

# THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA OR AWAKENED INDIA



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## News and Notes.

**New fields for work :—**Swami Vivekānanda is not returning to India next winter as was expected. He is going to Switzerland and will not be here before next autumn.

**Celebration of Buddha's Birthday :—**On the 26th of May last was celebrated the anniversary of Buddha's birthday at Calcutta. We are glad to notice that for the first time in the history of modern Buddhism several hundreds of Hindus joined in the movement and voluntarily paid homage to the nodding memory of the great Aryan Sage.

Babu Narendranath Sen who presided on the occasion made the following remarks in the course of the speech.

"But who was Buddha? Was he not a Hindu of Hindus, and has he not shed everlasting lustre on the Hindu name and race? Dissociate yourselves from the Great Master if you will; but the loss will be yours only. To-day the whole world claims Buddha; to-day the whole world turns to India with reverence, as to the universal, sacred land, for the sake of the Blessed one, who brought Salvation to every human soul without difference or distinction. What! shall we whom He raised to almost dizzy height in the past, and maintained us at that height for centuries together, shall we deny Him, the Master, whose name and works have conjured back the world once more at our feet? The thought is not to be endured. Gautama Buddha was born a Hindu, lived a Hindu, and died a Hindu. He preached Hinduism while he lived, that transcendental Hinduism which his contemporaries had seemingly forgotten, and faint glimmerings of which we of the present generation are just beginning to obtain. Buddha never intended to create any schism. He enjoined as much reverence for the *Dharma* as for the Brahmins. He was only hostile to superstition, to *avidya* or ignorance, to meaningless worship and ritual. As from India, the land of Hindus, he sent forth missionaries, not to conquer by force or fraud, but to spread the spiritual truth, as he felt and taught to his beloved disciples, in time half the human race came to be permeated with those transcendental doctrines of higher Hinduism, of *Karma* and re-incarnation, which are the solace and refuge to-day of Hindus and Buddhists alike. And that word, Buddhist, it is a comparatively modern and a clumsy invention and but for its constant use in recent years, we should not see that unreasoning hostility which has marred the harmony between the followers of Sakya Muni and Sri Sankarāchārya. Let us then, go back to the day when the blessed Tathāgata was born as Bhagavān Vishnu's ninth incarnation, surely it was a day of the deepest meaning and mystery for all mankind. The mystery has been partly raised, and the meaning partly explained. The full revelation has yet to come. But that time will be put off, indeed, indefinitely, if we, Hindus and Buddhists, brothers in spirit, and in the divine teaching common to us both, continue to be divided, at the instance of bad and selfish men. Let us to-day, on the anniversary of Lord Buddha's Birthday, unite once more for the glory of our ancient country, unite in the truths which the *Rishis* and

*Munis*—and Buddha not the least among them—taught; taught not merely for the advancement of the Hindu race, but for the progress and salvation of all mankind. And so we shall have the Divine blessing, a blessing that shall descend from man down to the lowest sentient formation in the Divine Economy of the Universe.

The *Indian Mirror* referring to the same movement says :—

"It is a most gratifying fact that this festival, the first of its kind, should have been held in the metropolis of India. If the celebration of Buddha's birthday anniversary is kept up, it will prove, we are sure, the means of cementing of friendly and even brotherly ties between Hindus and Buddhists. For the future elevation of India, we can not think of any matter of greater importance than an union between these two people. Rightly understood, there exists no essential difference between Hinduism and Buddhism. We believe, that, in course of time, the doctrines taught by Sri Sankarāchārya, will come to be accepted as the religion of the whole world. And as we have said, there is no essential difference between Sankarāchārya's doctrines and those promulgated by Gautama Buddha. We all know that Swami Vivekānanda has been in recent years labouring in America and in England to establish this great fact, and we have no doubt that he will succeed in his efforts. It must not be forgotten that the Hindu population of India is comparatively much smaller than the number of professing Buddhists, in the world. The Buddhists number five hundred millions souls, and form nearly a half of the human race. If the Hindus could succeed in forming a close intimacy with half the human race, a great thing will have been achieved in this age, much greater, indeed than in Buddha's life time, for he did not live to see the complete success of his work."

**Vedic Schools :—**There are at present in Triplicane, Madras, a number of Vedic schools, the most prominent of which are two—one in the *Atankāra Mantapa* of Sree Parthasarathi Swami's temple and the other in the house of a well-known High Court Vakeel. A number of people, most of them graduates, undergraduates and officials gather together punctually at 4-30 a. m. to learn by rote under qualified teachers particular portions of the Vedas; and the interest they take is really praiseworthy. The rhythm of the Vedas has a unique sublimity about it which nothing can equal, and the associations it brings to mind are little less than divine. One engaged in Vedic recitation feels a peculiar glow of sacredness in his heart and an elevating kinship, however remote, with the *rishis* of old. The institution at the temple owes its existence to the untiring zeal and disinterested labours of one Mr. M. C. Narasimhacharyar, a School Master, who may be seen, every day at about 4 a. m. going through the streets and waking the gentlemen students for their morning lesson with the help of a *Jatra* (a pair of small cymbals). Those who wish to know what the *Nishkāmya Karma Yoga* of the Gita is, need only study him for a few days. No wonder that he is a real power for good in Triplicane and may God grant a long life to him and to the institution which he so maternally rears up.

Thousands of these Vedic Schools should spring up in the various cities of India.



# Prabuddha Bhārata

OR

## AWAKENED INDIA.

ब्रह्मविदामोतिपरम्.

"He who knows the Supreme attains the highest."—*Tait. Upa. II. 1. 1.*

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### Modern Civilisation and the Vedānta.

A certain country gentleman living in one of the remote, out-of-the-way villages of the South, once happened to pay a visit to Madras and there, in a bad hour, purchased a time-piece and took it home. His old grandmother, aged 90 winters, had never heard of such a thing before, and therefore, from the very first viewed it with suspicion, which its constant tick-tick did not very much tend to set at rest. A few days after the introduction of this novelty, a child died in the house and the old woman got exceedingly angry with the time-piece, for she attributed the misfortune to it. If anybody fell ill in the house, it was on account of that wicked 'tick-ticking' time-piece; if any sorrowful news was heard, it was on account of that wicked 'tick-ticking' time-piece. She worried her grandson, day and night, to remove it out of the house or give it away to some enemy, but he unfortunately liked it as much as she feared it, and would not part with it. The result was that on a certain dark night, the blind old woman broke open her grandson's room, took out the time-piece and striking it several times, threw it into the house of her neighbour, an enemy, who was only too glad to find it there, the next morning. Such was the strength of her superstition.

Superstitions, however, do not seem peculiar to age or sex, and a new superstition is now getting into vogue, that just as the time-piece in the story killed the child and brought misfortunes into the family, the study of the Vedānta and the spreading of Vedāntic ideas would destroy all civilisation and material advancement and render life not worth living. The Vedānta, however, is incapable of any such crime; it has too strong a faith in the providential government of the world, to think that anything there, be it science, arts, industry or

religion came into it by mistake. Its only aim is to better, as far as it can, the individual and the society.

To enter into the subject, there are two important faculties in man, *viz.*, the heart and the intellect. Each of these, the Vedānta says, must be developed but not the one at the expense of the other. They are placed together that each may help and guide the other, like a pair of horses drawing a carriage. The business of the heart is to feel and to love, but it often makes mistakes; then reason comes to its help and corrects it. For example, the old man in his death-bed weeps for the children born and yet unborn he is leaving behind, but reason tells him, that he is trusting in broken reeds; that children, friends, relatives, wealth and lands follow him not beyond his grave, and that he has to make his journey all alone. Similarly, it is the business of reason to discriminate, to argue and to judge, and left to itself, it also makes mistakes, which the heart corrects. "Stay", says the alchemist to his weeping wife, in Balzac's novel, "stay, I have decomposed tears, tears contain a little phosphate of lime, some chloride of soda, some mucus and some water." To him weeping meant only that much. This is reason left to itself, and here the heart says "Learned idiot, look behind, it is the heart that weeps." So then, the heart and the intellect are capable of correcting each other, and they can, not only correct, but also develop each other.

The perfect man is a beautiful combination of the head and the heart, and he has no quarrel with either, for, he knows the place and sphere of each. Individuals make up the Society and, roughly speaking, it is their heart-portion that reveals itself in religion and the head-portion that takes shape as civilisation. As in the individual the heart and the head mutually correct and develop each other, so in society also, religion and material advancement, faith and science, ought to be the

\* A name suggested by Swāmi Vivekānanda which, while it means Awakened India, also indicates the close relationship that exists between Hinduism and Buddhism.



companion and guide of each other. It will be a mistake to cry down civilisation and hold up blind irrational religion, as the be-all and end-all of existence ; and it will be equally absurd to extol the latter and cry down the former. The end of existence is not blind irrational religion, nor is it barren intellectual science ; it is the harmonious blending of the head and the heart, of love and light, of faith and knowledge ; it is religion culminating in philosophy, and science developed into wisdom. Perfect knowledge is all love ; perfect love is all knowledge.

The Vedântin, therefore, has no quarrel with science and civilisation, any more than he has with faith and religion. What he says is, that science should get spiritualised and religion get rationalised, and that each should know its place, and that there should be no conflict between the two, any more than between the eyes and ears of a man. They should mutually help each other and develop each other. This happy union has, however, seldom been arrived at. Many an ancient civilisation has fallen down, owing to its one-sided development—as often happens in the individual. How many examples do we see of men developing into fanatics, just because reason does not come in time to aid the emotion and lead it onward, and how many, of men, who are intellectual giants, but are incapable of love or sympathy. Similarly, with regard to Society, we see great political empires falling down, side by side with spiritual movements, and the same history that records the downfall of Egyptian, Alexandrian, Grecian and Roman civilisations, mournfully records the extinction of Paganism, the collapse of the Papal Empire, the cessation of religious epidemics, like that of the holy dance of the middle ages, the failure of the Franciscan reform and the futility of Protestantism and a multitude of other movements. The secret of the failure in both cases is that the head and the heart of the society did not properly complement each other in time, as was required.

