

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वृत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

ATMA-JNANA—XXIX

ACCORDING to Vedanta, the waking state is no more real than the dream state.

There was a wood-cutter who was highly spiritual. One day he was dreaming a happy dream; but being suddenly awakened by someone, he exclaimed with annoyance: "Why did you awaken me? I was a king and the father of seven children. My children were all receiving education in the various sciences. I was seated on the throne and ruling over my country. Why did you destroy so happy and delightful a state?" The man replied: "Oh! It was only a dream. What does it matter?" The wood-cutter said: "Get away, you fool! You do not understand that my being a king was as real as my wood-cutting. If it be true that I am a wood-cutter, then it is equally true that I was a King."

THE Avatars are born with Divine powers and Divine qualities. They can go anywhere

and can stay in any state of Realisation from the highest to the lowest. In a king's palace a stranger can go only to the outer quarters, but the King's own child, the prince of the house, is free to go to every corner.

WE possess home, family, and children, for a short time, but all these are non-eternal. The palm tree itself is real. But when one or two of its fruits fall to the ground, why should we regret it?

THERE can be no Narayana without Lakshmi.

OUR duty is to fall down and adore where others only bow.

HE who has been really able to see one Form or aspect of God, can easily see all the other Forms or aspects of Him.

THAT which is Supreme Brahman, that which is the Undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss—that is what I call my Mother,

OCCASIONAL NOTES

THERE is only one responsibility each person has in this world. That is Self-realisation in the full definition of the term. And in this light one's obligations are all personal; real gratitude to those who help us consists in personal development, even when this means differing in vision with those to whom gratitude is due. One must grow at all costs. If one is true to himself he must be true to everyone with whom he has any relation. Certainly, one must transcend the ideas he receives in the educational career. True gratitude to the teacher is in the extension of knowledge beyond that which the teacher has taught and the pupil has learned. The true disciple is he who is in search of truth, not he who blindly refuses to progress beyond the bequest of inherited ideas. If any person progresses, it is not only he who progresses, but all those with whom he has any connection.

Temperament may bias one way or the other in the personal relationship, and therefore temperament is not to be trusted as much as personal sincerity. Personal sincerity in whatever direction must lead to personal growth; and personal growth is the highest fulfilment of all obligation. What each person owes to the world is the perfect expression of personal potentialities. When the personal ideal is realised, all obligations are redeemed. Obligations exist so long as the highest ideal is not seen. Faithfulness to the ideals embodies the fulfilment of all obligations. The greatest and the only obligation is therefore to one's Self.

There must be an ethical as well as metaphysical aspect to our religious belief. Belief alone is of no avail. There must be an active side to faith. The subjective vision

must be transformed into the objective progress; and this consists in the development of character, in the development of discrimination, and in the constant expansion of personality. Religion is not assent to or dissent from metaphysical statements. It is a life process, involving the constant transfiguration of human life, the constant spiritualisation of human experience. Therefore character is the test of vision; it is the guarantee of the depth and the worth and the earnestness of faith. Therefore the strengthening of character is our immediate Dharma.

Purity is emphasised as the essential element in spiritual progress because it goes to the root of the matter. It is a constant retrogression from the sex and physical consciousness and from the other innumerable superimpositions of Nature that make for the manifold in vision and experience. Sex and Maya are synonymous terms; and this definition takes Maya out of its metaphysical setting into a setting of effort at gaining the spiritual consciousness. Ultimately purity implies the complete spiritual consciousness. Purity is at the bottom of spirituality, which is the consciousness of truth and reality. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Chastity is the struggle towards Purity. Purity itself is a state; it is chastity become triumphant; it is spiritual instinct. Indeed, morality and spirituality are inseparable; and the qualities of spiritual vision are written in the language of character. Character is the test.

Relative immortality is true, so long as thought, which is matter, and desire, which is force, persist. The Yogi of the Advaita

Vedanta, however, goes beyond thought and desire,—the elements that make up personality,—seeking the state of True Immortality, the state of Deathlessness, the state of Divinity, beyond both birth and death, beyond all duality, beyond all sense of difference. In the expansion of personality the soul attains the Indestructible, going beyond all change and all forms of relative experience.

East and West are one in the possibility of combination between the Heart of the East and the Art of the West. The East is great in Insight, the West in Expression.

In the Vedanta there is room even for doubt, because doubt is the first stage in the breaking away from the old vision; it is the incipient form in the seeing of the higher reality. There are no dogmas in the pursuit of Reality; neither is there any immutable belief. Realisation supersedes blindness of faith. A state of conscious awareness is beyond the mind with its argumentative moods.

Our task is the realisation and the fulfilment of our responsibilities. That in itself is realisation. There is nothing greater than duty righteously performed. Wherever and whatsoever a man's position be, it is an opportunity for the realisation of Brahman. Knowledge is an effort at remembering the Infinite Omniscience within us. Work is an effort at revealing the glory thereof. So all tasks are spiritual tasks; all knowledge, in this sense, is spiritual knowledge. And every path is a path of Yoga; and every thought, when directed to the Highest, is a deliberate and successful effort at going beyond the bounds of the temporal in the realisation of that which is Eternal.

Colour the whole of life with spiritual intention. Then the soul shall already have passed into the Region of Nirvana. For Nirvana is as much Here as Hereafter. Aye, in the attainment of the spiritual consciousness, 'Here' and 'Hereafter' are idle terms; it is all 'Now.' There is no Past or Future Tense within the Infinite. It is all the All-Encompassing Present.

It is the ultra-individualism which counts; not the Individualism confined to geographical location or intellectual fixedness, but that which creates the original, the new. The true individualism is cosmopolitan; it knows no distinctions; it exceeds its geographical or historical limitations. Christ, born in Judæa, becomes the Moulder of Western spiritual thought. Akbar, born in exile in India, becomes the chief prophet of the destiny it should possess.

There is one sort of individualism which finds expression in intensity, another which manifests in originality. The latter is superior. It knows no conflict; its nature is growth and expansion. That is why the Priest is always greater than the warrior. That is why Buddha and Plato were superior to Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great. True individualism is always spiritual.

One must know Sri Ramakrishna in order to know Vivekananda. Both personalities were aspects of the same Reality. Both sought the Same Ideal through the transcendence of the purely personal consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna's was the living of the life of Hinduism. He was the fact. Vivekananda was the explanation, the interpretation. Sri Ramakrishna's was the Eloquent Silence of Insight; Vivekananda's was the Eloquent Expression thereof. He was the Mighty Voice, enunciating the Ideals and Realities of that life.

THE SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

III

THE inmost life in us is fathomless. There is no gauging its depths. From that inmost life all human greatness has arisen and will ever arise. There is no end to the potentialities within us. They are infinite in possibilities of combinations and in their results. Instinctively man recognises this. He expresses it in faith, in hope, and in aspiration, in self-confidence and in the determination to overcome obstacles. He expresses it in arts, in sciences, but most of all in religious belief. Religious belief is directly related to that inmost life. It is a belief in the highest, in the best and in the greatest within us. In religious belief man taps the source and fountain of that which is *reality* within his nature. For if there be reality, it must first of all be extant within the nature of the seeker for reality. Nothing is great but that it is also human. The human soul lends greatness to whatever is. It is the soul which lends reality to all appearances. Without the sentient self, without its empirical experiences the existence of the external has no purpose. The internal nature is all in all. The external is only a fragment, only a portion of the internal. Just as there are great physical powers so also there are great mental and emotional powers. And just as man has come to understand and control these physical powers, so also must he come to know these mental and emotional powers. He who knows and controls external nature is called a scientist. He who knows and controls internal nature is called a Rishi, a Knower, and a Master of the Self. These mental and emotional powers of the internal self constitute human nature. Therefore any real and final understanding of ourselves, and the individual freedom consequent on such an understanding, must come from a thorough knowledge and harnessing of these powers. When the mind understands a thing it comes under personal control.

