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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

Jnâna teaches that the world should be given up, but not on that account to be abandoned. To be *in* the world, but not *of* it, is the true test of the Sannyâsin. This idea of renunciation has been in some form common to nearly all religions. Jnâna demands that we look upon all alike, that we see only “sameness.” Praise and blame, good and bad, even heat and cold, must be equally acceptable to us. In India there are many holy men of whom this is literally true. They wander on the snow-clad heights of the Himalayas or over the burning desert sands, entirely unclothed and apparently entirely unconscious of any difference in temperature.

We have first of all to give up this superstition of body; we are not the body. Next must go the further superstition that we are mind. We are *not* mind, it is but the “silken body,” not any part of the soul. The mere word “body,” applied to nearly all things, includes something common among all bodies. This is *existence*. Our bodies are symbols of thought

behind, and the thoughts themselves are in their turn symbols of something behind them, *i.e.*, the One Real Existence, the Soul of our soul, the Self of the universe, the Life of our life, our *true* self. As long as we believe ourselves to be even the least different from God, fear remains with us; but when we know ourselves to be the One, fear goes: of what *can* we be afraid? By sheer force of will, the Jnâni rises beyond body, beyond mind, making this universe zero. Thus he destroys Avidyâ, and knows his true self, the Atman. Happiness and misery are only in the senses, they cannot touch our *real* self. The soul is beyond time, space and causality, therefore unlimited, omnipresent.

The Jnâni has to come out of all forms, to get beyond all rules and books and be his own book. Bound by forms, we crystalize and die. Still, the Jnâni must never condemn those who cannot yet rise above forms. He must never even *think* of another, “I am holier than thou.”

These are the marks of the true

Jnâna-Yogi: (1) He desires nothing, save to know. (2) All his senses are under perfect restraint; he suffers everything without murmuring, equally content if his bed be the bare ground under the open sky, or if he is lodged in a king's palace. He shuns no suffering, he stands and bears it;—he has given up all but the Self. (3) He knows that all but the *One* is unreal. (4) He has an intense desire for freedom. With a strong will, he fixes his mind on higher things and so attains to peace. If we know not peace, what are we more than the brutes? He does everything for others, for the Lord, giving up all fruit of work and looking for no result, either here or hereafter. What *can* the universe give us, more than our own soul? Possessing that, we possess *all*. The Vedas teach that the Atman, or Self, is the One Undivided Existence. It is beyond mind, memory, thought, or even consciousness as we know it. From it are all things. It is That, through which (or because of which) we see, hear, feel, think. The goal of the universe is to realize oneness with the "Om," or One Existence. The Jnâni has to be free from all forms, he is neither a Hindu, a Buddhist, nor a Christian, but he is all three. All action is renounced, given up to the Lord; then no action has power to bind. The Jnâni is a tremendous rationalist, he denies *everything*. He tells himself, day and night: "There are no beliefs, no sacred words, no heaven, no hell, no creed, no church—there is only Atman." When everything has been thrown away until what cannot be thrown away is reached, that is the Self. The Jnâni takes *nothing* for granted, he analyses by pure reason and force of will, until he reaches Nirvâna which is the extinction of all relativity. No description or even conception of this state is possible. Jnâna is never to be judged by any earthly result. Be not like the vulture which soars almost beyond sight, but

which is ever ready to swoop downwards at the sight of a bit of carrion. Ask not for healing, or longevity, or prosperity, ask only to be free. We are "Existence, Knowledge, Bliss" (Satchitânanda). Existence is the last generalization in the universe, so, we exist, we know it, and bliss is the natural result of existence without alloy. Now and then we know a moment of supreme bliss, when we ask nothing, give nothing, and know nothing but bliss. Then it passes and we again see the panorama of the universe going on before us and we know it is but a "mosaic work set upon God, who is the background of all things." When we return to earth and see the Absolute as relative, we see Satchitânanda as Trinity—Father, Son, Holy Ghost. Sat=the creating principle; Chit=the guiding principle; Ananda=the realizing principle, which joins us again to the One. No one can know "existence" (Sat) except and through "knowledge" (Chit), hence the force of the saying of Jesus: "No man can see the Father save through the Son." The Vedânta teaches that Nirvâna can be attained here and now, that we do not have to wait for death to reach it. Nirvâna is the realisation of the Self, and after having once, if only for an instant, known this, never again can one be deluded by the mirage of personality. Having eyes, we must see the apparent, but all the time we know it for what it is, we have found out its true nature. It is the "screen" that hides the Self which is unchanging. The screen opens and we find the Self behind it,—all change is in the screen. In the saint the screen is thin and the Reality can almost shine through; but in the sinner it is thick, and we are apt to lose sight of the truth that the Atman is there, as well as behind the saint.

All reasoning ends only in finding *Unity*, so we first use analysis, then synthesis. In the world of Science, the forces are gradually narrowed

down in the search for one underlying force. When physical science can *perfectly* grasp the final unity, it will have reached an end, for reaching unity we find rest. Knowledge is final.

Religion, the most precious of all sciences, long ago discovered that final unity, to reach which is the object of Jnâna Yoga. There is but one Self in the universe, of which all lower selves are but manifestations. The Self, however, is infinitely more than *all* of its manifestations. All is the Self or Brahman. The saint, the sinner, the

lamb, the tiger, even the murderer, as far as they have any reality, can be nothing else, because there is nothing else. "That which exists is One, sages call it variously." Nothing can be higher than this knowledge, and in those purified by Yoga it comes in flashes to the soul. The more one has been purified and prepared by Yoga and meditation, the more clear are these flashes of realization. This was discovered 4,000 years ago, but has not yet become the property of the race,—it is still the property of some individuals only.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Even as a child I had an inherent tendency towards spiritual life and an innate consciousness that enjoyment was not the object of life. As I grew in age and knowledge, these two ideas took a firmer hold of my mind. I went about the city of Calcutta seeking knowledge of God among its various religious societies and temples. But I could not find real satisfaction anywhere: none of them emphasised the beauty of renunciation nor could I discover a single man among them, who was possessed of true spiritual wisdom. Then in 1880 or '81, I heard about Sri Ramakrishna and went to see him in the house of one of his devotees at Calcutta. This was the time when Swami Vivekananda and those other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who afterwards renounced the world to carry on his divine mission, had begun to gather round him. On that first day of my visit, I saw Sri Ramakrishna passing into Samâdhi; and when he returned to normal consciousness, he spoke in details about Samâdhi and its nature. I felt in my inmost heart that here was a man who had indeed realised God and I surrendered myself for ever at his blessed feet.

I have not yet come to a final understanding whether he was a man or superman, a god or God Himself. But I have known him to be a man of complete self-effacement, master of the highest renunciation, possessed of the supreme wisdom and as the very incarnation of Love; and as, with the passing of days, I am getting better and better acquainted with the domain of spirituality and feeling the infinite extent and depth of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual moods, the conviction is growing in me that to compare him with God, as God is popularly understood, would be minimising and lowering his supreme greatness. I have seen him showering his love equally on men and women, on the learned and the ignorant, and on saints and sinners, and evincing earnest and unceasing solicitude for the relief of their misery and for their attainment to infinite peace by realising the Divine. And I dare say the world has not seen another man of his type in modern times, so devoted to the welfare of mankind.

He was born at Kamarpukur in the Hooghly district in the year 1836. He looked upon name and fame with extreme disgust. His example and

precepts deeply impressed on us the extreme insignificance of wordly joys before the ineffable bliss of God. He lived day and night in Divine ecstasy; and Samâdhi which is so rare and inaccessible, was perfectly natural to him. It is no wonder, therefore, that the idea of a God-intoxicated man being intimate with the details of everyday life and instructing people thereon, and yearning to remove the sorrows of men and women who approached him with the tales of their worldly afflictions, should appear contrary and unnatural to those who had not witnessed his life. But we have seen innumerable such instances in his life; and there may be a few householders still living, who are feeling themselves blessed by remembering his infinite mercy and his eager attempts at relieving the sufferings of men. One Mani Mallik, having lost his son, came to Sri Ramakrishna with a broken heart. Sri Ramakrishna not only sympathised with him, but entered so deeply into the feelings of the gentleman that it almost seemed as if he were the bereaved father and his sorrow surpassed Mallik's. Some time passed this way. Suddenly Sri Ramakrishna changed his mood and sang a song which encouraged him to prepare for the battle of life. I remember how the father's grief was assuaged by it. The song gave him courage, calmed his sorrow and brought him peace. To him there was neither good nor evil: he saw that the Divine Mother abides in all beings, the difference is only in manifestation. He visualised the Divine Mother in all women and revered and addressed them as his own mother.

By actually practising the doctrines of Hinduism, Christianity and Muhammadanism, etc., he demonstrated the truth of all religions; he found his own realisations tallying with the descriptions of the different scriptures,—the Upanishads, the Bible, the Koran, etc., and he declared that the Truth

is one, being called and worshipped variously by the various religions of the different countries of the world. I have seen many true seekers of God, professing other creeds, come to him to solve their spiritual problems. And it is by seeing him that I came to believe in the truth of such Incarnations and prophets as Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad, and feel their infinite mercy. He never antagonised anyone's spiritual mood or ideal. He helped all who came to him, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, high and low, to advance along the spiritual path according to their individual inclinations.

He was surely wide awake to the infinite sufferings of the world. He not only relieved the individual sufferings of those who came to him, but also removed collective suffering on several occasions and advised Swami Vivekananda and his other disciples to do the same. I should mention here that Swami Vivekananda was himself a man of high spiritual attainments;—we heard from the Master himself that the Swami's spiritual capacities were of a very high order. Once the Master accompanied Mathur Babu, a son-in-law of Rani Rasmani (proprietress of the Temple of Dakshineswar where he resided), to his estate in the Nadia District. It was the time when rents were to be realised from the tenants. But there had been failure of crops for two consecutive years and the tenants were reduced to extreme straits. The sight of their starved and ragged figures deeply pained Sri Ramakrishna. He sent for Mathur Babu and requested him to remit their rents and to give them a sumptuous feast and supply them with clothes. Mathur Babu said: "Father, you do not know how much suffering there is in the world. But it will not do because of that to remit people's rents." "You are but Mother's steward," replied Sri Ramakrishna. "These are Mother's tenants; let

Mother's money be spent. They are suffering so much and you will not help them? You must." Mathur Babu used to look upon the Master as the Incarnation of God; he had, therefore, to accede to his request. I shall mention a second incident. It happened at Deoghar in Behar. The Master was going on a pilgrimage with Mathur Babu and party. In those days the Master lived habitually in a semi-superconscious state. When they arrived at Deoghar Sri Ramakrishna found the local inhabitants (Santhals, an aboriginal tribe) reduced to extreme starvation, emaciated and almost naked. On seeing their unusual appearance, he dismounted from the palanquin and asked Mathur Babu who and what they were. The locality had been going through a terrible famine for two years, and the Master had never seen much extreme misery before. When Mathur Babu explained the conditions to him, he said that they must be given oil, bathed, clothed and fed well. When Mathur Babu remonstrated, Sri Ramakrishna said that he would not move from that place, but live with them till their misery was relieved. Mathur Babu had no other way than to do as he was bid. Those two incidents had happened before I met the Master; but I heard about them from his own lips.

Of those that occurred in our presence, I am mentioning here two instances, from which it will be evident that he was not satisfied with merely expressing oral sympathy and love for the afflicted, but also instructed Swami Vivekananda and ourselves to remove their misery. One day at Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna said in a half super-conscious mood: "Jiva is Shiva (man is Divine), who can show mercy to him? No mercy, but service by looking upon man as God." Swami Vivekananda was then present there. On hearing this

pithy utterance of the Master, pregnant with deep meaning, he said to us: "I have listened to-day to a noble word of wisdom. If the opportunity ever comes, I shall proclaim its great truth to the world." If anyone seeks for the root of the innumerable works of service that are being done by the Ramakrishna Mission in different places, he will find it in this incident. The other incident took place in the beginning of 1886. The Master was lying ill at the Cossipore Garden near Calcutta, under medical treatment. It was there, in that very year, that he entered Mahāsamādhi. Swami Vivekananda and some fifteen more of us used then to live in the Garden attending on him. Swami Vivekananda often pressed him during those days to grant him Nirvikalpa Samādhi (highest super-conscious realisation). One day while meditating, Swami Vivekananda actually reached that state. Seeing him become unconscious and his body grown cold like a corpse, we hurried to the Master in great fear and told him what had happened. The Master showed no anxiety: he merely smiled and said: "Very well," and then relapsed into silence. Sometime after the Swami regained outward consciousness and came to the Master. The Master said to him: "Well, now do you understand? This (the highest realisation) will henceforward remain under lock and key. You have the Mother's work to do. When it is finished, She will undo the lock." Swami Vivekananda replied: "Sir, I was happy in Samādhi. In my infinite joy I had forgotten the world. I beseech you to let me remain in that state." "For shame!" cried the Master. "How can you ask such things? I thought you were a vast receptacle, and here you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man! This realisation will become so natural to you by the grace of the Mother, that even in your normal state you will realise the One

Divinity in all beings. You will do great things in the world. You will bring spiritual knowledge to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor.”

Sri Ramakrishna had the divine power to transmit spirituality to others and lift them to higher states of consciousness. This he would do either by thought, power, or touch. Like Swami Vivekananda many of us used to visit him and had the privilege to be lifted to higher planes of consciousness according to our capacities. I myself had the privilege to attain to that high spiritual consciousness (Samâdhi) thrice by his touch and wish during his lifetime. I am living still to bear direct testimony to his great spiritual powers. It was neither hypnotism, nor a mere state of deep sleep inasmuch as such realisations brought about changes of character and outlook, which were more or less permanent.

It was naturally not always possible for one like Sri Ramakrishna, ever living on high spiritual elevations, to relieve earthly sufferings of the poor, but it will be wrong therefore to think that he was unmindful of them. What he himself practised and gave out in aphoristic utterances were and are being subsequently realised and practised by Swami Vivekananda and others. It was impossible for him to look after even his own requirements while dwelling on the high spiritual planes. He, therefore, transmitted his spiritual ideas apparently under Divine guidance to those who were fit to quickly assimilate those high spiritual truths and devote themselves to the welfare of mankind. The greatest of them was Swami Vivekananda—so we heard from the Master and felt ourselves.

Therefore, we find as we study the life of the Swami, that as on the one hand he preached the wonderful message of religious harmony, so on the other he preached the universal creed of service by giving secular and spiritual knowledge, food, medicine, etc., to the needy, so that having all their wants fulfilled, they might be by and by led to the domain of spirituality. In fact, Swamiji was the greatest interpreter of the Master's life and a commentary on the Master's aphoristic utterances on deep and noble spiritual principles. I have doubts if any man will ever be able to fully determine the infinitude of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual realisations.

Some conceive a distinction between the realisation of the Divinity in man and the consciousness of universal suffering with regard to motives for service. It seems to me that these are merely two aspects of the same state of mind and not two different states. It is only by realising the inherent Divinity of man that we can truly feel the depth of his misery—for only then the state of man's spiritual bondage and deprivation of the Divine perfection and bliss becomes vivid to our consciousness. It is the painful consciousness of the contrast between the Divinity within man and his present ignorance of it and consequent suffering, that goads the heart to his service. Without the realisation of the spirit within oneself and in others, true sympathy, love and service are impossible. This is why Sri Ramakrishna wanted his disciples to attain Self-realisation before they could devote themselves profitably to the service of mankind.

THROUGH THE DARK TO THE NEW DAWN

BY THE EDITOR

I

Is religion declining in India? Are our young people losing faith in religion and assuming a secular outlook more and more? If so, what are the reasons? Or is it that they are really as religious as their forefathers,—only the expression of religion with them is different? The other day an Englishman said to us: "Is not India's degradation due to her preoccupation with religion? It is enough if people are honest, active and efficient." We replied: "Don't you think that the world will be a much better place if all were like Christ?" Though this silenced the Englishman, his remarks have occurred to us again and again. We feel that this was not his individual opinion, or even a mere criticism of India. It was the expression of that secularism which is over-running the West and has infected India also to a certain extent. Perchance our people also are feeling the same way. If that be so, it is certainly worth some study.

It is always easy to condemn, but very difficult to understand. In all mental affairs, there is always the danger that we may take the vocal expression to be the thing itself. Even those that represent certain views do not always actually believe in them. We do not mean deliberate misrepresentation. The fact is, certain deep forces are at work in the collective mind. They want to achieve certain ends in the life of humanity. But when their workings reach the conscious layers of our mind, they are understood, interpreted and consequently represented according to our limited visions, and often assume a diametrically opposite appearance to their own real nature. Thus through contradictions and denials oftentimes the deeper purposes of the collective and the individual being are fulfilled. When

therefore we hear loud outcries against religion, they may after all be nothing but the imperfect and passing expression of the desire for a deeper understanding of religion.

In what we have said here, we have not enunciated any new law. In fact the world well knows these erratic workings of mind and reality. That is why we find everywhere the new tendencies—apparently secular—being interpreted as forms of a higher religion. The licence of young people, contempt for moral and spiritual values, preoccupation with material pursuits in the name of national service, application of science to the enhancement of material comforts—all these are being upheld as symptoms of a fuller, nobler life. Yet it needs a very stout optimism indeed to accept such interpretations as correct and true. Here also there is the same danger of misunderstanding. For there is irreligion. The tendency to explain all symptoms as signs of a new religion may also be over-indulged. We may misinterpret things. We must therefore be on our guard against going to the other extreme. The truth evidently lies as usual between the two extremes. We must be very careful in understanding and evaluating the modern phenomena,—they are so complex and deceptive! One way perhaps of evaluating them would be to compare them with the forms and tendencies of religious life, as they existed in the past. For those had been tested through centuries and found to be true of religion, whereas the present tendencies require to be tried before they can be accepted as right and genuine.