The great modern civilisation is not more infallible than the ancient ones, for it is even more materialistic than its predecessors. It glories over its fancied conquest of nature, is proud of its few real victories, and has a little too much of self-assertion. It forgets too often, that it has not even pierced through the outer veil of Nature, and that Nature has been blessed like Draupadi, the excellent wife of the Pândavas, with an inexhaustible number of vestures, one beneath another and more wonderful. To disrobe her is an impossible affair. The deeper you go the more dazzled you become ; sheath after sheath might be plucked away but sheath after sheath yet remains. Modern civilisation is somewhat too conceited to think of this, and it must become a failure, unless it listens to the cry of the unsatisfied heart which fortunately is making itself heard. Luckily for the modern world and perhaps for the first

time in modern human history, ' the still small voice, of the heart is heard just at the right hour and there is a prospect,—nay, a near probability—of the intellect and the heart meeting together and aiding and developing each other. Science is getting gradually spiritualised and religion is beginning to be established on rational scientific basis ; the old and prolonged conflict between them is slowly dying away ; they are now mutually correcting and developing each other, and out of their union may possibly spring up the ideal society of the Vedânta.

To leave the future to itself and return to the point, the Vedânta has no quarrel with science or civilisation. It says " Indulge as much as you can in the revelries of science, conquer worlds, build empires, ' rift ' the earth, flash the lightnings, roll the waters, weigh the sun, ' nay, even make new planets and launch them into space, but always remember, that these are not the end of existence, but that the heart must be satisfied as well as the intellect. The voice of the heart should be listened to, and the instincts of love, mercy, charity and religion should not be disregarded." The danger in modern civilisation is, that man has a tendency to externalise himself more and more and to fancy, that eating, drinking and going after creature-comforts are the sole aim of life. He creates for himself artificial wants and unnatural hunger, and sickens himself with unhealthy selfishness or pestilential discontent. As Swâmi Vivekânanda when addressing an American audience said. " It is one of the evils of your Western civilisation, that you are after intellectual education alone and there is no safeguard with it. There is one mistake made ; you give this education but you take no care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish and that will be your destruction."

That modern civilisation is lacking in some of the noble elements of humanity has been pointed out by many of the leading writers of the age :—

" Your average Englishman," says Carlyle, " does not greatly care whether there be a God or not, provided the price of stock does not fall. If you want to awaken his real beliefs, you must descend into his stomach ; purse, and the adjacent regions."

" The ruling goddess of England," mournfully observes Ruskin, " may well be described as the ' Goddess of Getting on ' or ' Britannia of the market. ' It is long since you built a great cathedral, but your railroad mounds are vaster than the walls of Babylon, your railroad stations vaster than the temple of Ephesus and innumerable ; your chimneys are more mighty and costly than cathedral spires ; your harbour piers, your warehouses, your exchanges all these are built to your great ' Goddess of Getting on. ' She formed and will continue to form your whole nature as long as you worship her."

Swâmi Vivekânanda says in his usual vigorous style " Intellect has been cultured, result—hundreds of sciences have been discovered, and their effect has been



that the few have made slaves of the many—that is all the good that has been done. Artificial wants have been created; and every poor man, whether he has money or not, desires to have those wants satisfied and when he cannot, he struggles and dies in the struggle. This is the result. Through the intellect is not the way to solve the problem of misery, but through the heart. If all this vast amount of effort had been spent in making men purer, gentler, more forbearing, this world would have a thousand-fold more happiness than it has to-day."

The following lines from Tennyson aptly describe the effects of modern civilisation.

"Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point,

Slowly comes a hungry people, as lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly dying fire,

"Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers and I linger on the shore,

And the individual withers, and the world is more and more;

Yes knowledge comes but wisdom lingers. There was an emperor whose name was Mahabali. He had conquered the whole world, all the Devas, Asuras and men, and yet was not satisfied in his heart. He asked his minister, if there were no more kingdoms to conquer and was told, that there was one other kingdom and that was his own self. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul" said the Blessed Lord Jesus. And this conquest of the self is the most difficult thing. It requires a perfect harmony between the head and the heart, perfect knowledge and universal love. "Oh Lord! that art all knowledge, light and bliss and that dwellest in my heart, it is easier to tame the wild elephant and make it obey our bidding, to bind the mouth of the tiger and the bear, to ride on the back of the lord of beasts—the lion, to play with the poisonous cobra, to convert the different metals into gold and live thereby, to roam in the world unseen, to make the gods our slaves, to enjoy eternal youth, to pass into another body, to walk on water, to stand on fire and develop powers incomparable—all these easier far than to subdue the mind and remain in blissful rest," sang a great Tamil sage.

It is this conquest of the mind, this realisation of the great Self or God—the little man losing himself in universal love, and wisdom, and becoming himself the Lord of the universe, the Brahman who is greater than the universe, the Great One, the Infinite, who is concealed within all beings according to their bodies, the only pervader of the universe,—which is the highest ideal of humanity, the noblest and the truest civilisation. The education of the heart, the cultivation of love, and the total annihilation of selfishness, are the necessary means

to the attainment of this high and blissful civilisation, and without the cultivation of the heart, without the help of rational religion completing itself in philosophy, without knowledge or science developing into wisdom through the sacred and saving influence of the heart, all the railways in the world, all the manufactories and steam ships that have been built or are to be built, can never make man a trifle better in himself than he is.

The attitude of the Vedānta towards modern civilization is exactly the same as that towards marriage. Those to whom marriage is a necessity let them marry by all means; but the object should not be sensual enjoyment, but the increase of good and the propagation of the race (this is the meaning of the mantra pronounced in the Hindu marriage ceremony). Marriage must be looked upon simply as a preparation for a higher life, in order that real renunciation might become possible. Some do not feel marriage a necessity, and they need not marry. Renunciation, i.e., mental renunciation, is the common ideal for both of them. Similarly, to those that feel curious to know about the outer world, the Vedānta says 'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay,' for, to such, the modern civilisation is an invaluable help as it destroys *Tamas*, (laziness and ignorance) and readily makes them the heirs of ages. Some, however, are free from the above curiosity and are all the more eager to know themselves. The ideal for both is the same, the knowledge of the Self or wisdom. Our lower civilisation is but a preparation for the higher. Besides, just as it is the same for the sage, whether he is with his family or alone, married or unmarried, it is the same for him, whether he is in the midst of society or alone. He might live in the forest like Suka or rule kingdoms like Janaka. The latter fought battles, improved commerce, agriculture and industry and is reported to have been one of the justest kings of the world, and withal one of the greatest of Indian Vedāntists.

To conclude, modern civilisation is rather one-sided, but has in it the possibilities of growing perfect. Its chief defects are its present materialistic tendency of regarding the enjoyment of creature-comforts of life as an end in itself, and the want of a proper ideal. This civilisation is simply a preparation for the higher and the truer one and the aim of the Vedānta is, not to destroy, but to improve and elevate it, by correcting its tendency and furnishing it with an ideal.

Hitherto, however, we have been speaking of civilisation, purely from the stand-point of man. It will be equally interesting to consider, absolutely, what the progress of the world means—a subject which we shall reserve for a future occasion.

"Always cultivate the heart, for through the heart the Lord speaketh but through the intellect, you yourself speak."  
Swāmi Vivekananda.



## What is Duty?

(An abstract of a Lecture delivered in America.)

BY

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

It is necessary to know what work is, and with that comes, naturally, the question, What is Duty? If I have to do some thing, I must first know my duty and that I can do it. The idea of duty again, is so different in different nations. The Mahomedan says, what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says, what is in his book, the Vedas, is his duty and the Christian says what is in his Bible is his duty. So we find that there must be varied ideas of duty differing according to different states in life, different periods and different nations. The term "duty," like every other universal abstract term, is impossible to define; we can only get an idea of it by describing the surroundings and by knowing its actions and its results. To make an objective definition of duty would be entirely impossible; there is no such thing as objective duty. Yet there is duty from the subjective side; any action that makes us go godward is a good action and is our duty; and any action that makes us go downward is an evil action. There is only one idea which is universal for all mankind, of any age or sect or country, and that has been summed up in the Sanskrit aphorism:—"Do not injure any being; non-injuring any being is virtue; injuring any being is vice."

One point we ought to remember is, that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes, and never wish to judge the customs of other races or other peoples by our own standard. "I am not the standard of the universe." This is the great lesson to learn. "I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me." Therefore we see that environments will change our duties, and doing in the best way, that duty which is ours at a certain time, is the best thing we can do in this world.

A certain young Sanyāsi went to a forest and there meditated and worshipped and practised Yoga for a long time. After twelve years of hard work and practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some dry leaves fell upon his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, and they made him very angry. He said:—"What! You dare throw those dry leaves upon my head!" and as he looked upon them with anger, a flash of fire burst from his head—the Yogi's power—and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad; he was almost overjoyed at this development of power; he could burn, at a glance, the crow and the crane. After a time he had to go into the town to beg his bread. He came and stood at a door and said:—"Mother, give me food." A voice came from inside the house:—"Wait a little, my son." The young man thought:—"You wretched woman, dare you make me wait! You do not know my power yet." While he was thinking thus, the voice came again:—"Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane." He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last a woman came and he fell at her feet and said:—"Mother, how did you know that?" She said:—"My boy, I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a common, every-day woman, but I made you wait because my husband is ill, and I was nursing him, and that was my duty. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. As a daughter, when I was unmarried, I did my duty; and now, when I am married, I still do my duty; that is all the Yoga I practise and by doing my duty I have become ill-mined; thus, I could read your thoughts and what you had done in the forest. But if you want to know something higher than this go to such and such a town and to the market, and there you will find a butcher and he will tell you something that you will be very glad to learn." The Sanyāsi thought:—"Why go to that town and to a butcher." (Butchers are the lowest class in our country; they are Chandālas; they are not touched because they are butchers; they do also the duty of scavengers, and so forth).

