

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

THE JNANI AND HIS BODILY ILLNESS

SRI Ramakrishna (to Keshab): you are ill; well, there is a deep meaning in that. There has passed through your body many a deep devotional feeling that seeks the Lord: your illness bears witness to those feelings. Of the havoc done by them to the system one can form no idea at the time they arise.

A ship goes past over the Ganges but nobody attends to it. A little while after, big waves are found beating upon the bank and sometimes washing away portions of it.

An elephant entering into a hut soon makes it totter to its foundations and at last pulls it down. The Love for the Lord is, in its greatness, like the elephant. It very often pulls down the frail house of clay, called the human body.

When a house is set on fire, some of the things inside are first burnt up; then the house is taken up as a whole by the fire and burnt. Much the same thing comes to pass when God is realised. The fire of God-vision

first burns up the various passions—lust, anger, greed, &c,—then the false ego which says 'I am the doer,'—and lastly, the whole house, viz., the body.

Hriday used to say, "Never have I witnessed such Love of God—and such illness too joined to it." I was at the time taken very severely ill. It then seemed as if myriads of ants had been eating into my brain. But the words that I used to speak were all concerning God.

Everything is ordered by Her will.

The gardener knows well how to deal with the common rose and those of a superior type. As for the latter, he clears the soil round about the roots to give them the benefit of the night dew. The dew adds freshness and strength to the plants. It may be that the same is the case with you. The Divine Gardener knows how to deal with you. He digs round about you to the very roots, so that the dew of His Inspiration may fall on you, and you shall be purer, stronger than before, and that your work may even be greater and more abiding than ever.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

So far from remaining unchanged, a religion that is alive must be always growing. Only the dead can be petrified in rigid forms. The living must be constantly assimilating new forces, new materials, responding in fresh ways to unprecedented stimuli, tending in some degree to remake the very environment that is re-moulding itself.

Even of the *Sanathan Dharma* this is true. Hinduism would not be eternal, were it not constantly growing and spreading, and taking in new areas of experience. Precisely because it has this power of self-addition and re-adaptation, in greater degree than any other religion that the world has ever seen, we believe it to be the one immortal faith, the great tree-stem, bearing on itself, as outlying branches, all the more fugitive creeds of the world.

It is necessary, however, to know in what direction to look for changes, if we would be intelligent about recognising these when they come. Like Roman Catholicism, Hinduism has gone on for the last twelve hundred years, developing more and more into a religion of segregation, the culture of the soul, a secret between the worshipper and the priest, or the soul and God. Undoubtedly it has been true, in this respect, to the ultimate message of all religions. The emancipation of the soul—'spiritual individualism,' as the Swami Vivekananda called it—is the main business of organised creeds. A few social benedictions are a mere side-issue.

But religion has also a communistic side. It lifts the soul to God, but it also binds together man and man. If we are the children

of the Mother, we must for that very reason be brothers of one another. A specialisation in one direction requires to be corrected by a compensating development in the other. More souls will now be emancipated, by attention paid to the democratic or communistic side of worship.

For this, there will have to be common prayer. And common prayer itself must be organised. That is to say, there must be services in which responses are required from several worshippers at once, and these responses should be in the vernacular. When slokas are recited by a great number all together, it will be found desirable to divide these into two sections, and let them repeat the texts in antiphon.

The religious uses of the procession must be restored. We cannot doubt, when we study Buddhism,—which was, of course, only a version of an older Hinduism,—that the procession, with banners, shanks, drums, incense, and holy water, was a great feature in old Indian worship. A few of its most beautiful uses still remain, as when seven women carry torches round the bridegroom, or the sons encircle the dead father with fire.

There ought now to be an anxious scrutinising of these old ritual observances, and of the whole subject of ritual in general. Many of our own most lovely rites are still practised in Europe, though lost to us! We must restore the greater meanings of our Hindu ceremonies. Worship is in future to have a place for the people, as well as for the priest. There is to be co-operation and self-organisation, even in the praising of God!

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THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM

BEING PAGES FROM THE LIFE OF THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BY HIS DISCIPLE, NIVEDITA.

XXXIII.

THE PASSING OF THE SWAMI.

LATE in the year 1900, the Swami broke off from the party of friends with whom he was travelling in Egypt, and went home suddenly, to India. "He seemed so tired!" says one of those who were with him at this time, "As he looked upon the Pyramids and the Sphinx, and the rest of the great sights in the neighbourhood of Cairo, it was in truth like one who knew himself to be turning the last pages in the book of experience! Historic monuments no longer had the power to move him deeply."

He was cut to the quick, on the other hand, to hear the people of the country referred to constantly as "natives," and to find himself associated, in his visit, rather with the foreigner than with them. In this respect, indeed, it would seem that he had enjoyed his glimpse of Constantinople vastly more than Egypt, for towards the end of his life he was never tired of talking about a certain old Turk who kept an eating-house there, and had insisted on giving entertainment without price to the party of strangers, one of whom came from India. So true it was, that to the Oriental, untouched by modern secularity, all travellers were pilgrims, and all pilgrims guests.

In the winter that followed, he paid a visit to Dacca, in East Bengal, and took a large party up the Brahmaputra, to make certain pilgrimages in Assam. How rapidly his health was failing at this time, only those immediately around him knew. None of us who were away, had any suspicion. He

spent the summer of 1901 at Belur, 'hoping to hear again the sound of the rains, as they fell in his boyhood!' And when the winter again set in, he was so ill as to be confined to bed.

Yet he made one more journey, lasting through January and February 1902, when he went, first to Bodh Gaya and next to Benares. It was a fit end to all his wanderings. He arrived at Bodh Gaya on the morning of his last birthday, and nothing could have exceeded the courtesy and hospitality of the Mohant. Here, as afterwards at Benares, the confidence and affection of the orthodox world were brought to him in such measure and freedom that he himself stood amazed at the extent of his empire in men's hearts. Bodh Gaya, as it was now the last, had also been the first, of the holy places he had set out to visit. And it had been in Benares, some few years later, that he had said farewell to one, with the words "Till that day when I fall on society like a thunderbolt, I shall visit this place no more!"

Many of his disciples from distant parts of the world gathered round the Swami on his return to Calcutta. Ill as he looked, there was none, probably, who suspected how near the end had come. Yet visits were paid, and farewells exchanged, that it had needed voyages round half the earth to make. Strangely enough, in his first conversation after coming home from Benares, his theme was the necessity of withdrawing himself for a time, in order to leave those that were about him a free hand.

"How often," he said, "does a man ruin

his disciples, by remaining always with them! When men are once trained, it is essential that their leader leave them, for without this freedom, they cannot develop themselves!"

It was as the result of the last of those foreign contacts that had continued without intermission throughout his mature life, that he realised suddenly the value to religion of high ideals of faithfulness in marriage. To the monk, striving above all things to be true to his own vows, not only in word and deed, but even in thought itself, the ideals of social life are apt to appear as so much waste material. Suddenly the Swami saw that a people to whose laity chastity was not precious could never hope to produce a faithful priesthood, or a great monastic order. Only where the inviolability of marriage was fully recognised, could the path that lay outside marriage be truthfully held. By the sacredness of the social ideal, was the holiness of the super-social rendered possible.

Humanly speaking, this was surely the crowning realisation. The whole of society was necessary, with its effort and its attainment, to create the possibility of the life of *Sannyas*. The faithful householder was as essential to the *Sanatan Dharma* as the faithful monk. The inviolability of marriage and the inviolability of the monastic vow, were obverse and reverse of a single medal. Without noble citizenship, there could be no mighty apostolate. Without the secular, no sacerdotal, without temporal, no spiritual. Thus all was one, yet no detail might be wilfully neglected, for through each atom shone the whole. It was in fact his own old message in a new form. Integrity of character,—as he, and his Master before him, had insisted—was a finer offering than religious ecstasy. Without strength to hold, there was no achievement in surrender,

For the sake of the work that constantly opened before him, the Swami made a great effort, in the spring of 1902, to recover his health, and even undertook a course of treatment under which, throughout April, May, and June, he was not allowed to swallow a drop of cold water. How far this benefitted him physically, one does not know, but he was overjoyed to find the unflawed strength of his own will, in going through the ordeal.