II

What were the conditions in India before? At the very first we should mention the popular tendency of those

days to engage in some kind of spiritual practices. It was considered that unless men daily went through some spiritual exercises, religious ideals would soon lose their value and reality to them, and religious life would become a mockery. Spiritual practices were considered obligatory. The reason is obvious. We are almost all of us enthralled by our senses. The existence of a reality beyond the sensuous experience seems fanciful to us. Yet religion is based on the existence of the supersensible realities. It is absolutely impossible to maintain spiritual enthusiasm in a people unless they were made to at least glimpse, however vaguely, the supra-mundane realities. They must feel in their heart of hearts that there is a reality, finer and more abiding, beautiful and blissful beyond their humdrum existence. The only way to do so was to undergo a daily practice by which the tumults of the sense-life would be at least partially stilled, the higher reality reflected on the tranquil mind, and consciousness lifted to a higher plane. Various forms of spiritual practice existed. One most common form was the practice of *Sandhyâ-vandanam*. Every high-caste boy had to practise it at least thrice a day, sitting calm and quiet in a solitary place. The mind was thus trained to withdraw from the sensible world and fix itself on a supersensible reality. This practice, however imperfectly done, did not fail to produce wonderful results. There was also the practice of *Japa*, the repetition of some sacred formula or a name of God. This also proved equally efficacious. There was again the daily worship of God and the singing of His praise—*Kirtana*,—both with similar effects. Almost all had to go through one or another of these practices. The result was that an entire people had their minds brought to the threshold of the supersensible world. To them the high planes of consciousness and existence were no mere fancies, but impressively real. No argument could rob them of their faith. For it was no

mere belief, but in many cases a thing of actual experience. And experience always tells.

The second thing was *Achâra*, the observance of certain rules of conduct. It was believed that human mind and life were so intractable and complex, that unless determined efforts were made to enclose them within legitimate limits, they would run headlong into ruin. Therefore various rules of conduct were promulgated, and society insisted on its members to abide by them. They were not generally allowed to exercise their individual choice in this matter. For the judgment of an average man was certainly unsafe and unreliable compared to the accumulated wisdom of the collective mind. Besides, such individual freedom was bound to result in virtual anarchy. So all had to abide by the rules. The rules were meant to keep our desires and activities within proper limits, so that they might, instead of leading us deeper into the mire of senselife, lift us to high spiritual levels. These rules were both social and individual. As regards the social rules, they were, except when they were purely sociological in function, meant to render our socio-economic relationships spiritually healthy: collective life was made morally purer and economic greed restrained. The individual rules were of course predominantly spiritual in objective. There were rules as regards bath, food, contact, marital relationship, etc. Though apparently mechanical, these certainly produced salutary effects. Life was chastened, mind properly disciplined, the hunger of the flesh checked and desires eliminated. Above all they produced a strength of mind, which was essential to spiritual progress. It must not also be forgotten that our body itself is a help or hindrance according as we keep it pure or defile it. The *âchâras* greatly succeeded in purifying the bodily elements.

The third element was the maintenance of holy traditions. Traditions play an important part in all life,

individual or collective. All cannot think out things for themselves. Besides, in our days of training we need them badly. No training is possible without a predetermined ideal, and who would determine it if not the accumulated wisdom of the nation handed down in the form of traditions? We have to take for granted that certain things are worth achieving in life and that certain other things are to be shunned. This is possible only through living traditions. Therefore, traditions were vigorously maintained and propagated in our society, through books, music, festivals, examples, pilgrimage and various other means. There were innumerable religious festivals throughout the year demonstrating the glory and truth of the spiritual life and realities. There were religious preachers, monastic and lay, who went about, even in the remotest villages, and held discourse on gods and goddesses, on the men of God, on mythologies, and on the religious theories and practices. And there is not another country in the world, where there are so many temples and holy places. Wherever we look, we find these concrete symbols of spiritual life. Every Hindu considered it obligatory to visit not only the temples in his neighbourhood, but also the famous places of pilgrimages. Then there were the holy books in vernaculars and Sanskrit. All these were held in great veneration and read with great devotion. Especially the *Purānas*,—the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata*, etc.—were studied in every village. And there were always religious songs on the lips of the people, and dramatic performances in which the holy traditions were represented. These were not with the people of those times, mere things of enjoyment ; they also attached a great religious value to them.

The fourth element was the existence of sufficient leisure. It was found that a man who was ever engaged in earning his bread, who was always thinking of money, could not devote much attention to religious things. He was bound to

become excessively material. It was necessary, therefore, that every man should have his living ensured on legitimate labour and a legitimate margin of leisure left to him. So economic competition was eliminated through the caste system. That gave people time to think of higher things.

The above general estimate is, we think, enough to contrast the past with the present conditions of religion in India. What are the present conditions? If we seek for the four factors considered above in the present-day India, we shall find that they have become rather scarce. Things are not at all the same as before. Economic conditions have totally changed. Now people are not assured of their living. The old structure has broken down and unemployment is rampant everywhere. In every field, there is keen competition. People are crying for bread. Day and night they are thinking of how to feed the mouths of the family. Little time is thus left for devotion to higher ends. People do not go as eagerly and devotedly on pilgrimage as before. Pilgrimage seems to have lost its original charm. There is no money to be spent on distant journeys, nor enough leisure. Temples are neglected. Many of them are crumbling down for want of repair, and very few temples are being built anew. The festivals have become few and far between ; and even the few that are still celebrated are, without their accustomed pomp and glory. People no longer care to read their Scriptures, and the sacred discourses have become rare. Sanskrit learning has almost vanished from the villages. Formerly the learned Brahmins of the villages were looked upon as guides not only in Scriptural knowledge but also in the practice of religion. But now few Brahmins are devoted to the study of the Scriptures,—they have received English education and neglected Sanskrit, because only through modern education can they hope to earn a decent income and ensure good position in society. Monks and laymen do not wander about as much

among the villages as they used to do before. And even when they do so, they do not receive the same attention as before. People are too busy with mundane affairs to listen to talks about God.

It will be seen that these changes are mainly due to changes in the economic conditions of India. If our former socio-economic system persisted, these unfortunate changes in our mental conditions would not possibly have occurred. But there have been other deeper changes. Our traditions have broken down. We do not trust and reverence them as much as we used to do before. We have lost faith in them. We are critical about them. Our holy books do not appeal to us in the same sense as before. It is nonsense to say that we have become more rational. We are not. Let us study our daily life and activity a little calmly, and we shall find that we are scarcely rational in most things. In fact, we are more unreasonable than ever before. Human mind has a tendency to delude itself by covering its inclinations with the cloak of reason. Somehow we have become indifferent about the things recorded and enjoined in our Scriptures. No doubt there are many unscientific things in our books. But our forefathers did not seek for scientific knowledge in them, but for a higher inspiration. Often our parents and dear ones are not as learned as we would wish them to be. Are they therefore less dear and respectable to us? We do not regard them intellectually but with love and affection, and therefore they appear adorable to us. Similarly of the national traditions. Defects there may be, but we also find higher elements in them when we love and reverence them. But the moment we cease to do so, we become critical and discover innumerable faults in them.

The reason of this critical attitude is perhaps the prevalence of a type of education, which is not only foreign but peculiarly destructive. It has not only undermined our faith but has failed to

substitute anything positive in return. The ideals for which the Indian nation has striven for ages, and the ideas which have been its very foundation, have come to be looked upon with suspicion. From all these the inevitable consequence has followed—the destruction of social cohesion. Hindu society is in disintegration. At least so it seems. The rules of conduct that were considered obligatory before, are scarcely observed now. Life lacks discipline. And last of all, there is no regular spiritual practice. The loss that this implies is incalculable. We have seen how this was the actual basis of spiritual faith and zeal. Lacking this, the spiritual realities seem to us as chimerical: we do not believe they are all true. Had we maintained our practices unimpaired, even the English education and economic changes could not have shaken us from our position as they have done. For in spite of everything our faith in and experience of the supersensible realities would have remained undimmed, and we would certainly not have become a bundle of negatives which we are now. But these practices we have neglected and the result has been seemingly disastrous.

Are we extreme in our estimate of the present conditions of things? We are not unaware that there are yet many devout souls in every part of India to whom religion is as true and real as it was to our forefathers, and that in spite of foreign education, the spiritual fire burns as bright in many bosoms as ever before. Still, we believe that judged from the standpoint of our past outlook, the present are indeed as gloomy as we have depicted them.

III

Mind that we say: "judged from the standpoint of our past outlook." We do not say that the prospect is absolutely gloomy. What we mean is that the present conditions are not without their redeeming features. If we take them at their face value, it is inevitable that we shall condemn them, for they would

hold out no hope for us. But we for ourselves are not prepared to be satisfied with a superficial estimation. As we have mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this essay, things are not always what they seem. Often fundamental forces achieve their purpose through self-contradiction. Anyhow it behoves us to probe deeper before we pronounce our final condemnation of the present conditions.

We said that the breakdown of our traditions is due mainly to a negative foreign education. But perhaps it would not be wholly true to fix the entire responsibility upon it. We have also to take an important fact into account, namely, that the conditions of Hindu society even in the pre-English age were after all abnormal. Let us explain.

We must remember that religion for most people is a thing of custom,—it is not sufficiently real and vivid with them. It goes without saying that the predominant tendency of most persons is towards sense-enjoyment. They do not really want God. Yet these persons have to be brought to Him. The natural course would be to satisfy their carnal desires before they are initiated into religion. This infinite universe with all its beauty and joy is tempting us every moment. It seems so vast and sublime! We want to enjoy it to the full—its riches, powers, beauties and joys. We want to conquer and possess it. There is an inherent desire in the human heart to master the universe; and it is but natural. We have a natural hatred of separation and limitation. Yet as we now are, we find this infinite universe beyond our hold and pressing us from all sides. We want to unite ourselves with it, we want to mingle our being with its being. But in our delusion we do not know the right process of doing it. We want to do it through the senses, that is, by externally conquering and possessing it. No doubt this is a normal desire. But this preoccupation with the visible universe blinds us to the existence of a

much superior reality, the Spirit. We get enmeshed by matter and toil in it from life to life. *In order to be truly religious, one must feel in one's inmost soul the infinite superiority of the Spirit to the universe.* The world must appear as insignificant, trivial, insipid. Without this feeling and consciousness, our idea of God would be poor indeed, and our faith in and devotion to Him, more or less formal. Religion, in fact, will not be real.

Of course, it is not possible for any sense-bound man to ever possess the universe. But his desire to do so must be assuaged. All wise religious systems have, therefore, provided for the average man's self-satisfaction before he embraces spiritual life seriously. Let him have his fill of the earth-life. Let him experience its hollowness. Only then will he yearn for That which is above and beyond the world. When the Hindus' life was normal, both individually and collectively, they had enough of earth's pleasures and powers. They revelled in them and thus transcended them. Unfortunately, however, this sane combination of *Dharma* and *Moksha* was impaired by the Buddhistic over-emphasis on *Moksha*, and the true balance of life was lost. The harmony was destroyed. And as a result, the nation became debilitated, till at last when the Muhammadans came, it easily succumbed to their attack.

And this was a great tragedy. For when the Muhammadans established their dominions in India, the only thing the Hindus could do was to retire behind the walls of protective customs and thus save themselves from being absorbed by Islam. It is true that Hindus still possessed many parts of the country and there were many powerful Hindu princes and landlords. But there is no doubt that the earthly glory and power of the Hindus were much circumscribed by the Muhammadans. This was not at all wholesome for the Hindus. Because, the very feeling of being under the power of another had

a great cramping effect on the Hindus' soul. It is always so. This is the worst of political subjection. Even when you have great privileges, you do not feel yourself normal. During the Muhammadan rule, Hindus enjoyed many privileges no doubt. There were great Hindu generals, ministers and provincial rulers. But in spite of all that, the consciousness of limitation was never lost. In fact, it slowly worked on the Hindu mind. Life became more and more abnormal. The normal activities of normal humans were not in evidence. We became preternaturally subjective in our outlook. We became unnaturally mild and other-worldly. There is no doubt that about the time the English established their rule in India, we were a broken nation, out of which all energies had been sapped, so that when the onslaughts of Western ideas began, we could not stand them, we easily succumbed. We were confused. We lost the sense of values. And why? Because then, generally speaking, the people were not truly religious. That is to say, though *consciously* they sincerely aspired after spiritual realities and were quite faithful to the spiritual ideals, and though there were undoubtedly some to whom religion was quite real, yet the sense of the surfeit of earthly glory which is the necessary basis of all abiding religious consciousness, was not with the generality of people. Their feeling for religion lacked the sense of majesty; there were in their mind lurking desires for earthly power and enjoyment. That is the reason why when the West unfolded before us the vision of the world's power and joy, we easily yielded, forsaking our own ideals and traditions. It was not merely the Western education, but our pre-existing inner weakness, that was responsible for that tragic confusion.

If our diagnosis is correct, we can at once discover new significance in the present apparently secular movements of our people. Perchance we are trying to become normal before we become

supernormal. Perhaps we are trying to taste of the earth in order to find it finally insipid. We want to enjoy earthly power in order to find it trivial and hollow. We do not refer to the present licences of a section of our people. They are wallowing in the mire of sensuality like pigs. Through this nothing is ever achieved. But there is a dignity and a majesty even in the man of the world when he takes himself seriously, when the powers that come to him, albeit they are earthly, raise his mind to a higher level (and do not drag him to the level of brutes)—the level to which the gods belong. Above and beyond that is indeed the place of the saints, the men of God. Now this celestial glory is the objective towards which the desires of our people are reaching, so that their normal faculties and powers may fully and healthily function and that they may overcome the sense of limitation, which is ever dogging the average human being everywhere, and specially in India.

And not merely that. The secular tendencies of our people are not merely a reaction to their previous limitation. We have said before that one must have satisfactory relations with the world, before one can truly transcend its influence. That means that these relations are relative. At a time when distant travelling was unknown, one's mental horizon was limited within his province or country. That was the area over which his mind roamed. But now that the whole world has come together, to remain shut up within one's province or country is nothing but insularity. At a time when most powers of nature were beyond human control, people never felt small if they could not employ them to their service. Now that men have enslaved many of those powers, to continue primitively seems indeed a deprivation and humiliation. At a time when our only resort for knowledge was our own culture and learning, it was enough if one mastered the indigenous culture. But now that all the different cultures of the world

are within our reach, to acquire only our own seems only half learning. Now the horizon of the average man has widened a great deal. Necessarily, any satisfaction as regards our relations with the present world, is possible only through a corresponding widening of the scopes of our knowledge and activity. This is another reason why the secular outlook predominates in India at present. Our people feel that they are much behind other nations in these terrestrial affairs and that they must overtake them somehow. This urge is in the soul of the Indian nation, and it cannot be satisfied until and unless we feel that we have manifested enough power worthy of the best of modern men.

IV

Now the question of questions is: Should we call this urge religious or irreligious? Is it religion to try to achieve materially? Is the feeling of our young people that we have enough of religion—what is wanted is that we should be active and efficient—in any sense religious? It does not matter what they *profess*. They may decry religion. For most of them are but unconscious instruments in the hands of the powers that are working in the depths of the national soul, fulfilling certain of their purposes through the fanatical zeal of individuals. But the powers—what are they? Are they contributing to the growth of religion? Yes, and No,—both answers perhaps are possible to this question. No, we say, because striving for material glory can in no sense be called spiritual. Yes, we say, because if they help men to satisfy their worldly ambitions and thus demonstrate the hollowness and triviality of the world, they substantially help them in realising true religion. But, of course, this answer would be justified, if only there is a propellent idealism in and behind our secular activities, which would push us beyond the earthly limits and lift us to supermundane levels. Unless there is this

conscious idealism, that is to say, unless there is quite a good number among those engaged in the work of material and secular upliftment of the nation, who are conscious that such achievements are but a means to a high end which is supersensible and spiritual, secular activities can in no sense be called spiritual, for then they would be in no way different from the activities of the worldly-minded. This idealism is the transforming element. We want political freedom. We want industrial greatness. We want social wellbeing. We want scientific knowledge and conquest of external nature. We want wealth, health, all-round prosperity. All these are helpful only if the advanced among of us, those that lead, are keenly conscious that the quest for earthly prosperity is justified, only that the requisite self-satisfaction may be obtained in order to rise to the higher levels of spiritual life. Without this consciousness, secular aspirations are dangerous. With this, they are but the necessary stepping-stones for reaching the perfect spiritual manhood.

And also perchance, we the people of the present age are dreaming of an ideal manhood, which would be denied nothing, which would not feel cramped in any part of its being, and which would be filled with a plenitude of power ennobled by its renunciation and therefore consecration at the feet of God. This is a dream which when realised would reveal a religion which is much more glorious than any of its previous versions. That is perhaps why humanity is disinclined to deny any vision of the Being, any part of his self. But all this hankering for the realisation of the Perfect Being will avail little, nay, prove fruitless and disastrous, unless the highest self of man—the Divine—be made the objective of all efforts. Have they done so in India? Not all, we are afraid. But there are many, many among us to-day, who have done so, who dream the glorious dream and are struggling to realise it in the life of the Indian nation. These are

indeed the hope of India and the world. There is no doubt that the old modes of religious expression will not all be repeated in the present age. If we think that spiritual feeling will express itself always in the older forms, we are sadly mistaken. Temples are being replaced by the busy workshops—in the very midst of their daily activities men are seeking to realise the Divine. The so-called secular service they are going to realise as the worship of the Lord Himself. Pilgrimage is being replaced by the quest of the service of men. Old *âchâras* are being substituted by self-imposed disciplines in the service of the nation and humanity and by struggles to achieve nobly. And do we not see how the story of Man has already taken the place of the stories of gods and goddesses in the interest of people?—History is replacing the *Purânas*. We do not mean that the old forms will totally vanish. Some of them will live, but other forms and institutions are attaining equal prominence and sanctity. If we fail to see this, we shall greatly mistake the present age. It is true the new institutions have not yet taken proper form, but there is no doubt they will soon do so.

V

But at this juncture we must sound a note of warning. There is a danger that our spiritual idealism may be cankered by false notions. There is no doubt that the modern age is predominantly secular in outlook. If we still look on it with hope, it is because we think that it has not yet matured,—it is only in its opening stages. It has a vast promise; it is rich with potentiality, though as yet its realisations are of a crude nature. But the dream of an unprecedented perfection is there. And because we are eager to realise it, therefore we are always in danger of mistaking the stages on the way as the goal itself: lower ideals we may mistake for the Ideal itself. This danger has to be provided against. We want national upliftment and we take that to be the

highest aim of life! We are enamoured of art,—well, we propagate art itself as religion! Pursuit of knowledge is all right, but our partial vision makes us consider that a kind of religion! These mistakes are being made every day. If the present age has gained considerably in breadth of vision, obviously it has lost proportionately in depth. But what use is a shallow liberalism? Breadth and depth must be combined:—as wide as the sky, but also as deep as the sea we must be. That must be our goal. *Let us remind ourselves once for all that unless our idealism be truly spiritual, it will spell the ruin of India, it will only mislead us and slowly drown us in materialism. Unless we be on our guard, the vast promise of the present age may after all come to nothing; on the other hand, our struggles for the all-round prosperity of the nation may draw us down to the dark abyss of death.* It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that we form a correct idea of the nature of the spiritual life and vision, or we shall always mistake the means to be the end and sidetrack the onward march of humanity. There are sure signs by which we can find out if our activity and objective is spiritual or not. Do we feel we are beyond body and mind when we engage in our work or dwell on our end? Do we feel the oneness of the entire reality? Do we feel we have gone beyond the reach of death (such a feeling is possible even while in a body)? If we do, we may be sure that we are going along the right path. To one who dwells and acts on the spiritual plane, the Divine Consciousness is ever present.