But after what he had seen, his mind was opened a little. So he went, and when he came near the city he found the market, and there saw, at a distance, a big, fat butcher slushing away at animals, with big knives, fighting and bargaining with different people. The young man said, "Lord, help me, is this the man from whom I am going to learn? He is the incarnation of a demon, if he is any thing." In the meantime this man looked up and said, "Swāmi, did that lady send you here? Take a seat until I have done my business." The Sanyāsi thought, "What comes to me here?" but he took a seat and the man went on, and after he had finished all his selling and buying, took his money and said to the Sanyāsi, "Come here, sir; come to my home."

So they went there and the butcher gave him a seat and said, "Wait there." Then he went into the house and there were his father and mother. He washed them and fed them and did all he could to please them, and then came and took a seat before the Sanyāsi and said, "Now, sir, you are come here to see me; what can I do for you?" Then this great Sanyāsi asked him a few questions about soul and God and this butcher gave him a lecture which is a very celebrated book in India, the "Vyāda Gita." It is one of the highest flights in the Vedānta, the highest flight of metaphysics. You have heard of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna's sermon. When you have finished that you should read the "Vyāda Gita." It is the extreme of Vedānta philosophy. When the butcher had finished, the Sanyāsi was astonished. He said, "Why are you in that body, with such knowledge as yours? why are you in a butcher's body, and doing such filthy, ugly work?" "My son," replied the Chandāla, "No duty is ugly, and no duty is impure. My birth, circumstances and environments were there. In my boyhood I learned the trade; I am unattached, and I try to do my duty well. I try to do my duty as a householder, and I try to do all I can to make my father and mother happy. I neither know your Yoga, nor have become a Sanyāsi; never went out of the world, nor into a forest, but all this has come to me through doing my duty in my position."

Let us do that duty which is ours by birth, and when we have done that, do the duty which is ours by our position. Each man is placed in some position in life, and must do the duties of that position first. There is one great danger in human nature, that man never looks at himself. He thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position, and when he has done that, higher duty will come to him.

The only way to rise is by doing the duty that is in our hands now, and making ourselves stronger and going higher, until we reach the highest state. Nor is duty to be slighted. A man who does the lower work is not, therefore, a lower man than he who does the higher work; a man should not be judged by the nature of his duties but by the manner in which he does them. His manner of doing them and power to do them is the test of a man. A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, nice pair of shoes in the shortest time is a better man, according to his works, than a professor who talks nonsense every day of his life.

Later on we will find, that even the idea of duty will have to be changed, and that the greatest work is only done where there is the least motive urging us from behind. Yet it is work through duty, that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship—nay, higher, work will stand alone for its own sake. But that is the ideal, and the way lies through duty. We shall find the philosophy behind all duties, either in the form of ethics or love, is the same as that in every other Yoga—attenuating the lower self, so that the real self may shine; to circumscribe the frittering away of energies on the lower planes of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher planes. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which, duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of Society has thus been developed, consciously or unconsciously, as the land of actions, the field of experience, where, by limiting the desires of selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.



There is a sage in India, a great Yogi, one of the most wonderful men I have seen in my life. He is a peculiar man; he will not teach any one; if you ask him a question he will not answer. It is too much for him to take the position of a teacher; he will not take it. If you ask a question, and if you wait for some days, in the course of conversation, he will bring the subject out himself, and wonderful light he will throw on it. He told me once the secret of work, and what he said was, "Let the end and the means be joined into one, and that is the secret of work." When you are doing work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, and the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being. Thus, in the story the butcher and the woman did their duty with cheerfulness, and whole-heartedness, and willingness, and the result was that they became illuminated, clearly showing that the right performance of the duties of any station, and being unattached, lead to the highest.

## Seekers after God.

### I. NANDA, THE PARIAH SAINT.

(Continued from page 8).

As soon as Nanda awoke from his holy trance, he prostrated himself before the brahmin crowd, that had gathered about him and began with his friends to go round the village once again. It so happened, that, while thus going round, a certain brahmin Pandit was reciting before a large audience Chidambarampurānam (the story of Chidambaram)\* from the pail of one of the cornermost houses of the brahmin quarters. As Nanda passed along, he heard the Brahmin say, 'Chidambaram is the holiest place in all the world; he that once visits the temple there, be he a Chandāla (outcaste), crosses once and for ever the ocean of births and deaths'; and then followed an eloquent description of the temple and the inner meaning of its grand symbolism.

Indeed in point of tradition, Chidambaram is one of the richest cities in the world. What Palestine was for the Christians, what Mecca is to the Muhammedans, what Srerangam is to the Vaishnavites, (the worshippers of Vishnu) that, Chidambaram is to the Sivite portion of the Hindu community. It is one of the five great places of worship in Southern India, in each of which, God is represented as one of the five elements. There the representation is as Akāś (ether), the first of the five elements. The idea of worshipping the elements as God is essentially Vedic, and is a great help in the finding out and practical recognition of the divinity in the universe—which latter, when examined, is seen to be nothing but a physico-chemical compound of these elements. In a higher sense, the Akāś worshipped at Chidambaram is not the ether of the scientists, but the spaceless, timeless, unconditioned sphere of the Self. The very name Chidambaram means the Akāś of wisdom, and the temple there, is called the *Kōil*—the temple *par excellence*. In the centre of that temple, there is a gold-tiled mantapam called the *chit-sala*—the hall of wisdom, in which is to be seen first the image of Natarāja, and then what is known as the *Ra-hasya* (the secret)—representing of course the secret of all secrets, the characterless Nirvāṇ of the Self. Of all the anthropomorphic representations of the deity yet known to us, that as Natarāja is one of the very best, and the image at Chidambaram, which is the prototype of all

similar images elsewhere, is certainly one of the most inspiring figures that I have known. Even considered as purely a work of art, there are few images more faultless, more lifelike and more charming. That soft curly hair tufted like that of a dikshitar (a priest of that temple), the long prominent nose, those eyes so full of life and expression, that face in which dignity, bliss and mercy speak out and dance, the natural bend of the arms and their ornaments, that beautiful attitude of the dancer, seeing which one fancies that the figure is really dancing, and lastly, that raised foot (*kunjidapāda*) so eminently inspiring, are before me as I write, and when to the artistic appreciation of the image is joined a full understanding of its idea, its inner poetry—that from the noise of the *damaruka* (a little drum) held in one of the right hands, innumerable worlds are represented as rushing forth, into life as sparks from fire, as bubbles from a spring—*Sabda Nistham Jagat* the world sprang out of, and stands by sound or vibration; that the other right hand expressive of the idea 'be it so', represents the power which maintains those worlds under a great unerring and faultless law; that the fire in one of the left hands, represents the mighty and mysterious power of destruction, which makes the stars, mountains and oceans 'the perfume and suppliance of minute'; that the firmly planted right leg indicates the power of the mystery, that refuses to clear up, the thick manifold veil of illusive panorama which hides the truth from us for ages together; and that lastly, the raised foot symbolises the grace of God, which shelters and saves those that seek it, from the eternal, infinite, and terribly deceiving drama of creation, existence and destruction—it is no wonder, that men like Appar, Mānicker, Pattanathār and Thāyumānavar (these are some of the great Sivite saints of the Tamil land) forgot in that Presence the petty commercial prose of our daily life, and broke forth in the highest, the most philosophical, and the most impassioned poetry, that the Tamil language has known. The idea of ecstatic dance symbolised in the beautiful image of Natarāja—the great unseen manager of the drama of the world ~~has~~ been the most popular one with the non-Vaishnavite poets and philosophers of the South. To them, wherever an atom moves, and the world means constant motion, there, Natarāja dances. In the play of the child, the might of women, the war of nations, the rolling of the stars, in earthquakes, conflagrations and deluges, in the water drop as much as in the cataract, Natarāja is dancing—eternally and blissfully dancing. To the Vedāntin, whom nothing less than the highest will satisfy, the conception of Natarāja means the all-pervading Ātman, through whose power, all the world presents the vision of life and activity, and the dance signifies the ecstatic condition of the soul, which has triumphed over the terrible illusion of the world and the inner enemies of anger, lust, etc.,\* and it is under the inspiration of this great philosophical conception, that the venerable sage Thāyumānavar has poured forth most of his sublime Upanishad-like utterances. One particular feature in the story of Chidambaram is, that Patanjali and Vyāṅgapāda both attained to the Presence of Natarāja—the one by his Yoga, the other by his Bhakti—a grand recognition of the truth that both Bhakti and Yoga lead, each in its own way, to the same goal. To express, even more strongly, this most important of truths—that all religions and religious methods are only different paths for approaching God—in the same temple and within a few yards of Natarāja's shrine, there is that of Śree Govindu Rāja Perumal; and Chidambaram is one of the

\* In the South Arcot District, Madras Presidency.

\* For farther explanation see page 22. Ed.



most important place of pilgrimage for the Vaishnavites also.

Nanda paused and heard the whole story of Chidambaram from the eloquent lips of the brahmin reciter. It acted on him like magic. The words, Chidambaram and Natarāja, obtained a strange mastery over him. He became eager to visit Chidambaram, which was not very far off, that very night, and was with great difficulty dissuaded from his object by his companions. 'The temple at Chidambaram would be closed', they said, 'before you reach it and besides, you are a slave to your brahmin master, you should not forget your position so easily. We have already stayed away too long and it will be dangerous to do so longer.' A lesser man in that situation might have been provoked to reply, 'Is that brahmin greater than God? I care not for him. I shall have my own way,' but Nanda meekly replied, 'Yes, you are right. It has pleased God to place me in the situation of a bondsman. He knows what is good for me, infinitely better than I do. To resign myself to His will, is even a higher worship than visit his temple. I shall fall at the feet of my brahmin master, please him in all honest ways and I am sure, he will sooner or later allow me to go to Chidambaram.' So saying, he returned home with his companions, but not before he had dug out with their assistance a tank, still pointed out as his, for the use of the people at Tirupunkoor. The feat was regarded as wonderful, and the idea of a few pariahs joining together and creating a tank, was an altogether novel one, so much so, that popular tradition attributes the work to God Ganeśa, who did it in order to please his father Śiva's devotee. The truth is, love works wonders and Nanda's love was of a very high order; it was not like that of some people who go into the temple with plenty of offerings to God—coconuts, plantain fruits, etc., but would not give a pie to the beggar at the temple gate. In Nanda's eyes all men were God's Children and to serve them, was itself a kind of worship, higher even than supplying temple-drums with leather or making offerings to God. After digging and completing the tank he and his companions returned home.

