

# PRABODHA BHARATA

OR

## Awakened India

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

*Katha. Upa. I. iii. 4*

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### CONTENTS :

A Hymn to Sri Ramakrishna, <i>Eric Hammond</i> ...	...	...	149
Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission to the World : What Can It Teach Us, <i>Swami Virajananda</i> ...	...	...	150
Sadashiv : A Story, <i>X. Y. Z.</i> ...	...	...	158
In Memoriam : Swami Vivekananda ...	...	...	161
News and Notes ...	...	...	165
The Kankhal Sevashrama Report ...	...	...	ii
The Nrisimhaprasad Hariprasad Buch Metaphysics Prize ...	...	...	iii

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# Prabuddha Bharata

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## A HYMN TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

O Thou, who stayed awhile on earth  
And taught earth's sons where Freedom lay,  
Who showed the secret of New Birth,  
The glory of The Better Way ;  
To Thee, to-day, we reverently raise  
Our varied voices joined as one in praise.

Our tongues are many as our climes,  
Yet, with our hearts aflame with Thee,  
These tongues ring truly as the chimes  
Of joy-bells making melody ;  
Our voices vary, but our souls shall sing  
One song—Thy sacred story cherishing.

The loveliness of love was Thine,  
A love that failed not, for it grasped  
The mighty king in vesture fine,  
While to Thy heart the poor were clasped ;  
And thus the meanest of the sons of God  
Beside the greatest, fearless, equal, trod.

We praise Thee for that love. We fain  
On lowly knees would learn to tread  
Where Thy firm footsteps trod, and fain  
Through loss of self the Love that led  
Thy self-less soul through earth's vain show to where  
The Self abideth radiantly fair.

ERIC HAMMOND.

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

**T**HE subject of this paper is one who is not removed from us by long centuries with their unavoidably wild growth of mythology, story and tradition, one contradicting another, such as cluster round great personalities ; but one who is within the loving memory of many young men of to-day,—one who left this Mayavic mask of the body only sixteen years ago, one who lived in the fog end of the nineteenth century, yet took us back through the rolling vistas of time to the sacred atmosphere of the Rishi age when the first enlightened Seers sounded the trumpet of freedom :

“I have known that Great One radiant like the Sun, beyond darkness.” ( Svet. up. III. 8 ).

Sri Ramakrishna was a strange personality, having so many varied aspects of character that it might truly be said that he lived in one body the lives of many of the perfected ones that humanity has ever produced. He was the cord that threaded into a single garland all the highest spiritual ideals of the past and the present alike! He was himself the living embodiment of the words that fell from his lips, untouched by the taint of the present-day materialistic civilization, though living in it.

His was the spontaneous growth of a soul towards the highest and the blossoming forth of a spirit-flower, which drew the bees from all around. Ramakrishna

was nothing if not original. His life affords a unique study for those who aspire to truth, to victory over the senses, to the realization of God. And he who casts his life in Ramakrishna's mould will surely attain, like him, the success, the peace, the goal, which is blessedness. He was wonderful, even as a boy. Son of a Brahman who was intensely religious in the orthodox way, rigid in the observance of sacred rites, Ramakrishna's dauntless independence of character showed itself early, on the occasion of his investiture with the sacred thread, by his taking *Bhiksha* from the hands of a low-caste woman to whom he had promised this, notwithstanding all the remonstrances and threats of his father. Discrimination formed one of the strongest traits of his character. As a boy of seven years, sent to a village school for education, he brooded over the ultimate end of intellectual knowledge and could see nothing in it but a means of earning livelihood. Even so the vulture soars far above the sky but its whole attention is bent on finding some rotten carcass on the ground. *Once the conclusion is reached the matter is solved for good.* His school life ended but not to give place to idleness. He determined to gain the knowledge which destroys ignorance, the light which dispels darkness, that knowledge, by knowing which all else can be known, for as the Upani-



shad says, by knowing the clay all that is made of it is cognised. This spirit of discrimination, coupled with the resolute will not to turn back as long as the goal is not reached, formed the secret of his success all through life. He distinctly perceived by his acute analytical mind that the chief bar to God-vision was the heart's hidden clinging to the world. He now set his whole heart upon the conquest of this deadliest foe of man. He reduced the countless forms in which world-attachment shows itself into two, *viz.*, lust and gold, and vanquished them one after another by the mighty sword of discrimination. He sat down to discriminate, taking in one hand a lump of clay and in the other a silver coin. Addressing the mind he said, "This is silver and this is clay ; by the one you can build huge temples and palaces and feed hundreds of men and animals, ride in carriages drawn by horses and supply all the wants of the body ; by the other also you can make bricks and tiles and the beautiful shapes of statues and so on, but what is either of these for except the enjoyment of the senses ? Both being matter, they never take one beyond it. Being themselves finite they never lead one to the infinite. Why do you vainly hanker after such ? Let them both be the same to you." Having meditated upon this over and over again his mind was strongly impressed with the idea that both were the same ; and he ended by throwing both into the Ganges. But it should be remembered, that this was no mere intellectual achievement ; it was renunciation, true to the word and the spirit.

For, henceforward he could not even

touch any metal without having his fingers stiffened and paralysed. It may sound like black magic to the worldly-minded,—something of charlatanry, something imposed upon our credulity ; but it stood the test of a hundred trials. Some one put a coin under the mattress of his bed when he was away ; coming back he could not even touch the bed, which to him seemed a couch of thorns as long as the coin was not taken out. Some one put an *amla* fruit in his pocket without his knowledge and he could not with the stolen article walk through the right road to the gate, his feet taking him, why he did not know, amidst thorns and by dirty ways.

