

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4.

Vol. XX, No. 233, DECEMBER, 1915.

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इतिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upe. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XX]

DECEMBER 1915

[No. 233

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(*In Madras, 1892—1893.—XVI.*)

[CONCLUDED.]

One way for attaining Bhakti is by repeating the name of God a number of times. *Mantrams* have effect;—the mere repetition of words. Jalangiman Chetti's powers are due to the repetition of Mantram—repetition of certain words with certain ceremonies. The powers of the *astras* or *vānas* (weapons etc.) of ancient war were due to Mantram. This is taken for granted throughout our Shastras. That we should take all these Shastras to be imagination is superstition.

To obtain Bhakti, take the company of holy men who have Bhakti, and read books like the Gita, and the Imitation of Christ; always think of the attributes of God.

The Vedas contain not only the means how to obtain Bhakti but also the means for obtaining any earthly good or evil. Take whatever you want.

Bengal is a land of Bhakti or Bhaktas. The stone on which Chaitanya used to stand in the temple of Jagannath to see the Image, was worn by his tears of love and devo-

tion. When he took Sannyas, he showed his fitness for it to his Guru by keeping sugar on his tongue for sometime without it being dissolved. He discovered Brindavan by the power of insight he acquired through devotion.

I will tell you something for your guidance in life. Everything that comes from India take as true, until you find cogent reasons for disbelieving it. Everything that comes from Europe take as false until you find cogent reasons for believing it.

Do not be carried away by European fooleries. Think for yourselves. Only one thing is lacking: you are slaves; you follow whatever Europeans do. That is simply an impotent state of mind.

Society may take up materials from any side but should grow in its own way.

To be shocked by a new custom is the father of all superstition, the first road to hell. It leads to bigotry and fanaticism. Truth is heaven. Bigotry is hell.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

IN the history of human culture, the modern age presents a peculiar phenomenon in the sphere of religion. Never before in that history, the cultivation of human thought and sentiment appropriated to itself such universal attention and importance. Modern culture, as a consequence, has clearly developed a tendency to concentrate and exhaust itself wholly in the cultivation of intellect and sentiment. It has thereby not only ignored its higher possibilities, but has grown sceptic about them. All pursuits of the human mind find themselves confined within the sphere of intellect and sentiment, and religion, which owes not only its birth but its whole value and aim to a higher type of realisation, finds itself metamorphosed and crippled into a religion of the intellect and sentiment.

In the place of a religion of higher realisation modern culture has given us this religion of intellect and sentiment. The full significance of this insidious, gradual substitution has not yet dawned upon educated minds all over the world, and very few amongst them care to enter into the real spirit of that teaching left by the Swami Vivekananda and his Master, namely,—“Religion is realisation.” Now this term “realisation” requires first to be clearly understood. We always speak of realising an idea, and by that expression we mean the actual experience of the contents of that idea. If I have the idea of a tree, I am said to realise that idea directly if I see that tree. Here seeing is equivalent to realisation. So in the case of sense-objects, their idea becomes realised through “sensing” or sensuous perception. Going a step further, in the case of ideas which denote a relation between the thinking, willing and feeling mind and any mental object of thinking, willing and feeling, what constitutes realisa-

tion is the actual mental experience of such relation through thinking, willing and feeling. Thus far we see that the subject realises an object either through the senses or through the intellect, or through both combined. But the scope of its realisation does not end here. Besides these two phases, actual experience or realisation has another higher phase which is the real birthplace and playground of religion.

This higher phase of experience or realisation transcends the senses and the object-world which the intellect creates for us out of the materials supplied by the senses. Therefore to say that religion is realisation is to identify it with this transcendental type of realisation. Religion is neither a fact of sensuous perception, nor an idea to be comprehended by intellectual operations. So religion can never be realised within the sphere of the senses and the intellect, and whoever wants his religion to be real must seek to transcend this sphere. But do we in modern times seek to carry our religion beyond the realm of intellect and sentiment? Our religion, rather, is merely a matter of intellectual faith and intellectual sentiment, and how few of us care to intensify that faith and that sentiment till intellect and its creations fade away into non-entity and the real experience of religion begins to dawn upon us. Religion within the limits of intellect and sentiment is no religion at all. It is worse than a travesty of religion. It is a rotten perversity that is breeding the most poisonous germs in the atmosphere of modern religious life. Let us point out some of the glaring effects of this substitution by modern culture of a religion of intellect and sentiment in the place of the real religion of realisation, which has just been allowed an obscure nook to exist under

the doubtful nomenclature of "mysticism,"—mostly a byword of spiritual morbidity.

If religion consists in intellectual faith and sentiment, everybody who excels extraordinarily in such faith and sentiment must be a saint or *rishi*. There are intellectual ways in which such excellence of faith and sentiment may be made patent to the whole world. A writer or a poet, for example, having such excellence of faith and sentiment forthwith becomes a *rishi*, and in the field of modern culture *rishis* are springing up like mushrooms. These *rishis* of the religion of intellect and sentiment are working wonders in the matter of exposing the hollowness of the whilom religion of realisation. The old religion drove out God from ordinary life and placed him in a *limbus* of asceticism and renunciation. The prophets of the new religion claim to bring back God to every man in every walk of life. The old prophets drew a sharp line between the flesh and the spirit; they used to distinguish things of the world from things of the spirit. The new prophets have knocked down these false barriers and have reconciled the flesh with the spirit. The old religion used to speak of dying to the world in order that one may live unto God. The new prophets have discovered the key to the life everlasting not in a morbid dying to the world, but in living the life in it as given to us. In this way the whole field of modern culture is dominated by a new order of prophets with wonderful pretensions of religious insight and wisdom.

But what is the basis of these high-sounding claims advanced by these new prophets of modern literature and thought? They are based purely on the authority of intellect and sentiment. Intellect says that God is immanent in His creation; the operation of all laws is but the working of His intelligence. Sentiment takes up the tune and sees the

thought and beauty of God welling up in all things and relations of the world. Intellect established the idea of Divine immanence and sentiment gave to that idea the warmth of feeling. First we have the idea, the intellectual faith, that God is in everything; and then sentiment gets hold of this idea and weaves poetry round it, or in other words, feeling reacts on the idea and we have good poetry. Modern culture has extolled this purely intellectual process into the status of religion. As a result, the advanced devotees of this pseudo-religion, great poets and thinkers, constantly declare that they are tasting the highest fruits of this religion of Divine immanence and therefore the old ideal of renunciation and all that it implied are perfectly useless. This declaration ringing high through the new vistas of modern literature and thought has confirmed men in their natural clinging to the world which intellect has created for them, and has produced a universal feeling of disdain against the old ideal of renunciation.

