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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

DISCOURSES ON JNANA YOGA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The greatest teacher of Vedanta Philosophy was Sankaracharya. By solid reasoning he extracted from the Vedas the truths of Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of Jnâna, that is taught in his commentaries. He unified all the conflicting descriptions of Brahman and showed that there is only One Infinite Reality. He showed, too, that as man can only travel slowly on the upward road, all the varied presentations are needed to suit his varying capacity. We find something akin to this in the teachings of Jesus, which he evidently adapted to the different abilities among his hearers. First he taught them of a Father in heaven to pray to Him. Next he rose a step higher and told them, “I am the vine, you are the branches,” and lastly he gave them the highest truth: “I and my Father are one,” and “The kingdom of heaven is within you.” Sankara taught that three things were the great gifts of God: 1. Human body, 2. Thirst after God, 3. A teacher who can show us the light.

When these three great gifts are ours, we may know that our redemption is at hand. Only knowledge can free and save us, but with knowledge must go virtue.

The essence of Vedanta is that there is but *One* Being and that every soul is that Being *in full*, not a part of that Being. *All* the sun is reflected in each dew drop. Appearing in time, space and causality, this Being is man, as we know him, but behind all appearance is the One Reality. Unselfishness is the denial of the lower or apparent self. We have to free ourselves from this miserable dream, that we are these bodies. We must *know* the truth, “I am He.” We are not drops to fall into the ocean and be lost; each one is the *whole*, infinite ocean, and will know it when released from the fetters of illusion. Infinity cannot be divided, the “One without a second” can have no second, *all is that One*. This knowledge will come to all, but we should struggle to attain it now, because until we have it, we cannot really give man-

kind the best help. The *jivan-mukta* (living free or one who knows) alone is able to give *real* love, *real* charity, *real* truth, and it is truth alone that makes us free. Desire makes slaves of us, it is an insatiable tyrant and gives its victims no rest ; but the *jivan-mukta* has conquered all desire by rising to the knowledge that he is the *One* and there is nothing left to wish for.

The mind brings before us all our delusions, body, sex, creed, caste, bondage; so we have to tell the truth to the mind incessantly, until it is made to realize it. Our real nature is all bliss, and all the pleasure we know is but a reflection of that,—it is the atom we get from touching our real nature. *That* is beyond both pleasure and pain, it is the “witness” of the universe, the unchanging reader before whom turn the leaves of the book of life.

Through practice comes Yoga, through Yoga comes knowledge, through knowledge love, and through love bliss.

“Me and mine” is a superstition ; we have lived in it so long that it is well nigh impossible to shake it off. Still we *must* get rid of it, if we would rise to the highest. We must be bright and cheerful,—long faces do not make religion. Religion should be the most joyful thing in the world, because it is the best. Asceticism cannot make us holy. Why should a man who loves God and who is pure, be sorrowful? He should be like a happy child, be *truly* a child of God. The essential thing in religion is making the heart pure; the kingdom of heaven is within us, but only the pure in heart can see the King. While we think the world, it is only the world for us, but let us come to it with the feeling that the world is God and we shall *have* God. This should be our thought towards every one and everything—parents, children, husbands, wives, friends and enemies. Think how it would change the whole universe for us, if we could consciously fill it with God! See nothing but God! All

sorrow, all struggle, all pain would be for ever lost to us!

Jnâna is “creedlessness,” but that does not mean that it despises creeds. It only means that a stage above and beyond creeds has been gained. The Jnâni seeks not to destroy, but to help all. As all rivers roll their waters into the sea and become one, so all creeds should lead to Jnâna and become one.

The reality of everything depends upon Brahman and only as we really grasp this truth, have we any reality. When we cease to see any differences, then we *know* that “I and the Father are One.”

Jnâna is taught very clearly by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gitâ*. This great poem is held to be the crown jewel of all Indian literature. It is a kind of commentary on the Vedas. It shows us that our battle for spirituality must be fought out in this life, so we must not flee from it, but rather compel it to give us all that it holds. As the *Gitâ* typifies this struggle for higher things, it is highly poetical to lay the scene in a battlefield. Krishna in the guise of a charioteer to Arjuna, leader of one of the opposing armies, urges him not to be sorrowful, not to fear death, since he knows he is immortal, that nothing which changes can be in the *real* nature of man. Through chapter after chapter, Krishna teaches the higher truths of philosophy and religion to Arjuna. It is these teachings which make this poem so wonderful; practically the whole of the Vedanta Philosophy is included in them. The Vedas teach that the soul is infinite and in no way affected by the death of the body. The soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is in some body. Death (so-called) is but a change of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere, and when we can get out of the narrow centre of body, we shall realize God—our true Self.

The present is only a line of demarcation between past and future, so we cannot rationally say that we care only

for the present, as it has no existence apart from the past and the future. It is all one complete whole, the idea of time being merely a condition, imposed upon us by the form of our understanding.

THE ROSARY

By M.B.C.

I sat watching a man telling his beads. They slipped one by one through his fingers and I watched the changing lights on his face. Now a joyous freshness as of a spring morning: his touch on the gem was gentle, and thrilling with a sense of awakening life. Anon, his look was one of burning enthusiasm, his grip on the bead was powerful, crushing. Again he had a look of profound yearning, a reaching out in love to the great of all life: his touch on the bead was tender and lingering.

Soon a great peace stole into his face, and presently he gathered up the rosary into the shelter of his hand. Past, present and future were one and at rest.

I had been watching the Lord counting the beads of the days of my life.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

The great disciple whose task was to take up the spiritual heritage of Ramakrishna and sow the grain of his thought throughout the world, was both physically and morally his direct antithesis.

The Seraphic Master had spent his life at the feet of the Divine Beloved, the Mother—the Living God. He had been dedicated to Her from infancy; before he had attained self-consciousness he had the consciousness that he loved Her. And if in order to rejoin Her he had been condemned to years of torment, that was akin to the trials of wandering knights, all of whose tests had as their one object to make themselves worthy of the object of their chaste and religious love. She alone was at the end of all the interlacing paths in the forest. She alone, the multiple God, among the thousands of Faces. And when he had reached Her, he had learned to recognise each one of these other faces, and to love them in

Her. And so he had embraced with Her the whole world. And the rest of his life had been spent in the serene fullness of this Cosmic Joy, the revelation of which Beethoven and Schiller have sung in our West.

But he had realised it more fully than our tragic heroes. Joy only appeared to Beethoven as a gleam of blue through the chaos of conflicting clouds, while the Paramahansa—the Indian Swan—rested his great white wings on the sapphire lake of Eternity beyond the curtain of tumultuous days.

It was not given to his proudest disciples to follow him. The greatest of them, the spirit with the widest wings—Vivekananda—only reached it by sudden flights in the midst of tempests which remind me over and over again of Beethoven. Even when he rested there, the sails of his ship were filled with every wind that blew. All the cries of the earth, the sufferings of the times, fluttered round him like a flight of famished gulls. All the passions of strength (not those of weakness) were striving in his lion's heart. He was

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energy made man, and he preached it to men. For him as for Beethoven it was the root of all the virtues. He went so far as to say in his aversion to passivity, whose secular yoke weighs so heavily on the bovine forehead of the East:

“Be strong! Be manly! I have a respect even for one who is wicked, so long as he is manly and strong, for his strength will make him some day give up his wickedness or even give up all works for selfish ends, and will thus eventually bring him into Truth.”¹

His athletic build was opposed to the tender and frail though wiry body of Ramakrishna. He was tall (five feet, eight and a half inches),² square-shouldered, broad-chested, stout, rather heavy; he had muscular arms, versed in all sports. He had an olive complexion, a full face, a vast forehead, a strong jaw,³ a pair of magnificent eyes, large, dark and rather prominent with heavy pupils, whose form recalled the classic comparison to a lotus petal. Nothing escaped the magic of his glance, which was capable equally of enveloping with irresistible charm, sparkling with wit, with irony, with kindness, losing itself in ecstasy, or plunging imperiously to the deeps of conscience and withering with its fury. But above all nobody ever drew near him in India or America without being struck by his majesty. He was born a king. When this young man of twenty-nine, then quite unknown, appeared in Chicago at the inaugural meeting of the Parliament of Religions, which was opened in September, 1893, by Cardinal Gibbons, everyone round him was forgotten; he dominated them all. His power and his

¹ 1891. To his Alwar disciples in Rajputana.

² He weighed 170 pounds. In the *Phrenological Journal of New York* (reproduced in Volume II of the *Life of Vivekananda*) the exact measurements may be found that were taken at the time of his first journeys in America.

³ His jaw was more Tartar than Hindu. Vivekananda boasted of his Tartar ancestors, and he loved to say that “the Tartar was the wine of the race.”

beauty, the grace and dignity of his bearing, the dark light of his eyes, his imposing appearance, and from the moment he began to speak, the splendid music of his warm deep⁴ voice enthralled the crowd of American Anglo-Saxons, prejudiced against him on account of his colour. And the thought of the warrior-prophet⁵ of India left the mark of its claws on the sides of the United States.⁶

He could never be imagined in a secondary position. Wherever he was, he was the first. Even his Master Ramakrishna, in a vision which I have related, described himself with regard to his beloved disciple, as a child before a great Rishi. It was in vain that he refused homage, judging himself hard, humiliating himself—each man at the first glance recognised him as his chief, the anointed of the Lord, the man marked with the brand of the power that commands men. Someone who crossed his path without recognising him in the Himalayas, stopped and cried:

“Shiva!.....”

It was as if his favourite God had inscribed his name upon his forehead.

But this same forehead was beaten, like a mountain peak, by the four winds of the spirit. It rarely knew a calm season, the limpid spaces of thought wherein soared Ramakrishna's smile. His too powerful body,⁸ his too vast mind, were the battlefield designed for

⁴ He had a beautiful voice like a violoncello (so Miss Josephine MacLeod told me), grave without deviation, but whose deep vibrations filled hall and hearts. He could make it sink, once his audience was held, to an intense *piano* piercing his hearers to the centre of their souls. Emma Calvé, who knew him, said: “An admirable baritone, having the vibrations of a Chinese gong.”

⁵ He belonged to the Kâyastha class, a subcaste of warriors.

⁶ The Ramakrishna Mission, introduced by him, spread there; and he found several of his most devoted disciples among the Americans.

⁷ Told by Dhan Gopal Mukerji.

⁸ Although it was already marked by the first ravages of poison (diabetes) from which he died. This Hercules had Death always sitting on his doorstep.

all the struggles of his stormy soul. The present and the past, the East and the West, dream and action there delivered assault. He knew too much, he could do too much, to win harmony at the expense of renouncing any part of his nature, any part of the whole truth. And the synthesis of the great opposing factions took years of struggle, wherein his heroism was consumed with his life. Battle and Life were synonyms in his case. Very few days made up his allotted span. Sixteen years from

Ramakrishna's death to that of the great disciple. . . . A flash! It was less than forty years before the athlete was stretched on his funeral pyre. . . .

But the fire of that pyre still burns. And like the Phoenix of old, from his ashes the conscience of India—the magic bird—has risen—faith in its unity and in the Great Message, which from the time of the Vedas broods over the dreaming spirit of a millenary people, and which it holds in ward for the rest of humanity.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : THE INNER MAN

BY THE EDITOR

I

When there is a flood, it covers a wide area and we see only a vast expanse of water. But when the flood subsides, it leaves behind many pools and ditches, each of them feeling its existence as separate from others, totally oblivious of the fact that they all belonged to the same flood waters. In the same way when a prophet comes he inundates the country with spiritual and religious fervour. But after his passing away ensues quarrel and discussion as to what he had actually said and meant. His teachings are discussed piecemeal and found sometimes one contradicting the other, and his followers and admirers are bewildered. This is the reason why there are so many schisms in every religious order—why though a prophet comes to bring unity and peace on earth, after some years of his passing away, in his very name there are so many fighting parties. The prophet perhaps said a simple thing which went straight to the heart of even his simplest disciple; but afterwards big philosophy is built upon that and furious

discussions begin as to what he really meant. Jesus did not say anything very difficult to understand (though hard to practise), but see, how many schools of Christianity are in the world to-day and how much bloodshed and persecution have tainted the pages of its history; and all that for finding out the correct interpretation of the teachings of Jesus. If Buddha emphasised anything more than all others, it was the practice of religion instead of wasting breath over learned discussions on tenets. Yet most abstruse metaphysics have been built in his name after he was gone, one school differing from another as day from night, and quite bewildering to those who want to find some light therefrom for the growth of religious life.

This has been the case with the teachings of almost all the prophets in the world, and we cannot say that those of Swami Vivekananda will escape this fate. Already conflicting thoughts have arisen as to what was the essence of the teachings of the patriot-saint of modern India. Was the patriot or the saint stronger in him? Which was more prominent in him—the love of the country or the love of religion? Swami Vivekananda talked on so many subjects. How to find out the connecting link among them? He talked on *Jnāna*, *Bhakti*, *Karma*, each time throwing the

Did he not define life as "the tendency of the unfoldment and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down"?

(April 1891 : Interviews with the Maharajah of Khetri.)

weight of his whole personality on the subject under discussion. Which was nearest to his heart? In fact, Swami Vivekananda with his complex personality has been an enigma to many. So, many have to rest contented with simply one or another aspect of his character. Some find in Swami Vivekananda only a patriot—they are altogether blind to the religious side of his character. Others see in him only a religious teacher—Swami Vivekananda's work, mission and organisation have not much charm for them. Swami Vivekananda was a breaker of bondage—why then the bondage of work again? Some look to the teachings of Swami Vivekananda in support of their scheme of social reform, while others like that great soul because of his love for the poor and his generous heart which could encompass within it the whole of humankind, for wherever people suffered—the sinner, the miserable, the weak, the oppressed—all could be sure of sympathy from him.

The reason why there is so much difference of opinions about the teachings of any prophet is that we see his teachings piecemeal according to our individual capacities and temperaments, and as disconnected from the life from which those teachings emanated. In God all contradictions meet. This is true to a certain extent also of the lives of prophets. Some blind men narrated what an elephant was like. They touched the body of the elephant and each described the part that he felt to be the elephant itself. Now each of them was perhaps right in a way, but the elephant was more than what they described. Each describes the teachings of a prophet in his own way—his sincerity cannot be questioned—but the teacher is more than what we can see him through his teachings. So to understand the teachings of a prophet, we should understand his life first.

The case of the Swami Vivekananda is not exceptional. To get at the essence of his teachings, we must see them in relation to the life he lived, with reference to the forces that went

to build up Vivekananda as he was. For this we should thoroughly study the formative period of his life and get ourselves acquainted with the struggles he underwent and the hopes and fears that throbbed in his heart during his early life.

II

Swami Vivekananda was nurtured in a deep religious atmosphere at home. His grandfather gave up the world to become a *Sannyāsin* and the memory of that must have greatly influenced the life of those who were left behind. His father was also a pious man and well-known for his generous heart. His charity would not wait for discrimination and his life was largely marked by indifference to worldly things. He was greatly devoted to the reading of the Bible and the poems of the Sufi poet Hafiz. His mother was also of a deeply devotional nature: it was her faith in God, which sustained her when the family afterwards suffered from a great reversal of fortune.

From early boyhood Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda as he was known before he left the world) was given to meditation. Even when four or five years of age he would sometimes meditate for long hours before one or another image of God. When he was angry, the utterance of the name of Shiva by a bystander was sure to pacify him. When on the threshold of youth, two parallel visions would appear before him night after night for a long time. One was that of great prosperity and immense wealth by which one becomes greatly influential in the society; the other was that of a *Sannyāsin* who gives up everything and roams about in search of God clad only in a loin-cloth. Swami Vivekananda said that there would thus be a conflict between these two visions, and on every occasion the vision of the latter, namely, that of a *Sannyāsin*, would overpower his soul before he fell unconscious in sleep. From this time he would think that the consummation of human life was the

realisation of God, and this was the undercurrent of all his mental struggles till he found lasting peace from the Man of Dakshineswar.

In the college days the study of Western philosophy for a time disturbed the equilibrium of his belief, and he was seized with a doubt if there was God at all, and if He existed, why He could not be realised. The mere study of books could not satisfy his thirst of religion—he would discuss the problem threadbare with many of his associates and persons who were likely to throw better light on his difficulties. Those were the days of terrible struggle. One day he ran frenzied to Devendranath Tagore, the most respected figure of the then Brahma Samâj and straight put to him the question: "Sir, have you seen God?" He was eager to see a man who could talk of God not from a second or third-hand information, but from direct experience. And at last he found a man who was more than ready to take up his challenge and said: "Not only can God be seen, but I can help you to realise Him."

From the time Sri Ramakrishna saw Narendranath, he perceived the latter's great spiritual potentiality. Afterwards Sri Ramakrishna would compare Narendranath to the *Homâ* bird said to be described in the Vedas. These birds come to life as the eggs laid by their mothers in the high sky fall towards the earth, but before they reach the ground, they fly back from earth to their mother in the high empyrean. Similar was the case of Narendranath. Trailing clouds of glory he came from God and untouched by any worldliness he went back to Him.

Even Narendranath's spiritual life was not built by any sudden magic stroke. He had to pay dearly for his spiritual realisations. But great as he was, he conquered all difficulties. After the death of his father, the prosperous family of Narendranath at once fell into a crushing poverty and they were literally face to face with starvation. A youngman of parts like Narendranath

could not secure any paltry job to keep the wolf from the door—such was the irony of fate. But here Narendranath's love for God was put to acid test. Even under such trying circumstances he could not pray to God for any worldly thing. When sent by Sri Ramakrishna to the temple of Kâli to pray to the Mother for saving the family from poverty, Narendranath returned after praying for sometime and said that he could not ask any worldly thing of the Mother, but prayed only for devotion. This brightened up the face of Sri Ramakrishna with a profound joy. On another occasion Sri Ramakrishna offered Swami Vivekananda some supernatural powers, but they were sternly rejected by the latter as being no help to the realisation of Truth. Swami Vivekananda had to pass through many fiery ordeals before he realised the Highest Truth in life. Even after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna Swami Vivekananda underwent severe *tapasyâ* in the monastery at Baranagore and other places. His idea was to be more and more absorbed in the meditation of God.

