

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THE HOLY MOTHER

[These notes, taken from the diary of a disciple as published in the Bengali monthly, *Udbodhan*, derive their value from the simplicity and directness with which many aspects of practical religion are herein touched upon and illuminated. To those of us who had the special privilege of knowing her, these words have an extreme spiritual value and significance, as those of one who was considered as the first and the greatest disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and possessed of immeasurable spiritual power and wisdom, may well claim to have. We hope to present our readers further instalments of these invaluable records in the future issues of P.B.]

I asked the Mother, "Mother, how shall I live my life?"

She replied, "As you are doing now. Ever pray to Him yearningly in constant recollection and contemplation of Him." "

"Mother, I am frightened at the sight of even great souls—Mahapurushas—slipping from the Ideal."

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“If one lives amidst objects of enjoyment, they naturally come to one. Do not cast your eyes even on a wooden representation of a woman or ever go near it.”

“But, Mother, is it not true that it is God who actuates man to every action?”

“Yes, it is true. But is man conscious of it? He thinks in his blind infatuation that he is the original doer.—He does not rely on God. Whoever surrenders himself to God is saved. A Sadhu must always be extremely alert. His path is very slippery, and a slippery path has to be trod with exceedingly careful steps. Is it a fun to be a Sannyasin? He must not even look at a woman, and when he walks the street, his eyes should be fixed on his big toes. Just as the collar of a dog saves it from being killed as a street dog, even so does the ochre-robe of a Sannyasin save him from harm. His is the royal road and every one makes way for him.

“The mind naturally tends to evil ; it is disinclined to good deeds. It was my habit to rise early in the morning and meditate. But once I failed to get up so early through indisposition. And such is the natural indolence of the mind that for several days I was late in rising. Therefore you must be up and doing if you want to achieve anything good and great. When during my stay in the *Nahavat*\* at Dakshineswar, I would see the silver moon reflected in the calm waters of the Ganges, I would tearfully pray to God: ‘O Lord, even in the moon there are stains. May my mind be absolutely spotless!’

“You were a Calcutta boy, you could easily live a comfortable married life. But you have given up everything. Why should your mind revert to its thought?”

“Mother, is the practice of *Pranayama* and *Asana*† beneficial?”

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\* It was a room intended for the temple music. The Holy Mother used to occupy it while staying in the Temple.

† Particular postures.



“The practice of them brings one occult powers and occult powers lead one astray.”

“Should a Sadhu travel in the holy places?”

“Why should he, if he feels calm and peaceful in one fixed place?”

“Mother, I scarcely have concentration of mind. Graciously awaken my *Kundalini*.”\*

“Rest assured She will wake up. A little of *japa* and meditation will rouse Her. Of course She will not awake of Herself. You must practise *Sadhana*. Practise meditation and by and by your mind will be so calm and fixed that you will find it hard to keep away from meditation. But meditation should not be forcibly practised. On the day when you find it hard to meditate, end by making your salutations to the Lord. On other days, meditation will come smooth and easy.”

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“Mother, how is it I cannot calm and concentrate my mind? I find it ruffled by various thoughts during meditation.”

“Of course it is bad if the mind thinks of money, wife or children. But the thought of one’s work is natural. If you cannot meditate, repeat the Name. *Japat Siddhi* — ‘Realisation will come through the repetition of the Name.’ Yes, *japa* will eventually bring spiritual realisation. It is good if you can meditate, but you need not do it forcibly.”

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“Mother, shall I practise *Sadhana* living in the Benares Math, or retire for the purpose to a solitary place? Which is better?”

“Practise *Sadhana* for some time in some solitary place like *Hrishikesh*. This will so strengthen your mind that in whatever place or company you may keep it afterwards, it will remain unaffected. A small plant has

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\* *Kundalini* = ‘coiled-up.’ The dormant spiritual power is so called.

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 to be hedged round against cows or goats. A grown plant has no fear from them. Whenever you feel your mind is beset with undesirable thoughts and desires for knowledge, pray to Him earnestly,—He will purify your mind and answer your enquiries.”

“Mother, I feel I am powerless. I have taken shelter in you. Do what you like with me.”

(*Folding her hands in a prayer*) May He protect your vow of Sannyasa! Never fear, He is ever looking after you. Do His work and practise Sadhana. A little daily work drives away idle thoughts from the mind. A solitary and inactive life is possible to be beset with idle thinking.”

“Where and how shall I practise Sadhana?”

“Benares is the place for you. Sadhana means concentrating the mind on God and plunging it deeper and deeper in His thought. Repeat His Name.”

“Is it any use merely repeating His name, if I do not love Him?”

“Your cloth will get wet if you fall into water, either willingly or unwillingly. Constantly practise meditation. Your mind is ‘unripe’—unsteady—now. But constant meditation will make it steady and calm. And always discriminate. Whenever the mind goes after anything other than God, consider it as transient and surrender the mind at the sacred feet of the Lord. Be like the man who, while angling for fish, became so absorbed in it that he did not hear the least of the din and bustle of a marriage procession passing by.”

“What is the aim of life?”

“To realise God and to be absorbed uninterruptedly in His consciousness, is the aim. You are a monk, you are His own man. He is taking care of your present and future. Why should you worry? One cannot of course think of God constantly. Therefore sometimes take a walk, at other times meditate.”

A NATION ADRIFT

The year is coming to an end. But the passing year holds out no hope for the nation. The situation is decidedly gloomier and more complex than before. The nation seems to be adrift. The sky is just now filled with the angry tumults of communal battles and the ugly clamours of electioneering. And only a very stout optimism can discover in them auspicious omens of the future.

Communalism and council-work,—are these the foundation on which we are going to build our future? We are not blind to the constructive work that is being variously carried on in the country. There are movements for uplifting the untouchables. There are a few national schools and colleges. There are indigenous industrial enterprises,—there is the *Khadi* and *Charkha* movement. And there are of course literary and artistic revivals in some of the provinces. These are no doubt contributing to a certain extent towards national self-realisation. But more is wanted and more organised movements, and above all the consciousness, spread throughout the country, of the purpose for which the nation lives, that our every action and movement may be real and truly guided. But what are the real conditions? Constructional works are only spasmodic and unrelated, often devoid of correct bearings on the collective whole and not yet imbued with the consciousness of their true place in the scheme of the nationhood. And those activities in which the country seems most interested are really no part, or only a very inessential part, of the national being.

The political aspect of nationalism has hopelessly infatuated us. We are seeking national salvation essentially through political movements. We are unduly emphasising the political aspect of the national struggle, and all problems and functions of the collective life are

being interpreted in terms of politics, with the consequence that, taken out of the calm atmosphere in which only they are truly comprehended and solved, they have assumed ugly and dangerous proportions. For instance, the communal problem. The political aspect of it is really the most insignificant. It is essentially social and cultural. But social and cultural problems cannot be solved by pacts and conferences. They can be solved by creating the correct atmosphere of unity, refinement and sympathy, by a deep comprehension of the underlying facts of history, sociology and religion involved, and not by harangues and recriminations. The process of solution can but be slow. But unfortunately the short-sided and hasty policy of the political leaders has made it a political question *par excellence*. And now the atmosphere about it is charged with too much heat to be easily and delicately handled. It ought never to be interfered with by politicians. It should be left to social reformers and religious leaders, to those who have made of themselves and their religions a harmony of the ideals of the contending communities.

Similarly, educational problems should be tackled by educationists alone and should not be made fashionable pendants by politicians to their programmes. The true progress of Indian education lies in the coalition of the various educational activities within India, informed with spiritual idealism. The industrial reconstruction in the same way should be left to expert economists and sociologists and not to politicians developing promiscuous economic policies to serve the passing purposes of diplomacy. And thus every other national function in conformity with the national genius.

We suggest that every sphere of life has its laws of function and growth. We cannot override them without obstructing its development and ultimately that of national welfare. Let us therefore organise every sphere separately, without any artificial regard for the political ideal. It may be asked, what, if all the spheres are separately organised, should the cementing factor, the

underlying unity be? The principle of synthesis will of course be the realisation of the national ideal. India has a fixed spiritual ideal and fixed laws governing her society, economics and politics in unison with it. This dynamic spiritual ideal is the unifying principle relating the different spheres of her collective life. The consciousness of the common ideal and the desire to realise it will inspire the different planes of national activity with a unitary purposiveness. What is being sought to be done through politics, we want to do through religion. We want spirituality, not politics, to govern the life of the nation.

The present tendencies however go counter to the requirements of national well-being. The birth of political movements in India is to a certain extent a reaction against, but to a greater extent a result of, the impact of Western civilisation on India. The Congress was created and run by Westerners and Western-educated Indians who were innocent of a proper knowledge of the Indian culture. The ideal held up by the Congress was, and still is, the realisation of a state, pre-eminently political, after the Western model, centralising and governing all the functions of the collective life. We did not ask whether such a state-ideal was intrinsically sound and wholesome, or true to the experience and genius of India. We ran madly after this glittering prize and cried to all and sundry to join us in this noble race. But the tumult of this joyous race has eventually roused many demons from their slumbers, and, released from their fetters, they are now overrunning this unhappy land.

