relations but come closer to the Mission as sincere friends. It was to their loving help that the Math owed the erection of their spacious hall for the library within the minimum period of time.

This hall formed, however, only the main portion of the building project connected with the propaganda and publication scheme. The rooms to accommodate the publication section had yet to be constructed and could not now be undertaken for want of funds. An amount equal to that now expended would have to be found to furnish the necessary facilities for such work. The Math authorities earnestly hope that the generous public would give a helping hand and bring to early fruition a noble undertaking begun under excellent auspices.

SIR SIVASWAMI AIYAR'S SPEECH

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar congratulated the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration Committee upon their decisions in regard to the utilisation of the surplus funds in their hands. The Ramakrishna movement had laboured in this Province for a number of years and its activities were well known. He had often wished that there was more of the missionary spirit among public workers in this country. He had often envied the spirit of self-sacrifice which animated Christian Missionaries working in this land. He was therefore glad that Hindu missionaries had also

come into the field and begun to work for noble objects just as other missions laboured with such great success. Of all the missions which so worked, there was none which was more in accord with the spirit of the times than the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. It was not identified with the comparatively older forms of religion not so well suited to the twentieth century and to the present intellectual atmosphere. This was due to the fact that the founder, or at any rate the inspirer, of this Mission, Sri Ramakrishna, was himself a product of the nineteenth century and of the various cultural, spiritual and religious influences which had moulded the thought of India during the nineteenth and earlier centuries.

The Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, laid stress upon humanitarian and propagandistic work. The two principles upon which Swami Vivekananda used to lay stress were sacrifice and service. That sage's own life was an embodiment of those two ideals. The same principles animated the members of the Sri Ramakrishna Order. While congratulating the Committee on their preference for propaganda work, he would mention that this did not mean that the Mission was not engaged or was not going to engage itself in humanitarian work. It was only a question of giving priority to one among a number of desirable objects in the disposal of surplus funds.

Unlike the propaganda carried on in political and other spheres, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, the Ramakrishna Mission desired that its propaganda should be based upon knowledge. It was essential, therefore, that for this purpose there should be a well-equipped library to supply its agents and missionaries with the requisite amount of knowledge, learning and culture. As for the departments of thought to be chosen in connection with equipping the library, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar recommended that emphasis should be laid on religion and philosophy. Comparative religion and comparative philosophy should form the main feature of the library. The other elements of culture were desirable too. But it was a question of making the best use of the limited funds now at the disposal of the Committee. The Mission had identified itself with the Vedantic

system of thought and had little to fear from rationalism. Hinduism itself in its finer forms had little to fear from rationalism. Of course, there were many forms, or rather many levels, of Hinduism. For, Hinduism was not a body of rigid inflexible dogmas and creeds. It had to be viewed rather as a ladder of knowledge and of spiritual uplift. It adjusted itself to varying degrees of intellectual and spiritual capacities. It had great tolerance for all kinds of religions. He had read that according to Swami Vivekananda and other leaders of the Sri Ramakrishna Movement, Hinduism was really a universal religion, not intended to be identified with any particular creed or cult. Whether that statement be absolutely correct or not and whether they could claim that Hinduism had no partiality for its own doctrines or not, one could safely state that there was no religion which was more impartial, more tolerant of differences of views and more prepared to make allowances for varieties in religious belief in minor matters. The one principle upon which Hindu religion laid stress was the fundamental concept which marked the unity of all religions.

For the purpose of spreading knowledge of the Vedantic system and other allied system of Hindu thought, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, a library such as the one opened that day would be most useful. It might not, in his opinion, be wise to spend at the outset on equipping the library with books on branches of knowledge such as economics, history or science. They might first concentrate on study of religion and philosophy, on a comparative plan and he had no doubt that such a study would result in a greater appreciation of the truths of Vedanta. It gave him great pleasure to associate himself with the opening of the library which he hoped would be filled with literature especially calculated to supply the requisite knowledge to the missionaries who would go forth from the Math. It was, however, not enough that missionaries should be filled with knowledge. Mere knowledge without a living faith was no good. Living faith was absolutely essential if a movement was to have any dynamic force. Indeed, it was living faith in the essentials of Hinduism that enabled the missionaries

of the Math to exercise the great influence they did over the minds of people especially the younger ones. He wished the library all success. (Following Sir Sivaswami Aiyar's speech, the President of the Order rose to deliver his address, accepting the gift of the Centenary Library from the citizens of Madras. We have given to the address the leading place in this issue.)