III

But Swami Vivekananda was not to lose himself absolutely in the divine contemplation—he had also other duties to perform. One day asked by Sri Ramakrishna as to what would be the greatest joy of his life, Swami Vivekananda replied that it was to be immersed in *Samâdhi*. Sri Ramakrishna cried fie upon him and remarked that he had considered him to be of a nobler stuff. He was to shoulder the burden of innumerable struggling souls wearied of life and not to look to any personal end. This was perhaps the tragedy of Swami Vivekananda's life—if it can be called a tragedy at all—as found in the inner conflict in his latter days.

Gradually the teacher in Swami Vivekananda began to grow and even in his wandering days when he carefully sought to obliterate himself he was found to be a dynamic apostle of

Hinduism and Hindu culture. True he talked on all subjects dealing with various phases of the Indian problem, wherever he was engaged in conversation, but it was the rôle of a religious teacher that was most prominent in him. He impressed the people first as a *Sannyâsin*, then as anything else. Once in the court of the Raja of Ramnad when he was challenged by some Pundits in course of a debate, he boldly said: "I have realised the Absolute in the superconscious state. I am the proof of the Vedas!" Again in Madras when he was assailed with the question how he could possibly reconcile the philosophical creeds of the *Dvaita*, the *Visistâdvaita* and the *Advaita*, which could not be done even by great *Achâryas* like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and others, he coolly said: "Because it was left for me to do it! Because I was born to show this to the world."

Swami Vivekananda was more an awakener of soul than a religious teacher who is contented with merely giving a message. A new message he had certainly to give, but while giving the message he could send with it a power to transmute lives. An obscure monk from a heathen land, it is true, astounded the audience in the famous Parliament of Religions by his able advocacy of the cause of Hinduism, and this may be an important event in the religious history of the world. But Swami Vivekananda is more reverentially remembered by those of his American audience, who came in close touch with him. For, his very presence worked in the disciples changes unawares, and his mere wish was sufficient to dispel the darkness of lives. It was with reference to this that the Sister Nivedita said: "One's whole attitude of things was reversed; one took fire, as it were, with a given idea; or one suddenly found that a whole habit of thought had left one, and a new outlook grown up in its place, without the interchange of a single word on the subject. It seemed as if a thing had passed beyond the realm of dis-

cussion, and knowledge had grown by the mere fact of nearness to him. It was in this way that questions of taste and value became different. It was in this way that the longing for renunciation was lighted, like a devouring flame, in the hearts of those about him." Himself become free, he was a breaker of bondage wherever he went. "Here and there he came forth with a message to the society, but his *gurubhâis* and disciples always think of him as the monk of monks, the man of Realisation, the Awakener of souls, the complement of Sri Ramakrishna and the bearer of the Message of his Master, which is the Message of India and Sanatan Dharma, to herself and to the rest of the world."

IV

But how is it that this important element in the character of Swami Vivekananda is ignored by many while valuing and accepting his solutions of the Indian problems? It cannot be gainsaid that Swami Vivekananda as a patriot has got a wider circle of admirers than as a saint. This is simply because of the general weariness of and distaste for religion, that have come over the world, and even India, forming a part of the world, has not been spared.

Those who are averse to religion says that religion has done more harm to society and mankind than good. Religion has suppressed reason and has ever been opposed to progress. It has made men less self-reliant and more other-worldly. Religion has been the source of inhuman bloodshed and persecution in the world and has disturbed its peace more than anything else. And they are determined to leave religion, God, etc., severely alone. Apart from the validity of the issues raised, it can be said that to deny religion altogether is to deny the entire religious experience of the past. Thousands may be irreligious in the name of religion, but has not the world seen persons who have been the salt of the earth and blessings unto mankind?

In Swami Vivekananda religion found a new definition and it covered a wider ground. According to him, religion is the end of all activities in which man employs himself. What is that which a man wants? What is that in terms of which every other desire of man can be evaluated? Swami Vivekananda would say that after close analysis it would be found to be freedom. It is the lure of freedom that impels a robber to commit robbery, a scientist to explore the domains of nature and a saint to dive deep within himself leaving everything aside. Man does not like to be in any bondage or shackle, to be dependent on anything whatsoever. So he is restless to be free. And consciously and unconsciously he is struggling to reach that goal. "To be more free is the goal of all our efforts," said the Swami and he defined God as the "embodiment of freedom." Now, how can we be perfectly free? It is by the knowledge of the Self. By knowing himself a man will tower above all things in the universe, for the mine of infinite strength and infinite knowledge lies hidden within him. "Each soul is potentially divine," he would say. "The goal is to manifest the Divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. . . . This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books, or temples or forms are but secondary details." To him religion was not synonymous with mystery-mongering, and to be religious, according to him, man needed not to look to the vaulted blue in mortal fear. He did not speak of "imps" or "astrals" and would talk of nothing but strength. To him strength was religion and whatever begot weakness was irreligion.

Now, if every one is potentially divine, if God is all-pervasive, all our actions become worship. We need not seek God only in temples and caves, but we can as well see Him in the work-a-day world. If we be *Atman*, we are to assert that in all our activities, in every moment of our life. The greatest contribution of the Swami Vivekananda to

the modern thought will be his conception of the practical Vedanta. If even a shoe-maker does his work in right spirit he can realise God, much more quickly than a so-called religious man who lives a hypocritical life. His whole ambition was to bring the highest truths of religion out from closets and caves to the open world for the benefit of all. "For, if a religion cannot help man wherever he may be, where he stands, it is not of much use; it will remain only a theory for the chosen few." It was this practical aspect of religion as preached by Swami Vivekananda, which drew round him all kinds of people and made him the idol even of those who were not *purely* religious in the orthodox sense. This also explains why people want to see him piecemeal—some as a patriot and others as a social reformer and so on.

But the fact that Swami Vivekananda was a *Sannyâsin par excellence*, an all-renouncing monk, does not in any way belittle his importance as a great lover of India. For it is a fact that he loved India intensely, most intensely. Even a man of realisation cannot set aside all the demands of the physical body, and no wonder that Swami Vivekananda could not deny the demands of his country. His love for India was so very great that at times it overpowered all other sides of his nature. The luxuries of his American life were a torture to him, because India was steeped in poverty, and he passed sleepless nights in America when the news of a famine reached him from India. At times he would grow frantic, to the astonishment of his Western followers, thinking or talking of the sufferings of India. It was the echo of his personal experience when he said addressing all would-be workers for the cause of India: "Does it (the hard condition of India) make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that

one idea of the misery and ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your dear ones, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? This is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step."

V

But behind all his patriotism, deep down there was the religious motive. For to him India was synonymous with the spirit of religion. "If India is to die," he said, "religion will be wiped off from the face of the earth." He did not want to see India a replica of a Western country, but his dream of future India was that along with material prosperity, which would be hers, she would as the Queen of Nations, extend the hand of peace and blessedness to all peoples of the world.

Even those who rallied round him, he wished to see them work not so much from a *humanitarian* as from a *spiritual* motive. It cannot be that those who gave up the world and took refuge in him in search of truth were duped by Swami Vivekananda with a false hope. He strongly emphasised that by social work, by serving the poor and nursing the sick, one would be able to *see* God, for does not God exist, also in them? So what is the use of digging a well for drinking water on the bank of the Ganges? It was from this view-point that he said: "Don't give a pice to the poor proudly and think you have laid him under obligation. Rather kneel down before him to thank him for the opportunity you have found to serve the God in him."

Even in the message which he left for his countrymen and others there is the reflection of his experience as a man of realisation. To each individual his advice was: "Be yourself. Be God and make others God." It was Swami Vivekananda who for the first time after an age-long stupor turned the attention of his countrymen to the innate strength and greatness of the country. In the last century India

passed through a great national crisis. Dazzled by the glittering civilisation of the West our educated people lost all faith in the country and its past, and the whole land was about to be engulfed by an alien civilisation. Even the boldest amongst them could not find anything to boast of in India, and imitation became the rule. Swami Vivekananda showed that even in its apparent weakness lay the real strength of India. He had the vision of a poet and the penetration of a philosopher to find even the dust of India sacred. The outlook of the whole nation was changed by Swami Vivekananda and he was acclaimed as the messenger of a glorious New Dawn.

It is said in the scriptures that to one who has realised the *Brahman*, the whole phenomenal world seems as a dream. If that was the case with Swami Vivekananda, it may be said that his was a transfigured dream. For in him we always find the commingling of two diagonal forces. At times we find him trying to dive down into the depths of his inner being and at other times we see him agonising at the sufferings of humanity and bursting out: "To work for the good of humanity, has been my motto all through life. Even though I die I shall still work for the salvation of India, for the salvation of mankind." Even while not meditating deliberately he was constantly losing himself in thought. "The difficulty with which he would stop the momentum that would carry him into meditation, had been seen by his American friends in the early days of his life in that country of rail-roads and tramways and complicated engagements." While he was making plans and programmes of work and busy watching its progress, we hear the subdued cry of agony: "I am entangled." In the midst of his success in America he writes in 1894: "How I should like to become dumb for some years, and not talk at all! I was not made for these worldly fights and struggles. I am naturally dreamy and slothful. I am

a born idealist, and can only live in a world of dreams. The touch of material things disturbs my visions and makes me unhappy. But Thy will be done!" Occasionally he would feel as if he was being worked by a Superior Force, over which he had no control.

Two years before his passing away he wrote: "Work is always difficult; pray for me, . . . that my work may stop for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works She knows."

"I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

". 'Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore.'

"After all, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banian at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities and so forth are all super-

impositions. Now I again hear his voice, the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking—love dying, work becoming tasteless—the glamour is off life. Now only the voice of the Master calling.

"I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst of power. Now, they are vanishing and I drift. I come, Mother, I come, in the warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come—a spectator, no more an actor."

Such was the writhing agony of a mighty soul who wanted to bridge the gulf between Heaven and Earth, whose mind was always running to the Highest, but whom the thought of the misery of the world constantly dragged down!

THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

30TH MAY, 1913.

In the afternoon, in the Visitors' Room at the Belur Monastery, the disciple was listening to the reading of *Sri Sri Rāmakrishna Kathāmrita* (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna). Some said that Sri Ramakrishna used to accept one as disciple only after proper enquiry,—after observing his ways, manners and physiognomy and asking about his people and if he was free from debts. On hearing this the disciple said: "Then it is not true that all were recipients of his grace. There is a song about the Master, in which a devotee says that however degraded he might be, he would have the shelter of the Master's blessed feet. Is it not true?"

Swami Premananda: "Why not? He showered his grace on Girish Chandra Ghosh and even on many prostitutes. One day the ladies of Bala-

ram Babu's family were sitting before the Master in his room, when a prostitute named Ramani passed along a road close by. The Master called out to her and asked: 'Why don't you come now-a-days?' The ladies were scandalised to hear the Master talking with a prostitute.

"Shortly after the Master took them to visit the shrines. When they reached the Kali temple, the Master addressed the Mother saying: 'Mother, Thou indeed hast become the prostitute Ramani: Thou has become both the prostitute and the chaste woman!' The ladies understood that they were wrong in hating Ramani, that the Master spoke with her, knowing her to be the Mother Herself and that they had nothing to be unusually proud of their chastity, for it was all due to Her will."

Disciple: "The Master might have been all right in not hating the prosti-

tute. But unless we hate the prostitutes, how shall we live apart from them? At least we must pity them even if we do not hate them."

Swami: "Why should you hate? Even pity comes out of egoism. Have you not heard the Master's stories of the tiger-Nârâyana and the elephant-Nârâyana? If we are to live away from a tiger and an elephant, are we to hate or pity them? Salute them from afar, thinking that it is through the will of God that they are what they are and that it is through His will again that you are what you are, and His will can in a moment redeem them for ever and drag you down. Destroy your pride and egoism once for all. The prostitute Ramani has now become a great devotee and sheds tears in remembrance of the Master."

17TH JUNE, 1913.

It was again at the Visitors' Room at the Belur Math. After the afternoon class on *Sri Sri Râmakrishna Kathâmrta* was over, Swami Premananda said:

"Every *Sâdhaka* must take up a definite attitude towards God and stick to it. He must maintain it under all conditions. There are many *bhâvas*, (attitudes) possible. The Master practised in all *bhâvas*, as a friend, a lady-friend and a sweetheart of the Lord, and also in the attitude of Balarâma, the brother of Sri Krishna. One can also practise in the *bhâva* of Mahâdeva.

"One must have intense dispassion for the world and deep hankering for the Lord—'I must realise Him even in this birth: even now!' No slow process! Remember this carefully: Work is no use if you do not get immersed in Him. Make your heart a temple of the Lord and install Him there. Take His name and for ever lose yourselves in Him."

Next day the mother of Swami Premananda visited the Math. After she had rested a little, the disciple asked her: "When the Master asked you to give him your son, what did he actually say?"

She replied: "He said: 'Give me your son. I feel much pleased even when he gives me a glass of water.' I said: 'Does anybody give away her son for nothing?' He then smiled and replied: 'What shall I give you? May you have devotion to your Chosen Deity!'"

29TH AND 30TH MAY, 1915.

Swami Premananda had come on a visit to Rarhikhal in East Bengal, and was staying at the ancestral home of Sir J. C. Bose. The residents of the village were celebrating the festival of Sri Ramakrishna and there was great enthusiasm among all sections of people. Men, women, boys, girls, Hindus, Mussalmans, all came to visit the Swami and everyone felt a deep love and attraction for him. A villager who was a teacher in a Dacca school, was narrating his family mishaps to the Swami. The Swami said:

"There was a Brahmo gentleman, named Mani Mallik, who used to visit the Master. His eldest son had seen the Master in the Church of Keshab Chandra Sen and had said to his father: 'He seems to me to be a true *Sâdhu*. Go and visit him.' When Mani Mallik came to the Master, the Master said to him: 'Are you not —'s father? You look like that.' Then that son died. Mallik was overwhelmed with grief and came to the Master for relief. At first the Master said: 'Indeed, what can you do? The bereavement of a son is no trifling thing,' and so on. He then sat silent for a while, after which he began to sing, clapping his hands: 'To arms! To arms! O man, Death enters thy home in battle array!' etc. Before he left, Mallik said to the Master: 'My mind is quite peaceful now. Now I suffer no more.'"

Next day the Swami said, addressing the monks who had accompanied him: "I am overjoyed to see their (of the villagers) enthusiasm. The Master fed us so often with sweets, and loved us so much! Thus did we go to him. But what have *they* got? They have

merely read of him in books. And yet how full of joy and enthusiasm they are! In this hot sun they went to the station and themselves carried all loads, barefooted and bare-headed. And they are cooking for all. They also serve cholera patients and thus rid themselves of all pride, egoism and fear. And they are quite mindful of their studies also. All this fills me with a great joy. It is to see these things that I hasten to these parts, and not to earn name and fame for myself. What am I doing? The Master himself has accomplished everything already. Swamiji said: 'The Master will be worshipped in every home. Go forth all of you and spread his name everywhere.' Otherwise what shall I, an ignorant man, preach? . . . When I see all this, I think within myself: 'This body will perish one day. What is the good of remaining at home for the sake of health? If my presence serves any purpose of the people, let me suffer all the troubles of travel and movement. I don't mind.*' Otherwise why should I undergo all the troubles of irregular meals and sleeplessness? You see yourselves, there is no pleasure in these.

"In these places I actually see what the Master and Swamiji had prophesied before. You will not require to do much. Just observe these things carefully, and you will learn to love the Master automatically. Is it easy to meditate and repeat His name continually? Impossible. Therefore meditate as long as you can and devote the rest of the time in selfless service to others. Thus gradually will your mind be purified and attached to the Lord."

The Swami thus narrated his early life in course of another conversation:

"My mother used now and then to shut herself within a room and meditate all day. If we happened to return home from Calcutta on those days, we had to live in a neighbouring house, and meet her next day. She was very strict in her discipline. She would never allow us to stay with her in the village home, because she feared that would spoil our education. But she would never utter a harsh word to her daughters-in-law and maid-servants. . . I was very naughty as a young boy. So I have got some scars on my head. Swamiji said: 'He is no boy, who has no scars on his head.' "

THE LESSONS OF RELIGIOUS INDIA TO EUROPE

BY CARLO FORMICHI

Not all the currents of Indian religious thought are known to Europe; and if we wish to inquire into the influence which religious India might exert on us, it is necessary to take into consideration only those doctrines which are more or less imperfectly familiar to our public.

One first lesson which India teaches us through the religious hymns of the *Rig* and the *Atharva Veda*, through the great epic poems of the *Mahâbhârata* and the *Râmâyana*, and through the

*Just on his return to the Belur Monastery from this visit, the Swami had a severe attack of cholera. The Swami suffered a long time from Kala-azar contracted during one of his visits to Eastern Bengal and may be said to have died of it.

Purânas, enables us to change our usual notions of Nature. We see at play in the Universe only mechanical forces which are blind and unconscious and which we have to know only in order to subdue them. Earth, water, air and fire preoccupy our attention only in so far as they are serviceable to our existence, and we forget that we ourselves are an aggregate of earth, water, air and fire. We discern a gulf, a separation and dissidence rather than a homogeneity and solidarity, between man and Nature; and because we love ourselves, we do not love Nature which we consider to be different from us, and we think with terror of the death which will resolve our bodies into the

elements. Nor do we take seriously our poets who exalt the greatness of Nature.

The polytheistic world of India, on the contrary, rejects this disjunction between man and Nature, and instructs us to observe human life as a part of the universal life, to think that the frontiers between spirit and matter are not insuperable, and to remember always that the noblest thought of ours is, in the last analysis, a piece of bread or a fruit of the earth, digested and assimilated. There is a genius in the flaming sun, the cleansing wind, the thundering clouds, the sweeping fire, the inebriating liquor and the scintillating stone. Man lives his life only in tune with the Universal All; he is not isolated from the rest of the world, but he respire like the wind, sees like the sun, hears like the ether, fertilises like water, assimilates like the earth, loves, hates, thinks and meditates like the rest of Nature. The Universe is the great temple of God who fills every object with His breath which is at once impulse, life, thought, ecstasy, and a perennially inextinguishable energy.