The most urgent question before the country now is of the choice between politics and spirituality as the centre of the national life. What is wanted is a clear formulation of the concept of the future Indian state. Is it to be a replica of the Western political state, that is to say, are we to organise ourselves into a nation of aggressive exploiters, hungering for other peoples' lands and robbing weaker nations of their prosperity and freedom,

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building monstrous armies, navies, air forces and diplomatic corps and preparing the nationals as zealous supporters of the state policy? For, euphemism apart, a Western state is doing all these, and it cannot redeem itself and rise to ethical levels without changing its very outlook and constitution and deliberately making spiritual uplift its governing ideal. Or is it to be a state whose function will be limited to externals only, which will look after the material necessities of the nation, its administration and defence, but leave all essentials, such as education, social economy and religion, to the collective wisdom of the people? It is on the nature of our choice that the character and ideal of national reconstruction and struggle depend. We hold that the latter has been the governing ideal of India's collective life from time immemorial. Political dominions have come and gone leaving little mark on the real life of the people, which has been growing and developing according to its own laws with its leaders of Incarnations and prophets, sages and philosophers. Let us shake off the fond delusion that we are devoid of the organisational principle in our collective life and have to borrow it from the West. We had it intensely alive and active through millenniums and we have it still, would we but look for it. Are we to discard it now in favour of a doubtful foreign import?

It must be remembered that human nature is the same in all times and lands. It has its laws and processes of fulfilment. Man is essentially a spiritual being. In the realisation of this his essential and eternal nature lies his permanent satisfaction and final peace. This is the end towards which all his efforts are tending consciously or unconsciously. The duty and utility of a state or nation lie in speeding him on his onward path and clearing it of all obstacles. If a state replaces this high ideal by a lower one, it not only creates a clash of duties and ideals in the individual, but also cripples itself by dwarfing the spiritual growth of its citizens. The troubles witnessed in the West to-day, or for the matter of that, in the whole world, are ultimately traceable to this internal conflict that



the political scheme of life has created. There is no domestic, social or religious peace. It is one long story of conflict, conflict *ad infinitum* in all planes of life. It is idle to plead that the political bias of the state need not affect the individual spiritual ideals of the nationals. They are constrained to uphold the state with their mental, moral and physical support, and this makes a tremendous difference. It is a vicious circle in which they are caught. Their own greed being organised upholds the state and the state pushes them on in the downward path of moral ruin.

It is true India also was not absolutely free from this evil. But here the evil was sought to be minimised. Exploitation or aggression was discouraged. India never went out to conquer a foreign land. When she went out, she did so to extend her cultural dominion through loving service and sympathetic understanding. That noble idealism has not yet forsaken her. It is slowly asserting itself even in the uncongenial atmosphere of politics. For, what was the non-co-operation movement, if not a harking back from the lure of the foreign ideal to our own spiritual ideal? The influence of Mahatma Gandhi transformed the nature of Indian politics. His doctrine of Satyagraha was a reapplication of the age-old Indian ideal to the work of national reconstruction. But even he was not free from the taint of politics, he also believed in expediency. His gaze was not always fixed on the high pedestal of Heaven but strayed sometimes to a group of persons who seem to hold the fate of India in their hands. His worship sought for signs from On High in the changed mentality of the white bureaucracy. But we can either follow God or man, there is no midway. And therefore, as it happens when men seek the fruits of their efforts from other men, his movement failed to be truly disinterested and spiritual and was as much given to hope and despair, jealousy and hatred as any other political movement.

The two streams of political expediency and spiritual

idealism are flowing on in our national movements, often side by side but sometimes crossing each other. On which of them shall we float our boat? The choice need not and indeed cannot be arbitrary. One thing is clear,—our past must have a determining voice in this choice.

There are two ways in which the worth and efficiency of our national policy can and should be judged. Firstly, it must not clash with the individual ideal which is of course purely spiritual and unalterable. Secondly, it must be potent enough to endow the nation with all-round prosperity, by revivifying all its functions. The idea of prosperity however must not be identified with actual earthly profits gained but with the infusion of strength—physical, mental and spiritual—into the nation. For earthly things may often be speedily gained through unrighteousness. But as the books say, “Through unrighteousness they prosper, they find benefits, they conquer their enemies, but they perish at the root.”

Between the two policies that are guiding our national activities, to which we have referred, the choice can safely be made by applying the fore-mentioned tests. The first policy, that of political expediency, manifestly clashes with the individual ideal. That ideal is *Mukti* or spiritualisation of life. Not only is the knowledge of, and union with, God posited as the one inevitable end towards which man must and does travel, but his whole life with its unavoidable multiplicity of action and experience has been sought to be spiritualised or deified. He is guided in all his actions by *Dharma*. And *Dharma* demands that his thoughts and actions should conform to moral and spiritual principles. There is only one cause of all things, God. He is the one driving force in life, and every detail of life should be understood in relation to Him. Our duties to the nation are not an exception. They also should be conceived as a part of *Dharma*. Our service to the people must be a service of God Himself. The policy of expediency clashes with this idea. It is a clash of outlooks and therefore fundamental. It does not trace the chain of causes further than men. Consequently



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it compels the human causes to yield its desires. And when men ascribe their miseries to other men, they are scarcely overscrupulous in their methods of coercion. It relies almost wholly on diplomacy and scarcely on moral principles. It does not believe in the moral vindication in the affairs of men, and is thus diametrically opposed to spiritual idealism. If therefore the conflict between individual and national ideals is to be eliminated, the national struggle must be conceived as pre-eminently a movement for spiritual uplift.

Regarding the second test, it is enough if we remember that the Spirit is the source and mine of all strength and that in India religion has been the pivot round which national activity has always moved. We are aware that many critical darts are often levelled against religion as one of the primary causes of India's ruin. There are some, again, who would throw spiritual idealism into the scrap-heap in favour of industrialism and of what they call the economic interpretation of life. We need not waste our ink on them. For good or for evil, religion is too deeply ingrained in our national being to be summarily discarded, and we *must* interpret and reconstruct life from the spiritual view-point or disintegrate and die. Our "economic" prophets seem to think that the only realities are those which feel hard to the touch and can be measured and weighed. They forget that idealism is the hardest of facts in the world of men. Is not the history of men the history of the triumph of spirit over the so-called realities? Besides it is a stupendous error to think that material prosperity is impossible without offering our all at the feet of mammon. We can realise political and economic prosperity even without organising our earth-hunger, greed of gold, hatred and jealousy. Let us organise the best aspirations of our soul, let us stimulate our progress towards spiritual self-realisation. *This spiritual struggle will generate a power which will be able to meet all situations squarely in the face, be they political, economical, social or religious.* Those who criticise religion as incapable of fructifying all fields of life, know

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little of religion. "A little of that religion conquers great fear." For religion is strength. None is spiritual if he is not strong. The first expression of religion is tremendous *rajas*. Religion makes one healthy, active, alert, keen, strong, fearless, selfless and noble. Not from *tamas*, dullness and torpor, can one go direct to the peace and light of *sattva*. One *must* pass through the intermediate stage of *rajas*, tremendous activity. This is religion which, if sincerely practised, will generate a power the immense magnitude of which will astonish mankind.

In fact, our choice can only be religion. Politics is not for us. Let us give up the foolishness of denying our past, and organise ourselves on the spiritual basis. We have already indicated the lines along which national work should be carried,—the separate organisation of each department. But all these departments as well as every individual must have one purpose in view, the realisation of the spiritual ideal. What exactly is being done in relation to politics, will have to be done in relation to spirituality. Let us deluge the country with spiritual ideas, that is the first and the *greatest* step towards national regeneration. All other things will follow of course. For, when people have awakened to the consciousness of their spiritual integrity, inertia and confusion will fly off, and each man will set himself to his work in a worshipful spirit, and service of the nation will appear as service of God, for there is no country without God and except in the heart of God.

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## LIFTING THE VEIL

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The Kena Upanishad begins with a very significant question :

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः । केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

“By whom desired and set forth does the mind flow towards its object? At whose bidding again does the chief Prana proceed to its functions? By whom wished do men utter the speech? What effulgent one, indeed, directs the eye or the ear?”

We generally ignore this question amidst the din and turmoil of our daily life. Our mind is raising constant storms in us. It holds up sometimes alluring pictures before us, and sometimes wears very gloomy looks. We feel at one time completely shattered by adversities and at another time highly elated. We are thus eternally at the mercy of the whims and freaks of our mind. We are verily its bondmen. We do not enquire if there is any one at the back of the mind exerting a regulating influence over it. Our eyes, ears and other senses are also most capriciously running after different objects, and most terrible sufferings are the consequence. It is true they apparently bring us occasional pleasure, but it needs little thought and experience to know how false and fleeting it is. And through the conspiracy of the mind and the senses, we are held back from asking ourselves the all-important question, Who is he that guides the senses? Do they obey any laws? Have they any master over them?

We are most of us given to superficial living. We do not know why we cannot dive deep into the heart of these momentous problems and wring therefrom the supreme remedy of our life's troubles. If life is all joy,

we can know it by going to the very source of it and drink deep of that fountainhead. If life is really and essentially miserable, a deep and inmost enquiry alone can find out the cause of the misery and eventually root it out. But somehow we do not feel inclined to take up this quest. We do not seem to want that 'golden wand' the touch of which will awaken 'the sleeping princess.' Ours is on the other hand the seemingly eternal chase after the will-o'-the-wisp of sense-joy, unreasoned and foolish, and deathly terrible.