How is one to understand this internal nature? Through conscious experience. One first perceives, then observes, then classifies, then controls. Just as there are certain methods for classifying

experience in the external world, so there are ways for classifying experience in the internal world. And these methods are derived from that standard of feeling that classifies the good as the pleasing or developing, and the evil as the displeasing or retarding. That which is either developed or retarded is the freedom or expression of the Self. The net results of sense experience and experience in mind embody themselves in the development of that faculty which is discrimination. This faculty distinguishes between the pleasing and the displeasing, the progressive and the retrogressive, the good and the evil, for nature always associates pleasure, growth and beauty with righteousness of attitude, and displeasure, decay and coarseness with unrighteousness of attitude. This is the meaning of morality. The good tends freedom-wards; the evil tends towards bondage. If control over the mental and emotional powers involves a knowledge of the Self, then morality is one of the key-notes to true Self-knowledge, Self-consciousness and Self-revelation. Morality is the means to the end of acquiring perfect Self-knowledge;—for in it is embodied that knowledge which leads to control, the knowledge that not to curb the powers constituting human nature leads to a defilement thereof. Human nature is a constant yearning for and an approaching to something beyond—That which man calls Divine.

Man is looking for freedom everywhere. The very thought of freedom points to the fact of freedom. If the sense of bondage rests hard in one—there is also this sense of freedom. Nature is the infinite bondage of the Self; freedom is the infinite realisation of the Self—but when the Self is realised, then both bondage and freedom are meaningless; only those who are bound dream of freedom. With the free, the realisation of the Self constitutes an awareness of existence absolute, knowledge absolute, bliss absolute. Freedom and knowledge are synonymous. Conditioned existence depends upon conditioned knowledge, and these make up that life of bondage and limitation which,

psychologically understood, constitute the universe. What is the solution? It is Self-understanding! To understand the Self in the psychological definition of Self-knowledge is the aim of the earnest-minded. For the most, one's awareness of the Self has been physical. It has arisen from investigation into the external, has concerned itself with the environment and with the improvement and refinement of external things. Naturally this awareness has had its psychological aspects. In becoming more and more conscious and in defining more and more the control over physical environment and external relations, the mind has become conscious to some degree as well of the powers of the internal nature. The internal life, the internal nature, is the primary fact. If one desires to solve the problems of human personality then one must come to know the inner universe, the universe of feeling and experience. Human energy has been devoted mostly to a discovery and mastery of the external. The current of energy must be changed. One must centre life and thought upon the discovery of the Self. Through effort the mind has come to know many things concerning the outer order of reality; through concentration man has harnessed many great forces in nature; through effort and through concentration he shall come to realise the essence of personality, the Self.

Is it possible that man himself is the Truth he seeks; for after all, are not all the revelations of life, making up the contents of empirical experience, valuable only in so far as they relate to the interests and highest definition of the Self? The web of knowledge is woven about man by himself; but so intense is the interest in the weaving process that the weaver loses his vision of the central part he plays in the weaving. Man goes on and on weaving the web of knowledge and experience and forgets the purpose in view—that perfect and true Self-knowledge and Self-consciousness which are the result of discrimination and conscious direction in matters of the daily experience of living. Without discrimination man is an automaton, ruled by desire and by the workings of desire; with discrimination he chooses intelligently, guided by wisdom, selecting and living out only those forms of experience which tend to broaden the perspective through which he realises the true nature of

personality, the Self, and widens the opportunities for its expression. This conscious discrimination, complementary to an aroused Self-consciousness, has more than an intellectual phase. It is intelligence, discrimination become stratified into instinct. The discriminating mind, concerned with Self-revelation, has surely travelled long on that path whose goal is the consummation of all discovery. It has been concerned for long periods with Self-analysis during which both factors of experience, the good and the evil, have exercised their formative influence. From its lowest to its highest rung the ladder of experience must be climbed; and with each new rung mastered, knowledge increases, and with knowledge comes illumination as well. Such is the process by and through which the faculty of discrimination is developed and true Self-realisation arises. In the end experience is the only teacher. No one can teach another; no one can help another. Each must hope in himself and help himself. The salvation of each depends upon personal exertion. Each becomes his own redeemer, his own saviour, his own Guru. And is this not right! Should one always depend on another? Taking his stand upon the Self man attains the goal. To the earnest soul, the Genius of Life will unfold the Truth and will lead it to Freedom, just as it has led it up the path of the inconceivable past in evolution. The same instinctive trust which the scientist has when he makes great scientific discoveries must be his who searches after That which expresses itself partially as the desire for freedom. Bondage is complex; freedom is single, freedom is a unit. Bondage makes for manifold states of consciousness and a manifoldness of Self; freedom makes for a unified state of consciousness, a unity of the Self. Mind and form are not the Soul, the real Self. There must be something free and perfect beyond, for mind and form are subject to perpetual change. Something must exist beyond, which is the true Self. Peace and deathlessness cannot have their basis in sense and thought gratification;—for, however this gratification may be, of one thing man is sure,—it passes. So one must go beyond; Freedom is Beyond.

In the development of human personality realisation constitutes reality. One may speculate much, one may reason to this or that conclusion,

but all to no purpose. It is life with which human personality is dealing, and life is not to be explained by reason. Life can only be revealed and understood in experience. Experience is the test of life. The emotions are the motive factors. What is their value in the making of experience? It is this, that they constitute the guarantee of vision; they incarnate into that which one thinks. Consequently, in the development of the emotions one may attain the highest goal. It is these that will lead to higher and higher levels of experience, by which in turn the contents of life are made more and more manifest and the Self, which is the weaver of experience, becomes more and more revealed. Experience is real—only experience. The realm of ideas must be touched by the emotions and coloured by them and thus metamorphosed into the realm of experience. Whatever is intellectually true bears the possibility of becoming emotionally true. Thought must become life; philosophy must become experience,—and the emotional correspondences of philosophy have always been religion and the religious life.

By desire one gathers experience. But desire must turn upon itself and not express itself outwardly. It must fly soul-wards, not form- or mind-wards. Just as the tendency to desire is infinite, so the great object of desire is infinite. And in this light desire is the effort on the part of the True Self to express its contents. The modes through which this effort passes on its way to realisation constitute, in their changes and in a psychological sense, the bondages of space and time; but when desire reaches its culmination, becoming purely spiritual in its aspects, then time and space, thought and form fade out. The timeless, spaceless, Infinite alone IS. The Self in man desires no little ends. Pain and illusion teach one this. The mind is constantly demanding the Beyond in beauty, in life, in pleasure and in knowledge; and that Beyond is reality. When this fact is realised one seeks satisfaction inwardly, knowing that the external can never embody and never express that which the Self demands. So, knowing that the ideal of one's desires can never be objectified, one seeks peace in the consciousness of the Self. One gives up that which is relatively attractive, for it is but a phase of the Great Ideal of all attraction, of That which man

has called the Divine. That Self, that Ideal, that Divine is alone everlasting. It is beyond form and thought; it dwells in the Eternal, verily it is the Eternal. The Self, the Reality is alone the real nature of personality, not the perishable form, not the changing mind. Knowing this is Freedom; not knowing this is bondage. Ultimately, the Divine Self-hood is no more related, in reality, to internal nature, or to the world of mind, than to external nature or the world of form. Both of these, the external and the internal, are moods through which the mindless, formless, Self-sufficient Self sees the Self as endowed with mind and form. That the self rests in the Self is attested to in the experiences through which it passes, for the self is manifesting more and more of that power, freedom and knowledge that prove its eternal distinction from the things that bind and the qualities of sense and mind that constitute the universe. Bondage is the obstruction to self-expression. Potentially the Self is boundless; actually personality is limited. What is that which limits it and binds? It is ignorance; it is the failure to understand the methods by which obstruction is overcome. Yet this ignorance, this failure at understanding is not final, for one sees that what at one time was not known, becomes known through earnest effort at knowing. The bondage due to previous ignorance is dispersed and freedom is gained, through the knowledge acquired, and also the power that comes with freedom. As an example of this, take into consideration any of the great modern discoveries that have revolutionised the conditions of human life. Take for instance electricity. Behold the freedom from limitations and the great power and control over nature that have arisen as the result of the dispersing of ignorance and the gaining of knowledge in this respect! Thus bondage and ignorance are conterminous; knowledge, power and freedom are thus the conditions of the real manifestation of personality. The gaining of knowledge is a faculty inherent within man. Thus freedom and power are potentialities of the soul. Bondage and ignorance are incidental and relative. The more that knowledge is gained, the more freedom is acquired. In the end knowledge and freedom are seen to be permanent and absolute. Man shows his innate knowledge and power in the

constant increase of faculty. Civilisation is the triumph of the mind of man over the limitations of nature, but true culture is the triumph of the mind over its own limitations.