This religious attitude, characteristic of the Aryan racial stock, *i.e.*, of our race, should needs hold out to us an irresistible fascination, though into our veins have been indoculated the germs of Semitic religions which do not take the least account of the harmonic pulsation of cosmic and human life, and reduce everything to a pact of alliance between an omnipotent monarch in heaven and his chosen people on earth. The magnificent world of Indian myths and legends will ever be for us the best antidote for the toxin of the Semitic religious outlook which, narrow and unilateral as it is, foments intolerance and remains irreconcilably averse to the scientific-philosophic spirit.

Thanks particularly to Paul Duessen, Europe to-day is in a position to know the teachings contained in the *Upanishads*, which together with the Buddhistic texts constitute the noblest of India's achievements in the spiritual

field. The *Upanishads* were the solace of Schopenhauer's life and the comfort of his death, even at the time when the extant translations were vague and incorrect. To-day in the clear German version of Paul Duessen, the *Upanishads* are no longer a secret or a puzzle for us; and if they do not happen to be the solace of our life and of our death, it is due to the defect of our eyes and not to the imperfection or the dimness of the light emanating from them.

One first immortal lesson which we learn from the *Upanishads* relates to the method of spiritual inquiry. If we wish to search for the mystery of the Universe, it is futile to study it in its parts, as is done by our science which finds itself ever compelled to postpone the definitive solution of the problems of the Universe, even like a debtor who puts off the payment of his debt from day to day and yet never pays at all. The Universe in its completeness manifests itself to us where we expect it the least: in our tiny self. The macrocosm is mirrored in the microcosm; just as when once I study a little piece of iron, I know all that is made of iron, so when once I know myself, I know all the rest of the world also: *Tat tvam asi*. The word *âtman*, equivalent to "I", "myself", is the alpha and omega of every metaphysical inquiry. If I seek for the mystery outside of myself, I become entangled in the net of the laws of causality and I fail to discover the mystery; and having failed to discover it, I end by thinking that it does not exist. If I see for the mystery in myself, I discover it suddenly in my recognition that it does not allow itself to be known by me, that it sees without being seen, hears without being heard, tastes without being tasted, and so on. The *âtman* is outside the law of causality, outside space and time, and sets us in the presence of God and of the Soul.

The *âtman* is inherent in every life (*jiva*) and the characteristic of life is that it is adapted to deploy itself and then to return to itself, to ascend farther

and farther upwards till it reaches the ecstasy of consciousness, and to descend deeper and deeper downwards till it touches the stage of the simple manifestation of breath and of heat, *i.e.*, till a stage which is no longer perceptible to our senses. Nothing is more mobile, more restless than *jiva*, than *âtman*; it goes and comes without rest, it gets out of itself for observing the external world, and then, as if repentant hastens back, so as to compose itself in its lodging place. It is like a fire shooting out sparks, a spider distending its web, a falcon leaving its nest, wandering here and there through the air and finally turning to its place of repose. For long can the *âtman* not stand outside of itself, which fact is proved by the necessity for sleep. When we fall asleep, the *âtman* makes one of its constant retreats; it does not arrive at its ultimate stage as when we are on the point of death, and when it remains invisible to us, but it posts itself at the stage of respiration, still perceptible to us. In sleep all our senses cease to function, but the respiration does not stop, and this is indeed one of the forms of the *âtman*, which demonstrate its immortality. The restless elf (*yaksha*), as it has been called by a sage of the *Atharva Veda*, is ever ready to flee into concealment, if it finds itself in discord with the lodging it has chosen. If a branch of the tree is eaten into by worms, the *âtman* flees from it, and the branch withers away. If an evil spasm twitches an organ of our body, the *âtman* suddenly beats a retreat, leaving us in a fainting fit. In death we can distinctly observe the regression which gradually the *âtman* makes into itself: before complete disappearance, consciousness remains, respiration continues; then respiration itself stops, but the heat of the body persists; and when the heat of the body itself escapes, we lose out of sight the "elf" which takes flight. But because we lose sight of it, we are not to think that it no longer exists, or that it is dead. What is abandoned by the *âtman* alone dies, and not indeed

the *âtman* itself which is imperishable and eternal. Life (*jiva*) cannot be death; to think that life dies is a contradiction in terms; rather, all that from which life escapes, dies.

This conception of life as a perennial energy which from being a form underlying even bodily heat and thence imperceptible to our senses, eventually manifests itself as soul and consciousness, signalises the immortality of the soul and the certainty of rebirth. If the departed dead did not return to occupy their places here in the world of the living, every heaven and every hell should be filled to overflowing, and be obliged to close its gates. How is it that the world beyond is never filled, though from eternity Death has been insatiably feasting itself on the living, even as fire is unsated with firewood, and the ocean with the waters of rivers? The fact is that the dead return from the other world to this earth, that nothing is created anew in the Universe, that every born thing is destined to die, and everything that dies is destined to be reborn (*Samsâra*).

This is how from the study of the tiny "I", from the *âtman*, I succeed in giving a basis to the entire Universe, in discovering in it the *âtman* itself, the imperishable substance, the reality of reality (*Satyasya Satyam*).

The *âtman* which is in me and in the rest of the Universe will be the inspirer of my meditation, the comfort of my life and of my death, in so far as it will reveal to me a world, not contingent but substantial, a form of soul-existence released from the obsession of matter and perfectly beatific. We shall cease to love the things of the world in and for themselves, but shall love them, on the contrary, in and for the *âtman*: not for the love of wife, will the wife be dear to me, but for love of the *âtman*; not for love of children, will the children be dear to me, but for love of the *âtman*.

The *âtman* thus dethrones all the gods and takes their place; with this difference, however, that it needs not

incense or immolated offerings, receives no prayers, doles out no charities, does not allow itself to be worshipped in temples, disdains being transfigured into images, is an iconoclast, and enemy of external cult, and a friend of purity of intentions, of good actions and, above all, of meditation.

This is a form of religion made for the elect and not adapted for the masses. In order that it may be accepted by these latter, the *âtman* will have to submit to being personified, and then it will cease to speak to us its language so suggestive.

Though the doctrine of the *Upanishads*, not satisfying the religious needs of the masses and making God into an abstraction—sublime, indeed, but yet always an abstraction—reduces itself to an esoteric teaching and the religion of a small circle of the initiated, nevertheless, through its demonstration of the existence of the *âtman*, or of a substantial reality, of a *Ding an sich* (thing in itself), it satisfies the highest religious aspiration of man, *viz.*, his desires to survive death through eternity. It is true that the re-entry of the *âtman* into itself, or to use orthodox Indian language, the reabsorption in the *Brahman*, is accompanied by the loss of individual consciousness. "After death there is no longer consciousness," says Yâjnavalkya clearly to Maitreyi. Eternal life, yes,—after death, but no longer individualistic. A great step forwards was made through the eradication of egoism from the human heart and through the enlightenment that the disregard of worldly interests leads to the idea of the Divine. Yet when once the *noumenon* has been substituted for the *phenomenon* and the littleness of illusion has been replaced by the reality of truth, the vanity of all things is indeed not proclaimed; but only the supreme good,—the highest happiness, the greatest value of life,—is revealed to us. The *Upanishads* do not condemn life, but like all the other religions, concern themselves with finding the form of perfect life. They even

aid the natural tendency of man to find every good in Being, and every evil in cessation from Being; in short, they subordinate the search after truth to the claims of life.

And now see how Buddhism batters down the last trench in which egoism has taken refuge, and restores to truth its rights independently of the demands of life. Nothing in the world has been reasoned out with greater courage and freedom from bias. *Being*, Buddha proclaims, does not exist, but *Becoming* alone does exist; "I" is a delusion, an aggregate of matter fatally destined to be transformed, disintegrated into its elements, and destroyed; the basis of life is grief, and life is nothing else than the blind desire to live, nourished on ignorance, breeding everlasting pain.

Life is desire and passion, it feeds on itself without cease, like fire; it has neither beginning nor end so long as it perpetuates itself, across *Samsâra*, from existence to existence, under the iron sway of the law of causality. There is no possible escape from the effects of a bad action. It is in vain for man to conceal himself in the depths of the sea or in the limitless fields of air, or in the remotest caves of mountains; *Karma*, in full bloom, will find him out in his hiding-place and chastise him. It is in vain to resist the moral law which is the law of nature and admits of no modification, much less of evasion, through the efforts of any human or divine power. Evil, soon or late, gets its punishment, even as virtue receives its reward. Besides, even good actions do not free man from the evil of existence, so long as desire, attachment and the thirst for life nestle themselves at the root. True virtue lies in the opening of one's eyes to the vanity and misery of existence, and in the effacement of all limits to the capacity of self-abnegation. It is needful to achieve the miracle of going through our life, filled with benevolence in the midst of the evil-minded, unarmed in the midst of the armed, shorn of every trace of desire in the midst of the covetous. In short,

it turns out that all values are reversed, beginning from the greatest, namely, life, which instead of being the greatest among the good things, becomes the greatest among things evil. It is evident that the goal of happiness of such a doctrine cannot be eternal life, or eternal evil, but only the definitive liberation from the peril of life. This liberation is *Nirvâna*, or the state in which every trace of desire and passion is spent out, all thirst for life is quenched. *Nirvâna* is not indeed a fantastic and mysterious region from which no traveller returns; but it is the experience of every man who succeeds in becoming a Buddha, it is a reality which cannot be described through words but which, proved by Buddha and promised by him to all who reach the end of a saintly life, exercises on the mind a fascination not inferior to that of any paradise or ultra-terrestrial place of happiness.

It is a fact that such a doctrine, contrary to our sentiment and repugnant to our habits of thought, penetrates into our soul in spite of ourselves, extorts our admiration with its magnificent logical precision, and discovers to us unexpected horizons of an incomparable vastness. The more we wish to persuade ourselves about the absurdity of Buddha's doctrine, the more the impression of the revelation of truth is borne in upon us. And this impression becomes all the more legitimate when we have to admit frankly that certain aspects of the doctrine continue to be a puzzle to us. How can we condemn what cannot be grasped perfectly? Who in Europe can say that he has penetrated to the depth of the fundamental Buddhistic idea of the twelve causes (*pratityasamutpâda*)? Buddhism, besides, is not merely a theory, it is also a practice. Which European can claim to have practised seriously the spiritual *yogic* exercises peculiar to Buddhism?

We find ourselves, therefore, before a spiritual creation of which we can have only an imperfect idea. But

imperfect as our conception may be, how many are the lessons with which we may enrich ourselves! Let us learn particularly to get rid of the prejudice that utilitarian truths are the only great values of life. Truth should not be a slave to anything, least of all to life. Through Buddha, India offers to us the example of the man who has offered the maximum sacrifice to truth. By the side of the thundering voice of Buddha, even the words of Leonardo da Vinci appear weak, when he said: "Untruth is so detestable that if it should say great things of God, it would detract from the grace of His Godhood, and truth is of such excellence that if it should praise small things, these latter become noble."

The West knows all the experiences,—advantages and disadvantages,—of the mode of life which conforms to natural feelings; it has more or less always lived according to nature, Pagan-wise; but it is ignorant of the reverse of the medal, *viz.*, what things man might gain and lose by living against nature, by eradicating desires, passions and the wish itself to live. This last is the maximum effort that might be expected of man,—the conquest of one's own nature. Buddha achieved it, and his followers tried to achieve it, through a path which is made of righteousness, sacrifice and spirituality. If it is true to say with Carlyle that "Denial of self, the annihilation of self, is the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to Earth," is not Buddhism the highest wisdom which heroic man, the superman (and not indeed heaven!) has revealed to earth? While self-abnegation and self-sacrifice are preached, and at the same time we add that life is the greatest good, there is little hope in fact that man will feel inclined to throw overboard all that ensures for him this greatest good,—there is little possibility indeed of his renouncing the pleasures of the senses, the desire to acquire wealth, to gain power and to take part in strife, competitions and

wars. Only when life appears in its frailty and vanity, can man annihilate himself, that is to say, can cast off all wishes, give away his money to the poor, curb ambition, suppress hate and anger, and dedicate himself to the cause of science, of fatherland, of the family and of the nearest. Everything that is of the greatest, of the most beautiful and of the most heroic, when examined closely, is not love or attachment to life but disdain thereof, and emancipation from the instinct of self-affirmation, self-assertion and self-glorification. True charity is practised unostentatiously; supreme art is cultivated in and for itself, undisturbed by the individual interests of the artist and through an attitude even opposed to these interests. The genuine hero is the unknown soldier. The presence of the restless ego belittles great values, while the elimination of the ego creates the sublime and the eternal. The apotheosis of life is equivalent to the glorification of the ego, and thereby passions are rekindled, and conflicts perpetuated. Nothing is more complacently self-satisfied, nothing is more intoxicated with itself, nothing more arrogant, than life in its exuberance. The healthy man does not think of the existence of disease and does not wish to hear it spoken about; the robust person cannot imagine himself to be weak and despises weakness. Life which is essentially unstable and fragile and is ceaselessly careering towards death, easily forgets its own frailty, falls under the delusion of being immortal, and acts like the hunchback who forgets his infirmity and flares up against those who reproach him with it. The state of soul farthest from religion and most exposed to corruption, sin, injustice and cruelty, is that of the man inebriated with the fullness and superabundance of life. What indeed will then curb ambition, anger, and the lust for power, except the continuous, implacable reminder that behind health in close proximity stands disease, behind youth old age, behind life death, and behind evil action

punishment? The Indians know this so well that even a political writer like Kâmandaki gives the following instruction to his ideal prince: "Whoever will wish to violate justice in order to satisfy this body of ours, loaded as it is with anxieties and infirmities, and destined to perish to-day or to-morrow? This body of ours, which may for the space of a moment be made pleasant through artificial processes like baths, massages, perfumes, etc., is really as insubstantial as a shadow, and should be considered as a mere water-bubble. How indeed will then strong-minded men allow themselves to be dominated by the subtle enemies called senses, even as a group of clouds are swayed this side and that by a strong wind? The life of mortals is really as unstable as the moon's image in water. Knowing it for such, practise thou ever the good. Having seen that this world is like unto a mirage and may vanish in a moment, the prince allies himself with the virtuous in order to be just and happy." (*Nitisâra* III, 9-13). The true religious sentiment consists, therefore, in denying the interests of self, in clearly visualising the insubstantiality of life, and in opposing thereto a supra-sensible reality. This is why Buddhism, notwithstanding its negation of God and of the soul, is the most profound religious doctrine known to man.

Besides, from the history of Buddhism, Europe receives a great lesson of religious tolerance also. This is a topic fully treated and illustrated in the volume *Dio nella liberto* by Luigi Luzzatti (Bologna 1926, Nicola Zanichelli, Publisher), to which I would refer the reader.

Buddhism, a fruit of India, has been rejected by its mother-country. The Indians have not learnt nor wished to renounce their faith in God and the Soul, and they have preferred as their gospel, the *Bhagavad-Gitâ* in which the immanence and the transcendence of God appear blended, and the duty of action is harmonised with the idea of indifference to the fruits of action.

The West is much too logical to be able ever to conceive God as immanent and transcendent at the same time. But, on the other hand, it can assimilate the doctrine of the necessity for action and indifference to the fruits of action. The life of the individual is pain and nothing else but pain, and emancipation from this pain is effected through the extirpation of egoism and of the thirst for life. Besides, beyond the life of the individual, there is the life of the community, and we cannot be sure that this is of no value, especially after the scientific achievements of generations of geniuses and patient workers mostly of the West. We cannot gainsay our civilisation as we do not know what unexpected results we might gain from our admirable method of scientific inquiry and from our mechanical skill that grows more and more astonishing every day. There is no question, therefore, of replacing the scientific laboratory by the cell of the Buddhist monk, nor of our becoming contrite and confessing to India that we have lost our way and that we have everything to learn from her. The two civilisations—the East and the West—are not mutually exclusive but are really complementary to each other; while the one is more spiritual and individualistic, the other is more mechanical and social. Both of them work together towards the same great object of making the life of man on earth better and happier.

Goethe's saying is the sole truth: "God's is the Orient, God's is the Occident," an idea which finds better expression in his verses:

“Wer sich selbst und andre kennt
Wird auch hier erkennen:
Oriend und Okzident
Sind nicht mehr zu trennen,
Sinnig, zwischen beiden Welten
Sich zu wiegen, lass'ich gelten;

Also zwischen Ost und Westen
Sich bewegen, Sei's zum Besten.”

[“He who knows himself and others will also recognise here that the East and the West are no longer to be separated. Sensibly to be rocked between two worlds is what I consider valid and right; thus to be active between the East and the West is ever the best.”]

The intense, conscientious and patient work that is being turned out in the West by all our workers from the scientist to the most humble labourer, raising as it does a monument of civilisation *aere perennius*, is and ought to be a source of pride, as it constitutes a form of the negation of egoism. I shall ever remember with admiration the words which Deussen spoke to me one day at Kiel: “Scientific labour is my asceticism (*tapas*).”

In work we possess an incomparable fountain of purification, and a new method of asceticism; what remains yet to be done by us is to fulfil this work disinterestedly, without regard to the benefits which might personally accrue to us. So much the better would be our work, by how much the more we regard it as indeed not ours but belonging to the community to which its benefits should enure, even while we dedicate our brains and our hands to incessant and ever ripening activity on earth, and turn our eyes and hearts to heaven and to the gates of eternity. Here we have but to work; the harvest will be gathered by the individual in “the region where exists neither earth nor water, neither fire nor air, neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, neither perception nor non-perception, neither the sun nor the moon, neither coming nor going, neither birth nor death,—in that sphere which marks the close of all pain.”*

* Translated from the original Italian by L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar, M.A., B.L.

SAMKARA AND BRADLEY

BY DR. MAHENDRA NATH SIRCAR, M.A., Ph.D.

(Continued from the last issue)

Relations, Bradley truly points out, have no meaning except within and on the basis of a substantial whole. Plurality and relatedness are but features and aspects of unity. From this Bradley concludes the internal relativity of reals. Bradley, by the doctrine of internal relativity of the reals, steers clear of the extremes of Pluralism and unmodified Monism. Pluralism vanishes inasmuch as reals are not the Absolute. Unmodified monism vanishes inasmuch as the reals are partially true.

This reduction of reals to partial truth, Bradley thinks, gives them their proper place in the absolute unity. The partiality of truth is the mark of appearance. A finite being is an appearance. The Absolute is the only truth, the finite beings are not truth in the sense in which the Absolute is. But partial truth is not falsity. It is neither being nor non-being.]