(To be continued.)

## The Glory of Devotion.

Once upon a time, while the Pāndavas were in exile, the sage Duryōdhan came to king Duryōdhan's court. The king courteously welcomed him and gave him a sumptuous feast: and so greatly pleased was the sage with the welcome and the dinner, that he offered to grant his royal host any boon he might ask. The wicked king Duryōdhan's one main desire at all times was, to do all the mischief in his power to the Pāndavas. He had contrived to drive them away into the forest in exile, and yet was not satisfied, as he learnt that they were leading a very happy life, even in the forest, doing great deeds and conversing with great rishis. All this very much roused his envy, and now, that a new opportunity presented itself for doing them harm, he addressed his guest and said 'O great sage, the great king Yudhishtira is the eldest and the best of our race; he is now living in the forest with his brothers. Do thou, therefore, once become the guest of that illustrious one, even as thou hast been mine. Do thou go unto them with all thy disciples and that, at a time when that beautiful and excellent lady, the celebrated princess of Pān-

chāla, after having regaled with food the Brahmins, her husband and herself, may lie down to rest.' In asking for this boon, Duryōdhan's motive was, that Duryōdhan and his numerous disciples will be too heavy a burden on the Pāndavas, especially if they go at a late hour and being unable to feed them, the latter will be cursed by the wrathful rishi. The boon was granted and accordingly the rishi and his ten thousand disciples repaired to the forest and presented themselves before the Pāndavas at a late hour. Yudhishtira, suspecting nothing, advanced with his brothers towards the sage, gave him and his disciples a fit and hearty welcome and said 'Return quick, O adorable sage, after performing thy daily ablutions and observances.' And that sage, not knowing, how the king would be able to provide a feast for him and his disciples, proceeded with the latter to a neighbouring river, to perform their ablutions. Meanwhile, the excellent princess Draupadi, devoted to her husbands, was in great anxiety about the food to be provided for the rishis. And, when after much anxious thought, she came to the conclusion, that means there were none for providing a dinner, she inwardly prayed to Krishna, the protector of the humble. 'Krishna,' she said, 'O, Krishna of mighty arms, O son of Devaki, whose power is inexhaustible, O, Vāsudeva, O Lord of the universe, who drivest away the difficulties of those that bow down to Thee, Thou art the soul, the creator, and the destroyer of the universe! Thou, O Lord art inexhaustible and the saviour of the afflicted! Thou art the preserver of the universe and of all created beings. Thou art the highest of the high, and the spring of all our mental perceptions. O supreme and infinite Being, O giver of all good, be thou the refuge of the helpless! I seek Thy protection! O God, Thou art ever kindly disposed towards those that take refuge in Thee! Do thou cherish me with Thy kindness, Thou art the supreme light and essence of the Universe. They call thee the Supreme germ and the depositary of all treasures! Under Thy protection, O lord of the gods, all evils lose their terror. Thou didst protect me before, on several occasions, do thou extricate me now from this difficulty!'

The great and sovereign God and Lord of the earth, of mysterious movements, the Lord Keśava, thus adored by Draupadi, and perceiving her difficulty, instantly appeared before her. Beholding Vāsudeva, Draupadi bowed down to him in great joy and informed him of the untimely arrival of the rishis. But Krishna said unto her 'I am very much afflicted with hunger, do thou give me some food without delay from the Akshaya-pātra\* given by the sun and then we may talk of those things. Hearing this Draupadi got greatly perplexed, for she had no food to give him and said 'That vessel remains full, till I finish my meals, but as I have already taken my meal to-day there is no food in it now? Then the lotus-eyed and adorable Krishna said unto Draupadi 'This is no time for jest, go thou quickly, bring the vessel and show it to me. I am very much distressed with hunger.' 'There is nothing in the vessel Krishna,' said Draupadi, 'I shall cook a meal for thee in no time. Do thou wait a few seconds. I am very sorry that—'. 'I cannot wait, interrupted Krishna. 'I am extremely hungry. Bring thou that vessel, let me see if there is nothing in it.' 'I assure thee the vessel is empty: there is nothing in it' said Draupadi bringing the vessel which Krishna quickly snatched from her hand and looking into it he said 'Do thou look here! there is a particle of rice and vegetable; thou

\* A vessel which never gets empty and can feed any number of people.



wantedest to deceive me!" "Certainly not" exclaimed Draupadi. "It is I that cleaned the vessel and kept it in the usual place. I cannot really say how that little bit of rice came there." "No matter if thou canst not say" said Krishna, "my hunger will be satisfied all the same. This little bit of rice from this vessel is more than enough for me. May this please God Hari, the soul of the Universe and may that God, who partaketh at sacrifices, be satiated with this!" and so saying he swallowed that little bit. "I suspect that thou art at some new trick" said Draupadi. "Thy hunger must have been a very wonderful one to be appeased by half a grain of rice." "This is how you all mistake me" replied Krishna. "No matter if thou dost not believe me, thou wert talking to me of some rishis come for dinner. Where are they?" "They are at the river performing their ablutions. I do not know how to provide for them" said Draupadi.

Krishna—"Let them come. Send for them."

Draupadi—"And if they come, what shall we do? I have nothing to feed them with."

Krishna—"We shall chide them for having come at an untimely hour, tell them to wait till to-morrow and teach them to be more careful about their dinners and suppers in future."

"That is hospitality itself" remarked Draupadi.

"Learning is more valuable than eating" said Krishna, "and so let them, at least by fasting to-day, learn to be more careful in future, as for teaching them that lesson, leave that to me" so saying he called Bhismasena, and said "Do thou go and speedily invite the rishis to dinner."

Meanwhile, those rishis while bathing and performing their ablutions, suddenly felt their stomachs becoming full. Indeed they became so full, as to render even breathing difficult. The surprise of the rishis knew no bounds, and they stared at one another being hardly able to speak, and turning towards their common guru Duryodhana, with great effect said "Having bade the king to have our meals ready, we have come here for bathing. But how, O holy sage, can we eat anything now, for our stomachs seem full to the throat—we do not know how. The repast has been uselessly prepared for us. What is the best thing to be done now?" Duryodhana replied "Never before in my life was my belly so full; I do not know by what strange cause this has happened. If Yudhishtira comes and invites us, as he certainly will, in a short time what shall we do? By wasting his repast, we will be doing a great harm to that royal sage. The Pāndavas may get angry with us; I know the royal sage Yudhishtira to be possessed of great ascetic power. Ye Brahmins, I am afraid of men that are devoted to Hari! The high-souled Pāndavas are all religious men, learned, warlike, diligent in ascetic austerities and religious observances, devoted to Vāsudeva, and always observant of rules of good conduct. If provoked, they can consume us with their wrath, as fire with a bale of cotton. Therefore, ye disciples, shall we all run away quickly without seeing them?"

"O adorable sage" they replied "we can hardly rise up: how then could we run? We find it difficult even to talk, nay even to breathe. We are 'full to the neck'; save us O master, from this misery." Duryodhana did not know what to do, he regretted that he foolishly gave power to Duryodhana to use him for his own wicked purposes; he feared, that his punishment had already begun and was heightened, that further harm might come. While he was in this miserable plight, there appeared Bhismasena and said to him "Come O sage, with all thy disciples, for my brothers, Draupadi and Krishna are waiting to receive thee. At the very mention of Krishna's name, poor

Duryodhana trembled from head to foot; his fears gathered new strength and he inwardly felt greatly ashamed to face the Pāndavas, but there was no helping it. So, he addressed his disciples and said "Rise ye forth, exert all your might and let us walk on to the abode of the Pāndavas, for in sooth, there is no helping it." It was rather a comic sight to see these 'pot-bellied' Brahmins 'swollen up to the neck' (as the Indian saying goes) toiling onward with feet too weak to bear the weight on them, breathing like mountain-snakes and sweating in rivulets all over the body. Bhismasena looked at their condition and learnt from them what the matter was. With no small difficulty, they reached the abode of the Pāndavas and were duly welcomed by Yudhishtira and the rest. Krishna showed special attention to Duryodhana, which only made him more miserable than before. The face of the poor rishi was covered with shame, he bowed to Krishna and with his head hung down or rather, his eyes hung down, as he could not bend his head, said "Lord, thou shouldst forgive me for my foolishness. I hastily placed myself under the power of a wicked man but my only consolation was, that no harm could come to the Pāndavas, who have always been piously devoted to thee; and then he related in detail the whole story, and how he and his disciples had already been punished. "I see O cunning Krishna, artful, farseeing, mysterious and omnipotent Krishna" exclaimed Draupadi "I now see why thou wert so hungry for half a grain of rice. By your taking in that little bit of rice, all these rishis have got satisfied. What example there could be, more plain than this, to show, that thou art the soul of the Universe, the Paramātmā, in whom all men and things live, move and have their being, that thou art in all the world as oil in the sesame-seed, as brightness in the diamond, as smell in the flower. All praise and glory to thee, that art our refuge, our master, our friend, our relative, our guide, and our teacher. No fear can ever come to the followers of Hari, no danger to the worshippers of the lotus-eyed Krishna."

Needless to add that the rishis were forgiven and all rejoiced at the event and sang the glory of Krishna.

(Adapted from the Mahābhārata.)