The capacities of understanding are the criterions for the capacities of experience. He who can touch in thought the strata of freedom can also touch them in feeling, for thought and feeling come out of the same order, out of life. To think is to realise in a dim way. Concentration of thought intensified will bring realisation, for concentration of thought is also a concentration of feeling, of life. So one should meditate on the Great Freedom wherein are comprised all truths with regard to the Self. Thought is subjective feeling; so is desire. Improving our thoughts thus means, indirectly, improving our feelings, developing our desires, training the capacities of the feeling, directing the currents of desire. Thus attention must be paid to thought. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought." Desire is the greatest force in the world; it has added wings and limbs to the fish, and mind and knowledge unto man. It will add, according to the earnestness with which it is cherished, the consciousness of the soul to him who yearns. The direction and control of desire is freedom; its mis-direction and lack of control is bondage. Masses of thought and instinct are to be disposed of, and it is all according to the faith in Self, whether the soul succumbs or overcomes. As these

masses have been built by efforts bred in ignorance, so they can be destroyed by efforts rooted in knowledge.

Will is the force of the active mind, but only the force. It is propelled by desire, but behind desire is the network of ideas that beget desire. Therefore bondage is of the mind and is rooted in ignorance. There is no bondage or freedom of will. Bondage exists through ignorance and freedom through knowledge. Naturally most desires, or rather the ideas guiding them, are instincts. And it is with these that the battle for emotional and spiritual freedom is carried on. These instincts can be overcome, if they tend towards bondage, provided the conscious mind imbues itself with freedom-tending thoughts. In time, but surely, these new thoughts will overcome those instincts acquired in ignorance. Freedom is knowledge, bondage is ignorance.

Saturate the mind with great ideas; concentrate it until these ideas become instinct! There is salvation! Let these ideas be complementary to an exalted vision, a vision in which the greatness of the soul is perceived! Greatness, embodied in vision, overcomes all smallness. Know the Great Things in life; be concerned with them! Then all smallness will vanish. Give yourself up, abandon yourself to the highest thoughts, destroy all weakness in the Idea of Strength! Trust in the Self, in the Divinity within! And in time shall come the Great Realisation!

SHIVA.

Within the Roar of Thunder Thou art Silence,
 Thou art Peace within the Strife of Life.
 Thou art Soul within the Frauds of Form,
 Thou art Reality within the Dream of Life.
 Beyond all thought Thou art Eternal Truth,
 Beyond all Form and Thought Thou art the Soul.
 Beyond the Vast Immensity of Form
 Thou art the Fathomless Infinite of God.
 Thou art Eternity beyond the Flight of Time,

Thou art the Silent Witness Unattached;
 Yet greater—beyond all Silence and attachment
 and all Witnessing,
 Art Thou Shiva! Shiva! Shiva Mahadev!
 And Thy Devotees remembering well Thy Truth
 Forget the world, forget the dream of life
 In that Eternal Endless Meditation
 Wherein Thou dwell'st; Which, verily, Thou art.

—Nandi,

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

IX.

There came a Voice resonant with Divinity. It said, "O there is a Love which fears nothing, which is greater than life and greater than death. I am that Love. There is a Love which knows no limit, which is everywhere, which is in the presence of death and which is all-Tender even in the Terrible. I am that Love. There is a Love which is Unutterably Sweet, which welcomes all pain, which welcomes all fear, which drives away all sadness, which is wheresoever thou dost search for it. I am that Love. O I am the Very Essence of that Love. And, O My own Self, I, That Love, am Thine Own Self. My nature is Love! I *am* Love Itself!

"O there is a beauty which is all-comprehending. It knows neither ugliness nor shortcomings. It is sublime. It is divine. O there is no limit to this beauty! It is like the expanse of the sky or the depth of the seas. It is manifest in odorous dawns and in flaming sunsets. It is manifest in the roar of a tiger and the song of a bird. It is manifest as storm and as peace, but is *beyond* these. These are its aspects. I am that Beauty. There is a Beauty which is much deeper than pleasure and much deeper than pain. This is the Beauty of the Soul. I am that Beauty! O I am that Beauty. Of all attraction, whatever its character, I am the Centre. I am the magnet; all other things are iron filings, some drawn this way, some that, but all are drawn—irresistibly. O I am that Magnet! I am that Beauty! I am that Attraction, and My nature is Blessedness!

"O there is a Life which is Love, which is Blessedness! I am that Life! Nothing circumscribes that Life; nothing can limit it; and this is the Life Infinite. It is Eternal Life, and I am that Life. Its Nature is Peace

and I am Peace. Within its all-embracingness there is no strife, no hurried coming and going, no ruthless attempt to live, no desire to procreate. IT IS. I am that Life. Neither the stars nor the sun can contain It. It is a Light which no other light can outshine. It is Itself Light. There is no gauging the depths of this Life. There is no measuring Its Heights. I am that Life. And thou art in Me and I am in Thee!

"Unsustained, sustaining everything, I am the Spirit in all forms that are. I am the Silence within the Sound of Life. I am Eternity woven on the warp and woof of Time. I am the Self beyond both form and thought. Mindless—yet am I Omniscient. Formless, yet am I everywhere. Containing naught I am contained in everything. I am Power! I am Peace! I am Infinity! I am Eternity! I am the Unifying Unit of all Plurality. I am the Sum and Substance of all living things. Of all warring parts I am the whole! Beyond the spheres of life and death I dwell deathless, birthless, beyond bondage. Who finds Me out he is the Free, the Free!

"Through all illusion I perceive Reality. I am Reality perceived! I am the Wielder of this magic force, this Sakti, this Maya which is the Mother's Form. From out the Womb of Time I take My birth, embodying Myself in All that is of Form. I *am* the Womb of Time, and thus Eternity. And "Thou art That," O Soul, which is in ME the Self. Therefore, arise, awake and tear all bonds to shreds. Wipe out all dreams, dispel illusion's hold. Thou art the Self! The Self art Thou! Naught can hinder thee from the realisation of thy nature. Arise! Arise! Stop not until the Goal is reached—the Goal which is the Self, the Life, the Love, the Bliss Eternal and the Knowledge of the the soul made Free!

X.

And the Voice of the Guru spoke unto my soul, "Man, where is thy Faith! Art thou a beast that thou goest quaking at every danger! Until thou hast overcome the body-idea, thou canst not realise the Truth! Art thou then a carcase! Wilt thou forever dance in that net of physical dirt! Come out of thy smallness! Come forth. Be a man! Where is thy divinity if it remains forever unexpressed? Art thou then so important that the world stands in need of thee! Overcome the self by the Self. Be Free! If thou strivest after the Imperishable, death shall not touch thee, for thou shalt have lost the knowledge of what death is. Thine shall be Immortality. All the world has been struggling to express Reality—but the very first success in this effort is the spelling of character. Character is everything. Make character! Make character! Every hour do thou make character! Dwell thou in thy spirit upon the Deathless, and thou shalt become deathless! Make thine abode Reality—and then neither birth nor death nor the varying experiences of life shall cause thee fear.

