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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

BHAKTI—IV

IF you must be mad, be not so with the things of the world, but be mad with the love of the Lord.

DIVE deep into the sea of Divine Love. Fear not. It is the sea of immortality. I once said to Norendra,* "God is like a sea of sweetness. Would you not dive deep into the sea? Suppose, my boy, there is a vessel with a wide mouth containing syrup of sugar and you are a fly anxious to drink of it, where would you sit and drink?" Norendra replied that he would like to drink from the edge for if he happened to go into it, he was sure to be drowned and die. Thereupon I said to him, "You forget, my boy, that if you dive deep into the Divine Sea, you need not fear danger or death. Remember that Sachchidananda Sea is the sea of Immortality, with the water of Everlasting Life. Be not afraid, like some foolish people that you may 'run to excess' in your love of God."

FIRST, obtain Bhakti and all other things shall be added unto you. First Bhakti, then Work. Work, apart from Bhakti, is helpless and cannot stand.

*Swami Vivekananda.

FOR Kali-Yuga, Naradiya Bhakti, (communion with God by love, devotion and self-surrender, as practised by the Rishi Narada) is enjoined. There is hardly time for Karma-Yoga, i. e., for doing the various Karma laid upon man by the Shastras.

Don't you see that the well-known decoction of the ten medicinal roots—*dashamula pachana*—is not the remedy for fevers of the present day? The patient runs the risk of being carried off before the medicine has time to take effect. 'Fever mixture' is therefore the order of the day.

PREMA (ecstatic Love of God) is attainable only by a few. They are men with extraordinary powers and entrusted with Divine commission. Being heirs of Divine powers and glories they form a class of their own. To this class belong Avatars of Iswara (incarnations of God) like Chaitanya Deva, and their Bhaktas of the highest order, who are Amsha (parts) of Iswara.

THE two characteristics of Prema are, first, forgetfulness of the external world and, second, forgetfulness of one's own body.

“AND LET SHYAMA DANCE THERE”

RENDERED FROM A BENGALI POEM CONTRIBUTED TO THE UDVODHANA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BEAUTEOUS blossoms ravishing with perfume,
 Swarms of maddened bees buzzing around ;
 The silver moon—a shower of smile,
 Which dwellers of heaven
 Smile upon the homes of earth ;
 The soft south-wind, whose magic touch
 Ope's memory's folds ;
 Rivers and brooks, rippling lakes
 With Bhramaras* wheeling
 Round waving lotuses unnumbered ;
 Foaming cascades—a streaming music—
 To which echo mountain caves.
 Warblers, full of melody,
 Hidden in leaves, love discourse ;
 The rising orb, the painter divine,
 With golden brush but lightly touches
 The canvas earth,
 A wealth of colours floods the ground
 —A museum of hues—
 Waking up a sea of sentiments.

The roll of thunder, the crash of clouds,
 The war of elements covering earth and sky ;
 Darkness vomiting darkness,
 The Pralaya † wind angrily roaring ;
 In bursts, flashes the blood-red, terrific lightning ;
 Monster waves, thundering, foaming,
 Rush to leap mountain peaks ;
 The earth booms furious, reels,
 Sinks down, hurled from its place ;
 Piercing the ground, stream forth flames,
 And mighty ranges blow up into atoms.

A lovely villa, on a lake of blue—
 Festooned with water-lilies ;
 The heart-blood of grapes
 Capped with white foam
 Whispering softly ;
 The melody of the harp floods the ears,

* A beetle somewhat like a bumble-bee, which lives solely on honey.

† The time of cosmic destruction.

Growing desire, by its air, time and harmony rich ;
 What stirring of emotions !
 How many hot sighs of love !
 And tears coursing down !
 The red lips of the youthful fair,
 The two blue eyes—two oceans of feeling ;
 The two hands eager to advance
 —Love's cage—
 In which the heart lies captive.

The martial music bursts,
 The ground shakes under the warriors' tread ;
 The roar of cannon, the rattle of guns,
 Volumes of smoke, the gruesome battle-field,
 The thundering artillery vomiting fire ;
 Shells burst and blow up
 Elephants and horses mounted,
 The earth trembles ;
 A million cavalry charge,
 And capture the enemy's ordnance,
 Piercing through the smoke and the shower of shells
 And the rain of bullets ;
 Forward goes the flag
 —The emblem of victory—
 With blood streaming down the staff,
 Followed by the rifles, drunk with war-spirit,
 Lo! the ensign falls, but the flag advances
 On the shoulder of another ;
 Under his feet swell heaps of the slain,
 But he falters not.

The flesh craves for pleasure,
 The senses for sweet strains of song,
 The mind for peals of laughter,
 The heart pants to reach beyond sorrow ;
 Who cares exchange the soothing moonlight
 For the burning rays of the noontide sun ?
 The wretch with a scorching heart
 —Even he loves the sweet moon ;
 All thirst for joy,
 Breathes there the wretch
 Who hugs sorrow to his bosom ?
 Misery in his cup of happiness,
 Venom in that of nectar,
 Poison in his throat,
 Yet he clings to hope.
 All are scared by the Terrific,
 But none seek Elokeshi* Whose form is Death.
 The frightful sword, reeking with blood,
 They take from Her hand, and put a lute instead !
 Thou Kali, the All-destroyer, Thou alone art True,

* She with untied hair, a name of Kāli.