It has been said that “the creative spirit of God gets His best work done through men when at the practical moment they forget themselves, and even Him, in the work and the object. Before or after a long flight of speculation, Kepler or Newton—a Linnæus or Pasteur—formally remember their God, and then, being finite workmen, promptly forget Him so as to do His work and benefit the race.” This, as many

of our readers will feel, states only the standpoint of a *Karma Yogin* in the first stages of his development. To make the means the end is no doubt a sign of *Karma Yoga*. We become absorbed in our work and in the realisation of our end and forget everything else. But such absorption, when it is deep, complete and true, takes us to the living presence of God even in the midst of our work. We do feel as clearly as in the hours of our formal devotions the presence of Divinity in and outside us, and everything appears enveloped and interpenetrated by the spirit of God. There need not be any kind of forgetfulness of Him. This indeed is the character and experience of the true *Karma Yogin*. But what we should further note here is that when such an experience comes, the nature and estimation of our work also change. If we have begun with, say, social service, it will not remain what we usually know it to be, when the pre-

sence of God has sanctified it. It will become transformed. This inner and outer transformation is the sign. Let everyone engage in the work he has chosen. But let him never think that it is spiritual even in its present form and import. It will become spiritual only when the inner and consequently the outer transformation has taken place. Once we realise this, our outlook at once changes,—we try not only to do our chosen work, but also to raise our consciousness to the spiritual level by distinct spiritual exercises, for we feel that until that level is reached, our work and understanding of it will scarcely be perfect. No man indeed, whatever the nature of his vocation, can ever deny homage to religion even as it has been known from time immemorial and as it will be known for all times to come,—the conscious consecration of life and all to God and their eternal absorption in Him. May India never lose sight of this ultimate eternal vision!

THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

6TH MAY, 1922.

It was evening. Swami Shivananda was sitting in the upper veranda of the main building of the Belur Monastery. The disciple asked him:

“I want to ask you a question: Can a Westerner enter the shrine of the Master?”

Swami: “Why not? But of course he must take off his shoes before he enters.”

Disciple: “Suppose a Muhammadan also wants to go into the shrine?”

Swami: “Yes, he also can go. Only the other day Moulana Mohammed Ali and Moulana Shaukat Ali came here. They went into the shrine.”

Disciple: “Yes, Maharaj, I also think that unless people of all creeds are allowed to visit the shrine of the Master, how can we maintain the all-comprehensive ideal of the Master, and how can people regard him as the teacher of all religions? Of course, one

must be clean if one wants to go into his shrine.

“An Englishman one day visited the Dacca Centre of our Mission. When he was told of the Master’s teachings on the harmony of religions, he asked: ‘Can I enter into your shrine?’ ‘Certainly you can,’ I replied, ‘but you must wear pure clothes and take off your shoes.’”

21ST MAY, 1922.

It was Sunday, about 8-30 at night. At the Belur Math, Swami Shivananda was sitting in the outer veranda of the main building, overlooking the sacred stream of the Ganges. Some monks of the Monastery were sitting and standing near him. One of them asked the Swami in course of conversation:

“Is it true that the amulet of the Master, which is worshipped here, was given to him by your father?”

The Swami replied: “While the Master was suffering from an excruciat-

ing burning sensation all over his body, my father asked him to wear an *ista-kavacha* (amulet containing an inscription of the sacred formula pertaining to his Chosen Deity) on his person. It is that same *ista-kavacha*."

A Devotee: "Were you at that time at Dakshineswar?"

Swami: "I was not even born then. It happened during his *Sādhanā*. My father used in those days to visit Dakshineswar now and then. He used to practise as a Mukhteer at Barasat. In fact he was connected with many landlords including Rani Rasmani as a legal practitioner, and used to earn a great deal of money. He was a great *Tāntrika Sādhaka*. I remember how he used to invite home many *Tāntrika Sādhakas* from Kamakhya, paying all their expenses, and worship the Divine Mother and practise *japa*. I remember one *Sādhaka* who used to sit at *japa* with a bottle of wine. He would drink a little from time to time and continue with *japa* throughout the night.

"I, however, did not know that my father visited Dakshineswar. I learnt it afterwards from the Master. The Master would not generally ask anyone about his home affairs. He used to see his disciples with the spiritual eye and always behaved with them accordingly. One day he asked me: 'I don't know why, but I am feeling a desire to ask you about your home. Where is your home?' I mentioned my village. 'Who is your father?' 'Kanai Ghosal,' I replied. On hearing this he exclaimed: 'Oh! he was a great *Sādhaka*. He used to practise *japa* in the Kali temple here, clad in a red silk cloth. He used to bring a man with him, who would sit behind him singing Mother's songs, and tears would trickle down your father's face. And as he would come out of the temple, with his eyes all red, he would seem to me like a veritable *Bhairava*. At that time I had a terrible burning sensation all over my body. It was so intense that all the hair on my body was burnt. I

said to your father: 'You know many things. Can you tell me how I can get rid of this burning sensation?' He advised me to put on the *ista-kavacha*, and that indeed relieved me.'"

A Monk: "Who made the *kavacha* for the Master?"

Swami: "That I do not know. This is all that the Master told me."

A Monk: "Where did you first see the Master? At Dakshineswar?"

Swami: "No, at the house of Ram Babu.* A relation of Ram Babu used to work in the same office with me. He would visit the Master and often tell us his story at the office. I used to practise *Sādhanā* even from a boy. I was attached to Brahmoism in those days, and I read about the Master in Keshab Babu's paper, *Dharma-tattva*. I did not, however, know the exact location of Dakshineswar or the way to it. I was afterwards told by Ram Babu's relation that it was opposite to the mouth of the Bally Khâl.

"One Saturday that gentleman informed me that the Master would visit Ram Babu's house that day, and that I could see him if I went there. I said: 'The place is very near to where I stay. I shall surely go.'

"For a long time I had been eager to know the nature of *Samādhi*. I used to meditate and sometimes realise a condition which I thought was approximate to *Samādhi*. But I wanted very much to know what it exactly was. I questioned many people, but none could explain it to me. Only one man said: 'None can realise *Samādhi* in this *Kali Yuga*. I have seen only one man who has it,—he is Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Dakshineswar.'

"Anyhow, I went that evening to Ram Babu's house. I found the Master sitting in a room crowded with people. The Master was scarcely conscious. I saluted and sat near him. What was my surprise when I heard

*Ram Chandra Datta, a prominent household disciple of the Master.

him talking eloquently on a subject which I had been so eager to know about—on *Samâdhi*!”

A Monk: “What did he say about *Samâdhi* that day?”

Swami: “I do not remember details. But I remember that he dwelt on *Nirvikalpa Samâdhi* and said that very few could realise it in the *Kali Yuga*,

and if one realised it, one’s body did not live more than twenty-one days, and that Shyam Mukherji of Salkhia realised *Nirvikalpa Samâdhi* and his body lived only twenty-one days.

“I did not have any talk with the Master on that occasion. A month after, I went to Dakshineswar and became known to him.”

THE RIVER RE-ENTERS THE SEA*

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

He was nearing the Ocean. The end was approaching. His feeble body was almost daily consumed in the fire of ecstasy and was worn out by his constant gift of himself to the famished crowds. Sometimes like a sulky child he complained to the Mother of the flood of visitors devouring him day and night. In his humorous way he said to Her:

“Why do You bring hither all these people, who are like milk diluted with five times its own quantity of water? My eyes are destroyed with blowing the fire to dry up the water! My health is gone. It is beyond my strength. Do it Yourself, if You want it done! This (*pointing to his body*) is nothing but a burst drum, and if You go on beating it day in and day out, how long do You think it will last?”

But he never turned anyone away. He said:

“Let me be condemned to be born over and over again, even in the form of a dog, if so I can be of help to a single soul!”

And again:

“I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man!”

He reproached himself for his ecstasies, because they took time that might otherwise have been given to others:

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“O Mother, stop me from enjoying them! Let me stay in my normal state, so that I can be of more use in the world.”

During his last days when his disciples protected him in spite of himself against the importunity of devotees, he said:

“How I suffer because no one has need of my help to-day!”

His great friend, the illustrious chief of the Brahma Samaj, Keshab Chunder Sen, preceded him in death. He died in 1884. With tears in his eyes Ramakrishna said of him shortly before his death that “the rose tree is to be transplanted because the gardener wants beautiful roses of him.”

Afterwards he said:

“Half of me has perished.”

But the other half, if it is possible to use such an expression, was the humble people. He was as easy of access to them, if not more so, as to the most learned; and among the familiar friends of his last years he counted, in the same category as the disciples so dear to his heart, simple people, madmen of God. Such an one was old Gopâler Mâ, whose simple story is worthy of a place in the Franciscan legends:

An old woman of sixty, who had been widowed while still a little girl, had dedicated herself to the Lord. The hunger of her unassuaged maternal love had made her for thirty years adopt the child Krishna, Gopâla, as her own, until it had become a harmless mania.

No sooner had she met Ramakrishna than his God-filled glance made little Gopâla issue from her. The warm compassion of the Master, which made the hidden desires and sorrows of those who came near him his own, lent inspiration to the unsatisfied dream of the childless mother, and he put the God-Child into her arms. From that moment the little Gopâla never left the mother, who had adopted Him. Henceforward she did not pray; she had no need to pray, for she lived in unbroken communion with her God. She threw her rosary into the river and passed her days prattling with the Child. This state lasted two months and then was mitigated; the Child only appeared in moments of meditation. But the old woman's heart was filled with happiness, and Ramakrishna tenderly regarded her joy. But his ever present sense of fun made him ask the old woman to tell her story to the haughty Naren, proud of his critical reason and holding that such visions were stupid and morbid illusions. The old woman quite simply interrupted her maternal chatter, and made Naren her judge:

"Sir," she said to him, "I am only a poor ignorant woman. I do not rightly understand things. You are learned. Tell me, do you think it is true?"

Naren, deeply moved, answered:

"Yes, mother, it is quite true."

It was in 1884 that Ramakrishna's health took a serious turn. While he was in a trance he dislocated his left arm, and it was very painful. A great change took place in him. He divided his infirm body and his wandering soul into two. He no longer spoke of "I." He was no longer "me." He called himself "This." The sick man more intensely than before perceived "Lilâ. . . the Play. . . . The God who disports Himself in men. . . ." The man roughly seized his real self, and then fell into silent amazement; his joy knew no bounds, as if he had suddenly and unexpectedly met one of his dear ones. . . . "When Shiva saw his real

self he cried: 'Such am I! Such am I!' and danced for joy. . . ."

In April the following year his throat became inflamed. Overstrain from constant talking and the dangerous Samâdhis, which made blood flow in his throat, certainly had something to do with it. The doctors he consulted forbade both speech and ecstasy, but he paid no attention to them. At a great Vaishnava religious festival he spent himself without measure, and in return the disease grew worse. It became practically impossible for him to eat. Nevertheless he continued to receive those who came to him day and night. Then one night he had hemorrhage of the throat. The doctors diagnosed cancer. His chief disciples persuaded him to put himself for a time under the care of Dr. Mahendra Lâl Sarkâr of Calcutta. In September, 1885, a small house was rented where Ramakrishna's wife installed herself in a corner, so that she might supervise his régime. The most faithful disciples watched during the night. The majority of them were poor, and they mortgaged, borrowed or pawned their effects in order to pay the expenses of the Master's illness—an effort, which cemented their union. Dr. Sarkar was a rationalist, who did not share the religious views of Ramakrishna, and told him so frankly. But the more he came to know his patient the deeper did his respect for him become, until he treated him for nothing. He came to see him three times a day and spent hours with him (which, it may be observed in passing, was perhaps not the best way to make him better). He said to him:

"I love you so dearly because of your devotion to truth. You never deviate by a hair's breadth from what you believe to be true. . . . Do not think that I am flattering you. If my father was in the wrong I should tell him so."

But he openly censured the religious adoration rendered him by the disciples:

“To say that the Infinite came down to earth in the form of a man is the ruin of all religions.”

Ramakrishna maintained an amused silence, but the disciples became animated in these discussions, which only served to increase their mutual esteem; and their faith in the Master, who was illumined by his sufferings, was strengthened. They tried to understand why such a trial was imposed upon him, and split up into groups holding different views. The most exalted, headed by Girish the redeemed sinner, declared that the Master himself had willed his illness, so as to establish the communion of apostles round him. The rationalists with Naren as their mouthpiece admitted that the Master's body was subject to the laws of nature like other men's. But they all recognised the Divine presence in the dying man; and on the day of the great annual festival of Kâli, of which Ramakrishna to their surprise made no mention, but spent absorbed in ecstasy, they realised that the Mother was indwelling within him. The exaltation excited by this belief had its dangers, the chief among them being an access of convulsive sentimentalism. They had—or pretended to have—visions and ecstasies with laughter, song and tears. Naren then showed for the first time the vigour of his reason and his will. He treated them with contempt. He told them that “the Master's ecstasies had been bought by a life of heroic austerity and desperate conflict for the sake of knowledge; their effusions were nothing but the vapourings of sick imagination when they were not lies. Those who were ill ought to take more care of themselves! Let them eat more and so react against spasms which were worthy only of ridiculous females! And let them beware! Of those who encouraged a religion of ostentatious emotion eighty per cent became scoundrels and fifteen per cent lunatics.” His words acted like a cold douche. They were ashamed and the majority humbly confessed

that their ecstasies were shams. Naren's action did not stop there. He gathered these young people together and imposed a virile discipline upon them. In their need for action he counselled them to devote themselves to some definite object. The young lion's cub began to assert himself in those days as the future sovereign of the Order, although he was himself not yet free from his own difficulties and struggles. For him these days marked the crisis of despair, when he had to make the final choice between the conflicting forces of his nature—harrowing days, fruitful days, preparing the soul for the harvest.

Ramakrishna grew worse. Dr. Sarkar advised his removal from Calcutta to the country. Towards the middle of December, 1885 he was taken to a house in the suburbs in the midst of the beautiful gardens of Cossipore, and there he spent the last eight months of his mortal life. Twelve of his young chosen disciples never left him until the end. Naren directed their activities and their prayers. They begged the Master to join with them in praying for his recovery; and the visit of a pandit, who shared their faith, gave them an opportunity to renew their entreaties.

“The Scriptures,” the pandit said to Ramakrishna, “declare that saints like you can cure yourselves by an effort of will.”

Ramakrishna replied:

“My mind has been given to God once and for all. Would you have me ask it back?”

His disciples reproached him for not wishing to be restored to health.

“Do you think my sufferings are voluntary? I wish to recover, but it depends on the Mother.”

“Then pray to Her.”

“It is easy for you to say that, but I cannot say the words.”

Naren begged:

“For our sakes!”

“Very well,” said the Master sweetly. “I will try what I can do.”

They left him alone for several hours. When they returned the Master said:

"I said to Her: 'Mother, I can eat nothing because of my suffering. Make me able to eat a little!' She pointed you all out to me and said: 'What! Thou canst eat through all these mouths!' I was ashamed and could not utter another word."

Several days later he said:

"My teaching task is almost finished. I cannot instruct people any longer; for I see that the whole world is filled with the Lord. So I ask myself: 'Whom shall I teach?'"

On January 1, 1886 he felt better, and walked a few steps in the garden. There he blessed his disciples. The effects of his blessing manifested themselves in different ways—in silent ecstasy or in loquacious transports of joy. But all were agreed that they had received as it were an electric shock, an access of power so that each one realised his chosen ideal at a bound. (The distinguishing characteristic of Ramakrishna as a religious chief was always that he did not communicate a precise faith, but the energy necessary for faith; he played the part, if I may say so, of a mighty spiritual dynamo). In their abounding joy the disciples in the garden, whom the Master had blessed, called to those in the house to come and share the bliss of his benediction. In this connection an incident took place that might have come from the Christian Gospel: The humble Latu and Sarat the Brahman were taking advantage of the Master's absence to clean his room and make his bed. They heard the calls, and saw the whole scene from above; but they continued their task of love, thus renouncing their share of joy.

Naren alone remained unsatisfied. His father's loss, worldly cares, and the fever in his heart consumed him. He saw the fulfilment of all the others and felt himself abandoned. There had been no response to his anguish, no comforting ray to warm him. He begged Ramakrishna to allow him to

relieve his misery by several days of Samâdhi; but the Master rebuked him severely (he kept his indulgence for those from whom he expected least) and reproached him for such "base thoughts." He must make some arrangement for his family and then his troubles would be at an end and he would receive everything. Naren wept like a lost sheep, and fled through Calcutta and the fields, covered with dust and the straw of a stack into which he had run; he groaned, he was consumed with desire for the inaccessible, and his soul knew no rest. Ramakrishna, tenderly and pityingly, watched his wild course from afar; he knew quite well that before the divine prey could be brought down panting, it was necessary to pick up the scent. He felt that Naren's condition was remarkable, for in spite of boasting his unbelief, he was home-sick for the Infinite. He knew him to be blessed among men in proportion as he was proven. He softly caressed Naren's face in front of the other disciples. He recognised in him all the signs of Bhakta—knowledge through love. The Bhaktas unlike the Jnânins (believers through knowledge of the spirit) do not seek for liberation. They must be born and reborn for the good of humanity; for they are made to love and to serve mankind. So long as an atom of desire remains they will be reincarnated. When all desires are torn from the heart of mankind then at last they will attain Mukti (liberation). But the Bhaktas never aspire to it themselves. And that is why the loving Master, whose heart was the home of all living beings, and who could never forget them, always had a preference for the Bhaktas, of whom the greatest was Naren.

He did not hide the fact that he regarded him as his heir. He said to him one day:

"I leave these young people in your charge. Busy yourself with developing their spirituality."

And in preparation for a monastic life, he ordered them to beg their food from all houses without distinction of caste. Towards the end of March he gave them the saffron robe, the sign of the Sannyâsin, and some semblance of monastic initiation.