Hundreds of instances like these may be cited. The other great barrier that he saw in the path of spirituality was the idea of sex. This animal instinct must be done away with, or total shipwreck of life and soul is inevitable. He did not need to read the histories of nations, he did not read the fall of Antony or the siege of Troy, or even the Mahabharata or Ramayana, in order to be convinced of the downfall of many heroes and sages in the snare of sex. He saw it clearly and vividly by studying human nature. He resolved to enter into the heart of the question, and before his scrutinising discrimination the skin-deep glitter of body had to yield, and show itself as nothing but the worship of a cage of bones coated over only with flesh and expression.

Of all the human emotions of mutual relationship none is so pure and high, none so unselfish and ennobling, none so innocent and sweet, as the relation of a child to its mother. So there is but

one way of escape from carnal passion and that is to know woman as mother,—as the manifestation of Divine Motherhood, that Shakti or force which is both Vidya and Avidya—playing as the chaste and modest wife, but none the less also as the prostitute, though in a very different garb. This once realised, it became to him a fact, and he could not see even his own wife (for he was married in his boyhood) in any other light.

The great impostor that clings to man so fondly, and is nearest and dearest to his heart, that treacherous friend—Egoism,—which is the hardest of all to get rid of—springing up again and again like the Banian tree, however often it may be cut down, was the one he saw still left, eating and fattening itself, unawares, upon the dearly earned fruits of his devotion. “What is this idea of ‘me’ and ‘mine’?” he asked himself, “who is always boasting—I am the son of so-and-so, I do this, I do that, I am so very good and religious, who is there to compare to me, do they not know me, it is my house, my land, my wealth?—this pest of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ always harassing us, turning the mind inside out, and disturbing its equanimity and peace, causing untold trouble? It must be eradicated.”

He struggled and struggled but the idea would not go, indeed it seemed to stay, as if only to provoke him. He saw that this idea had its existence in ignorance only, and that it was only with the advent of Knowledge that the “me and mine” change places with “Thee and Thine.” Or it leaves its narrow cell and spreads itself into the universal I, the universal Self—there is then nothing but I, I am all in all. This is the “I” of knowledge—“the ripe I,” as he used

to say, in comparison with the unripe “I”—the “I” of ignorance. His mastery over the narrow self was so complete that he could not utter the first person singular or first person possessive singular when speaking of himself. He would always say “This body” instead of “My body,” “Mother wishes” instead of “I would,” “Do come here” instead of “Do come to me.” He always dealt a death blow at the ‘I’-idea whenever it reared its head. Once a rich disciple of his presented him with a valuable shawl, and put it himself around him. A few minutes after, what was his surprise to see Ramakrishna throw it away in the mire. Addressing himself at the same time he was saying, “Now you are rightly served, you are, you fool of an egoism?”

But the most prominent feature of his life, the one thing that we lack so much nowadays, but which was our distinctive national character in the old times—was his intense practicality in religion. Theorising would not do. The world had had enough of it. One might talk exceedingly well, deliver beautiful and stirring sermons and lectures, but of what avail would it all be if one failed miserably to live the life one preached? Who would listen to one and attach importance to one’s words if one could not show in his life a living example of what one said? Any amount of thinking and theorising is sure to fail in the long run; is sure to be superseded by another higher intellect; is sure to leave the man as weak as ever—a miserable wreck—before any great temptation and trial, if accompanied by no life of realisation. Religion—the power of the spirit that would tide over all those ills and ailments of the internal



world that the human soul is victim to—must be realised, must be sensed, as it were, or no peace, no cessation of misery, no escape from eternal slavery to nature, is possible. So intense was Ramakrishna's devotion that he would forget food and drink often, would not know what sleep was for months. So intense was his anxiety to see his Divine Mother face to face, talk with Her, be a child in Her arms, that he would become frantic at seeing the sun set on the horizon, day after day, in each of which he expected to be blessed with the Divine vision. With this intense fire burning in his heart, fanned by daily disappointments, he would roll on the ground, rubbing his face, shedding tears that would make the earth wet, with cries of "Mother, Mother, where are You, show Yourself to me, Your helpless child, but once." His heart-rending cries and lamentations would draw crowds of sympathetic men and women from the neighbourhood, who, thinking that his beloved mother had just died, would try in vain to soothe him. "A hurricane," as he used to say referring to those days, "passed over me sweeping away every thing before it." At last he was blest with the sight of his Mother, at which moments he would lose all outward consciousness in the overpowering ecstasy of Divine communion, when he would speak in broken words, whose meaning no one understood, laugh and dance, and cry, and shake, and be still and silent. His sacred thread he would lose every time it was put on, his cloth he would put under his arm or it would fall off unconsciously!

No wonder that many called him mad

beyond recovery. Many medicines were tried upon him, but his disease showed no signs of abatement. Ah! the ignorance of the human heart, what does it know of beyond its own limit! But one can only understand another if one be on the same plane oneself. As he used to say, seeing a God-intoxicated man lying in a ditch, a drunkard took him to be one in a worse plight than himself, through excessive drinking; a lunatic took him to be another like himself; a homeless, hungry beggar expressed pity for his condition more miserable than his own, and so on, until another God-intoxicated man coming that way knew what he really was.

Now comes the chapter of his life which is unique in the records of prophets and seers and God-men, as one which proved to demonstration the great truth that different faiths and religions are but so many paths to lead to the one Reality. He did not arrive at that conclusion by intellectual gymnastics or liberal thinking, but took by the hand one religion after another separately and in succession, became duly initiated into each of them and practised the formulas of each in its orthodox style, and finally reached the ultimate goal of each.