But the Upanishad has given the answer :

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यदाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणश्चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य  
धीराः प्रेत्यात्मास्त्रोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

"He is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, He is also the Prana of the Prana, the eye of the eye. Knowing thus, the wise, having relinquished all false identification of the self with the senses, become immortal, when departed from this world."

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति न मनो न विद्वो न विजानीमी यथैतदनु-  
शिष्यात् । अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि इति शुश्रूषाम् । पूर्वेषां ये नस्त-  
द्वाचचक्षिरे ॥

"There goes neither the eye, nor speech, nor mind ; we know it not ; nor do we see how to teach one about It. Different It is from all that are known, and is beyond the unknown as well,—thus we have heard from the ancient seers who explained That to us."

Here is the clue to how our senses are guided and the mind is controlled, as well as to the remedy against their oppression on us. There is One within us who directs the senses, commands the mind and is the regulator of our intellect. When we realise this fact and realise Him, all our sufferings vanish and our imperfections are made whole, and we are made one with the Life Divine. Our everyday life gives us little opportunity to solve this question, for we ever identify ourselves with our senses and the mind,—to go beyond them is to negate the world itself—and subject ourselves to their mercies and suffer.



We think we are a bundle of limbs and organs and are extremely anxious to save and protect them. Through these limbs and organs we relate ourselves to other bundles of limbs and organs and share their suffering. Life is robbed of all peace and calm and we gasp for a breath of relief. Yet we do not know nor do we care to know that what we call our *self* is but the shadow of the *Real Self* who is hidden from us with all His glory and blessedness through ignorance.

He is beyond knowledge—the ordinary knowledge, He cannot be known. Because He is infinite and cannot be grasped by our finite nature. We see all things with our eyes, but because it is He who is the power behind the eyes, we cannot see Him. “How can you know the knower?” We hear with our ears, but since it is He who is the power behind hearing, we cannot hear Him. In the same way, we cannot smell Him, because the power of smell comes from Him. Words cannot express Him, because the power of speech comes from Him. The mind cannot encompass Him, because He is the sustainer of the mind. The senses and the mind are like the puppets in a puppet-play, moved and directed by His invisible hand. This is the mystery of existence. Without His substance and light, this world of ours would have been lost in nothingness, and even ordinary knowledge would have been impossible ; and yet all these cannot even faintly express Him. As Sri Ramakrishna’s homely illustration explains, He is like a policeman with a bull’s-eye lantern on his night watch. His lantern lights up other things but not himself. So we may pursue the reflected light of God in the world through eternity but shall never come to its original—the Transcendent Effulgence. Well has the Upanishad said :

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

“The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor this lightning, and much less this fire.

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He shining, everything else shines, by His light all this is lighted." His is all light that we see in the universe, external and internal. But none of them can show His Inscrutable Face !

Therefore it is said,—Whoever says he has known Brahman knows Him not. But Brahman is truly comprehended by him who knows Him as incomprehensible. Brahman is ever "unknown" to the wise. It is only the self-conceited ignorant who say that they have known Him. Brahman cannot be known in the ordinary sense of the word *knowledge*. He is not to be known objectively. He is to be realised subjectively, as the soul of our soul, the life of our life. We really know Him only when we know Him as the perceiver of all objects. When we have known Him thus, we no longer have a separate existence from Him or any consciousness of separateness. And we cannot then speak of Him in an objective sense. A salt doll went to measure the saline waters of the ocean ; but before it had gone far into the waters, it melted and became one with them. "To know Brahman is to become Brahman."

The light of our life is a reflection of God's light, but in our ignorance we claim it as our own. We go about our business in the world, and when we succeed, we say the success is *ours*, *we* have achieved it by *our own* labour and effort, scarcely thinking that the power to work and succeed comes from God. But when failure overtakes us, we do not ascribe it to ourselves, but look for an invisible Power to lay the responsibility on and cry for His help. This is life, a weary tale of alternate smiles and tears. Yet we do not ask ourselves whom we really live by.

This is nicely explained in the Kena Upanishad by means of a parable. There was a great fight between the gods and the demons, in which the gods came out victorious. In the excess of their pride, they began to boast of their powers and greatness, little thinking that the glory of the victory belonged really to Brahman and


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not to themselves. Brahman perceived their exultation and appeared before them in a strange form. Naturally the gods failed to recognise Him. They said to Fire, "You who know everything, go and find out who this strange being is." When Fire approached Him, He asked him, "Who are you?" "I am Fire," he replied. "What are your powers?" "I can burn all whatever there is on earth." "Burn this straw," and Brahman put a straw before him. Fire approached it with all his might, but could not burn it and went back hanging his head in shame. At this, Air went forward. "I am Air," he said, "I can take up all whatever there is on earth." But he could not move the little straw and went back ashamed. But when Indra came forward, Brahman revealed to him His secret, and the gods knew that it was the strength of Brahman, and not their own, that gave them victory over the demons.

In exactly the same way we fare in this world. We are easily puffed up by success and make a parade of it. Then comes failure to convince us of our littleness. To some the world goes easy, they may deny the existence of a Higher Power. But to others perhaps, everything goes wrong, they look in vain for an explanation of the odds of fortune. The fact is, the power behind both success and failure is Brahman Himself. Ignorance does not permit us to perceive it. A veil of delusion hides as it were the Shining Face of Brahman. Should we then cease to strive for anything? The question does not arise. For, whether we will or not, we shall *have* to be active till we have oned ourselves with Brahman. Until we have realised Him, there can be no peace or rest for us. The moral of the parable is not a stagnant fatalism. The parable exhorts us to cease to identify our self-consciousness with the mind and the senses and to identify it with the Real Self. It tell us to know the mind and the senses as they really are, dead and inert, made to look conscious and living by the reflected light of the Self.

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः। भूतषु भूतेषु विचिता धीराः प्रेत्यास्माह्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

“If a man knows It here, then there is truth ; if he does not know It here, then there is the great destruction for him. The wise, having realised that Atman in all beings, become immortal, on departing from this world.” We have to perceive Brahman in and behind every object and happening in the world. Only thus can we go beyond the great delusion. Till then, we shall have to fall victims to the unceasing round of births and deaths with their inherent and concomitant evils and sufferings.

How to realise Him? “Let the mind,” says the Upanishad, “always go to Him, let the mind always remember Him.” “Know Him alone,—the one and only Existence, give up all other thoughts.” That is to say, deny the modifications of the mind and the senses and their objects. Turn your face from the shadow and look at the resplendent Sun. Well says the Upanishad :

“The mind is chiefly spoken of as of two kinds, pure and impure. The impure mind is that which is possessed of desire, and the pure is that which is devoid of desire.

“It is indeed the mind that is the cause of men’s bondage and liberation. The mind that is attached to sense-objects leads to bondage, while, dissociated from sense-objects, it is held to be fit for liberation.

“Since liberation is predicated of the mind devoid of desire for sense-objects, therefore the mind should always be made free of such desire, by the seeker after liberation.”

The mind is like a search-light thrown outwards bringing into the light of cognition the world of sense-joys. Let us turn it inwards and the great Inner Illumination shall be ours.

पराञ्चि खानि व्यहणत् स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्। कश्चिद्बीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमेक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥

“The self-existent God has rendered the senses so



defective that they go outwards, and hence man sees the external and not the internal self. Only perchance some wise man, desirous of immortality, turns his eyes inwards and beholds the inner Atman." Therefore *Nivritti*, renunciation, self-restraint and purity are the great helps towards the realisation of Brahman.

यो वा एतामेव वेदापहत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गे लोके ज्येष्ठे प्रतितिष्ठति  
प्रतितिष्ठति ॥

"He who knows this knowledge of Brahman, attains the highest heaven, having destroyed all evil." Brahman Himself is the highest heaven.

## THE PROSPECTS OF VEDANTA IN THE WEST

BY MADELINE RUTH HARDING

Like most other subjects the prospects of Vedanta in the West depend upon how it is presented to the people, and the *how* largely depends upon the people who present it. It is simplicity which people seem needing now in their religious life, something free of all unnecessary trimmings, a religion the power of which can be demonstrated in daily life by the overcoming of sin, sickness, and inharmony of every kind. But the foundation must be strong and absolutely clear, in the light of which all that comes into daily life can be examined.

Some years ago, when first interested in what is known as Christian Science, the writer asked that someone might come and give some enlightenment on certain difficulties in the way of its acceptance. Chief, perhaps, was the insistence that *all matter is illusion*. This is a difficult point when at first its acceptance is demanded of a would-be convert. But alas! the one who came to enlighten had no ability to explain, and the writer feeling in still greater difficulty at the close of the talk, could only exclaim, "Then why do you dress up your illusion in jewels and

furs?" But later a little study of what is meant by Maya gave the needed help.

Next the explanations of the *spiritual man as the only reality* were not convincing and raised many difficulties, but the teaching of the Vedanta gave true light on this, and one began to realise the *Infinite* as the Life of one's life, the Self of one's self.