The proud Naren set the example of renunciation. But it was with great difficulty that he abdicated his spiritual pride. The devil would have offered him in vain (as to Jesus) the goods of this world, but he would soon have found a chink in his armour if he had proposed sovereignty of soul to him. One day in order to test his spiritual powers Naren told his companion, Kali-prasad, to touch him while he was in a state of meditation. Kali did so and immediately fell into the same state. Ramakrishna heard of it and rebuked Naren severely; he blamed him for casting his seed into the grass for a frivolous object, and categorically condemned the transmission of ideas from one to the other. To attempt anything against complete freedom of spirit was anathema. You should help others, but you must not substitute your thought for theirs.

A little time afterwards Naren, while meditating, had the sensation of a light shining behind his head. Suddenly he lost consciousness and was absorbed in the Absolute. He had fallen into the depths of the terrible Nirvikalpa Samâdhi, which he had sought for so long, and which Ramakrishna had refused him. When, after a long time he returned to himself, it seemed to him that he had no longer a body, but that he was nothing but a face, and he cried out: "Where is my body?" The other disciples were terrified, and ran to the Master, but Ramakrishna said calmly:

"Very well, let him stay like that for a time! He has worried me long enough."

When Naren again came down to earth, he was bathed in ineffable peace. He approached the Master. Ramakrishna said to him:

"Now the Mother has shown you everything. But this revelation will remain under lock and key, and I shall keep the key. When you have accomplished the Mother's work you will find this treasure again."

And he advised him what to do for his health during the succeeding days.

The nearer he approached his end, the more detached he became. He spread his serene heaven over the disciples' sorrow. The *Gospel*, written practically at the bedside of the dying man, records the harmonious murmurs of his soul, like a stream in the night, in the heavy silence of the apostles, while in the moonlight the branches of the trees in the garden rustled gently, shaken by the warm breeze of the south. To his friends, his loved ones, who were inconsolable at the thought of his loss, he said half in a whisper:

"Râdhâ said to Krishna: 'O Beloved, dwell in my heart, and do not come again in your human form!' But soon she languished for the sight of the human form of her Beloved. But the will of the Lord had to be accomplished and Krishna did not appear in human form for a long time. . . . The Lord came and was incarnate in man. Then he returned with his disciples to the Divine Mother."

Rakhal then exclaimed: "Do not go away before we do!"

Ramakrishna smiled tenderly and said:

"A troop of Bâuls suddenly entered a house; they sang God's name and danced for joy. Then they left the house as suddenly as they had entered it—and the owners did not know who they were. . . ."

He sighed.

"Sometimes I pray that the Lord will grant that I should be no more sent into this world."

But he went on at once:

"He (God) re-clothes Himself with the human form for love of those pure souls who love the Lord."

And he looked at Naren with ineffable affection.

On the 9th of April Ramakrishna said, looking at the fan which he was waving to and fro in the hot night :

"Just as I see this fan I am holding in front of me, I have seen God. . . . And I see. . . ."—he spoke quite low, laying his hand on Naren's, and asked: "What did I say?"

Naren replied: "I did not hear distinctly."

Ramakrishna then indicated by signs that *He*, God and his own self were one.

"Yes," said Naren, "I am He."

"Only a line intervenes—for the enjoyment of bliss," said the Master.

"But," said the disciple, "the great remain in the world even after they have realised their liberation. They keep their own ego and its sufferings so that they may accomplish the salvation of humanity."

There was complete silence and then the Master spoke again :

"The roof is within a man's sight, but it is very difficult to reach it. . . . but he who has reached it can throw down a rope, and pull others up to him on the roof."

This was one of the days when he realised to the full the identity of all within the One Being ; when he saw that "all three were the same Substance—the victim, the block and the executioner," and he cried in a feeble voice: "My God, what a vision!" He fainted with emotion, but when he came to

himself he said: "I am well. I have never been so well." Those who knew how terrible was the disease from which he died (cancer of the throat) marvelled at the loving and kindly smile that never left him. If the glorious death upon the Cross was denied this man, who is Christ to his Indian believers, his bed of agony was no less a Cross. Nevertheless he could say :

"Only the body suffers. When the mind is united to God, no pain can be felt."

And again :

"Let the body and its sufferings occupy themselves with each other. Thou, my mind, remain in bliss. Now I and my Divine Mother are one for ever."

Three or four days before his death he called Naren, and asked that he should be left alone with him. He looked lovingly at him and passed into an ecstasy. It enveloped Naren in its folds. When he came back from the shadows, he saw Ramakrishna in tears. The Master said to him :

"To-day I have given you my all, and am now only a poor fakir, possessing nothing. By this power you will do immense good in the world, and not till it is accomplished will you return."

From that moment all his powers were transferred to Naren. The Master and the disciple were one.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

BY K. B. MADHAVA, M.A., A.I.A. (LOND.)

An exceptional circumstance—panic or epidemic, riches or floods, distinction or disability—invariably stimulates inquiry. Even so, exceptional children, gifted and feeble-minded alike, have engaged both hopeful and anxious consideration at the hands of scholars, publicists and the State. For it goes without saying, that a Nation's resources of intellectual talent are among the most precious it will

ever have. But at the present time, this subject commands unusual interest, first from among the votaries of science who seek to unravel the mechanism of human heredity and achievement, next from among all civilised governments who seek to provide sound schemes of national education and welfare, and finally also from among the larger public who indulge in problems of in-

ternational assessment and in policies for future recruitment of populations.

I

At the outset it will be understood that the term "exceptional" conveys a certain dictionary sense, suggesting something unique, not common, out of the usual or ordinary way, forming an "exception" to a "rule." This connotation sets to us the problem first of a rule or generality, a trend or a tendency, which we may expect to evolve, and secondly, the task of measuring both the direction and magnitude of the failure to conform to and concord with that type; even if we may not consider the question of negotiating such variations. In this light, the exceptional child is probably a problem of measurement and statistical technique. This being so, our task is to survey what is known regarding the distribution of "natural gifts" in the community. But how to measure such natural gifts? It is not difficult to measure some physical or mental characteristics. We can measure a man's stature, and we have also means of assessing his motor and functional capacities. We have too a rough gauge of certain features of mental ability in examinations, though it is certainly very difficult to assess temperamental characters, such as, vivacity and power of concentration. The only mental characteristic of great importance in fact, of which we have extensive measurements at the present day, is intellectual performance.

Now in regard to intellectual performance, the type of measurement that has now been evolved by experimental psychologists and by pedagogues is by "tests," by 'rating' the 'responses' to certain 'stimuli.' It is not possible—nor perhaps necessary at the present day in educational world—to describe in detail either the content or schemata of tests, or even to examine the validity and reliability of such tests. We may, for

the purposes of this article, assume that an experimental study of intellect is obtained by a careful canvass of individuals, and that the final rating of each subject is expressed as a quotient, designated "I. Q." or "Intelligence Quotient," which however is independent of age, and which moreover is indicative of an intelligence above or below "normal" according as its absolute value is in excess of, or under, 100. It is no doubt a promising line of attack, but it is to be recognised that measurement is not a problem which can be solved by any single "attack," however skilfully planned or executed, nor is it independent of educational interests, or even environment. The evidence is both indirect and inferential, and although intelligence has been determined to be abiding, we must always realise the relative value of the result to the standard borne and that we have not as yet secured a precise and infallible measure, but only groups, such as demarcate "gifted," or "defective" or "neither."

It is regrettable that for substantiating the above remarks or for even illustrating them we have to depend upon "foreign" experience, and although from very, very recent date some work along this line has been in progress in India, these results are neither sufficient, efficient, nor consistent. For very extensive and intensive work, we may only quote the evidence collected by Professors Thorndike or Terman in America, or Binet in France, or that of Spearman and Cyril Burt in England, and also of such investigations as that of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, or Medical Research Council in England. In the next few paragraphs I draw very freely upon these.

II

In *The British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XIV, an account is given of the extensive investigation of the distribution of intelligence carried out by Duff and Thomson in Northumberland

in 1922. All children in elementary schools, and most children in secondary schools, between the ages of 11 and 13 in that area, were tested and their

I. Q.'s	Girls	Boys	Total	% of total
140 & over	4	12	16	0.1
130-139	49	80	129	1.0
120-129	318	414	732	5.4
110-119	1146	1129	2275	16.7
100-109	1765	1833	3598	26.5
90-99	1779	1757	3536	26.0
80-89	991	981	1972	14.5
below 80	622	715	1337	9.8
Total	6674	6921	13595	100.0
Spoilt papers	21	9	30	...

With these figures—or rather percentages in the several ranges of I. Q.'s because the data in this case are not available in absolute figures—one may compare the summary of results of

Range of I. Q.'s	over	130-	115-	100-	85-	70-	50-	under
	150	150	130	115	100	85	70	50
Per cent. of total	0.2	2.0	10.0	38.0	38.0	10.0	1.5	0.2

From both these it is clear that most of those tested are moderately gifted with intelligence, but there are about the same number definitely handicapped by a low native intelligence as there are unusually well endowed with natural gifts. This evidence is exceedingly interesting, and when it is recognised that this situation is substantially similar for other mental and psychical characteristics, the emphasis is greater. A number of problems both of diagnostic and of prognostic value are raised, and both the citizen and the State are concerned with the discernment of these exceptional elements, with their location in social or occupational groups, with the evolution or perfection of that machinery which will sift the more from the less intelligent

intelligence quotients rated. In all there were 13,625 pupils, and the distribution of I. Q.'s is as follows:

testing the intelligence of a large number of London school-children published by the Medical Research Council (Report No. 33—*A Study in Vocational Guidance*):

and direct them into occupations suitable to their capacities, and finally, with the conservation, guidance and control of all exceptional elements by methods which are solely suited for these purposes.

To one other matter of no little interest available in this investigation, I may now refer. In this investigation information as to the occupations of the fathers of children was obtained in all but 176 cases out of a total exceeding 13,000. It was thus possible to place each father in the occupational group to which he belonged, and to calculate the average intelligence quotient for the children of the fathers in each group, and the summary is somewhat as follows:

Occupations of fathers.	Average I.Q.'s of children.
Professional	112.2
Managerial	110.0
Higher commercial	109.3
Army, Navy, Police, Postmen	105.5
Shopkeeping	105.0

Occupations of fathers.	Average I.Q.'s of children.			
Engineering	102.9
Foremen	102.7
Building	102.0
Metal workers, Ship-builders	100.9
Miscellaneous industrial workers	100.6
Miners and quarrymen	97.6
Agriculture (all classes)	97.6
Low grade occupations	96.0

An examination of this table shows that the children of the more skilled and better paid fathers have on the whole the higher intelligence quotients. The correspondence between the average intelligence of the children and the demands which the occupations make upon the mental faculties of the fathers is in fact remarkable. At the same time it must be remembered that intelligence tests, as we may have already indicated, almost certainly fail to separate entirely the effect of environment and heredity, so that we may not lay too much stress on innate endowment as the sole differentiating element between one group and another. On this matter it is rather dangerous to dogmatise. We can only gather a few lessons. Indeed, genius and imbecile pass one another in our streets although it is true that judging by intellect alone, we might fairly place the genius in one species and the imbecile in another, and discover the huge gap that may exist between the most abundantly, and the least adequately, endowed. The second lesson is, that these well distinguished groups—consisting of not negligible numbers—constitute problems in themselves baffling the attempts of all those who have as experts to minister to them. A third conclusion is also possible, though not directly deducible, from the evidence so far produced alone; *viz.*, that the best—and likewise the worst—do not beget their own, either the best, or the worst, but that continuously there is a tendency as time goes on and generations pass on, for reversion to mediocrity. There is in any case, a continually shifting mechanism at work which, very incomplete though it may be, does something

to sort out the members of the community according to their inborn intelligence and to allocate the more intelligent to the more skilled and better posts, for instance. This mechanism is in part directly designed also to that end. We refer to the educational ladder; and that ladder is continually being broadened too; elaborate methods are being evolved for vocational guidance; the entrance to most professions is now barred to those below a certain level of intellectual attainment. In consequence we may expect the existing average intellectual differences between members of various occupational groups to grow larger. These considerations make the necessity for an inquiry into the recruitment of future populations a matter of great importance. And we may say, that a census of inborn qualities of the community is just as desirable as a census, say of birth-places, or of incomes. As yet, however, no plans have been laid for the taking of such censuses.

III

All that has been now accomplished along this line is either through the insight and enthusiasm of researchers like Galton, Woods, Havelock Ellis, Lippincott, etc., or through the foresight and generosity of philanthropists who have brought into being institutions like Galton Laboratory of Eugenics in England, the Eugenics Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution in New York, etc. The publication of Galton's *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, marks the beginning of a new era. Since that date the interest in individual differences, and their causes has grown until these promise to become

national issues on such problems as selective immigration, the evils of differential birth rates, special training for the gifted, and the economic reward for creative talent. Indeed, both scientific and popular interest along these lines has been greatly intensified by recent developments in the psychological methods of measuring intelligence, which have furnished conclusive proof that native differences in intelligence are universal phenomena and that it is possible to evaluate them. Educators especially, have been quick to appreciate the practical significance of such differences, first for the training of backward and defective children and more recently for the education of the gifted. The National Society for the Study of Education in America, for instance, has since 1920 devoted two whole yearbooks for the results of the classroom problems of the gifted children. The more classical investigations are those by F. A. Woods: *Mental and Moral Heredity in Royalty*, Gunn: *Kin of Genius*, and other recent inquiries by Havelock Ellis and the Eugenic Society. Various other investigations are also afoot, and the problems of genius among children at school—along its three lines, nature, origin and cultivation—have been best described in Terman's *Genetic Studies of Genius* just completed at the Stanford University in America. I indicate in the next paragraphs the lines along which that inquiry proceeds, but I may state also that the closely akin problems of the criminal and the mentally deficient have received the most careful attention. Dr. C. Goring's work is classical, and recently a Report on Mental Deficiency by the Joint Committee of the Board of Education and the Board of Control has also been published by H. M. Stationery Office.

The study organised by Professor Lewis Terman at the Stanford University about the nature of gifted children covered several points of attack. First there were anthropometric measurements and medical examination of sub-

jects. Next there were records of family history, home and school progress. Finally there were reports of intellectual, social and activity interests. This is obviously a very extensive canvass and its precise scope may be indicated by the following few summaries.

The purpose of the anthropometric study of children—gifted and otherwise—was fourfold: “(1) to secure an accurate picture of the status of physical development of each of the gifted children through a series of selected physical measurements; (2) to make a comparison of their total and partial growth with that of other groups; (3) to determine the relationship of the physical traits measured; and (4) to analyse the correspondence of the physical status and mental status of this group of children.” To this end some 37 anthropometric measures of the head, shoulders, arms, chest, hips, legs, grip, breathing capacity, besides height and weight, were carefully obtained and the resulting statistics analysed in the most perfect manner. It is only sufficient to say that the results of this investigation showed “that the gifted group is, as a whole, physically superior to the various groups used for comparison,” and that “the gifted children deviate in a positive direction from the normal American standards (appropriate to the age) in weight, height, breathing capacity, and a large proportion have broad shoulders and hips, strong muscles and well developed lungs.” The health and physical history of the child was made up by three reports—the home, the school and the medical examiner. The home blank covered information regarding length of pregnancy, mother's health during pregnancy, weight at birth, conditions at birth, infant feeding, early health, accidents, habits, and habitus. The medical examinations included the usual schedules *re* skin, head, ears, eyes, nose, mouth, chest, abdomen, bones and joints, muscles and tendons, urine and blood, genitals and extremities and glands and radiographs when necessary. The findings are very

interesting, and I should at once say, that there is no shred of evidence to support the wide-spread opinion that typically the intellectually precocious child is weak, undersized, or nervously unstable. "In so far as the gifted child departs at all from the average on these traits it is pretty certainly in the other direction, but (taking a comprehensive view of the subject) "the facts seem to be that his deviation from the norm on physical traits is in most cases very small; indeed with his deviation in intellectual and volitional traits. Even the slight superiority that he enjoys within his physical equipment may or may not be due to endowment primarily. It might be accounted for—mainly, if not entirely,—by such factors as diet and medical care and other environmental influences." It was discovered, for instance, that the mean birth weight of the gifted group was approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. above the norm according to accepted standards, that the proportion of breast-feeding was considerably higher than for the general population, that the ages of "learning to walk" and "learning to talk" averaged from about one-and-half months to three-and-half months less than mean ages for normal children; that even pubescence occurs on the average somewhat earlier among gifted than among unselected boys. Dr. Albert Moore, one of the medical examiners, remarks: "I have a strong conviction that, other things being equal, there is a direct correlation between physical health and mentality among children when studied in groups."

It has always been considered that the records of family history, home and school progress afford very reliable diagnostic purpose in discovering giftedness among siblings. In this study by Terman and others an extensive inquiry of the heredity of gifted children was undertaken of all the intellectually superior relatives. To this end the entries in the Hall of Fame, *Who's Who*, *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Appleton's Cyclopaedia* and the *National Encyclopedia of American Biography*,

etc., in addition to home information were very carefully sifted and pursued. No account need be given here of the laws of family resemblances, or of the transmission of superior mental abilities, but the data collected "gave considerable support to Galton's theory as to the hereditary nature of genius." This theory states that in spite of exceptions and contradictions, the genius reproduces the genius and the imbecile tends to reproduce the imbecile. In regard to the home "vital statistics," it is discovered too, that the longevity of grandparents of gifted subjects was in excess of the expected, infant mortality and proportion of miscarriages to pregnancies less in this group, and also that the gifted preponderated among the first-born in the data on the order of birth. In regard to home and early school accomplishment, a thorough canvass has been undertaken, and it appears that, in spite of the fact that very few parents have carried out any systematic scheme of child-training, the indications of superior intelligence most often are quick understanding, insatiable curiosity, extensive information, retentive memory, early speech, unusual vocabulary, with the manifestation in most cases either of superior ability in arithmetic, or of music, drawing, painting or dramatics. Prof. Terman reviewing his evidence is satisfied that "although the home environment of the gifted child has been, on the whole above the average, nothing has been found to warrant the belief that the superior intellectual attainments of the gifted group are in any considerable degree the product of artificial stimulation or forced culture."

It is in the last aspect—"intellectual, social and activity interests"—that considerable scope exists for the psychological and other tests that we now hear of so much. These consist in rating according to well devised means abilities such as, arithmetic, reasoning, word-building, biographical and geographical information, science information and so on, on one side, and on the other, play

and amusement interests of the "active solitary class" (such as, spinning tops, rolling hoops, using tools, etc.), of the "social-active" class (such as hide-and-seek, baseball, follow-the-leader), or the "social-quiet" class (such as cards, "playing" school, etc.). Reading interests in regard to quantity, quality and variety constitute a fertile means of measuring intellectuality, and the tests may also be extended to cover character, personality and trustworthiness ratings, etc. Several very interesting conclusions have been arrived at: first, the many-sided richness of the mental, social and activity interests of the gifted child; next, the general excess of achievement of the gifted child in an all-rounded way; the wide, deep and abiding reading interests of the gifted child; and others of similar import. In particular, Professor Terman says in more or less emphatic language that "the one-sidedness of precocious children is mythical," "that no observant judge of human character should be surprised that the gifted surpass the unselected in honesty, trustworthiness and similar moral traits," and that "the common opinion that the intellectually superior children are characterised by a deficiency of play interests appears to be wholly unfounded."