The distinction of the absolute truth and the partial truth is not very convincing, though it seems to be indeed an ingenuous conception.

Truth is existence. Existence is attributed to both the Absolute and the finite, and in this common characteristic Bradley leaves no distinction between the Absolute and the finite. The only distinction that distinguishes the Absolute from the finite is the completeness and the integrity of the Absolute.

This topic introduces us to the conception of the degrees of existence. Partiality and fullness of being are indeed a question of degree, but the difference in degree cannot introduce any difference in being. The distinction of degree may be attributed to qualities but not to being. Bradley's conception of the Absolute as fullness of existence and the finite as partiality of existence leaves a gap between the

Absolute and the finite not only in their qualities but in their essence. The finite remains always a finite existence and always represents a partial experience, it can never attain the infinite existence and outlook of life. The Absolute, therefore, is by necessity fundamentally different from the finite and it ever remains so, though its partiality and speciality are sought to be resolved in the Absolute. It is not made definitely clear how the partiality of existence in the finite is resolved in the Absolute. Partiality is truth as much as fullness is; though it may not represent the complete truth, still the sectional truth of partial existences is not illusory. The question here arises whether in the Absolute the partial truths and partial presentations have any meaning or value. Bradley's over-emphasis upon the Absolute leads us to suppose that the partial presentations have not their original meaning and value in the Absolute, for in the Absolute unity these presentations are detached from their context and get fused with wider experience and meaning. Though Bradley thinks that in this assimilation into a wider existence their partiality in meaning and value is lost and that they attain the truer meaning, still it may be asked whether in this assimilation the partial experiences are not completely lost. Partial experiences have a meaning in reference to a finite context, and as soon as their reference is changed they lose their original meaning and in a way their distinctness is lost. The wider meaning which they acquire in reference to a wider subject completely overcomes their partial vision and interest. In this wider fusion the interest in their history of growth and development is completely lost. Finite experience has a growth and history, the absolute experience is eternally com-

plete. The moment the finite experience changes its reference, it ceases to exist or it changes its character completely. It cannot exist in the Absolute in the same sense and meaning as it exists in the finite. The finite experience, therefore, has not its cycle and history complete in the Absolute; on the other hand, by this new reference and change of context it completely ceases to be finite. Bradley's difficulty has been that he regards finite experience as true, though he does not call it reality. It should be noted that the truth of partiality and the truth of completeness are to Bradley not different kinds of truth though they represent different degrees of truth. The lower degree of truth to Bradley is appearance; appearance is reality partially viewed. But in the complete view of reality, if the partial presentation of reality is removed, the appearance ceases to exist, for reality is not partiality. Reality, therefore, is exclusive of partialities and of appearances. Appearances, therefore, are not only partialities but must be *illusions*; if the touch of partiality is withdrawn, the appearances can have no distinctive reality in the Absolute. If the appearances are in the least real, they can be so to finite and divided experience; they cannot be so in the Absolute; for the Absolute is Reality and Reality is integrity exclusive of partialities. Bradley has not been able to maintain an even balance between the relative and the Absolute, and his Absolute is an all-absorbing reality in which distinctions are not assimilated but transcended.

Samkara has not attempted the impossible synthesis. He keeps the viewpoints of the Absolute and relative, completely distinct. Philosophers in the West are enamoured of synthesis. Philosophy to them is the end of knowledge, and the end of knowledge is to build a synthesis of our experiences—scientific, ethical, æsthetic and religious. This all-comprehensive synthesis is the quest which has captivated the

Western mind. Philosophy is to them the relational integration of the concepts that different sciences advance. This is true especially of Modern Philosophy, wherein reason reigns supreme. Philosophy is in a sense system-building.

In India this rational instinct has all along been subordinated to intuitive soaring, reason to intuition. For system-building is after all a demand of synthetic understanding, but the demand of the integration of concepts is after all no sure foundation, and we are carried off our feet unawares by the deeper currents of the soul.

The Indian mind is, therefore, not so much anxious for a system as for apprehension. System satisfies the intellect; apprehension, the soul. And truth-seeking, if it is not a fashion, nor a profession, demands a complete freedom from the conceptual limitations. The Indian intellect, therefore, in system-building, has not been unmindful of the deep currents of the soul and has supported their logic by intuitions. Samkara has all along been faithful to this method.

In understanding Samkara we should have his method before us. He appeals to reason. He appeals to intuition in the same breath. Bradley has done the same. But he has not been able to free himself from the rational demand of a synthesis. He is, therefore, alternately pressed by a demand for a rational synthesis and a demand for transcendence. His logic cannot sacrifice the elements of experience, his mysticism cannot have them there. Being pressed by logical and mystical instincts he gives us a system which must dissolve itself either into the philosophy of the naked Absolute or into the philosophy of the concrete Absolute.

We have said already that Bradley's great charm lies apparently in offering us a system which seems to reconcile the widely divergent concepts in a setting which has a room for each one of them and at the same time offers

the prospect of an all-inclusive non-relational unity.

Samkara boldly rejects this theory. His is the firm conviction that value-concepts and truth are not identical. Truth is absolute, non-relational, not in the sense of embracing and transcending differences, but in the sense of completely denying relations. The Absolute cannot contain in it relations, either internal or external. External relations put a restriction to being, internal relations imply self-determination and limitation. Limitation is negation.

Some of the recent writers on Samkara indulge in thinking that Samkara's Absolute has in it a room for the internal distinctions. And they interpret Mâyâvâda in the sense of a modified monism. This is indeed grafting Bradleyean conceptions on Samkara. The relation and distinctions of the empiric order are distinctions true of the relativistic consciousness, and Samkara sees no bond of unity between the relative order and the Absolute. What passes for reality on the relative side of experience cannot be reality in the absolute sense. This, no doubt, takes away from the ultimate truth of relative experience ; but if Samkara is understood right, we cannot see how in his sense the relative forms an integral part of the Absolute.

The relative is true in one sense, the Absolute, in another. The relative is true because it appears, the Absolute is true because it endures. The appearance is true in relation to experience, the Absolute is true in spite of experience. Experience and Reality are two things, experience is related to the percipient, Reality is non-related identity. It is not even percipient ; percipient is concrete, percipience is abstract ; the concrete is relative, the abstract is absolute. Samkara presents side by side the undivided percipience and the concentrated percipient ; and the two have not the same reality. The limitation and the relatedness of

the latter cannot be in the former, and the two cannot have the same character. Perfection, growth, experience, value are possible to the percipient, but not to percipience. The Absolute is percipience, and as such transcends all conception of perfection, growth, harmony and beauty.

Samkara's Absolute is, therefore, in a sense the denial of all ethical and æsthetic concepts. The wealth of existence which is a constant charm to our moral and religious life has been denied an absolute value ; because they in their nature imply a limitation and restriction of being.

Samkara is, therefore, anxious to set aside the value-concepts by making the Absolute highly abstract without allowing the least compromise between the relative and the Absolute.

The Absolute cannot be relative, because the Absolute and the relative are opposite concepts. The Absolute transcends space, time and causality, the relative implies them. And Samkara cannot agree with those who seek a synthesis of the two, for such a synthesis is well-nigh impossible. This would suppose that the Absolute embraces the relative order in itself and still can transcend it. The relative order is in the non-relational Absolute. This sounds strange. How are the distinctions of the relative order composed in the Absolute? These distinctions should be real in the Absolute, if they are supposed to be contained within it. Such a supposition destroys the non-relatedness and impersonality of the Absolute. And even if they are supposed to be ideal or empirical, they are not *illusory*, they possess meaning : they cannot, therefore, cease to be barriers to the integrity of the Absolute. Since they are ideal, they have meaning for finite minds, but since they are not absolutely illusory, they must be supposed to be contained within the Absolute. Their ideality is partial presentation, their reality is in their being elements in the Absolute.

In this integrity their "solitariness" disappears and therefore they no longer belong to the realm of appearance. But the question can be raised: Have they existence at all in the Absolute or not? If distinct existence is denied, they are not there, being completely integrated in the Absolute. The identity of the *indiscernibles* does not help us, for this is no identity in the real sense. The *indiscernibles* retain their distinctions and the least distinction leaves a gulf between the Absolute and the appearance. Bradley is anxious not to concede any value to the appearance in isolation, for that to him is partial reality, but if the appearance is lost in the complete unity, it ceases to exist as appearance. Reality alone exists, and not appearance.

Samkara perceives this difficulty of intellect to spin out a relation between appearance and reality. And he frankly confesses that appearance and reality can never be synthesised. The truth of relativity is, therefore, to him a different grade of truth distinct from the Absolute. Samkara sees no possibility for theoretic reason to conceive an impossible synthesis between the empiric relations and the supra-relational identity. Naturally, therefore, he conceives a relational order out of touch with the Absolute. This order is, therefore, a separate order of meaning and values—real to the percipient subject, real psychologically, but not metaphysically. Samkara's system is open to the charge of some sort of dualism in the existence of two realms of existence—Reality and appearance. True, but this charge would have been telling, had Samkara attributed to them the same kind of existence. Truth in metaphysical sense is not truth in psychological sense. Samkara draws this distinction between the conceptions of truth. Here lies his genius. He does not declare experience to be nothing, nor does he extend to it, either individually or collectively, the absolute truth.

The intellect may claim the same category of truth of reality and appearance, and is anxious to spin out a synthesis on the ground of the equality of being of reality and appearance. The intellect cannot transcend its own limitations and illusions of thinking by relations, and therefore naturally the demand of the intellect will be to seek an explanation of the appearance in the reality. But this seeking illustrates the tendency of the intellect to attribute always a cause to an appearance. This attribution of an effect to a cause is the limitation of the intellect, and led by this limitation the intellect conceives appearance as grounded in reality.

Led by this demand of the intellect Samkara conceives a relation between appearance and reality; and he opines that intellect must read appearance in Brahman, but this location is true of the intellect, and not of Brahman; for what intellect supposes to be true in its own relative way is not necessarily true of the Absolute. The intellect posits the Absolute to explain the relative order and accepts the relative order therein, but it cannot transcend its own inherent limitation and apprehend reality in itself. Samkara anticipates Kant in the limitation he discerns in the intellect. The attribution of appearance to reality is, therefore, to Samkara an illusion of the intellect, though this illusion persists so long as the intellect is active.

This reference of the relative order to the Absolute is the demand of the intellect, for the intellect cannot conceive the relative or empiric order to be *causa sui* and completely self-existent. The relative must be dependent. This natural bent of the intellect posits a cause for the relative order.

But this native tendency gets a rude shock when the intellect is enlightened by philosophic intuition, and the enlightened intellect, therefore, gets rid of the realistic demand of explaining appearance by reality or finding the causal nexus of the empirical order.

Vivartavâda represents this philosophic vision, for it categorically states that the effect is non-different from the cause, or the effect, as distinct from the cause, is non-real. It is rather the denial of the prevailing causal concept, which obtains in the order of phenomena. The concept is ideal and useful for an ideal construction. It cannot touch reality. Samkara stoutly refuses to link the phenomenal to the noumenal, and he thinks that wisdom begins when we come to feel the illusoriness of appearance. The beauty of Mâyâvâda lies in frankly affirming and denying in the same moment the truth of appearance. The unthinking mind accepts the reality of the phenomenal world because it cannot transcend the limitations of the relativistic consciousness. Samkara's genius lies in declaring that the Absolute is beyond the relative order, and any systematisation in terms of relative concepts falls always short of reality. The intellect which thinks in relations cannot transcend relations and embrace a non-relational unity.

Any attempt, therefore, at reading empirical facts in the Absolute must fail. The explanation of the world-process as issuing out of the Absolute by self-alienation is a concession to the popular instinct; and Mâyâvâda satisfies the popular and the philosophic demand; the popular demand by pointing to the dynamism of Mâyâ lying at the root of creation, the philosophic demand by overstepping the realistic aspect of Mâyâ and declaring the creative order as illusory.

This declaration of the illusoriness of the phenomenal world with the collapse of the entire structure of the world of appearance and values, is what disturbs the modern mind and makes it feel dizzy, for it cuts the very ground of the construction wherefrom we derive our inspiration and wherein we find the satisfaction of our being. Mâyâvâda has, therefore, been never appealing either as a metaphysical theory or as a discipline in life.

The world of values—political, social, æsthetic, ethical and religious—determines the lines of our attractions, and life without these attractions is supposed to be empty and dull. And, naturally, a charge is levelled against Mâyâvâda that it takes away the joys from life and banishes the delights of existence. The modern tendency is confined to the charm of values and the delight of creation. It naturally overlooks the deep abyss of the soul, which passes beyond the delight of creation and the joy of expression. It is busy collecting experience, reading meaning in it, and is upheld by the belief that the Absolute is *meaning*, to put it in the words of Count Keyserling. Existence and meaning are identical.

Samkara thinks that to identify existence and meaning is to make existence restricted and limited. Meaning implies a reference besides self. An inward reference is no less a limitation, for either it has no meaning, or it implies a self-alienation. It implies an antithesis in existence, and antithesis is contradiction. Reality cannot involve self-contradiction. To say that meaning is not self-contradiction, but self-fulfilment, is to court the hypothesis of an ever-fulfilling Absolute, an ever-expressive meaning and an ever-realising value. Should it not be noted that such a meaning has the mark of a limitation, such a value, an imperfection?

On the relative side of experience such a meaning appears to be the only valid conception of being, for here the being cannot be conceived without its inherent meaning. Experience is meaning, meaning is existence.

But we cannot resist the temptation of pointing out that the directness and self-evidence of meaning proves nothing, for it is a fact neither direct nor self-evident. Experience causes impressions, impressions have by *themselves* no meaning. On the sense level, the distinction of sensation from a sensitised object, or the distinction

of sensation as a feeling or as an object is more conceptual than sensational. Thought overrules all experience, and is busy to understand experience by categories and even apply them where they cannot be strictly applied. The Absolute must deny relativity of any form, and thought in accepting meaning as Absolute really imposes itself upon reality, for meaning is the main character of thought, but not necessarily of reality. Thought has a limitation, reality has no limitation, thought is concrete, reality is abstract, thought works by relations, reality transcends relations. What is true of affections or sensations, is also true of reality. The affections are caused, reality is uncaused. The affections can be felt, but not known, and when they are known, they are no longer affections; similarly reality can be felt, but not known, for it denies the very relativity of knowledge.

Samkara agrees here with Bradley when Bradley presents the non-relational sentience, beyond and above relations, as the nearest approach of the description of reality. "Being and reality are, in brief, one thing with sentience." Bradley has drawn the analogy from the common psychic life and experience, Samkara has gone beyond that. He opines that nothing in our normal psychic experience can have a correct analogy to the super-normal experience. Deep sleep and concentrated meditation are the nearest approach, but they also are inadequate descriptions, for by the nature of the case the absolute intuition is unique. Sleep is diffusion of attention. The mental being may not be active. The psychic organism may be quite passive. And it has, therefore, the appearance of transcendent stillness, while it is only the drooping of psychic mentality and the apparent stillness of Mâyic dynamism. Sus-

tained effort of concentration can pass into mono-ideism, but is not the absolute consummation.

But even this is not the experience of the Absolute. The Absolute is beyond activity and passivity of mind mind can pass into a state where the subject-object relation apparently ceases, but this surely is not the experience of the Absolute. The Absolute is not touched by psychic relations or by psychic experiences. The psychic being is to be distinguished from the Absolute. Psychism is fine mentality which can pass into super-sensations, super-normal experiences; but even these blessed experiences in expansion of our being and vision are to be sharply distinguished from Vedantic intuition. Vedantic intuition stands as the supreme fact, non-relational without any point of concentration. Psychic vision is penetration into nature's finer aspects and finer expressions of life. It is still a penetration into the finer aspect of life but it cannot reach beyond the relativistic consciousness. Intuition, on the other hand, is the essence of Being. It is the Absolute, beyond space, beyond time, beyond experience—psychic and spiritual. Spiritual experiences, as compared to it, are finer currents of our super-mind, which have meaning, joy and expression, but intuition is beyond such expressions, though it is expression itself. It is beyond the touches of delight, though it is delight in itself. Nothing on this side of experience, however sublime and fine, can even be a shadow of it, for in this height and depth of transcendence our experience is so completely changed that no language can describe it. It is, therefore, absolutely unique and remains ever as such. When one has an access to it, one can only indicate it as that it is not this, not this—*Neti, Neti.*

(Concluded)

AN INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

[In order to truly appreciate the following correspondence, the reader has to be informed of the occasion which gave rise to it and also to remember the relation that existed between the correspondents. At the outset of the first letter below, the Swami speaks of "the hard raps" that he gave to his correspondent. These were nothing but a very strong letter which he wrote to her in vindication of his position, on the 1st February, 1895, which will be found reproduced in pp. 56 of the fifth volume of the Complete Works of the Swami. It was a very beautiful letter full of the fire of a *Sannyâsin's* spirit, and we request our readers to go through it before they peruse the following text. Mary Hale, to whom the Swami wrote, was one of the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Hale whom the Swami used to address as father and mother. The Misses Hale were like sisters to him and they also in their turn held the Swami in great love and reverence. Some of the finest letters of the Swami were written to them.

As will be seen, a few portions of the following have been published before. But we are confident the text does not, therefore, lose in charm. In this the Swami is seen in a new light, playful and intensely human, yet keyed to the central theme of his life, *Brahma-jnâna*.—Ed.]

NEW YORK,
15th Feb., '95.

Now Sister Mary,
You need not be sorry
For the hard raps I gave you,
You know full well
Though you like me tell
With my whole heart I love you.

The babies I bet,
The best friends I met,
Will stand by me in weal and woe.
And so will I do,
You know it too.

Life, name or fame, even heaven forego
For the sweet sisters four
Sans reproche et sans peur,
The trust, noblest, steadfast, best.

The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
The flame stirred up doth blaze,
The desert air resounds the calls
Of heart-struck lion's rage.

The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast,
When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
Great ones unfold their best.

Let eyes grow dim and heart grow faint,
And friendship fail and love betray,
Let Fate its hundred horrors send,
And clotted darkness block the way,

All nature wear one angry frown,
To crush you out—still know, my soul,
You are Divine. March on and on,
Nor right nor left but to the goal.