And so if the truths of the Vedanta are to be brought before the people of the West, one of the first necessities is clear explanation, without embroideries, of the basic truths, given under such headings as God—The World—Man. These are three subjects which appeal to all at some time in their lives. Perhaps all teaching under these heads could conform to a very clear, short, explanatory little text book.

On such a foundation as this all else could be built, according to the needs of each one, and light would be thrown on the long-discussed question of the brotherhood of man. Then it would be realised that it is first and foremost a spiritual brotherhood, the realisation of which, as in the case of Jesus the Christ and other great teachers and prophets who have come from time to time all down the ages, will manifest itself in love, self-sacrifice, and all that goes to make up the consciousness of a man who realises his oneness with the All-Father-Mother God. Just the simply put truth that God is the *only* Life, manifesting through all men, limited only by man's material mind, would soon result in some conception of the brotherhood, as well as the greatness of man.

Strong food could be given as needed, but there are certain great truths which at first sound to mortal sense as blasphemy, although later the same people may accept them with eagerness. For instance, if any man here stood forth and said, as did the great Swami Vivekananda, "I am Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute ; I am Life, the One Being, and nothing exists except through Me, and as Me" etc. etc., he would run the risk of being certified insane.



Even in the case of the great Swami when similar utterances reached ears not prepared for them, they were looked upon as blasphemous. Commenting on some such phrases in one of his lectures in Madras, after his return from the Chicago Parliament of Religions, a member of a great missionary family wrote: "Oh this poor dark India! If there is anything more pathetic than its darkness I think it is its light. 'Awakened India' hails these doctrines as inspired."\*

To the writer it seems that India holds the greatest and deepest of truths, capable of revolutionising not only India but the whole world. But it is the *effect* of these truths which people are out to see, and our missionaries and others come back here and address church congregations on the results of 'Idol-worship' as seen in the degradation of women, child-marriages, cruel treatment of little widows and inhuman treatment of the Shudra class. These are the chief pegs on which the abuse of India and her religion are hung.

Therefore, it is the grand basic truths to which we must revert:—that, as already stated, God is the *only* Life, manifesting through all men, limited only by man's material mind. We can then show the wonderful workings-out, of which this understanding is capable; and next show that this *realised* will enable men to *demonstrate* this oneness in the overcoming of inharmonious material conditions, bringing into their life health, holiness, happiness, harmony, and the supply of all their needs. For man realising his oneness with the Infinite, can be the channel of nought but good.

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\* Swami Vivekananda, however, believed that this great truth could be preached to all and made easily acceptable to them. It depends on how we present it. If we tell a man that 'he is God,' he will consider it blasphemy. But if we tell him instead, "You are infinite, you have infinite power in you, you are not a sinner, but pure, you are not miserable, but infinitely blissful, you are not ignorant, but knowledge itself; you have forgotten your real nature, remember it, and you will be Divine," we are sure many will welcome it as a beautiful idea. Yet both these presentations are identical in substance. Swamiji wanted that the glory of the Atman should be preached to all, whatever might be the form of presentation.—Ed., P. B.

The time seems to have come for a religion which can be judged by its fruits, in the power of good over evil, harmony over inharmony, health over sickness, plenty over lack ; and what can give greater power than the knowledge that the Life of our life, the Self of our self is God—Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent?

If Vedanta could be presented to the people of the West in this simple way, which need not rest upon close and prolonged study as with some of us who have gained a little understanding, the prospects of its success are great. Only this week the writer had an instance of the power of its appeal—a man, an educated man, exclaiming, “How wonderfully simple! and can this be applied to everything in life?”

The people of the West, that is to say, the workers and the anxious ones, seem more and more weary of the formal religions which suit the well-to-do and care-free, so many of whom just salve their conscience by repeating written prayers and creeds, or following the words of others in the form of petitions. Many of us who have suffered the hard things of life realise we need the Christ, but not so-called Christianity or Churchianity. As we look around on the majority of those calling themselves Christians, they do not appeal to us, and we whose hearts are tried and sore, exclaim with the great Swami :

“I tell you it is because you are not like your Christ. Do you think if you came to our doors like Him, meek and lowly, with a message of love, living and working and suffering for others as He did, we should turn a deaf ear? Oh no! We should receive Him and listen to Him.”

If the really simple teaching of the Vedanta could be used as a basis for the expression of brotherly love in carrying out the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,” we should soon begin to realise the truth of the words of One who said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

No, the misery which prevails in India is not the product of pure Indian religion, as taught in the Vedanta,



any more than the poverty and misery and crime of our London is the product of Christianity ; but it is the outcome of the selfishness of men who know little beyond their own material life, and which only an understanding of the Real nature of man, as taught in the Vedanta, can alter.

Only in this way, too, does there seem likely to be a realisation of a universal religion of which the world stands in so much need, when we shall each respect the *means* our brother uses to bring into his own consciousness a demonstrable understanding of his oneness with the Father-Mother God.

How ignorant are the people of England of the beauties of which the pure religion of India is capable ! Perhaps when that is realised, no longer will it be said in the words of Kipling, "The East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet," because the spiritual thought of India will be a bond of brotherhood which neither soulless organisations, nor armies, will have power to hold in check.

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## THE MAHABHARATA

I lately came across a fine eulogy on Sanskrit literature and the *Mahabharata* in an article on Art and Literature contributed by A. R. Orage, editor of *New Age*, to the *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston, U. S. A.). I am sure the excerpts reproduced below will interest the readers of P. B. The writer believes that the art and literature of the West which according to him have become uncreative and soulless, can be reinfused with life and vigour only through their contact with the ancient literature of India. The yearning for the Unattainable and the Infinite, which is the primal urge behind all true art, no longer exists in the heart of the Western artists. They are trying in vain to regain the lost life of art by infusing into it the blood of savage

cultures and inventing all kinds of possible and impossible art-ideals, e.g., imagism, cubism, Joyceism, etc.

Hitherto there have been many happy accidents in the history of art in the West. *Why not another accident?* The Greek stream, about to die, received accidentally a tributary of Egyptian art "which raised its source considerably above its original level, for the Greeks, in the absence of Egyptian tradition, and even with it, were 'children.' " And later on the art of the early Middle Ages was miraculously saved by its contact with the classical sources. Since then there have been 'movements' but no great renaissance. There were only mutual influences of the countries of Europe. "There was no new tidal movement."

Now " 'the King is dead.' " Western art and literature are uninspired, and concerned and content with the visible only. The call of the Invisible does not sound in their mansions. Shall we bury the King or try to revive him by infusing life from alien sources?—asks Mr. Orage. He says:

"But is the case hopeless, and is culture irrevocably doomed? There is a remedy and not an impossible one: its name is ancient India. Ancient India stands in the same relation to us 'children' of Europe as ancient Egypt occupied toward the 'children' of Greece. Europe to-day is ancient Greece writ large. India, moreover, is our most ancient parent; our oldest racial ancestor; our Adam and Eve. Truly enough, her visage is wrinkled with age, and her words are a mumble of incoherence. [*Certainly not.*—Ed., P. B.] But so must, no doubt, have appeared to the Greek child the ancient wisdom of Egypt. Pythagoras is not reported to, have found it easy to persuade Greece to go to school to Egypt. On the other hand, we are not obliged to speculate darkly in the philosophy of India. The philosophies of India are without exception no more than mummies, the enshrined corpses of once living ideas, and dead very long since. [*Queer and ignorant ideas!*—Ed., P. B.] And even if they could be revived, art can no more be saved by



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philosophy than by art itself. The dead cannot raise the dead. Nor need we spend any time with the Indian antiquarians. Scholarship of whatever degree is barren. No—we have, by grace, accessible to us in the remains of ancient India something infinitely more living than philosophies, and infinitely more inspiring than scholarship. We have a literature translatable and translated into our own tongue, of such dimensions and qualities that its chief work alone, the *Mahabharata*, towers above all subsequent literature as the Pyramids look over the Memphian sands. Realization of the inexhaustible significance of the *Mahabharata* would be the initiation of a modern Renaissance, as surely as the revival of ancient Egypt made possible the dawn of Greece, and the swimming of Homer into the ken of the early Middle Ages stirred the watchers of the skies to ecstatic silence on a peak in Darien.

“The *Mahabharata*, competently translated into English under the supervision of the late Max Müller, and shortly to be beautifully retranslated and published under the auspices of the English Academy of Literature, is the greatest single effort of literary creation of any culture in human history. It is difficult for any mind to conceive the mind that conceived it; and the effort to do so is almost itself a liberal education. A walk through its table of contents is more than a Sabbath-day’s journey. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are episodes in it: and the celebrated *Bhagavad-Gita* is simply the record of a single conversation on the eve of one of its many battles. Characters appear by hundreds, and episodes follow episodes with the infinite resourcefulness of Time. Nevertheless, there is no moment when the plan of the work is forgotten. At regular stages, by astronomical clock-time as it were, everything is gathered together or is reassembled for a fresh phase of the continuous history. In the interval, relationships have been established between scores of characters, each of whom, moreover, has undergone mutation by experience, yet, on reassembly, the whole innumerable caravan is marshaled and set off

again with the least confusion in the mind of the reader. Never was writer more currently aware of his readers than Vyasa, the author. Ganeca, who transcribed it to Vyasa's dictation, had stipulated that he should be released if once the meaning should cease to be plain to him,* and he was not released until the end. And Ganeca is every reader.