But does religion simply consist in intellectual faith and poetic sentiment? This is the essential question. The reality of God is the foundation of every religion. So the experience of religion can never really begin unless and until this foundation is first reached. But what do we mean by the reality of God? Is God real in the sense in which all sense-objects are real? No. Sense-objects, in order to be revealed to us, require of us nothing but particular position in space. God is not revealed in this way. Is then God real in the sense in which all thoughts, sentiments and volitions are real to us? No. The mental processes and products are abstract relations and the test of their reality is their conformity with the reality of concrete things. The intellect only gives us our particular *way* of seeing and relating sensuous realities; it does not reveal to us any realities beyond those revealed by the senses. So if God is not a

reality within the domain of sensuous realities, intellect is also powerless to establish his reality. When the intellect says that God is immanent in all sense-objects, it does not make God real to us even to the extent sense-objects are real; neither does it relate one reality with another, but simply connects an abstract creation of its own with concrete things of the world, or more psychologically speaking, it foists on its own concrete dependent creations an abstract creation of its independent processes.

The God of the intellect is therefore unreal. It is a God which is less real than any object lying before my senses. The religion of the intellect and sentiment naturally finds it very easy to reconcile sensuous realities with this unreal God. It is this God that that pseudo-religion brings back to every sense-infatuated man and bids him cling closer to all the attachments of the world. It is this God that the prophets and seers of the pseudo-religion of intellect find dwelling in every object of this sensuous world and run into fits of sentiment over the idea. The mere facts of their intellectual and sentimental life, they have styled as religious experiences, and on the strength of these experiences they want to dethrone the God of renunciation and substitute an unreal God in his place. These so-called experiences of religion not only render it unnecessary for us to detach ourselves from the world which the intellect creates for us, but absolutely require of us an unswerving devotion to all the ties and bondages which that world naturally implies, for the practice of a religion which the intellect creates for us naturally and necessarily ties us down to all the creations of the intellect evolved for the satisfaction of human desire.

From all this miserable travesty of religion let us turn to the reality of God as the foundation of every form of religion. God is not a reality existing side by side with other

realities within the domain of the intellect and the senses. God is no doubt a pre-supposition for every kind of reality we recognise through the intellect or the senses; and that is why the intellect finds the postulate of a God superimposed on all its activities; that is why our intellect and sentiment spontaneously search for glimpses of Divine reality. But it is a profound fallacy for our intellect and sentiment to restrict that quest within the range of their activities and then to confound the unrealised idea of a God with God himself. And it is by feeding their minds on this unrealised idea of God that the new prophets have developed a conception of religion that dispenses with the old ideal of renunciation. Let them sincerely strive to carry their idea of God and religion into concrete realisation, and they will find the world of intellect to which they love to cling vanishing and the promise of renunciation fructifying. For it is implied in the very psychology of religious practice that the more our mind approaches the reality of God the more the reality of the sensuous world recedes from us. The reality or realisation of God is psychologically incompatible with the reality of the world of intellect.

It is this psychological truth which renders hollow all the pretensions of the new prophets of the religion of intellect and sentiment. God is a reality which transcends intellect and intellectual operations and religion is a reality only in that sphere of experience where God is a reality. Therefore true religion and its principles can never be evolved from experiences which lie within the sphere of intellect and sentiment. The doctrines of the new prophets, the challenge they fling at renunciation, their so-called reconciliation of the flesh and the spirit, of worldly attachments and spiritual realisations, are all based on intellectual and sentimental experiences, and constitute mere idle talk in the light of true religion. It is one of the greatest misfortunes

of the modern age that on all this idle talk people have readily learnt to hang a sort of idle justification for pursuing objects of their worldly attachment. How glibly they talk of realising God through all the worldly pursuits to which they are attached! How vainglorious is their apparent defiance of all the worldly ties by which they are bound heart and soul! How purile is the disdainful sneer they fling at ascetics whose only fault is that they whole-heartedly follow the ideal of renunciation, the *sine qua non* of spiritual realisation!

So let us accept the incontestible psychology of real religious experiences. In the world of intellect and sentiment, constituted by sensuous realities, we can simply pursue the *idea* of religion and God. This secondary ideal pursuit of religion can never bring us face to face with the truths of religion, for being all the while in the world of sense-objects, we can only relate real facts of that world not to God and religion as *facts*, but to God and religion as *ideas*, and facts may not fit in with facts just as fluid ideas may do. The theory of Divine immanence being the theory of an idea, it has been possible for many new prophets to preach and sing the glorification of worldly attachments. So long as God remains with us an idea, the real meaning of Divine immanence will not dawn upon us, and therefore when people glorify worldly attachments by bringing an ideal God into all manner of relations with those attachments, they give us nice poetry but not religious truths. The world of intellect and sentiment, created by desire, is incompatible with the world of spiritual realisation. When spiritual realisation comes, whether of Divine immanence or of Divine *Lila*, intellect vanishes with all its creations. There is therefore a world of difference between Divine immanence or *Lila* in talk and the same thing in reality.

The cry of many prophets of this modern intellectualism is that Vedanta strikes up a false antithesis between God and the world as we find it through the intellect and the senses. These people know precious little about the real standpoint of Vedanta. Advaita Vedanta, for instance, has nothing to do with synthesis or antithesis between God and anything else. The real complaint of these critics is: Why cannot Vedanta allot in their scheme of religion a permanent place for the sweet attachments we feel for objects of our sensuous experience? The Scriptures say, God is all sweetness (rendering रस as sweetness, of course). So through whatever we enjoy as sweet, we enjoy God Himself. Vedanta says: yes, you enjoy God in talk or idea, not as a fact. When in fact your sensuous self enjoys sweetness, it enjoys things like sugar; when in fact your intellectual self enjoys sweetness, it enjoys sweet relations as between sensuous objects. But God is neither sugar, nor any relation between objects of intellectual cognition. So you can only enjoy sweetness (or रस) that is God when you *transcend* the world of intellect,—which means—when no attachment binds you down to worldly relations and enjoyments. So it is pitiable delusion to say that one enjoys Divine sweetness through the loving relations created and experienced by the intellect!

In fact, a most treacherous form of secularism and materialism is going to be established even in India, the land of renunciation, through these fallacious doctrines of the new prophets of the religion of intellect and sentiment. It is far better for India that her people honestly confess their inability to pursue the higher ideals of life, set before them by their teachers of old, to the extent to which those ideals ought to be pursued by them, than that they delude themselves into a proud, defiant opposition to those ideals on the strength of a theory of religion which reduces religion itself into pleasurable and

volatile fancies fitting into every mould of human desire. Let us remember that religion is the most difficult, because it is the highest, pursuit of man; but only to a sincere mind, it comes naturally and spontaneously as a steady uplifting of the soul, while to one who is clever to whitewash his worldliness by intellectual theories of religion it remains

the despair of his intellect which loses itself in the maze of its own delusions. We shall again return to the subject in future, considering its importance for those who want to make a real, healthy start in their spiritual life, free from all false notions of religious progress and endeavour.