Mr. C. Ramanujachariar read messages wishing the library success received from different persons and also announced a donation to the library by the sons of the late Mr. V. C. Seshachariar of that gentleman's collection of books on religion and philosophy.

SPEECH BY SIR KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR

Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar said that as a lay disciple of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, he could say with pleasure that the Mission tried to serve man and help him to a fuller expression of his life. The location of the Math, the library and the dispensary in such close proximity, seemed to symbolise the combination of the spirit of sacrifice, search for truth and service—ideals which the Mission strove for. He had a feeling that religion to-day was on its trial and unless it kept itself in close touch with the pulsating movements of the modern spirit, it would have to abdicate its function. Hinduism was not lacking in this vital element of adjustability. The time had come when heads of religious Orders and Maths should go forward and help in the emancipation of human beings and the solution of the great problems that afflicted mankind. It was fortunate that at the head of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission they had one who combined scholarship, a deep spirit of service and a sympathetic understanding of modern trends. They had, therefore, the hope that ere long they would find libraries, hospitals and educational and other institutions started by the Ramakrishna Mission increase largely, disseminating the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna throughout the land.—Adapted from the *Hindu*.

Celebration of the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, Vedanta Society, Providence, Rhode Island

The Vedanta Society of Providence, Rhode Island, celebrated the birthday of

Sri Ramakrishna on Feb. 21st. Swami Vishwananda of Chicago and Swami Akhilananda performed elaborate worship with *homa* and other necessary rituals. Special offerings were made and a few devotees joined in the worship, attending the Vesper service as well. The *prasada* was served to the students who gathered in the evening.

A public dinner was held on Feb. 24th in honour of Sri Ramakrishna. Many professors, ministers, and distinguished citizens of Providence were present. It was a sacred evening, long to be remembered by all who came, for its happiness and charm. The guests expressed their delight and appreciation for the delicious Hindu food which Swami Akhilananda himself had prepared for them. They were enchanted, too, with the exquisite flowers which decorated the Chapel and which showed the devotion and love felt by the devotees for the Great Master, whose portrait was in full view in front of the altar.

Swami Akhilananda introduced each of the distinguished speakers, and it was a pleasure to feel the warm response that came from them as they answered his words of welcome. Not only did they express gratitude for the invitation to share in this joyous celebration, but each one paid special tribute to Sri Ramakrishna and to Swami Akhilananda who has brought the blessing of the Master's love and divine message to Providence.

In the intervals between the speeches, delightful music was provided by Professor Faucher, an eminent violinist, who was ably accompanied on the piano by Mme. Faucher. Their brilliant performance was a rare treat, and they gave generously of their talent. A vocal selection was beautifully rendered by Miss. Ruth Webber, accompanied by Mrs. Marian Currie.

The speakers of the evening were Professor Joachim Wach, of Brown University, Rev. Frederick Wilmot of Fitchburg, Mass., Dr. Allen E. Claxton of the Methodist Church, Providence, Swami Vishwananda of Chicago, and Swami Akhilananda. Each of them spoke as if inspired.

Professor Wach, an eminent and well-known scholar of comparative religions showed how Hinduism and Christianity are similar in their experience of the 'Holy', and in their expression of different holy

aspects of the Personal God. Hinduism also depicts the destructive as well as the beneficent aspects. Shiva gives blessings as well as blight and decay. It is through an understanding of this that we can interpret the beauty of the deep philosophical thought which is the rare and significant contribution of India to the spirituality and culture of mankind.

Mr. Wilmot spoke feelingly of a visit which he had made to India, and especially described the Temple of Dakshineswar which he had seen there. Here Sri Ramakrishna had lived, and the wonderful spirit of his divine presence seemed, to Mr. Wilmot, to permeate the atmosphere still. This beautiful spirit is being given to America by the Swamis who come here in His name. They are bringing a much-needed message of harmony and repose that will be a blessed gift to the Western world.