"Scholarship, lay and 'occult,' has indulged its usual speculations in the meaning of this Cyclopean monument. It is variously the history of a soul in time, the history of the human race, the history of our planet and of our solar system ; again, it is the story of the conquest of India by the Aryans, or of a civil war between the conquerors themselves. Let it be all of them, as their authors agree to disagree. Who cares if Helen was a myth or a fact? Homer gave us literature. In the case of the *Mahabharata*, as in the case of the Bible, the theologians have sat too long upon the stone on the tomb. It is time that it were rolled away. Taken as literature simply, as the most colossal work of literary art ever created, its example and inspiration are as multiform and vital as time itself. It contains every literary form and device known to all the literary schools, every story ever enacted or narrated, every human type and circumstance ever created or encountered.

"Unlike the reading of derivative works of art, the reading of the *Mahabharata* is a first-hand experience. One ends it different, just as one emerges different from everything real.

"But is it not precisely this that is needed for a Renaissance — something at once different, real, a new experience, and, at the same time, indubitably art? To the Greeks, Egyptian art was religion only because its

* The orthodox version is different. Ganesha had stipulated that the moment Vyasa would halt in his dictation, he also would cease being his amanuensis. Vyasa accepted it on condition that Ganesha would not write anything without understanding it. So whenever Vyasa's verses would not flow eloquently, he would dictate an abstruse line which would involve Ganesha in long thinking and afford a respite to Vyasa.—Ed. P.B.

standards were incomparable, hopelessly incomparable, with the prevalent Greek standards. We have only to recall the tones of the early Florentine Platonists to realize that in their eyes the classical Greeks were divine. Where but in the *Mahabharata* shall our age find a similarly fresh literary source that shall be Scripture to our literature—Scripture being literature in pursuit of an impossible aim.”*

SURESHWAR SHASTRI

THE HEADY WINE OF POLITICS

[*An Unpublished Writing of the late SWAMI PRAJNANANDA*]

The question is whether the Indian people in view of building up a collective life should proceed on a political basis or on a spiritual basis. The trend of public activities indicates rather a general bid for a political basis and this impulse, giving itself utterance through newspapers and political movements, clearly owes its birth to the brilliant example and the atmosphere of culture which the political nations of the West have been creating all over the world. The same impulse, finding free scope and favourable circumstances in Japan, is pushing her on to the forefront of Asiatic countries as the most successful disciple of the Political West. In fact we live in an age which seems to be consecrated to this political impulse, and east or west, north or south, there is not a single country in this world, which, more or less actuated by this impulse, does not measure its status by the political standard. It is even a universal creed tacitly accepted by every *modern* man that the only conceivable outlook on collective life which man can entertain is the political.

* We believe that not only in art and literature, but also in philosophy and religion, the West may derive great inspiration from India.—*Ed., P.B.*

Notwithstanding all this, a voice of warning for India against the great political temptation rose about a decade and half ago,—the voice of an inspired messenger from On High, who closed his career of world-wide activity almost with that of the nineteenth century with its triumphant apotheosis of political nationalism. That undying voice of Swami Vivekananda lives as an inspiration for all futurity and the warning still rings clear. When it was first uttered after the Swamiji's first return from the West, the Western wine of political aspirations was just coursing through the blood of educated India, and they slid down too soon, from visions of spiritual glory for their country which the inspired eloquence of the speaker conjured up, into the sphere of political ambitions that lay closer to their choice. But in this there was no occasion for losing heart, for wine must have its action, only let it not be the drunkard's dose, but the patient's. Before this, the heart of the Indian people had been falling fast into the fatal sleep of *tamas* and a new spirit of activity was required to be infused into it at any cost. So it was a kind Providence that brought down over it the rude shock of conflicting Western ideals, and from the confusion of conflict and the tumult of self-adaptation, the keynote of a new awakening was heard in the revived sentiment for collective interests and collective life, that welled up in the bosom of educated men with the promise of a long lease of new life for India. It was of the highest moment then that that sentiment after this its new birth should live to grow and deepen, and a comparatively less value attached at that stage to the question of a proper direction. So this sentiment, cut off from all those forces that gave it direction and scope in the historic past but now lay dormant, had to depend for nourishment and support solely on a common political outlook and a common imported culture which the British rule brought with it, and naturally caught the contagion of that political impulse which runs rampant in the West. The political spirit is fraught with the excitement of conflicting rights and is therefore fraught


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with that *rajas* which constitutes the most potent force for counteracting *tamas*. So the wine of political aspirations acted from the beginning like a powerful tonic upon the nerves of Indian life stupefied by *tamas*, and while giving forth his message of warning, Swami Vivekananda could well afford to wait and follow its action, till the enduring sentiment for collective life into which this wine had transfused itself would rise as a result of the process to the pitch of an active unquenchable enthusiasm.

But the aspect of things has changed since then, and the patient's dose has turned itself into the drunkard's. The political craze has seized upon the soul of educated India and a political prospect for collective life in India has enchanted their vision. Lost in a dreamland of political independence, they have been weaving up their religion and their past history into the tawdry texture of their dream, and the nimbler spirits fretting against obstructions have been running sometimes to ignoble excesses. It is a pitiless triumph of the Western political spirit, seeking to lead India astray from that noblest scheme of collective life which she has been working at throughout her past and which she has got to demonstrate to mankind in the future. And the pity of it is that half of this triumph has been won behind the treacherous cover of the term "Swadeshi"! For a political prospect for the Indian collective life is as good "Swadeshi" as some Swadeshi articles in use, manufactured from ingredients and inclosed in bottles that are all of foreign importation!

It is high time therefore that the unwary victims of the political creed in India should cry halt in this their onward march to self-oblivion and ruin, and should firmly draw the line between their political impulse and the noble sentiment for collective life that owns a deeper and nobler source in the depths of their nature. It is high time for all the sons of India that have the sacred enthusiasm for collective life kindled in them, to stop subjecting it further to the profanation of a refined political selfishness as the rest of the world blinded by their world-

liness do. For it should be to them the sublimest *homa* fire for a new sacrament of worship, such as will give to all mankind an imperishable sanctuary to turn to for spirituality real and unalloyed,—the India of the future where that ideal will perpetuate itself in and through an organisation of life and activity, more perfect and enduring than any political organisation of any country in the world. It is this supreme ideal of spirituality to which India has been bearing a pledged existence since the time she rose out of the watery depths, and she is bound to live so long as that ideal lives, like the eternal blue, standing inviolable beyond the sunshine and cloud of political vicissitudes and announcing itself and its claims over the birth and fall of kingdoms and empires.

So the situation most clearly demands that the great warning of Swami Vivekananda be reiterated and explained in terms of modern culture. But the secret of his unerring insight into the past and future of his country lay in his actual communion and perfect self-identification with that tremendous force that has come down embodied in the miracle of Sri Ramakrishna's life to replenish, as by an all-overwhelming wave, the ancient but declining life-currents of India, and thus to impel her onward to her predestined path of progress and beneficence to mankind.

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## “TURYANANDA'S CONCLUSION ”

BY DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

I have intimated in a previous chapter that I intended to deal at length with Swami Turyananda's work. He was one of the disciples of Rama Krishna whom I knew. And since he is not living now, I think I may speak about him without any reserve.

I have already alluded to his great power and prestige among other holy men. At his feet I learnt more about the heart of the religious teachings of India than



I can set forth in writing. It was because of his Himalayan spiritual stature that I returned to him to obtain a final measurement of the Message of Rama Krishna.

Now the Monastery in Benares, over which Turyananda presided,\* was divided into two sections, separated from each other by a high concrete wall. One of them was called Gunatita and the other Saguna.

In the former lived about a dozen monks who through meditation and concentration sought to realise the Gunatita—God without any name or form. They held no rites and rituals. Their days were spent in learning concentration and acquiring Insight. They were the most devoted of scholars as well. They studied all the Indian systems of philosophy and those of the West. Their dwelling, a two-storeyed brick building, gave one the impression of unmitigated somberness. Every wall, every door and every stick of furniture had no useless decoration. Beauty had been reduced to bare essentials in this home of Silence and Meditation. I do not know why Turyananda, who was a Yogi and holy man, never lived in the Gunatita section.

On the contrary, he dwelt in the Saguna part of the Monastery. Saguna (through name and form†) worship consists in realising God through work, prayer, rituals, observances and festivals. In fact the word Saguna covered a multitude of practices, such as feeding the hungry, succoring the needy, ministering to the sick and giving instruction to those who asked for it. Owing to the range of the activities that the Saguna worshippers undertook, they had to own an estate full of buildings of all kinds, and large gardens. In a remote corner of the latter, under some tall trees, stood the hut of Turyananda. Since I have dwelt in another place elaborately with Turyananda's conception of salvation by

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\* Swami Turiyananda was not the president of either of the sections.—Ed., P.B.