THE NEW DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADVAITA.

PEOPLE conversant with the different systems of Indian philosophy generally represent the Advaita as a system of religious theory and practice based on Jnana in contradistinction to the various phases of the Dvaita as comprising a parallel system based on Bhakti. The traditional line of distinction drawn between Jnana and Bhakti is generally taken to represent the cleavage between the Advaita and the Dvaita, the former being identified with Jnana or the path of Jnana and the latter with Bhakti or the path of Bhakti. If we study the history of religious culture in India, we find also the whole stream of Indian spirituality flowing from a certain period in two distinct but parallel courses one wonderfully developing with time on the basis of the Advaita the current of Jnana or spiritual insight and the other developing in the same marked way the current of Bhakti or spiritual love on the basis of the Dvaita philosophy. Even the lives of great personalities who flourished in India as the makers of that history appear to have served to perpetuate and feed this divided flow of the spiritual stream. History itself for a long period meant clearly to keep the two currents apart from each other, replenishing and enriching both almost alternately. So from a historical point of view as well, it seems proper to draw the line between Jnana and Bhakti, placing the

Advaita on the former side and the Dvaita on the latter.

But in modern times, the most significant and remarkable phenomenon in the history of Indian spirituality has come to pass,—we mean the perfect fusion of the two currents of Jnana and Bhakti, after their divided course has been pursued through so many centuries. We call this fusion perfect, because by that event neither of the two currents had to compromise even an iota of its wealth of development, but on the contrary each found the culmination of its progress in the synthesis implied in the fusion. Let us study this phenomenon a little more closely.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who embodied this perfect fusion of Jnana and Bhakti vividly represents to us the highest and richest form of Advaita as well as Dvaita, while eliminating from both some non-essential characteristics, adventitiously developed, which make them mutually exclusive. None ever plied his "sword of Jnana" so relentlessly as he, when in his practice of Advaita he was making boldly for its ultimate goal, and after he realised this goal, never did that experience, which remained with him ever afterwards, stand in the way of, or fit ill with, all the ecstasies and visions he experienced in the sphere of Bhakti. To say that the higher experiences of Jnana and Bhakti became reconciled in his case is

not enough, because we speak of reconciliation as an intellectual synthesis, while the altitude of spiritual experience to which he habitually rose transcends all functions of intellect. His case therefore presents to us not a reconciliation but a transcendental unity of Jnana and Bhakti. His experiences establish for us a spiritual plane where Jnana and Bhakti combine themselves into a unity of spiritual mood and temperament.

This transcendental unity of Jnana and Bhakti had never been so conclusively demonstrated in the history of Indian spiritual culture. Bhagavad-Gita, for example, embodied a comprehensive synthesis too early in that history to take up into it all those developments of the different cults with which the disciplines and theories of Jnana and Bhakti were enriched in later times, and in Buddha, Sankara, Ramana and Chaitanya, we find only different paths of Yoga represented in all the glory of their success and efficacy. But in this latest embodiment of Indian spirituality, we find the highest aspirations and possibilities of all the Yogas, made manifest to us as yet through different isolated lives, simultaneously realised and perfectly combined into a unity of spiritual revelation. Here lies the uniqueness of the greatest religious phenomenon of the modern age to which we have been inviting attention at the outset.

Swami Vivekananda based the whole science of religion he preached to the world on his close study of this phenomenon and on the personal edification he derived from it. His lectures on the different Yogas present to us a scheme of religion, in which all lines and paths of spiritual development are coordinated to one another, each being free to move towards the highest to which it aspires. And the principle by virtue of which this miracle of systematisation was wrought was nothing but that practical wisdom which the great Swami derived from his practice and realisation of the Advaita as instilled into

his soul by his Master. Never before was the Advaita called upon to achieve such a master-stroke of systematisation in the history of our collective spiritual life. We know what the glorious Advaita accomplished when in some past crisis of our history the whole of Vedic spiritual culture had to be restated in the form of Tantrik wisdom. At that time, its task of re-adjustment and synthesis was concerned mainly with rituals, ceremonies and psychological (Yoga) practices. But in the present age the same task of the Advaita lay in sublimer altitudes of spiritual experience opened up before man mostly by the developments of Bhaktiyoga and Karmayoga. And in rising equal to its present task, the Advaita, as embodied in the lives of Swami Vivekananda and his master, has revealed to us a new aspect of its significance as a philosophy and consequently new possibilities of its practice in actual life. Let us briefly examine this new development of the Advaita.

The very key to the proper understanding of the Advaita philosophy is a psychological truth which few students make themselves familiar with when commencing their study of the system. This truth may be stated as follows: That which relates the subject and the object in every fact of consciousness is *greater* than both the subject and the object. For the term "greater" we may also put "more real." But this relating Reality stands beyond the whole system of subject-object relations, and as a result, the subject appears to us to be the most central fact in the whole system. Human thought including all schools of philosophy except the Advaita acknowledges subjectivity therefore to be the summit of all the attributes of all forms of existence. In its view of things personality is the highest category; that which is alleged to transcend subjectivity is either a mistaken reflection of objectivity or simply null and void. Even the God of human thought is put under the category of

subjectivity. The cause of the whole creation must be a creator,—a subject having infinite relations with infinite objects. In fact, subjectivity defines the highest conception of reality to which human thought rises.

But the very first step in Advaita philosophy is to transcend this ordinary common-sense conception of reality. That only is real, in and through which the subject finds itself related to the object. We cannot say why or how this Reality relates the subject to the object; for why or how means ways of relatedness and neither can be asked of the Unrelated relating. So intellect has to acknowledge its inability to reach the Reality as it is in itself, and can only know it as the world or as the system of subject-object relations.