When June closed, however, he knew well enough that the end was near. "I am making ready for death," he said to one who was with him, on the Wednesday before he died. "A great *tapasya* has come upon me, and I am making ready for death."

And we who did not dream that he would leave us, till at least some three or four years had passed, knew nevertheless that the words were true. News of the world met but a far-away rejoinder from him at this time. Even a word of anxiety as to the scarcity of the rains, seemed almost to pass him by as in a dream. It was useless to ask him now for an opinion on the questions of the day. "You may be right," he said quietly, "but I cannot enter any more into these matters. I am going down into death."

Once in Kashmir, after an attack of illness, I had seen him lift a couple of pebbles, saying, "Whenever death approaches me, all weakness vanishes. I have neither fear, nor doubt, nor thought of the external. I simply busy myself making ready to die. I am as hard as *that*"—and the stones struck one another in his hand—"for I *have* touched the feet of God!"

Personal revelation was so rare with him, that these words could never be forgotten. On returning from the Cave of Amarnath, moreover, in that same summer of 1898, he had laughingly said that he had there received the grace of Amarnath—not to die till he

himself should will to do so. Now this, seeming to promise that death would never take him by surprise, had corresponded so well with the prophecy of Sri Ramakrishna—that when he should know who and what he was, he would refuse to remain a moment longer in the body—that one had banished from one's mind all anxiety on this score, and even his own grave and significant words at the present time did not suffice to revive it.

Did one not remember, moreover, the story of the great *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* of his youth, and how, when it was over, his Master had said, "This is your mango. Look! I lock it in my box. You shall taste it once more, when your work is finished!"

"—and we may wait for that," said the monk who told me the tale. "We shall know when the time is near. For he will tell us that he has tasted his mango."

How strange it seems now, looking back on that time, to realise in how many ways the expected hint was given, only to fall on ears that did not understand!

It would seem, indeed, that in the withdrawal of all weakness, there was one exception. That which had ever been dearer to him than life, kept still its power to move him. It was on the last Sunday before the end that he said to one of his disciples "You know the WORK is always my weak point! When I think *that* might come to an end, I am all undone!"

On Wednesday of the same week, the day being *Ekadasi*, and himself keeping the fast in all strictness, he insisted on serving the morning meal to the same disciple. Each dish as it was offered—boiled seeds of the jack-fruit, boiled potatoes, plain rice, and ice-cold milk—formed the subject of playful chat; and finally, to end the meal, he himself poured the water over the hands, and dried them with a towel.

"It is I who should do these things for you, Swamiji! Not you for me!" was the protest naturally offered. But his answer was startling in its solemnity—"Jesus washed the feet of His disciples!"

Something checked the answer "But that was the *last* time!" as it rose to the lips, and the words remained unuttered. This was well. For here also, the last time had come.

There was nothing sad or grave about the Swami, during these days. In the midst of anxiety about over-fatiguing him, in spite of conversation deliberately kept as light as possible, touching only upon the animals that surrounded him, his gardens, experiments, books and absent friends, over and beyond all this, one was conscious the while of a luminous presence, of which his bodily form seemed only as a focus and symbol. Never had one felt so strongly as now, before him, that one stood on the threshold of an infinite light. Yet none was prepared, least of all on that last happy Friday, July the 4th, on which he appeared so much stronger and better than he had been for years, to see the end so soon.

He had spent hours of that day in formal meditation. Then he had given a long Sanskrit lesson. Finally he had taken a walk from the monastery gates to the distant highroad.

On his return from this walk, the bell was ringing for evensong, and he went to his own room, and sat down, facing towards the Ganges, to meditate. It was the last time. The moment was come that had been foretold by his Master from the beginning. Half an hour went by, and then, on the wings of that meditation, his spirit soared whence there could be no return, and the body was left like a folded vesture, on the earth.

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DIVINE INCARNATIONS.—V.

BY SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

WHEN Hiranyáksha was killed by Vishnu, the elder brother, Hiranyakashipu, was so enraged that he began to make *tapas* so that he might fight Vishnu and revenge the death of his younger brother. He performed so much penance for years and years together that Brahmá had to come down to him and say: "I am very much pleased with you. Tell me what do you want? Ask of me a boon." Then Hiranyakashipu replied: "I want to be immortal." But Brahmá said, "Take some other boon. It is contrary to the laws of the universe that any created being shall be immortal. Ask something else." Hiranyakashipu then said: "Grant Lord, that I shall not die in the night and I shall not die in the day; no living being created by Thee, will have the power to kill me. I shall die by no weapon whatever. I shall die neither inside, nor outside of a house. I shall die neither on the surface of the earth, nor above it. I shall not die either by living, or by lifeless beings. Make me as powerful and great and unequalled as Thyself. Let me have all the powers of a perfected Yogi." Brahmá answered, "All right, so let it be!" Hiranyakashipu, after this, thought that he had made himself immortal because he had named all the possible conditions under which a man might die. He was therefore very happy with his boon, and coming back to his palace, he began to harass the whole universe and at last conquered it.

Once during his penance, his army had been routed by the gods in his absence and his wife was captured by them. She was at that time pregnant, but they caught hold of her hair and were dragging her to heaven when

Narada chanced to pass by them and seeing this, he said: "Do not maltreat this innocent lady. A great devotee is soon to be born of her. Let me take her to my Ashrama and care for her." She was a very pious lady and Narada took her to his Ashrama in the forest. Now she often used to ask Narada about the duties of a woman and as she served him with great devotion, Narada was very glad to answer her questions, so much so that he would talk on for hours and hours together until sometimes the lady, growing weary in body, would fall asleep. But although she would sleep, the unborn child in her womb did not sleep, and it listened attentively to all Narada was saying. Now Hiranyakashipu, coming back successful from his Tapas, heard that his wife was safe in Narada's Ashrama and he was very happy; so he came and took her home, thanking Narada for his kindness. In course of time a child was born to her, and he was called Prahláda.

Hiranyakashipu after conquering the whole universe, tried in every way to tease and anger Vishnu in order to provoke the Lord to fight with him. He would torment all those who were devoted to Vishnu, especially the Bráhmanas and even the cows, for cows and Bráhmanas are especially loved by the Lord Vishnu.

When Prahlada was five years old he was sent to the teacher's house to study, and the teacher was particularly enjoined never to let his pupil hear the name of Vishnu. But Prahlada was a very remarkable boy, for when he was in his mother's womb he had heard all the stories told by Narada who as a matter of fact did not care to relate them so

much for the mother as for this unborn child, and it was really he whom he was teaching. Now, when the *guru* began to teach Prahlada the alphabet, at the repetition of the first letter (क), he began to weep because it was the initial letter of Krishna's name. The *guru*, seeing this, asked, "What is the matter with you, my child?" Then Prahlada said: "I weep because this first letter reminds me of my Master's name." "Who is your master?" the teacher again asked. "Krishna, the Lord," the boy replied. The *guru* reproved him with saying, "You foolish boy, do you not know that he is the enemy of your family? Never take his name. Remember that you have no master but your father who is the ruler of the worlds." When, however, the *guru* went about his other tasks, Prahlada used to gather all the boys together and talk to them of the Lord and teach them to sing the name of God, and then they would dance and spend all their time in thus worshipping the Supreme Lord.