The pleasant Vanamali† is Thy shadow's shadow.
 Terrible Mother, cut the core,
 Illusion dispel—the dream of happiness,
 The fondness for the flesh.

True, they garland Thee with scalps,
 But shrink back in fright
 And call Thee All-merciful!
 At Thy thunder peal of laughter,
 At Thy nakedness uncovered as space,
 Their hearts cower, but they say
 "It is the demons that the Mother kills"!.
 They pretend they wish to see Thee
 But at Thy sight, they flee.
 Thou art Death,
 Thou distributest plague and disease
 —Vessels of venom filled by Thine own hands—
 To each and all.
 You insane! cheating yourself,
 You turn not your head
 Lest you see the Mother Terrible.
 You court hardship in the hope of happiness,
 You put on the cloak of devotion and worship
 To achieve your selfish ends.
 The blood from the severed head of a kid
 Fills thee with fear—
 Your heart throbs at the sight—
 A coward! Compassionate?*
 A strange state of things! Who will see the truth?
 Break the harp, free thyself
 From the mighty attraction—the wine of love, the charm of sex.
 Forward, with the ocean's cry!
 Drink tears, pledge life,—let the body fall.
 Soldier, awake! Shake off thy dreams,
 Death stands at thy head,
 Does fear become thee?
 A load of misery—this Becoming ‡, know this
 To be thy God!
 His temple, among corpses and funeral pyres;
 Unending battle, His worship, and constant defeat,
 Let that not unnerve thee;
 Shattered be self, hope and name,
 Make thy heart a burning-ground,
 And let Shyama¶ dance there.

† Literally, He, garlanded with wild flowers. The shepherd Krishna in His aspect of youthful sport.

* The idea is that the brave alone can be compassionate, and not the coward.

‡ The wheel of constant birth and death, hence the World.

¶ The Dark One, Kali.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS MISSION TO THE WORLD : WHAT IT CAN TEACH US

II

IT would be a miserable sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life and mission, a cruel injustice to his great personality and character if the article which appeared in the last September number of this journal is left by itself. Though, as I remarked, an exhaustive summary of this great life is impossible within the short space of a monthly magazine, yet it is my bounden duty, when treating of such a subject, to point out at least the most important and instructive as well as the most prominent and extraordinary features of this wonderful character which like unto a flower divine miraculously blossoming on a desert shed grace and sweetness on our hard and harsh worldly existence.

Time rolls on its usual course, robbing us of our blessed childhood and landing us in youth, where we are hopelessly engrossed with vainly pursuing the fleeting shadows of this world, and before we are hardly aware of it we find ourselves going down the vale of tears! The blessed and innocent days of childhood subsequently become the cherished dwellers of the dreamland,—this is the irresistible law of Nature. But, lo! in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Nature's law was set at naught. He was a child for life, a child, pure and simple, in the mask of a grown-up man and those who had seen him in the latter period of his fleshly existence were charmed to see this extra-

ordinary expression of a child in his face, only divinely illumined. Perhaps the two first impressions that every visitor of Sri Ramakrishna carried away with him—be he a devout religious believer, or a sceptical and scoffing worldly soul—were his wonderful childlike nature and extreme simplicity. Like a child he could not take care of his dress, like a child he would sometimes cry out when hungry or thirsty, forgetful of time and place, whether he was in the parlour of a rich man whom he had gone for the first time to see, or in a carriage, and like a child he could not eat much at a time, even when he said he was dying of hunger, but would take just a few mouthfuls. Like a child he could be easily consoled and satisfied. Once a gentleman went to see him when his arm was fractured. Sri Ramakrishna asked him if he had come there to see the temples. The newcomer replied, "No, sir, I have come here to see you." Sri Ramakrishna broke forth into a loud cry, "What will you see Bapu, my elbow-joint is dislocated. Oh, it is paining." The gentleman was charmed with the scene and did not know what to answer. After a while in order to console him he said, "There is no cause of anxiety, sir, it will be all right before long." Immediately Sri Ramakrishna was as delighted as only a child could be and exclaimed "Will it be so, will it be so?" Then he called out to

some one and told him "This Babu has come from Calcutta, he says my hand will be all right." Immediately he threw off all anxiety and became cheerful.

He would not allow anyone to call him Baba (father). "I am the child of my Divine Mother, how can I be anybody's father?" Sometime he was in a state of mind when he could not do a single act, however commonplace, without going to the temple and asking his Mother's permission which he used to get readily, for to him his Mother was more real than those earthly counterparts of Her known to us.

Once he was told by a student fresh from college that his Samadhi was nothing but brain disease, a sort of nervous disorder due to weakness. No sooner had he heard this than he ran out to the temple of the Mother Kali, crying out "Mother, Mother." Returning he said, "Mother tells me there is nothing wrong with my head, but it is a mistake on your part to think so."