Just at this juncture, religion comes and claims to lead us where intellect fails to reach, and it is only Revelation which substantiates this claim of religion. Therefore Sankaracharya, for example, persistently points to the Vedas as the basis of the Advaita. Religion says on the authority of Revelation that the whole world or the whole system of subject-object relations is not what it appears to be purely through our intellect. In the place of these appearances, religion imports a God and a system of relations through God. If we generalise all the modes of such importation represented by the various religious creeds, we find that what all these creeds aim at is to recognise subject-object relations only as the symbolisation of the Reality, and thereby to carry the human mind from the symbolisation to the Reality. The Advaitist creed, for instance, takes up selfhood in man as a symbolisation and then strives to free this self from the *upadhis* or the adjuncts consisting in subject-object relations which go to make up the symbolisation. When this symbolisation drops off, self-hood resolves itself back into its Real substance, the Absolute. This is the negative or the *neti-neti* method of Vedanta. Then there

is the positive method of dualistic creeds, in which the symbolisation is not directly negated but is sought to be melted into Reality, as it were, by the very intensity of its affirmation. A toy baby and a girl who caresses it, for example, symbolise motherly love which is latent in the girl. Intensify the symbolisation and the reality of the clay toy as also the fact of symbolising become resolved into the reality of mother-love which then fills the girl's mind and heart. The more is symbolisation intensified, the more does the fact symbolised assert its reality and supplant that of the symbol. The school of Bhakti takes fullest advantage of this truth about symbolisation. It accepts the subject-object relation, (or the generalised principle as union between the Divine and the human,) as symbolising Bhakti or love. And as this relation is intensified more and more, the reality of Bhakti asserts itself and absorbs the reality of all other subject-object relations. In this way the Bhakti school aspires to reach that stage of the process where the reality of all other enjoyments through subjectivity becomes merged in the supreme reality of Bhakti or love, though still maintaining subjectivity and objectivity in the subtlest form possible. It was this halting conception of the reality of love or Parabhakti which in fact proved an obstacle on the way of harmonising Advaita and Dvaita, Jnana and Bhakti.

Now we have shewn that whatsoever may be the recognised method through which religion seeks to lead its votaries from symbolisation to Reality, all paths must finally lead to Rome. But the religious creeds of the world mostly prefer to stop short on the way at some point where each sticks up its fingerpost of salvation under various names. The old Advaitist school might remonstrate with each pointing out the fallacy in its conception of salvation and trying to impress the truth of its own. But no creed would give up its own line of spiritual progress to test the truth of salvation in the Advaitist path, and

therefore the Dvaitist schools contented themselves with criticising the Advaitist doctrines from their own intellectual standpoint, while the old Advaitist following more or less his own negative method could not substantiate his point about the final unity of salvation to the satisfaction of other creeds which pursue the positive method of symbolisation. Thus the harmonisation of all creeds remained an unrealised desideratum, an unsolved problem.

The solution of this problem came from the lofty spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He plunged his heart and soul into the practice of the dualistic creeds, Hindu, Islamic and Christian, and after having gained the highest experiences to which each of them aspires but which still afford room for the duality of subject and object, he proceeded further along each line of practice till the Advaitist goal was reached in each case, a goal where every vestige of dualism merges. In his life we have the actual demonstration how every path of spiritual practice if persevered in even beyond its current ideal of salvation is bound to carry a spiritual aspirant beyond all symbolisation to the ultimate Reality. It is as the outcome of these actual experiences that Sri Ramakrishna gave to the world his well-known watchword of religious harmony, viz: **एतन्मन्तु एतन्मन्तु एतन्मन्तु**, "so many faiths, so many paths."

And the Advaita was demonstrated to be the one goal of all these paths. And because it was not any intellectual method of demonstration that did it, but a method which implied more than any thing else the practice of every creed constituting itself one of these paths, the Advaitist goal cannot but be recognised by every creed as its own ultimate goal which any of its votaries should be free to strive towards if he chooses. At the same time it is assured that no man need give up the creed to which he belongs by spiritual temperament and predilections, only

it would conduce to the interests of religious harmony if each creed recognises the great truth of religious unity demonstrated by Sri Ramakrishna.

But a clear demand has not only been made out for a broadening of the Dvaitist creeds, but it is also required of the Advaitist creed to re-adjust itself in view of the new claims that have been proved on its behalf. Henceforward, this school must be watchful against a too exclusive insistence on the negative method anywhere in its own camp. In former ages, worship in dualistic forms was recognised by this school only as a preliminary discipline calculated to bring about that purification of mind and heart which alone qualifies a man to proceed with the negative method of "neti-neti." This scant recognition of dualistic worship has now to be superseded by its wholesale acceptance as a regular part of its own essential discipline. In fact, the same acceptance which the Advaitist school once successfully offered to Tantrik dualism, has now to be extended to all forms of dualism established in the world. In Tantrik worship we find the Advaita imparting to all important ceremonial steps its real significance. The worshipper is in fact never allowed to lose sight of the Advaitist goal and of the fact that all the ritualistic steps tend to carry him ultimately to the same goal. The Tantras, when finally Hinduised, accepted the Advaita not only as their new inspiration and setting but also as the immanent end governing all their ritualism.

So in accepting all dualistic forms of religious practice as part and parcel of its own scheme of discipline, the Advaita has naturally to broaden out its own sphere of practice. This broadening out consists in recognising, side by side with its negative method, the positive method of intensifying the symbolisation with a view to its final resolution into the Reality. During the Tantrik synthesis, the importance of this

positive method was not much brought into prominence, because emphasis was laid then more on the Advaitist doctrine of the Atman or Self as forming the common *substance* behind the worshipper and the worshipped than on the other phase of the doctrine which maintains *that* only to be real which causes subject-object relations. This phase of the Advaita has a special bearing on the spiritual standpoint of the Bhakti school. The Advaita of the Tantras seeks to resolve the duality of the worshipper and the worshipped into their unity of substance, while now in taking over the Bhakti school into its fold the Advaita must seek to resolve the duality of personalities related in love, or the subject-object duality, into the unity of the Principle underlying the relating of the subject and object. The highest category for the Bhakti school of all subject-object relations is love. So love may be taken to represent in human language that supreme Principle which breaks itself up, as it were, into subjectivity and objectivity, "I" and "thou." But as the Principle only is real and the breaking up unreal, we find in love the perpetual tendency of merging back the "I" and the "thou"; in fact, love consists in each term of the relation, called either the lover or the beloved, seeking to lose itself in the other, while the actual outcome is that each loses itself the more in love. So the very psychology of love shows that with the intensification of love the apparent reality of the related terms yields itself up into the absolute reality of love, which must in the end absorb therefore the fading duality of the lover and the beloved. So the breaking up or symbolisation of love into the relation of the lover and the beloved is a fact which the Advaita need not find itself at a loss to harmonise with its own doctrine of one Reality and Vivarta or creative superimposition. On the other hand, the Advaita may very well supplement its negative method by accepting the positive method of affirming and intensifying the

symbolisation which defines the creed of the Bhakti school. This extension of the scope of the Advaita has actually been effected by the experiences of Sri Ramakrishna within the sphere of his practice of Bhakti; and this is what we mean by the new development of the Advaita in the present age.

EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XLXIX.

Kashmir,
25th Aug. 1898.

Dear—

It is a lazy life I am leading for the last two months, floating leisurely in a boat, which is also my home, up and down the beautiful Jhelum, through the most gorgeous scenery God's world can afford, in nature's own park, where the earth, air, land, grass, plants, trees, mountains, snows and the human form, all express on the outside at least the beauty of the Lord;—with almost no possessions, scarcely a pen or an ink-stand even, snatching up a meal whenever or wherever convenient, the very ideal of a Rip Van Winkle! * * *

Do not work yourself out. It is no use; always remember,—“Duty is the mid-day sun whose fierce rays are burning the very vitals of humanity.” It is necessary for a time as a discipline; beyond that, it is a morbid dream. Things go on all right whether we lend them our helping hands or not. We in delusion only break ourselves. There is a false sentiment which goes the extreme of unselfishness, “only to injure others by its submission to every evil.” We have no right to make others selfish by our unselfishness; have we? * * *

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

XLXX.