"Let the body go! Give up clinging to it! Free thyself in mind! The whole meaning of religion and of ethics is to overcome the animal consciousness, confined in sex and fear and sleep and food. Give it up! Give up this clinging to the carcase. Call it the carcase! Regard it as such at all times. Throw no gold cloth over it. It is filth. Only the Spirit is real. The consciousness of the Spirit is immortality. The thinking of immortal thoughts leads thee into eternity. Be brave! Be bold! Be as strong as adamant! Dost thou desire to realise God—then, my boy, there is no time for *caring* for the body. Now is the time; even now is the opportunity. Thou art the Child of Reality, thy nature is the True. Therefore, plunge into the living Waters of the Life of the Soul. Be unafraid! Learn to rise superior either

to the joys or the miseries of life! Remember thou art the Soul! Remember thou art the Self!

"Go down deep—deep. And thou shalt find that thou art strong. Go to the bottom of thy nature. There thou shalt find that thou art genuine in thy spiritual effort. What matter a few failings? Learn that fear and weakness are physical! They arise from the body—that nest of dreams; but thou in thy inner nature art free and fearless. Sing a song of strength, my son. Sing a song of strength! Thou art the child of Immortality. Thy destination is Reality. What are these fleeting experiences of a day but phantoms in the Vast Mirage? Either deify life, or deny it. No matter how thou doest this—realise divinity. Whether the method be positive or negative it is all the same."

And there arose in my soul a sense of peace. A great calm arose and in its quiet the passive all-pervading power of omnipotence suddenly revealed itself. This was a power that gave strength to my soul. And the Voice of the Guru was made audible in this state of consciousness and it spoke, "Beyond time, aye, within time I am Eternity. Whether embodied or disembodied all is the Spirit. In the heart there is ever Oneness. In the heart there is ever Peace. Deep beneath the storm on the surface, deep beneath the waves of manifoldness and of strife and all the woe that comes of these there is the Undercurrent of Reality.

Tat Tvam Asi! Tat Tvam Asi!"

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for e'en
as thy thought,
So are the things that thou seest; e'en as thy
hope and belief,

Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition
and action,
With the great girdle of God, go and encom-
pass the earth. —A. H. Clough,

VEDANTA CONCERNING DEATH

THE world is full of books and theologies and beliefs concerning death, most of them representing crude notions of eschatology. And all of them, to a greater and less extent, are interwoven with that greatest of all fears, the fear of death. The fear of death is rooted deep in the animal consciousness of man. And idle and unsatisfactory or childish speculations are found everywhere, arising from an over-emphasis of this fear. It has been only the Vedanta that has given man a true conception, because it has totally dispensed with fear concerning the term "Hereafter." It has altered the notion of life in all its aspects. The Vedanta holds out no judge or no rewards or punishments apart from the individual himself, who by his deed becomes his own judge. The Law takes the place of a Personal Judge of conduct, with his bias of temperament. The theory of reincarnation does away with the theory either of eternal punishment or eternal reward. The deeds of a short span of a lifetime, rooted in mortality and in mortal consciousness, cannot have eternal effects. The idea of eternity has its true origin in an altogether different order of thought; it is connected with the vision of the soul, above all temporal concerns, above all change. The Vedanta idea that Divinity is everywhere predisposes argument against the ultimate loss of any soul. All souls progress; none shall be left behind in the final summing up. For Realisation is the goal, and the course of experience must eventually bring each and every individual, by the pathways of discrimination thereunto.

The fear of death has originated in wrong notions both of death and of individuality. Everything that contracts the progress of personality is error; therefore fear is error; it is weakening. Better to be a brave out-

and-out agnostic than a clinging devotee in constant trepidity as to the judgment of some supposed Being sitting above the clouds. Better to know that the self within is the weaver of experience, and that all experience is changing. The self passes through many forms of experience, and both birth and death are but two entrance ways to experience. Death is no more terrible than birth, nor more mysterious. And life is to be lived in the solution of the problems it presents, not in a constant dread of what is to come hereafter. The fear of death can only be eradicated by a true Self-consciousness. The physical notion blocks reason on every side. The notion of hell is physical, and so is the notion of heaven. These are only the extension, subjectively, of the miserable or of the pleasing in life. Heaven is all good, minus evil; and hell all evil, minus good. Indeed, man has been exceedingly physical with regard to matters of the soul and to his vision in the spiritual perspective. The senses have constantly blinded the view. He need fear no experience, even death, who lives life truly and efficiently, who fulfils responsibilities and who fulfils the demands of the Law of Conscience.

In the long summing up, it is wisest not to speculate or feel with regard to the hereafter. It is better to interpret the whole contents of experience, be they of life or death, spiritually. Then all fear vanishes. The experience of death leaves the individual the same as before. Death makes no changes in the psychical constitution of man. Therefore, if there were a world of effort hereafter, that effort would mean the constant improvement of the ideals and ideas that have actuated the personality while incarnate here on earth. Incarnate or disincarnate are adjectives that do not, in reality, qualify the soul. The

search after Self-revelation eventually leads man beyond all qualities and all sense of the dual form of experience and, resting in the vision of the Oneness and Identity of all souls, resting content in the consciousness of Pure Spirit, he is affected neither by life nor by death. Indeed, it is life that presents the more numerous and the more seemingly insolvable problems. It is life that demands the answer to all enigmas, and it is while in the body, as the Sages have said, that Truth, in its most inclusive form, must be realised. Death has no mysteries to reveal that life does not already present. Therefore, the concern about death should be superseded by the concern about life. The noble living of life, the constant expansion of personality here on earth will fit each individual for whatever destiny may be beyond corporal disintegration. The spiritual contents of the Vedanta throw a new light upon all human problems. They spiritualise the whole world of thought, do away with the conceptions of time and space with reference to the soul, and place the consciousness of the spirit in man upon most exalted heights of vision.

What is there to fear when matter and force have been destroyed of their properties, in so far as the spiritualised intellect has seen beyond thought and form? The idea that man is a body has brought about all human misery, said one great sage. And he spoke truly. For the idea of the body has coloured all human philosophy, rendering it physical, instead of truly metaphysical. It has been only the bold speculations of the Vedanta that have thundered out to the world the truth of the Spirit, *per se*. The soul is beyond thought and beyond form; for what after all is form but a state of consciousness? What after all is the body but a state of awareness? And consciousness can become refined beyond physicality, as for example in art, in music, and in letters. Ultimately it can be refined to that state or

condition of being, where the essential spirituality is perceived residing in all appearance as the Reality. Holding the spiritual vision steadfastly man becomes liberated from all physical notions of the soul, and is thus emancipated from hell and heaven and from birth and death, which constitute the binding powers of Maya that have prostituted the spiritual into the physical consciousness.

The whole meaning of character and philosophy is the gaining of the super-physical outlook, to learn that the soul is above all physicality, that the heart of man is beyond the definitions of purely sensuous existence. And this is proved in the story of human progress, wherein is seen the constant increase of refinement of emotion and of thought. The ideas of man are becoming more and more spiritual, until to-day philosophy and religion are becoming one the world over, as they were always in Hinduism. The sense of Ineffable Oneness proclaimed by the Vedanta is not the denial but the enrichment of personality; and in this recognition of the Ocean of Oneness, the sense of preserving the isolated drop appears, what it truly is, folly. The soul, in its vision, aye, even in the early dawn of the mystical consciousness loses the insular and particular perspective and gauges Reality through the perspective of the Universal. If personality is conceived of as a constant development towards something vastly superior to itself, then death will be considered only as one of the innumerable experiences towards the reaching of that goal of True Individuality which is ever the perception of Oneness, the realisation of the Divine, the Indestructible.