## Pitfalls in the Vedānta.

### I. RENUNCIATION.

The path to salvation is, says the Upanishad, like walking on a sword; it is dangerous and difficult and requires great caution. It is like dancing on a rope hung over a vast abyss. One false step might be fatal. Hence arises the necessity for a guru. A guru can, however, do little, unless the student moves freely and frequently with him and gets his doubts cleared then and there.

A certain king went into a forest, and there finding a sage, fell at his feet, and asked of him the way to salvation. "Absolute renunciation" (sannyāsa) replied the sage. The king asked no further questions, but thanked him and departed; and as soon as he reached his kingdom, he abdicated his throne, took the vow of a sannyāsi, retired into the forest, built there an *Asrama*, and began to lead a lonely life. A few years passed in this way but he had not become any the wiser. So he again went to the guru and asked of him the way to salvation and again the guru replied "sannyāsa." The king thanked him and departed thinking, "True I have left wife, children, kingdom, wealth and power but I keep here an *Asrama* and live like a householder"; so



he set fire to the hut and began to live in the open air. His body soon lost all vestige of royalty, became pale and emaciated; the sun and rain told heavily on his health, till at last he became a skeleton and unable even to move about. But the bliss of wisdom had not yet come to him. So he again went to his guru and asked of him the way to salvation and again the guru said '*sarva saṅga parityāgam.*' The poor king got miserably confounded. He long thought of what else he had to give up. He said 'I have no house, no money, no vessels not even a piece of cloth to wear.' It struck him that he should now give up the only thing he had and that was his body. Some stories came to his mind of God having presented Himself to his devotees at the critical moment of giving up their bodies. At once, he rose up and prepared to hurl himself down from a rock. A few minutes more and all would have been over. Just then, his guru presented himself before him and asked him what he was about. The quondam king replied 'I am only carrying out your behest and am sure as soon as this body also is given up, I shall be saved.' 'Good God!' exclaimed the sage 'what a curious meaning you have put upon my words. If this body goes, another immediately comes and where then, is your salvation? I admire your perseverance, but alas! how misdirected! True renunciation is not the giving up of your body, but being free from attachment of any kind in your mind. You have touch with external things, only through your mind and losing that mental attachment is the only true renunciation. You heard a great truth from me, but had not the patience to ask me what exactly it meant; you may live in the world but not be of it—this is the great secret of renunciation.'

Renunciation is often misunderstood. Though few people carry the error to such an extreme as in the story many mistake it to be external; and how many homes have been rendered desolate by the mistake! Physical renunciation is really easier than mental and is therefore more common.

A RECLUSE.

## Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gītā.

(Continued from page 11).

ONCE Krishna, with a view to point out the contrast between Dharmaputra and Duryodhana, sent the former on the mission of finding out a handful of wicked men, and the latter on that of discovering a few really good and faultless men. Duryodhana conducted his search with great zeal, for he had been assured that a sacrifice jointly performed by them would totally destroy the Pāṇḍavas; but not one good man was available to him in all the world. Dharmaputra's search was equally vain, for, not even robbers, murderers, parricides and matricides, were in his opinion wicked, but only ignorant at the worst. To this royal sage endowed with angel's eyes, everything appeared celestial. Certainly Krishna could not have obtained in all the world a worthier disciple than this incarnation of purity, virtue and goodness. And then, there was Sahadeva, who, by his practical asceticism and firm morality, richly deserved a divine teacher like Krishna. His inmost conviction, as he sincerely expressed it on the occasion, when the gooseberry fruit incantiously plucked by Arjuna had to rejoin the tree, was, that truth was his mother, wisdom his father, virtue his brother, mercy his friend, humility his wife and patience his child. It would therefore appear, that Sahadeva or

Dharmaputra better deserved the privilege of instruction from Krishna than the warlike and worldly-minded Arjuna. The latter had practised none of the austerities they had trained themselves in, and had more even than Bhimasena, gone after worldly pleasures. He was indeed a polished gentleman (gentlemen were possible even in those days) with a sweet disposition, pleasant manners, refined tastes and genteel accomplishments. He could evidently sing and dance, and ladies (and a decent lot they were) fell madly in love with him. He was certainly the most beautiful of the five brothers, and with his proud whiskers, broad chest, long extended arms, well proportioned limbs and royal mien, and with the Gāṇḍivā (his bow) in his hand was really a standard of male beauty and physical perfection and a veritable 'glass of fashion and mould of frame' in his days. The story goes, that Īśvara himself longed to see his beautiful back, and hence arose the idyllic Himalayan scene immortally wedded to Bharavi's verse. The celestial damsel Urvāsi conceived a mad passion for him, while he was unsuspectingly sleeping in one of Indra's groves; but, to be a gentleman, to be loved by celestial damsels, to be able to sing and dance, however valuable they may be in the harem, are not counted among the qualifications for Vedāntic discipleship.

But we find that somehow, from the very beginning, Krishna was more attached to Arjuna and had more to do with him than with his brothers. The first important occasion on which we hear of Krishna in connection with the Pāṇḍavas, was that of Draupadi's Swayamvara, and it was under his prompting, that Arjuna competed for the hand of the royal maiden. He contrived to marry him his sister, undertook to drive his chariot for him, and on the eve of the Bhārata war, publicly declared 'Thou art mine and I am thine, while all that is mine is thine also. O Pārtha, thou art from me, and I am from thee, O bull of the Bhārata race! no one can understand the difference between us.' This attachment however was not a matter of mere accident or personal predilection and Bhīshma once had occasion to say that Arjuna and Krishna were Nara and Nārāyaṇa, and were repeatedly born when destructive wars were necessary, that they existed only for the destruction of the Asuras and the establishment of virtue. They came into the world of men with a special purpose, and in the great war through which the first part of that special purpose was accomplished, Arjuna was the instrument and Krishna the inspirer. The second, the more positive and the more enduring part—the re-crowning of dethroned virtue was accomplished by the deliverance of the Gītā, and in that likewise, Arjuna and Krishna complemented each other. Krishna was born for the whole human race and in the universal and divinely beautiful idyll of his life and work, there is no chapter greater, more sacred, and more fraught with consequences to humanity than that of the Gītā. For teaching that Gītā he could not have found a more convenient disciple than Arjuna who was, as it were, the universal type of man as such, Nara, man not fallen into beastliness nor evolved into divinity. By teaching him he taught it to the whole mass of humanity and that is how it is so truly universal and provides for every one from the humblest beginner in religion to the loftiest philosopher. A discourse with advanced men like Dharmaputra or Sahadeva would not have started with the rudiments of philosophy, and therefore would not be equally universal.

Arjuna then was chosen not because he was an *adhikāri* (one qualified), but because he was not. To go into the question a little more fully, there are four qualifications required of every seeker after wisdom.



The first is discrimination of the real from the non-real, the permanent from the perishing, of God from the world. The second is indifference to the fruits of one's action here and hereafter. Attachment is the fetter that binds us. Few of us do a thing for itself; we are always going after results and making ourselves slaves to them. This slavery must be got over before wisdom can be realised. The next requisite is a group of six qualities—*Sama*, *Dama*, *Uparati*, *Titiksha*, *Samādhi* and *Saulbha*. Of these *Sama* is 'not allowing the mind to externalise.' *Dama* is 'checking its internal activity.' *Titiksha* is 'non-resistance, forbearance.' *Uparati* is 'not thinking of the senses or sense objects.' *Samādhi* is the serene concentration of the mind and *Saulbha* is faith in the truth of religion and in the teacher. The last qualification is an intense desire for emancipation or Moksha.

Had Arjuna all these qualifications, when Krishna taught him? The answer is he was lacking even in the first—a clear and strong discrimination of the real from the unreal, for he was immoderately grieved at the prospect of his friends and relatives being slain in the battle, and then, what is even more significant, he prayed Krishna not for final salvation, (Moksha) but for the solution of his immediate problem. With any other companion than Krishna, that solution would have rested on comparatively low and common considerations, such as worldly prosperity, social justice, Arjuna's valor, Veeraswargam (the heaven of the brave that die in battle) and would it all probability have involved few serious transcendental issues. Arjuna might have been appeased and the battle might have been fought all the same, but the battle-field of Kurukshetra would not mean to us anything more than the plains of Thanoswar. Indeed Arjuna's grief was essentially mundane, there were in it the fear of sin and hell, the fear of misery even if success be theirs, and that of social disorder and family extinction, on which point all the Pāndavas, Bhīma included, were very sensitive, but it disclosed no longing for Moksha without which, in the field of Vedānta, no one is counted as an *adhikāri* for *gnāna* (wisdom). It was Krishna's genius that gave to this purely mundane grief of Arjuna an unequalled philosophical dignity, and raised his narrow and individual problem into a universal, world-wide one; and all praise and glory to that great ideal teacher, who took hold of a favorable opportunity in his friend's life, to give forth to the world his great message of consolation, peace and love, and all honor to the few memorable tears which Arjuna shed on the battle-field. Never before or after, was human grief assuaged with such heavenly balm, and never before or after, was it assuaged in such a permanent way. Of all men, Arjuna had the privilege of such heavenly consolation, not because he was eminently good and virtuous like Yudhishtira, nor because he was wise and contented like Sahadeva, but because he was Nara—the typical man, the standard representative of the world of men; the man, by teaching whom all humanity was taught and not merely the advanced or philosophic portion of it.