Totapuri, a great Vedantist Sannyasin, in course of his wanderings came to the temple garden at Dakkhineshwar near Calcutta, where Sri Ramakrishna lived and spent the greatest part of his life—and instructed him in the knowledge and practices necessary to the realisation of the Absolute Brahman, one without a second. What was his surprise to see his disciple reach the highest stage of Yoga—the *Samadhi* in the un-

conditioned Brahman—in three days only—a stage which had taken Totapuri himself 41 years of hard work in the Himalayas to arrive at! He went through many other Sadhans or religious practices, consisting of the idea of the five relationships with God connected with the various sects of Hinduism. Next came a Sannyasin lady of wonderful parts, versed in the scriptures, who initiated him into Tantric practices. It was she who was the first to dispel from the minds of men the false notion of Ramakrishna's madness and disease by quoting from the Shastras the characteristic marks of God-men, such as Chaitanya, Sri Krishna, and others, and showing point by point their agreement with Ramakrishna's case.

Having thus realised the ideals of the different sects of Hinduism, he next turned his attention to the other religions of the world. He practised the religion of the Prophet, being initiated by one who was secretly following it. Be it noted here that for the three days he practised it, he adhered strictly to Mohammedan customs and usages, subsisting on such unorthodox diet as onions. During that time he would look at no temple or Hindu god or goddess, while he believed that he was praying in a mosque amidst the Mullahs. One day while visiting an adjacent garden he saw a beautiful picture of Christ hanging on the wall. On being enlightened as to the personality of Christ, he saw an aura proceeding from the picture and entering into himself. Coming back he was full of the Christ-idea for three days. He saw himself within magnificent churches listening to the reading of the Bible, and sermons from the pulpit, until in vivid vision,

Jesus was before him in his full glory.

All these various practices occupied him full twelve years of arduous devotion and frequent communion, and Samadhi. Within this long period he had scarcely any idea of the body, knowing not what sleep was or when to eat or drink. Such a love, and not the daily dry routine of closing the eyes and sitting still for certain hours, ensures success in the spiritual life. All body-idea must go, attachment to persons, and the thousand and one objects of the senses must be given up, so that the self may be one-pointed towards the attainment of the ideal. Perfect self-sacrifice, no looking backwards and forwards, 'let the body go if it will, I will not stop till I reach the end of the path,' such iron will and perseverance, such intense yearning and concentration of purpose, can alone be blest with the attainment of perfection. There is no royal road to it.

It was this realisation of the highest truth through each and every path, though apparently as opposed to one another as the poles, that made him look upon all religions as true, leading to the same goal. Hence, no more dissensions about yours or my faith, no more narrowness or shutting off of sympathy from one another, for we are all fellow-travellers who may widely diverge now, in this plane of diversity, but will meet again in that one place, nay, will unite with an affinity as of one drop of water for another, in the great ocean of Reality. If this noble idea were comprehended and followed by the majority of mankind, how much narrow-minded sectarianism, unrest and useless waste of energy, bloodshed and destruction, could have



been saved, and the mind full of love and fellow-feeling, calm and undisturbed, could have made rapid progress in the path that leads to freedom. To sound the trumpet note of peace among the warring sects, by his own living example was the grandest mission of Sri Ramakrishna's life. All love for every one and not a word of abuse, ever broke forth from his lips. Members of all sects and denominations used to throng around him and would go back, each taking him to be the ideal of his own sect. Thus the Vaishnava would think him to be a perfect devotee of Sri Krishna, the Shakta would see in him a Siddha Purusha of Kali, the Advaitist would find in him a knower of the absolute and unconditioned Brahman, and so on. He would never destroy anyone's faith, but push one further in the direction that one was already going, instilling strength and helping by such advice as would be conducive to one's growth. This endeared him to all.

At a time when everyone is anxious to preach and teach, and no one to follow, the study of his life affords a great lesson to us all which we can with profit make our own. He hated the modern method of self-advertisement. Referring to it he used to say, "It is as if inviting a hundred persons to dinner while providing for one." "The flower, when it is full-blown, does not go to invite the bees, they come of themselves, drawn by its sweet fragrance. The true preacher does not go to look for audiences, and cry "O come and hear!" They flock of themselves around him and seek for his advice." This is true preaching, and it was fully exemplified in his own daily life. He was there in a lowly

corner, a man illiterate and uncultured, unassuming and humble, yet hundreds of distinguished scholars, men of vast erudition, and saints used to come and sit at his feet and learn. Yet all their adulation and worship urging on him Divine honours did not seem to work any change in his child-like character. He never posed himself as the teacher of men and yet he was one of the greatest of them. He never knew that those people came to him to be taught. If pressed by some one to teach, he would say like a child, "What do I know? I know only that my Mother is, and that I am Her child." If he would tell anything to anyone, he would say "My Mother says so." If anyone in his presence would call him teacher or guru he would, be vexed beyond measure and rebuke him, saying, "Who is whose Guru? The Lord is the Guru of all." He would make no distinction between the rich and the poor, a powerful or a famous personage and a weak and unknown man. He would not see whether one was Dvaitist or Advaitist, or Visistadvaitist or even nihilist, whether one was a worshipper of Vishnu, or Rama, or Kali or Christ, but he would only judge by the depth of sincerity of heart. He would see only whether one was *sincere*, no matter if one believed in anything or not, no matter if one was looked down upon and stamped by society as a sinner. No, he would not condemn or hate even a prostitute or a drunkard. Nor would he bid him or her to give up bad habits immediately, for he knew they could not, then and there, but he would ask them to come there now and then, so that by the influence of holy association, they might come round in time. He cared not a



straw for the opinion of others. Truth, plain truth he would say. He would point out his faults even to a powerful and famous man, whether the latter liked it or not, for he had no selfish motives. A sincere man, who is struggling with his weaknesses can never take offence if they are pointed out. It is only those that are deluded by egotism and pride who feel offended at this. The one thing he prized above all was sincerity. Be sincere, this is the one qualification of discipleship.