One day Hiranyakashipu wanted to see how his son was progressing, so he called the boy to him and asked: "Well, my son, what have you learned?" And Prahlada said: "I have learned, father, that there is only one thing in life to do, that is to glorify the name of the Lord Vishnu." At once Hiranyakashipu grew very angry and sent for the teacher and asked: "What have you been teaching my child?" "It is not my fault," the *guru* replied, "we have done our best, but he insists on repeating the name of our enemy and on teaching the other boys to do the same." Prahlada said: "Yes, father, that is true. It is not his fault. I have done those acts myself by disobeying him." Though Hiranyakashipu was very angry, yet as a father he did not wish to hurt his son, so he merely rebuked him, saying: "I will forgive you this time. Go back with your *guru* and do not do those things again. Remember, I am the only lord of the universe."

After a time he again called Prahlada to him and put the same question. The boy made the same answer. This so much exasperated Hiranyakashipu, that he forgot himself to be his father, and sprang upon him with his drawn sword, with which he dealt a terrible blow upon him. But the mighty sword got broken to pieces even at the touch of the soft body of his son! Thus baffled in his attempt to kill him, the king ordered Prahlada to be trampled down by an elephant. But this brutal act also proved fruitless, for although many elephants were made to trample over his prostrate body he could not be killed. Then he was given the most terrible poison to drink, but it proved nectar to him! He was then thrown down from a high precipice upon the craggy beach, but that proved a flower-bed to him!! Then he was thrown inside a big cauldron full of boiling oil, and that heartless operation also proved to be a soothing bath to him!!! When in this way Hiranyakashipu found that nothing would kill his child, he got more exasperated and questioned him threateningly, "Where is thy God? I have punished thee so much, hast thou not still changed thy opinion? Where is thy God?" Prahlada replied: "My God is everywhere." "You foolish lad, you talk pure trash and nonsense. I do not see your God as you assert. Here is a pillar. Is it not one?" "Yes, father, it is a pillar, but in it there is God also." "Then show me your God," and he struck the pillar a powerful blow. It fell and out of it came a Man-lion, half-man and half-lion, so terrible in form that all the followers of Hiranyakashipu fell down senseless at the very sight of Him. But to Prahlada He did not appear terrible, because he saw in Him his loving God and Father.

Now, Hiranyakashipu was so dauntless and intrepid that he did not get at all frightened at the sight of the terrible Man-lion. He unsheathed his sword and at once

sprang upon Him, and a terrible fight ensued between them. It raged for sometime furiously till the Lord had the better of him. He dealt such a terrible blow at Hiranyakashipu that he fell down senseless. He then lifting him up, placed him upon His thighs and tore him to pieces with His long nails and roared so loudly after destroying him that the whole universe shook with fear. Even the gods trembled to approach Him. But Prahlada, the little boy, was peaceful and calm. All the while, when the fight was going on, he was glorifying his Lord, and thus remained rapt in the bliss of divine communion.

When Hiranyakashipu was killed, none of the gods dared to approach the terrible Man-lion-form of the Lord. Then Brahmâ asked

Prahlada to go near and pacify Him. The pure and spotless boy-devotee at once obeyed, and as an innocent and sweet child approaches his most loving father with great joy, so Prahlada went near the Lord. At the sight of His sweet devotee, all anger left the Lord, and His heart glowed with the infinite love of a mother. He then taking the boy up in His arms kissed him fondly; Prahlada enjoyed the embrace infinitely. Then all the gods came forward, and each and every one of them began to glorify Him with deep devotion. Then the face of the Lord assumed a benign form, and He looked smiling around Him shedding peace and bliss everywhere.

(To be continued).

SELECTIONS FROM SANSKRIT

THE WREATH OF GEMS

[For the last month's Sanskrit selection, we offered our readers the memorable thirty-two verses of Sri Sankaracharya, known as "Maniratnamâlâ," a free translation of which is given below. It is in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and his disciple. The latter is putting forth one query after another, on receiving from the former the answer of the preceding one. This dialogue forms in itself, a collection of fine ethical and metaphysical distinctions and definitions of no ordinary merit, expressed though in the garb of poetry, and has always been valued highly by those who want sincerely to go beyond the trammels of ever recurring births and deaths (Samsâra).—Ed.]

TRANSLATION

1. Speak, O gracious master (spiritual guide), what can be my refuge,—now as I am about to sink in this endless ocean of Samsâra (i. e., the recurrence of birth and death)? The lotus-feet of the Lord of the universe is the great ship to take thee across this ocean, let that be thy refuge!

2. Who are in bondage and who really free? Those who are attached to sense-objects, it is they who are in bondage, and he alone is free whose mind has renounced the world. What is like a dreadful hell?—One's own body. And what is Paradise? The annihilation of all desire for enjoyment.

3. What destroys the chain of births and deaths? The Knowledge of the Self, begotten of the Vedas. What then the cause of freedom from all bondages whatever? That very Knowledge of the Self that has been extolled in all the Scriptures. What is the sure gate to hell? To look upon

women with a lustful eye. And what leads one as sure to Heaven? Non-injury to all.

4. Who sleeps in peace? He who has attained to the direct perception of his oneness with the Deity in Samadhi or perfect concentration, and attempts to remain in that condition as long as he can. And who is awake? He indeed who can discriminate the Real from the unreal and loves the Real. Who are enemies of one? One's own organs of sense-perception. Who then are one's real friends? Those very organs when subdued and conquered.

5. Who really is the poorest of the poor? He whose desires for sense-enjoyment is keen. Who has then really been favoured by fortune? He indeed who is all contentment. Who again is dead while alive? He who is destitute of all diligence and energy. What the nectar that soothes the mortal? Renunciation of all desires whatever.

6. What is the cord that keeps all in bondage? The idea of 'me and mine. And what maddens one like wine? The idea of possessing a woman. Who indeed is really blind? One who is carried away by lust and passion. What indeed is death? The extinction of one's good name.

7. Who is a Guru? He who imparts beneficial teachings. Who is, again, a disciple? He who is devoted to his Guru. What is the disease that protracts the most? The condition of being born and born again is that, Oh aspirant after Truth! And what the remedy for the same? It is the discrimination of what is true and what untrue.

8. What adorns one more than all ornaments? A good conduct. What is the holiest of all holy places (pilgrimages)? A pure heart. What are the objects to be shunned in this world? Wealth and lust. What then is that which is to be cherished most (in the heart)? What you have learnt from the Vedas and from your spiritual guide.

9. What are the causes to lead to the realisation of Brahman? The company of the righteous, self-restraint, discrimination and contentment—these alone are conducive to that end. Who are the really virtuous? Those who are void of all attachment to everything unreal, have gone beyond all delusion that the unreal spreads on one's mind, and remain ever steadfast to the Supreme Truth.

10. What is the fever that ails all that live? Anxiety. Who is a dunce? Who is devoid of the power of discrimination. What pious acts shall I perform? Keep a devoted love for Shiva and Vishnu in your heart. What is indeed life? It is to live and remain free from all wrong-doings.

11. What indeed is true learning? It is that by learning which one sees the way to realise the Brahman or the Truth Absolute. What then is wisdom? It is indeed that which brings about emancipation from all bondages whatever. What is the greatest of all gains? The realisation of the Atman. Who has conquered the whole world? He who has conquered his own mind.

12. Who is the greatest of all heroes? He who has never been troubled by the shafts of Cupid. Who indeed can be called the wise and of great patience and poise? He indeed in whom the eyes of women have never raised the idea of lust.

13. What is the most venomous of the venoms? All the sense-objects. Who indeed is ever miserable? He whose heart is ever attached to the pleasures of the senses. Whose life is blessed? His, who does good to others. Who deserves respect of all? He whose mind is firmly fixed in the Truth.

14. What must a wise man never do in any circumstance, and what again ought he to do with all his might? A wise man must restrain himself from having inordinate attachment and from committing all sins; he should study the scriptures and perform virtuous deeds. What is the root of the world? Avidyâ—ignorance.