It is true—the world after all is only an idea. Now, for the most that idea is physical, but the opportunities for transforming it into spiritual forms are with mankind, *here and now*. Birth and death, being physical experiences cannot affect the soul ultimately. The whole burden of the Vedanta is this

spiritualisation of everything. Then, life and death lose their dread and separate distinctions. The whole universe is spiritualised. Only the Soul endures in the vision of the Wise Ones. All the violently discordant elements of physical and intellectual experience shall then have been metamorphosed and only the Soul shall be seen, the Self, the Essence, the Indivisible One. On the spiritual side all paradoxes are reconciled. All mysteries are revealed and are no longer mysteries. All relative visions, all sense of the manifold, which frighten the mind and which distort the spiritual perspective, will

have been wiped out. The Lover, searching after the Beloved, is swallowed up in Love. The thinker is swallowed up by his thought. And with the devotee, all his apprehensions, all sense of life and death and manifoldness, are swallowed up and completely engulfed by the All-comprehending, All-unifying, All-reconciling Experience of Self-Realisation. "For Him there is neither coming nor going, nor birth nor death, nor friend nor foe. He is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. He is the Blissful One, the Blissful One!"

Hail, Land of Ind!

Hail, Land of Ind!
 From the Himavant to Thy every distant point
 Resound the Voices of Thy Deathless Dharma
 In myriad-toned reverberations.
 In forests and in plains, in mountains and by
 streams
 Echoes, this Motherland throughout, the Lore
 Divine
 In song, in thought, in poetry, in life.
 India, Land of the Vedic Race,
 Primordial Parent of the later nations,
 Primordial Light that flooded human thought,
 Thou first hast known the Soul's Own Life!
 From Thee have sprung, the generations through,
 A thousand million Freedom-knowing minds!
 From out the Sourcelessness of Thee have flown
 The torrents of the Vedic, Everlasting Truth!
 Thou first didst sense the Infinite Supreme,
 Larger than the world's combining whole;
 Thou first didst know the Self-Indwelling Life,
 Vaster than the world-creating Brahmâ!
 All hail to Thee, O Immemorial Ind,
 To Thee, Soil, whence sprang Krishna, Avatar,

Author of that great Celestial Lay;
 Whence rose Sri Rama, whose glory divine,
 The incomparable Ramayana proclaims!
 From Thee, O Ind, came Gautama, the Buddha,
 He, the Master-Soul of all Compassion,
 Came Master-Minds like Sri Sankara,
 Came God-intoxicated Sri Chaitanya Dev,
 And others great, of whom the world has heard,
 And hearing stands amazed
 At the grandeur of that Upward Flight of Soul
 Which Thou, O Ind, dost know and where
 Thou art!
 A myriad more shall speed forth from Thy Life,
 Sensing, teaching, worshipping the Truth,
 Conquering life and all its hollowness
 And point the way to Self, above all dreams!
 All hail, O Ancient Mother Ind,
 Yet ever young in Thy Sage-producing Soul!
 Hail to Thee Vedanta-minded Ind!
 Thy Soul, Thy Thought, Thy Self are ever Free
 From the dream which holds the world enslaved!
 Thou art stationed in the Self's Eternity!

—A Western Pilgrim.

RANGADAS

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.—Gray.

ALL living beings search for happiness. For the attainment of happiness all mankind strives unintermittently. The search for happiness will always be. Humanity is distinguished from the rest of creation by wisdom or Jnana (the discriminative faculty), and has been desiring happiness consciously, while the lower animals have been doing so only instinctively. Were it not for the continuous desire to attain happiness, progress and civilisation would long since have come to a standstill. It is the desire for increased happiness which serves as an incentive to all work and stimulates mankind, as a whole, to multifarious pursuits and avocations. But this desire for external happiness can never satisfy; it is infinitely small when compared with that perfect and everlasting happiness which comes from within, that spiritual happiness which comes as peace when desire has been metamorphosed into aspiration and the soul longs for and attains God—the Soul of the soul. The duty of every human being is to find final happiness, when, in the Beatific Vision, happiness becomes transformed into that absolute, unalloyed blessedness and bliss which are the *summum bonum* of all existence and which constitute the nature of Pure Spirit, freed from the limitations of sense to which physical desire leads.

Prakriti, or nature, has created the variegated objects upon which unrestrained desire feeds and gratifies itself. Spiritually uneducated and undeveloped souls, being ignorant of the real abode and character of happiness, which is centred in the Inner Self and which is to be made manifest from within, search for it vainly in the external world and in nature, and their minds being mad with inordinate desires, are allured by the deceptions of sense and run wildly to and fro, never knowing peace, from one attraction to another.

The Sages and Seers of the world have, in the earnestness of their search, come to realise that true and permanent happiness consists in con-

quering all desires, and they say that right discrimination, concentration and meditation are the means of controlling the out-going tendencies of the mind, which are the sources of all desires. And they have clearly defined the various stages through which all aspirant souls should pass before they can attain to the realisation of that Self which is the essence of absolute bliss and true Self-consciousness.

Mother Asia has never been sparing in sending forth, from time to time, men before whom the whole world bows down in awe, admiration and worship,—men who, having fully realised true happiness, have in their over-abundant love for humanity, preached their own experience for the good of mankind. She has given birth to Sri Sankara, the intellectual giant who trumpeted forth the Oneness of Being; to Sri Ramanuja, the giant heart who proclaimed the glory of absolute Self-surrender to God; to Lord Buddha, the champion of renunciation, who sacrificed everything on the altar of Universal Love; to Jesus the Christ, the Yogi, who proclaimed the message that absolute faith and purity alone led all souls to the Divine Presence; to Mahomed the Prophet, who upheld the doctrine that incessant prayer and the dedication of even the simplest acts of daily life to the Heavenly Father brought salvation to souls; to Sri Chaitanya, Bhakti incarnate, who immersed thousands of souls in the ocean of Divine Ecstasy; and last, but not least, to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the harmony of all religions, the teacher of Bhakti and Yoga and Jnana. She has contributed to the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, in 1893, her brightest jewel, the Swami Vivekananda, that flower of the Hindu Race, who concretised the Ideal of Service to Humanity and who thundered forth the gospel of the freedom of the human soul to our brothers and sisters in the Western lands, teaching them the right way to Realisation, and preaching, at the same time, the wisdom of the East and the Universality of the Religion of Vedanta. The muster-roll of great men who have blessed the sacred soil of Asia cannot be exhausted. But one thing is clear, that from time to time and under different conditions, she has kept flowing the current of spirituality all over the world through the agency

of such great souls. One of such, though little known, blessed the Northern Circars with his spiritual illumination and is the hero of the present sketch.