He used to say, "When one attains to God he becomes as a boy of five. The boy is not influenced long by any of the *gunas*. Now see, he is not subject to *tamas*. He quarrels and fights with his playmate; the next moment how he loves him, how much he plays with him, encircling his neck by the arm. Again he is not bound by *rajas*. Now he takes out his playthings, makes various rooms and no end of arrangements and resolutions, but immediately after, he leaves everything and runs to his mother. Perchance he has a beautiful cloth on and you see and ask him, 'Whose *dhoti* is this, it is such a nice one!' He says with all the force of egotism 'It is *my* cloth,

my father has given it to me.' If you tell him persuasively, 'Give it to me, there is such a good and nice boy,' he revolts, 'No, no, it is *my* cloth, my father gave it to me, I won't give it to you by any means.' But if you put a doll or a two pice worth of red whistle in his hand, he will gladly part with the cloth worth five rupees. Again he is not rigid as regards the *satva*. Now he loves his playmates so much, as if he cannot live without seeing them for a moment. But if perchance they go away, he gets new companions and all his love centres round them; he then forgets his old playmates absolutely. Again, he has no overweening opinion of his high caste. If his mother tells him that somebody is his brother, he believes in it; and if he is a Brahman's son, and the other a blacksmith's, he will eat rice from the same dish with the other. He has also no idea of uncleanness; he loves to roll as dearly on a soft snow-white sofa as on the dust. Again, he has no sense of shame or privacy—the product of impure impressions in the mind. Sometimes he acts and behaves like a lunatic, crying, dancing and laughing almost simultaneously." Whether in his devotion to God or in his dealings with his kind Sri Ramakrishna's life was full of manifestations of a similar nature.

Sri Ramakrishna was also equally simple. He never did wear the customary *Gerua* cloth of the Sannyasin. Many people came to see the Paramahansa with the idea that they would find an unapproachably grave-looking figure clad in *Gerua*, sitting on a tiger skin, having his hair in knotted locks and *Rudraksha* round his neck, body besmeared with

ashes, and surrounded by *chelas* of the same type. What they found instead, was a simple plain-looking man, with a small white *dhoti* hanging loosely from his waist, sitting on a wooden *charpoy* in a nice room, with pictures of gods and goddesses on the walls! Might be, he was amusing himself with the young men who had come to see him as if he was one of themselves. His *bon-mots* were calling forth peals of laughter from the hearers and he would continue in the same jocose and light vein, never caring what a visitor might think of the spectacle. But, lo, in a moment the scene was transfigured. In course of conversation the subject had suddenly turned into one about God and Soul, and the seemingly frivolous man had completely lost himself into deep Samadhi, sitting motionless, eyes fixed and half-closed, tears of joy rolling down the cheeks, fingers twisted and stiff, breath imperceptible, as if the senses and the mind had left their functions for good, driven back from a plane where they have no passport to enter, where time and creation are not, but Absolute Existence and Bliss beyond unity and duality! The Bhaktas, who had a few moments before been indulging themselves in merriment, were looking speechless on this strange transformation. Some out of the fullness of the heart were crying, some uttering aloud the name of the Lord. Such was he an unusual man, much more so, perhaps, as a Sannyasin, according to the popular idea.

Once a reputed physician of Calcutta was called to attend a patient at Dakshineshvar. On his way back he strolled by the Ganges through the temple garden of Rani Rásmani. Various

kinds of flowers had come out in the cool evening air. The doctor happened to see Sri Ramakrishna walking near by. Taking him to be a gardener of the place the doctor ordered him to pluck a few flowers for him which Sri Ramakrishna instantly obeyed. What was the astonishment of the doctor, when years afterwards he came to examine his throat and cried out in amazement "Woe to me, what had I done, I ordered *him* to pluck flowers for me!"

Such was Sri Ramakrishna's extreme simplicity in dress and manner that it appeared an insurmountable barrier, at least for once, to one of our cultured Brahmo ministers to present him to the followers of his Samaja. Once Mathur Babu, the good son-in-law of Rani Rásmani who built the Dakshineshvar temples, took Sri Ramakrishna to this grand old man of the reform party in Bengal, who was deeply affected by his devotion and Samadhi. He begged Sri Ramakrishna to favour by his presence the anniversary of the Samaja which was coming soon, but took pains to impress upon him the necessity of coming in good dress and being careful about it. The Master replied with a smile that it was beyond his power to keep thinking about his dress if that state—meaning Samadhi—came upon him. The minister, however, satisfied himself by extracting Sri Ramakrishna's promise, while parting, that he would have at least a shirt on. The next day Mathur Babu got intimation from the above gentleman that it was advisable not to bring Sri Ramakrishna, because it would look vulgar and awkward if he should go into Samadhi in such an assembly, which he was sure to

do with his clothes out of orders!

I cannot but mention here an anecdote of Sri Ramakrishna's mother. Mathur Babu, being impressed by his greatness, was the first ardent and devoted follower of Sri Ramakrishna. He saw that Sri Ramakrishna's near relatives were very poor; so he wished to make some provision for them. But he could not get his wish by proposing it to the Master, for the latter sharply rebuked him for the suggestion and told him never to mention it again. Mathur Babu, disappointed, tried Sri Ramakrishna's old mother next, who was then living with Sri Ramakrishna *in the same garden*. He asked her what wants she felt so that he might find some means to remove them. She replied, "My son, I cannot indeed make out any want that I have in this world, I am so happy here. I am passing the latter portion of my days on the banks of the holy Ganges, and taking the *Prasada* of Mother Kali. What more can I wish?" But Mathur Babu would not be so easily turned away. He tried again and again but in vain. He received the same answer every time. At last she said, "Since you are so persistent to offer me something, well, buy me two pice worth of spices." Mathur Babu was surprised with the reply, and exclaimed with joined palms, "If you were not so, why should Sri Ramakrishna be born of you!"