The preacher must be one who is fully devoid of the teacher-idea. It is pride and egotism that ruins. Another factor that he laid much stress upon was that the teacher, before attempting to preach, must receive a commission from the Lord. He must have full credentials behind him or his teaching will be a waste of voice with no abiding result. "A single policeman," he used to say, "can quell a riot with ease. Why? Only because he has the badge of authority from the government. So the teacher must have the badge of Divine authority and then he is irresistible. He is never in want of thoughts or arguments. His store of knowledge is inexhaustible, for he draws his inspiration from the infinite source of knowledge."

His relation with those who came to him was of the sweetest character. His all-embracing love for each and everybody was truly Divine. In his eyes every thing was full of life and consciousness. Sometimes he could not even pluck a flower, and felt hurt if he saw any one treading on the grass. His whole life was one grand sacrifice for the good of humanity. In the last

part of his life he had the terrible disease of cancer in the throat and his doctors strictly forbade him to talk, but he could not abide by their advice and made the case worse by talking to those who came to see him. Asked not to do so, he used to say, "What! Ought I to mind about the body when I would be glad to take a hundred bodies even living on sago-water, if I could help one soul out of this misery of the world?" He was a sacrifice to the cause of humanity; one who would willingly die a hundred deaths for just one soul, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the out-cast, for the down-trodden, for every one in this world.

He was a personification of humility. He taught this virtue daily to all those who came to him. No one can boast of having ever given him, before receiving from him, a salute. He would not even conform to the outward observances of the religious life. But he disapproved of doing away with all rites and ceremonies,—such as caste rules and image worship and the many other things which help a beginner—until the fire of the knowledge of Brahman did not blaze forth from within. "Cart loads even of the driest wood heaped on a fire which is just beginning to burn will tend to put it out, but in a huge conflagration even plantain trees, which are almost all water, will be burnt to ashes in no time. These rites and ceremonies will drop away by themselves when their time is come, like cocoanut leaves. Eating and drinking with any and every body without distinction, is no criterion of universal brotherhood, if there reign in the heart hatred,

egotism, pride and contempt." For himself, however, the sacred thread could not be put on ; it would fall off and be lost, everytime it was put round him. He could not hold water in the joined palms of his hands to offer it to the Pitris and gods—for his fingers would grow stiff and bend if he even tried to do it.

At a time when the tidal wave of occidental materialism washed the land with its destructive flood ; when the intoxication of western ideas was too great for young minds to see any truth in Hinduism ; when they were losing all faith in the religion of their forefathers and going out to borrow foreign ideas and invest it with them, there was a man born who showed by his life that every religion in itself contains not part, but the whole of truth, if one is only in earnest for its realisation and not set on mere 'leaf-counting.'

Sri Krishna voiced but the natural law of the action and reaction of forces in the universe, which history has demonstrated again and again, when he said in the Gita (IV. 7.):—

"Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, there is decline of spirituality and rise of unspirituality, then I body myself forth."

The manifestation of this marvellous power is not confined simply to the religious sphere alone, but shines out in every plane. In India religion is the life-centre of the nation, and that was in danger. So this tremendous power in the form of Sri Ramakrishna became manifest.

And what a reactionary force it was ! Who had ever dreamed that a poor illiterate man, born in a corner of an obscure village, would turn the life-tide

of many of the most brilliant men of our country who were imbued with ideas just the opposite of his ? What a marvellous expression of power in ways least expected, least thought of ! We cannot, as we are, by our very nature grasp at once the Impersonal ; we want spiritual ideals and grand spiritual examples before us, to give us strength and courage to follow them and persevere. Such a one, we have before us. Well may he be regarded as a manifestation of Divinity, but he did not come to add one more Deity to the many existing ones, to be put within a temple and worshipped, with flowers and ceremonies, but to be followed and studied, so that one may learn to act as he would act, in the same circumstances. If one can do one sixteenth, as he used to say, of what he said and did, that is enough. It is a long, long story, and it is impossible for me to attempt an exhaustive summary of his most marvellous life, in a paper like this. Each insignificant act or word of his if studied closely, would reveal volumes of teaching. For even such commonplace acts as eating and walking and talking, were marked by a peculiarity all his own,—something not of this world—something of sweet renunciation, something saturated with Divine love ; something of a beauty unspeakable, something taking us to a region of thought, where one, if one is a thinker, is destined to tread, losing all sense of personality. His life forms a most reliable guide-book to all travellers who have consecrated themselves to the attainment of the ultimate goal of perfection.

VIRAJANANDA.



## SADASHIV

### A STORY.

**S**ADASHIV was barely twenty. He graduated last year in the Calcutta University. Sincere to the backbone, he never told a lie even in joke. When a boy, he was religiously inclined, as could be seen from his great interest in going through the daily Sandhyâ practices enjoined in the Hindu Shastras on every Brahmana. Later on, he became more earnest about religion and strongly desirous to know the real truth in it. The belief of his fathers, village or nation, the authorities of the Vedas or other Shastras were meaningless to him. His conviction was that one's own reason ought to be the only criterion, that believing blindly in anything betrayed but ignorance and weakness.

He now studied the six systems of Hindu Philosophy, Bible, Koran and many other scriptures of other religions, and came to the conclusion that though the different scriptures differed in many respects, yet they all agreed in affirming that the human mind, at certain moments came face to face with peculiar facts, which formed the basis of all the religions of the world. Religion did not consist only in reading books; it had to be realized. Sadashiv determined to find out a man, who had realized religion and under his instructions, to realize it for himself. So he left home and travelled, in Sannyasi's garb, in different parts

of India in search of such a man.

Shilapati was a Sannyasin of Sanatan Dharma, at Benares. He had hardly any book learning and could with difficulty write his name. He lived in a small house on the Ganges.