IV

Such are the conclusions of very extensive scientific modern studies in regard to the nature of giftedness. Feeble-mindedness too has its stable laws, although we need not go into them here. The culture and guidance

of these exceptional elements are of course different problems equally wide, and certainly more difficult of control.

It may be asked whether intellectual eminence too is a relative fact even as wealth or property are, whether Croesus, who accumulated a few thousands, or at most a few millions, or Rockefeller who accumulated billions, was richer. Also whether there may not be mute inglorious Miltons, and that "genius," like murder, "will out," and that therefore if it does not appear it is not there to appear. Nobody can deny the compelling force of environment, the possibilities and limitations of surroundings, and of the differences in structure between the ancient and the modern world, between one community and another, and between one opportunity and another. But the fact remains that the differences are in the main due to natural powers and aptitudes; that if Roosevelt had been in Africa, he would, without being the Roosevelt he has been, would have been the big hunter, "Buanno Tumbo," probably. I am not here developing the line of race culture through marriage laws, and Eugenic control, but I remind my readers Ruskin's thought that "There is no ascertained limit as yet to the nobleness of person and mind which the human creature may attain, by preserving the observance of the laws of God respecting its birth and training." We have in this increasingly material world transferred our hopes from heaven to earth and from ourselves to our children.

HOW SRI RAMAKRISHNA TESTED HIS DISCIPLES

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna said to Keshab Chandra Sen, when the Brahma Samaj was split over the Cooch Behar marriage: "It is no wonder that your Samaj breaks up. You accept all as your followers without testing them. But I do not accept anyone without doing so." It was indeed wonderful

in how many different ways the Master used to examine the devotees that came to him. He was illiterate; yet he mastered many wonderful methods of gauging human character. Was it due to the revival of knowledge acquired in past lives? Or to his supersensuous vision and omni-

science attained through *Sādhanā*? Or to his being a Divine Incarnation as he sometimes described himself to his intimate disciples?

I

We always found that whenever any person came to him, he would look at him with special attention. And if he felt attracted towards the visitor, he would talk about spiritual things with him and ask him to visit him occasionally. As days passed and the man visited him, Sri Ramakrishna would observe, unknown to him, the shape of his body and limbs, the nature of his thoughts, the strength of his carnal desires and the extent of his love for him. From these minute observations, he would arrive at a sure conclusion about his latent spirituality; and before long he would have a firm grasp of his character. And if he felt the necessity of knowing any hidden facts of his inner being, he would know them by his keen *Yogic* vision. About this he once said to us: "During the small hours of the morning, while awake and alone I think of the spiritual welfare of you, the Divine Mother shows and lets me know how far one has advanced in the spiritual path, why another cannot progress, and so on." From this, however, let us not conclude that his *Yogic* power was active only at that time. From his talks at other times we understood that he could ascend at will to high states of spiritual consciousness and obtain similar visions. For he said: "Just as by merely looking at a glass almirah one can see all its contents, so I can know the inmost thoughts, tendencies and everything of a man by merely looking at him."

The above, however, was only his general method of judging a character. In the case of his special devotees, he used to apply other methods also. In fact, their case was special in various senses. His first meetings with them came about always in a

peculiar manner: he generally used to be in an exalted mood at those times. And he would intuitively know their natures,—the facts of their inner life would be spontaneously revealed to him. The explanation is simple. By wonderful spiritual practices, he had made his body and mind excellent instruments for retaining and communicating subtle spiritual forces. Thus whenever any devotees approached him, his mind would be at once coloured by the same spiritual outlooks as their own, and would automatically correspond to their spiritual levels, and the facts of their inner life would become at once patent to him. This, it must be admitted, was a special method. It was an intuitive process. But as we have said, he also applied the general methods, the methods of observation, to his special devotees, and these can be described under the following four heads:

II

I. Sri Ramakrishna would ascertain the predominant tendencies of his devotees by observing their physiognomy and other bodily signs.

Physiology and psychology now prove that every definite thought when it becomes active, leaves an impress on the brain and the body. The Vedas and other scriptures have always affirmed this fact. All Hindu philosophical and religious books declare that the mind builds up the body, and that a man's physical form changes according as his thoughts and propensities are good or evil. Therefore, many proverbs are current amongst us about ascertaining a man's nature from the forms of his body and limbs. And that is also why on the occasions of marriage, initiation and other ceremonies, the examination of the hands, feet and other parts of the persons concerned is considered necessary.

It is no wonder that Sri Ramakrishna, believing as he did in the

scriptures, should examine the forms of the body and the limbs of his disciples. He would relate many facts about this in course of conversation. And we would wonder-struck listen to his descriptions of the various limbs and features of man, as he compared their forms with the objects of everyday life, and explained their special significance. About the eyes he would say: "Some have eyes like lotus petals; some like bulls' eyes; and some possess the eyes of a *Yogi* or a *Deva* (god). Those who have eyes like lotus petals are endowed with good and spiritual tendencies. Those whose eyes are like a bull's, have strong sex-passions. The *Yogi's* eyes have an upward look and a reddish tinge. The divine eye is not very large but is long and stretches to the ear. If a man casts side-glances or looks from the corner of the eye while talking, know him to be more intelligent than the average person." Or he would thus speak of the peculiarities of the body: "Those who have a devotional temperament have naturally a soft body, and the joints of their hands and feet are supple; and even if their body be lean, the muscles and tendons are so shaped that it does not appear as angular." In order to ascertain the turn of a person's mind, whether it was towards good or evil, he would weigh his hand in his own from fingers to elbow. If he found the weight less than usual, he would conclude that the mind was towards good. We may cite an instance. While Sri Ramakrishna was staying in the Cossipore Garden suffering from cancer, the younger brother of the present writer came one day to visit the Master. The Master was much pleased to see him. He made him sit near him, questioned him about various things and gave him many spiritual instructions. When the present writer came to Sri Ramakrishna, he asked him: "Is this your younger brother? He is a fine boy and more intelligent than you. Let me

see if he has good or bad tendency." So, saying he took his hand into his own and weighing it said: "Yes, he has good tendency." He then asked: "Shall I draw him (that is, draw his mind away from the world and turn it towards God)? What do you say?" We replied: "Yes, Sir, please do so." But Sri Ramakrishna thought for a while and said: "No, no more. I have taken one and if I take this one also, your parents, specially your mother, would be much aggrieved. I have displeased many a *Shakti* (woman) in my life. No more now."

The Master used to say: "Men having different mental tendencies have also different ways of functioning physiologically, such as in sleeping. Experts can find indications of character also in them. For examples, all people do not breathe in the same way in sleep. A worldly man breathes in one way, a man of renunciation in another way."

Of women, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that there are two kinds, *Vidyâ Shakti*, of god-like nature, and the *Avidyâ Shakti*, of the nature of *Asura* or low nature. "Those of godly nature," he said, "take little sleep and food. They do not care for the sense-life, they like to talk with their husbands on religious subjects, and they save their husbands from evil thoughts and impure acts by filling them with high spiritual inspirations. They help their husbands to live a spiritual life so that they (husbands) may ultimately realise God. But the *Avidyâ Shaktis* are just the opposite. They eat much and sleep much and they always want their husbands to think of nothing else than their happiness. They become annoyed with their husbands if they talk about religion."

In this way Sri Ramakrishna told many things. Once he examined Naren's (of Swami Vivekananda) body that way. He was very much pleased with the result. He said: "You have all the good marks in

your body. Only during sleep you breathe heavily. Yogis say that it indicates a short life."

III

II and III. The Master's second and third means of knowing a man's nature were the observation of his mental tendencies and his attachment to woman and gold as expressed in little and ordinary actions.

Silently he used to watch all those who came to visit him at Dakshineswar. And when he had decided to accept one as his disciple, he would teach him in many ways and sometimes would scold him to correct his defects. After studying a new-comer he would decide whether he would train him to become a good householder or whether he would train him to become a *Sannyāsin*. First he would ask whether he was married or single and whether he had sufficient means to maintain himself, or if he were to renounce the world whether he had anyone to take his place in maintaining his family.

His love went out especially towards young students. He used to say: "Their minds are not yet divided in many interests, as wife, children, desire for wealth, fame, etc. If they are trained properly, they can give their whole mind to God." Therefore, he loved to instruct them in the spiritual path. He used to say: "The mind is like a packet of mustard seeds. If you once let it be scattered, it is very difficult to gather the seeds again." Or he would say: "Once a bird is full grown, it is difficult to teach it to say *Rādhā-Krishna*." Or again he would say: "If a cow steps on an unburned tile the footprint can easily be smoothed over. But when the tile is burned, no impression can be removed." He would, therefore, question the young boys carefully to learn the natural tendency of their minds, whether it was towards *pravritti* or worldly enjoyment, or towards *nivritti* or re-

nunciation. And he would train them towards *nivritti*, if he found them fit for it. Through questioning he would also learn whether the boy was unsophisticated and truthful, whether he really practised what he professed, whether he used discrimination or not in all his actions, and how far he could understand his instructions. All these he would ascertain very carefully.

Once he asked a young student who came to him: "Why don't you marry?" The boy replied: "Sir, my mind is not yet under my control. If I marry now, I shall have no discrimination of right and wrong in my attachment to my wife. If I can conquer lust, then I shall marry." Sri Ramakrishna understood that though the boy had strong attractions for sense-joy, yet his mind was tending towards the path of *nivritti*. He laughed and said: "When you have conquered lust, you will not need to marry at all."

Talking to another boy at Dakshineswar, he said: "You see, I cannot always keep my cloth on. Sometimes it comes loose and drops off without my noticing it. I am an old man, and I move about naked. Yet I do not feel ashamed. What is the reason? Formerly I did not notice at all whether people saw me naked or not. But now I notice that some people feel embarrassed, so I keep my cloth in my lap. Can you go naked, like me, before others?" The boy said: "Sir, I do not know. But if you tell me to do so I think I can." Sri Ramakrishna said: "Try it. Take off your cloth, wrap it round your head and walk around the Temple courtyard." The boy said: "No, Sir, that I cannot do. I can do that only before you." Sri Ramakrishna said: "Yes, others also say that they feel the same way. They feel no shame before me, but they do before others."

Once it was the second day of the bright fortnight. We had all retired,

The moonlight was beautiful and the tide on the Ganges was always a grand sight on such evenings. In the middle of the night Sri Ramakrishna called us and said: "Come, come and see the incoming tide." He himself then went to the embankment. Seeing the calm water of the Ganges changing into huge waves by the tide and splash against the embankment, he was as happy as a boy and he began to jump.

Now, after rising from bed, we had to arrange our cloth as we were fast asleep. And that made us a little late, and by the time we came to the embankment the greatest beauty was over. Only a few were in time to see a part of it. Sri Ramakrishna was absorbed in his own joy. When it was over he turned to us and said: "How did you enjoy it?" Hearing that we had come too late because we had to dress, he said: "You fools, do you think the tide will wait for you to dress? Why did not you leave your cloth behind as I did?"

Sometimes he would ask a disciple if he wanted to marry and earn money. If he replied that he would not marry but would have to enter service for earning money, it would not satisfy the Master who was a tremendous lover of freedom. He would say: "If you do not marry, why then be the slave of someone all your life? Give your whole heart to God and worship Him. Being born in the world this should be man's highest ambition. But if that is not possible, then marry. But make the realisation of God your highest goal, and maintain your life ever honestly." Such were Sri Ramakrishna's views. If, therefore, any disciples whom he considered specially or even fairly gifted spiritually, married or entered service to earn money, or worked for fame and wasted his energy, he would take these very much to heart.

One of his young disciples (Swami Niranjanananda) accepted employment to support his mother.

When Sri Ramakrishna heard about it, he said: "If it were not that you have done so for your old mother, I would have never looked at you again." When another disciple came to Cossipore garden to see Sri Ramakrishna after his marriage, Sri Ramakrishna wept as if he had lost a son. He put his arms round the young man's neck and crying, said repeatedly: "Try not to sink in the world forever by forgetting God."

All scriptures teach that progress in the spiritual path is impossible without sincere faith. Knowing this, some of us would make it a point to believe in everything and every person. But Sri Ramakrishna warned us against that. Though he asked us to travel along the spiritual path through faith, he never asked us to cease to discriminate. One should use the sense of right and wrong both in the spiritual path and in worldly matters,—such, we think, was his view.

Once one of the young disciples (Swami Yogananda) went to a shop and bought an iron pot. He appealed to the religious feeling of the shop-keeper and did not examine the pot closely. Afterwards he found that the pot leaked. Sri Ramakrishna scolded him and said: "Because you are a devotee of God, does that mean that you should be a fool? Do you think a shop-keeper opens a shop to practise religion? Why did you not examine the pan before you purchased it? Never act so foolishly again. When you go out shopping, first know the real price by going round several shops and thoroughly examine the thing you buy. And do not fail to demand the little extras where allowed."

Sometimes some persons, having begun the practice of religion, become so kind-hearted that their kindness itself becomes a bondage to them and even drags them down from the path of spirituality. Such often is the case with soft-hearted persons. Such

people Sri Ramakrishna would instruct to be firm and resolved. But those who were by nature domineering and harsh, he would ask to be gentle. Swami Yogananda was of a very mild nature. We have never seen him getting angry or abusing anyone though sometimes there was reason enough for it. Though quite against his nature and inclinations, through his tender nature he suddenly got married. His mother entreated him and seeing her weep he had not the strength to refuse. It was only through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna that he was saved from a life of bitter disappointment and repentance. Sri Ramakrishna watched over him with great care and tried in every way to cure his too great mildness. Just one instance to show how even through the smallest matters Sri Ramakrishna would instruct us:

A cockroach was once found among Sri Ramakrishna's clothes. He asked Swami Yogananda to take it out and kill it. Swami Yogananda took it outside the room and let it go without killing it. Sri Ramakrishna asked: "Have you killed it?" Swami Yogananda said: "No, Sir, I let it go." Then Sri Ramakrishna scolded him and said: "I told you to kill the cockroach, but you let it go. You should always do as I ask you to do. Otherwise later in serious matters also you will follow your own judgment and come to grief."

Swami Yogananda one day came by a row-boat from Calcutta to Dakshineswar. One of the passengers asked him where he was going. He told him that he was going to Dakshineswar to see Sri Ramakrishna. Hearing this the other passenger began to revile Sri Ramakrishna's character. He said: "Sri Ramakrishna only pretends. He eats well, sleeps on a bed and still he claims to be a saint, and he spoils the young boys." Swami Yogananda was very much pained to hear the man talk like that about Sri Ramakrishna. He thought of rebuking him. But his

gentle nature came up and he thought: "Well, people do not know Sri Ramakrishna, therefore they have queer ideas about him and blame him. What can I do?" So he kept silent.

Coming to Dakshineswar he told Sri Ramakrishna about it. He thought Sri Ramakrishna did not care what people thought or said about him, and so the matter would end there. But he was mistaken. Sri Ramakrishna took it quite seriously. He said: "That man abused me for nothing and you kept silent! Do you know what the *Shâstras* say? You must cut the head of him who blames your *Guru* or leave his presence at once. And you did not even protest against these false accusations?"

But Sri Ramakrishna trained each disciple in his own way, according to his needs. So the treatment of one would be quite the reverse sometimes of the treatment of another. In the same case, under the same circumstances, Sri Ramakrishna told his different disciples different ways of conduct. Let us illustrate this. We have just had Swami Yogananda's case. Now let us see what happened to Swami Niranjanananda under almost the same conditions.

Swami Niranjanananda was of a rough and ready temper. Now once while he was going to Dakshineswar in a row-boat, some fellow-passengers spoke ill of Sri Ramakrishna. At first Swami Niranjan protested vehemently. But when they continued their slandering talk, he became very angry. He was so angry that he threatened to upset the boat and drown them all. He was a strong man and a good swimmer. They all got frightened and to save themselves began to pacify him in many ways. And then he calmed down.

Now Sri Ramakrishna came to hear about it. He scolded Swami Niranjan, saying: "Anger is like a Pariah—untouchable, you should never yield to it. The anger of a good man disappears like a line drawn in the water.

Mean people will say many things, and if you want to quarrel about that, you will pass your whole life quarrelling. You should think in such cases: What are people?—they are like worms. Pity them and overlook their weakness. Think of what a wrong deed you were about to do through your anger. What was the fault of the boatmen that you should have put them also in danger?"

His lady disciples also he would train similarly. Once he said to one of them, who was particularly soft-hearted: "Suppose someone you know takes great pains to help you on all occasions, but you feel that that is because he is under the spell of your beauty, which he is too weak to break. Would you be kind to the man? Won't you, on the other hand, deal a hard kick on his chest and live always away from him? So you see, you cannot be always kind to all persons under all conditions. There must be a limit and you must discriminate."

We remember the case of a young man named Harish. He was a strong young man. He had a beautiful wife and a boy, and had enough to support them. Coming to Dakshineswar a few times he felt a strong disgust for a worldly life. His simple nature, his devotion and gentleness made him very dear to Sri Ramakrishna. So Sri Ramakrishna accepted him as a disciple. From that time he passed most of his time at Dakshineswar serving Sri Ramakrishna and meditating on the Lord. His guardians began to oppress him, his father-in-law asked him to go back to his home, his wife wept, but nothing could dissuade him from his purpose. He paid no attention to all these entreaties and threatenings. He remained silent and went on in his own way. Sri Ramakrishna, to teach us through his example, pointed out to us how calm and steadfast Harish was, and he would say: "Those who are real men should be dead though living, like Harish."

One day Sri Ramakrishna was told that because Harish had left them, the whole family felt very sorry and his wife refused to eat or drink. Hearing this Harish remained silent as before. But Sri Ramakrishna, in order to try his mind, said to him: "Your wife is so very anxious to see you. Why don't you go to her once? She has none to look after her. What is the harm consoling her once this time?" Harish became sad and answered: "Sir, that is not the proper occasion to show compassion. If I go there, I may fall in bondage again and forget the highest object of life. Pray, do not ask me to do that." Sri Ramakrishna was highly satisfied with his reply, and he often repeated his words to us, praising his spirit of renunciation.