Sri Ramakrishna's tenacity to keep the truth was exemplary. He used to say, "In this *Kali* Yuga if one has *nishtha* or devotion to speaking the truth, one has no need of performing any other *tapas* or austerity. If one tenaciously holds on to it, he easily realises in his own conscious-

ness God who is the essence of Truth. In my *sadhana* stage I told Mother, 'Take this your *Jnana* (knowledge) and this your *Ajnana* (ignorance); take this your *Shuchi* (cleanliness, both internal and external) and this your *Ashuchi* (uncleanliness), give me instead pure Bhakti; take this your good and this your evil, take this your virtue and this your vice, give me instead pure Bhakti. When I offered all these I could not say 'Mother, take this your truth (*satya*) and this your untruth.' I gave away all to Mother but I could not part with truth, for I thought that if it went, with what could I live." Once while he was taking his food and talking of things spiritual as was his wont, he was asked if he would have a second helping because he was given a very small quantity to begin with. Inadvertently he replied "No." When he finished he saw that he had not taken half enough. They asked him to have some more. He said, "When once I have told 'not,' I can't eat any more now." Once he told one of his Bhaktas that he would go for a walk in the garden of a gentleman near by in the evening. That afternoon there came many people from Calcutta to see him. The whole time was spent in talking on religious subjects with them. Late in the evening he remembered his promise. Could he rest without fulfilling it? No. A Bhakta asked "What harm would there be if you did not go?" He replied "Then I shall lose my adherence and devotion for keeping truth other times, which may be on more important matters." He had the gate opened by the porter whom he in return gave some sweetmeat afterwards, and walked a little in that gentleman's garden and then only he was satisfied.

Once a distinguished leader of the Brahma Samaja tried to dissuade from coming to Sri Ramakrishna a youth who was very eager to do so. The gentleman asserted that Sri Ramakrishna's head had gone wrong, that he was a mad man and such often became the lot of those, as in the case of many Western philosophers, who devoted themselves life-long to an abstruse subject too deeply. By and by these words reached Sri Ramakrishna. He invited the gentleman to come and see him. Twice or thrice this preacher sent word that he would come on such and such a date positively, but every time he did not keep it. After a long interval he turned up. Sri Ramakrishna spoke to him in his usual sweet way, "Well, did you say my head is gone

wrong? But you see when I say that I shall go to see some one on a certain day, I never fail to do it. While you an educated man with sound brain, promised to come here twice or thrice but failed. Further you stated too much meditation was the cause of the dérangement of my brain and cited parallel cases of occidental thinkers. But may I ask you if it is possible to lose one's sanity by meditating upon the Consciousness which has made the universe conscious? What wonder with the weight of dead matter on them some Western minds would be unbalanced?" It is needless to add that the preacher bowed and confessed his error.

VIRAJANANDA

ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

CHALDEA AND EGYPT

PROFESSOR Hilprecht in his work "Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century" gives an account of the astonishing discoveries made in the ruins of the oldest cities of Chaldea. The whole groundwork of scientific exploration depends upon the recognition of the fact that the law of stratification is as fundamental a principle in archæology as it is in the sister science of geology, and that thereby the story of an ancient city becomes as legible to scholars as the earth's history is in the record of the rocks. The exploration of the great mound of Nuffar, the ancient Nippur, the sacred city of Mullil the

mountain god, the Older Bel of the Semites of Babylonia, uncovered no fewer than 21 strata of successive towns and cities upon the site, covering a period from Arab times, about A.D. 900, to probably a period of some 5,000 years before the Christian era. Ancient as these remains are, there is absolutely no trace of any pre-historic or neolithic age. Chaldea reveals the astonishing fact that there is no period when writing was not known; no stone age. The inscriptions from the lowest strata, which cannot be later than B.C. 4500, show an advance of culture that it must have taken centuries to develop. Writing had progressed

beyond the pictorial stage, copper and silver were worked, and a silver tariff had replaced a corn standard. It is clear that it is to the east of the Tigris that we must look for the home of the first immigrants, who, already equipped with the first elements of civilization settled on the fertile plains of Chaldea. The remains of the Sargonide and pre-Sargonide ages throw a new light upon the beginnings of Chaldean civilization. The curious primitive shrine, with its temenos altar and huge vases, is perhaps the oldest religious edifice in the world ; and yet we can see in it the germ from which the Babylonian temple developed. The basket-shaped vase, about 2ft. high, with its curious rope strengtheners, is another proof that basketwork was the predecessor of pottery, and this in turn owed its origin to man's imitation of the bird's nest. The curious gateway of about B.C. 4500, with its elevated sidewalks, shows a high civilization. The most important discovery was that of a vast pre-Sargonide necropolis, with partially cremated remains in jars. Round the oldest stage tower were found thousands of urns, containing the remains of partially cremated bodies, together with cups, dishes, and other funeral furniture ; some of these cinerary urns were found in rooms which were evidently funeral chambers. Lastly, there was found an inscription which described the stage tower as "the tomb" of the god. Here, then, in this Chaldean necropolis we have the essential features of the Egyptian necropolis at Abydos, the whole grouped round the tomb of Osiris. Here we have at last an important link in the chain which connects the early civilizations of