15. Who is the greatest of all the sages? He who has never been beguiled by the hateful feeling of lustful attraction towards the female sex. What is the great fetter for a man? Wife. What is the best of all the vows? The desire to become 'poor in spirit.'

16. What is most difficult to be understood by all? The mind of woman and her ways of conduct. What is hard for all persons to relinquish? Ambition or the desire for things which can only be attained with great difficulty. Who is equal to a beast? He who is devoid of knowledge.

17. With whom one ought not to live or keep company? With the ignorant, the sinful, the mean and those who cannot bear the sight of good of others. What should be resorted to immediately by those who want to be free from all bondages (Moksha)? Good company, non-attachment, and devotion to the lord of the universe.

18. What is the root of all humiliation? To go a-begging for one's own self-gratification. And what commands respect of all? Never to have the spirit of a beggar for anything whatever. Who can truly be called 'born'? He, who will not be born again. And who again can truly be called 'dead'? He, who will meet with death no more.

19. Who can really be called deaf and dumb? He is dumb who cannot speak out the right things in right moments; and he is deaf indeed, who never hears a good advice. Who can seldom be relied upon? Woman.

20. What is the Ultimate Truth? The fact of the existence of That, Which is all-good and One without a second. What is the noblest thing in this world? A pure spirit. What is that work, by whose performance one is never brought to grief? The worship of Him who is the enemy of lust (Shiva), and Him who killed Kamsa (Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu).

21. Which is the most formidable of all the enemies of man? It is the passion to possess, attended, as it always is, with anger, untruthfulness, and avarice and thirst for more. What is never appeased by gratification? The aforesaid passion indeed. What is the seed of all misery? The thought of 'I' and 'mine.'

22. What is the embellishment of face? Literacy. What is truth? That which is beneficial to all beings. What kind of happiness should be shunned? Sex-indulgence. What is the best thing to be given to all, at all times? Freedom from fear of all kinds.

23. At whose destruction comes the final liberation? Mind's. In which state there is no more fear? In the state of perfect emancipation on realisation. What is the keenest of all the darts (that pricks a man)? One's own ignorance. Who are the objects of respect? Those from whom we learn anything and the elders.

24. What should be done by the thoughtful mind in all haste at the approach of the great destroyer, Death? Then, with all mind and speech one must meditate on the lotus-feet of Murari (Vishnu), the great saviour from its hand.

25. What like thieves (takes away the valuable possessions of one)? Evil propensities. Who graces an assembly? The learned. What brings happiness and solace in life? Learning. What augments by imparting to others? Learning.

26. On what quarters ought we always to look with distrust and fear? On public opinion and the wild mazes of this forest-like world. Who is a friend and who can truly be called to be one's parents? He who helps one in times of adversity, is the friend, and those who help to maintain one are the parents.

27. What knowing, nought is left to be known any more? The Lord of the universe, who is all good, all peace and whose very Self is Absolute Bliss and Knowledge. By realising which the whole world stands realised? By the realisation of the absolute Brahman Who is the Self of all.

28. What are rarely to be found in this world? A spiritual guide, who has himself seen the Lord—the company of real sage—a mind really struggling to attain to the perfect realisation of the absolute and infinite Being, the Brahman—the renunciation of everything for the Lord—and the realisation of the truth 'I am that Absolute Bliss.' What every one finds very hard to vanquish? The sex idea and the attraction of the other sex.

29. Who is the most beastly among the beasts? One who does not practise what is right and virtuous (Dharma), and also he who is devoid of Self-Knowledge, even after a thorough study of the Scriptures. What is the poison that seems sweet like nectar to taste? The wife of a man (for she stands on his way to attain to the realisation of the Lord with her so-called love). Who, though in friend's guise, are really one's foe? One's own offsprings and relations.

30. What are fleeting like lightnings? Wealth, youth and life. When becomes a gift most plausible? When it is made to a worthy recipient. Even with the last breath, what must not be done and what should be done? Dirty deeds, and the worship of Shiva (the infinitely blissful Being).

31. What work is pleasing to Him (Shiva) and therefore ought always to be performed in this world? The worship of Vishnu (the enemy of the demon Mura.) What is to be contemplated day and night? The non-reality of the world and the unity of the one's self with the Lord Who is Bliss Absolute.

32. If memorised or heard with attention, this dialogue, known as "The wreath of gems," is sure to bring joy to the wise, for it proclaims directly the glories of Shiva and Vishnu.

SOLITUDE.

Laugh, and the world laughs with you ;
Weep, and you weep alone ;
For the sad old earth
Must borrow its mirth,
It has troubles enough of its own.

Sing, and the hills will answer ;
Sigh, and it is lost on the air ;
For the echoes bound
To a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you ;
Grieve, and they turn and go ;
They want full measure
Of all your pleasure,
But they do not want your woe.

Be glad, and your friends are many ;
Be sad, and you lose them all ;
There are none to decline
Your nectared wine,
But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded ;
Fast, and the world goes by ;
Succeed and give,
And it helps you live,
But it cannot help you die.

There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a long and lordly train ;
But one by one
We must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX,

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE SWAMI TRIGUNATITA

We take the following interview from *The Evening Post* of San Francisco, reluctantly leaving out, for want of space, the highly appreciative remarks with reference to the Swamis, the Hindu Temple, and the work that is being carried on at the Vedanta Society of San Francisco:—

Oriental greetings.

Upon arriving at the study of Swami Trigunatita, the scholarly priest of the morning services greeted his visitor in the Oriental manner at the door of the Hindu Temple.

“Our cordiality is spiritual, and our greeting is the same. I see in you a child of the same God Whose mind created both. I open my mind, my soul to you. So I bow reverently, recognising in you our spiritual relationship,” explained the Swami after the preliminaries of the meeting had been stated.

Vedantic ideas explained.

“So you would like to know what Vedantism is?” said the Swami, his eyes oddly bright, his manner all cordiality and benignity.

“It is neither Scripture nor a code of laws. It is not a religion or a system of philosophy, for it is the philosophy of all philosophies, the science of all sciences. It is not made by man, or prophet, or even by God. It is not made at all. It is ever-existent, embracing the sun, moon, the stars and all the universe. The Vedanta establishes the place of man to the world permanently. Mankind has ever desired to ascertain his place in relation to the universe. The true Vedantist recognises God in everything and he can sacrifice his life with the greatest pleasure, if need be, for the purpose of realising the truth. Self is the only substance existing, and when we recognise this, we easily arise above envy, jealousy, hate, greed and the like.

“We do not teach crude, visionary ideas. The true followers of the Vedas, once understanding its immutable laws, improve their mental, moral, social, political and even physical conditions.”

Commercial standards criticised.

“Whenever we cast our eyes over this rich and prosperous country, we find people from the highest to the lowest ranks of life groaning under the burden of overwork, unrest, worry, anxiety and ceaseless hurry. The poorer classes hold the ideal of the middle, the latter of the millionaire, the millionaire of the multi-millionaire, and so on, and the latter; even though possessed of far more wealth than he could possibly utilise even if his life were prolonged much beyond the ordinary allotment, reaches out to possess the wealth of other nations. No one is content. Men are so beset by the canker of constant demand for more and more, and more, that the thought of this eats up their vitality, destroys their mental and physical equilibrium, and they lose sight of their spirituality entirely.

“Owing to this constant unrest the Western people fail to understand themselves, because they possess not the first idea or the philosophy of life. This is one of the evils of modern civilisation, the inevitable result of a system built upon ideals such as the Western world adheres to.