All that has hitherto been said is however superficial, and to the philosopher, who by a sort of divine prerogative, perceives the inner truth of things, will appear as a child's prattle. The question has to be asked and answered, who was Krishna and who was Arjuna? 'I am the lord of the Universe without birth or beginning (X. 3 &c.)' says Krishna, and he is as Sree Sāntānanda Śrīnivasatī remarked, the best authority on himself. He is 'The great Atman residing in the hearts of all beings, the cause of beginning, existence and end of the universe (X. 18)' the Innermost Unity, the Supreme underlying Essence in the

sun, moon, stars, men, animals, in short in all the world—not one that came and went or was born and died, but the Eternal Teacher, the Lord of the world, the Paramātmā. And Arjuna is Nara, the typical human mind, the refined mechanism in man which reasons and distinguishes, which knows what is good and evil, which discriminates right from wrong, and which can, when properly guided, reflect back the great Self. 'Nature sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal and wakes in men' and this waking is the result of the refined *upādhi* (vehicle) of the Self in man—the human mind. Krishna is particularly attached to Arjuna and is constantly with him, i.e., the Self or Atman is always with the mind and it is through its presence and power that the mind moves. Krishna marries his sister to him, induces him to compete for Draupadi's hand, helps him in his hunt after pleasure, lends him into the battle-field, drives his chariot and enables him to win in the end. All this has now a new meaning. By and through the Atman the mind is brought into contact with Nature, and gathers experience. The Atman is with the mind in weal and woe, indeed causes both weal and woe, leads it into the struggle of life, guides it through the struggle and finally enables it, by killing both its good and bad *tritis* (Duryodhana and his brothers as well as the allies of the Pāndavas), to gain the victory. Krishna is the constant companion, friend, guide and teacher of Arjuna. The Self never leaves the mind, is with it in weal and woe. Krishna is the Paramātmā and Arjuna the human mind in which the knowledge and conquest of Nature is completed, and consequently the Self is reflected back on itself—in other words knows itself, and the Gītā is nothing but the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna in the sad and awful hour of battle, i.e., between the Atman and the mind when the latter is repelled by the outer world, is vexed and grieved and forced to seek refuge in truth—in the Atman. But we are entering into the second of the two questions we proposed to ourselves at the outset.

(To be continued.)

## 'The Living are few; the Dead are many.'

KRISHNA Gautami had an only son, and he died. In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking them for medicine, and the people said: "She has lost her senses. The boy is dead."

At length Krishna Gautami met a man, who replied to her request; "I cannot give you medicine for your child, but know a physician who can."

And the girl said: "Pray tell me, Sir; Who is it?" And the man replied: "Go to Sākhyamuni, the Buddha."

Krishna Gautami repaired to Buddha and cried "Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy."

Buddha answered: "I want a handful of mustard seed." And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, Buddha added: "The mustard seed must be taken from a house, where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend."

Poor Krishna Gautami now went from house to house, and the people pitied her and said: "Here is mustard seed; take it!" But when she asked, "Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?" They answered her: "Alas! the living are few, but the dead



are many. Do not remind us of our deepest grief." And there was no house but some beloved one had died in it.

Krishna Gautami became weary and hopeless, and sat down at the way side, watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were extinguished again. At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. And she considered the fate of men, that their lives flicker up and are extinguished. And she thought to herself: "How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all; yet in this valley of desolation, there is a path that leads him, who has surrendered all selfishness to immortality."

Putting away the selfishness of her affection for her child, Krishna Gautami had the dead body buried in the forest. Returning to Buddha, she took refuge in him and found comfort in the dharma, which is the balm that will soothe all the pains of our troubled hearts.

Buddha said:—

The life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and combined with pain. For, there is not any means by which, those that have been born can avoid dying; after reaching old age there is death; of such a nature are living beings.

As ripe fruits are early in danger of falling, so mortals when born are always in danger of death.

As all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken, so is life of mortals.

Both young and adults, both those who are foolish and those who are wise, all fall into the power of death; all are subject to death.

Of those, who, overcome by death, depart from life, a father cannot save his son, nor relatives their relations.

Mark! while relatives are looking on, lamenting deeply, one by one of the mortals is carried off, like an ox that is led to the slaughter.

So the world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore, the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world.

Not from weeping nor from grieving will any one obtain peace of mind; on the contrary his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation.

He who seeks peace, should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint and grief.

He who has drawn out the arrow and has become composed, will obtain peace of mind; he who has overcome all sorrow will become free from sorrow, and be blessed.

(From 'The Gospel of Buddha'.)

### Selections.

Evil swells the debts to pay  
Good delivers and acquits  
Shun evil, follow good; hold sway  
Over thyself. This is the way.

How charming is divine philosophy!  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Love virtue, she alone is free,  
She can teach you how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime;  
Or if virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

## Symbology.

### NATARAJA.

It is proposed to write from time to time, in the pages of this journal, short notes on the various symbols of the Hindu Religion, like, Sri Rungnatha, Nataraja, Dukshināmurti, and so on. The inner meaning of these symbols is often very grand and poetic and to enter into and understand it, will certainly be a privilege to those who are striving to realise for themselves the truths of philosophy: for these symbols were devised simply as helps to the imagination and many men have employed them with advantage. The meanings of these symbols differ of course according to the standpoint adopted and the highest, viz., the Vedantic will be the one from which we shall study them. The symbol Nataraja is taken in this number as there is a reference to it in another article.



Nataraja means the Lord of the Stage. The idea is that the world is a stage, a puppet-show which presents the vision of life and activity through the power of the all-pervading Atman or God, the unseen Lord of the Stage. "Who will not dance when thou causeth him to dance, and who will not sing when thou causeth him to sing," says a poet-philosopher. But for the inner Atman all the world would be mere Jada (inert or dead).

The Atman or Self being the real teacher of the human mind, Nataraja is meant to represent the Teacher or Guru. There are two kinds of Guru—the apparent and the real, the seen and the unseen. The former is the teacher who instructs the disciple and takes him along the path—this is what we usually mean by the word guru; but all teaching really comes from inside, not merely in the sense that the outward apparent teacher is but the instrument employed by Atman or God, but also in the sense that all growth is from within. The plant, for example, grows from within; the manure, water, &c., are simply helps to its growth. In the same way, the mind has to grow only from within, assimilating of course the teachings from outside. Nataraja then is the real guru concretely represented. One of the functions of the guru and perhaps the most important is to be what he teaches—to



enforce his teachings by example. It is this idea that is the keynote to the Natarāja symbol.

The little drum in one of the right hands is meant to express the idea that God or Guru holds the cause of all the world, i.e., sound (*śabda* *Nishtam Jagat* = through sound the world stands) in his hand, in other words, all the world is in his hand, to be folded or unfolded at his own will. To the Guāni or wise man the world exists only if he chooses and not otherwise. The deer on one side is the mind, because the latter leaps and jumps from one thing to another as wildly as that animal. The Ātman is far beyond the reach of the deer-like mind; and so the deer in the picture is placed near the legs. Natarāja wears the skin of a tiger which he himself slew. Ahankāra or egoism is that tiger; it is beastly and ferocious and fiercely fights when attacked, but it has to be killed and Natarāja the Guru alone can kill it. On his head he wears the Ganges, i.e., Chit Sakti or wisdom which is most cool and refreshing, and the moon which represents the ethereal light and blissfulness of the Ātman. One foot is planted over and crushes the giant Mayalaka, i.e., Mūla Māya, the endless illusion which is the cause of birth and death, while the other foot is raised upward and represents the 'turiya' state, which is beyond and above the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, and leaves behind, the mind, Māya and the world. The second right hand representing the idea of peace indicates the blessed calmness which is the glorious privilege of wisdom. In one of the left hands is held *Agni* (fire), i.e., the Guru brings in the *Jāti* of the Ātman itself to attest the truth of his teaching. The idea is that the truth of the Guru's teaching can only be fully understood in practical realisation, in experience (*Anubhava*). The place of the dance, the theatre is *Tillavānam*, i.e., the body (of the individual as well as of the kosmos) spoken of as *vanam* or forest on account of the multitude of its components. The platform in that theatre is the cremation ground, i.e., the place where all passions and the names and forms that constitute the vision of the world have been burnt away—pure consciousness devoid of attachment to anything outside and devoid of illusion.

The above are some of the leading features of the Natarāja symbol. The Guru teaches that Māya—illusion—should be crushed down, that the world should become subject to us and not we to the world, that the deer-like mind should be left behind, and Ahankāra (egoism) be destroyed, and that man should ascend to the regions of pure, unconditioned consciousness free from passion and free from deception, and enjoy the calmness which is his birthright, the bliss, the light and the truth that form the Self. Viewed in the light of this inner meaning the image of Natarāja is no more a meaningless idol, a piece of stone or copper but a symbol of the highest teaching, an object that can inspire and elevate.

This Self is the bridge, the support of the whole universe, which, but for it will be nowhere.—*Chāndogyaopaniṣad*.

Temples and churches, pagodas and mosques in all lands, at all times bear testimony by their splendour and vastness to the metaphysical need of man.—*Schopenhauer*.

These are the three gates to hell and self-destruction:—desire, anger and greed: give up these three.—*Bhagavad Gītā*.

## True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastry.

By T. C. NATARAJAN.

### CHAPTER II.

(Continued from page 12.)

THE scene changes: you are now entering a humble, low-roofed and partly dilapidated house. But take care you do not knock your head against the doorway, it is so low. The door is open and the inside of the house is anything but inviting, nevertheless, you enter and as you leave behind the pails, and cross through an isthmus-like passage, you see the building opens out into a hall, which is at once the dining room and the parlour of the house. The hall or 'Sircar' as it is elegantly termed in Madras is, you find, very mean in appearance and too much at the mercy of the sun and the rain. You can find no furniture in it except one or two small planks to serve as seats. A few vessels are kept in a corner, and in another, there is a stone for grinding sandal, and adjacent to it there is an almirah containing the household gods; and, there are two rooms opening into the hall opposite to each other, one of which is the kitchen and the other contains a large number of pots arranged over one another in which rice and other things are kept. In the centre of the hall, there is a small group sitting and talking.

One of the group—a woman said 'When I told him that one should not get mad over empty titles and think too highly of oneself, he got exceedingly angry with me. We are seldom able to look beyond ourselves.'