Sadashiv, in his travels, visited the Himalayas and many shrines of the Hindus, went to every place where he was told that some great Sadhu lived, but nowhere could he find a man he could take as his spiritual guide. He had been at Benares for three months and seen many Sadhus and Sannyasins there. He had formed certain ideas about the man of true religion and, though he searched every part of Benares, he came across none in whom he could meet the expression of those ideas. So he thought of leaving Benares. He was much distressed that he had to go disappointed even from Benares, where lived so many Sadhus and Mahatmas in the garb of spirituality.

Sadashiv sat on one of the steps in front of Shilapati's house, with his face towards the river. He felt very miserable. "Is there any truth in religion? Or am I wasting my life in vain pursuit?" he asked himself. It was just night-fall, when a Sannyasin, about 60, stood before him and said, "My boy, Kasi is the seat of Vishwanath. I see the Lord's grace is on you," and saying so, made a bow to him and sat by him. Sadashiv

was somewhat surprised at the queer manner of the aged Sannyasin. However he had a long talk with him. The sweet and childlike nature of Shilapati, the easy and simple ways in which he explained and impressed upon him the deep truths of religion, made Sadashiv feel as if the vision of another world opened to him. For some time, he forgot who or where he was.

Sadashiv: "How does one become Guru to another?" Shilapati: "The disciple says to the Guru, 'I am your disciple,' and the Guru accepts him." Sadashiv: "If I say I am your disciple, will you be my Guru?" Shilapati did not answer. Sadashiv paused a little, and, though not quite certain in his own mind said, "Sir, I accept you as my Guru." Shilapati smiled. "What will it be if I now deny you?" asked Sadashiv again. Shilapati did not answer.

Shilapati and Sadashiv lived together for three years, Sadashiv at first being very devoted to Shilapati, and Shilapati having all along great affection for him. Sometimes, Sadashiv would ask, "Maharaj, I have been with you long, done great Tapasyâ and Sâdhana, why do I not realize something?" Shilapati would say, "Wait. Every thing comes in time." Yet Sadashiv was not satisfied. Moreover, the other Sannyasis of Benares would not unoften speak to him disparagingly of Shilapati as ignorant of the Hindu Shastras. To all appearances, Shilapati was an ordinary man; no wonder, few understood him.

Sadashiv's discontent grew into disgust. Had he been self-deceived in accepting Shilapati? One day he told Shilapati that he had no more faith in him

and would leave him and go elsewhere. Shilapati blessed him and Sadashiv left Benares for Hardwar.

At Hardwar, he was the guest of the rich merchant, Jailal Kshetri. Jhandu Das was a Sannyasi of Hardwar, leading a highly pure and spiritual life. Jailal was one of his disciples; he made an Ashrama for Jhandu Das and used to give him Rs. 100 monthly, for the expenses of the Ashrama. Sometime after Jhandu Das, captivated by the charms of a Musalman girl, who used to come to him now and then for religious instructions, became a convert to Islam and married her. This happened thirty years ago. Nevertheless, Jailal's devotion to Jhandu Das had been firm as ever. He turned his Guru's Ashrama into a mosque and paid his expenses as before. When asked, he would say, "I accepted him and I can on no account deny my Guru. Does a son ever deny his father?" Sadashiv saw this; he stayed only one day at Hardwar. That day was the turning point of his life.

Day and night, the one thought pressed upon him,—did he make a great mistake in leaving Shilapati? "By studying the Shastras," he thought, "I know what religion is and Shilapati taught me the way to it. I shall now follow it. What matters if I be faithful to him or not? Religion means to be one with the Divine Principle, which is equally in me and in Shilapati; let me try to be one with that Principle; what shall I gain by having or serving a Guru? I was with Shilapati three years and got nothing." Jailal Kshetri and his devotion to his Guru came before him and he was shocked at his own meanness that he



could ever think of bringing down the sublime Hindu ideal of "Love and serve the Guru with no selfish motive" to the shopkeeper's ideal of "give and take." "Did the great Acharyas *impose upon* the world, when they enjoined the same devotion to Guru as to God? Never could such devotion be blind attachment to any human being ; it must have been meant for the Divine element in him. That element dwelt as well in other men animals, trees, even in stones. Why should I then choose Shilapati as my Guru in preference to others? But, when once I did choose him, why should I be false to him? True, I saw many faults in Shilapati, but they did not touch the Divinity within him, with which alone I was concerned. Let me return to Shilapati."

This time Sadashiv was convinced of his mistake in leaving Shilapati. Again doubts arose. No, he must not go to Shilapati. Again he reasoned that without absolute devotion to the Guru, religion was impossible. Doubts unbalanced him again. At last, he became helpless. When he would try not to reason, as if some unseen hand would force him to do so ; when he would think of reasoning, all doubts would disappear, leaving no room for reason. He lost all control of his mind and apprehending some derangement of his brain, returned to Hardwar for medical treatment.

Sadashiv's condition grew worse every day. He had been at Hardwar Hospital for three months, when not for a single night he had a wink of sleep. The one thought of Shilapati would be constantly pressing on him. Life was unbearable and he determined to end it by drowning himself in the Ganges.

It was a clear evening. Sadashiv was sitting on the Ganges, with the Himalayas, the moon, the stars, the sky, mirrored on her crystal waters. "Is there a bond between the Guru and the disciple, though undefinable, yet too strong to be torn, that helps the suffering soul across the waters of life or is it that the Divine Principle manifests himself through the Guru, that man may know and reach Him through man? I am confused. O Shilapati, if a Guru can save, save me from this agony." A voice from within answered, "Wherever you are, in heaven or hell, whatever you be, saint or sinner, my child, I am ever with you." Sadashiv heard the voice ; a load fell off from his heart ; he burst into tears and felt as he had never felt before, except when he first saw Shilapati. He at once left Hardwar for Benares and not stopping anywhere on the way, reached the holy city. Coming to the entrance of Shilapati's house, he prostrated himself to the very dust touched by the feet of his Guru.

The door was locked. Shilapati had attained his last Samadhi one month ago.