“True civilisation, which is based upon moral and spiritual standards, reforms the inner nature of man, impelling him to obey the spiritual and moral laws of a higher plane of existence than the commercial one. Surely a civilisation which encourages deceit, avaricious ambition, jealousy, the utmost lawlessness in competition, will not lead a nation to enduring greatness, nor bring happiness to its people.

Follow simple life.

“Occidental civilisation, as one sees it flowering in this country and in Europe, is complex beyond all degree. Needs are so increased that mankind slaves to death to provide these artificial necessities. In this country the vast majority of people live to eat and to drink, to wear costly garments according to changes of fashion and these lead to insatiable desire to live the life of the senses. They never learn that the more we gratify our needs,

the more they increase. The problem of food and clothing is most formidable to those of ample means, and so on, until with many it is the sum and aim of life.

“Missionaries from this country and Europe go to India to set an example of their complex life, glorifying it as a part of religion, forgetting possibly that Jesus was an Oriental, and therefore, like all spiritual teachers among the Orientals, he lived a simple life, always trusting in the Heavenly Father, who cares even for the sparrows of the air. One finds many true disciples of Christ among the so-called heathens of India, and very few among the so-called Christians of the Occident.

“However, a simple life does not necessarily imply that one must forsake the world, go to live in the woods or in caves, but it does mean absolute obedience to the laws that immutably govern our mental, moral, spiritual and physical being. When we violate these laws it leads to confused complexity of living, which produces disease, vice, ignorance, slavery to passion and the worship of Mammon.

“Again, simplicity does not mean only outward plainness of garment, meagre diet, a modest dwelling. It means self-control, which makes one master over nature. Simplicity is the result of the highest education, the most vigilant moral and spiritual training of the soul. Simplicity of soul inspires us to love and feel for others as we love and feel for ourselves. This, as you may see for yourself, is far from the Occidental ideal. Still, a Vedantist is an individualist, believing thoroughly in the development of the individual, but the ideal of development differs.

Jesus the ideal man.

“Jesus Christ is regarded as the ideal of mankind. His philosophy is admitted to be without flaw,” said the Swami, and continued with the statement that Christ of the Christian religion was but one of the several teachers of Vedanta philosophy, who from time to time dwell among mankind, such beings being regarded as perfected souls sent to deliver mankind from its ignorance.

Broadly charitable, Swami Trigunatita declared that according to this ancient faith of his fathers, it included all religions. The sincere following of any faith, with a strong and ardent purpose to

advance morally, mentally and spiritually, is the main and primary principle of Vedantism, they believing that all such plans, even though differing in manner, help society and improve the world in the long run. They teach that nothing should bind one, should submerge the personality of the individual, who must stand free, unhampered, if progress is to be attained.

“Since the first man began thinking about his surroundings, mankind has been trying to solve the ills of life. The heaven of the future, beyond the skies, is not very satisfactory to mature minds unless they may have a glimpse of it in this life. This problem of realising heaven in this life here and now is all-important to Vedanta philosophy.

“We have evolved from the animal plane to the human plane. The next step is to evolve into the divine plane. All of the universe, this world of ours included, is but the playground of God.

“In those whom we love we see reflected all the virtues and beauties of mind and heart, which all, even those of least illumination, admire and desire. As we see God in them, so must our love develop and grow until we see this beauty, this godliness, in others, until our vision embraces all humanity and all creation. Gradually this world, which is mistakenly called ‘a vale of tears,’ and a place of irredeemable misery, will be transformed into an abode of true happiness. This is the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and when Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is within you,’ it must have been this which He meant.”

REVELATION

When all the choric peal shall end,

That through the fanes hath rung,
When the long lauds no more ascend
From man's adoring tongue;

When whelmed are altar, priest and creed;
When all the faiths have passed;
Perhaps, from darkening incense freed,
God may emerge at last.

Mr. William Watson.

VEDIC CONCEPTION OF GOD AND SOUL

*(A lecture delivered by Swami Nirmalananda in
Bangalore.)*

TIME rolls on and with it everything else on the plane of the phenomenal—the stars, the moon, the sun, huge systems of the universe and this planet of ours wherein we live and move and have our being. From the minutest atoms to the largest of heavenly bodies, wherever we turn our eyes, we find that this law of nature governs uniformly. Nothing is stable. Everything is continuously changing, taking different name and form at each step and completing the circuit of phenomenal existence, thus reverting again to its origin. Such is the hard and fast law of nature. None escapes it. Looking at this stern law, man stops for a while in awe and asks: Is there no way out of it? Does it hold good only in regard to what is but a combination of force and matter, or also in regard to things immaterial? Is the soul of man also subject to birth, growth and dissolution, like his body, or is it something which undergoes no change?

Infinitesimally small is this sphere of ours when compared to the entire universe and still more so is our individual entity; yet man shrinks not from asking such questions but pushes hard to reach beyond his limitations, to get a peep behind the veil of this stupendous phenomenon. Ever since man reached the domain of thought and reason, problems of a similar nature have troubled his mind, and he struggled tremendously to attain their solution. So long as man shall continue to think, so long these problems will remain ever new for his individual solution. The yearning will never die out, for it is innate, in his very being. Many centuries back, in the Occident, these questions were manipulated in a sporadic way by some solitary individuals of great calibre; but since the dawn of the scientific era, when the barriers of theological dogmatism were gradually levelled down, the rationalistic enquiry made its way through the vast arena of unfettered thought, and the search after the reality behind was taken up more

generally and with less restraint. From the very misty times of tradition, where the light of history cannot penetrate, India has devoted the best part of her energy to the quest of this truth. Nothing was as near and dear to her heart as this. To her it was of vital consequence, for all her happiness and peace, both here and hereafter, depended solely upon this. It was the very backbone of her existence. And as a result of this arduous and unbroken search after the reality, there is handed down to us a wonderful evolution of rationalistic religion, a perfect concordance of the head and heart, by our sage forefathers of Vedic times.

Religion and philosophy have always been two distinctly different elements in Europe; hence, as a natural consequence, animosity and conflict sprang up between the two. They remained alienated from and hostile to each other from the very beginning. No ray of the light of reason and philosophy was ever let into the domain of religion. Religion was and still is, in the Occident, a mere question of belief. Thus it was inevitable that it should become a dead mass of doctrines and dogmas, deeply buried in the mire of superstition. Hardly can it cope with the present age of enlightenment in every branch of knowledge; what solace then, can such religion bring to the lettered mind? Philosophy, on the other hand, was equally uncompromising. It refused any help whatever from religion. Independently it tried to force a way, with this limited human intellect, to the realm of Truth. The head never agreed to join with the heart. So all its efforts were almost fruitless and the result was either rank materialism or agnosticism. By its lack of practicality it failed to bring peace to the mind, nor could it promise any future happiness in a life hereafter. It became a mere intellectual pabulum, a resort for the speculatively-inclined.

In India, religion and philosophy were never at variance. They were harmonious, co-operative, and inseparable factors through the course of their evolution. Both of them originated from the intense yearning of the Rishis of old for the unravelling of Truth from behind phenomena. So great was the yearning of these men that, severing all ties, they repaired into mountain caves and forests and there sank for years into deep contem-

plation, to solve the problem. Years rolled on; generation after generation passed away in the struggle, but this enthusiasm did never cool down. One generation built upon the experience of the past ones. Rich and poor alike joined in the effort. From the king to the man placed in the lowest valley of life, each contributed his share to the original stock of spiritual knowledge. Thus, in the course of many thousand years, a hoard of revelations was amassed, and this vast accrescence of divine wisdom is called the Vedas, the ancient scriptures of the Hindus.