Dr. Claxton emphasized the similarity between the life and teachings of Christ and of Sri Ramakrishna. He said that that Christian land will be benefited by the practices of meditation and concentration which were taught by Sri Ramakrishna, while his synthetic view of religion will help them in establishing understanding and peace amongst different races and groups.

Swami Vishwananda of Chicago, the guest of honour for the evening, made a most interesting and inspiring address on Sri Ramakrishna himself, giving glimpses into his life, and telling of his wonderful power of mind that could solve the problems besetting the world. Secluded in a temple by the Ganges, he gave to the understanding of life and its difficulties a message of harmony and synthesis. As we study that holy and beautiful personality, we must realize that he was in truth a Divine Incarnation.

Swami Akhilananda spoke of the Great Master as one who placed a new emphasis upon religion, who verified that God is actually to be experienced,—a man who lived a life of renunciation and intense realization. He came at a time when man was rapidly reaching the zenith of scientific progress, when spiritual life and thoughts were in danger of being crowded out of existence. The Swami quoted that beautiful promise made by Sri Krishna that when-

ever there is a decline of religious faith and the spread of irreligion, He, the Blessed Lord, will come again in human form to save the world from materialism. Not only did Sri Ramakrishna teach that God is to be known and experienced, but also all the religions. He himself verified this, that He is to be found by the paths of all the religions. He himself verified this, proving conclusively that all faiths lead to the same goal,—that all religions are but the various paths that we may choose to follow to reach Him. Swami Akhilananda then invoked the Spirit of the Master to bless each one with His grace, that all might share in the peace and harmony that He came to earth to give.

And so a most inspirational and delightful evening came to a close.

On Sunday, Feb. 26th, both Swami Vishwananda and Swami Akhilananda gave lectures on the life and teachings of the Great Master. Swami Vishwananda emphasized, Sri Ramakrishna's divine message of harmony to a blind, materialistic world, and likened the methods of this great teacher to those of Christ. Both could illumine by a glance or a touch; both gave their lessons in parable form. All through the ages, the mind of India has been obsessed with the lure of the Infinite, the desire for knowing the Unknowable. A long, unbroken line of devout men and women have experienced God, and these great personalities have contributed wonderful spiritual understanding and enlightenment, the bed-rock of Indian religion and culture. The Swami's talk was vivid and inspiring, giving all who were present a feeling of his deep reverence and love for the Great Master in whose name he has crossed seas, and for whom he is devoting his time and energy to bring the divine message to the people of Chicago.

Swami Akhilananda gave in a few words an excellent portrayal of the meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's message to us, and spoke of Swami Vivekananda who was the first to bring the treasure of Hindu spirituality and culture to the West. If we will but follow the teachings of those two great personalities, if we will allow the light to enter and illumine our hearts, then we shall have realized the blessedness and harmony that can be experienced even in this life.

If we will practise the meditation and methods of devotion that these teachers have given us, we shall attain to that peace which 'passeth understanding' and realize the Self which is divine. He emphasized that Sri Ramakrishna's teaching of the divinity of man is the very basis and foundation of all life and spirituality. The moment that men can realize their true nature, the moment they know that they are divine, all differences will disappear. There will no longer be cause for quarrels, and the very problems that are disrupting modern life and thought will be solved completely and for ever.

Music was furnished by Miss. Flora Leigh, whose lovely voice gave charm to an already delightful evening. She was accompanied by Mrs. Marian Currie.

Everyone who attended the dinner and the lectures the following Sunday seemed glad of the privilege of sharing in the celebrations, and expressed their gratitude that the Swamis have come from India to bring spiritual enlightenment and unfoldment to America.

Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul, The Vilangana, Trichur

The report of the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul and Vidyamandir for the year 1937-38 is a splendid record of what has been achieved in the way of Harijan uplift and national education by the steady work of a band of selfless workers inspired by the ideals of renunciation and service inculcated by the great Swami Vivekananda. Within a decade of its starting it has taken a prominent place among similar institutions.