The other day, with the words, "Shilapati, Shilapati, Shilapati," on his lips, passed away a great sage of Benares, who never spoke to any one, but the most difficult problems of religion and philosophy of an enquiring mind would be solved, by simply sitting by him for some time. The people of Benares still remember him with deep love and veneration. Need it be told who this silent sage was?

X. Y. Z.

## IN MEMORIAM: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

**W**E have received with much regret the news of the death of the Swami Vivekananda, at the early age of thirty-nine, at the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission near Calcutta. We were among the small company which gathered at the Triplicane Literary Society ten years ago to meet Swami Vivekananda, then an obscure and unknown wanderer in Southern India. The incidents of the memorable evening will be fondly recorded in the pages of the *Reformer*. Some time after that the late Swami was enabled to go to Chicago. There, at the Parliament of Religions, his opportunity came. He became the hero of the hour, and his return was a royal procession from Ramnad to Madras. Addresses poured on him, his carriage was drawn by enthusiastic admirers, and, so far as popularity went, it was the supreme moment of the Swami's life. We were present at the enormous mass meeting at Victoria Hall where he made his first speech on returning to Madras, containing a scathing attack on Mrs. Annie Besant and Colonel Olcott for the treatment he had received at their hands in India and America. We had occasion to meet the Swami pretty frequently, he paid a visit to the rooms of the Madras Social Reform Association, and, much to the surprise of some followed it up by a violent and public attack against "beardless boys" attempting to guide the course of Hindu social progress. From Madras, the Swami passed on to Calcutta and, in

reply to an address of welcome, made a powerful speech in which he denounced the abominations of *Sakti* worship prevalent in Bengal. Then he set himself to founding the Ramkrishna Mission and to direct its work of intense practical philanthropy. The experience of working the mission seems to have brought a change. He sent a telegram of cordial good wishes to the Social Conference held at Lahore.

The whole of this brief but crowded life is so compacted together that it is really difficult to unravel it into its component parts. That the Swami was, from the first, actuated by a single powerful idea, is certain. That he consented, for the sake of procuring it success, to disguise it for a time from the mass of those from whom he sought support, is equally certain. That, at last, he found his thralldom to popularity very irksome, and that he thereupon threw off his disguise and incurred unpopularity, is also certain. Somebody has said that every successful man has at some time or other in his career been guilty of a crime of the heart. That is the sacrifice demanded by the goddess of success for her prizes. The pure idea, in all its loveliness, fills our youth's vision. We advance into early manhood, and are alarmed to see that the strict course of conduct prescribed by the idea proscribes all accessibility to the influences which lead to success. We think nothing of ourselves and are all absorbed in the ideal. But we soon find



that the world pursues a very different course. It finds it easier to take an interest in a person than in an ideal. It wants us to lend ourselves to its ways, without caring in the least for our ideals. For a time, we shrink with horror from what is nothing less than pawning our persons to the public. Well is it for those—alas, how few—who wisely fear to overcome this instinctive pride of intellectual purity. But the larger number adopt another line. They are eager that their idea should take shape and form, and since the only chance of its doing so in their time lies through their own persons, they yield themselves to the crowd in the hope of advancing their ideal. Soon enough they realise the terrible consequences of their sophistry, but it is too late. Thus it happens that many a man on whom the grace of the ideal shed its most splendid lustre early in life, becomes at the end of it a confirmed cynic, with no faith in human virtue, with no hope beyond the grave, and with an absolute contempt for all that is not palpable and immediate. It is our conviction that the Swami Vivekananda was a victim of this sophistry in the twelve months that followed his return from Chicago. And it is, in our view, the strongest proof of the innate greatness of the man and the lofty sanity of his ideal, that he was, notwithstanding, able to soon realise and to pull himself out of the slough into which he had been sinking as a result of his one false step. His greatest and most abiding work was done after his reclamation from the mouths of the populace. The brilliant part of it was the least faithful to his ideal and the most wasteful to his energies. It is the strain of

Chicago and success that has sent him to his last account so early in life, and just in the middle of his real work. Had he realised the fatal failure of what passes by the name of success earlier in life, he might have lived longer, perhaps. Who can say? But in that case, would he have been able to found his Ramkrishna Mission, whose mainstay is the English and American disciples.....

Now, what was the ideal of Swami Vivekananda? We have seen it said that it was to establish the greatness of the Vedanta philosophy. To us, however, it seems to have been more a practical than a philosophical end that he had in view. He, no doubt, made a good deal of the Vedanta, but that was because he knew that the Hindus would accept much under a religious garb which they would not look at in its real, commonsense aspect. But Vivekananda's real object was to make his countrymen take a more serious view of the present and the future than of the past. In this he was at one with those whose views are represented in these columns, though he strove hard at first to make people believe that he was in antagonism with that ideal. On one point, at any rate, his attitude was unmistakable and that was in regard to caste. The deliberate seeking and acceptance of the personal co-operation of men and women in Europe and America, was an affront to present-day Hinduism of the most aggressive kind. About eating and drinking, the late Swami held more with the doctrine of Christ than with the ceremonial scruples of his own people.

The philanthropic work of the Ramkrishna Mission which he founded and

controlled till his death, marks it out as a unique organisation in the history of modern India. That alone is enough to raise him high among those who have laboured to infuse new life into the Indian people. It is a matter of melancholy satisfaction to us, who differed so much and so strenuously from the deceased Swami at one period of his remarkable life, to bear testimony, at his death which we sincerely deplore, to the greatness of his ideal, the magnetism of his personality, and the depth of his patriotism. India is poorer for the loss of Swami Vivekananda.—*The Indian Social Reformer*, July 13th.