the Nile and the Tigro-Euphrates valley. The early dynastic invaders of Egypt who came from Asia brought with them the cereals, the art of working metals, the use of brickwork and of the cylinder seal. They buried their dead in brick houses, and the first royal tombs were stage pyramids like that at Sakkara, and the necropolis was near the tomb of the god. All of these features we find in Chaldea long before the first Egyptian dynasty. The bed of Osiris found by Amelineau, and so often represented in the paintings and sculptures, is the funeral couch figured on the bronze funeral tablet found at Zergul. At last we have a real approximation between the two oldest civilizations, and the connecting link is not far to seek, for we find it in the early connexion between Sinai and Chaldea. Besides the archæological remains over 30,000 inscribed tablets were found, and these should greatly add to our knowledge of Babylonian history.

—*The Times (London)*.

IN MEMORIAM :

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

IF the bodily presence of him who was known to the world as Vivekananda, all that remains to-day is a bowl of ashes. The light that has burned in seclusion during the last five years by our river-side, has gone out now. The great voice that rang out across the nations is hushed in death. Life had come often to this mighty soul as storm and pain. But the end was peace. Silently, at the close of evensong, on a

dark night of Kali, came the benediction of death. The weary and tortured body was laid down gently, and the triumphant spirit was restored to the eternal samadhi.

He passed, when the laurels of his first achievements were yet green. He passed, when new and greater calls were ringing in his ears. Quietly, in the beautiful home of his illness, the intervening years with some few breaks, went by amongst plants and animals, unostentatiously training the disciples who gathered round him, silently ignoring the great fame that had shone upon his name. *Manmaking* was his own stern brief summary of the work that was worth doing. And laboriously, unflaggingly, day after day, he set himself to manmaking, playing the part of Guru, of father, even of school master, by turns. The very afternoon of the day he left us, had he not spent three hours in giving a lesson of Sanskrit grammar? External success and leadership were nothing to such a man. During his years in the West, he made rich and powerful friends, who would gladly have retained him in their midst. But, for him, the Occident, with all its luxuries, had no charms. To him, the garb of a beggar, the lanes of Calcutta, and the disabilities of his own people, were more dear than all the glory of the foreigner, and detaining hands had to loose their hold of one who passed ever onward toward the East.

What was it that the West heard in him, leading so many to hail and cherish his name as that of one of the greatest religious teachers of the world? He made no personal claim. He told no personal story. One whom he knew and

trusted long had never heard that he held any position of distinction amongst his Gurubhais. He made no attempt to popularise with strangers any single form or creed, whether of God or Guru. Rather, through him the mighty torrent of Hinduism poured forth its cooling waters upon the intellectual and spiritual worlds, fresh from its secret sources in Himalayan snows. A witness to the vast religious culture of Indian homes and holy men he could never cease to be. Yet he quoted nothing but the Upanishads. He taught nothing but the Vedanta. And men trembled, for they heard the voice for the first time of the religious teacher who feared not Truth.

Do we not all know the song that tells of Siva as he passes along the roadside?—"Some say He is mad. Some say He is the Devil. Some say—don't you know?—He is the Lord Himself!" Even so India is familiar with the thought that every great personality is the meeting-place and reconciliation of opposing ideals. To his disciples, Vivekananda will ever remain the arch-type of the Sannyasin. Burning renunciation was the chief of all the inspirations that spoke to us through him. "Let me die a true Sannyasin as my Master did," he exclaimed once, passionately, "heedless of money, of women, and of fame! And of these the most insidious is the love of fame!" Yet the self-same destiny that filled him with this burning thirst of intense *vairagya* embodied in him also the ideal householder,—full of the yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching out towards the reorganisation and re-ordering of life. In this respect, indeed,

he belonged to the race of Benedict and Bernard, of Robert de Citcaux and Loyola. It may be said that just as in Francis of Assisi, the yellow robe of the Indian Sannyasin gleams for a moment in the history of the Catholic Church, so in Vivekananda the great saint, abbots of Western monasticism are born anew in the East.

Similarly, he was at once a sublime expression of superconscious religion and one of the greatest patriots ever born. He lived at a moment of national disintegration and he was fearless of the new. He lived when men were abandoning their inheritance, and he was an ardent worshipper of the old. In him the national destiny fulfilled itself,—that a new wave of consciousness should be inaugurated always in the leaders of the Faith. In such a man it may be that we possess the whole Veda of the future. We must remember however that the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda. Religion is living seed, and his sowing is but over. The time of his harvest is not yet. But death actually gives the Patriot to his country. When the master has passed away from the midst of his disciples, when the murmurs of his critics are all hushed at the burning-ghat, then the great voice that spoke of Freedom rings out unchallenged and whole nations answer as one man.