Nor angel I, nor man nor brute,
Nor body, mind, nor he or she,
The books do stop in wonder mute
To tell my nature ; I am He.

Before the sun, the moon, the earth,
 Before the stars or comets free,
 Before e'en time has had its birth,
 I was, I am and I will be.

The beauteous earth, the glorious sun,
 The calm sweet moon, the spangled sky,
 Causation's laws do make them run ;
 They live in bonds, in bonds they die.

And mind its mantle dreamy net
 Cast o'er them all and holds them fast.
 In warp and woof of thought are set,
 Earth, hells and heavens, or worst or best.

Know these are but the outer crust
 All space and time, all effect, cause,
 I am beyond all sense, all thoughts,
 The witness of the universe.

Not two or many, 'tis but one,
 And thus in me all me's I have ;
 I cannot hate, I cannot shun
 Myself from me, I can but love.

From dreams awake—from bonds be free,
 Be not afraid. This mystery,
 My shadow, cannot frighten me,
 Know once for all that I am He.

Well, so far my poetry. Hope you are all right. Give my love to mother and Father Pope. I am busy unto death and have almost no time to write even a line. So excuse me if later on I am rather late in writing.

Yours eternally,
 VIVEKANANDA

Miss M. B. H. sent Swami the following doggerel in reply :

The monk he would a poet be
 And wooed the muse right earnestly ;
 In thought and word he could well beat her,
 What bothered him though was the meter.

His feet were all too short too long,
 The form not suited to his song ;
 He tried the sonnet, lyric, epic,
 And worked so hard, he waxed dyspeptic.

While the poetic mania lasted
 He e'en from vegetables fasted,
 Which Léon had with tender care
 Prepared for Swami's dainty fare.

One day he sat and mused alone—
 Sudden a light around him shone,
 The "still small voice" his thoughts inspire
 And his words glow like coals of fire.

And coals of fire they proved to be
 Heaped on the head of contrite me—
 My scolding letter I deplore
 And by forgiveness o'er and o'er.

The lines you sent to your sisters four
 Be sure they'll cherish evermore
 For you have made them clearly see
 The one main truth that "all is He."

Then Swami:

In days' of yore,
 On Ganga's shore preaching,
 A hoary priest was teaching
 How Gods they come
 As Sita Ram,
 And gentle Sita pining weeping.
 The sermons end
 They homeward wend their way
 The hearers musing, thinking.

When from the crowd
 A voice aloud
 This question asked beseeching seeking—
 "Sir tell me, pray
 Who were but they
 These Sita Ram you were teaching speaking!"

So Mary Hale,
 Allow me tell
 You mar my doctrines wronging, baulking.
 I never taught
 Such queer thought
 That all was God—unmeaning talking.

But this I say,
 Remember pray,
 That God is *true*, all else is *nothing*,
 This world is dream
 Though true it seem,
 And only truth is *He* the living.
 The real *me* is none but *He*,
 And never never *matter* changing.

With undying love and gratitude to you all. . . .

VIVEKANANDA.

And then Miss M. B. H.:

The difference I clearly see
 'Twixt Tweedledum and tweedledee—
 That is a proposition sane
 But truly 'tis beyond my vein
 To make your Eastern logic plain.

If "God is truth, all else is naught,"
 This "world a dream," 'delusion up wrought,'
 What can exist which God is not?

All those who "many" see have much to fear,
 He only lives to whom the "One" is clear.
 So again I say
 In my poor way,
 I cannot see but that all's He,
 If I'm in Him and He in me.

Then the Swami replied :

Of temper quick, a girl unique,
A freak of nature she,
A lady fair, no question there,
Rare soul is Miss Mary.
Her feelings deep she cannot keep,
But creep they out at last,
A spirit free, I can foresee,
Must be of fiery cast.

Tho' many a lay her muse can bray,
And play piano too,
Her heart so cool, chills as a rule
The fool who comes to woo.
Though Sister Mary, I hear they say
The sway your beauty gains,
Be cautious now and do not bow,
However sweet, to chains.
For 'twill be soon, another tune
The moon-struck mate will hear
If his will but clash, your words will hash
And smash his life I fear.
These lines to thee, Sister Mary,
Free will I offer, take
"Tit for tat,"—a monkey chat,
For monk alone can make.

MY REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

It was in the year 1897, the year of my graduation, that I had the rare privilege of seeing at Calcutta the world-famous Hindu monk, the epoch-making Swami Vivekananda, in the house of the late Babu Balaram Bose, a devout *Bhakta* well-known to the disciples of Paramahansa Ramakrishna. I went to see him because I was profoundly interested in his message, though its significance was not yet quite clear to me. A few words may be necessary to explain my interest.

I was inquisitive from my boyhood and the question of religion had a strange fascination for my mind. Just as in these days the predominant interest of my countrymen is politics, so in my boyhood their predominant interest was religion. It was a time of great religious movements and controversies. There was a constant play of action and reaction. On the one hand, there was the rising tide of Brahmoism

with which most enlightened men were in sympathy. On the other, there was the frantic effort of the so-called orthodoxy with its pseudo-scientific and fanciful interpretation of the religion of Hindus. Then, again, there was Theosophy with its Mahatmas, occultism and spirit-world to which many educated people were attracted because they did not like the Westernised outlook of the Brahmos, and further because they felt flattered by the uncritical eulogy of everything Hindu by Colonel Olcott of America and Mrs. Annie Besant of England. It must be said at the same time that a not inconsiderable section of University-bred young men were free-thinkers, rationalists or agnostics who swore by Mill, Comte, Spencer, Huxley and Haeckel and thought that all religions were equally false. Such was my intellectual *milieu* as a boy and a youth. I listened to the discussions of my elders and sometimes took part in

the discussions. Religion to me was not yet a craving of the soul. It was more or less a question of intellectual interest. Though born in an orthodox Hindu family, yet the influence that I felt most was that of the Brahmo Samaj and also that of a near relative who was an out and out agnostic. With the social programme of the Brahmos I had every sympathy but their theology I could not accept. I was swaying between two forces—Brahmoism and Agnosticism.

It is in this state of mind that I finished my school education and entered college. It is in the first year class, if I remember aright, that I first heard of Ramakrishna,—yet I did not hear of him from any fellow-countryman of mine but from a foreigner—no less a personage than Professor Max Müller himself. I just happened to read two articles from his pen in *The Nineteenth Century*—one entitled *Esoteric Buddhism*, a scathing criticism of Madame Blavatsky and her theosophy and the other *A Real Mahatman*. This Real Mahatman was no other than our Bhagawan Ramakrishna. A new horizon opened before me. A new light flashed forth. And all this happened at a Muffassil town.

About a year after this, I read in the papers all about the famous Parliament of Religions at Chicago and the resounding triumph of Swami Vivekananda there. Who was this Vivekananda? I came to know soon after that he was the chief disciple of Ramakrishna, the Real Mahatman of Professor Max Müller. I was eager to know all about the man and his message. Unfortunately I was not present at Calcutta at the time when the whole city turned out to receive him with the tremendous ovation that signalises the return of a conquering hero. I read, however, glowing accounts of the event and saw that honour such as this had never fallen to the lot of any man on the Indian soil.

From this time onward I read the reports of all the speeches he delivered

at different places in India. I felt that it was the spirit of India herself that breathed through his utterance. Such force, such fire was beyond the utmost stretch of my imagination. Several speeches of Keshab Chandra Sen I had read before. I had great admiration for his style, eloquence and religious fervour. But here was a new atmosphere altogether, a new accent, a new emphasis, a new outlook at once national and universal. Here was Hinduism in all its phases, but how different from the Hinduism of the hide-bound Sanatanists, pseudo-revivalists, the Scribes and Pharisees of India! I was under a spell. The two speeches that impressed me most were his Calcutta Town-hall speech and his Lahore address on Vedanta. When I read the Lahore address I was a B.A. student at Calcutta.

I eagerly waited for an opportunity to see the man. The opportunity came, as I have said, in 1897. I went to see Swami Vivekananda in the Calcutta residence of the late Babu Balaram Bose in company with a class-fellow of mine, Babu Narendra Kumar Bose.

We entered a hall which was full to overflowing. The people assembled there were for the most part students of the Calcutta colleges. They were all seated cross-legged on the floor covered with *duree* and *pharas*. In the centre was the seat meant for Swamiji. I managed somehow to occupy a place in the hall and we all eagerly waited for the arrival of Swamiji. Perfect silence prevailed. A few minutes passed and the Swami stepped in. His gait was leonine and the dignity of his bearing simply royal. His frame was athletic and robust. He had a *gairic alkhalla* (ochre cloak) on, his feet were bare and his head, chin and lips clean shaven—altogether a striking personality. He had the look of a man born to command. He was soon seated and then he looked at us. His large eyes beamed with genius and spiritual fire. He spoke in Bengali interlarded with English. Words flowed from his lips

and we heard him with rapt attention. Each word of his was like a spark of fire. His manner was impassioned. It was clear to all that here was a man with a message. His awakening power was wonderful. We heard him and felt aroused. A new spirit was breathed into us. Here was a man of faith in an age of doubt, sincere to the backbone, a dynamo of supernal force. To have seen him was education. To have heard him was inspiration. It was the most memorable day in my life and it is impossible for me ever to lose its recollection.

What did he tell us all? To be strong and self-confident, to renounce and serve. Strength was the burden of all that he said. He poured torrential scorn upon what he called our "negative education" and spoke enthusiastically on man-making. He gave a vivid picture of our country's degradation and the misery of the masses. How he felt for the poor, the down-trodden and the oppressed! If we had a millionth part of his feeling, the face of the country would change at once. He spoke of the greatness of Hinduism and proudly said: "It is my ambition to conquer the world by Hindu thought—to see Hindus everywhere from the North Pole to the South Pole." As he uttered these words I saw in him the very Napoleon of Religion. I saw the warrior's heart throbbing beneath the yellow robe of the *Sannyasin*. Not a mild Hindu at all this Swami Vivekananda but the most aggressive Hindu I have ever seen in my life. He was made of the same stuff of which Alexander and Cæsar were made—only his *rôle* was different.

Some of his words are still ringing in my ears and they are these: "You must have steel nerves and cast-iron muscles. A moment's vigorous life is better than years of jelly-fish existence. Cowards die many times before their death. An honest atheist is a thousand times better than a hypocritical theist. Don't be jealous, for the slaves are jealous. Virtue is heroism—

from *vir* in Latin which means *man* and which again is the same word as *vira* in Sanskrit."

After about two hours the Swami left the hall and we dispersed in different directions. I returned to my lodgings but the words of the Swami filled the air. I could think of nothing but Swami Vivekananda. There stood his heroic figure whichever way I turned.

I could not resist the temptation of seeing him again and so on the next day I went once more to the house of the late Babu Balaram. On this day there was no great gathering. Swamiji was seated in the verandah on an *asana* surrounded by a group of his brother-disciples. The *Brahma Sutras* with Sankara's commentaries were being read out by one of them and Swamiji passed explanatory remarks here and there. To-day's atmosphere was different altogether. It was all very quiet. Soon after the reading was finished one of the Swami's brother-disciples spoke of the spirit-world and read an extract from a theosophical book. Swamiji at once came down upon him and extinguished him completely. I saw that the Swami was a hater of spookism. He clearly said that all this was weakening and debilitating and had nothing to do with true religion. After this many light topics were introduced and then Swamiji laughed and joked like a child. Here was another mood. I said to myself: Is it the same Swami I saw yesterday—the thundering Swami in dead earnest?

It was about a year after this that I saw the Swami once more—and this time on the platform. Now I was face to face with Vivekananda the orator. The scene was the Star Theatre of Calcutta. The occasion was the introduction of Sister Nivedita to the Calcutta public. The hall was crammed to suffocation. On the dais were seated many distinguished persons. I remember only Sir Jagadis Bose and Sir Ananda Charlu among them. Swami Vivekananda was in his best form. He wore a *gairic* turban and a long-

flowing robe which was also *gairic* in hue. He introduced Sister Nivedita in a neat little speech. The Sister addressed the meeting in a graceful style. Then rose Swami Vivekananda and he spoke on his foreign policy. The speech is to be found in the Mayavati Memorial Edition of his Complete Works. He brought forward a scheme of his future missionary work in the West. The speech was full of fire. Such thrilling voice, rich intonation, variation of pitch, strong and sonorous accent with occasional explosion as of the bolt of heaven I have never heard in my life nor am I likely to hear again. Sometimes he paced to and fro on the platform as he spoke and folded his arms across his chest. Sometimes he faced the audience and waved his hand. His expressions flowed free and fast with the rush and impetuosity of a mountain torrent. His words were like the roaring of a cataract. Well might *The New York Herald* say: He is an orator by divine right. Altogether a more majestic, striking and magnetic personality it is hard to conceive. We heard him spell-bound. Each word was an arrow that went straight to the heart.

Such is my recollection of Swami Vivekananda. To fully understand his message I read subsequently all his speeches and writings and almost all about his Master. There is not a single problem of our individual, social and political life, that he has not touch-

ed and illuminated. He has given a new impulse to the country. So far as I am concerned, he is growing more and more vivid to me with the lapse of years, and I see his stature dilated to-day "like Teneriffe or Atlas." His message is the message of freedom, strength, fearlessness and self-confidence. It is the eternal truths of our religion that he has preached in a new way, in modern terms, and he has also shown how these truths are to be applied to the present conditions of India and the rest of the world. A more constructive thinker and inspiring teacher I have not seen in my life. I do not know a single self-sacrificing Indian worker of the present century, who has not been influenced more or less by his thoughts, words and example. More than anybody else he has made India respected abroad. Many a child of the West has found in his message the solace of his life and the solace of his death. It is true that at the present moment the predominant interest of our country has become political, but the better minds believe with Swami Vivekananda that spirituality must be the basis of all our activities. It is difficult to say what form our national reconstruction will exactly take, it is difficult to predict anything about the future of the world as a whole, but I sincerely believe that the ideas and ideals of Swami Vivekananda are destined to play a very important part in the history of the human race. May his influence grow from more to more!

BEAUTIES OF ISLAM

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

I

The secret of Islam seems curiously slow to yield itself up to Christian eyes.

If it is not true that our common conception of the Prophet is of a bold bad man (to quote a distinguished Mohammedan the other day), at least most of us will acknowledge that the

name calls to mind chiefly glimpses of flashing sword-blades, charging horsemen, and the sound of Moslem warcries in one part of the world or another. That is to say, the boundaries and antagonisms of the Faith are well defined in our thought; but of all that makes it a religion, all that it gives of Living Waters to its people, all that it

offers of tenderness and consolation to the human heart,—of all, in a word, that is positive in it, we have received no hint. Much as though our own creed should be associated only with its *autos-da-fé* or its witch-drownings, while its call to the weary and heavy-laden, its passion for service, and its mystic Gift of Bread and Wine were all forgotten!

Even the missionaries, who have laboured so long and earnestly among the Hindi-speaking peoples of India, have not yet come back to tell us the hopes and fears, the loves and hates, by which these live,—although the two religions are so allied that a Moham-
medan mosque is simply a Christian Church, in a climate where the nave requires no roof! (The very sanctuary and baptistery are represented.) Yet one would suppose that if a knowledge of French is advantageous in teaching a Frenchman English, the corresponding equipment would be even more desirable in dealing with such delicate and complex adjustments as those of a national religion!

Not one of us, however, can have gone through the great cities of Northern India without fretful beating of our wings against the bars of our own ignorance. That magnificent rainbow of Indo-Saracenic architecture, whose ends touch earth as it were, at Lucknow and Lahore, speaks for itself of impulse as deep, of faith as noble and abiding, as any that ever lived in the soul of man.

Not alone in the vastness of a Jumma Musjid, nor in the solemnity of the lofty Chancel-screen at Kutab, but even in the tiny Oratory of the Emperors of Delhi, we have some of the world's supreme utterances of the religious sense.

Never can I forget my own visit to this last, surely in truth, the pearl of mosques. It was evening. While the light lasted, we had all examined the decorations—carving of acanthus patterns in low relief of half-transparent marble on the pillars, and the almost

sob of awe with which we had entered into this presence of Purity-made-Visible, had been justified. But now the others had drifted on, and the sun had set. I sat alone on the steps of the mosque. Everywhere the same glistening grey-white marble surrounded me. Even the porch was but a space of it in deeper shadow. Not a sound came from the world without; not a stone of wall or tower obtruded on the eye. Perfect stillness. Utter remoteness. Overhead, the sky, a few stars, and one green bough could alone be seen. I stayed, and stayed, till twilight had deepened into night. In such a place one is alone with God.

It was, in fact, a little bit of the wilderness conquered and kept in the midst of the proudest palace in the world. Oh for that desert where the Prophet was called from amidst the sheep-folds on the hill-sides! Only he who has watched there knows the meaning of that word solitude. Only he who knows that, can even dimly guess at the meaning of the Unity of God.

But if the points of contact between Christianity and Islam are hard to come at, they do nevertheless exist. Perhaps nowhere more completely than in the sentiment about Death.

For we must remember that all that poetry that associates itself inevitably with earth-burial belongs as much to the Mussalman as to ourselves; nay, far more. It is his by birthright, whereas we only ceased to cremate when we became Semitised by our religion. Only those who have lived in communities of both kinds can realise how complete is the loss of him whose body has been burnt, as compared with the abiding memory that clings about a grave. And to the Mohammedan, going at nightfall to place a lamp and fragrant flowers on the last resting-place of the beloved, it is infinite consolation to remember the Benediction of the Prophet. For it is written that he passed by graves in Medina, and, full of that great and solemn sense of the pity and mystery of life, with which his soul was charged,

he "turned his face towards them, and said, 'Peace be to you, O people of the graves! God forgive us and you! Ye have passed on before us, and we are following you.' "

But we have a more direct expression of the thing we seek in that poem translated from the early Arabic by Lyall and quoted by Lane-Poole:

"Take thou thy way by the grave wherein
thy dear one lies—
Umm-el-Ala—and lift up thy voice: Ah!
if she could hear!
How art thou come, for very fearful
wast thou,
To dwell in a land where not the most
valiant goes, but with a quaking heart!
God's love be thine, and His mercy,
O thou dear lost one!
Not meet for thee is the place of shadow
and loneliness.
And a little one hast thou left behind—
God's ruth on her!
She knows not what to bewail thee means,
yet weeps for thee.
For she misses those sweet ways of thine
which thou hadst with her,
And the long night-wails, and we strive
to hush her to sleep in vain.
When her crying smites in the night upon
my sleepless ears,
Straightway mine eyes brimful are filled
from the well of tears."