Rangadas was born in the month of June 1880, in the town of Masulipatam, of respectable middle-class parentage. His father was a cart maistry by profession and led a very pious, simple and unostentatious life. He was a very enthusiastic devotee, and was always moving in the company of Sadhus; and it is said of him that he never uttered a falsehood in all his life. The mother of Rangadas was a highly spiritual woman, and was, so to speak, a Goddess among her people. Of such extremely pious, truth-loving and God-fearing parents came Rangadas, to bless the soil of India for a time and pass away at the very early age of twenty-five. In the case of truly great men, the early days of their life are often obscure. In solitude they develop their spiritual faculties and the fruit is not known to the world before it is ripe. So it was with Rangadas. It is said that he learnt the Telugu alphabet at a secondary school. Its head master, who has himself written the Life of Rangadas ('Rangadasiyam' by N. Purushotama Sastri), in Telugu verse, states that he was always a shy boy during the short period of his stay in the school. It appears that he used to visit the house of this gentleman during the evenings in order to hear the Bhagavatam and other Puranas that were daily read there. It appears that, at those emotional passages in the Puranas where reference was made to Prabhu Iswara and the Bhaktas, he would go on laughing so much that the other members present would think he was going mad. Such was the rapture that filled his tender heart from the very beginning, and the teacher recognised the beauty of the soul that inhabited the form of the school-boy. He would treat this boy with special care and guard against his mixing in bad society. He also encouraged him to visit his house regularly at nights and hear the Puranas. Outside school hours, Rangadas would gather around him boys of about his own age, who lived in the neighbourhood of his house, and narrate to them the stories from the Bhagavatam and the Puranas, which he had heard in his teacher's house. He would not leave a single boy before he uttered

the name of Hari at least once. His progress at school extended only so far that he learnt how to read and write, and to cipher up to the rule of three. So, this young boy regularly went to his teacher's house at night and learnt a few beautiful stories from the Bhagavatam, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. All the emotional stories such as those of Prahlad, Vali, Narada, Dhruva, Ambarisha, Kuchela, Bhishma, Suka Deva and Sri Krishna were so eagerly listened to by him that in later years he could accurately reproduce them in a charming manner, and in minutest detail, so retentive was his memory.

The compassion he felt for the poor and the suffering was strikingly shown even at a very early age by incidents like the following: Whenever his father gave him his school-fees to pay, he would give them to the first starving beggar he chanced to meet on the way, and return home lest the teacher should refuse him admission in the class. When this was repeated several times, the father, it is said, began to send his school-fees to the teacher direct. If he met a beggar on the road, he was sure to throw his upper garment or shirt to him and himself return home with only his waist-cloth. Once it appears that his father placed a few annas in his hand and asked him to fetch some fruits from the market. On the way he met some ragged and famished people, and he at once, unhesitatingly, gave away the few annas to them and returned home with empty hands. The father enquired if the fruits were brought and the son replied 'Dear father, I purchased for you the fruits of Immortality.' 'What do you mean?' asked the father, and he replied 'Dear father, instead of purchasing fruits that can bring us only temporary pleasure, have I not, by making a gift of your money to the poor, starving Narayanas, purchased fruits that will bring immortal bliss?' The father, who himself was of a very charitable disposition, smiled in cheerful acquiescence.

Some time after Rangadas left school and for the next eight years, his life was one of deep and solitary meditation. He would rise at the dead of night and steal away to some solitary place at a distance and would not return home till midday on the morrow. The members of his house

thought that he was becoming insane and wanted to cure this malady by marrying him. He however did not consent to marry. Many respectable families were eager to enter into an alliance with him, but he hated the very idea of marriage. The father thought his mind could be restored by his old school-master and he was accordingly taken to his presence. The following very interesting discourse went on between the teacher and the student.

Teacher: Boy, it is not good for you to wander thus like a madman, and leave home and family, and thereby cause grief to your parents.

Student: Sir, while I listened with rapt attention to all the Pauranic stories in the evening gatherings at your house, I thought that unless I became a *tivra mumukshu* (passionate seeker after liberation), I could not attain Mukti. I have therefore resolved to follow this path, and I beg not to be disturbed in my chosen methods.

Teacher: The Shastras lay down that one must lead the life of a Grihastha (householder), before he can be fit for the life of a Sannyasin. The Grihastha Ashrama is the training-ground for seekers after spiritual knowledge. There the sweets and bitters of life are enjoyed, and there each new experience stamps a truth on the mind of the seeker. The householder's life is one of service to humanity. The members of all other Ashramas depend upon the householder for their maintenance and support. Dear boy, it is advisable that you should marry, lead a family life as all of us do, and after gaining experiences of the pleasures and sorrows of life, strive to attain Jnana and Moksha. This is the proper step to insure a strong foundation for the huge edifice of the Sannyas Ashrama, so that the mind will not be shaken by the tempests of trials and temptations.

Student: Respected Sir, I clearly understand all that you now teach me. But my mind is not so far advanced as to enable me to develop a spiritual life along with the worries and turmoils of the family life. My capacities are too poor and limited to efficiently discharge both the responsibilities together, and I shall therefore rest content with passing my life in my devotions, without marrying.

Teacher: God has given you hands and feet in order that you may do some work and earn your own livelihood without being a burden to others. It is also your duty to use your body as far as possible for the service of humanity. This is the object for which all our organs are given us.

Student: Sir, I am too incapable for all that. I am not anxious even to save my body, if it has to be preserved only by working, and by serving others. I shall neither beg food from others, nor use my hands to eat anything. Be pleased to let me alone to follow my own convictions.

Teacher: Will you not take food if others offer it to you? Do you think it right to sit idle yourself and eat what others offer you out of their own hard toils?

Student: Sir, I shall not desire to take food even. I am prepared to spend any length of time without food. As to others offering it, I think myself justified in taking it, when it is offered unasked. In any case, dear Sir, I can do no work, and I will not marry, as I find these are hindrances to my path of the realisation of Self.

Teacher: The debt one owes to one's parents is great. Pray, how do you wish to discharge that debt?

Student: I shall try to discharge it by giving them Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self) if I can earn it myself.

Teacher: How long are you going to remain like this?

Student: Bless me that I may continue to be like this until I attain the goal of Self-realisation.

This very interesting discussion clearly shows the absolutely unassuming simplicity, the untiring zeal and the dogged perseverance of Rangadas to attain the Goal. The teacher thought he had better not interfere with the Vairagyam of his student, who proved so resolute that no one could persuade him to marry. He advised Ranganath's parents also not to trouble him any more and assured them that he would become a great man. A beautiful anecdote is related in connection with the question of his marriage. It appears that during the period that Rangadas was being pressed for marriage, his father one day happened to suffer from some pain in the fingers. Several

medicines were tried but they produced no effect. One doctor having suggested that the pain would subside if the finger were placed in lemon-juice, Rangadas, who was present at the time, offered to bring the lemon from the market himself. But before doing so, he adopted a most ingenious way by which he succeeded in convincing his father of the hardships and responsibilities which the life of a householder entailed on a man. He took the money, went straight up to his father and said, "Father, I undertake to bring the lemon for you, but, pray, let me know why you want it." The father grew impatient and said "You naughty fellow, don't you know that I have been sorely suffering from the pain in the finger and that the doctor prescribed the application of the lemon-juice?" "Oh father, I know it," said Rangadas, "but it is you that suffer the pain, or I? What if I do not bring the fruit, say?" The father flew into a rage and cried out, "Will you see me die! But what do you care? I am the suffering man and it is I who want it. You are quite at ease and do not understand my pain, and hence play like this!" The son coolly replied, "Dear father, if you should have me married it is I who shall be the sufferer, and you will not be able to gauge my suffering at all. This pain of yours can be cured by a lemon, but mine can never be cured by any number of medicines that the doctors may prescribe for me. I shall be doomed to suffer all throughout my life, and those that intend to bring about my marriage do but play in exactly the same manner as I pretend to do before you now. So, father, henceforward, kindly do not press me to marry. Here, I am hurrying to bring the lemon for you."

Now his parents and brothers thought it impossible to change his mind and lost all hope of his recovering from his madness as they thought it to be, or of his becoming a 'useful' member of the family. As a last resource they finally importuned him to earn his livelihood to see if that would not make him give up his solitary wanderings. But he seems to have left his father's house in disgust at the proposal and did not return home for some days. Then the father repented and brought him home after a great search and never afterwards interfered with his son's independence of thought. All these days Rangadas had taken no food whatever and never sought it from anyone! Yet he was the

same merry and lovable Rangadas, unchanged in body or in spirit. This is one of the many kinds of obstacles generally thrown in the way of most great men, but so long as *ananya* (one-pointed) *Bhakti* of the type of Prahlada or Dhruva rules in the heart of any man, no injury proceeds to him from any external obstacles.

(To be continued).