The Math.
15th Dec. 1898.

Dear—

* * * *

The Mother is our guide and whatever happens or will happen is under her ordination.

* * * *

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

—
XLXXXI.

Baidyanath, Deoghar,
29th Dec. 1894.

My dear D—

You know already my inability to accompany you. I cannot gather strength enough to accompany you. The cold in the lungs continues and that is just what makes me unfit for travel. On the whole I hope to improve here.

I find my cousin has been all these years cultivating her mind with a will and she knows all that the Bengali literature can give her and that is a good deal, especially of metaphysics. She has already learnt to sign her name in English and the Roman alphabet. It is now real brain work to teach her and therefore I have desisted. I am trying simply to idle away my time and force myself to take rest.

Ere this I had only love for you, but recent development proves that you are appointed by the Mother to watch over my life, hence, faith has been added to love! As regards me and my work I hold henceforth that you are inspired and will gladly shake off all responsibilities from my shoulder and abide by what the Mother ordains through you.

Hoping soon to join you in Europe or America,

I remain
Ever your loving son,
Vivekananda.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: THE GREAT
MASTER.

Chapter VI.

THE EARLY DAYS OF GADADHARA.

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IT is wonderful, always, to watch the gradual unfoldment of a child's mind as it comes in contact with the world outside day after day. And in case a child-mind, the object of that study, is not an ordinary but a highly precocious one, as the mind of our little Gadadhar, the sentiment of wonder verges often upon that of the miraculous, in us. The child observes, imitates, thinks and struggles to express itself as much as we do, only perhaps in its case it does all those things mechanically; or in other words, it is guided and led into them by the impulse of the habit that has grown upon it all through the long series of its past incarnations. That goes to explain again, how every child-mind looks at things and events of life from an angle of vision peculiarly its own, since the very day of its entrance into its present incarnation, and ultimately forms and expresses its own conclusions regarding each of them in a manner quite different from the rest of the world.

The parents of Gadadhar who had to watch over the growth of undoubtedly one of the most precocious child-minds of the age, must have noted early with ever-increasing wonder how it used to form its likes and dislikes of persons and things related to itself in a manner peculiarly its own,—how on many an occasion it used to inquire about them in a way that pointed most certainly to the depth into which it entered within itself in its cogitations about them, and how at times it would flash forth its own views and conclusions about them most unexpectedly, like an elderly man. They had found out moreover, on more than one occasion, that their little Gadadhar would resist most stubbornly if attempt was made to make him accept ways or do things through fear of punishment, while otherwise he would be quite amenable to reason and love. Thus with the passing of

days they had the pleasure to find that the child of their old age was growing into a healthy little boy, whose unique ways of looking at persons and things combined with his habits of fearlessness, truthfulness and other virtues promised for him a great future. And did not the wonderful visions that they had of him before and after he was born tend the same way? Thus with joy and trepidation they performed the ceremony of initiating the boy in the three R's as soon as he reached his fifth year and invoked the blessings of the goddess of learning and fine arts, mother Sarasvati, upon him on the day. And little Gadadhara was thence sent daily to the *pathshala* (lit. reading-room) or the neighbouring village school, which used to have its sitting, in the spacious *nat-mandap* (or, the hall for the musical and theatrical performances on festive occasions) of the Laha family, the Zemindar or the land-lord of the village.

From what we have gathered from various sources of the early days of Gadadhar's life, we have been struck with the wonderful qualities of heart that he manifested from the very beginning. All the accounts of these days of his life, are unanimous on the point that he used to attract everyone towards him with his winning ways. The elderly ladies of the neighbourhood used to love and regard him as one of their own children, the boys and girls of his own age would always be led by him in their sports and pastimes, and even grown-up people would feel so much attracted after meeting him once that they would invite him frequently to their own families and send him presents as tokens of their love every now and then. As an instance of this we can relate the visit of our little Gadadhar to a well-to-do family at Bhursubo, a village situated about a mile to the north of Kamarpukur. The head of the family was perhaps the richest landlord within many miles around and had earned a great reputation for himself on account of his liberality and large-heartedness. It is said even to this day how on more than one occasion he had invited to his place a hundred-thousand men of the Brahmin class alone, from many a mile around, and made elaborate arrangements for feeding and providing them each with suitable presents! The poor and the lowly always found his hospitable doors open to give them a hearty welcome and his kind heart

and hand ready to help them on every emergency. The big tanks that he excavated in and about his village, such as the elephant-tank, the pleasure-tank etc. for the benefit of the people, the large mangoe-groves that he planted and dedicated to the use of his poor neighbours, the temples that he erected in the neighbourhood and various other things that still bear the stamp of his name—all go to prove that he did not bear the title of Raja in vain.

Now it so happened that Raja Manick Chandra Banerjee knew Khudiram the father of our little Gadadhar from a long time and valued highly the friendship of that poor but proud and austere Brahmin, who had preferred abject poverty before falsehood and the creature-comforts of life, and had borne it so bravely in silence and retirement without demeaning himself by asking favours from his rich but lukewarm friends of yore. He watched his career with great interest, invited him frequently at his own place, although never officious to come forward with his help having regard to his sensitive disposition, and sought his disinterested advice on many an important occasion of his own life. Thus the two men of rare and genuine merit who were so wide apart from each other as regards the status which wealth afforded them in society, met frequently on equal terms and esteemed and respected each other on account of the manly qualities which they both possessed. And so Khudiram, who always felt himself free in company with the Raja Manick, took his little boy Gadadhar with him on one of such visits, thinking it would please his friend to see the little one, who had blessed him so late in life. Now little Gadadhar behaved himself in such a way on the occasion that he became quite a favourite with the Raja and all his household since that day; and they used to take him over to Bhursubo regularly from now and load him with valuable presents on his return. It is said that Ramjaya the brother of the Raja had told Khudiram one day, "Brother, your Gadadhar is not an ordinary child; the Divinity within shines so clear through his little body and mind that he makes us feel as if we are before the Divine-child, whom we worship." And strange as it may appear, our little Gadadhar, who was less than five years old at the time, never felt any qualms to go to visit the family of the

Raja all alone with a servant whom he had not known before.