'Very difficult, Seetha, very difficult' said another 'And this difficulty is universal. Once, Vyāsa was walking over the field of Kurukshetra, when he found a little worm crawling away as fast as it could at the sound of his feet, fearing that it might get crushed under them. The sage smiled and said to himself 'We regard that creature as worthless and despicable, but look at its anxiety to preserve its life! ah, what a wonder!' and then by virtue of his yogic powers, he found to his great surprise, that it was the eminent sage, Nārada, who by some sinful karma, had become the worm and, giving it the power of speech, he asked "O worshipful sage Nārada, how is it that, having got into this wretched worm life, you are so anxious to preserve it?" The worm replied, 'All praise be to you O Vyāsa; by a sinful act I was reduced to this condition, but this is the fatal illusion, that even in this worm life, I think sufficiently well of myself and have enough to do with my own pleasure and pains. Though mean and despicable in your eyes, I am not so to myself and that is why I am so anxious to preserve my life.' Thus, while even the worm thinks so highly of itself, what wonder, that we look so big in our own eyes. Indeed, from the atom to the star, every particle in the universe rings with this egoism and it is this, that makes what is called the world. If by some magic, this egoism is purged out of the world, the unconditioned, universal Self or God alone will remain. Few of us are able to look beyond ourselves, to rise above this foolish I.'

'Aha! how beautiful!' cried an enthusiastic girl who was one of the group. 'Is it not uncle, is it not that our loving our husbands, rearing up children, helping the poor are all means to get rid of this sense of I, this little narrow selfishness?'

But I must hasten to introduce the party to the reader; otherwise, according to the unwritten laws of etiquette, he might refuse to interest himself in what they say. Begging his pardon for the delay, I should say, that the person who first spoke is one already known to him. She was Seetha Lakshmi, wife of the great M. R. Ry. Dewan Bahadur Narayana Aiyar Avergal, C.I.E. The enthusiastic girl, that spoke last, was her daughter by name Rukmani. The one that spoke second was no other than Vasudeva Sastry the hero of our story, the gentleman, who was so respectfully referred to by the great Dewan Bahadur the previous night.

To describe him in detail, as is the fashion, he was a middle-aged man of fair complexion and well-proportioned limbs; his



face was the most remarkable thing about him. There was a calmness and a serenity in it, a gentleness, a sweetness and a luxuriant cheerfulness like that of a full blown lotus flower, which an ancient rishi might have envied; and in his large, beautiful eyes, there was an angelic expression of goodness, which by its silent and sweet magic could have soothed the anger of a Duryōdhan. The glory of these eyes, if I may say so, lay, not in occasional lightning-like flashes, but in their constant and continued revelation of the ocean of goodness, love and calmness, that dwelt within. Their expression never faded, time and place had no influence on that, and they were like the unfading *Karpaka* flowers of the *Deraloka*, and while seeing, they seemed to perceive not the external differentiated things, but by a sort of divine prerogative, the inner harmony that dwelt underneath. To look at them was like looking at milk, ever sweet and to be looked at by them—to fall within the charmed, sacred circle of their rays was a privilege which men and women alike envied. He seemed to depend for his happiness on nothing outside and he was never known to be excited either by pleasure or by pain and much less get angry. To try to provoke him was a favourite amusement among school boys. There was not the least amount of assertiveness or arrogance about him and all his motions spoke humility and love. He was a very poor man, all his income being the pittance he received from *Narāyana Iyer*, for making *pūja* in his house, but he was respected more than the richest man. He was the pet of all the children in the neighbourhood, they would crawl over him, dance on his shoulders, pull him by the hair, adorn him with a saddle and ride over him or furnish him with reins and drive him like a bull. Mothers, when they were busy or had to go out, would entrust their babies to him and he would put them to sleep or sing them songs, of one or two of which, the following is a rough translation.

'Say Krishna, Rama, Govinda  
You invite me and only me,  
Call Iśa, Sambu, Mahadeva  
You invite me and only me  
Of all the world I am the guard  
The Soul, the Lord, the Soul, the Lord.

The last lines of these songs would, in the original, read like an English note and excite the innocent mirth of the little children. Old *Kuppipatty* would never pass his house without calling him *Dharmarāja*. The boy Krishna would never go home, without first narrating to him all the news he had—how a white elephant was going to be brought to the temple, how he one day saw a white crow sleeping on his slate, how dogs never bark, when he is asleep, how it would never rain on a Saturday, how there was a big tiger in the backyard of his house, and many more edifying things of the kind. The pensioned *Tahsildar*—*Mr. Subrahmanya Aiyer* would fain favor him with all his leisure, but for the fact, that he talks *Vedānta* and *Vedānta* alone in one form or another and has no genius for gossip. *Viswanatha Aiyer*, the *Madura Munsiff*, who professed to know a great deal of *Vedānta*, would visit him at least once a day. Angi the sweeper-woman of the *Madura Sub-Judge's* house would say whenever she saw him "Where is the good of wealth? Wealth leads only to quarrel and heart-burning; look at our *Sastryar*, how happy he is in the midst of adversity!" School-master *Ramaswamy Aiyer*, who firmly believed that all the world was wicked, would say that poor *Vasu* was an exception, that he was dropped down here by mistake and that was why he was so poor. *Vakeel Sandra Iyer*, who spoke nothing but lies all day long, admitted that somehow he could not tell a lie to him. *Muthu Iyer*, the *Sub-Registrar*, who was a theosophist and had a long beard, would say that he was the best *Swāmyar* he had seen—the holiest man he knew. Be that as it may, he is now sufficiently introduced to the reader and it is left to the latter to decide, if he would care to cultivate a closer acquaintance with him.

To return to the story. As soon as *Vasudeva Sastry* heard *Rukmani's* question, he said 'you are perfectly right my child. We should drown our selfishness in love, but in helping the poor and doing such things we should never fall into the danger of priding ourselves on that account. We are simply

instruments not free agents. In a certain village there was once an old woman, who lived by preparing and selling cake. She would set about her business punctually at 4 A.M. every day. She had a cock which announced to her the break day as punctually, so much so that in course of time she gradually got into the belief that the day would not break unless her cock raised its trumpet voice. One day it so happened that the village boys offended her; she vowed vengeance and said, 'Very well, these little fellows do not know who I am, shall remove with my cock to the next village and see how the day could break here; let the fellows suffer in eternal night. These little fellows offend me!' She did as she vowed that very night, and the next day, when some men came to the second village from the first, she said to them 'you see if you had appeased me, all this would have been avoided. Poor men, I pity you; you have to suffer eternal night.' They asked what the matter was and she replied 'Why, I have brought my cock over here and so the day would not have broken in your place.' It is needless to add that the men had a hearty laugh at the idiotic woman's self-importance. A similar mistake we are all of us committing; we think that, but for us and such a thing would never happen, we die, but the world goes on all the same. We should warn ourselves against such mistakes.

'But' asked an elderly widow who sat by 'what is there in names and titles?' 'Why' said *Vasudeva* 'the whole world is nothing but name and form. We are all deceived with—'

Before he had finished, in rushed a woman, with a bag in hand roaring 'you be d—d. You have ventured to open the *Vedāntic* shop in my own house! What wonder that I am so poor and miserable and my family has been ruined! You *Rakshasis*, you d—ds, let *Vedānta* fall into your houses and let all of you become as miserable as I am. I do not know when the cursed *Vedānta* will enter your families and ruin you, and make you wander in the streets for bread. You come and open your shop in my house!'

(To be continued).

## Extracts.

All things are full of divinity, full of soul.—*Plato*.

So long as there is in the human heart one fibre to vibrate to the sound of what is true, pure and honest, so long as there are found, friends of truth to sacrifice their repose to science, friends of goodness to devote themselves to useful and holy works of mercy, woman-hearts to love whatever is worthy, beautiful and pure, artists to render it by sound and color and inspired accents—so long will God live in us.—*Renan*.

Everything that depends on Self is bliss, everything that depends on another is misery.—*Mann*.

One beam meets another in the dash of the great ocean and becomes immediately separated in the same manner, similar indeed is the meeting of a being with other beings.—*Mahābhārata*.

If thou considerest the dignity of the giver, no gift will seem to thee little, which is given by so great a God. Yet though he give punishment and stripes, it ought to be acceptable, for whatever he suffers to befall us, he always does it for our salvation.—*Thomas à Kempis*.

The highest wisdom of Greece was to know ourselves, the highest wisdom of India was to know our self.—*Max Müller*.

Nature sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal, wakes in the man.—*Schelling*.

The blind man trembleth with fear at every straw he cometh across; so do the ignorant at the little things that happen in life.—*Sree Ś'āntānanda Saraswati*.



## Max Muller—A Vedantist.

Swami Vivekānanda writing to the *Brahmavidin* about his visit to Professor Max Müller, says among other things:—

"What an extraordinary man is Prof. Max Müller! He was first induced to inquire about the power behind, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of the late Keshava Chandra Sen; and since then he has been an earnest student and admirer of the life and teachings of Sri Rāmakrishna. "Rāmakrishna is worshipped by thousands to-day Professor." I said. "To whom else shall worship be accorded, if not to such?" was the answer. The Professor was kindness itself; he asked Mr. Sturdy and myself to lunch with him, and showed us several colleges in Oxford and the Bodleian library. He also accompanied us to the Railway station; and all this he did because, as he said, "It is not every day one meets a disciple of Rāmakrishna Paramahansa." That was really a revelation to me. That nice little house in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silver-headed sage, with a face calm and benign, and a forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the helpmate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting interest, over-riding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India—the trees, the flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky—all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of Ancient India, the days of our *Brahmavidhā* and *Rājavidhā*, the days of the great *Vāṇashruti*, the days of Arundhati and Vasistha.

It was neither the Philologist nor the Scholar that I saw, but a soul that is everyday realising its oneness with the *Brahman*, a heart that in every moment expanding to reach oneness with the universal. Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry details, he has struck a well of life. Indeed his heart-beats have caught the rhythm of the *Upanishads*, "Know thyself and leave off all other talk."

Although a world-moving scholar and philosopher, his learning and philosophy have only led him higher and higher to the realization of the spirit: his lower knowledge has indeed helped him to reach the higher. This is real learning. Knowledge gives rise to humility. Of what use is knowledge if it does not show us the way to the highest?