Here was a mind that had had unique opportunities of observing the people of many countries intimately. East and West he had seen and been received by the high and the low alike. His brilliant intellect had never failed to gauge what it saw. "America will solve the problems

of the Shudra, but through what awful turmoil!" he said many times.....His great acumen was yoked to a marvellous humanity. Never had we dreamt of such a gospel of hope for the Negro as that with which he rounded on an American gentleman who spoke of the African races with contempt. And when, in the Southern States he was occasionally taken for "a coloured man", and turned away from some door as such (a mistake that was always atoned for as soon as discovered by the lavish hospitality of the most responsible families of the place), he was never known to deny the imputation. "Would it not have been refusing my brother?" he said simply, when he was asked the reason of this silence. To him each race had its own greatness, and shone in the light of that central quality. There was no Europe without the Turk, no Egypt without the development of the people of the soil. England had grasped the secret of obedience with self-respect. To speak of any patriotism in the same breath with Japan's was sacrilege.

What then was the prophecy that Vivekananda left to his own people? With what national significance has he filled that *gerua* mantle that he dropped behind him in his passing? Is it for us perhaps to lift the yellow rags upon our flag-pole, and carry them forward as our banner? Assuredly. For here was a man who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength. Supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority—are not missionary slanders still ringing in our ears?—Are not some of them to be accepted with fresh accessions of pride?—

he refused to meet any foreigner save as the master. "The Swami's great genius lies in his dignity," said an Englishman who knew him well, "it is nothing short of royal!" He had grasped the great fact that the East must come to the West, not as a sycophant, not as a servant, but as Guru and teacher, and never did he lower the flag of his personal ascendancy. "Let Europeans lead us in Religion!" he would say, with a scorn too deep to be anything but merry. "I have never spoken of revenge," he said once. "I have always spoken of strength. Do we dream of revenging ourselves on this drop of sea-spray? But it is a great thing to be a mosquito!".....

He was himself the exponent of Hinduism, but finding another Indian religionist struggling with the difficulty of presenting his case, he sat down and wrote his speech for him, making a better story for his friend's faith than its own adherent could have done!.....

Such points, however, are only interesting as personal characteristics. Of a deeper importance is the question as to the conviction that spoke through them. What was this? Whither did it tend? His whole life was a search for the common basis of Hinduism. To his sound judgment the idea that two pice postage, cheap travel, and a common language of affairs could create a national unity, was obviously childish and superficial. These things could only be made to serve India's turn if she already possessed a deep organic unity of which they might conveniently become an expression. Was such a unity existent or not? For something like eight years he wandered about the land, learning of

every one he met, gaining a vision as accurate and minute as it was profound and general. It was this great quest that overshadowed him with its certainty when, at the Parliament of Religions, he stood before the West and proved that Hinduism converged upon a single imperative of perfect freedom so completely as to be fully capable of intellectual aggression as any other faith. It never occurred to him that his own people were in any respect less than the equals of any other nation whatsoever. Being well aware that Religion was their national expression, he was also aware that the strength which they might display in that sphere, would be followed before long, by every other conceivable form of strength.

As a profound student of caste,—his conversation teemed with its unexpected particulars and paradoxes!—he found the key to Indian unity in its exclusiveness. Mahomedans were but a single caste of the nation. Christians another, Parsis another, and so on. It was true that of all these (with the partial exception of the last), non-belief in caste was a caste distinction. But then, the same was true of the Brahma Samaj, and other modern sects of Hinduism. Behind all alike stood the great common facts of one soil, one beautiful old routine of ancestral civilisation, and the overwhelming necessities that must inevitably lead at last to common love and common hates.

But he had learnt, not only the hopes and ideals of every sect and group of the Indian people, but their memories also. A child of the Hindu quarter of Calcutta, returned to live by the Ganges-

side, one would have supposed from his enthusiasm that he had been born, now in the Punjab, again in the Himalayas, at a third moment in Rajputana, or elsewhere. The songs of Guru Nanak alternated with those of Meera Bai and Tana Sen on his lips. Stories of Prithvi Rai and Delhi jostled against those of Cheetore and Pratap Singh, Shiva and Uma, Radha and Krishna, Sita-Ram and Buddha. Each mighty drama lived in a marvellous actuality, when he was the player. His whole heart and soul was a burning epic of the country, touched to an overflow of mystic passion by her very name.

Seated in his retreat at Belur, Vivekananda received visits and communications from all quarters. The vast surface might be silent, but deep in the heart of India, the Swami was never forgotten. None could afford, still fewer wished, to ignore him. No hope but was spoken into his ear,—no woe but he knew it, and strove to comfort or to rouse. Thus, as always in the case of a religious leader, the India that he saw, presented a spectacle strangely unlike that visible to any other eye. For he held in his hands the thread of all that was fundamental, organic, vital ; he knew the secret springs of life ; he understood with what word to touch the heart of millions. And he had gathered from all this knowledge a clear and certain hope.