So our little Gadadhar knew no fears even from his earliest days, and not only was he not afraid of approaching strangers, but with his radiant smile, his bright answers to questions and precocious remarks, and above all, his loving and endearing ways, would make them feel as if he was of their own kith and kin. It is said that he was fearless in other directions also, and would always feel undaunted where others of his own age became invariably nervous and frightened. As an instance of the kind we shall narrate here a little incident that happened in the family about this time. We have told the reader already how all the relations of Khndiram had the psychic temperament. His wife Chandrâ, his son Ramkumar, his daughter Katyayani and even his sister Ramsila, who used to visit the family from time to time, were all more or less alike in that respect. Of those the last one, Ramsila, would lose herself so completely in her meditations of the goddess Sitala, as to feel herself identified with the goddess on some days and would speak and behave on such occasions as one possessed by that higher Being. It is said that she used to look quite different from her ordinary self at those times and always excited the feelings of awe and reverence, fear and wonder, in the hearts of every one, who saw her, with her predictions and blessings and powers of healing diseases. The family would treat her on such occasions as the goddess herself and would listen and obey her commands implicitly. Now, Gadadhar, who was very fond of his annt, had the first opportunity of seeing her in one of those strange moods when he was less than five years old. It is said that he became much astonished at first to find her behaving so unusually, but instead of getting frightened remained near and watched her carefully and at last whispered to his mother, "It would be such a fun if the one, who possesses anntie now, would come upon me, for then I would be able to see things as she has been doing!"

Even from this time Gadadhar showed great aptitude for imitating perfectly the voice and manners of others in fun and proved to his parents that he possessed dramatic powers and a great sense of humour. Again, his father was greatly

astonished to find that he possessed such a wonderful and tenacious memory as to be able to repeat every thing that he told him even after the first hearing and to retain it in his mind for ever. It was the custom in Hindu families to make the little boys, learn the geneological table of their forefathers and little verses in Sanskrit in salutation to various gods and goddesses. They were told, besides, stories from the two great national epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata even before they were formally initiated in the mysteries of the three R's. And little Gadadhar had not only learned these things from his father's lips but could also repeat verbatim some portions of the Bengali version of the epics by simply hearing his father reading them, even before he learned his alphabets. And we can well imagine how eagerly he looked forward to the time when he would be able to read the sacred epics himself like the rest of the family. He mastered the alphabets quickly and made such strides after joining the school that in less than a year he was able to read the Bengali version of them, as well as all the other Bengali books that he could lay his hands on. Indeed from that time forward he dived deep, daily, into those sacred books, the fountain-head of every Indian inspiration of later times, and the poet in him pondered and brooded over the noble characters and their doings in such a way as to make of them living and moving personalities around him. His powerful imagination would at times spread its golden wings over immense gaps of time and space and carry him over to the doors of the palaces at Ajodhya or at Hastinapur to witness the magnanimous deeds of Rama, his faithful Sita and his devoted brother Lakshmana or the noble doings of the five Pandava brothers. Thus passed the days of our little Gadadhar, after he joined the school, with absorbing interest in the Sacred Books and the characters contained therein, and they helped to educate and mould his young mind and heart rapidly and in accordance with the old Indian ideals, even from these days.

The folk-lore of the villages around had a deep attraction for our little Gadadhar, besides the great epics. Bengal has always been great for poetical culture, and its poetry has followed mainly through the two distinct sacred channels of the

cult of the Divine Motherhood and that of the worship of Krishna and his beloved Radha. The miraculous doings and stories of self-manifestation of the local dieties of many villages, also, used to attract the imagination of the poets and their verses and hymns were being widely circulated by the swarm of beggars who daily sang them to the edification of the people as they visited the doors of every family of the villages around, for alms. Manuscripts of some of those stories and hymns could be found at the time and our little Gadadhar used to get hold of these and make copies of them, some of which are still to be found preserved in the family and in the Ramakrishna Math at Belur in the district of Howrah in Bengal. Legends, such as that of the Divine Mother Yogadya of Kshiragram, who it is said had been brought over by Mahahira, the devoted monkey general of Rama after killing Mahi-Ravana, the brother of Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon, and placed in that village since that time,—of the famous image of Siva at Tarakesvara, a village situated at about eighteen miles to the east of Kamarpukur—or of that of the big tank about ten miles from Khudiram's place and known even to this day as the tank of Ranajit Ray, the man who it is said had such unique devotions towards the Divine Mother that She appeared in the family for a time as his own little daughter—legends such as those, and their number was numerous, had great fascination for the mind of our little Gadadhar. His young eyes shed tears while he used to read them and his young heart felt a deep yearning for a sight of the Divine Mother. And thus he passed many hours and days even from this time in trying to imagine the wonderful beauty of the Divine Mother and Her great compassion towards Her devotees or the great love of the Lord Krishna towards the simple boys and girls in the shady and beautiful groves of Brindaban.

It must not be imagined however, from what we have said before, that our little Gadadhar became so much absorbed in his study of the sacred epics and the folk-lore of his age that he took no interest in plays and sports as is natural to a child of his age. With all his lofty propensities and his precocious mind, he was entirely a child of nature and did instinctively the proper thing.

Therefore, as it was natural for his vigorous mind to get concentrated deeply on the subject of his study, so it was natural also for it to do the same on sports and pastimes in which he engaged. And it is said that none of his companions excelled him in climbing trees, in swimming, running and the pursuit of games such as 'Hide and Seek,' 'Hadu-du-du,' 'Hunsh-Hunsh' and the rest—and none ever excelled him in devising new games and playing all sorts of boyish pranks, such as in robbing orchards, in teasing and frightening people who became angry with them on account of their noisy mirth and in doing things which disturbed the elderly people and which they were forbidden to do. Indeed in all such matters our little Gadadhar always had the lead of his companions.

As an instance of the kind, we may tell the reader of the incident which took place one day in the ladies' bathing ghat at Haldarpukur, the big tank close to the house of our little Gadadhar. The boys were having one of their 'ripping' times in the water on the day to the great inconvenience of the ladies, when an elderly lady, who was muttering her prayers after her bath, as was the custom, became very much annoyed with them and told them in angry words to leave the place and have their sport in that part of the tank where male persons used to have their bath, for, she said, it was not proper for boys to be prying about in places where ladies had their bath. And when little Gadadhar asked her why it was not proper, she scolded him vehemently all the more and threatened to get him punished by reporting his behaviour to his parents. Little Gadadhar who could not see any impropriety in the affair came thenceforth for a few days daily to the place and watched the ladies secretly, to find out the reason why he was scolded. At last the matter reached his mother's ears, who knowing beforehand that her boy was not amenable to threats, appealed to his heart, and asked him whether it was proper for him to do a thing by which she herself as well as all of her sex felt their dignity greatly injured, namely to watch them in their toilette. And little Gadadhar now understood the reason and never did the thing any more.