A GLORIOUS light is extinguished and a terrible gloom has been cast over the land. The brightest star that for ten years and more proclaimed in all its splendour and grandeur the glory of God and the divinity of man has vanished from mortal view. He that came of the Lord has gone unto the Lord. The noble soul that early in life cast off all that mortal man holds near and dear, donned the simple yellow robe of the ascetic, took the beggar's bowl in hand and wandered from one corner of the country to another, aye! crossed the distant seas to proclaim the glory of the Vedanta, is no more. We shall no longer see his majestic figure, nor hear his magnetic eloquence that kept under a spell all that came under its influence. It is impossible to adequately give expression to the feelings of genuine and profound sorrow which the news of the premature demise of this great Sannyasin has caused throughout the land and the sorrow with which the sad tidings will be received in America, the land where he built his

world-wide fame. It is equally impossible within the short space of a note written hastily under the influence of great sorrow even to describe in brief the glory of his mission and the greatness of his achievements. To that we shall have to refer often in future. For the present we content ourselves with answering the question, what is the reason of the extraordinary sorrow which his death has called forth? To say that he pandered to the vulgar patriotism of the people by speaking of the glory of the past would be a cruel lie. No, on the other hand there was no more scathing critic of the present degeneracy of the Hindus than Swami Vivekananda. Those that have not had the fortune of listening to his many private discourses have simply to read his many lectures and in particular the one on the Vedanta delivered at Lahore on the 12th November 1897. Therein they will find the Swami's sledge hammer blows on the excrescences that have crept into our religion and life. The secret of his success lay in his sincere but enlightened love for the land of his birth and the religion of his *Rishis*. His religion knew no caste, no creed, no colour; his philosophy knew no systems and sophistries; his sympathy was boundless, and he recognised a brother and sister in every man and woman he met. With the same breath and the same spirit he praised the glory of the Brahma of the Hindus, the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehova of the Jews, and the Father in Heaven of the Christians. He despised no religion, no form of worship. Read his favorite song:—



"As the different streams, having their sources in different places all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

If often he laid stress on the glory of the Vedanta, it was because he felt that in ideal it proclaimed the great lesson which he incessantly voiced forth,—the lesson of the harmony of all religions. Remember the motto which he proclaimed from the platform of the Great Parliament of Religions! "Help and not Fight." "Assimilation, and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace, and not Dissension."

The death of such a man leaves a void that will long remain unfilled. This is the great misfortune of India at present. Worthy and capable leaders are few and far between, and when they go, they leave no successors to carry on their work. Swami Vivekananda, however, was a teacher of rare personal charm and power. May we hope that his blessed mantle has descended on some worthy pupil of his?—*The Indian Review, Madras, July.*

WE issued an extraordinary sheet on the 10th instant, containing the Special Telegrams from Colombo sent to us as soon as the sad intelligence of the death of this most revered and renowned sage and Hindu Missionary was published in the Colombo dailies. We need hardly say that a genuine feeling of very deep regret pervades the Hindu community here at the death of the Swami. It is but five years ago the Swami paid a visit to Jaffna and was accorded a most

hearty and enthusiastic reception by the Hindu public. He then thrilled audiences composed not only of Hindus but also of Christians, by his unmatched eloquence and religious fervour; and this visit of the Swami is, and will always be, remembered by the Hindus of Jaffna as an important event connected with the revival of Hinduism here.

The Swami was undoubtedly the greatest Hindu Missionary of modern times. All other great Hindu sages and reformers confined their action within the limits of India. But it was Swami Vivekananda who preached Hinduism in America and Europe, convinced a large number of people in those Continents of the truths of this ancient Religion, and made several converts to his faith. Although he has trained others to carry on the work which he had commenced in the West, yet his death is an irreparable loss to the cause of Hinduism, and it would be long before his place can be filled.

—*The Hindu Organ, Jaffna, July 16th.*

SWAMI Vivekananda, the foremost of the spiritual sons of India.....He was a great master of Hindu religion and philosophy. He contributed more than anybody else to shed a spiritual lustre around the Vedanta Philosophy of India among the Westerns. By his death the philosophy and religion of India have sustained a loss which it is very difficult to make good. We have many masters of Hindu Religion and Philosophy equal and even superior to Swami Vivekananda but we have yet to find one who has combined such mastery of the English language with such attainments in Hindu philosophy. It is however a consolation that in so short an age he has done so much to raise the name and fame of his fatherland in the western world.

—*Mysore Herald, July 14th.*

## NEWS AND NOTES

THE privilege of free postage is extended to Boer prisoners in India.

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PAPER coal is a form of lignite found near Bonn, in Germany. It splits naturally in films as thin as paper.

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WE acknowledge with thanks receipt of Rs. ten from Mr. K. H. Kirkere, Sub-Judge, Viramgam and of Rs. five from Mr. Narsoo Dumrooji as donations to the Advaita Ashrama.

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INVITATIONS to attend the Delhi Durbar have been sent to the editors of 34 Native newspapers in India—11 in Bengal, 9 in Bombay, 5 in the United Provinces, 4 in the Punjab, 3 in Madras, 1 in Burma, and 1 in Beluchistan.

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A PUBLIC MEETING was held at the Town Hall, Calcutta, to protest against the recommendations of the Universities Commission. It was very largely attended, but only four Europeans were present. Raja Peary Mohan Mookerji presided.

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LALA HIRALAL Bansal, Supervisor, P. W. D. of the Punjab is making a tour round the world and is willing to supply his countrymen with useful information. Lala Hiralal's patriotic resolve is much praiseworthy and we hope his offer will be fully availed of.—*Advocate*.

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IT is reported that the first Bengalee who repaired to Japan four years ago

for education in mining has been provided with employment as a mining engineer in Tokyo, and his services are fully appreciated by his employers. Recently when he signified his intention of returning home, his salary was quadrupled as an inducement to make him stay on.