Let us now see how the immortal and divine nature of the soul dawned upon the mind of the Vedic Rishis along with the evolution of the conception of God in His various aspects. The Samhitas are the oldest records of the Vedas. They comprise a vast collection of hymns addressed to different deities, such as Indra, Varuna, Mitra and a host of others. These gods are the rulers of the different celestial realms or Swargas. One striking fact we cannot but notice when reading these various hymns,—that each of these gods in turn is credited, by his respective votaries, with the supreme qualities of the Lord of the Universe and was looked upon as the God of all gods. Are we to understand, then, that the *Mantradrashtâs* of the Samhita period inculcated the worship of and believed in the plurality of gods? Does it follow that the religion of the Samhitas teaches nothing but sheer polytheism? No, the Vedic Rishis did not believe in polytheism. A close study of the hymn portions will convince the reader that therein are scattered, here and there, flashes of highest truth, establishing one underlying unity behind these various divine manifestations. India had outgrown fetishism, animism and polytheism, and had arrived at the oneness of existence long before the time when Europe and other parts of the world were being rocked in the cradle of crude belief in a primitive theology. But how came the Rishis to realise this underlying unity out of which all variety proceeds? Their introspection, their metaphysical methods of search after the reality, and above all, their entrance into that higher plane of super-consciousness called Samadhi, made them directly perceive that One Being who

is the Lord of the Universe, and that all these various gods are but different manifestations of that One. In confirmation of this statement, let me quote from the very oldest part of the Rig Veda, a Mantram which boldly declares the unity of existence and which disperses the gloom of doubtful suppositions which have gathered around this apparent polytheism of the Vedic Rishis. The Mantram runs thus:

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो
गरुत्मान् ।

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वान-
नमाहुः ॥

(Rig Veda. I. 164. 46).

“They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni and the effulgent and nobly-winged Garutmán. That which exists is One, sages call it variously, Agni, Yama and Mátarishván.”

Then again, in the Yajur Veda Aranyaka we read—एकस्सन्बहुधा विचारः । शतं शुक्राणि
यत्रैकं भवन्ति ॥ (Yajur Aranyaka. III. 2. 4.)
“He, though one, is regarded as many. All the bright ones become one in Him.”

Many a Mantram bearing similar import can be cited, but I fear our time will not permit us to do so. One thing we should bear in mind, that is, not to swallow any and everything, indiscriminately, that the Western critics tell us with regard to our Vedas. First let us study them closely, then use discretion to form our own opinion of them. These critics can hardly be expected to have a clear comprehension of the true spirit and meaning of the Vedas, for their very ideas and thoughts are so alien to the ways of Indian thought. Therefore it is no wonder that most of them stumble into blunder in ascribing polytheism and nature-worship to the Vedic Rishis. I shall here allude to one incident, regarding the difficulty of the Western mind to comprehend the principles of Indian monotheism, not to mention the pure Advaitism of Vedanta. When the late illustrious Swami Vivekananda was delivering a series of discourses on the religion of the Vedas in London, there was among the audience a very learned and respected lady who attended regularly all

the lectures and appeared to be very much interested in all that the Swami said. After the completion of the course of lectures, she came one day for an interview with the swami, and said: "All that you have told us with regard to Hindu religion is simply grand and beautiful, but one thing I did not quite understand and about that I should like to ask you. How is it that you have not mentioned anything about the Devil in your lectures. Is there no Devil in your religion? I cannot conceive how can there be a religion without Devil." Thus it seems that to the Western mind the Devil is an absolutely necessary factor in constituting a religion, without which no religion worthy the name can possibly exist.

(To be continued).

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL

BELUR MATH

THE Seventy-seventh birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Belur Math on the 13th March, the public festival coming on the 20th. This year the *tithi-puja* day fortunately turned out to be a Sunday, which allowed many students and public officers who are devoted to the cause, an opportunity to attend it. This made the day a festival in itself. During the day, special *puja* ceremonies were gone through by the Swamis Sivananda and Suddhananda, in accordance with strict Shâstric rites. The Bhaktas who numbered about a thousand, enjoyed themselves with devotional songs sung by connoisseurs in music, and were sumptuously served with various kinds of *Prasadam*.

To those who look up to Sri Ramakrishna as one of the Highest Manifestations of Divine Power on earth, the day was of the utmost consequence. To meditate on His wonderful life on the very day when the Earth first claimed Him as her own, and to see His holy memory cherished and adored by hundreds of well educated disciples and followers was a precious boon to most of those assembled. The presence of our revered President Sri Swami Brahmanandaji was a further incentive to the general joyousness.

The Râma-nâma-Sankirtanam which he introduced on the occasion, charmed many feeling hearts with its recital; it is a skilful presentation, in a nutshell, of the whole of Sri Ramachandra's hallowed career in simple Sanskrit metres, which can be easily sung in a chorus with the accompaniment of musical instruments. Among the musicians present was a gentleman who showed the very acme of his art in playing on the guitar.

At dead of night, amid universal hush, the worship of Mother Kâli was performed and the *Homa* with its oblations poured into the sacred fire with appropriate Mantrams, terminated the holy rites of the occasion.

The celebration on the 20th surpassed all previous ones in grandeur and enthusiasm, owing mainly to the much larger number of people attending it this year. The steamer and boat service between Belur and Calcutta was constant. The gathering must have been not less than fifty thousand in all. This increase in number shows that Bengal is coming to know more and more of Sri Ramakrishna and take greater interest in his life and teachings. The numberless diversity of creed among the musical parties assembled, was a fit tribute to the memory of One who was the embodied synthesis of all religions. The spacious kitchen-shed had been all astir since the day and the night before, with preparations for Prasadam in huge quantities. Excellent arrangements were made, this year, by a sturdy band of Bhaktas numbering 400, for its distribution which turned out to be a grand success. They were in charge of almost all the camps where prasada &c., were freely distributed to the visitors. The various Sankirtana parties sang with great religious fervour, going round from place to place, and several concert parties showed admirable skill in playing music; while the noted Kali-Kirtan party of Andul, and the Râma-nâma-Sankirtanam organised by the members of the Math were much appreciated. All these, one after another, were the centres of animated gatherings. Sri Ramakrishna's life-size portrait, beneath a large durbar-tent looked exceedingly imposing, being beautifully decorated with flowers and foliage &c., by the Calcutta florist Sj. Sital Chandra Bose. Besides, the painting itself was so life-like and inspiring, that a glance at it "untwists all the chains that tie the hidden soul of

harmony." Throughout the day the spacious lawn was literally packed with people who walked to and fro to enjoy all the different entertainments, and have their share of the *Prasadam* and sherbet. One noticeable feature was the *Tarjâ*, a metrical competition, often impromptu, between two parties, on Pauranic subjects, and in strict conformity to decorum. The serene faces of the Swamis shone welcome to the assembled people, and as the sun went down, the festivities came to a close amidst shouts of 'Jai Guru Maharaj ki jai' and 'Jai Swamiji Maharaj ki jai.' A large number of beggars were also fed.

One is perplexed to account for this huge concourse, and the voluntary assemblage of so many amateur musical and kirtan parties to celebrate the day. The answer is to be sought for in the irresistible attraction and inspiring influence which realised souls exert upon all. However private might have been their lives, their thoughts are irresistible and never fail to spread. Consciously or unconsciously people are drawn to them. Impressed with the spiritual significance of the occasion, sons of the highest classes, casting aside their pride, openly joined with their brothers of the humble rank to share in glorifying the one who brought back, for once, the old India of Realisations, to the sceptic gaze of the modern world. And Sri Ramakrishna was Love personified. It is no wonder, then, that His birthday, wherever celebrated, will be the occasion of religious upheaval, bearing his message of Love and Renunciation.

AT THE RAMAKRISHNA HOME, MADRAS.

THE anniversary was celebrated with usual marked enthusiasm and rejoicing. In the morning there was a very grand Bhajana in which Swami Baba Premananda Bharati took the leading part. Many joined in the Bhajana. From morning nine till evening four about 7,000 poor people of all classes were fed. A number of boys belonging to respectable and well-to-do Brahman families took part in the service. In the afternoon, Mr. M. K. Tatachariar, B. A., performed a Haiikatha on "Sarasetu bandhanam."