The all-absorbing interest of Gadadhar in the ideal characters of the epics and his constant brooding and concentration on them brought out,

however, a most unlooked-for result, as soon as he reached his seventh year. Bengal being the richest rice-producing province in India, the people of her rural villages have always fed their boys with that article of food, and besides the two meals of boiled rice during the course of the day, the boys are given fried rice and fried paddy, sometimes sweetened with molasses, at breakfast and tiffin times. And boys and girls about the age of our little Gadadhar would often carry their simple breakfast in small wicker-baskets and eat it in the open, sitting together or walking here and there and chatting with one another. The cottage of Khudiram being on the western outskirts of the village, close to where the fields began in that direction, Gadadhar would often eat his breakfast as he roamed about in the fields. As he was doing so one summer morning he noticed the rise of a thunder-cloud in the distant horizon. It began to spread rapidly covering the blue expanse of heaven and looked so sombre in its black grandeur that the poetic sense in him became thoroughly roused and rivetted by it. A flock of cranes rose at this time suddenly from the neighbouring fields and in their measured flight spread their snow-white wings against the deep dark sky, raising such a beautiful contrast that the inmost soul of the boy was thrilled with pleasure. He watched and watched forgetting all about his breakfast, until at last his mind became so much absorbed in contemplation of the beauty of it all that he lost all consciousness of his surroundings and even of his own body! A kind neighbour happening to walk in that direction found the boy lying in that condition by the roadside with his breakfast strewn all around and carried him home to his parents. He became quite his own self, however, in a little while and when asked what ailed him at the time, he asserted strongly that it was no ailment whatsoever, only that his mind getting thrilled with a deep sense of pleasure on looking at the beautiful sight became somehow unified with the same. His parents, however, would not believe his statement and taking it to be the first appearance of some serious malady took him to the physicians and kept him indoors for a few days to get him completely rested. But as a second attack of the kind did not come upon him soon and he looked as strong and

healthy as ever the seriousness of the affair gradually slipped out of the minds of the family and he was permitted ere long to go to school and do everything else as he had been doing before.

The seventh year had in its store a deep sorrow as well, for our little Gadadhar. For his father Khudiram whose health had been failing rapidly of late died while he was on a visit to his sister's place at Salempur for the Durgapuja festival, celebrated annually with great éclat by the family. His eldest son Rankumar and his sister's son Ramchand for whom he had always the most genuine affection were by his side at the time and the last words that he uttered were a deep and devoted call on his tutelary Deity, Raghubira, in whose hands he commended himself before the supreme moment. Khudiram died in 1843 A. D. while he was sixty-eight years old.

Swami Saradananda.

THE VAIRAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 211).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

किं वेदैः स्मृतिभिः पुराणपठनैः शास्त्रैर्महाविस्तरैः
स्वर्गग्रामकुटीनिवासफलदैः कर्मक्रियाविभ्रमैः ।
मुक्तैकं भवदुःखभाररचनाविध्वंसकालानलं
स्वात्मानन्दपदप्रवेशकलनं शेषैर्वणिग्वृत्तिभिः ॥७१॥

71. What are worth the Vedas, the Smritis, the readings from Puranas, the vast Shastras, or the mazes of ceremonials, which give us, as their fruits, a resting-place in heaven, (which is, as it were,) a village (interspersed) with huts! All else is but the bargaining of traders except that one way which admits one into the state of supreme bliss in one's Self, and which is like the (final) destructive fire to consume the evolving mass of worldly miseries.

[The Shastras, by which is meant here Logic, Grammar etc. and the six systems of philosophy are said to be vast because of the amplitude of comment, illustration and argument with which their doctrines have been developed.]

यतो मेरुः श्रीमान्निपतति युगान्ताग्निवहितः

समुद्राः शुष्यन्ति प्रचुरमकरग्राहनिलयाः ।

धरा गच्छत्यन्तं धरणिधरपादैरपि धृता

शरीरे का वार्ता करिकलभकर्णाग्रचपले ॥७२॥

72. Seeing that, when set all over with the fires of cyclic destruction the stately mountain Meru topples down, the seas which are the abode of numerous sharks and aquatic animals are dried up, and the earth (itself) comes to an end, though held firm by the feet of mountains, what to speak of this body as unsteady as the end of the ear of a young elephant.

धरणिधर—According to Hindu mythology the mountains are regarded as the supporters of the earth.

युगान्ताग्नि—The cosmic conflagration at the end of the present cycle.

गात्रं संकुचितं गतिर्विगलिता भ्रष्टा च दन्तावलि-

र्हृष्टिर्नश्यति वर्धते वधिरता वक्त्रं च लालायते ।

वाक्यं नाद्रियते च बान्धवजनो भार्या न शुश्रूषते

हा कष्टं पुरुषस्य जीर्णवयसः पुत्रोऽप्यमित्रायते ॥

73. (In old age) the body becomes shrivelled, the gait becomes unsteady, the teeth fall out, the eye-sight is lost, deafness increases, the mouth slavers, relatives do not value (one's) words, the wife does not nurse; and alas! even the son of a man of worn-out age turns hostile.

वर्णं सितं भ्रष्टं वीक्ष्य शिरोरुहाणां

स्थानं जरापरिभवस्य तदा पुमांसम् ।

आरोपितास्थिरातकं परिहृत्य यान्ति

चण्डालकूपमिव दूरतरं तरुण्यः ॥७४॥

74. Seeing the grey hairs on the head of a man, emblematic of discomfiture by old age,

youthful women at once fly away from him, as if from a Chandala's (the untouchable in caste) well whereon is placed a structure of bones!

आरोपितास्थिरातकं—may be taken to qualify पुमांसम् or कूपम्. If it be taken as qualifying the former, it would mean: this frame-work of bones, (meaning the old man).

[It was a custom in former times with the Chandalas to line their well with bones for ornamentation.]

यावत्स्वस्थमिदं शरीरमरुजं यावज्जरा दूरतो

यावच्चेन्द्रियशक्तिरप्रतिहता यावत्क्षयो नायुषः ।

आत्मश्रेयसि तावदेव विदुषा कार्यः प्रयत्नो महा-

न्संदीप्ते भवने तु कूपखननं प्रत्युद्यमः कीदृशः ७५

75. As long this body is free from disease and decrepitude, as long senility is far off, as long the powers of the senses are unaffected and life is not decaying, so long wise persons should put forth mighty exertions for the sake of their supreme good, for when the house is on fire what avails setting about digging a well (for water).

तपस्यन्तः सन्तः किमधिनिवसामः सुरनदीं

गुणोदारान्द्वारानुत परिचरामः सविनयम् ।

पिवामः शास्त्रैधानुत विविधकाव्यामृतरसा-

न्न विद्मः किं कुर्मः कतिपयनिमेषायुषि जने ॥७६॥

76. Shall we live by the celestial river practising austerities, or shall we amiably serve (our) wives graced by virtues, or shall we drink of the currents of scriptural literature or of the nectar of diverse poetical literature? Man having the longevity of a few twinklings of the eye, we do not know which (of these) to undertake!