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THE Japan religious conference which was to take place on the 15th October has been postponed to 15th April 1903. The conference having roused great enthusiasm in Japan and China and Buddhists of all schools having expressed a desire more fully to participate in its deliberations than what would have been possible in the short time, now available, it has been decided to postpone the sitting.—*Advocate*.

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THE example set by youngmen of the Aligarh College who are going round the districts of the Punjab, Central Provinces and the United Provinces making collections for their College, ought to be followed by promoters of other institutions. It is this noble spirit of sacrifice which deserves encouragement. The members of the Duty Deputation have everywhere received help from the local officials, who gave a practical proof of their sympathy with the Aligarh movement by liberally contributing towards the College funds.

—*Advocate*.

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THE *Praja Bandhu* publishes an interesting letter written by a German



student of Hindu Philosophy to an Indian friend. "I spend this summer in a quiet farm in Essex, 20 minutes from the sea. I am engaged in my literary work and live in very congenial environments down here. Live almost on uncooked food which agrees with my health and ideas very well.....Have been studying last winter the *Upanishads*. I worked through the largest and grandest of all, the *Brihadaranyaka* and several of the smaller ones. They are delightful reading, unsurpassed in the world's literature. Even *Vedanta* and *Bhagavad Gita* seem a pale light compared to them. It is pure monism, simple, fearless and true. Every Hindu should read a few *slokas* every morning at sunrise and commit them to memory and heart. What are all these formal external religions, Krishnaism and Shivaism, and Kali and Rama worship compared to these grand outpourings of great souls such as Yajnavalkya?"

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THERE is no particular advantage to be gained from going hungry. Hunger is the voice of nature telling us that the system needs food, and, like all of nature's warnings, should be heeded. To be sure, a great many, we might say, the majority of people, eat too much as well as too often; but the entire abstinence from food is an exceptional remedy, if it is used at all. In cases where one's stomach is filled with germs it is far better to fast than to go on eating in the usual way; but even then it is not necessary, for one can get all the benefits of fasting and more, without the discomfiture, by subsisting for a time, upon a fruit diet. In this way the germs are starved out, the fruit juice acting as a disinfectant. Us-

ually one or two days of this kind of fasting is all that is needed, and it is not always necessary to use the fruit entirely alone even then. Some dry sterilized bread, such as zwieback or granose, may be taken with it without interfering with the purpose of the fast. It is really wonderful what can be accomplished by the use of fruit in ridding the digestive tract of germ.—*Good Health*.

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SURPRISE has been caused in some quarters, possibly some men have been scandalised, by the remark made by one of the speakers at the Town Hall Meeting that the Calcutta, B. A. is as a rule superior to the ordinary or Poll B. A. of Cambridge. The remark is not only absolutely true, but is somewhat short of the truth. The B. A. of the Calcutta University is in point of versatility superior even to First-class men of Cambridge. A Senior Classic may be so deficient in Mathematics as not to understand the elements of Trigonometry or Mechanics. A Senior Wrangler may utterly lack literary or philosophical capacity. We remember a time when no less than six subjects were compulsory for the B. A. Examination. Even now three subjects are compulsory for the B. A. and five for the F. A. The reason why Macaulay did not get a Degree at Cambridge is well-known; Tennyson, we believe, never got through the Little-go. And Mr. Tawney once confessed in a public meeting that the only Mathematical book he ever understood was Phear's *Hydrostatics*. We forbear giving the names of men now working in India. Many of them are fearfully one-sided men. And no one-sided man, though a genius, has ever a

chance of getting a Degree in India. But it would be extremely easy for such a man to get a Degree, and a high one, in England.—*Indian Nation*.

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During last year the death-rate among Hindus in the sister provinces was 30·65 against 28·81 among Mahomedans. In the Punjab the deaths among Hindus were at the rate of 39·14 per cent and among Mussulmans 33·58 per cent. In noticing the Madras Census Report for the last decade the *Pioneer* observes :—“The proportion borne by Hindus and Animists to the total population is slowly falling, *the rates of increase being continuously lower than among Mussulmans and Christians*. This fact has been noticed in other Provinces, and there seems no reason to doubt that Mussulmans are more prolific than Hindus, and have a greater tendency to increase by conversion.” The difference in the death-rates above given is no doubt slight, but significant enough to furnish food for serious reflection. A higher birth-rate may be easily accounted for ; but a higher death-rate is another matter. Why are there more deaths among Hindus than among any other Indian community ? Is it due to early marriage ? But in towns Mussulmans too marry when children. Perhaps it is because Hindus are over-burdened with family cares due to their joint family system ; or because they follow sedentary occupations as a rule while Mussulmans are mostly labourers and agriculturists, and because Hindus do not spend so much on their food and comforts as Muslims. Whatever the causes may be, the ugly fact is there, and it behoves Hindu leaders to give the matter

their sustained attention.—*Tribune*.

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PROFESSOR RAMSAY, in a prefatory letter attached to Major Grant's article on Mr. Tata's Institute, in the *East and West*, says :—“During my too short stay in India, I was impressed by two facts : first, that most of the population supports itself by agriculture, and that the relative proportion of manufacture to agriculture, in comparison with Europe or America, is insignificant ; and, second, that the raw products of India, which, so far as I could ascertain, are very considerable in amount, have either not been exploited, or, like the Kolar gold fields, are in the hands of English Companies, or are exported in an unmanufactured state ; in the latter case, they leave the country without producing any equivalent in wealth, except in so far as the labour required to collect them and to transport them to a port of shipment may be regarded as productive. Impelled by these considerations, I recommended a scheme by means of which I hoped that industries dealing with raw products would be established in the country ; granting the success of the attempt, an educated class of manufacturers would gradually be created, while, at the same time, employment would be given to a large army of persons who are at present directly dependent on the soil for their livelihood.” This is the whole economic situation of our country placed in a nut-shell. All well-wishers of India and students of her economic condition should never lose sight of these fundamental facts.