At 5-30 p. m. a lecture was delivered by the Hon'ble Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar on "The all-embracing love of Sri Ramakrishna"

with the Hon'ble Mr. P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar in the chair. He spoke to the following effect :—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.—Sri Krishna says "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, and exaltation of unrighteousness then I myself come forth." I truly believe that it is in fulfilment of this promise of the Lord and in conformity with the laws of Nature that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was born amongst us. To-day I have undertaken to say a few words upon the example of his life to us and our neglect of the lessons which he taught. I desire to draw your attention principally to his attitude towards what are known as the depressed classes of this land and how by precept and by example he has left us a legacy whose true value we have not been able to appreciate. His love was all-embracing. It knew no limitations of caste and colour. The lower a man's status in the social scale, the greater was Sri Ramakrishna's love for him. It is said of Sri Ramakrishna that he swept the houses of Chandalas even. He worshipped at every shrine. He bowed to every good man, no matter to whatever class or creed or nationality he belonged. In this as in other matters he was a true representative of the old teachers. In the good old days nobility of soul and greatness of heart won allegiance and not pedigree or the colour of skin. In our Pauranic legends no name stands in higher estimation than that of Prahlad, yet he was not a Brahman, but an Asura. Again, if the followers of Ramanuja have studied the life of their great teacher they will find that he drew his disciples from all classes. There are Alvars and Acharyas among the Vaishnavites in whom there was not a drop of Aryan blood. Coming to modern days, the great Nanda belonging to the lowest rank in our social scale, has been deified, and there is not a soul which does not thrill with joy at the recounting of the trials and sorrows of this truly great man and at his ultimate triumph.

So it is sheer folly, nay highly irreligious, to treat the lower classes in the manner we do now. I do not think that we are quite conscious even of the tremendous loss we are incurring by such treatment. Slowly a wide gulf of estrangement has sprung up between the upper and the lower classes,—the

former is not getting any sympathy and co-operation from the latter, nor the latter from the former. The consequence is simply disastrous to both. But the gulf can be bridged yet. One good word, one kind look, a little less superciliousness and a little more consideration for the intellectual elevation of the Panchama will make him as devoted to the Brahman as of old. The unity will be restored again.

Ours is the most tolerant of all religions. We count all kinds of beliefs as part of Hinduism; Atheists and Agnostics are Hindus, and Lord Sri Krishna also has said that no caste can claim Him and no clan. It is the pure in heart and the selfless that are dear and near to him. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna whom we all so lovingly venerate, has taught us a lesson in this respect. Neglecting this grand precept of our religion, by constant cruel treatment, it was we who brought the masses to their present state of degradation, and now the time has come when we must lead them on to higher planes of life and to nobler pursuits again. In ages gone by, the Brahman was kind and considerate towards his social inferiors. Times have changed and to-day he is bound to take steps to raise up these men, so that their allegiance and co-operation may not be lost to the nation. We must imitate the example of the Paramahansa Deva, who was a true Brahman and a true patriot. If you love India, if you are anxious that your social status should not be synonymous with unwise intolerance towards the lower classes, you must take Sri Ramakrishna's lessons to heart and work up to his ideal of toleration and humanity. Let us watch, study and follow the life of his revered pupil Sri Ramakrishnananda; here we will find the epitome of all that is good and practicable and of all that you and I can imitate and adopt. It is easier to be and to become by closely following in the footsteps of a living saint than by abstract generalisation. Sri Ramakrishnananda has lived in our midst for nearly 12 years. Full of true love to suffering humanity, without any thought of self, living only for others, simple, devoted, untouched by the desire for worldly things, unaffected by worldly pleasures he has been to us all a source of strength, of true happiness and the fountain of love and wisdom. Yet how few

of us recognise in him the saint that he is! Again I say to those who asked me to say a few words on the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, "Look at the life of this disciple before you and tread in his footsteps; you will learn everything that the great teacher had to impart."

We hear much of reforms in this age of ours, but we must remember that in India no permanent change for the benefit of mankind, no abiding reformation in the manners and customs of the people have been and will be inaugurated, unless the reformer renounces self and works as the humble servant of all his fellowmen and as a participator in their joys and sorrows. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was such a reformer. He was a true Sannyasin. He lived to bless others and not to enrich himself. He realised his oneness with the Supreme Lord in order that his fellowmen may be taught to follow in the same wake.

Unlike other religions, Hinduism sets forth different ideals for different stages of human development. From birth to boyhood, from youth to old age, there are different object-lessons leading to the same goal. The child-man in his nursery is taught stories which satisfy him that a Divinity watches over him and that if he is good and wise, he will attain to prosperity and greatness by the grace of God. If he is a little advanced by object-lessons in temples where good and holy men congregate, he is led to think of the Form Divine. When full development is attained, the Upanishads satisfy his soul. It is in this way that variety leading to unity, is taught by our all-comprehensive religion. In conformity with this that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna worshipped everywhere, in every temple, because he found God everywhere. He wanted people to know that the great God was as well in the image in the temple as in 'Heaven.' This lesson has been our heritage for ages past. Have we profited by it? Hindus and Mahomedans can live together in amity, in brotherhood and in peace, if they take this lesson to heart. Smarthas and Vaishnavites fight among themselves. The lives of our great men have been lived in vain in the face of these everlasting disputes. Blasphemy in the name of God is what we hear every day. Hatred, oppression and persecution are indulged in, as if they please

the Almighty. If there is any lesson to be learnt most of all, from the life of the Paramahansa Deva who worshipped Sri Krishna, Mahadev, Allah and Jesus Christ, all alike, it is the utter futility of these wranglings and cavillings, nay, that we commit sin by indulging in them.

Gentlemen, I want you to study this great life. I request you to ponder over his teachings. If you try sincerely to fashion your life after that glowing ideal, you will find, as the history of the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa shows us, that you are a benefactor to mankind, and that you have helped the world to move on in the path of peace and progress, and in the end you have attained to that eternal peace which is the *summum bonum* of human life. Om! Santi! Santi! Santi! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Then the Hon'ble Mr. P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, the chairman, spoke a few words expatiating on the grand life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and his spirit of complete self-renunciation and perfect asceticism. He said:—

“In every nation there are back-slidings and times of transition when owing to various circumstances, particular aspects of a religion are not sufficiently remembered by the people. The doctrine of universal love found practical acceptance among the Hindus for many a century, but has been overloaded in latter days by incrustations of prejudices or sentiments which have a tendency to divide them among themselves. To make this self-examination, to show the shortcomings, and to raise them to that ancient ideals, that Sri Ramakrishna came and preached. This great lesson to be learnt from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, this catholicity of love which we should not merely admire but translate into practice.”

Baba Premananda Bharati followed next. He referred to the noble qualities of Sri Ramakrishnananda, and illustrated the all-embracing love of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa by particular instances. In conclusion he said Brahmans might or might not eat from the hands of Chandalas but all the same they must love them heart and soul and elevate them; and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an example of that love.

The proceedings of the day terminated with Aratrikam and distribution of Prasada.

AT BANGALORE.

The seventy-seventh birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with much enthusiasm at the Ramakrishna Math, Basavangudi, Bangalore City, on Sunday, the 13th March. A big shamiana was put up in front of the Math building on its extensive grounds for the accomodation of the large gathering. A number of Bhajana parties walked in procession to the Math in the morning carrying a likeness of Guru Maharaj in a nicely decorated Vimán and singing Kirtanams in praise of the Lord. Then in the noon Prasadam was served to all present. Next followed Harikatha lasting from 2 o'clock to nearly 4-30 p. m. The subject was the life of Sri Ramakrishna himself. At about 6 p. m. Mr. B. Ramiah of the General and Revenue Secretariate, read in Kanada a beautiful summary of the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Mr. M. G. Varadachar of the local bar then spoke in his usual impressive way on his teachings. Mr. H. K. Ramiah concluded by addressing the audience in Kanada on the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. After distribution of Prasada the assembly dispersed in the evening.

AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, DACCA.

All the members and devotees assembled on the *Jannatithi* day at the verandah adjoining to Mohini Babu's house, and performed worship, *Aratrikam* and *Homa*. The whole day was spent in religious devotion. The Bhaktas were all entertained with Prasad. The public celebration took place on March 20th, and there were singing of devotional songs and Sankirtanas holding for some hours. The proceedings were brought to a close with distribution of Prasada among those who were present there.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL.

The birthday anniversary passed off with great rejoicing. The day was observed with special *Puja*, *Bhoga* and *Aratrikam*. Many Sadhus and poor people were fed during the day.

THE RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA, BENARES.

The anniversary was celebrated with great rejoicing and devotional services. The programme of the day included reading from "Sri Ramakrishna Lilâ Prasanga," Bhajanam and Sankirtanam and feeding of the poor. Prasada was distributed among the devotees present on the occasion.

AT OTHER CENTRES OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

We have also received reports from various other centres of the Ramakrishna Mission, at which the birthday anniversary was observed with much devotion and enthusiasm.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES

(CULLED AND CONDENSED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

HER Excellency Lady Minto paid a private visit to the Belur Math, on the 9th March, and was pleased with everything she saw there.

WHEN a fire took place at the Holy Trinity Cemetery, Brooklyn, it was discovered that most of the supposed marble monuments were only wood coated over with composition.

THE relics of Gautama Buddha, which were discovered last year, near Peshawar, have been entrusted to the Buddhist community of Burma, and have been taken to Mandalay to be enshrined there by a special deputation of the Buddhists.

THE French War Office has acquired a motor-car which is capable of being instantly changed from a land to a water machine. It has a speed of 40 kilometers on land, and 12 kilometers while in the water. It can carry four persons, and is actuated by a 14-horse-power motor.

KING Gustave of Sweden tried to find out the facts concerning the recent great strike in his country, but without complete success. Now he disguises himself and works among artisans of various sorts, unknown, that he may have knowl-

edge of actual conditions at first-hand. Recently he carried sacks of coal as a stevedore for several hours.

A CYPRESS tree, to be seen near Oaxaca, in Mexico, is believed to be the largest in circumference of any in existence. It measures 104 feet round the trunk at a height of 130 feet, and twenty-seven people holding hands, can just encircle it. The tree has stood for many centuries, and part of its trunk has commenced to decay from sheer old age. A writer of a statistical turn of mind has estimated that the tree and its branches must weigh something like 1,300 tons.

THREE-QUARTERS of the earth's surface is covered by water. The body of a man is about four-fifths water. Even the teeth, the hardest and densest tissue of the body, contain about four per cent. of water. The bones contain from eleven to fourteen per cent. of water; the muscles are three-quarters water. The blood varies from four-fifths to seven-eighths water. Water makes up ninety-seven per cent. of the gastric juice, ninety-eight per cent. of the perspiration and ninety-nine per cent. of the saliva.

THE youngest aviator, "Telegraph" says, is, no doubt, little Marcel Hanriot, the son of the motor and aeroplane constructor, M. Hanriot. A few days ago the lad astonished everybody at Rheims by executing a splendid flight around the aerodrome on his father's aeroplane, with which he had been practising for some time. He scarcely looks twelve years of age, but has wonderfully steady nerves, and curiously enough, he has been able to handle the machine better than his father, who built it, and who in his day was an excellent chauffeur.

At a public meeting at the Royal United Service Institution, in connection with the annual meeting of the Incorporated Institute of Hygeian, Sir George Kekewich remarked, "I don't think, when I was at Eton, we ever dreamt of any ventilation of the class rooms. I don't think the masters or the boys ever thought about the air they breathed, and as for cleanliness, well, there were no baths. We were allowed, in the winter, a foot tub on alternate Saturdays. Of course in

the summer time we had our washies, because we had the Thames, and used it freely.

A VEDANTA Centre has been established in Washington under the charge of Swami Paramananda. The first public meeting with a lecture by the Swami was held on Jan. 2, and public lectures and classes are regularly held. The following is the list of lectures for Jan.—March, 1910:—

January 16th.—Karma Yoga. 23rd.—Reincarnation. 30th.—Yoga and Concentration. February 6th.—The Message of the East. 13th.—Duty and Service. 20th.—Character Building. 27th.—Light of Wisdom. March 6th.—God as Divine Mother. 13th.—The Power of Faith. 20th.—God Vision.

PROFESSOR Fowler, an English scientist recently gave the following opinion of the dangers involved by the approach of Halley's comet.

"I do not believe we shall feel any ill-effects from Halley's comet when it passes near us May next. We have recently been able to discover the material of the comet's tail.

"It is, I am convinced, quite harmless, and many of us would be glad to take the risk of passing through the tail for the sake of experience. Comet's tails are so fine that it has been said that a hundred-million-mile long tail, properly packed, could be put in a hat-box.

A SPECIAL course of lectures on "Comparative religions" was delivered by Swami Abhedananda. On Sunday afternoons at the Vedanta Society Headquarters, New York.

Subjects:—November 7th.—The Universal Religion. 14th.—The Great Saviours of the World. 21st.—Krishna and His Teachings. 28th.—Buddha and His Teachings.

December 5th.—Zoroaster and His Teachings. 12th.—Laotze and His Teachings. 19th.—Mahomet and His Teachings. 26th.—Christ and His Teachings.

A second course of lectures by Swami Abhedananda was arranged to be given at Duryea's Hall, New York, on Sundays at 3 p. m., beginning January 16th.

AT the instance of Maharaja Sir Chandra Samser Jang, of Nepal, Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Shastri has recently collected some seven

thousand Sanskrit manuscripts which the Maharaja has presented to the Bodleian Library, Oxford. This is a most wonderful collection, comprising all the different branches of Sanskrit literature; and Lord Curzon as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, has sanctioned £1,000 as the sum necessary for the purpose of binding and the up-keep of these manuscripts. It is, however, interesting to note that since the death of Raja Rajendra Lal Mitter in 1891, Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad has, besides the works referred to above, collected over eight thousand Sanskrit manuscripts for the Government of India which are deposited with the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

YOUNG Master Sidis, Harvard's boy prodigy, recently lectured before the Harvard Mathematical Club, on the Fourth Dimension. Alphabetical blocks, calculating machines, and even time-tables, it appears, were the boy's "playings," almost from birth. Young Sidis not only attended a Harvard course, but he also occupied his learned leisure in writing a simplified Greek grammar. Now he is in bed in a state bordering on nervous collapse. Professor Daniel Comstock, an instructor in mathematical physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, declared lately that Sidis, if his health were maintained, would be a great astronomical mathematician, evolving new theories and inventing new ways of calculating astronomical phenomena. "Sidis," said Mr. Comstock, "doesn't just cram his head with facts, but reasons. Karl Friedrich Gauss is the only example in the history of 'prodigies' whom Sidis resembles."

A WARNING

WE are informed that a Sadhu, calling himself Swami Nirbhayananda Vivekananda, and representing himself as a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, went to the town of Limbdi, Kathiawad, about last October. He is aged forty-five; his original home is in Muttra, U. P. He pretended to know something of native medicines and drugs, as well as dentist's work, and under such ostentatious means cheated many persons. He is addicted to opium, ganja-smoking, and drinking. He committed two thefts, for which he has been undergoing rigorous imprisonment for eight months, in the Limbdi jail, since last November.

It is needless to say that the man has no connection with the Ramakrishna Mission.