The Vidyamandir is the school where boys and girls, residential as well as day scholars, receive instruction from the Lower Primary class to the Fourth Form. It will soon be raised to a full-fledged High School. Of the total strength of 382, 234 are boys and 148 girls. The special attention paid to the culture of the mother-tongue, the teaching of Sanskrit and Hindi, the teaching of History, Geography and Civics so as to promote love of national ideals and patriotism, industrial and vocational training, religious classes, music, folklore and dancing and indigenous games—these constitute the special features of the Vidyamandir.

In the Industrial section, weaving, mat-making, drawing, needlework, embroidery, crochet and knitting and printing are taught. The students are sent up for Government examination.

The Harijan Co-operative Store dealing in school requisites is run by the pupils under the guidance of teachers and is a registered society. This is supplemented by theoretical instruction in co-operation and civics.

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According to Swamiji, education should bring out strength of character and a spirit of philanthropy, foster in the students an ideal of self-reliance and self-sacrifice and afford them facilities for the assimilation of ideas. Above all, it must develop their will in such a way that they may face the most trying circumstances and carve a way for themselves through adamant difficulties. Moreover, education, to be a creative force in life, must be based on religion, which in a wider sense seeks fulfilment through the service of humanity—the worship of God in man. At the same time it should not lose touch with the socio-economic conditions; it should rather make every student conscious of the realities of life, provide him with the means of earning a decent livelihood and thus equip him for future citizenship. "We want that education," says the great Swami, "by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. . . . What we want is Western science coupled with Vedanta,

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To begin with, it is proposed to start an Intermediate Arts College of the residential type, on spacious grounds close to the Belur Math and the new Temple, where the boys, living in a holy atmosphere away from the tumult and temptations of a congested city-life, will be trained in both secular and spiritual studies. In addition to the advantages of University education, they will be helped to acquire, during this formative period of their life, a steady character and healthy outlook to resist the many evil influences to which our youths are continually exposed. Provision for vocational training will also be made to increase their efficiency, so that they may enter the world better fitted for the struggle for existence. Special attention will be paid to their physical well-being as well.

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Sri Ramakrishna Mission 30th Annual General Meeting

Progress of Work in 1938: The 30th Annual General Meeting of the Rama-

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krishna Mission was held on Good Friday at the premises of the Belur Math, the Head-quarters of the Mission, with Srimat Swami Virajananda, the President, in the chair. A large number of lay and monastic members were present. Swami Madhavananda, the Secretary, presented his report for the year 1938. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of work done by the Mission during the year under review.

Centres: There are at present 102 centres of the Math and the Mission in India and abroad. At the end of 1938, the total number of centres of the Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Straits Settlement was 54.

Temporary Relief Works: The Mission conducted both Temporary Relief Work and Permanent Work as usual. Flood Relief Work in Bengal and Cyclone Relief Work in Orissa were done. In all, over 2,844 mds. of rice, 2,989 new clothes and blankets and 2,328 old clothes were distributed among 7,580 recipients of 2,241 families belonging to 105 villages of 12 unions in Faridpur and Murshidabad Dts., in Bengal, and Puri and Ganjam Dts., in Orissa. In Murshidabad Dt. over 6,300 cases of malaria and other ailments that appeared in the wake of the floods were treated. Rs. 160 were given as aid in cash, besides seed-grains. 279 huts were also put up in Ganjam Dt.

The above relief work is exclusive of the minor relief done by the Head-quarters before July, 1938, and the relief done by the Mission centres at Dacca and Sonargaon, Rangoon and Cawnpore, as well as by the Math centre at Malda.

Permanent Work: The Permanent Work was of three kinds as usual, viz., Philanthropic, Educational and Missionary.

Philanthropic: The Philanthropic Activities fell into three distinct divisions, viz., Indoor Hospital Work, Outdoor Dispensary Work, and Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds.