† Saguna = *Having*, not *through*, name and form.—Ed., P.B.



good works, I shall not go into the matter here. Let us learn from his lips the import of the message of Rama Krishna.\*

It was on a morning in June that I presented myself at the door of Turyananda's hut. After entering, I found its interior filled as usual with cool shadows. There was not much sunlight within, but the atmosphere was clear enough to afford me a distinct vision of every person and object in the room. Turyananda, clad in the ocher robe of Sanyasins, sat on a couch in the middle of the room. One glance at his face made it more than vivid to me that he was all-holy. I took the dust from his feet, then crouched on the floor before him. Now I looked at him very carefully. This time that lion-like person was pouring upon me a sweetness and tenderness

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\* The last three paragraphs are misleading in their description. The two sections of the Monastery are called *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama* and *Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama*, and not *Gunatita* and *Saguna*. These appellations are the author's own creation. It is true, *Advaita* is equal to *Gunatita*; but the Monastery is not named the *Advaita*, but *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita, Ashrama*; and *Sevashrama* is in English a *Home of Service*. In the *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama*, there are at least two shrines in which daily worship is held with all rites and ceremonies. There are besides celebrations of annual worships and festivals. Its inmates are not devoted merely to meditation and concentration, but also to occasional ceremonials and charitable works. The *Sevashrama* is devoted essentially to the treatment and cure of the diseased, the workers being all monks. The institution is maintained by public help, and a statement of finances and work done is reported annually to the public. That is why the *Sevashrama* and its work and property are entirely separate from *Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama* which depends for its maintenance entirely on the private charities of devotees and is an absolutely private institution. The workers of the *Sevashrama* and the inmates of the *R.K. Advaita Ashrama* belong both to the same *Sri Ramakrishna Order of monks*, and the nature of the spiritual practice of each is determined by his choice and temperament, irrespective of the nature of the *Ashrama* to which he may temporarily belong. But of course the workers of the *Sevashrama* cannot devote as much time to spiritual practices, properly so-called, on account of their heavy hospital duties as the inmates of the *R. K. Advaita Ashrama* can. But so long as they are engaged in the hospital work, they make of their service a worship of the Divine by looking upon the patients as the embodiments of God Himself. A monk however does not generally work more than six years in the *Sevashrama*, and he is allowed afterwards time enough to devote to prescribed spiritual practices.

Swami Turiyanandaji lived in the *Sevashrama* on account of want of house-room in the *R.K. Advaita Ashrama*.—Ed., P.B.



that were indescribable : his eyes, his mouth, even the slight forward inclination of his head, all showered on me the benediction of a lover and a seer. He gazed on me I know not how long, when those smiling lips opened and in a deep voice (deep as a bull-frog's, we say) he said : "You have certain questions for my ear, my son." "Yes, my Lord, it is about your Master, and about this Monastery."

"About Him, all of you know my feeling. May He bless you with illumination."

"My Lord," I began again, "if I understand Rama Krishna's stature at all, it is because I have beheld you."

"You mean, a dwarf like me conveys to you the Himalaya-humbling height of his soul?" Then Turyananda laughed out aloud. It was a very simple laugh ; not a trace of malice in it, but plenty of mischief. He laughed so that tears stood in his eyes. It took him a little time to wipe his eyes dry with an end of his robe. "Please repeat your question to me."

I said : "Please don't laugh at it. I want to know many things. But the question that I should like to ask first is about your work. Why do you live here in the Saguna section?\* Is Saguna worship really better than the Gunatita?"

Never in a hurry, Turyananda pondered a little. He put his hands together—then looked at them. Now fixing his gaze on me he began : "In the Gunatita—beyond

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\* We are sure this question must have appeared strange to the Swami ; for as we have explained in a previous foot-note, the distinction the author conceives between the two Ashramas is non-existent and unknown. The dialogue that follows may possibly be misunderstood by the unwary reader. The first question put to the Swami is why he lived in the Saguna section, i.e., in the Sevashrama instead of in the R. K. Advaita Ashrama. The reply that the Swami gives is not evidently to it, but clearly to the second question, "Is Saguna worship really better than the Gunatita?" The Swami's reply is really an amplification of the verse of the Gita—"Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the Unmanifested ; for the goal of the Unmanifested is very hard for the embodied to reach" (XII, 4), and of Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine of Vijnana, according to which the devotee, after realising the Highest, dwells in the world in the loving service of men. But there are passages in the conversation, which seem to indicate that the author has taken the Swami's words as a reply to his first query also.—*Ed., P.B.*

name and form—the monks practise the arts of concentration, and study Vedanta texts along with other metaphysics. They are in a hurry to find Him, so they think of Him all the time. When they cannot practise concentration they read the sacred books. Thus they keep themselves—mind and body—consecrated to one subject. The only times they interrupt their work are when they eat their solitary meal and sleep. They do not sleep much either. It is a hard life. But that is the price you pay for giving up the simpler path of name and form.”

“But, my Lord, you are one of the great holy men of our time. Why don't you go to the other side? Why do you stay and work here in this world?” I asked with impatience.

He laughed again. This time it was a gentle laughter. After the zephyr of mirth had subsided, he resumed: “It is well that I accept every epithet that comes my way. For a man who is a votary of God must accept whatever is hurled at him—a cow-dung cake or a lotus-flower. As to why I do not go over to the other side, my son, your answer is in Rama Krishna. If He who became God stayed on this side, after his realization, why not the smaller fry like myself? Then they who are working in and through Saguna name and form, are as sacred as those on the other, Gunatita, side. These here are probably more sacred for they are more numerous.\* God comes to earth for them. Then there is more fun to be had here. Think of the kind of questions like yours that are asked to quicken our vanity. And after all, as our Master says, that to earn salvation for one's own self is not amusing enough—I really mean amusement, since God is the Most Absorbing Amusement. You must see the light in order to give sight to the blind, which is most amusing. The more numerous the ways of reaching Him, all the more formidable grows the consensus of opinion that He exists. If you love God, and if you

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\* We wonder if the Swami really said this. This appears so unlike him! Besides, the statement is scarcely correct.—*Ed., P.B.*



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have seen Him your way, it is to your own interest to urge others to see Him through their unique methods. How else can you know that your way (of religion) has given you the ultimate God, if all the other religions do not reveal Him every time a soul plunders the secret of Immortality? Rama Krishna taught us the ancient truth of India—ATMANO MOKSHARTHA JAGAT JANA HITAYACHA (the blessings that will come to all and the salvation that will be yours).^{*} Where else but in this part can one pursue both? One like myself likes this Saguna worship. Each name and each form that is, exists in order to articulate God. We must help all people to utter the thunder of Silence. Let the gem of salvation be set in the heart of every man and woman. For each one of them is here to give you verification of your God by finding Him in his way.”

“That explains why you who can easily cross over any time to the Gunatita, Absolute, stay here on this side of name and form?” I asked.

“I stay on this side,” he said emphatically, “because it is easier of the two. It is the path of the weak and the simple. Here is room for a man of action, for a pure mystic, and for a pure lover of God.[†] The man of action, if he eschews all the material reward of his acts here and hereafter, will find God in no time. A mystic who meditates and prays without any desire for acquiring power, he too will find the All-Powerful in a short time. And he, who loves God's creatures, finds Him the instant his love is not caused by a motive, nor held by an earthly end.[‡] Here in the house of name and form there is room for all. It is the market place of the Infinite. I

^{*} The Sanskrit and the translation as here given are scarcely correct. They should be: *Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya cha* (“for one's own emancipation and for the good of the world”).—*Ed., P.B.*

[†] But as a matter of fact the pure mystic follows the path of the Gunatita and not of the Sugana—to use the author's expressions.—*Ed., P.B.*

[‡] The sentence is scarcely a correct presentation of *Bhakti Yoga* (for it is evidently *Bhakti Yoga* which is intended),—it rather describes *Karma Yoga*—the Path of Action.—*Ed., P.B.*

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love to be here. Rama Krishna set us the example."

Turyananda's face glowed with enthusiasm. His hands lay wide open and inert on his lap. If one could overlook the movement of his lips and the fire in his eyes while he was talking, one would at once feel the perfect serenity and poise that characterised him. He embodied the phrase of the poet—"That man is fierce with tranquillity."

Now I asked him the most vital of all my questions. I spoke with a studied slowness in order to make him receive my words without laughing at them again.

"My Lord, what is the message that Rama Krishna has for the West?"

"The West must realize God more. Realization is what Rama Krishna symbolized. Religion is the record of our experience of God, and not a theory of our own belief in God. To the West his message is the same as to the East. Find God. He said to Swami Vivekananda in answer to the question: Can you see God?—'Yes, as I see you, only more intensely.' If Rama Krishna saw and became God, so can you and I. To be religious is to experience and then to believe in God. Belief comes after experience. Belief that precedes experience is not important."

"Yet there is not one belief," I interrupted him. "Only One God, but so many religions and beliefs."