Let others blunder as they might. To him, the country was young, the Indian vernaculars still unformed, flexible, the national energy unexploited. The India of his dreams was in the future. The new phase of consciousness initiated to-day through pain and suffering was

to be but the first step in a long evolution. To him, his country's hope was in herself. Never in the alien. True, his great heart embraced the alien's need, sounding a universal promise to the world. But he never sought for help, or begged assistance. He never leaned on any. What might be done, it was the doer's privilege to do, not the recipient's to accept. He had neither fears nor hopes from without. To reassert that which was India's essential self, and leave the great stream of the national life, strong in a fresh self-confidence and vigour, to find its own way to the ocean, this was the meaning of his Sannyas. For his was pre-eminently the Sannyas of the greater service.....

For he who thinks himself weak *is* weak : he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. And so, for his nation, as for every individual, Vivekananda had but one word—one constantly reiterated message :—

“Awake ! Arise ! Struggle on,
And stop not till the
Goal is reached !”

—SISTER NIVEDITA

in *The Hindu, Madras.*

REVIEWS

SOHAM-TATVA : The teachings of SOHAM SWAMI (in Bengali).

IN Bengali chaste and vigorous, though not always lucid, Soham Swami has given his thoughts to the world. There is promise in him. We are pleased to

welcome the Swami to the work of dissemination of the light that is in him and have nothing but sincere good will and encouragement to offer him.

This is, if we are not mistaken, the first attempt of the Swami to write a book ; and having regard to the abstruseness of the subject it is not a matter of surprise that there should be some defects in it though we believe they will be recompensed for to many by the valuable practical suggestions it contains, among which we may mention the advices regarding the selection of Guru, the duty of the disciple, the annihilation of the mind by thought-control and discrimination.

This notice would be incomplete if we failed to indicate what we have mentioned as defects in the work. There is much obscurity of thought in it, of which the Swami's criticism of the Maya theory may be cited as an instance. He condemns it as involved-dualism (p. 42), and explains the universe as the kalpana (cogitation) of Brahman. He asks rightly "How is kalpana possible in the attributeless Brahman?" But his answer "Kalpana being non-existence does not affect the attributeless Brahman" (p. 48) is far too wide to be satisfactory. How could the existent Brahman and non-existent kalpana be related? How could the non-existent kalpana be responsible for the tangible world? This peculiarly untenable position taken by the Swami only serves to make the mote in the eye of the Mayavadin assume the proportions of a beam in his own.

He contradicts himself in again stating the universe as the kalpana of Jiva (p. 52).

Who are the Shastrakaras (p. 41) according to whom Maya is a different entity from Brahman? In the absence of definite mention, people might regard his taking the trouble of refuting them as fighting against an imaginary foe.

What are his authorities for the statements contained in the opening lines of § 23, pp. 64-5 and in the first nine lines of § 27, p. 66? In both of these he goes against the teachings of the ancient accredited Acharyyas in a way which a little more experience of the different schools of Sadhana and philosophy would probably have deterred him from doing and thus saved him the position.

His observations about Ishwara are inconsistent and border on the flippant. We should have liked to see him, a professed Advaitin that he is, approach the subject with greater caution and reverence. In pp. 6-7, on arguments that are halting at their best, he raises the non-existence of Ishwara. He is not even as real as the phenomena of the universe. He is only fancy-born. Again He is put down as quite a solid entity, as solid even as the universe, nay, if we are right in inferring from bracketing them all together as so many states of the 'I' (p. 79), as good and sound as Brahman Itself!

True, "a buffalo sees his God as a huge buffalo" (p. 25), in other words, as the embodiment of the highest and best conceptions the buffalo is capable of. Does Soham Swami mean to say a man, an Advaitin for the matter of that, can do better? Whatever we do, we cannot transcend our own mind. And having regard to the fact that the

Swami is admittedly alive to the necessity of a Ishwara (p. 29), it would have been happier if he did not commit himself to lightness on the subject.

But we shall limit our criticism here and gladly own there is much that is strong and strengthening in the book; and we doubt not that a greater acquaintance with the classics of the Vedanta and peradventure, contact with its professors will draw out the potentialities of the Swami and remove from his future writings the blemishes we have pointed out.

BUDDHISM. By *A. S. Mudaliar*.
Madras, 1903.*

A pamphlet on Buddhism in five short chapters. The feature of the work is its brevity and in noticing it one requires all the synonyms of that happy word. A general view of Buddhism is given in the first chapter. In the second the more important doctrines of the faith touching substance and quality, Ego, Law of Karma, Reincarnation, sorrow and its cessation, chance, God and Nirvana, are stated. The briefest life of the Lord Buddha forms the subject of the third chapter. The fourth contains "a passing glimpse of Buddhism in its progress" "through centuries." "The path to peace" "thro' Buddhism"—one wished the real thing was as short as this chapter—is described in the fifth. Our author aims at sententious brevity and in many places he approximates it.

* To be had of the author, Gautama Vile, Royapettah, Madras.

NEWS AND NOTES

ALTHOUGH the Suez Canal is only ninety-nine miles long, it reduces the distance from England to India by sea nearly 4,000 miles.

A STEEL-LIKE grass from the volcanic slopes of Osran, Algeria, is so elastic that it can be used instead of springs in the manufacture of furniture.

AN eminent statistician says that the British Empire produces one-third of the world's coal, one-ninth of its copper, one-eighth of its iron, one-fifth of its lead, one-ninth of its silver, and one-half of its gold.