There are at present 7 Indoor Hospitals under the Mission, including the Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre popularly known as the Sishumangal Pratishthan at Bhawanipore, Calcutta. In the year under consideration 10,394 patients were treated as against 9,007 in

1937. There were 467 beds in 1938 as against 444 in 1937 in all these hospitals. Rangoon and Benares centres had 170 and 145 beds respectively; Sishumangal Pratishthan and Kankhal 60 and 50; Brindaban, Midnapore and Tamluk 24, 12, and 6 respectively.

34 centres including the Head-quarters conducted Outdoor Dispensaries, each centre having one or more. These dispensaries are flung in different parts of India, and some of them are situated in Benares, Hardwar, Brindaban, Allahabad and other places of pilgrimage, and in cosmopolitan cities and towns such as Rangoon, Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow, where they have been alleviating the sufferings of lakhs of poor sick people hailing from different parts of the country and speaking diverse tongues. In all, a total number of 12,86,143 cases was treated in 1938, as against 11,37,794 in 1937 the new and repeated cases being in the ratio of 11 : 20.

The Sevashram at Benares, which is one of the most prominent centres treated 2,21,541 cases and had a daily average of 607. The Rangoon centres treated 2,54,123 cases and held the highest record for outdoor as for indoor work, as usual, the daily average being 696 in the Outdoor Department. The Dispensaries at Bankura, Kankhal, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar and Salkia each treated between 23,000 and 30,000 new cases. The Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi treated a total number of 15,733 cases.

Miscellaneous, regular and occasional service of various kinds was done by 26 out of the 46 centres in India. In all 106 helpless patients were nursed in their homes, 49 dead bodies were cremated, Rs. 3,654-1-1½ given as aid in cash, 455 mds. 1 sr. 4 chks. of rice and 272 pieces of cloth and blankets distributed, the total number of persons helped regularly or casually in cash or in kind being 2,244.

Educational: The Educational Work of the Mission falls into two divisions mainly, (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, as well as Night Schools, Adult Schools and Industrial Schools; (2) Students' Homes and Orphanages. Mass Education

for adults and juveniles through day and night schools formed a feature as usual.

41 centres in India, Ceylon and Straits Settlement conducted one type of educational work or other. In all the centres together there were 28 Students' Homes and Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools, 7 High Schools, 5 M. E. Schools, 60 Vernacular Schools, 11 Night Schools and 2 Industrial Schools. The total strength of these 116 institutions in India, Ceylon and S.S. was 11,115 in 1938 as against 8,250 in 1937 in 96 institutions, the number of girls being over 26 per cent.

Rural educational work was conducted by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore, Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha had 488 boys and girls in all its institutions.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the arts and crafts and industries which may be grouped under the following heads: (1) Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, (2) Spinning, weaving, dyeing, calico-printing, tailoring, (3) Cane-work, (4) Carpentry, cabinet-making, (5) Shoe-making. In the Industrial School and Workshop at Madras, the Mechanical and Automobile Engineering course covers a period of five years and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe-factories to provide better training to the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

In Madras, there were 2,020 students in the Students' Home, Industrial School, Residential High School, and Branch High School at Thyagarayanagar and the Sarada Vidyalaya and its institutions in that place had 869 pupils, the total strength in all the institutions in Madras being 2,889. The Sister Nivedita Girls' High School at Bagh-bazar, Calcutta, had 603 girls. The Mission Residential School at Deoghar, the Students' Home at Gouripore near Calcutta, and the Nivedita Girls' High School at Baghbazur, Calcutta, produced very brilliant results. The Residential High School at Periyannayakanpalayam in Coimbatore, also did valuable work. The Dacca centre had 437 pupils in all its Schools; Jamshedpur Vivekananda Society 338; the

Contai centre 266; the Shillong centre 386; and Taki 286.

Libraries and Reading Rooms: Each centre had one or more Libraries and Reading Rooms. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent library work and had an attendance of over 29,381 in its reading rooms in 1938. The Students' Home at Madras had more than 20,840 volumes in all its libraries. The total number of books in the Mission centres may be roughly computed to be about 1 lakh and the total number of periodicals 600, in the year under review.

Missionary: The monastic members went on preaching tours in India and abroad. A Swami was deputed on invitation to Fiji, and another to Chicago.