As the mystery of death constitutes one of the two or three great religious motives of the human soul, so the attitude in which it is met must always be an ultimate standard of criticism between rival formulæ.

Now Nineteenth Century Christianity has resulted in two great utterances on this subject: Newman's "Dream of Gerontius" and Whitman's "When Lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloomed." Let me quote from the second of these:

"Dark mother, always gliding near with
soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of
fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee,—I glorify
thee above all—

I bring thee a song, that when thou must
indeed come,
Come unfalteringly.
Approach, strong Deliveress!
When it is so, when thou hast taken them,
I joyously sing the dead.
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death."

Truly a heroic word! The Stoic's sigh of relief, adding to itself the Christian impulse, has borne flower in this cry of passion and welcome, so like the old Norseman's ringing cheer.

And what of the faith of Islam in this regard?

Who that remembers the Mahdi's letter to the Queen can ask? Mad, ignorant outburst as it was, there was yet a wild poetry and a wondrous nobility about some parts of it. "Know, Madam," or words to the same effect, he wrote, "that the men of my nation are not as other men, for God has given to my people a strange love. As others for cool waters, so do they thirst for Death."

Surely, if the sense of manhood and victory with which one faces the King of Terrors be a proof of greatness at all, no creed of the world has more superbly met the test than this of the Arab Camel-driver. Only abject meanness and a hopeless ignorance of psychology could prompt the suggestion that it is the sense-gratifications of the after-state that the Moslem craves. For Heavens and Paradises, mansions and palm-branches, Angels and Peris, are all alike but the Kindergarten toys of imagination, whereby Humanity is brought to recognise its own inner feeling. And of what that deep need of the soul really is, we can learn from a voice that spoke the liquid Erse amongst the Irish mountains seven centuries ago. "What is the good of living?" cried this soul; "Our servants can do that for us! There is nothing worth possessing but the Infinite, and only the Dead possess that!" That is the secret. We all long for the Infinite. Death seems to be the gate, and so it

happens that a man's bearing in face of it is a matter of final importance to us all, and the spirit it produces a supreme test of the nobility of any theory of Truth.

Again, those who study the Koran deeply are forced to the conclusion that what stands for the gospel of an army on the path of conquest was really born of an overwhelming emotion of love and pity for the world. Mahomet's constant synonym for God is "The Compassionate, the Merciful," and he is perpetually reiterating the message of forgiveness of sins and charity to all men. That he himself was as much saint as conqueror, the account of his entry into Mecca proves:

"Mohammad forthwith marched upon Mekka with ten thousand men, and the city, despairing of defence, surrendered. The day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koreysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him, and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peaceably; no house was robbed, no women insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. Going to the Kaaba, Mohammad stood before each of the three hundred and sixty idols, and pointed to it with his staff, saying, 'Truth is come, and falsehood is fled away!' and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols and household gods of Mekka and round about were destroyed. It was thus that Mohammad entered again his native city."

Well indeed may our author add:

"Through all the annals of conquest there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one."

This is not the picture of one who lets loose a pandemonium on his fellows.

Further we must remember that if Ali is the great figure of its later history, and military splendour the great medium of its development, at least Arab Religion is no more anomalous than our own in this respect.

For Christianity was preached by a still gentler master, and its conquests—from Peru to Khartoum what record!—have been ten times fiercer and more sustained than those of Mahomet.

The fact is, a new religious teacher always stirs in men that sentiment of Humanity that we of this age are prone to call the sense of nationality, and in exact proportion as that is strong and active, do its limitations become vividly defined. Within its own boundaries, Mohammedanism was the most tremendous assertion of the Rights of the People and of Woman that the world has ever seen: for that very reason, perhaps, it carried proselytism to the people of the land of ignorance with fire and sword.

II

At this point, however, we come upon a very grave objection that may be urged against the Faith.

Is it not true that its range of characters is somewhat narrow, and that its choice of ideals is therefore too exclusively heroic or chivalrous? Of that Strength-in-Meekness which the Christian reckons the height of human achievement, of the Divine Manifestation of Forgiveness, of the realised Ideal of Suffering Manhood, what trace is there in Islam?

The answer lies in those groups of mourners that one meets everywhere in Northern India throughout the days and nights of the Mohurrum.

That the figures of Hasan and Husain stand alone in this respect may be due either to their lack of due immensity to attract disciples, or, more probably, to the fact that the genius of Mussalman peoples has not lain in the way of producing the long succession of martyrs

and ascetics by which Europe has witnessed to the Worship of Pain. But the ideal is acknowledged. "The Man of Sorrows" receives the passionate devotion of his kindred, in this as in every other system that is true to the heart of man.

It is a wonderful picture that they carry us back to—these huge processions, and these knots of wandering worshippers at May-time. "Hasan!" cries one, beating his breast with his clenched hands, and "Husain!" replies another, making the same gesture of despair. The emotion is real and absorbing. Beside it, our own intermittent observance of Holy Week and Good Friday is slack and pale. The very children are broken-hearted, and some years back an aged prince who led the procession through Calcutta in the last stages of physical exhaustion from long fasting and fatigue, was seen to strike himself till the blood flowed. There is no pretence about this; it, at least, is in dead earnest. But what is the motive from which it all proceeds?

Strange to say, there is, in the case of the Sunnis at any rate, an element in it of national penance. It is a public declaration that "We are of the people who slew the martyrs! We loaded them with sorrows and put them to the death! We!—We!—We!— Oh Hasan! Oh Husain!" Is this not a generous offering to lay at the feet of Justice?*

How long the Mohurrum has been observed in this fashion it would doubtless be difficult to say. What we do know is that it is more than twelve centuries now since Husain's little camp of thirty persons was pitched on the bank of the Euphrates, during nine weary days, bent on advancing at all costs to answer the call of Korfa to him whom it regarded as the rightful Khalif.

* It is only fair to say that this acknowledgment of complicity is entirely unconscious. The celebration of the Mohurrum was originated by the Shias and copied by the Sunnis. Aurungzebe was so well aware of its penitential significance that he tried in vain to stop its observance by the latter.

Hasan was already dead of poison, and his brother must have known that death was the only possible end of his own attitude.

Yet as long as the great camp of Yuzed's general barred the way, he could not proceed without swearing what he held to be false, that Yuzed was the true Khalif. And he would not swear.

Amongst all that is impressive in the scene and story, nothing is more so than the perfect absence from Husain of all personal ambition. Because it was false, he would not swear; not for a moment because he desired the Khalifate for himself. And as day followed day, and the cloud of destiny settled down more darkly over the devoted little band, not one murmur of rebellion or impatience escaped the lips of the gentle captain. He could die, when the moment came, as an Arab noble should, but meantime he could neither be treacherous to the Prophet's last intention nor mean in his estimate of dignity and truth.

It was on that fateful tenth morning when the army of the mighty Yuzed came up and once more offered the old terms or instant annihilation, and when he, standing up, laid his statement before the troops,—it was then that was enacted one of the grandest proofs of honesty and courage that the world has ever seen. For Hur, that very general who had so effectually cut off his progress during these past nine days, convinced at last of the truth of the chieftain's cause, threw himself at his feet and prayed his pardon, and then, in spite of Husain's entreaties that they should not court instant death, deserted to his standard with some forty followers!

Husain's force was now seventy, instead of thirty, against four thousand. Battle must be given at once, but Moslem chivalry forbidding the massacre of a handful, single combats became the order of the day.

Husain's, however, was the blood of great warriors, and so it happened that at last he stood, with all he loved, save

one infant son, dead around him, alone upon the field.

The mighty soldier seized the babe, and with it in his arms was once more about to address his foes, when some recreant's arrow was let loose and lodged in the heart of the child.

And then the hero's passion of wrath and sorrow broke all bounds. Throwing the dead baby from him, he plunged into the thick of the soldiery, and even the bravest, it is said, drew back from the sight of that strong right arm, ere he fell, pierced with many wounds.

Is it not a wonderful story? Chivalry raised to the white heat of Religion!

Knighthood consecrated in Sainthood! The proud noble, impervious to insult and outrage, dying to avenge a little child! The great captain who would stand by the right even to the death, though to do so stamped himself culprit to the end of time!

It does not strike the distinctive notes of ethical ideal that we find in Buddha, St. Francis of Assisi, or Ignatius Loyola. But of its own kind the Mohurrum stands supreme, and verily I think that amongst these heroes the angelic soul of Joan of Arc might have found its kin.

PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

THE GURU

In our last article we mentioned that the choice of food depends essentially on one's spiritual outlook and temperament. Some foods are suitable to some kinds of spiritual temperament, others to other kinds. But the question of questions is how to find out what is one's temperament. No doubt some guess can be made by a person himself. But there is a great chance of there being mistakes. No, it is no exaggerated fear. Those who have undergone some spiritual struggle already, know that when we come to close grips with our mind and nature in order to mould them properly, they reveal undreamt-of complexities. The mind assumes unthinkable forms. There are so many twists and angles and contortions! The likes of to-day become the dislikes of to-morrow. What we have all along thought to be our predominant tendencies leave us all on a sudden, and their places are taken by quite novel inclinations. Under such circumstances, one's own judgment proves indeed the proverbial broken reed. Some outside help becomes necessary to point us our way. Hence the necessity of a *Guru*.

The modern mind is so unnaturally egotistic and individualistic that it is

inclined to think the necessity of a *Guru* as imaginary. Is not the truth already in us? Is not God everywhere? Why should we need an intermediary? These are all fine sayings, but altogether meaningless. Yes, God is everywhere, and the truth is inherent in us. But it is a fact that in spite of His omnipresence and omnipotence, He has let us wallow in the mire of worldliness for ever so many lives, and in spite of our being the possessor of the treasure of truth, we are continuing as ignorant as ever. It is best, therefore, to give up such meaningless talks and proceed as serious-minded, practical persons. Somehow or other, God has made our access to Him extremely difficult. Again and again the saints of God have declared that it is only rarely that man can realise God. And even then, through what troubles and tribulations! We cannot argue here. We can only meekly accept the statement of the inexorable truth. That is His will,—He would not let Himself be known easily. Knowing this, man has to do his utmost to realise Him. And in this attempt, the need of a *Guru* is paramount.

We know so little of our own self! And so little, again, of the reality! It is all mysterious. Knowledge of anything is so difficult to attain! The little learning that we acquire with the utmost labour of a whole life, has to be done so with the help of so many persons! Without their help, our progress would have been very slow, if not impossible. And yet the learning and knowledge of even the greatest scholar is nothing, is a mere speck, compared with the infinity that remains yet unexplored. And what is God-realisation? It is nothing else than knowing this Infinity. It is the totality of knowledge. Consider, then, what amount and kind of help we must have before we can make any real progress in the path of spirituality. This path is beset with innumerable obstacles. It is a narrow path, not straight and broad. Who would tell you if you are going along the correct path or have lost your way? The *Guru* alone can do so.

Nor is that all. Merely a *knowledge* of the path, mere direction, is not enough. You must also have *power* to walk it unflinching and untired. You require to have a new strength infused into your mind,—a power and a courage that will take you whole through the tremendous struggles of spiritual life. We know we have infinite strength within us. But this also we know that that strength has not availed us much so long, that it is somehow under a magic lock and key and will not come out. The *Guru* infuses strength into the disciple. And when there are difficulties on the way, when we lose our way or get entangled, he graciously places our feet again on the right path and unties the knots that bind us. Even the bravest heart, without these aids, will quail before the difficulties and fail to reach the goal.

Such has been the experience of all who have reached God. The modern outlook in this respect is, therefore, unreal. The fact is, such an outlook is the very antithesis of the spiritual out-

look. The modern man cries out: "What! shall I make myself an unquestioning slave to another? Is it not unbecoming of the dignity of man?" and so on and so forth. But the self that cries out like this, is the creation and sustainer of ignorance. It is by rejecting and transcending it that we gain the spiritual outlook. If we hold on to this ignorance-begotten self, how can we ever be spiritual? It is a mistake to think that the submission required of the disciple is slavery. There is a great, very great element of freedom in it. For you do not submit to an ordinary erring man. The *Guru* is not a man like us, selfish, bound by desires, caught in the meshes of the ego, and ignorant. His personality is not like ours, finite, narrow and crooked. It is almost one with the Impersonal. His mind is suffused with the Light Divine. His thoughts and actions do not proceed from the little self, the play-ground of passions, but from a Divine source. Even his body is a transformed one. He is the very Ideal personified. To serve him, is to serve the Ideal itself,—the Ideal become man. To submit to him is to identify oneself with God Himself. Through the *Guru*, we come in contact with the *Ista* (the Chosen Deity) Himself. The *Guru* and *Ista* are identical, they are not different. Through the *Guru*, by submitting to him and serving him, we make acquaintance with the mysteries of the Lord and the intricacies of spiritual life. Therefore, the holy books have prescribed that we must realise the Lord by questioning men of realisation and by *servicing* them. Without service, their instructions will not fructify in our life.

And here is a deep truth. All words are not the same. There are words and words; and the same words, again, have different effects according to circumstances. The words of a man of realisation have a peculiar potency. On the surface, they may be simple and commonplace. Any other man perhaps can speak them. Perhaps we ourselves know them. Yet there is a world

of difference. To listen to them from the lips of a man of God is to derive a unique benefit. But even the words of a man of God do not act the same way on all. Much depends on the *shraddhâ*, faith, earnestness and reverence, of the listener. Our *shraddhâ* evokes a great power in the heart of the speaker, and his words become surcharged with a peculiar power, and that power tells tremendously on our life. Much depends on our own attitude. If we are not earnest, even the words of a man of realisation will prove comparatively futile in our life. Hence the necessity of service.

But, it may be legitimately asked: Are all *Gurus* of such transcendental

character? It is true, they are not. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that before we make one our *Guru*, we closely examine him and watch him for long, and when he fulfils all expectations, we may submit to him. Not until then. But once we have accepted him as our *Guru*, even if we subsequently discover any defects in him, we must never pay any attention to them. We must know him as God Himself and give him our whole-hearted allegiance. And indeed, is not God in every man? And what is impossible to a strong faith?

We hope to continue the topic in our next article.

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

CHAPTER XIII

(HAPPINESS)

जनक उवाच ।

अकिञ्चनभवं स्वास्थ्यं कौपीनत्वेऽपि दुर्लभम् ।

त्यागादाने विहायास्मादहमासे यथासुखम् ॥१॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

अकिञ्चनभवं Originating in one who is without anything स्वास्थ्यं soundness of spirits कौपीनत्वे in the state of having a loin-cloth अपि even दुर्लभं rare अस्मात् therefore त्यागादाने renunciation and acceptance विहाय giving up अहं I यथासुखं happily आसे live.

Janaka said :

1. The soundness¹ of spirits that springs in one who² is without anything, is rare even³ when one possesses but a loin-cloth. Therefore,⁴ giving up renunciation and acceptance, I live happily.

[¹ Soundness etc.—literally *Swâsthya* means the state of being established in oneself.

² Who etc.—Who, being established in the perfection of the eternal Self, knows himself as distinct from everything of the world and is, therefore, completely unattached.

This spiritual tranquillity is uncaused. It is not a product like the joy of health, riches, beauty or fame. It is inherent in the eternal Self. So long as we are attached to even the slightest thing, the eternal Self and its joy cannot be realised.

³ Even etc.—A very high state of renunciation and spiritual realisation is indicated. Even the wearing of the loin-cloth is indicative of the relative consciousness.

⁴ Therefore etc.—Renunciation also presupposes egoism and attachment. True happiness, therefore, consists in realising a still higher state.]

कुत्रापि खेदः कायस्य जिह्वा कुत्रापि खिद्यते ।
मनः कुत्रापि तत्त्यक्त्वा पुरुषार्थे स्थितः सुखम् ॥२॥

कुत्र अपि Somewhere कायस्य of body खेदः distress (भवति is) कुत्र अपि somewhere जिह्वा tongue खिद्यते is fatigued कुत्र अपि somewhere मनः mind (खिद्यते is tired) तत् this त्यक्त्वा foregoing (अहं I) पुरुषार्थे in life's goal सुखं happily स्थितः established (अस्मि am).

2. There is trouble of the body¹ somewhere, trouble of the tongue² somewhere and trouble of the mind³ somewhere. Having renounced these, I live happily in life's⁴ supreme goal.

[¹ *Body*—in the practice of penances.

² *Tongue*—in the study of scriptures, etc.

³ *Mind*—in meditation, etc.

The application of body, speech and mind for Self-realisation presupposes imperfection,—the Self has not yet been realised. This is the period of struggle. Complete inactivity comes with complete Self-realisation.

⁴ *Life's etc.*—i.e., Self-realisation or *Moksha*.]

कृतं किमपि नैव स्यादिति सञ्चिन्त्य तत्तुतः ।
यदा यत्कर्तुमायाति तत्कृत्वासे यथासुखम् ॥३॥

(आत्मना By the Self) तत्तुतः in reality किमपि anything whatever न not एव certainly कृतं done स्यात् is इति this सञ्चिन्त्य thinking fully यदा when यत् what कर्तुम् to do आयाति comes तत् that कृत्वा doing (अहं I) यथासुखं happily आसे live.

3. Fully realising that nothing¹ whatsoever is really done by the Self, I do² whatever³ presents itself to be done and live happily.

[¹ *Nothing etc.*—Because whatever is done is done by the body, mind and the senses accompanied by the ego. The Self is beyond all these.

² *Do*—being devoid of the ego and feeling unattached. The body and mind do the works, the Self remaining unattached.

³ *Whatever etc.*—For so long as one lives in the body one has to do some activities, at least such as eating, sleeping, etc.]

कर्मनैष्कर्म्यनिर्वन्धभावा देहस्थयोगिनः ।
संयोगायोगविरहादहमासे यथासुखम् ॥४॥

कर्मनैष्कर्म्यनिर्वन्धभावाः States of insisting upon action or inaction देहस्थयोगिनः the Yogis who are attached to the body (भवन्ति are) अहं I संयोगायोगविरहात् owing to the absence of association and dissociation यथासुखं happily आसे live.