C. Ramakrishna Rao.

GLIMPSES

Truth is the principal object of science, inspiration is its guide, reason its receptacle, God its inspirer, and the word of man its vehicle.

—Imam Jaafar Sadik.

—*—

No man can live happily who regards himself alone, who turns everything to his own advantage; it behoves you to live for another, if you would live for yourself.—Seneca.

—*—

Honour lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall.—Confucius.

—*—

To pray well is the better part of study.—Luther.

—*—

I went to see and forgot to observe,
Enrapt in rapture divine;
How can I see my own form,
I myself am the whole universe.

—Jnyaneshwara.

—*—

O God, deliver us from pre-occupation with worldly vanities, and show us the nature of things 'as they really are.' Remove from our eyes the veil of ignorance, and show us things as they really are. Show not to us non-existence as existent, nor cast the veil of non-existence over the beauty of existence. Make this phenomenal world the mirror to reflect the manifestations of Thy beauty, and not a veil to separate and repel us from Thee. Cause these unreal phenomena of the Universe to be for us the sources of knowledge and insight, and not the cause of ignorance and blindness. Our alienation and severance from Thy beauty all proceed from ourselves. Deliver us from ourselves, and accord to us intimate knowledge of Thee.—Jami.

Vedanta Ashrama : A Correspondence.

To the Editor of the Awakened India.

Dear Sir,

Being a student of the Vedanta Philosophy, and a guest at the Vedanta Ashrama of West Cornwall, Conn., which is conducted by the Swami Abhedananda, I thought a few lines about the place would interest our Hindu friends and readers of the "Awakened India." The Vedanta Ashrama is situated in a valley, and its boundary walls, on the beautiful woods and hills of the famous Berkshire Range. The elevation is twelve hundred feet above sea level, the distance from the village of West Cornwall is three miles, through beautiful country roads and wonderful scenery on every side. There are two houses upon the Ashrama grounds, of 375 acres. One house is called, Lotus Cottage, the other, Peace Cottage. There are the most beautiful trees and forests. There are apple, pear, maple, and different nut trees, delicious drinking-water springs, a babbling brook, and a delightful swimming pool the source of which is the brook. Comfortably furnished tents are scattered throughout the Ashrama grounds for those who prefer an outdoor life; when the tents are lighted up at night, from the distance they look beautiful amongst the tall trees. In winter the house is well heated.

The household is well directed, the rooms are clean, airy and comfortably furnished. Two well-prepared and plentiful meals are served daily, which are announced by the melodious sounds of a huge farm-bell which hangs upon a tree. The breakfast is served at 9 a. m. and dinner at 5 p. m. The food consists of a great variety of cereals, breads, fresh home-made butter, fresh milk, and vegetables that are picked every day from the Ashrama gardens. The maple syrup, and maple sugar served at the table are made at the Ashrama, from maple trees growing upon the estate. The students and friends enjoy walks in the morning; they pick berries of all sorts for the table, and gather beautiful flowers to decorate the sitting-room, dining-room and library.

The library is a large cool room a short distance from "Lotus Cottage," where there are many books on the Vedanta and other Philosophies, also

the "Awakened India" and other magazines which we all enjoy reading, and discussing.

The swimming-pool is situated in a glorious secluded spot, surrounded by tall trees and bushes. So when one goes there to bathe, one finds oneself alone with God and Nature.

The life of the Swami Abhedananda is very simple; he works in the fields as do the Trappist Monks of Catholicism; and in the course of it he directs the men who are employed in the fields. In the evening he conducts classes and gives very interesting and helpful thoughts to the students and friends. On Sunday afternoons the Swami Abhedananda has meditation, readings from the Gita and a public lecture under the trees. Each season of the year has its beauties. One does not know which season to admire the most;—the spring with all the plantations, the trees and grass so fresh and green; the summer when all is in full bloom; the fall when the harvesting is being done and the leaves change from green to varied colours, and the ground is like a beautiful Indian carpet of all colours; the winter with the sound of the lumberman's hatchet chopping trees, then hauling them, when everything is beautifully covered with snow, and the wind whistles through the trees and at night the beautiful moon lights up the white carpet of snows.

The Ashrama is open all the year round to receive students and friends. There is full opportunity to study every form of Nature, and to realise through unity in variety that all are parts of the Universal Whole, and to feel that, I too am THAT, which is so beautifully thought in Vedanta.

A Student.

REVIEWS

The Hindu System of Moral Science. By Kishori Lal Sarkar, M. A., B. L. Third edition. Revised and enlarged. Published by S. C. Majumdar, 121 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pp. 216. Price Rs. Two.

This excellent work has been widely reviewed before, but it is a subject which cannot be dwelt on at too great a length. A preface by the Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna

Mission, presents, in a concise form, the gist of the contents, saying that though it has become customary to extol the metaphysics of India, nevertheless it has become equally customary to deny an ethical system to the Vedanta, in particular, by reason of its peculiar universality and sense of the ultimate non-distinction between all forms of experience which it proclaims. The Swami says rightly that the work which he introduces proves conclusively that the experience of the highest realisation does not deny but fulfils the ethical laws.

By reason of the import of its contents and by reason of the exceptional and learned style of the author of this book it can be readily recommended to the reading public. It should be a possession of every student of the Vedanta, in fact, of every Indian. For it should be the ambition of every Indian to become a defender of the Dharma, and works of this kind prepare one amply for this task. Taking his basis upon the Mahabharata, and particularly upon that section of it which is the Bhagavad-Gita, Mr. Sarkar quotes at great length, proving from the Scriptures the inseparable union between spirituality and morality in Hinduism. A perusal of the book by the Orientalists of the Western universities, is sure to be of inestimable value in their faithful summing up of the Vedanta teaching. Indirectly the book is a splendid answer to those violent critics of Hinduism who have taken upon themselves the bigoted task of maliciously or ignorantly carping at the teaching of the Vedanta. Mr. Sarkar has been singularly fortunate in the manner in which he has related the *gunas*, generally considered too largely in their cosmological rather than in their moral aspects. The *tamo-guna* he speaks of as the principle of disorganisation, wherein the self is in perfect submission to lower forces; the *rajo-guna* he speaks of as the principle of evanescent organisation, involving the selfish struggle with external forces, high or low, whilst he speaks of the *satva-guna* as the principle of perfect organisation and as the tendency to harmonise personality by controlling self, or else by sacrificing self to higher forces.

Mr. Sarkar in thus defining the Hindu system of moral science has exhibited the true patriotic and

philosophic spirit and has rendered an invaluable service to the Cause of Hinduism. The author has added two new sections and has enlarged much upon the previous editions to introduce a greater degree of clearness and improvement.

Photo Album of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood. By Mr. A. R. Kumaraguru, artist and photographer. Cloth-bound. Price Rs. 22. Postage and packing extra. Foreign, (Post paid) £ 1-12 Sh. or \$ 8. To be had of the Prabuddha Bharata Office.

We have much pleasure in bringing before the notice of the admirers and followers of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda this admirable and exhaustive collection of photographs of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and all the prominent members of the Brotherhood. The album contains 66 cabinet and 12 card size photos beautifully executed. Mr. Kumaraguru is a Bhakta of the Masters and a follower of the Ramakrishna Mission. He has laid his Brother-devotees under a debt of gratitude to him for his pains to bring together as many different poses of Swamiji as possible, many of them hitherto unpublished, and present them before the public. The various postures are by themselves a most interesting study, bringing out various phases of character, specially of our Swamiji. We hail it as an opportune publication in this the fiftieth year of Swamiji's birth, and are confident that this handy volume will be a most valuable souvenir of holy and invigorating memories, and will be treasured as a rare possession, especially by the Bhaktas of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthigunj, Allahabad. From Oct. 1910 to Dec. 1911.