More than 300 classes were held and more than 400 meetings convened during the year under review.

There are colonies for the Harijans and for the Backward classes, conducted in Trichur (Cochin), Shella (Khassia Hills) and other places by the monks of the Mission.

Expenditure: The total expenditure for the Mission's permanent work in 1938 was about 6 lakhs of Rupees.

The Ideal of Service: Swami Vivekananda, the Founder of the Mission, sounded the clarion call for self-dedication and service of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Such a noble ideal alone is capable of giving peace and light in the world to-day with its clash and conflict, darkness and despair. Will not the youngmen of India respond to the call?

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

Propaganda Tour

Swami Ranganathananda who was deputed for a propaganda tour from the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is now in the Bombay Presidency. His activities started in March with a series of lectures at the Astika Samaj Hall, Matunga, Bombay, which were well attended. In connection with the Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna organised under the joint auspices of the Vivekananda Society and the Hari Hara Bhajana Sangham, he delivered three timely lectures on "Who is

a true devotee?" "The spirit of Indian Culture" and "Life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna," at Poona, which were followed by a series of public discourses on Gita and other allied subjects in the same city, at Sirdars' Bangalow and South Indian Association, respectively.

The Swami's popular exposition of religious, cultural and moral themes was enthusiastically received by enlightened audiences on all occasions he spoke.

Activities of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, 1938-39

Since the return of Swami Nikhilananda from his six months' visit to India, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York has had a varied and interesting programme of activities. On December 25th, the Swami opened his Sunday services of this season with the celebration of Christmas, speaking on "The Blessed Life of Jesus." A Christmas tree and greens adorned the Chapel and refreshments were served to the many students and friends who assembled to welcome the Swami to this country.

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the Chapel, Swami Nikhilananda speaking on "The Inspired Teachings of Swami Vivekananda." During the last week of February and the first week of March, a special programme was arranged for celebrating

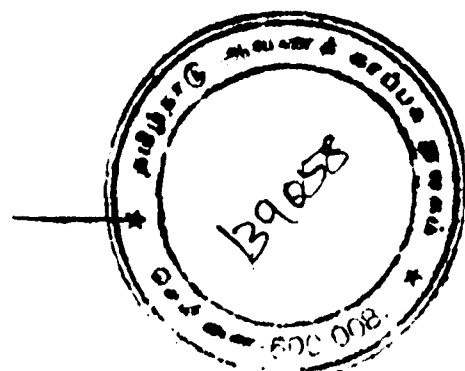
the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. On the 28th, Swami Nikhilananda spoke on "The Blessed Life of the Great Master." A small statue of Sri Ramakrishna in meditation, placed on a special altar, was decorated with garlands and flowers, as were the other holy pictures in the Chapel. The following Friday, Swami Vishwananda of Chicago conducted the service and spoke on "The Laws of Inner Life." Two days later, Swami Vishwananda again addressed the congregation, speaking on "How to be a Yogi." On Sunday evening the annual Sri Ramakrishna birthday dinner was given, with over a hundred guests present. Swami Vishwananda and Dr. Taraknath Das of New York University were the guest speakers. After the dinner, Swami Nikhilananda showed moving pictures of the holy and historical places he had visited in India recently and described them in great detail. Everyone was keenly interested in this medium of contact with India.

Swami Nikhilananda has also addressed members of "All Souls' Church" in New York and the Central Congregational Church of Brooklyn, as well as a class at the Dalton School.

In addition, the Swami has opened regular Tuesday evening classes on the Upanishads and Friday classes on meditation and the study of Raja Yoga at the Center. These classes are being very well attended.

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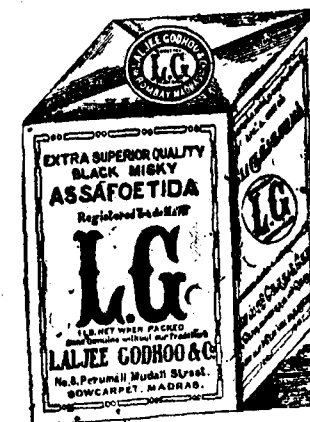
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But inaction is not a manifestation of Sattva (purity). It is a sign of Tamas, lethargy or inertia. Tamas should be overcome by Rajas; and then Rajas should be overcome by Sattva. Sloth, indolence, and inertia should be overcome by energy and activity. Then all actions should be dedicated to God; and gradually the life of Sattva or purity should be attained.