4. The Yogis who are still in the body insist upon action¹ or inaction. Owing to the absence of association² and dissociation,³ I live happily.

[¹ *Action etc.*—Prescriptions for action or inaction are true only of those who have still the body-idea. To one who is without it, these are meaningless. So long as we are not completely released from the body, i.e., have not fully realised the Self, we have to follow certain prescribed rules, forbidding certain actions and prescribing certain other actions by way of discipline. When the Self is realised, such rules have no meaning.

² *Association*—with the body.

One is so completely established in the Self, that even when one uses the body for performing action such as are referred to in the previous verse, one is not affected any way. The association with the body is quite voluntary and under control. There need not, therefore, be also any undue emphasis on dissociation, for there is really no association at all.]

अर्थानर्थौ न मे स्थित्या गत्या न शयनेन वा ।

तिष्ठन् गच्छन् स्वपन् तस्मादहमासे यथासुखम् ॥५॥

स्थित्या By staying मे my अर्थानर्थौ good or harm न not (स्तः are) गत्या by going शयनेन by sleeping वा or न not (मे my अर्थानर्थौ good or harm स्तः are) तस्मात् so अहं I तिष्ठन् staying गच्छन् going स्वपन् sleeping यथासुखं happily आसे live.

5. No¹ good or evil accrues to me by staying, going or sleeping. So I live happily whether² I stay, go or sleep.

[¹ No etc.—Good and evil are products of action done by the body and mind. The results of action do not affect one who is not attached to the body and mind.

² Whether etc.—For so long as one is in the body, one does such actions. But they make no difference to his inner consciousness, as they do in the case of the ordinary man or the imperfect Yogi.]

स्वपतो नास्ति मे हानिः सिद्धिर्यत्नवतो न वा ।

नाशोल्लासौ विहायास्मादहमासे यथासुखम् ॥६॥

स्वपतः Sleeping मे my हानिः loss न not अस्ति is यत्नवतः striving वा or (मे my) सिद्धिः success न not (अस्ति is) अस्मात् so नाशोल्लासौ loss and elation विहाय forgoing अहं I यथासुखं happily आसे live.

6. I do not lose by sleeping¹ or gain by striving. So forgoing loss² and elation³ I live happily.

[¹ Sleeping—that is, when inactive.

² Loss—of pleasure on account of the non-acquisition of anything.

³ Elation—due to the acquisition of worldly things.]

सुखादिरूपानियमं भावेष्वालोक्य भूरिशः ।

शुभाशुभे विहायास्मादहमासे यथासुखम् ॥७॥

भावेषु In (different) conditions सुखादिरूपानियमं irregularity of the forms of pleasure, etc. भूरिशः abundantly आलोक्य observing अस्मात् so अहं I शुभाशुभे good and evil विहाय renouncing यथासुखं happily आसे live.

7. Observing again and again the fluctuations¹ of pleasure, etc. under different conditions, I have renounced² good and evil and am happy.

[¹ Fluctuations etc.—due to their instability. Pleasure and pain are not stable, but change constantly with the change of circumstances.

² Renounced etc.—Good and evil are associated in our mind with happiness and sorrow. We seek the good and avoid the evil in order to be happy. But one who has realised that happiness and sorrow are really products of circumstances and change with their changes and are not essential to the eternal Self, does no longer care for good or evil and remains established in the Self, in which alone there is real and absolute happiness.]

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna

The Anniversary of the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Sunday, the second March.

In This Number

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, as our readers may be aware, fell this year on Tuesday, the 21st January. Our February issue, coming immediately after this auspicious occasion, has been largely devoted to the writings of and on the great Swami. The number opens with *Discourses on Jnana Yoga* by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. These are the Swami's unpublished utterances, as we intimated last month..... *The Rosary* by M.B.C. is a finely fashioned titbit. The writer is a Westerner who came some time ago on a visit to India. Indian experiences have evidently proved very suggestive to her..... *Swami Vivekananda* by ROMAIN ROLLAND, though short, is a brilliant characterisation of the Swami, quite worthy of the well-renowned artistic genius of the great writer and of his profound understanding of the depths and heights of human nature. The article is the prelude to his *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, to be published shortly in French..... *The Lessons of Religious India to Europe* by CARLO FORMICHI is another witness by a great Western savant to the spiritual wealth of India. Signor Formichi is a great Sanskritist and a professor in the University of Rome. It may be recalled that he came a few years ago as a visiting professor to Tagore's Visvabharati and also delivered a course of lectures on the Upanishads at the Calcutta University. The article was originally contributed by him to a year-book of the Schopenhauer Society, Germany..... DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR, M.A., Ph.D., concludes his *Samkara and Bradley* in the present number. Dr. Sircar is the professor of Philosophy in the Sanskrit College,

Calcutta, and has several finely written philosophical works (mainly on Vedanta) to his credit, which have all been very well received by scholars in India and abroad. We recommend the present excellently written comparative study to the best attention of our readers.....

An Interesting correspondence is a correspondence inverse between Swami Vivekananda and Miss Mary Hale. We request our readers to peruse the note we have given at the head of the article. The correspondence is unique in various ways,—playful, yet profound, highly significant teaching being given and received in the guise of an affectionate battle of wits. It is interesting to remember in this connection that it was the mother of Miss Hale, who gave the Swami shelter while he was wandering about the streets of Chicago, having lost the address of the office of the Parliament of Religions. The lady, her husband, their two daughters and two nieces, in fact, the whole family, became deeply devoted to the Swami who also, in his turn, had a great love for them.

..... We are sure *My Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* by KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A. will be appreciated by our readers. Mr. Mitra is the principal of the Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal. May we imbibe the great faith in the Swami, which is his !..... *Beauties of Islam* by SISTER NIVEDITA, an unpublished writing, is characteristic product of her wonderfully synthetic mind. We do require to understand better our Muhammadan brethren. It is ignorance that causes all misunderstanding. We believe this little article of the Sister will make it easier for us to appreciate Islam..... ANANDA is thinking of concluding his *Practice of Religion* next month.

Swami Vivekananda on Western Industrialism

We give below a second instalment of quotations from the speeches and

writings of Swami Vivekananda, bearing generally and specifically on his views on Western methods of life, organisation, and industry :

"I would say, the combination of the Greek mind represented by the external European energy, added to the Hindu spirituality, would be an ideal society for India. . . . India has to learn from Europe the conquest of external nature, and Europe has to learn from India the conquest of internal nature. . . . We have developed one phase of humanity, and they another. It is the union of the two that is wanted." (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, pp. 145-146).

"Swamiji.—Without the development of an abundance of Rajas, you have hopes neither in this world, nor in the next. The whole country is enveloped in intense Tamas; and naturally the result is—servitude in this life and hell in the next.

"Disciple.—Do you expect in view of the Rajas in the Westerners that they will gradually become Sâttvika?

"Swamiji.—Certainly. Possessed of a plentitude of Rajas, they have now reached the culmination of Bhoga or enjoyment. . . . Hence do I say, let people be made energetic and active in nature by the stimulation of Rajas.

"Disciple.—Sir, did our forefathers possess this kind of Rajas?

"Swamiji.—Why, did they not? Does not history tell us that they established colonies in many countries, and sent preachers of religion to Thibet, China, Sumatra and even to far-off Japan? Do you think there is any other means of achieving progress except through Rajas?" (*C. W.*, Vol. VI, pp. 413-415).

"In reply to the question: what is civilisation, Swamiji said that day, "The more advanced a society or nation is in spirituality, the more is that society or nation civilised. No nation can be said to have become civilised, only because it has succeeded in increasing the comforts of material life by bringing into

use lots of machinery and things of that sort. The present day civilisation of the West is multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men. On the other hand, the ancient Indian civilisation, by showing people the way to spiritual advancement, doubtless succeeded, if not in removing once for all, at least in lessening in a great measure, the material needs of men. In the present age, it is to bring the coalition of both these civilisations that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was born. In this age, as on the one hand people have to be intensely practical, so on the other hand they have to acquire deep spiritual knowledge.' Swamiji made us clearly understand that day that from such interaction of the Indian civilisation with that of the West would dawn on the world a new era." (*C. W.*, Vol. VI, pp. 417-418).

"You have not the capacity to manufacture a needle and you dare to criticise the English,—fools! Sit at their feet and learn from them the arts, industries and the practicality necessary for the struggle of existence." (*C. W.*, Vol. VII, p. 145).

"Modern education has changed your fashion, but new avenues of wealth lie yet undiscovered for want of inventive genius." (*C. W.*, Vol. VII, p. 146).

"Going round the whole world, I find that the people of this country are immersed in great Tamas (inactivity), compared with the people of other countries. On the outside, there is a simulation of the Sâttvika (calm and balanced) state, but inside, downright inertness like that of stocks and stones—what work will be done in the world by such people? How long can such an inactive, lazy and sensual people live in the world? First travel in Western countries, then contradict my words. How much of enterprise and devotion to work, how much enthusiasm and manifestation of Rajas are there in the lives of the Western people! While in your country it is as if the blood has become congealed in the heart, so that it cannot circulate in the veins—as if

paralysis has overtaken the body and it has become languid. So my idea is first to make the people active by developing their Rajas, and thus make them fit for the struggle for existence. With no strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and no originality in the brain, what will they do—these lumps of dead matter! By stimulating them I want to bring life into them—to this I have dedicated my life. I will rouse them through the infallible power of the Vedic Mantras. I am born to proclaim to them that fearless message—‘Arise, Awake!’ Be you my helpers in this work. Go over from village to village, from one portion of the country to another, and preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brâhmana to the Chandâla. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the Rajas within them—make them fit for the struggle for existence, then speak to them about salvation hereafter. First make the people of the country stand on their legs by rousing their inner power, first let them learn to have good food and clothes and plenty of enjoyment—then tell them how to be free from this bondage of enjoyment. Laziness, meanness and hypocrisy have covered the whole length and breadth of the country. Can an intelligent man look on this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes? Madras, Bombay, Punjab, Bengal—whichever way I look, I see no signs of life. . . . Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth! Will your education fulfil this want? Never. With the help of Western science set yourselves to dig the earth and produce foodstuffs—not by means of mean servitude of others—but by discovering new avenues to production, by your own exertions aided by Western science. . . . Therefore I say, first rouse the inherent power of the Atman within you, then rousing the faith of the general people in that power as much as you can, teach them

first of all to make provision for food, and then teach them religion.” (C. W., Vol. VII, pp. 179-181).

“Nor it won’t do to merely quote the authority of our ancient books. The tidal wave of Western civilisation is now rushing over the length and breadth of the country. It won’t do now simply to sit in meditation on mountain tops without realising in the least its usefulness.” (C. W., Vol. VII, p. 183).

“What you have to do now is to establish a Math in every town and in every village. . . . A well-educated Sâdhu should be at the head of that centre and under him there should be departments for teaching practical science and arts, with a specialist Sannyâsin in charge of each of those departments.” (C. W., Vol. V, p. 286).

“We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mahomedans? It was due to the Hindus’ ignorance of material civilisation. . . . Material civilisation, nay, even luxury is necessary to create work for the poor.” (*Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, First Series, 3rd edition, p. 50).

“Why has originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft-fingered artisans daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer? Education, education, education alone? Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got.”

(*Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, First Series, 3rd edition, p. 59).

The Divine and the Human: Their Conflict

A correspondent from Brazil has put us a question: *Is human love a help or hindrance to spiritual progress?* This is a question which occurs to many minds and a consideration of it will not be in vain. No categorical reply can possibly be given to it. First of all what is human love? Different minds hold different ideas about it. With some the distinction between man and God has been obliterated. Their spiritual realisations are so high that to them nothing exists except God. Everything to them is Divine. There are others again, to whom love is basely carnal. About these two classes of people, the question is easy to answer. The former class are already men of Self-realisation; and when they love men, there is nothing unspiritual in it. And with the latter class, human love is of course the very antithesis of spirituality, and it would surely impede all spiritual progress.

But the question, at least the significance of it, arises only with the persons who are between these two limits. They are in doubts. They do not know which is which. And it is of their case that we should specially think in this connection. But before we directly answer the question, it is necessary that we consider a few fundamentals of spirituality.

What is spirituality? What is the aim and end of our life? What is the Truth? What is the Eternal Reality? Wherein is the Peace Everlasting? In solving all spiritual questions, these facts have to be clearly determined beforehand. The other day it was said by someone that our life's aim was to become a co-worker of God. To us it seemed almost blasphemous. Did God wait for any co-worker? What we want to point out in this connection is that behind this statement there is an

assumption, which the speaker did not seek to properly examine. He took for granted that men here are for improving the conditions of other men. Is that really so? Is that the quest of life? He has also taken for granted certain wills of God. Yet if we closely question the gentleman, he would admit that these were merely his surmises. Yet one dares to build up a philosophy of life on them! Take again the oft-repeated argument against *Sannyāsa* that God wants men to beget children in order to perpetuate His creation. As if God had declared this intention of His to those people! Here also we find that there is a basic assumption that the world has to be maintained intact. We take things for granted. We do not care to pursue our enquiry further. If, however, we follow truth to the farthest limit, we shall find that the very existence of the world is problematical. We shall find that this vast variegated universe is really nothing. We shall find that what we have hitherto taken for the will of God was nothing such. It was merely a sublimation of our own aspirations. Many of our present assumptions will crumble to the dust and our outlook will change totally. A real answer to any spiritual question must not omit to take into account the nature of the Ultimate Reality in which man finds his eternal rest. And what is the Ultimate Reality? If we are to believe the Vedānta philosophy and the evidences of the greatest saints of all times and climes, we must say that in the Absolute consciousness, infinite, alone, in which there is no trace of otherness, no question of world or humanity or human love. We must all realise that state of consciousness. Without this, there is no peace, no rest. This is the goal towards which all are wending their ways knowingly or unknowingly. If such is the end, what should be the means? Surely we must strive hard to go beyond all duality, beyond all consciousness of the not-Divine. From this it follows that human love also must be transcended.

If we stick to it, we shall be entrapped. We shall lose our way. Our progress would be impeded.

It is sometimes said that by being a householder, by marrying and begetting children, we are enabled to love God in different sweet aspects, as God the father, God the mother, God the beloved, God the son, God the daughter, etc. That is to say human love makes Divine love variegated and thus sweeter, more enjoyable and intense. O sweet delusion! In India and in a less degree in some other countries also, the realisation of God as mother, father, etc., has not been unknown. But what has been the process? Except amongst some obscure sects who have sought to make men or women the emblems of their Divine Beloved, all others have insisted on complete renunciation of all domestic and social outlooks before people could be fit to practice *Sādhanā*. One mistake is often made: the way is often confused with the goal. It is true that when we *have* realised God, we can see Him in all human beings and serve and love Him there. But the means of that realisation is not to continue the old natural outlook, but to repudiate it strongly. Those who have tried to realise men as Divine, know what a tremendous struggle it means. Behind the normal, natural outlook are the *Samskāras* of innumerable births in which our love-relations with other men and women have been mainly and essentially through the body. We have never sought to perceive or love and serve them as spirit, above body and mind, but always as body and mind (superficial mind). It is very, very hard to get over those associations. Our mind *would* take men and women as physical and mental only. These tendencies have to be conquered and destroyed after hard struggle. And as the very first step we must desist from those feelings, thoughts and actions which remind us of their humanity and not Divinity. And of these the love-relations are the most pernicious, because these are the

deepest, and have always in all our previous lives found expression in and through the body. A smile, a tear, a caressing word,—how much do not these mean to the ordinary mortal! And as he seeks to eliminate the human, the physical element from his love, and see the Divine shine in and through the smile and tear, his mind refuses to relinquish the old associations. Here is the tremendous difficulty. So human love must first of all be eschewed, in order to spiritualise it. Practically considered, it is impossible for householders to spiritualise their domestic relations by merely continuing the normal relations. During the period of *Sādhanā*, a strenuous effort should be made to realise God as beyond all these domestic felicities. Only when the perception of Him had deepened, would we be able to feel His presence also in our parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Otherwise there is a great risk of our confusing the Ideal with the real.

From the above remarks, the answer to our correspondent can be easily inferred. For the ordinary *Sādhakas*, spiritual aspirants, it is best that they do not bother about human love. Let them give themselves heart and soul to God as He is in Himself. That will purify his mind and clarify his vision. If he mixes in human love in order to make it an ally in the path of spirituality there is every chance of there being *moha*, infatuation, the blurring of the spiritual vision and eventual fall. One must avoid carefully all these experiments. But one has always the right and privilege of serving others as God Himself—Mind, as *God*, and not as man; and there must be no reference to the usual love-relations. Do not let the human elements creep in. These are fraught with danger.

We must mention that what we have written above is meant only for sincere spiritual aspirants and not for the average man. There are many whom the touch of human love redeems. There are many again, whose life would wither up without the waters of human

love. Most men are of this condition. Their duty is assuredly to conceive those love-relations in the best possible spirit, to purify, ennoble and exalt them. That would be to their good. And it is necessary. But beyond even this noble state, is the life spiritual. When one has been sated with human love, when the finite life and reality has made one restless to escape their limitations, when one's heart yearns for the Infinite and the Eternal, even as the mother cries for her departed child, there begins the spiritual life. And then the so-called human love appears to one as a dark, deep, weed-smothered well, to quote the significant description of Sri Ramakrishna. Like the famous

Chátaka bird one would cry for the rain-drops in order to slake one's thirst and would not drink from rivers or ponds even though they be full.

The modern age with its cheap idealism, its secularity and tendency to cover the corpse with flowers, has been trying to create a glamour about the normal life, the life of the senses and of the surface mind. Spiritual aspirants, if they are serious and sincere, should beware of its pitfalls. Men have tried in every age to idealise the real, to shut their eyes to the grim reality that this world with all its joys and sweets is after all false. But alas, it has not succeeded yet, and it will never succeed.

REVIEW

SWARAJ—CULTURAL AND POLITICAL.
By Pramatha Nath Bose, B.Sc. (London).
W. Newman and Co., Ltd., Calcutta. 290 pp.
Price Rs. 4.

We welcome the timely publication of *Swaraj—Cultural and Political*. The author is a well-known man of letters and is by no means a stranger to those who take interest in books that give Indian interpretation of things Indian.