And what love he bears towards India! I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland. An extraordinary, and, at the same time, intensely active mind, has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought fifty years or more, and watched the sharp interchange of light and shade in the interminable forest of Sanskrit literature with keen interest and heart-felt love, till they have all sunk into his whole soul and coloured his whole being.

Max Müller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has indeed caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedānta in the midst of all its settings of harmonies or discords. He has caught the one light that lightens up the sects and creeds of the world, the Vedānta, the one principle of which all religions are only applications. And what was Rāmakrishna Paramahansa? The practical demonstration of this sacred principle, the embodiment of India that is past.

The great vision of Swami Vivekānanda, one of the greatest of the Modern Saints.

and a foreshadowing of the India that is to be, the bearer of spiritual light unto nations! The jeweller alone can understand the worth of jewels; this is an old proverb. Is it a wonder that this western sage does study and appreciate every now and then the firmament of Indian thought, before even the Indians themselves realise its magnitude?

"When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light," I said. The face of the aged sage brightened up—there was almost a tear in his eye, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out—"I would not return then; you would have to cremate me there." Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart.

His life has been a blessing to the world; may it be many, many years more, before he changes the present plane of his existence."

## News and Notes.

(Continued)

An American Divine on Swami Vivekānanda:—The Rev. C. C. Everett, D.D., LL.D. of the Harvard University, in an introduction to an address on Vedānta Philosophy by Swami Vivekānanda published in America, speaks of the Swami and his works in the following terms:—

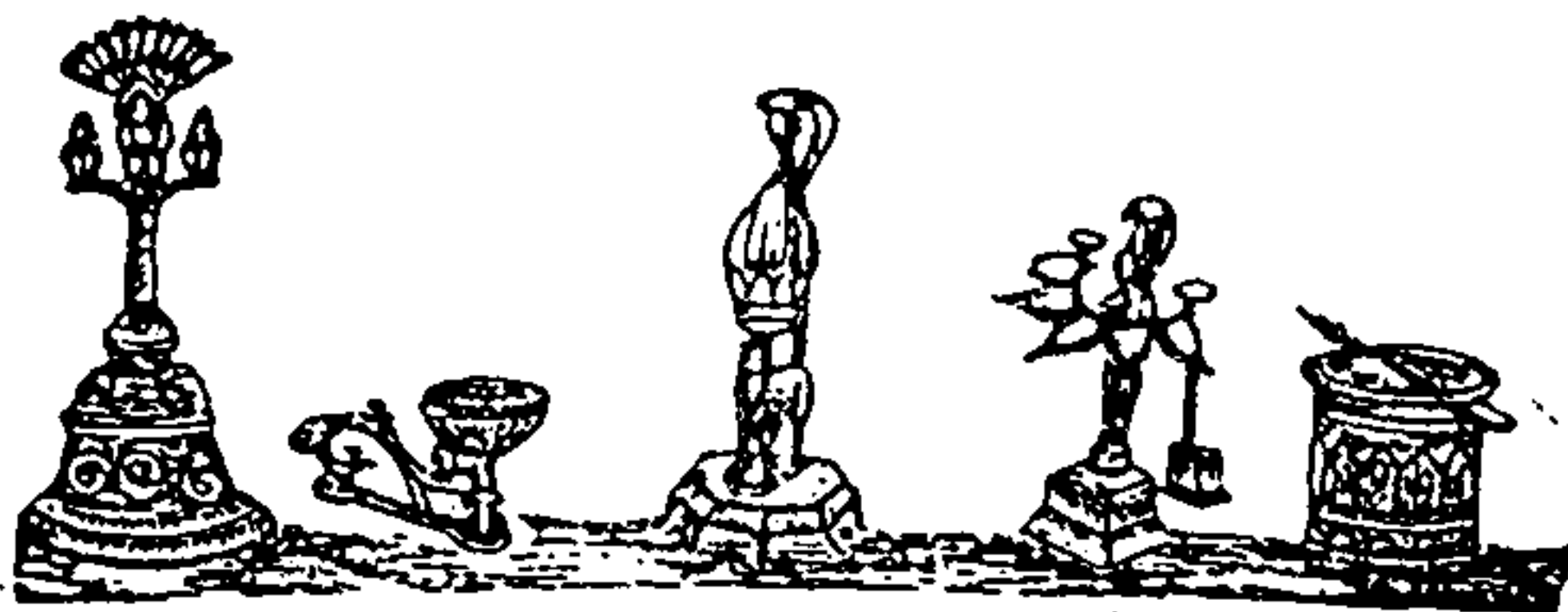
The Swami Vivekānanda was sent by his friends and co-religionists to present their belief at the Congress of Religions that was held in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago. Thus he did in a way to win general interest and admiration. Since then he has lectured on the same theme in different parts of our country. He has been in fact a missionary from India to America. Every where he has made warm personal friends; and his expositions of Hindu Philosophy have been listened to with delight. It is very pleasant to observe the larger interest with which his own people in India follow his course, and the joy that they take in his success. I have seen a pamphlet filled with speeches made at a large and influential meeting in Calcutta, which was called together to express enthusiastic approval of the manner in which he has fulfilled his mission; and satisfaction at this invasion of the West by oriental thought. This satisfaction is well grounded. We may not be so near to actual conversion as some of these speakers seem to believe; but Vivekānanda has created a high degree of interest in himself and his work. There are indeed few departments of study more attractive than the Hindu thought. It is a rare pleasure to see a form of belief that to most seems so far away and unreal as Vedānta system, represented by an actually living and extremely intelligent believer. This system is not to be regarded merely as a curiosity, as a speculative vagary. Hegel said that Spinozism is the necessary beginning of all philosophising. This can be said even more emphatically of the Vedānta system. We occidentals busy ourselves with the manifold. We can, however, have no understanding of the manifold, if we have no sense of the One in which the manifold exists. The reality of the One is the truth which the East may well teach us; and we owe a debt of gratitude to Vivekānanda that he has taught this lesson so effectively."

The Swami Saradananda on his way to New York:—The Swami who is fast becoming appreciated equally with Swami Vivekānanda, for his unselfish and kindly disposition, is to lecture before a women's Vegetarian Society in London on Vegetarianism and to sail to New York soon after.



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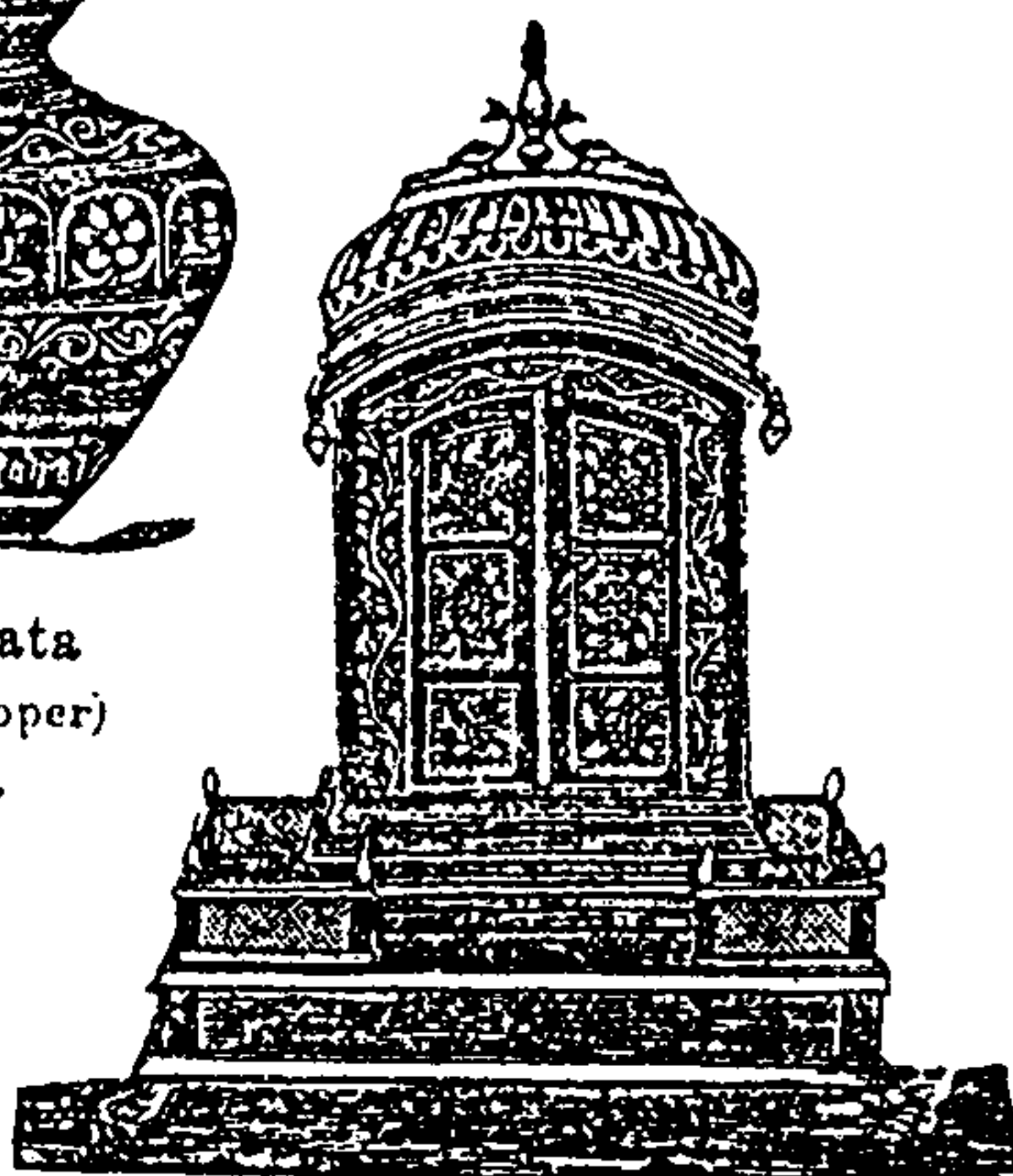
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