The holy man fell in line with my thought with perfect ease. He rejoined: "There is only One Truth, but there are so many ways of experiencing Him. And there ought to be as many beliefs as there are experiences of God. Authentic and important beliefs are but statements of men's realization of their own inherent Godhood. Look, how experiences and statements of them differ in such objective matters as the sun—Men's experiences differ exceedingly. An African's feeling of the sun is quite different from that of a Laplander. They have different stories to tell about the cycles of the sun; the former believes that it shines twelve hours a day, while the latter holds that it shines for six months in a



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year. Yet it is the same sun. Similarly with our experience of God. Though we all realize the One Beloved, our ways of stating Him are quite different. Yet all of them verify and magnify His 'thousand-facèdness.' Instead of seeing the same bleak, flat face all the time, we all see many different faces of the One Face of Silence. Does not that make the Lord all the more interesting? You cannot be bored by Him, since by the time you have grown used to seeing one aspect of Him, He has another to reveal to you. He is ever new, for He is for ever the same. As to a growing child its mother seems to display different sides of herself year after year, so does the Mother of the Universe to us. Once, when we are spiritually young, He is our Helper and Sustainer. During our soul's adolescence we find in Him our most intimate friend. In the growing manhood of our spirit, He reveals Himself as a symbol of our experience. And at the end we discover that all those faces that we have looked upon are but faces of our own Immortal Self."

"How can we find that self, my Lord?" I cried out. "So many religious teachers, so many Gurus, create but confusion!" Turyananda paused awhile. He looked at me; then through the small window at the garden without. Slowly he withdrew his gaze and fastened it upon me again. "There are Gurus who have seen the Lord. Find one of those. He will take you into the very nuptial chamber where souls of men are united with the Lord. Such a Guru may come from any caste or religion. He may be a Hindu, a Moham-medan or a Christian, but he alone has the power and the right to take on a disciple. If you have come across one such, go to that Guru, and he will give you the key to the Chamber of the Bridegroom."

Here someone interrupted us, and the rest of my questions had to remain unasked until the morrow. The next day about four in the afternoon, Turyananda discoursed to me, as he and I walked up and down on the

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green turf of the Monastery gardens. He appeared quite different, as if he was another man—alert, athletic, noticing things quickly and clearly. Now and then he shouted to a passing white-robed Brahmachari and asked him about the health of certain patients in the hospital. Sometimes he stopped and chatted with the gardener working at a small bush, “about the diseases of certain trees and plants this time of the year,” yet all that time—nearly two hours—he kept the thread of our conversation uninterrupted. It was during one of the pauses of his chat with the gardener that he asked me: “You have another enquiry to make. What is it, my son?”

So I put forth another question: “If each man can find God in his own way, then why not through Yoga practices?”

“Yoga practices are singular,” he said. “Have you dived deep into Shivananda’s pamphlet\* on that? It is a deep work, that is why it is so short. You must not be deluded by what the Yogi teachers say. For Shivananda is right. If you learn to control your breath, if you increase your powers of concentration, all those things tend to make you strong. Even physical health is affected by them. *Na tasya roga na jara na mrityu praptasya yogagnimayam shariram*—He has no age, disease, nor decay, who has put on the flame-garb of Yoga. That is true. But perpetual youth is no good to you if you cannot find Him, the Ageless, who does not have to be even young....

“Beware, my son! If you search for and find God, all the occult powers will be won unto you. And what is more astonishing than a dwarf’s scaling the Himalayas is that once the Beatific Vision has been vouchsafed unto you, you will never be tempted to abuse your powers. Like those great men who, given the freedom of a city never use it, so does one with the privileges

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\* As a matter of fact, the pamphlet was not published till nearly two years after Swami Turiyanandaji’s passing away.—Ed., P.B.



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 of the House of Immortality. The sons of Immortality never stoop to magic or display of power.

“Besides, we are living in an age when men have neither time nor patience for the thaumaturgy of occultism and Yoga. Men and women nowadays are in a great hurry. Hence they will take short-cuts to the Infinite. In Kali Yuga, this age, the only thing they have to do is to go on wanting the Lord sincerely. If they want Him long, He will reveal Himself to their mortal eyes. There is no doubt of it. He is like the mother-cat who cannot resist the crying call of her kitten very long. Look at Rama Krishna. He found the Mother by simply crying and pleading with Her. Do so yourself and She will at once take down the mask of the sun from Her Face, and reveal to you Her Face of Compassion that is within you. Oh! it is so easy to find God in our time! Look, my child, the sun is setting. It is time to commune with Her. Come into my dwelling and meditate with me. Hari Om, Hari Om.”*

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HIMALAYAN WHISPERS.—By A. Christina Albers. Published by Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta and Simla. Pp. 16. Price Re. 1/-.

We had already the pleasure of noticing the poems that constitute the present delightful booklet in our February issue of 1925 (P. 92). The poems are extremely beautiful and we who live in the Himalayas, can attest to the genuineness of the poet's feelings and imagination. The metre and diction seem to enclose in them the very sublimity and sweet purity of the Himalayan snows. All who have not visited these holy mountains can breathe through these poems their transcendent atmosphere.

* From the author's *The Face of Silence*, lately brought out by Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Co., New York. A review of the book will appear in our next issue.—Ed. P.B.

The booklet is nicely got-up with an oval picture of the Himalayan snow-peaks attached to the cover. The price is rather too high for such a small thing.

THE HIDDEN POWERS IN MAN.—By M. N. Ganesa Iyer. Published by P. K. Vinayaga Mudaliar & Co., Sowcarpet, Madras. Pp. 482. Price Rs. 2/8.

Deals among others with the following subjects,—Thought and its Power, Telepathy, Hypnotism, Clairvoyance, Apparitions and Ghosts, Magic and Witchcraft and Dream Reading. Get-up indifferent.

BHAGAVAT GITHA UPANISHAD, Part I.—Translated by Parameswara.

A very original interpretation of the Gita! "This edition consists of 745 verses between which and extant Gita editions about 560 verses are common but here the same verses are in a different order of utterance."

SHRI SANTASANGHA PUSTAKMALA, Part III.—Published by Krishna Jagannath Thaly, Ramsevak Chitralaya, Girgaon Road, Bombay. Pp. Demy 108. Price Rs. 2/-

Contains pictures and short life-sketches of forty Sadhus and devotees written both in English and Marathi and ends with a collection of devotional songs and poems. A delightful publication, nicely got-up and cloth-bound.

NEWS AND NOTES

HINDUISM IN EUROPE

The Indian press, sometime ago, circulated the news of a Western lady having embraced Hinduism. The *Daily News* of London published an article on the day she sailed for India from London, giving interesting details about her and her intentions. It said:

Believed to be the only European woman subscribing to the Hindu faith, Mrs. Walter Tibbits, widow of a major


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in the Northern Army of India, sails to-day for India to lay the foundation-stone of a museum at Benares, to the cost of which she has contributed £15,000. Her only companion will be a Brahmin woman of high rank, and in India Mrs. Tibbits, who is a novelist and authoress of mystical works, will also go on a sacred pilgrimage to a 15,000-feet-high cave in the Kashmir Hills. She is taking her collection of pictures, which will eventually adorn the walls of the museum at Benares, and an urn containing the ashes of her husband, Major Walter Tibbits, which will be placed in a niche in a wall. A place will be reserved for a similar urn to enclose her ashes after death.

"The Voice of the Orient Museum" will be the name of this museum, which is being erected to the memory of her husband. "I am undertaking the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone as a deputy of Marshall Foch, a very old friend of mine, who is patron of my gift," Mrs. Tibbits told a "Daily News" representative. "Madame Foch has been helping me to obtain copies of pictures in the Louvre to hang on the museum walls. This museum is to be a museum of Eastern and Western art and travel, and I chose the name from the title of the first book I published." Sir Edwin Lutyens, she added, was going to Benares at the end of December to arrange the design of the museum.

The Hindoo University, in which the museum is to be erected, occupies a site two miles by one in the midst of grassy plains on the banks of the Ganges, and Mrs. Tibbits' museum will stand in the centre of it. The laying of the foundation-stone ceremony will take place on Jan. 17 of next year. Mrs. Tibbits will stay in India a year. At Benares she will be the guest of the Maharajah of Mysore, the late Chancellor of the University. Since a year after her marriage she has been an adherent of the Hindoo religion, and it is her intention to go on a pilgrimage to the cave of Amarnath to get material for a book on veiled mysticism in India.

Interesting as the article was, the reply that was sent to it by an English lady under the caption "European

Converts to Hindu Faith'' was more interesting and thought-provoking still. It indicates how much the principles of our religion are in request in the West, and how with little effort on our part, they are slowly gaining ground. We quote the reply in full :

As a follower myself of the pure teaching of the Vedanta, I was interested to read in your issue of September 14th that Mrs. Walter Tibbits is a convert to the Hindu faith.

I would like to state that the *belief* that this lady is ''the only European woman subscribing to the Hindu faith'' is without foundation. There are many who are doing so quietly and unostentatiously, realising that it is the wonderful Indian philosophy which gives the greatly needed understanding of man's relationship to God, based on the perfect unity of God and man, which Jesus the Christ taught.

To mention only one, who is known to all students of the *pure* Hindu faith, there is the well-known English lady, Miss Margaret Noble. She left all to become a disciple of the eloquent and learned Swami Vivekananda, who some years ago delighted and spiritually helped his hearers, both in England and America. After this lady's conversion and settling in India, she was known as Sister Nivedita. Her books are well known to students of Vedanta or Hindu philosophy,—''The Web of Indian Life,'' ''The Master as I Saw Him,'' and several others.

Only last month an English lady, Miss Elizabeth Mayson, another convert to the Hindu faith, arrived in Calcutta for further study under the guidance of the great thinker, teacher and author, Swami Abhedananda, President of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society.