All actions should be done without attachment. They should not be actuated by any feelings or emotions. (ii, 47; iii, 9, 19.) They should not be performed with any end in view. Duties should not be performed with a view to attaining success or failure, gain or loss, pleasure or pain. (ii, 38, 48.) Duties should be performed for the sake of duty. So far the teaching of the Gita resembles the teaching of Kant. But it differs from it in an essential point. All duties should be dedicated to God. The fruits of all actions should be surrendered to God. Moral life is a life of action completely dedicated to God. Thus the moral life inculcated by the Gita is transformed into a spiritual life based on the firm bed-rock of God. (iii, 30; iv, 24; v, 2, 10-12; vi, 1, 4; ix, 27; xviii, 2, 11, 56.)

The Gita enjoins different kinds of duties in different stations of life. So far its teaching resembles that of Plato. Every one is born in a sphere of moral life. He is born to it and lives in it. He lives, moves, and has his being in a sphere of social organisation. This constitutes his moral universe. His duties are relative to his station in life in this universe. They are strictly determined by his place in the society. His duties are

the duties of the class to which he belongs. If he tries to usurp the duties relating to another sphere of society, his efforts will be in vain, and his moral life will be a life in a vacuum. His moral life is strictly determined by his own aptitudes, heredity, and his immediate social environment. His duties must be in harmony with his inner dispositions, and his station in the social life. (xviii, 41-47.)

The duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras have been distributed according to their qualities born of their own natures. (xviii, 41.) The four classes have been created according to their inherent qualities and function in the society. (iv, 13.) Every man reaches perfection by performing his own duty determined by his station in life. (xviii, 45.) Every one worships God by performing his own duty and attains perfection. (xviii, 46.) The Lord emphatically says: "Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the well-executed duty of another. He who performs his duty determined by his own nature does not incur sin." (xviii, 47.) "Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another, well-performed. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (iii, 35.)

Thus the Gita strikes an important note of modern Ethics. Bradley has emphasised the conception of "My Station and its Duties."⁴

⁴He says, "To know what a man is we must not take him in isolation. He is one of a people, he was born in a family, he lives in a certain society, in a certain state. What he has to do de-

Mackenzie explains it in a popular way thus: "Human beings do not drop from the clouds. Men are born with particular aptitudes and in a particular environment; and they generally find their sphere of activity marked out for them, within pretty narrow limits. They find themselves fixed in a particular station, helping to carry forward a general system of life; and their chief duties are connected with the effective execution of their work." Hence the force of Carlyle's great principle, "Do the Duty that lies nearest thee." (*Manual of Ethics*, p. 323.) "Thou shalt labour, within thy particular province, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. Work is Worship." (*Ibid*, p. 309.) Carlyle rightly has said: "All true work is religion."

Action is better than inaction. The Lord Himself sets the goal of action before us. He acts incessantly to set

(Not concluded)

THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS

BY DAYAMOY MITRA, M.A.

No sun, no glow of light, no radiant moon I see.
The world and heavens all in shadow-shape doth float,
O'er mind so faint they float;—this earth and starry world,
They rise and dive below, 'gain sink and rise in 'me'.
Now slow the shadows fade, in one deep void they close,
But 'me' and 'me' it runs—all other strains are mute,
When that too ceases, lo! the silence silence weds
Which word nor thought can plumb—He only knows who knows.

This is an English version of Swami Vivekananda's famous Bengali song 'Nahi Surya, Nahi Jyoti' etc. Swamijee describes in it the feeling that the saint has on his way to deep 'Samadhi,' the highest ecstatic bliss, when his senses are in-gathered and a reflux sets on consciousness. Here is poetry of the void—the *vox nihil* of the aspiring soul—so contrary to all that our poets adore of this lovable sensuous world!—Translator.