We may mention many instances of Sri Ramakrishna's observing the trifling details of our daily life and thereby understanding our mental qualities and defects. Once he saw Swami Niranjanananda taking too much *ghee* (clarified butter), and he said: "Why do you take so much *ghee*? Would you afterwards run away with somebody's daughter or daughter-in-law?" (He meant that such rich food would make it difficult for the disciple to control his passions.) When one of the boys in spite of his prohibition, began the study of medicine, he said: "You are to renounce your desires, you are increasing them instead! How then would you make any spiritual progress?"

He would not be satisfied with merely knowing the characters of his disciples, he would also try to remedy their defects. And he would also often enquire about their spiritual progress. And in order to ascertain it, he would always adopt a special means, which was his fourth method in examining his disciples.

IV

IV. Sri Ramakrishna would often enquire if the regard and devotion for

him, which had first brought his disciples to him, were increasing or not.

This method of enquiry would take the following form: He would sometimes question them as to how far they could understand his spiritual conditions and conduct. Or he would observe if they put complete faith in his words. Or he would introduce them to those other disciples, an intimacy with whom, he thought, would deepen their own spiritual moods. And he would not be finally certain of the spiritual future of a disciple, until he had learnt to accept Sri Ramakrishna of his own accord and intuitively, as the expression of the highest spiritual ideal of the world.

This may astonish some. But a little thought will indicate that it was only reasonable and natural. For what else could he do, knowing as he did that there was an unprecedented influx of spirituality through him? He had gone through a long and superhuman *tapasyâ* and meditation and had realised *Samâdhi*. As a result, all his egoism had been totally destroyed, and all chance of any delusion or error had been eliminated for ever. Necessarily, therefore, the complete memory of his past and omniscience revived in him; and he felt in his inmost soul that the spiritual ideal that was manifested through his mind and body, had never before been witnessed in the world and he naturally concluded that whoever would, with full understanding, seek to mould his life in the light of the ideal that was embodied in him, would find his spiritual progress easy and smooth in this age. Need we then wonder that he enquired of his disciples if they understood him as the highest spiritual ideal, and were trying to build their life after its model?

The Master would variously express this conviction of his. He would say: "The coins current in the reigns of the Nawabs become invalid during the Emperor's rule." "If you follow my instructions, you will reach the goal straight." "Those whose present birth

is the last (that is to say, those who have been so far freed from their past *karma* that they would not have to be born again), will come here and accept the spiritual ideas and ideals of this place." "Your *Ista* (Chosen Deity) is (*pointing to himself*) within this. If you meditate on this, you meditate on your *Ista*." We shall give a few illustrations:

All the disciples of the Master knew that he sometimes asked them what they thought of him. This question was put after a disciple had been intimately known to the Master. Not always so however; for sometimes he would put this question to a disciple even on the first meeting. But such disciples belonged to the group whom he had known long long ago in a superconscious vision. The replies that he received were various. Some said: "You are a true saint." Some said: "You are a true devotee of God." Some said: "You are a *Mahâpurusha*,—a great soul." Some said: "You are an emancipated person." Some said: "You are an incarnation of God." Some said: "You are Sri Chaitanya himself." Some said: "You are Shiva Himself." Some said: "You are God," and so on. Some who belonged to the Brahmo Samaj and did not, therefore, believe in Divine Incarnations, said: "You are a lover of God, of the same rank as Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Sri Chaitanya." A Christian, named Williams,* said: "You are the Christ Himself, the Son of God." We cannot say how far the boy-disciples really understood the Master. But their answers at least indicated what they thought of him and what was their conception of God. The Master also evidently took the answers in that light and behaved with and instructed them

*We are reliably informed that Williams, after he had seen the Master a few times, became convinced of his Divinity. He gave up the world at the Master's advice, repaired to the Himalayas to the north of the Punjab, and there passed away after practising hard *tapasyâ*.

according to their spiritual outlooks and temperaments. For the Master never interfered with anyone's moods and outlook; on the other hand, helped him to grow in his own way that he might eventually realise the Highest Truth. But he always carefully observed whether the disciples replied from sincere conviction or merely copied others.

We shall mention the instance of Purna. The Master himself testified to his deep spirituality and reckoned him as one of his chief disciples; in fact, he gave him a place immediately next to Swami Vivekananda. Purna was only thirteen years old when he first met the Master. But he felt deeply moved even at that first meeting. When he next came to the Master, the Master asked him in what light he regarded him. Purna replied with a good deal of emotion: "You are God Himself, incarnated in flesh and blood!" Sri Ramakrishna was surprised and delighted with the answer. He blessed him from the bottom of his heart and initiated him into the mystery of *Shakti* worship.

Here is another instance: There was a picture in Sri Ramakrishna's room in which, Sri Chaitanya and devotees were shown as absorbed in singing the praise of God. One day Sri Ramakrishna pointed it out to a friend of ours, and said: "Do you see how absorbed they are in singing the praise of the Lord?"

Friend: "They are all low class people."

Master: "What do you say? You must not say so."

Friend: "Yes, Sir, I come from Nadia.* I know only low class people become *Vaishnavas*."

Master: "Oh, you come from Nadia?—Then I salute you a second time.† (*Pointing to himself*) Well,

*Nadia is the origin and stronghold of Bengal *Vaishnavism*.

†It was the custom of Sri Ramakrishna to salute one as soon as he met him. That is why he said 'second time.'

Ram and others say that this is a Divine Incarnation. What do you think?"

Friend: "They estimate you very poorly, Sir."

Master: "What! They call me a Divine Incarnation and you think that a poor estimate?"

Friend: "Yes, Sir. An *Avatāra* is a part of God, but I look upon you as Shiva Himself."

Master: "Indeed!"

Friend: "So indeed I think you. What can I do? You asked me to meditate on Shiva. But though I try daily, I cannot do so. Whenever I sit in meditation, your loving and blissful face appears before me in a luminous form. I cannot replace it by the form of Shiva, nor do I like to do so. So I think you as Shiva Himself."

Master: (*smiling*) "Is that so? But I know, I am like an insignificant hair of your head. (*Both laughed*). However, I am satisfied,—I had been anxious about you."

The significance of the Master's last words was not perhaps quite evident to our friend at that time. We remember that whenever in such cases the Master expressed satisfaction with us, we would be filled with a great joy and care little to go into his inner meaning. Now we understand the reason of the Master's satisfaction at our friend: he had accepted him as the highest spiritual ideal.

The Master was very careful that the disciples properly studied all his ways before they accepted him as the highest ideal. He would often say to us: "Watch a *Sādhu* by day and by night, and then trust him." He encouraged us to see if a *Sādhu* practised what he taught. He would tell us never to trust a man whose actions did not tally with his words, and whose mind was not one with his lips (words).

Thus encouraged, we would carefully observe the ways of the Master. Some of us went so far as to even test him. But he gladly bore with all the troubles we caused him in our

sincere desire to confirm our faith in him.

Jogin, who afterwards became Swami Yogananda, was one of the principal disciples of the Master. His home was very near to the Dakshineswar Temple; he could, therefore, pass long hours in the company of the Master. One evening, Jogin, with the Master's permission, decided to spend the night with him, with a view to serve him in case of need. They went to bed. About midnight Jogin suddenly woke up to find the door of the room open and Sri Ramakrishna absent. At first he thought he might be pacing outside. But he did not find him there. Suddenly a suspicion flitted across his mind—could he have gone to meet his wife, thus acting contrary to his profession? Unpleasant though it was, he resolved to ascertain the truth about it, and kept his watch upon the door of the concert-room where the Holy Mother lived. Suddenly he heard the sound of slippers from the direction of the *Panchavati*. A moment later, Sri Ramakrishna stood by his side. "Well, what do you want here?" he asked. Jogin hung down his head in shame for having doubted the Master's sincerity and could not utter a word. The Master understood the whole thing in a moment and relieved the penitent boy, saying: "Well done! You must examine a *Sādhu* by day and by night, and then believe in him." Though forgiven, Jogin could not sleep any more that night.

V

In conclusion, we may briefly delineate how Sri Ramakrishna examined Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) and what conclusions he formed about him.

Sri Ramakrishna carefully observed Narendra's every action and movement ever since he first came to Dakshineswar. From this he came to feel that spiritual earnestness, courage, self-restraint, heroism, self-sacrifice for noble causes and similar other noble qualities existed in a developed

form in him. He understood that noble qualities were naturally so predominant in him, that even under adverse circumstances and temptations, he would never succumb to and do anything mean. As regards his devotion to truth, the Master had noted his utter truthfulness. He thus implicitly trusted in whatever Narendra said, and felt deeply that very soon Narendra would reach a state where nothing but truth would issue from his lips even under confusion, and whatever casual desires arose in his mind would be fulfilled. He would, therefore, encourage him still further in truthfulness, and say: "Whoever holds to truth in word, thought and action, is blessed by the vision of God who is Truth Itself;" and "One who observes truth for twelve years in thought, word and deed, reaches a state in which whatever he resolves comes true."

We remember a funny incident about Sri Ramakrishna's belief in Naren's truthfulness. In the course of his conversation Sri Ramakrishna once mentioned that there comes a stage in the life of the *Bhakta*, which is like that of the *Chātaka* bird. This bird will drink rain-water only, and that, when it falls from the clouds. So it is always watching the sky in the hope of rain falling. *Bhaktas* in that state depend on God alone to appease the thirst of their heart. As the bird watches the sky, so these *Bhaktas* always look up to God for all their needs. Naren was hearing this. Then he suddenly exclaimed: "Sir, though it is the common belief that the *Chātaka* bird drinks only rain-water, it is not a fact that it does not take other water. I have seen these birds drink from rivers and ponds." Sri Ramakrishna said: "Is that so? Do they drink like other birds? Then I am mistaken. If you have seen it, then there is no doubt about it." But Sri Ramakrishna, simple as a boy, was a little disturbed in mind. He thought: "If I am mistaken in this, then I may

also be mistaken in other ways." It made him very sad. After a few days Naren called Sri Ramakrishna and said: "Sir, see, a *Châtaka* bird is drinking Ganges water." Sri Ramakrishna rushed out of the room and said: "Where? where?" When they came near the spot, what did they see but that it was one of the small-sized bats? Then Sri Ramakrishna laughed and said: "Yon rogue, it is a bat. You have given me so much trouble for nothing. Now I shall be wiser and not believe everything you say."

It is often seen in men that as soon as they come in the presence of women, they become softer than is accountable by only a sense of politeness, respect and appreciation of beauty. This, according to the *Shâstras*, is the result of certain *Samskâras* deeply hidden in the heart. But in Naren we did not find that. Sri Ramakrishna noticed this, and he was, therefore, convinced that Naren would never forget himself under the infatuation of womanly beauty. Once Sri Ramakrishna compared Naren with a well-known *Bhakta* who often went into spiritual ecstasy and was thus highly respected by us. He said: "That man gets beside himself on meeting women. But Naren never. I watched him carefully. Though he does not say so, I found that he seems rather annoyed when they come. His attitude seems as if he thinks with some disgust: Why are they here?"

It was characteristic of Naren that though *Jnâna* was so strong in him and he was so manly in every respect, still he was very gentle and full of devotion. Sri Ramakrishna often remarked on this, and once he said, looking at Naren's face: "Could one who is only a dry *Jnâni* have such eyes? With *Jnâna*, you have all the tender feelings of the *Bhakta*. You have the strength of a man and the devotion of a woman. Those who have only manly qualities, have not the black circles round their nipples. In

the great hero Arjuna these marks (black spots round the nipples) were not present."

Besides the four methods described above, the Master also tested him in other ways. We shall cite two instances. One day he said to Narendra that he possessed many supernatural powers and would like to transfer them to him. Narendra asked him if they would help him in realising God. When the Master answered in the negative, he sternly refused to have anything to do with them. This reply greatly pleased the Master.

But the other test was severer. The coming of Narendra to Dakshineswar was always hailed by Sri Ramakrishna with intense joy, so much so that sometimes even a distant sight of Narendra would plunge him into *Samâdhi*. But a day came when all this changed. Narendra came, saluted and sat before him, but there was no response from the Master. The Master talked with others, but not with him; he even turned his face away from him. The whole day passed in this way. In the evening Narendra saluted him and returned home. Several days after he again went to Dakshineswar. That day also he met with the same reception. The third and the fourth time also it was the same. Thus passed one month. Then one day Sri Ramakrishna called him to his side and said: "Tell me, how is it that though I do not speak a word to you, you still continue to come here?" Narendra replied: "Sir, it is not your words alone that draw me. I love you and want to see you, therefore I come." Sri Ramakrishna was highly pleased with the answer. He said: "I was only testing you. I wanted to see if you would stay away when I did not show you love and attention. Only one of your calibre could put up with so much neglect and indifference. Any one else would have left me long ago, and would never have come again."

PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

SIGNS OF THE TRUE GURU

Of course the *Guru* has to be very carefully sought out. Not all can be *Guru*. Neither can all be disciple, *Shishya*. The *Guru* and disciple should possess the necessary qualifications. We are considering here the case of an aspirant who is eager to realise God, who has been convinced of the evanescence of the world, who is not attached to the things of the world, and who is full of *viveka* and *vairāgya*. He is qualified to be a disciple. As regards the *Guru* we must remember that a man of realisation is a very rare thing in the world. Not one in a million has realised the Truth. Besides, even when one has realised God, one does not want to let it be known. He rather wants to keep it a secret. That makes the finding of a capable *Guru* much more difficult. Then again, not all realise God in all aspects. Suppose one has realised God, say, as *Vishnu*. He can be of full help only to a *Vaishnava* aspirant. A worshipper of *Shakti* will have to approach one who has realised God as *Shakti* to be his disciple. That makes the chance still narrower. The fact is, as we said last month, the way to God is beset with all obstacles possible. Only an adamant resolve can overcome them.

It is easy for us, ignorant as we are, to be deceived by pseudo-*Gurus*. And there are indeed plenty of them always about. We have no idea of true spirituality. Some occult powers are enough to delude us. Yet occult powers have nothing to do with spirituality. Any audacious claim by any striking person, or by one advanced by any well-established society, may hook us for any nonsensical creed.—We are so credulous! Many are caught in the snares of these

frauds and suffer greatly. And as a result their life becomes a failure and they lose faith in religion itself. But there are signs by which we can know the right person. If we are sincere, if we seek only God and do not practise religion with any ulterior purpose, we shall instinctively know if the person claiming to be a *Guru* is genuine or not. Our sincerity itself will be our guide. But mere instinct may not be the safest guide. We must employ our reason also. Swami Vivekananda has nicely described the signs and qualifications of a true *Guru* in his *Bhakti Yoga*. We cannot do better than quote from it:

“In the teacher we must first see that he knows the secret of the Scriptures. . . . the teacher must be able to know the *spirit* of the Scriptures. The teacher who deals too much in words, and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words, loses the spirit. . . . The various methods of joining words, the various methods of speaking in beautiful language, the various methods of explaining the diction of the Scriptures, are only for the disputations and enjoyment of the learned, they do not conduce to the development of spiritual perception. . . . You will find that no one of the great teachers of the world ever went into these various explanations of the texts; there is with them no attempt at ‘text-torturing,’ no eternal playing upon the meaning of words and their roots. Yet they nobly taught. . .

“The second condition necessary in the teacher is—sinlessness. The question is often asked, ‘Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher? We have only to judge of what he says, and take that up.’ This is not right. If a man wants to

teach me something of dynamics or chemistry, or any other physical science, he may be anything he likes, because what the physical sciences require, is merely an intellectual equipment; but in the spiritual sciences it is impossible from first to last, that there can be any spiritual light in the soul that is impure. What religion can an impure man teach? The *sine qua non* of acquiring spiritual truth for one's self, or for imparting it to others, is the purity of heart and soul. A vision of God, or a glimpse of the beyond, never comes until the soul is pure. Hence with the teacher of religion we must see first what he is and then what he says. He must be perfectly pure, and then alone comes the value of his words, because he is only then the true 'transmitter.' What can he transmit, if he has not spiritual power in himself? There must be the worthy vibration of spirituality in the mind of the teacher, so that it may be sympathetically conveyed to the mind of the taught. The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something, and not one of a mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore the teacher must be pure.

"The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name, or fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted, is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or for name, will immediately destroy this conveying medium. God is love, and only he who has known God as love, can be a teacher of godliness and God to man.

"When you see that in your teacher these conditions are fulfilled, you are safe; if they are not, it is unsafe to

allow yourself to be taught by him, for there is the great danger that if he cannot convey goodness to your heart, he may convey wickedness. This danger must by all means be guarded against. 'He who is learned in the Scriptures, sinless, and unpolluted by lust, is the greatest knower of *Brahman*.' "

Why is the *Guru* expected to know the secret of the Scriptures? Book-learning and intellectualism have no place in religion, we know. Yet why should he know the Scriptures? The idea is that the teacher must not preach things which are antagonistic to the Scriptures. If he does, we must be suspicious of him. He is not genuine. For the Scriptures are not mere records of intellectual cogitations, but of actual, living experiences. These experiences are true for all times, because they relate to things which are eternal,—soul, God. If someone suddenly claims to have found out something which negatives all those previous experiences, we must mistrust him. Either he is self-deluded or he is a fraud. We must in any case beware of him. He is not a safe guide.

As regards the other conditions, the motive is obvious. He must be pure both as regards *Kâmini* and *Kânchana*, lust and gold, more specially about *Kâmini*. Nowadays there are specious philosophies advocated, lauding sexual intercourse as holy and sacramental. These are all talks of self-deluded fools who consider their present condition as something praiseworthy and have no idea of the true nature of high spiritual realisations and the conditions precedent to them. We must never listen to them. What to speak of sex-action, even the slightest of sexual thought is a great bar to spiritual progress. If, therefore, anyone indulges in any kind of sexuality, however refined, he is quite unfit to be a real *Guru*. He is yet far from the truth.

The would-be disciple must watch the *Guru* carefully, watch him by day

and by night and be perfectly sure that he fulfils the above conditions. Then the disciple must know that he has indeed met a god among men, and he may, and indeed should, surrender himself completely at his feet.

We know such *Gurus* are very rare. But then, are real aspirants plentiful? They are also very rare. Most of us are only aspirants in name. We are half-hearted. We do not want God sincerely. And when the yearning for Him will flame up in our heart, we shall have the true *Guru*. The saints of God have assured us that there is this provision in the laws Divine that when we shall want Him seriously, He would send teachers to guide us to His sacred feet. So there need not be any cause for despair. There should be, on the other hand, even greater attempts at making ourselves pure and sincere.