TOMATO plants have recently been grafted on potato plants, giving a crop of tomatoes above ground and of potatoes below. Potatoes grafted on tomatoes have produced flowers and tomatoes and a few tubers.

A FOOTLESS race of men is said to have been discovered in New Guinea. They live in the midst of lakes, moving about on little canoes and possessing a few cabins built on wood piles. Their feet are so undeveloped as to be practically useless for walking.

WHEN the Dayaks of Borneo have to decide between two disputants they give to each the same-sized lump of salt. These lumps are dropped into water, and he whose lump is dissolved first is decided to be in the wrong. Or they put two live shell-fish on a plate—one for each litigant—and squeeze lime-juice over them. The verdict is given according to which man's fish stirs.

LOOK not mournfully into the past—it comes not back again ; wisely improve the present—it is thine ; go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart.—*Longfellow.*

ETHER and chloroform, so useful in sending men to sleep, have the very opposite effect on plants, which are stimulated to the greatest possible activity by these drugs. In Denmark and Germany advantage has been taken of this fact to force flowers in rooms and glass-houses and to make them bloom out of season. The results are said to be marvellous.

BOATS with heavy and slightly magnifying glass bottoms are constantly used by tourists in the Santa Catalina Island, a Californian Paradise, to visit the famous Blue Cavern. The passengers sit round the sides of the boat, and can see, as they pass, or linger over them, the brilliant sea-weeds, glinting fish, and natural wonders of the deep, a veritable fairyland on glow and colour, in transparent water beneath.

NEITHER should you attempt to thrust upon others your own view of Truth until they are ready for it. What is true for *you* to-day may not be true for them until to-morrow, while that which is true for them to-day may not appeal to you until to-morrow ; and indeed you may yourself, in the light of future revelations, come to regard your own views to-day as erroneous. Nevertheless, for *you* and *to-day* they are *true*.—*Mind.*

A BULGARIAN student, named Noviza Petrovitch, has recently quitted Berne

on his long journey across the world on foot. Noviza Petrovitch is twenty-nine years of age and a native of Belgrade. He is also rich. The object of his self-imposed task is to study the customs and manners of the people in the different countries he visits. He walks at the rate of forty-five miles a day and hopes to finish his journey within five years.

THE London Jewish charities raise in the course of a year about £120,000, which is nearly 23s. per head of the Jewish population of London, an average of £12 for each contributor. But this amount is very far from representing the sum-total of charity dispensed by London Jews. It hardly represents much more than is supposed to be given away by a single family—the Rothschilds—whose charities are said to total up in the course of a year to £100,000.

PAPER gloves and stockings are now being manufactured in Europe. As to the manner in which the former are made little is known, but the stockings have been carefully examined by experts, and they are loud in their praise of them. It is claimed that they will last almost as long as ordinary stockings. The reason, they point out, is because the paper of which they are made was during the process of manufacture transformed into a substance closely resembling wool, and was then woven and otherwise treated as ordinary wool.

THERE is a parrakeet at the Zoological Gardens in London that has lived for over half a century without drinking anything. Many naturalists have a theory

that hares never drink, at all events, that water is not a necessity to their existence; the dew on the grass is supposed to be sufficient liquid for their want. There is a certain breed of gazelle that never drinks, and the llams of Patagonia live for years without taking water. In France there is a particular class of cattle near Losere that rarely touches water. This is all the more remarkable because these cattle give milk of a rich quality, from which excellent cheese is made.

WE cannot logically say that God arranges the great events of life, and leaves the details to be filled in by man. Great events are the result of an infinite series of little events, from which it is impossible to isolate them: and both alike are the outcome of a complex chain of natural causes in which no one can show any supernatural interruption. If we fancy otherwise, that is because our ignorance of the facts prevents us from tracing all the links; where we know them all, we invariably find causation to be clear and intelligible. It is only the mind tinged with superstition, which deems the unknown and the supernatural to be convertible terms.—*Charles T. Gorham.*

THE idea that the marvellous phenomena of life sprang from a 'fortuitous grouping of atoms' did not receive the support of Lord Kelvin in his recent speech at University College. His lordship said: 'While "fortuitous concurrence of atoms" is not an inappropriate description of the formation of a crystal, it is utterly absurd in respect to the

coming into existence, or the growth, or the continuation of the molecular combinations presented in the bodies of living things. Here scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, "No, no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces." Every action of human free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science.'

IF the calculations of astronomers are correct, the year 1903 will be unusually fertile in comets. About September the comet discovered by Faye in 1643 should appear for the ninth time, and that it will appear is practically certain, since it is a model of regularity and has never failed to show itself when due. In December the Vinecke comet, which has already been observed seven times, will probably be seen and during the same month astronomers will look for the Brooks comet, which hitherto has only been observed twice. In January 1904 the Arrest comet will arrive at its perihelion, and a glimpse may be obtained of it as early as November or December 1903.

During this year the Perrine, Giacobini and Spitaler comets will also appear. Of these the Giacobini comet is of unusual interest, since it was only added to the list last January, the fortunate discoverer being M. Giacobini, astronomer at the observatory of Marseilles.