The perusal of the book will impress the reader with the author's intimate knowledge of and profound sympathy with Hindu culture. He would have us believe that the solidarity of Indian cultural life and the structural unity of Indian social life are actually disintegrating under the influence of Western civilisation. It is apparently clear that Mr. Bose does not see eye to eye with those who hold that India is in the process of becoming a nation.

The political India in the past had a chequered career, but the cultural India had an even history, and with the changing forces of time, though there has been the advent of new ideas, yet India has wonderfully preserved her cultural unity and cultural independence.

This shows that the heart of India is still sound. Indian cultural ideas are virile. They can inspire Indian minds for things Indian. The book will not fail to present

the Indian ideals when the time is ripe for their close study and reaffirmation in Indian life.

The book covers a large ground; it gives a history of the past, it throws out a perspective of the future. All the chapters are mines of information. The author gives a touching picture of how things Indian were destroyed, but happily he does not finish the book with a pessimistic note. He closely considers the prospect of an imitation Swaraj, its promises and short-comings. "Is Imitation Swaraj Desirable?" and "Is Political Swaraj Possible?" would be read with interest and profit by those who are anxious to implant a Western constitution on an Eastern soil. Mr. Bose discusses threadbare the points in favour and against the revival of cultural Swaraj and sees in it the desired end and consummation of our efforts. Indian culture has been synthetic, and the cultural synthesis is spiritual. India has never favoured the dynamic materialism of the West, and India has wonderfully conserved the spiritual, ethical and æsthetic values in her culture, and has not allowed these values to be dominated by material and economic values. Indian cultural ideas, therefore, present a singular contrast to the present-day civilisation which sees its strength in industrialism and armaments. The time has come for a wise

decision. Should India lose her soul and be cast adrift from the moorings of her intuition, vision and construction? Mr. Bose has given the only possible answer in the clear negative.

Mr. Bose has raised issues of wide magnitude and it is not possible here to enter into a thorough discussion of them. The book will be a helpful study to the rebuilders of India's political and cultural history. While dissociating ourselves from the Western ideas of progress and prosperity, we cannot help thinking that India in the whirlpool of modern civilisation cannot spread her cultural idess. The cultural conquest should be checked. India must be spiritually efficient as she desires to be politically efficient, and that to-day Indian ideals are not appreciated is due to the lack of the spiritual insight of the moderns. To uplift herself India needs the reaffirmation of her spiritual ideas which, instead of weakening the material and political progress, will put India in the right track. India suffered a dementia in the recent past in her spiritual and political life, and now that the political India is astir with life, we hope she will direct her forces in a way which can revive her spiritual energies and rebuild her political system suited to her genius. India solved this problem in the past, as pointed out by Mr. Bose. Should the lesson be lost upon us when we are about to inaugurate a new chapter in Indian history?

THE BRAHMA SAMAJ (A SHORT HISTORY). By Manilal C. Parekh, B.A., *Oriental Christ House, Rajkot, Kathiawad.* 287 pp. Price cloth Rs. 4, board Rs. 3.

The book is primarily a record of the thoughts and the deeds of the leaders of the Samaj. The development of the Samaj into branches and sub-branches out of the trunk implanted by Rammohan has been clearly traced by the author. The excellences and limitations of each section and the contributions of its organisers have also been stated. The book further deals with the various reforms inaugurated by the Samaj, its missionary activities and its spread in other provinces of India. It may serve as a hand-book of useful information regarding the Samaj.

The author has already made himself known to the literary public by producing short lives of the founder and the third great leader of the Samaj, the first of which we reviewed in the August number of P. B.

He was connected with the Samaj for more than a decade and was ordained a missionary of the Navavidhan. Later in life he adopted the Orthodox Christian faith. But he still remembers with gratitude the early source of his inspiration and initiation into religious life, and offers the book to the public as a tribute of love to the Samaj.

The author represents the Samaj as an inter-religious movement of great national significance. Through it Hinduism is to attain its fulfilment in Christ Jesus and bring about that religious and cultural unity which is essential for the national reconstruction of New Hindustan. Keshab, the greatest leader of the Samaj, has contributed most towards this culmination. His New Dispensation is only a step short of the goal. Instead of making it Christocentric, as intended by Keshab, his followers have made it Keshab-centric. The Sadharan Brahma Samaj has miserably failed to run the destined course because of its secular and rationalistic tendencies. The only hope of the Navavidhan as of the whole Samaj lies in its acceptance of Christ.

But does the salvation of the Hindus or of India lie in the Christianisation of Hinduism, or does Christianity require Hinduisation for its fulfilment? Of all the religions in the world, Hinduism has been most tolerant and comprehensive. Because it stands not on the authority of persons, but on eternal principles, the self-revealed truths known as the Vedanta. To it, the different religious systems are but adaptations of these truths, as realised by their founders, to the varying conditions of the world. Harmony of religion is not possible on the narrow basis of personal authority, but on the common ground of the universal truths. Let the Christians stand on them free from all dogmatism and they will be in a position to accept the Hindu sages in the same spirit in which the Hindus accept theirs. Hinduism has had prophets enough to provide it with all possible types of spirituality. It can receive others into its bosom, if need there be. It can also live without the prophets.

Because of this universal feature of Hinduism, it has been remarkable for its power to reconcile diverse faiths and cultures. The Brahma movement grew out of this reconciliatory spirit. But though based by the Raja on the eternal rock of the Vedanta, it was carried off its feet under the influence of the Western thoughts and

the Christian ideas. Of all the pioneers of the Movement, Keshab seems to have been most open to this influence by his nature and culture. He does not represent the Hindu religion, as the author assumes. His religious ideas were formed by his study of the Christian books and the current philosophy of Great Britain and France and his contact with the Christian Missionaries. He had little knowledge of Hindu philosophy and scriptures. His devotion to the Christian ideals did not grow out of a mature understanding of the comparative values of Hinduism and Christianity. The Brahma Movement has done a real service to the country by checking the onrush of Christianity and the Western civilisation and by liberalising Hindu orthodoxy. It has formed a midway between Westernism and Conservatism.

STUDENT LIFE IN THE WEST. By A. J. Appasamy, M.A. (Harvard), D.Phil. (Oxon.). *Christian Literature Society for India, Madras.* 83 pp. Price As. 8.

This little book has been prepared, as the author says in his preface, for the use of those who would like to know something of the university life in America and Europe. The author who is an M.A. of the Harvard University and D. Phil. of Oxford, is in a position to write with first-hand knowledge on the subject. The book furnishes intimate pictures of the students' life, their methods of study, the teaching methods, the educational ideals of England and America with comparative remarks on those in India, teachers and their qualifications and duties, their position, academic discipline, etc. Much information is supplied on those and other allied topics.

The book is written in a pleasant and simple style. It is not learned, but is

nevertheless quite interesting and profitable-reading.

LETTERS FROM A FATHER TO HIS DAUGHTER. By Jawaharlal Nehru. *Allahabad Law Journal Press, Allahabad.* 121 pp. Price not mentioned.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is up for the independence of his country, has, to our pleasant surprise, revealed himself as an unconscious writer of excellent juvenile literature. Some letters were written by him to his daughter of 10 years, who was away; and the loving father, watchful of the education of his little daughter, though himself caught in the whirlpool of politics, took this opportunity to imperceptibly increase her general knowledge and widen her outlook of thought. These letters, giving a brief account of the early days of the world, will be highly profitable-reading, not only to the children of the age of his daughter, but also to those who are not quite so young, and they will be all grateful to the little child whose love could make the busy father produce such an excellent treatise. The subjects treated in the letters cover a wide ground, such as "How Early History was Written," "The Making of Earth," "The First Living Things," "The Coming of Man," "How Different Races were Formed," "The Relationships Of Languages," "The Patriarch—How He Began," "The Early Civilisations," and "The Ramayana and the Mahabharata," to mention only a few, and they are written in a way which makes a direct appeal to the child-mind. Though the letters were originally written without any idea of publication, the publisher has done well to bring them out in book-form. Sixteen illustrations have enhanced the value of the book. The get-up is excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

R. K. Mission Relief Work

The Secretary of the R. K. Mission has sent us the following for publication:

The public are aware that the flood relief work of the Ramakrishna Mission in Assam and Midnapur was finished in November last. The distribution of food-stuffs in Akyab (Burma) was closed on the 15th December, but hut-construction has been taken up. We give below an abstract of the receipts and disbursements of the flood relief

work in Assam and Midnapur and cholera relief work in Burdwan, audited by Mr. N. K. Majumdar, M.A., G.D.A., Hony. Auditor of the Mission. A detailed report of the whole work will be published when the work in Akyab is over.

Receipts: From Provident Fund—Rs. 3,773-4-0; by donation—Rs. 36,387-4-0; sale proceeds—Rs. 574-15-9; Total—Rs. 40,735-7-9.

Disbursements: Rice for recipients—Rs. 23,751-4-0; other food grains—Rs. 13-11-3;

fodder—Rs. 80-0-0; sacks—Rs. 6-0-0; clothes—Rs. 1,016-13-9; transit charges—Rs. 1,706-6-0; travelling and inspection charges—Rs. 862-9-7½; equipment—Rs. 121-8-3 workers' expenses—Rs. 891-7-0; establishment—Rs. 299-8-9; stationery—Rs. 54-15-6; postage, telegram and m.o. commission, etc.—Rs. 209-1-6; printing—Rs. 24-8-6; miscellaneous—Rs. 29-10-10½; pecuniary help—Rs. 91-5-0; medical relief—Rs. 268-11-6; agricultural relief—Rs. 40-0-0; aids for building houses—Rs. 4,303-2-9; Total—Rs. 33,770-7-3. Balance deposited to the Provident Fund—Rs. 6,965-0-6. Total—Rs. 40,735-7-9.

**R. K. Seva Samsad, Harinagar,
Midnapur, Bengal**

A correspondent has sent us the following report of the above institution established about nine years back in a backward village of the Ghatal subdivision in the district of Midnapur, Bengal. It has done excellent work during these few years towards the spreading of education, sanitation and religion in a considerable number of villages along with the improvement of their economic conditions.

In 1920, Swami Prashantananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, was sent by Swami Saradananda and he visited several villages of the Ghatal and Midnapur subdivisions. Moved by the backwardness of the villages in every respect and inspired by the great Swami, Swami Prashantananda organised the above institution with the help of some energetic men of the locality in order (i) to spread education among the masses without distinction of caste and creed, (ii) to teach the modern ways of sanitation among the people and to help them in all possible ways to adopt them, (iii) to help the poverty-stricken people for the adoption of means whereby their economic difficulties might be minimised to some extent, and lastly (iv) to diffuse religious and moral culture among the public. The Swami may be said to have achieved great success in all these departments of work.

(i) *Education*: The Swami reorganised several Middle and Upper Primary Schools that were about to be extinct and established a few new Primary Schools. It is interesting to note that one of the reorganised Upper Primary Schools has now been raised to the status of a High English School. Of the newly founded schools, two Night Schools for labourers are nicely continuing, some have been extinct and some are in a

moribund condition for want of funds and proper supervision. In 1920, a Women's School was started and turned into a Co-operative Mahila Samiti in 1928.

(ii) *Sanitation*: A few Co-operative Health Societies have been established in several villages. Harinagar which has a Co-operative Health and Anti-malarial Society, has improved so much in respect of health that it has become an ideal village in the district of Midnapur. Lantern lectures were arranged in populous places regarding the origin, spread and the means of prevention of various diseases as well as regarding maternity and child welfare. The want of supply of pure water is a potent cause of insanitation in villages. In order to remove it the Swami had several ponds re-excavated and arranged to sink 28 tube-wells in different villages within the last one year. He trained also three young men to sink tube-wells and they are doing this work creditably.

(iii) *Economic Help*: The Swami's attempts at saving the poor peasants from borrowing money at unusually exorbitant rates of interest are indeed unique. As a result of his strenuous labours for the last seven years, he has established more than a hundred Co-operative Credit Societies and a Co-operative Central Bank in those parts. The peasants used to borrow money at an interest varying from Rs. 36/- to Rs. 75/- per cent per annum; but now to their great relief, they can do that at an interest of Rs. 12½ per cent per annum only. Besides, the profit also of those Credit Societies go to the borrowers. Transaction of about three lacs of rupees is made by these societies which cover about four hundred villages with an area of four hundred square miles.

(iv) *Religion*: The Swami is keen about spreading religious and moral culture among the masses, and with this object he goes from village to village and holds discourses on religion and morality. He has established a small library at Harinagar with a collection of religious and cultural books. He also arranges lectures and discourses by the monks of the Ramakrishna Order at different times in different places.

It is worthy of note that the Ramakrishna Seva Samsad with its centre at Harinagar is doing yeoman's service to the masses with those various institutions covering an area of about 450 square miles and also that this central insignificant village has been converted into an ideal one within the short period of the last nine years. Before 1920

this village was a permanent abode of malaria and various other diseases which were gradually decimating the population. The poor peasants, over head and ears in debt, were miserably dragging on their existence. There were no proper educational institutions and proper roads and paths. But at present the village is blessed with a Women's School, a Labourers' Night School, a Co-operative Credit Society, a Co-operative Health and Anti-malarial Society, a Women's Association, a Post Office, a Public Library, a Village Defence Party and a deep Tube-well. The roads and paths are being reconstructed. Diseases are scarce. Attempts are also being made to found a dispensary. All these institutions of service have elicited great admiration from all official and non-official visitors.

The Swami's work is certainly inspiring.

Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Delhi

The activities of the Delhi centre of the Ramakrishna Order are growing day by day. In addition to the Math started about 2½ years ago, a charitable Dispensary was also opened near New Delhi about a year back. Last October a Students' Home was been opened near the Jumna River close by the colleges and the University in a new house given by Lala Lachmandas, a local municipal commissioner and a generous Rais of the City, for free use. If the work satisfactorily increases, he may permanently place it at the disposal of the Mission. A strong committee of some prominent men of Delhi with Rai Saheb Shri Ram Sharma as President has been formed to run the Home and secure for it a permanent fund, site, and building. Professors, Teachers, Principals, Doctors and others are taking keen interest in it. The Home is also growing to be a centre of students' activity and other forms of social service.

R. K. Mission Centre, Singapore

The First Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre, Singapore, for the years 1928-29 is to hand. When Swami Sharvananda visited Singapore in 1913, he was cordially welcomed by the people. His second visit in 1919 was crowned with great success. On that occasion he delivered many lectures explaining the ideas, ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. Since that time the Singapore public had been wanting a monk from the Ramakrishna

Mission to work amongst them. In May 1928 Swami Adyananda was deputed by the Governing Body of the Mission to start a centre there. The Centre was started in the beginning of 1928 and was duly registered under Ordinance (Companies') 155, Section 290.

During the period of 13 months, covered by the report, the Swami Adyananda delivered many lectures and conducted weekly services. Studies on the Gita and the Upanishads and Swami Vivekananda's works were made during the services. The Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were also celebrated. The Library, though small, was of great use to the public.

The Singapore Centre's activities will be as follows: (a) Missionary Work; (b) Educational Work by starting Day School for boys and Night School for the labourers; (c) Charitable Work by serving the poor in every way possible. To have a permanent building of the Mission, a sub-committee was formed. It is expected that the project will materialise soon and greater activities will be undertaken.

The income of the Ashrama under various headings amounted to \$3,130.85. The total expenditure came to \$2,602.77, leaving a balance of \$528.08.

We are much gratified to go through the report of work already done. Singapore is an important international city. The members of the advisory committee of the Centre are men of light and leading, and with their co-operation we believe that Swami Adyananda will be able to do greater and greater services to the citizens of Singapore.

Swami Paramananda's Activities in U.S.A.

We have received the following report of the activities of Swami Paramananda:

Swami Paramananda's work in America has taken another forward step. Those who follow with devout satisfaction the widening influence of Sri Ramakrishna's message to the world cannot but review the Swami's growing achievement with deepest appreciation. In 1908 he established the Vedanta Centre of Boston; in 1914 it was installed in large and imposing headquarters on one of the loveliest parkways of the city. In 1920 extensive additions were made to this already spacious house.

In 1923 further expansion carried the Swami across the continent to found an Ashrama in the milder climate of Southern

California near Los Angeles. He procured 140 acres of richly planted land. On this he has erected gradually a Temple of the Universal Spirit, a large Library, living quarters and book-room, all joined by arched cloisters, two large dwelling-houses, 14 cabins, a cottage, two garages and two barns. In this mountain retreat lying in a crescent of hills belonging to the Sierra Madre range live twenty-five or thirty zealous devotees under the Swami's inspiration and guidance.

Drawn by the power of the teaching and the rare beauty of the place, the public has invaded more and more the quiet of the Ashrama. To safeguard its character as a retreat the Swami has acquired now a town house in one of the finest residential sections of Los Angeles. Lovely gardens and handsome residences surround it on every side. The house itself stands in a charming garden and the impression is of a flower-grown, tree-shaded suburb rather than of a crowded city. There are seventeen large rooms in the new house besides six bathrooms and still other rooms with bath over the garage. The modern improvements visible everywhere bear witness to the far point convenience has been carried in American life. Touch one electric button and lights shine out from every room in the house. Touch another and the whole garden is lighted up. Push a third and a furnace in the cellar is kindled; a fourth or fifth

directs the heat to different parts of the house.

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

The work at the Boston Vedanta Centre is growing daily more fervent and vital. Its Temple of the Universal Spirit counts a numerous congregation every Sunday and Tuesday. The Ashrama at Cohasset purchased last spring by the Swami to supplement the Boston Centre is closed for the winter, but I am sure many will still go there to enjoy the beauty of the snow-weighted trees and the white-blanketed fields.

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

"We Hindus have now been placed, by the will of the Lord in a very critical and responsible position. The nations of the West are coming to us for spiritual help. A great moral obligation rests on the sons of India to fully equip themselves for the work of enlightening the world on the problem of human existence. . . . The eyes of the whole world are now turned towards this land of ours for spiritual food, and India will have to work at present for all the races. For her alone is the highest ideal for mankind. Western scholars are now struggling to understand that ideal. But that was found out long ago in India. That ideal has been kept enshrined in our Sanskrit Literature and Philosophy and to teach that has been the characteristic of India all through the ages."—Swami Vivekananda.