There is an idea prevalent amongst a large section of people that once they have been initiated by a *Guru*, they need not do anything more: the *Guru* himself will now do everything for them and lead them on to God. There is also the other idea that a *Guru* by initiating a disciple takes on himself the entire burden of the disciple's sins. Though no doubt there is some truth behind these ideas, their wide prevalence is due more to our inherent indolence than to the core of truth existing in them. There are teachers and teachers. Not all men of realisation possess the above powers. Only Divine Incarnations and a few of their greatest associate-disciples possess them. They can give instant Illumination to a man and

free him for ever from his sins. But others, however great, cannot do so. The disciple will receive from them power, the spark that will light the fire in him and burn all impurities. But the disciple himself must blow at the fire, and try assiduously to realise the truth and conquer obstacles. No indolence will avail. The sooner we get rid of this complacent philosophy, the better.

The search for the *Guru* must necessarily be a long one. Till then, what shall we do? Let us pray yearningly to God to vouchsafe us His grace in the form of a true *Guru*. And let us grow more and more in the spiritual qualities. Much can be done by the sincere efforts of oneself alone. We may nicely prepare the soil of our heart, so that when we shall meet the *Guru*, he may at once sow the mighty seed of which is to grow the tree of ambrosial fruits.

We have accompanied the reader at last to the sacred feet of the *Guru*. The *Guru* will instruct him on the actual practices which are to lead him to the Holy of the Holies. Now indeed will his actual spiritual practice begin. He has now entered the mansion of the Lord. We can accompany him no further. We do not presume to help him further. We have tried to tell him about the preliminaries of practical religion in accordance with our light. Perchance we have been of some help to some, perchance not. We now bid the reader good-bye, wishing him all prosperity in his voyage towards the peaceful haven of God. *Om Shāntih! Shāntih!! Shāntih!!!*

(CONCLUDED)

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

CHAPTER XIV

PEACE

जनक उवाच ।

प्रकृत्या शून्यचित्तो यः प्रमादाद्भावभावनः ।

निद्रितो बोधित इव क्षीणसंसारणो हि सः ॥१॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

यः Who प्रकृत्या by nature शून्यचित्तः empty-minded प्रमादात् through inadvertence भावभावनः thinking of objects निद्रितः asleep बोधितः awake इव as if सः he हि verily क्षीणसंसारणः one whose worldly life is exhausted.

1. He verily has his worldly¹ life exhausted,² who is empty-minded³ by⁴ nature, who thinks⁵ of objects through inadvertence, and who is as⁶ it were awake though asleep.

[¹ *Worldly etc.*—life of the senses implying the pairs of opposites, bondage of *karma* and consequent birth and rebirth.

² *Exhausted*—For him worldly life is destroyed for ever. Its forces have no longer any hold on him.

³ *Empty-minded*—devoid of any desires or *samskāras* and knowledge of objects, but full of the luminous consciousness of the Self alone.

⁴ *By etc.*—in reality.

⁵ *Thinks etc.*—So long as his body remains, he becomes casually conscious of the phenomenal world, due to the remnants of *karma*, called *prāraṅdha karma*, which still continue to function. But such consciousness of objects should not be considered as the same as the ordinary man's consciousness of them, it is so superficial and flimsy with the man of realisation. It is only accidental and does not leave any effect behind. Hence, *in reality* he is empty-minded.

⁶ *As etc.*—Sleep generally clouds our consciousness. But the man of realisation is ever full of the knowledge of the Self and it is not obstructed even if he may be physically asleep.]

क धनानि क मित्राणि क मे विषयदस्यवः ।

क शास्त्रं क च विज्ञानं यदा मे गलिता स्पृहा ॥२॥

यदा When मे my स्पृहा desire गलिता dropped down (तदा then) मे my क where धनानि riches क where मित्राणि friends क where विषयदस्यवः robbers in the forms of the sense-objects क where शास्त्रं scripture क where विज्ञानं knowledge च and.

2. When my desire¹ has melted away, where are my riches, where my friends and the robbers² in the forms of the sense-objects, and where³ are scripture and knowledge?⁴

[¹ *Desire*—for the objects of enjoyment in this world or the next.

² *Robbers etc.*—Because the objects of the senses rob us of the perception of the Self.

³ *Where etc.*—Scriptural injunctions are only for those who are still in ignorance. They are of no use to a man of Self-realisation,

⁴ *Knowledge*—secular as well as scriptural. The one is derived from worldly experience and is therefore of no use to a *Jnani*. And the other is an indirect knowledge of the spiritual realities, but having now directly experiencing them, he does not want it.]

विज्ञाते साक्षिपुरुषे परमात्मनि चेश्वरे ।

नैराश्ये बन्धमोक्षे च न चिन्ता मुक्तये मम ॥३॥

साक्षिपुरुषे Self who is the witness ईश्वरे Lord च and परमात्मनि the Supreme Self विज्ञाते (सति) having been realised बन्धनीक्षे in bondage and liberation च and नैराश्ये desirelessness (सति being) मुक्तये for emancipation मम my चिन्ता anxiety न not (चिन्ता is)

3. As I have realised the Supreme Self who is the Witness and the Lord, and have¹ lost all desire for bondage and liberation, I feel no anxiety for emancipation.

[¹ *Have etc.*—because of the realisation of the eternal, ever-free and ever-blissful *Atman*. A man of Self-realisation transcends all consciousness of bondage and freedom. An ignorant man alone requires to shake off bondage and attain emancipation.]

अन्तर्विकल्पशून्यस्य बहिः स्वच्छन्दचारिणः ।

भ्रान्तस्येव दशास्तास्तादृशा एव जानते ॥४॥

अन्तः Within विकल्पशून्यस्य devoid of uncertainty बहिः outside भ्रान्तस्य इव like a deluded one स्वच्छन्दचारिणः moving at his own pleasure ताः ताः such and such दशाः conditions तादृशाः those like him एव surely जानते know.

4. The different conditions of one who is within devoid¹ of doubts but without moves² about at his own pleasure like a deluded person, can³ only be understood by those like him.

[¹ *Devoid, etc.*—He has the perfect Knowledge. He possesses the whole and complete Truth. He is, therefore, free from all doubts and uncertainties.

² *Moves etc.*—One who has attained Self-knowledge is no longer bound by man-made laws for the regulation of his conduct which sometimes appears as unbecoming and wrong.

³ *Can etc.*—A man of realisation alone can understand the ways of another man of realisation. The average man who estimates people by their outward conduct, can never understand the men of Self-knowledge, for their external ways are apparently contradictory to their inner illumination.]

NOTES AND COMMENTS

In this number

Just as the February issue was devoted pre-eminently to Swami Vivekananda, so the present number is dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna whose auspicious birthday falls this year, as our readers know, on Sunday, the 2nd March. . . . We are privileged to publish an article on SRI RAMAKRISHNA

by SWAMI SHIVANANDA who is one of the prominent direct disciples of the Master and the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In this article which he originally wrote in reply to inquiries by M. Romain Rolland, he dwells briefly but clearly on his own experience and understanding of his great Master ; and as such it will always be considered a valuable

document. We have great pleasure in presenting it to our readers. . . . We, however, draw the readers' attention to the present instalment of *The Diary of a Disciple*, wherein the Swami's reminiscences of his divine Master are recorded in further details. . . . *The River Re-enters the Sea* by Romain Rolland is that great writer's last article on Sri Ramakrishna to be published in *Prabuddha Bharata*. The Master's last days are so beautifully portrayed in this article that we could not resist the temptation of presenting it to our readers. The English translation of M. Rolland's book on Sri Ramakrishna, of which the chapters hitherto published by us form but a part, is already in the press and will be shortly published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. . . . We draw the careful attention of our readers to *Exceptional Children* by K.B. MADHAVA, M.A., A.I.A. (LONDON), in which a subject comparatively unknown in India is tersely treated. Mr. Madhava is a brilliant professor of the Mysore University where he occupies the chair of Statistical Economics. He is an Associate of the Institute of Actuaries, London, and has many thoughtful works to his credit. Scientific determination of individual intelligence and capacities has indeed become urgent in view of the strenuous international competition in all fields as well as for the purpose of developing our latent powers ; and India cannot possibly neglect it. . . . We adapt *How Sri Ramakrishna Tested His Disciples* from the Bengali biography of the great Master by SWAMI SARADANANDA. The Swami was another prominent disciple of the Master and his book on him is undoubtedly a masterpiece. The present article, dealing as it does with a very interesting and important aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's life and activities, will be, we have no doubt, much appreciated by our readers. . . . *Practice of Religion* by ANANDA is concluded in this issue. Most possibly it will be soon brought out in book-form with some additions and alterations.

Swami Vivekananda on Western Industrialism, etc.

Here is a third instalment of quotations from the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda, bearing on his views on what we can learn from the West and other cognate topics :

"Have we to learn anything else, have we to learn anything from the world? We have, perhaps, to gain a little in material knowledge, in the power of organisation, in the ability to handle powers, organising powers, in bringing the best results out of the smallest of causes. This perhaps to a certain extent we may learn from the West. . . . Yet, perhaps, some sort of materialism, toned down to our own requirements, would be a blessing to many of our brothers who are not yet ripe for the highest truths. This is the one mistake made in every country and in every society, and it is a greatly regrettable thing that in India where it was always understood, the same mistake of forcing the highest truths on to people who are not ready for them, has been made of late. . . . there is a tendency to bind every one down by the same laws as those by which the Sannyâsin is bound, and that is a great mistake. But for that a good deal of the poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been. A poor man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous spiritual and ethical laws for which he has no use. Hands off! Let the poor fellow enjoy himself a little, and then he will raise himself up and renunciation will come to him of itself. Perhaps in this line, we can be taught something by the Western people, but we must be very cautious in learning these things. (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, pp. 149-151).

"As Western ideas of organisation and external civilisation are penetrating and pouring into our country, whether we will have them or not, so Indian spirituality and philosophy are delug-

ing the lands of the West. None can resist it, no more can we resist some sort of material civilisation from the West. A little of it, perhaps, is good for us, and a little spiritualisation is good for the West; thus the balance will be preserved." (C. W., Vol. III, p. 171).

"This is the teaching on the practical side. Believe, therefore, in yourselves, and if you want material wealth, work it out; it will come to you. If you want to be intellectual, work it out on the intellectual plane, and intellectual giants you shall be. And if you want to attain freedom, work it out on the spiritual plane, and free you shall be, and shall enter into Nirvâna the blissful. But one defect which lay in the Advaita was its being worked out so long on the spiritual plane only, and nowhere else; now the time has come when you have to make it practical; . . . it must come down to the daily, every-day life of the people. . . . Let us bring it down from heaven unto the earth; this is the present dispensation. . . ."

"Aye, you may be astonished to hear that as practical Vedantists the Americans are better than we are. . . ." (C. W., Vol. III, p. 427).

"What we want is not much spirituality, as a little of the bringing down of the Advaita into the material world." (C. W., Vol. III, pp. 431-432).

"Machinery in a small proportion is good, but too much of it kills man's initiative and makes a lifeless machine of him. The men in factories are doing the same monotonous work, day after day, night after night, year after year, each batch of men doing one special bit of work—such as fashioning the heads of pins, or uniting the ends of threads, or moving backwards and forwards with the loom—for a whole life. And the result is, that the loss of that special job means death to them—they find no other means of living and starve. Doing routine work like

a machine, one becomes a lifeless machine. For that reason, one serving as a school-master or a clerk for a whole life-time, ends by turning a stupendous fool." (C. W., Vol. VII, p. 299).

Renunciation the Basis of Spiritualisation

In course of our note last month on the Conflict of the Divine and the Human we remarked that human love is rather an impediment to spiritual progress than a help, and that the desire to enjoy God through the love of father, mother, wife, children, etc. was a delusion. This has raised the questions: What about spiritualisation? Have we not time and again said that family life can be spiritualised? And is not that a strong point of Hindu spirituality? How then do we reconcile these two ideas? These questions have certainly some point. But we must say that the statements are not at all contradictory. Last month we only detailed the process by which spiritualisation is possible. We say that spiritualisation is not possible by indulging in the felicities of domestic relations. The joys that we have through our normal relationships with men and women, especially our relatives and friends, have certainly to be foregone. We must make a distinction: it is one thing to conceive one's dear ones as God and love and serve them as such, and quite another thing to continue our *natural* relations and simply name them as spiritual. Mere giving a different name makes little difference. Some inward change is essential.

How can that change be brought about? How can we truly spiritualise our human relationships? We must possess a strong power of discrimination to accomplish this. We must every moment distinguish between the eternal and the ephemeral in our beloved ones. And we must more and more relate ourselves to the eternal and withdraw ourselves from the ephemeral. And if we do so, we

shall find that the joys of natural relationships do not affect us any more. A complete change of outlook has ensued. The love that will then grow will be real love,—spiritual and not secular as it is now. In fact, that love will be the love of the devotee for the Lord, and nothing else. One then never feels that one has more of the joy of Divine communion because it percolates through the forms of human love. On the other hand, this interposition of human forms appears irksome, and one is impatient to do away with them. The spiritualisation of human relations is the beginning and an aid to spiritual illumination, and not the perfection and enhancement of it. The vision which sees the Divine as interpenetrating *all*, is not to be identified with this spiritualisation. It is the result of a very high state of spiritual perfection. We first try to conceive some as Divine: this is the spiritualisation of family relationship. This develops spiritual consciousness. Then comes complete renunciation of the world. In that stage everything smacking of the world seems dreadful and one feels one's secular relationships as so many deep dark wells into which one may any moment fall. One wants God and God alone. When one has realised Him or approached Him very near, one finds the entire universe as penetrated by the Divine Himself,—one finds that God and the world are the same. In that state man and God become one and then to love men is to love God Himself. But only a few can realise that state. For others to say that by loving their dear ones they are loving God, is sheer hypocrisy. The fact is, without complete renunciation God can *never* be realised whether in the world or outside it.

Psychological Tests

Elsewhere we publish an article on *Exceptional Children* by Prof. Madhava of the Mysore University. Our

readers, we are sure, will properly appreciate the subject-matter of the article. There are two ways in which an individual can fulfil his life, at least his relative life: (1) by spiritualising himself, by being non-attached to all his activities, mental and physical, and eventually realising himself as spirit; and (2) by perfecting and fully developing his mental powers and faculties. Both these, in our opinion, are essential to the healthy growth and prosperity of our collective life. If we merely preach *Karma Yoga*, non-attachment, without at the same time emphasising the need of developing one's powers, we run the risk of stunting the manifestation of life with all its attendant evil consequences. In the present age specially, the latter aspect requires to be specially attended to. In all parts of the world, strenuous efforts are being made to make the utmost use of the human material. No powers are allowed to be wasted. It has become, therefore, urgently necessary that an individual's tendencies and latent powers should be gauged betimes and the man trained up and employed accordingly. A misfit is a waste not only unto itself, but also to the nation. But how to find out the tendencies and latent powers of a boy or girl? Prof. Madhava's article will give us an idea.

In our country also, some such test was considered necessary. Our readers may be aware how astrologers calculate and discover the intrinsic caste of a new-born babe. The baby may be born in any caste. But it itself has a caste of its own,—*Brâhmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* or *Shudra*. This is supposed to indicate the latent *Samskâras* of the child. It has been said that the caste of a man is determined by his latent tendencies and powers and his occupation. The intrinsic caste of a child indicates its latent powers and its fitting occupation. Obviously this method of determining the career of a boy or girl is

of little use at the present time. But what we should note here is that the need of psychological determination has been felt all along in India. New means should be adopted now, that is all.

Like every other thing, the modern means of psychological tests also has been often abused. There may be genuine and spurious tests. Suppose we want to test the intelligence of a group of boys. What tests shall we apply? Professor X has devised a set of tests which he considers perfect. Suppose we employ the tests and find that 50 per cent of the boys are intelligent. Professor Y, however, has got another set of tests, by applying which we find only 20 per cent intelligent. Now which tests are true? This is only one of the many difficulties of the present means of determining human powers and tendencies.

In fact, no tests can ever be considered final and complete. Besides, the human material is an illusive thing. It is impossible to always correctly determine its future. But allowing for all these deficiencies, it must be admitted that there is much truth behind these tests and that they are for practical purposes often useful. As Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, M. A. (Cantab.) said in his presidential address at the Indian Economic Conference recently held at Allahabad:

"If the human capital of the country is to be most effectively employed, it is necessary to determine what qualities are required by each separate occupation and how the possession of these qualities can most accurately be determined in the child. Otherwise, there will be social waste in a number of ways. Children may be given training leading to occupations for which they may have neither the ability nor the aptitude. When they actually enter the occupation for which they have received the preliminary training, misfits will naturally occur and there will be wastage either because there will be a poor level of

work or a high rate of labour turnover. Nor is this all. There are numerous other evil consequences of misfits of which a long and uncomfortable list is given: neurotic disorders, delinquency, bad temper, malingering, creation of industrial discontent. It is, therefore, necessary that any scheme of vocational education should be supplemented by measures to study the different aptitudes of children, and direct them to courses of study appropriate for the occupations towards which their abilities and aptitude point.

"Vocational tests are destined to play a prominent part in the social organization of the future. Already in parts of Germany, they are in active operation; in Hamburg four-fifths of all the children leaving the school pass through the Vocational Advice Bureau, including children of all social classes, and a large number of these are given psychological tests to assist in the decision with regard to the occupation to be followed in after-life. It is a matter for satisfaction, therefore, that the last Indian Universities' Conference passed a resolution in favour of experiments in the application of psychological tests in the Universities and it is to be hoped that the recommendation will be taken up actively, as the economic and social value of these tests cannot be exaggerated."

Smelling by Ear and Testing by Eye

We are indebted for the following to a recent issue of *The Literary Digest*.

That curious mixture of the senses called by physiologists "synesthesia" is responsible for the fact that certain persons can receive a brain-message corresponding to one sense when another sense is stimulated. The most common case is that of "color-hearing" where certain sounds produce the sensation of colors; but a writer in *The American Weekly* (New York) tells us that there are instances where

a smell provokes the sensation of sound, where a color produces taste, and so on. Several theories are advanced to explain this curious effect, and the author prefers that which accounts for it by supposing some sort of a "short-circuit" between different brain-centres, so that the sensation that ought to affect the centre of vision stimulates instead that of sound, for instance. We read:

"A radio listener in Paris recently presented French radio engineers with a puzzling problem. When he listened to the church service broadcast from the Cathedral of Notre Dame, this listener said, he also smelled the smoke of the candles in the church. Was it possible, he asked, that smell sensations might be picked up accidentally by the microphone?