We congratulate this new centre of the Ramakrishna Mission on having turned out under the guidance of Swami Vijnanananda such excellent work during the first fifteen months of its existence. The outdoor dispensary work to which the activities of this centre are mainly restricted for want of accomodation for indoor patients, brought relief to no less than 5,292 patients. The utility of such a Home, especially in a holy city like Prayag where Hindus flock by hundreds of thousands for pilgrimage, speaks for itself. We desire to invite the kind attention of the generous public

towards the permanence of this Sevashrama, and the furtherance of its humanitarian endeavours.

The Fifth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for the year 1911.

A glance at the pages of this interesting report convinces the reader of the growing usefulness of the Sevashrama as a relief centre. In the year under review there were 175 indoor patients as against 136 of the preceding year, and the outdoor patients treated numbered 4,617, all of them being new admissions. The total entry showing the repetitions come up to the number 17,297. Besides, ten were served with diet and medicine in their own homes, and four ladies reduced to indigence were helped with monthly grants. We wish the Home all success in its appeal to the sympathising public for funds to construct an infectious diseases ward and a permanent Hospital of its own.

The Tenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service, Benares, July 1909 to June 1910.

We are sorry to have been unable to notice earlier the excellent work done by this Home of Service as recorded in the above report. It is a matter of great joy that the services of the Home are being more and more appreciated with the passing of every year, both by the public and by those to whom they are dedicated. This is shown by an increase in the indoor cases from 259 in the previous year to 327 in the year under review. No less than 5,953 patients received outdoor medical and surgical aid, 187 persons were treated and nursed at their own homes, and 70 aged and invalid persons were relieved by pecuniary help and by distribution of rice, 122 mds. in quantity, begged from door to door by the indefatigable workers. Over and above these, 16 persons were picked up from the streets and saved from death by starvation, and 40 special cases of persons who had been in good circumstances but were reduced to destitution, were helped with food and money. The year's subscriptions amounted to Rs. 3,343-14-0, and donations, Rs. 4,034-12-5 for the general work and Rs. 18,949-0-6 for the Building Fund. The total expenses including those of building were Rs. 29,753-12-9. Considering the disinterested work that the Home is carrying on, we heartily wish it an ever-increasing prosperity, and hope that with the generous help of the public it will be able to add the much needed quarters for its workers and Doctor and the Refuge for the old and invalid destitutes, for which last a Sympathiser has kindly offered a monthly grant of a hundred rupees.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES

(CULLED AND CONDENSED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

THE Emperor Akbar had 415 generals, and among them we find 55 were Hindus.

MR. Rattan Tata, the well-known Bombay philanthropist, has headed the Indian Memorial Fund to General Booth with a donation of six thousand guineas (one lakh of rupees) to be used for consolidating and ensuring the permanence of the Salvation Army work in India.

A Sphinx weighting ninety tons and carved from a single block of alabaster, has been unearthed in Egypt. It is now half exposed to view, and next year it will be raised to a vertical position. It measures about 14 ft. in height and 26 ft. in length, and is considered to have been carved about 1300 B. C.

Manmatha Nath Bhattacharya, a member of the Ramakrishna Sevak Samity of Rangoon contracted pneumonic plague while nursing a plague patient. He succumbed on July the 11th. Two other young men who had been helping him also caught the infection and died. This is, indeed, heroism and life eternal—to face death in the service of others!

DURING last year no fewer than 410 people met their death in the streets of London—a number which is greater than the total killed on the roads and in the streets of twenty-four English counties, representing a population of 16,000,000—while the street accidents reported by the police not ending fatally amounted to 15,154. This makes a total of 15,564 killed and injured, which works out at the rate of practically 300 a week.

THERE are 32 travelling dispensaries established in the U. P. under the immediate supervision of four members of the Indian Medical Service. During the six months of their existence, we are told, 217,653 persons were treated, of whom 28,333 were malaria cases, 29,043 were cases of eye diseases, 13,413 of ear diseases, 14,854 of respiratory diseases, 12,825 were cases of gastric disorder and 44,442 of skin diseases. In addition to these, 3,094 operations were performed.

UNDER the auspices of the students of Vedanta in Los Angeles, California, Swami Bodhananda delivered the following lectures on every alternate Sunday during July, August and September:—1. Harmony of Religions. 2. Immortality. 3. Fatherhood and Motherhood of God. 4. Evolution—Reincarnation. 5. Spiritual At-one-ment. 6. Peace. A course of lectures on the Bhagavad-Gita was also given on every Tuesday evening, and every Thursday evening was devoted to a short lecture followed by meditation.

IN answer to the desire of some earnest students of Vedanta in Florence, Swami Paramananda has consented to devote a part of his time there in order to form a new centre in their city, and to give during September and October of this year lectures on the following subjects:—1. India and Her Contribution to the Thought World. 2. The Secret of Work (Karma Yoga), 3. The True Spirit of Religion is Universal. 4. The Value of Concentration. 5. The Immortality of the Soul. 6. Reincarnation and the Law of Karma. 7. Divine Law and Tolerance. He will also conduct Talks on the Bhagavad-Gita on Thursdays, specially for students.

By the death of General Booth on Aug. 20, one of the greatest philanthropists and social workers of the day has passed to his reward. Since the day in 1865 when the young Methodist minister, touched by the destitution and misery of the East End of London began special efforts on behalf of the suffering poor, the Salvation Army has grown until it includes 8,972 corps circles and societies, established in 56 countries and Colonies with over 21,000 officers and employees, including men and women maintained by the work. In India it is doing much good under the direction of Commissioner Booth-Tucker, especially among what are known as criminal tribes and also among released prisoners. Agricultural schemes on a large scale have also been introduced. In Canada the Army has inaugurated Colonies for the reception of deserving cases from England, and there is no English-speaking country or Colony that has not felt the benefits of the great organisation which owes its inception to General Booth.

The General was born in 1829 and though his

health had been failing for some years, still his commanding figure was often seen at gatherings of his Army in both hemispheres.

The Salvation Army deals entirely with the submerged, the starving, the vicious, and the criminal classes. During a recent year 6,327,249 beds and 11,839,437 meals were supplied either in the Army's shelters or by its charity.

The General on behalf of his organisation visited Canada and the United States five times. Australasia and South Africa three times; India twice, Japan once, and almost every country of Europe on several occasions. His three sons and four daughters are all engaged in social work.

Well done! Brave soldier of God!

A largely attended public meeting of the residents of Calcutta was held at the Town Hall on Sept. 6 to commemorate the memory of the late Babu Girish Chandra Ghose, the father and founder of the Bengalee stage. Besides the friends and admirers of the illustrious dead there were present almost all the Bengalee literary men of Calcutta, also judges, magistrates, barristers, pleaders, zemindars and merchants. The Hon. Maharaja of Burdwan was voted to the chair.

After referring briefly to the religious side of the life of Girish Babu the Chairman said, that Girish Babu could be best described as "the insane child of the insane Mother." He hoped that they would be able to fittingly keep alive the memory of the illustrious dead, though he did not doubt that his memory would always be kept alive so long as the Bengalee literature would last.

Sir Goorudas Banerjee moved the following resolution:—That the gap caused by the death of Babu Girish Chandra Ghose, the brilliant star in the horizon of the Bengalee stage, author of various historical, social and religious dramas and a well-known actor, will not be easily filled, and that this meeting expresses its heartfelt sorrow at the death of such an illustrious man.

He said that the large gathering that had assembled there testified to the importance of the meeting. Girish Chandra was their object of glory and admiration. To keep the memory of the departed was a religious duty to them.

A committee, to take steps to raise a suitable memorial, was formed with the Maharaja of Burdwan as president and Rai Yatindra Nath Chowdhury as secretary. Among the members were almost all the Maharajas, Rajas, Zemindars and leading men of Bengal. Babu Panchcowri Banerjee in seconding the resolution announced that the committee had already collected Rs. 5000.