In the present day one has only to open papers, to which truly spiritual and highly qualified men and women contribute, to at once see that their writings are saturated with Indian thought. Many are beginning to realise the truth of what one of our own great Bishops said, that we shall never even understand the Gospel of John until we accept Indian thought.



The Vedanta, or Hindu faith *in its purity* is not one which appeals to women only, but a number of men both in England and America, see in it a faith which enables them to realise the power and dominion which God intended should be theirs. They also see in it the basis for a universal religion, and a true meeting ground for East and West in a manner which the presentation of films, as suggested, can never bring about. Moreover, if they are likely to be entirely one-sided, as in the case of the missionary film recently shown in London and other parts of England, when only the poorest and most needy side of India was depicted, on a level with the poorest conditions of London, they may be the means of a still wider breach.

In stating the beauties of which the *pure* Hindu or Vedanta teaching is capable, one does not uphold the abuses which have crept in, as alas! they have done into all religions.

#### NEW PARABLES OF JESUS

The *Message of the East*, (La Crescenta, Los Angeles, U. S. A.) publishes the following in its July issue, as discovered by Professors Hunt and Grenfell.

“Jesus saith: Except ye fast to the world ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God. . . . I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them and I found all men drunken and none found I athirst among them and my soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart.

“Jesus saith: Wherever there is one alone I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

“Jesus saith: Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and, having reached the kingdom, he shall rest.

“Jesus saith: Ye ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in heaven? The fowls

of the air and all the beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea. These are they which draw you, and the kingdom of heaven is within you ; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Almighty Father ; and ye shall know that ye are in the city of God and ye are the city."

### LEGACY OF BUDDHISM

Prof. J. Takakusu, professor of Sanskrit in the Imperial University of Tokyo, writing in the *Young East* (Japan), September, under the heading "Civilisation without History," raises the question why India, possessing a fine literature, has not yet a proper history, and remarks *inter alia* that although originating in the same land, Brahmanism and Buddhism are wholly apart in the course each has taken. \* \* It is Buddhism that has given history to India which was without one, Brahmanism has no written history and has in its place many legends. \* \* Buddhism has fairly authentic history and it was Buddhism that taught India how to keep personal records giving age and dates, how to conduct councils, the first lessons in voting, dramatic art, sculpture and all the magnificent temples, pagodas, libraries and universities and lastly it was Buddhism that helped in the foundation of great dynasties. In short according to him it was Buddhism that enabled India to possess a civilization in the modern sense of the word. If India never had Buddhism, she would have gone down with her immaterial civilization and she would have cut an insignificant and sorry figure. In concluding the writer says, "India in the past was saved by Buddhism. \* \* Nothing is plainer than that without salvation coming from Buddhism India will never be able to reach the goal of her aspiration. The unification of India can never be achieved simply by means of economic policies. The Indian people can never be made contented and happy



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only by policies of reconciliation, for they are blind to economic interest before the dazzling light of ideals. It is only high ideals that will win over Indian people. Without laying down arms it is impossible to bring peace and good will in India. The best and only way for so doing is to give to the Indian people a religion founded on the principle of peace and non-killing. Such a religion is Buddhism. * * Buddhism and Buddhism alone will bring permanent peace not only to India but to the whole world."

As for the ancient form of Buddhism which Buddha preached we have the greatest respect for it as well as for his person. We Hindus worship him as an Incarnation. Real Buddhism is yet capable of doing much good. We also agree with the writer in his summing of what Buddhism has done for India. But what we cannot understand is his dealing with the case as if Buddhism was some influence coming from outside the border of India. Buddhism was a product of the Indian soil. Buddha was a Sannyasin of the Vedanta School. He started a new sect just as others are started to-day to meet the exigencies of society. The ideas now called Buddhism were ancient but Buddha gave the ideas power. The unique element in Buddhism was its social element. It was a social revolt against some of the existing evils in the society of the day. When the work for which the new movement was launched was done and the society absorbed the sap of the new movement, it subsided and disappeared from India. We would also like to point out here that our present condition on which the writer harps so much is mainly due to Buddhism. But little do we know that this degradation which is with us to-day has been left by Buddhism. Many debasing elements Buddhism in its propagandist zeal was forced to assimilate. Its extreme adaptability in the long run made it lose all its individuality and its extreme desire to be of the people made it unfit to cope with the social problems, and it ceased to live as a separate sect in the land of its birth. All the horrors that the Indians are trying to reform are the outcome of that reign

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 of degradation in the wake of Buddhism. The process of reclamation is going on slowly since the days of Sankara.

The writer holds out Buddhism, the religion of peace and *ahimsa*, as the only hope for Indian regeneration. India had enough of *ahimsa*. She is still under that stupor caused by the indiscriminate preaching of that doctrine to all irrespective of their capacity to assimilate it. The doctrine by itself is the highest. But the way in which it was put into practice by Buddhism brought ruin on India.

### SOME ANNUAL REPORTS

Scarcity of space forbids us to go into a detailed examination of the annual reports of some of the branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as well as of two unaffiliated centres of work, that are lying for some time on our table.

The last year's report of the *Rangoon Sevashram* shows the addition of new wards and a decrease by Rs. 5,000 of its previous year's debts. Altogether 1,262 indoor and 34,152 outdoor patients, paying 73,842 visits, were treated. Quite a great achievement, it must be admitted.

The *Brindaban Sevashram* records a better work in 1925 than in any of the previous years. Altogether 221 indoor and 7,450 outdoor patients with 26,060 repeated cases were treated. This Ashram's work is very important and strenuous, but it is regrettable that the financial support received from the public has not been adequate. Just now it wants urgently an outdoor dispensary building, a general ward for male indoor patients, workers' quarters, a guest house, an embankment and a compound wall at a probable cost of about Rs. 35,000. The public surely owes this much to this noble institution! Contributions may be sent to Secy., R. K. Mission Sevashram, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra, U. P.

The reports for the years 1924 and 1925 of the *Dacca Ramakrishna Mission* are interesting records of varied



activities, missionary, educational and charitable, in the town as well as in the outlying localities. It held weekly classes in different quarters of the town as also in the Ashram itself. And there were activities through its Free School, Library and Reading Room, through the Indoor Hospital and the Outdoor dispensary, house to house relief, cremation, and occasional famine and cholera relief. Altogether a very noble record of work the measure of which could be fully appreciated by our readers, if we could go into details.

The *Dinajpur Sri Ramakrishna Ashram*, started in 1923, is doing useful work. In 1925, it treated, in addition to 3,573 ordinary patients, 63 Kala-Azar cases with injections in its outdoor dispensary. There are also religious and educational activities to its credit. We wish it rapid growth and increasing usefulness.

The *Baranagore Anathashram* was started in 1912 for sheltering and bringing up orphans, and has at present 20 inmates. There is a Middle English School in the Ashram itself and provision for training in various arts and industries. The Ashram not only serves its inmates but is of great service to the local public through its free library, outdoor dispensary, occasional relief and aids to the widows. The utility of such an institution is immeasurable, and it behoves all men of means to come forward to its assistance. The Ashram is at present situated in a rented house. A plot of land has been secured through the generosity of a patron and there is immediate need of Rs. 30,000 for the construction of a permanent house on the new site. The recurring expenses of the Ashram are now met from monthly subscriptions and weekly rice-collection. It is necessary for the ensurance of the beneficent activities of the Ashram that there should be the nucleus of a permanent fund as also funds for the proper equipment of its school, industrial department, library and dispensary. We earnestly appeal to the generous public to send their gifts in cash or kind to the Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Anathashram, P. O. Baranagore, 24-Parganas, Bengal.

*Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home*, Bangalore City, reports that it had 16 boarders last year. It is doing quite useful work. Cannot the local public secure a house for it?

It does one good to read the all-round progress of the *Vivekananda Society*, Jamshedpur, in its last year's report. In five years, its membership has grown from 6 to 612. And no wonder. For its various activities,—weekly religious classes for both ladies and gentlemen, library and free reading room, organisation of religious discourses and lectures, and specially its three schools and one night school, Students' Home, Workers' Home, nursing of the sick, cremation of the dead and other kinds of relief,—have proved so beneficial to the public that they could not but be drawn into its sphere of influence. All credit to the noble workers!

### “VOICE OF TRUTH”

We are much pleased to receive the first issue of *Voice of Truth*, the new English monthly started last October by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. *Voice of Truth* has begun with a bright promise. Among other things we have the following articles, ‘The Way Out,’ ‘A Hero of Truth,’ ‘The Ideas, Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission,’ ‘A Lecture by Swami Paramananda,’—all interesting and instructive. “In view of the fact that most of the newspapers and periodicals of this country (F. M. S.) are mainly devoted to the cause of its material progress, necessity of a religious and philosophical organ for the propagation of moral or spiritual ideas and ideals is being keenly felt.” We hope and pray that *Voice of Truth* will meet the necessity. The annual subscription is \$5.00 and the size of the paper Demy 8 vo., 42 pages.

### FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN MIDNAPORE.

We are informed that the situation in the flood-area having considerably improved, the Ramakrishna Mission has closed all its relief-centres in the Midnapore District since the 17th of November last.