"Radio engineers thought not, but were undecided about the real explanation. Certainly nothing of the character of a smell can possibly be sent out, everybody agreed, over radio waves.

"Fortunately for the candle-smelling Parisian, psychologists came to his rescue. He was the victim of a curious mental abnormality called 'Synesthesia' or the mixing of sensations. These instances are most likely to occur in people above the average in mental powers, education, and culture.

"In the Parisian case the listener got his hearing sensations mixed in his brain as they came in. Some of the nerve impulses leaked across the brain to affect the centre for smells. That the listener seemed to smell burning candles is explained by past association.

"In the records of laboratories of psychology are accounts of individuals whose taste sensation got mixed with sounds or with sensations of color; of individuals whose smell sensations called up colors or senses; of still other persons whom sounds made to feel pain or whom pain made to hear

imaginary sounds. Apparently nearly every possible mixture of one sense with the other has been detected in at least one abnormal individual.

"Some such mixtures are familiar. Taste sensations, for example, are not infrequently produced by the sight of food. The fact that the body feels the taste impulses unconsciously is indicated by the common observation that sight of food often 'makes one's mouth water.'

"Another instance is the fact, well-known to musicians, that sight of objects possessing strong taste may interfere with the position of the mouth muscles. A cornet player, for example, may be broken up completely in a solo on his instrument if he chances to see a person in the audience sucking a lemon. The automatic reaction to the acid lemon juice produced by mere sight of the fruit draws the cornetist's mouth into a shape which makes production of a good tone all but impossible.

"By far the commonest of these abnormalities are color sensations called into being by ideas of other kinds. 'Color-hearing' is one of the commonest cases; a condition in which the hearing of some sound always calls up in a person's mind the sensation of a definite color."

There can be no doubt, we are assured, that these color experiences on hearing sounds are perfectly real to the persons who experience them. Not long ago in Germany, a Dr. Anscutz, musician and psychologist, broadcast by radio an appeal for persons possessing these powers to present themselves for psychological study. One hundred and fifty individuals came forward, which must indicate that an immensely larger number of such persons exist. The writer goes on:

"Dr. Ponder, Dr. D. F. Fraser-Harris, of London, and other experts located many other cases. Something like 12 per cent of the average population possesses, Dr. Ponder believes, traces

of this color-hearing power. It belongs, he suspects, to an actual majority of young children, although it often fades as a child grows up.

"Dr. Ponder has several acquaintances, he reports, who see colors and color combinations when they hear the horns of taxi-cabs or other automobiles on the street; usually a different color for each horn. Accordingly, these persons amuse themselves when walking on the street by 'looking' at the colors of the horn blasts and other street sounds entering their ears. Two other color hearers are recorded as quarrelling bitterly about the precise

color of the sound of knives and forks being rattled in a restaurant kitchen.

"In a smaller number of individuals, several of whom have been studied by Dr. Fraser-Harris, the sound is not necessary to call up the color. A mere idea is enough. Dr. Fraser-Harris calls these individuals 'color thinkers,' and describes one who thought of Sunday as yellow, Wednesday as brown, and Friday as black.

"As an example of mixture of taste sensations with others, Hibbert records the case of a lady to whom milk tasted yellow, sweets tasted blue, and all unpleasant tastes were brown."

REVIEW

THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH, VOL. II. By M. K. Gandhi. The Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. 608 pp. Price Rs. 5-8-0.

Many biographers of greatmen make the mistake of painting their virtues in such glowing colours that they altogether hide their weaknesses. And thus one great purpose of biography is defeated—it fails to inspire the readers to emulate the good qualities of those greatmen. Mahatma Gandhi will escape such tragedy by reason of the fact that he has laid bare his strength and weakness unsparingly and unhesitatingly in his autobiography.

The early life of Gandhiji had not much to distinguish it from that of any average youth. But when noble purposes dawned upon his mind, he began to strive with what ordinary resources, moral and spiritual, he had, and after years of persistent struggle he has achieved so much success that he is now universally acclaimed as indeed a saint. The success of Mahatma Gandhi is not due to any magic power or sudden grace of God, which many less earnest persons will like to wait for, but has been earned by slow labour from day to day. As to the method of work, he has always looked to the Small Voice within, and made the whispers of his soul audible in action. As such, his life has been a series of experimentation, and in that he had very often to go against established beliefs and opinions: he had occasionally to flout the best opinions of medical experts

and cast aside the earnest pleadings of sincere friends. Many of the conclusions arrived at by Gandhiji through his *experiments* may not coincide with the experiences of others; but the rigidity with which he could stick to his purpose will be an object-lesson to all idealists, to all who want to live the life to a purpose and not wallow in the mire of sense-enjoyment.

Many of those who are busy only with the political opinions of the Mahatma could not have access to his inner life but for this autobiography. "What I want to achieve,—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years," says Gandhiji, "is self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, all my ventures in political field, are directed to this same end." This is the reason why each of his actions is actuated by a supreme idealism, sometimes seemingly absurd. But he can keep his vision undisturbed under all circumstances, whether engaged in political struggles, or busy with economic problems or social reforms and sundry other things. This is a distinct contribution by the Mahatma to the modern world. And his autobiography, being the history of the growth of his inner life, will be read with reverence as long as noble ideas do not fail to inspire human beings. The first volume of his autobiography was out some-

time back and the present volume completes the narration describing events till the Nagpur Congress. The get-up of the book has been consistent with its inner excellence.

RAMDAS AND RAMDASIS. By Wilber S. Deming, Ph.D. Association Press (Y.M.C.A.), 5, Russel Street, Calcutta, pp. 223.

The present volume is one in 'The Religious Life of India' series, edited by a group of Christian Missionaries, their purpose being to make a critical study of all the living forces of religion in India. In bringing out the salient features of Indian religious life, the religion described is brought into relation with Christianity. The ulterior motive appears to be to show the superiority of Christianity over others, and as such it is a new method of preaching among the intellectual classes.

We, Indians, look upon Christianity as a fine religion, giving shelter to millions; but when it claims to be the best of religions and exposes every other idea and practice making it the absolute standard of truth, we beg to differ. We welcome a comparative study of religions, but such a study is not possible with people who are already prejudiced by a number of fixed ideas and who have no imagination to look beyond.

The first ten chapters of this book were originally prepared as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree and submitted to the Faculty of the Kennedy School of Missions in the Hartford Seminary Foundation. These chapters have been written with a spirit of research, and the author has laboured hard to go through many contemporary works and letters of Ramdas and his disciples. Reference has also been made to many standard authors like Ranade, Sircar, Kincaid, Keluskar, etc.

The life-story of Ramdas has been told after weighing every doubtful fact and consulting every possible source, though the decision arrived at may not be always true. The author has evinced his love of history by a laborious sifting of facts, but his interpretation has been misleading in many cases, for he could not understand the Hindu point of view.

The author has told us how Ramdas passed his boyhood, renounced the world, wandered from place to place, made disciples, established a new movement, composed books and performed miracles. He has set

forth the ethical teachings and the theological views of the Swami, and has assigned his place in history by pointing out his social, political, religious and literary influences. "Ramdas and Sivaji" is an interesting study, but the narrative has lost its flow and force by being sceptical and halting at places. The book presents a series of disjointed facts, rather than a growth of a single life. The style is simple and commonplace.

In the last chapter Ramdas and Jesus have been compared. They have, no doubt, some points of similarity, but the message of Ramdas is limited to a particular place and time, while "the message of Jesus derives part of its uniqueness from its timelessness and universality, for it is as applicable to the twentieth century as to the first, to the West as well as to the East." Such is the author's conclusion.

The metaphysical position of Ramdas deserves special consideration. He is a *Vedantist* and a *Bhakta*. Study of *Dāsboḍh* and other poems of the Swami reveals that he seeks to teach that there is only one reality, namely, Brahman, and at the same time he emphasizes the worship of Rama. Rama is the loving God who saves his humble worshipper from the miseries of life, and only by knowledge can the truth be known that the human soul is the Supreme Soul.

These apparently contradictory notions concerning Monism and Dualism, *Jñāna* and *Bhakti*, self-effort and self-dedication, have created great confusion in Mr. Deming who finds no way out of it. So the life and teachings of Ramdas do not stand his logical test, and consequently do not rise so high as those of Jesus. To a Hindu, Christ is great, because he has struck the note of Dualism as successfully as that of Monism. Ramdas, as a Hindu genius, represents the cultural unity of his race that is based on the reality of life and not on logic merely. Reality is one and undivided, but it appears to be divided under the shadow of egoism which differentiates the Individual from the Universal and begets miseries. So long as I exist, He exists. When I disappear, He is realised as One Eternal Substance. In the process of spiritual unfolding all these phases are experienced at different stages,—they never conflict, rather one leads to the other.

We are sorry to observe that one who is brought up in a narrow creed and can-

not view life as a whole, can hardly do justice to Ramdas or Jesus or any other great soul.

The book can be recommended to a lover of History, but not to a seeker after spiritual knowledge.

GLIMPSES OF LIGHT. By *Swami Dhirananda. Yogada Sat-Sanga, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. 146 pp. Price not mentioned.*

The book contains some of the addresses the author delivered in the U.S.A. during the last three and a half years. Although the addresses are brief, they are marked by simplicity. The author has tried to reconcile the Oriental and Occidental ways of expressing truth from a broad and ra-

tional view-point. Christianity and Hinduism have been explained by the author from a liberal and universal standpoint. The author is of opinion that superstition and provincialism in religion have marred the progress of humanity in the East as well as in the West. Science, he says, has given a death-blow to all superstitions at the present age.

The intention of the author in publishing this book is to stimulate a casual reader to a deeper study of philosophy and religion. There is a tinge of mysticism in his speeches. The book under review will help the Westerner to have a sympathetic attitude towards the East. The printing and get-up of the book are excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Prospective Sevashrama at Hrikhikesh

Hrikhikesh, 15 miles from Kankhal, is a favourite resort for *Sādhus* for practising *tapasyā*. From all parts of India *Sādhus* and pilgrims visit this place. These *Sādhus* and pilgrims, when attacked by disease, have none to care for them and serve them. Their plight under such conditions is sad indeed. This the leading *Sādhus* of Hrikhikesh have been noticing for a long time. Recently they appealed to the President of the Ramakrishna Mission to open a Sevashrama there. The President of the Mission was kind enough to sanction the appeal. He has asked the Kankhal R. K. Mission Sevashrama to start a Branch Centre at Hrikhikesh.

Funds are necessary to begin the work, to buy land and construct buildings thereon for dispensary and hospital work. The need is urgent. A sum of Rs. 30,000/- is required for the following: to purchase a land, and to build the outdoor and indoor dispensary, workers' quarters, a kitchen and a well. Those who wish to perpetuate the loving memory of their dear departed, may do so by erecting any of the buildings in their name. Already a lady of Rangpur has contributed a sum of Rs. 2,000/-, for the construction of the well. A gentleman of Rangoon has also promised to build a ward consisting of 2 beds in memory of his daughter, for which he has donated the sum of Rs. 1,200/-. We earnestly hope the public will respond liberally and quickly to

these urgent needs. All contributions may be sent to the *Hon. Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P.O., Shaharanpur Dt., U.P.*

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Student's Home, Madras

The management of the Home beg to place before the public their report on the working of the institution for 1929. During the year the Staff-Quarters were completed and were opened in May last. The number of students on the roll was 142. The examination results of the institution were praiseworthy and satisfactory. The boys of the Home do a great portion of the household work. This naturally promotes a sense of the dignity of labour, which the present-day students lack. Fifteen boys or so are under the charge of a teacher. The Warden who is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, supervises the whole work of the institution and is responsible for imparting religious instruction to the students. In the mornings and evenings religious classes are held and the Ramayana and Mahabharata as well as the lives and teachings of Saints are read to the younger boys. The elder students are taught the Gita. Every kind of facility is given to the boys to practise *Sandhyā*-meditation and to follow the teachings of religion in actual life. Music classes are also held in the Home. Students attend the physical training classes thrice a week. They also play football, cricket and some indigenous games. The general health of

the students during the year was satisfactory. The Magazine started in 1928 is being conducted efficiently. Through this medium the old students, friends and sympathisers of the Home are informed regularly of the progress made by the Home. The library of the Home is of great help to the students. During the year 1,254 books were presented to the library, making the total 8,000.

The Residential High School and the Industrial School have made rapid progress. We would like to mention that the Industrial Section of the Home sent many models of their work to the Exhibition held in the Y.M.C.A. building in August last, and certificates of excellence were awarded to almost all the students. The authorities have felt the necessity to extend the Industrial Section. Proposals for the extension of the workshop by the acquisition of about 12 grounds of land on the northern side of the existing workshop, have been approved by the Government, and it is hoped that the programme will be completed before the middle of 1930. The total estimated cost of the building scheme is Rs. 35,200/-, and additional machinery, etc., will cost about Rs. 47,000/-. The authorities appealed for funds in August last. We are glad that in response to it, a sum of Rs. 14,493-10-9 was received during the year. We earnestly hope that further response to the appeal will be soon made.

The total receipts on all heads amounted to Rs. 47,308-4-4 and the expenditure to Rs. 49,070-4-4 resulting in a deficit of Rs. 1,762/-.

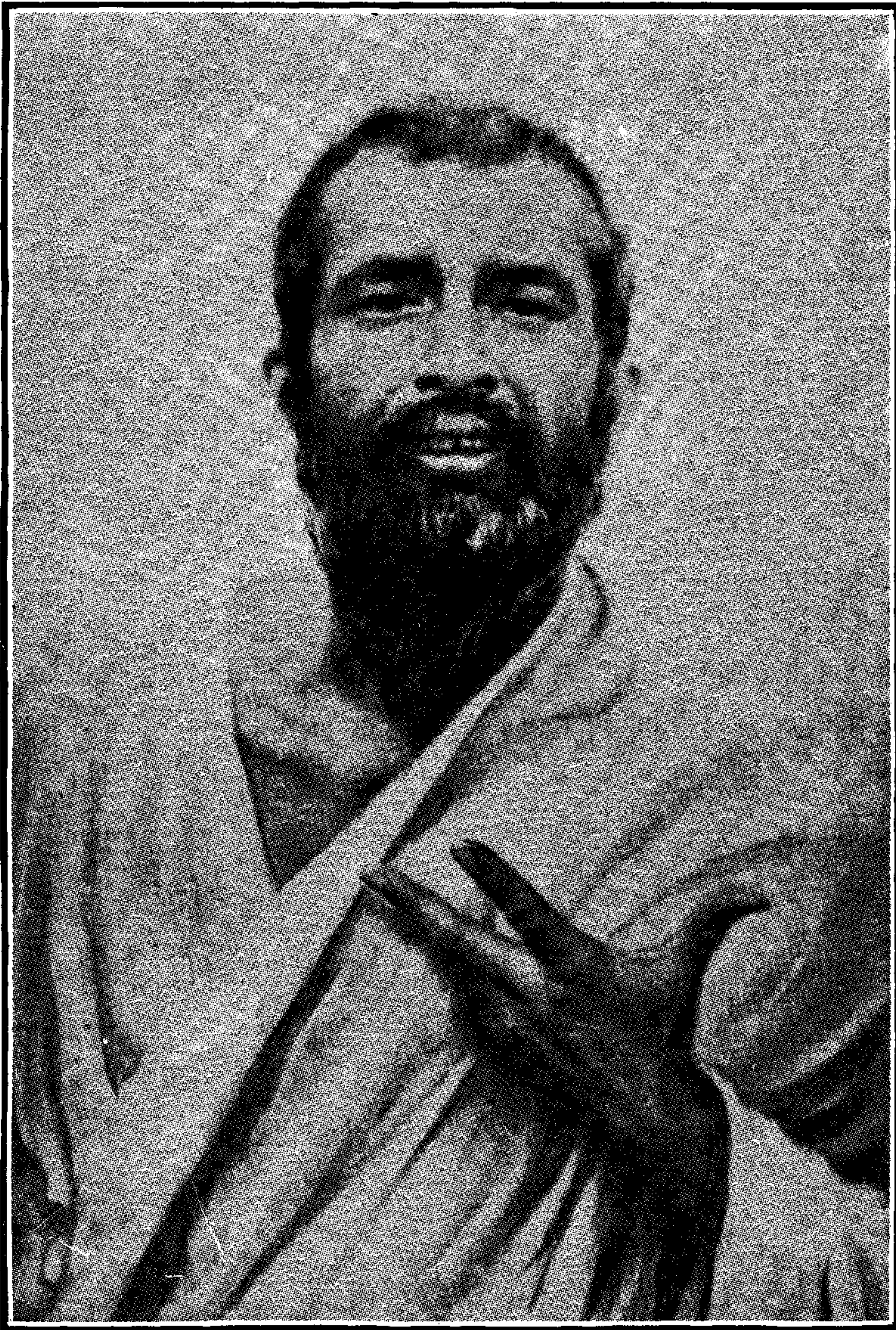
In conclusion the management brings to the notice of the public that the ensuing Silver Jubilee of the Home falls in February, 1930. The Silver Jubilee must see a vista of more active and intensive work open before the Home. What the country needs to-day is improved industrial education. This is the crying need of the day. The management sincerely hope that the Industrial Section when completed will

prove a worthy memorial of the Silver Jubilee. We hope the generous public will continue their hearty support and make the projected scheme an accomplished fact ere long. All contributions to be sent to the *Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.*

**R. K. Mission Sevashrama,
Kankhal**

The report for the year 1928 shows a good record of service done to suffering people of the locality and especially to pilgrims and *Sādhus*. The number of persons who obtained relief during the year came to 18,273 of whom 791 and 17,482 were indoor and outdoor patients respectively. Besides giving medical aid 114 patients were also supplied with diet and necessary clothing. The Sevashrama has been conducting a free elementary night school having 34 boys of the local depressed classes on the rolls. For teaching the vernaculars the Sevashrama has engaged a paid teacher. There is also a Library in the Sevashrama for the benefit of the workers and the students of the place.

The present needs of the Ashrama are:— (1) Workers' Quarters, (2) Guest House or *Dharamsālā*, (3) Rest House for Friends and Relatives of Pilgrim-patients, (4) Permanent Endowment Fund, (5) General Maintenance, and (6) A Temple for Worship. We are glad to inform the public that a few kind-hearted ladies and gentlemen have donated something for the above-mentioned items. Still there is much to be done. At present there is a great national awakening in the country. We hope the generous public will come forward with their liberal support to enable the institution to cope with the increasing demands on its service. All contributions, however small, towards any of the departments of the Sevashrama as stated above, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by *Hon. Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P.O., Shaharanpur Dt., U.P.*



SRI RAMAKRISHNA