दुराराध्यभ्रामी तुरगचलचित्ताः क्षितिभुजो

वयं च स्थूलेच्छाः सुमहति फले बद्धमनसः ।

जरा देहं मृत्युर्हरति दयितं जीवितमिदं

सखे नान्यच्छ्रेयो जगति विदुषोऽन्यत्र तपसः ॥७७॥

77. These rulers of the world, having minds restless like a horse and (therefore) diffi-

cult to please, and ambitious as we are with minds pitched on vast gain, and as age steals away bodily strength and death steals away this dear life, ah friend! nothing and nowhere else is there good for the wise in this world excepting the practice of austerities.

(To be continued).

SOME LETTERS OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

(5)

Triplicane,

14. 8. 04.

My dear Mr. Chockalingam,

I am very glad to read the description of yourself. It is very good of you that you want to be a true Yogi. But before you attempt to be one, you must have to do some preliminary things which are absolutely necessary, just as the foundation is necessary for the creation of a building.

Try to be dutiful to yourself, towards your wife, and children, if you have any. Try to be dutiful towards your relatives, friends and neighbours. Be charitable, honest, plain and truthful. Lastly, have an intense devotion and love for God, the author of your being. Lead this sort of life as long as it does not become one with your nature. For, you should know it for a fact, that unless a man is physically and mentally pure, he has no right to enter the Holy Shrine of Yoga. Yoga does not consist in merely holding the breath, and making *pranayama* and various postures. It means getting rid of all *chitta-vrittis*, or desires. The pure alone can get rid of the evil effect of evil desires. So, my dear, try to be pure, by being dutiful towards your parents, wife, children, relatives, friends and neighbours. Be an ideal householder first, and then alone you will be able to be a real Yogi, otherwise not.

With my best love and blessings,

I am yours affectionately,

Ramakrishnananda.

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.

We published in November, a report and appeal of the Ramkrishna Mission, dated the 21st September, 1915, in connection with its relief work carried on in Tipperah, Cachar, Bankura, Kotalipara (Faridpur), and Balasore. The next report published by the Mission is dated the 31st October, 1915. This report announces that the work in Cachar from its centre at Silchar has been closed, owing to better conditions prevailing among the people there. During the last four weeks from the 6th Sept. to the 4th Oct. this centre relieved successively 1054, 730, 884, and 875 people from 75, 80, 94 and 95 villages. In Tipperah from twelve centres, during the same weeks, about 220 villages were relieved, the number of persons weekly relieved being more than 4500.

Besides Bant in Balasore (Orissa) another centre was opened at Agarpara during this period, with six villages under its radius of relief and 134 persons to relieve. At Bant, in the 4 successive weeks, 310, 245, 474 and 531 persons were relieved from 21, 27, 32, and 43 villages successively.

The centre at Kotalipara, placed under the local Ramakrishna Sevashrama, was closed after four weekly distributions. During the first three of these, this centre reported relief of 846 persons from villages averaging about 30.

The sum of Rs. 300 has been sent to the Thana Bhairab in District Mymensingh, where a centre for relief work is to be opened at the urgent request of the local people.

But according to reports from the workers, the severity of famine conditions in other places pales before what the famished people in Bankura District are suffering from. The Government has placed the charge of 27 village unions under the workers of the Mission. These unions they have at present distributed under six relief centres. Weekly reports from these centres received during 6th Sept. to 18th Oct. give the number of villages and persons relieved as fluctuating in every case, at least during the first few weeks. In Bankura centre, for instance, from 1315 recipients, inspec-

tion as well as other causes have brought down the number to 675 in the fourth week; in Bishnupur, from 766 to 901; in Kaniamara from 444 to 710, in Onda from 371 to 1808, in Sonamukhi from 1143 to 1017, and in Indpur from 403 to 369, the rough total of persons relieved every week being about 5500.

But the latest report about the work in Bankura district shows great embarrassment due to funds falling short. An appeal (dated the 22nd Nov.) has been issued by the Secretary of the Mission for sustained public contributions to funds for the Bankura work. We summarise the appeal below, and it speaks for itself:—

In our report dated, Sept. 21, we informed the public of the serious outbreak of famine in Bankura District, Bengal, and that we had already opened centres there to carry on relief work. Our mission has up to this time relieved some seven to eight thousand people every week in that district. Rs. 2500 have been spent every week for the purpose. At present we have been compelled to cut short our scope of work owing to the want of adequate funds. We have now got only Rs. 3000 in our hand. We can with great difficulty carry on our work with this sum for about two weeks only, though the people sorely need our help for a few months more. It is needless to say that if contributions be not forthcoming we shall be compelled to stop the work though with the greatest reluctance. We eagerly look forward to sustained and energetic help from the generous public in aid of these distressed men and women.

Contributions however small will be thankfully received and acknowledged at either of the following addresses:—

(1) Swami Brahmananda,

The Math, Belur P. O., Dt. Howrah,

(2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office,

1 Mukherji's Lane, Baghbazar P. O.,
Calcutta.

THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE R-K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA,

KANKHAL.

THE Kankhal Sevashrama has completed another year of its useful work among the Sadhus and Pilgrims of Hardwar, Rishikesh and Kankhal as well as the indigent people in the surrounding villages. In the present Report we find a record of work covering the period from January to December, 1914; so it does not contain any account of the work carried on by the Sevashrama during the last Kumbha Mela of Hardwar.

The total number of persons relieved during 1914 was 9655, of which 7685 were Hindus, 1036 Mahommedans, 12 Christians, 784 Chamars and 138 sweepers. The persons relieved included visitors from almost every part of British India and the Native States. The total number of indoor patients during the year was 211, as against 154 of the previous year and of this number 183 were cured, 18 left treatment and 8 died. Of 9444 out-patients, 1558 were Sadhus and 7886 lay people made up of pilgrims and poor inhabitants of the surrounding villages.

The Night School for the depressed classes had 38 pupils on the roll during the year. The education is entirely free and there is no age limit. The school unfortunately holds its sittings at present in the exposed verandah of the Outdoor Dispensary.

The Sevashrama workers helped during the year to extinguish three fires in the vicinity of the Sevashrama. Certain poor families affected by these fires were helped by them with money and materials to rebuild their huts.

We extract below from the Report the fervent appeal of the Sevashrama for public help:—

The Sevashrama is labouring under great disadvantages consequent on its increased activity, chief of which is the want of accommodation. We are glad to announce that in response to our last year's appeal the much-needed Cholera Ward was completed in April 1915 and did inestimable service during the last Kumbha Mela, which will be noticed in proper place in the Report for the next year. But there are other pressing needs

still. The first need of the Ashrama is an outdoor dispensary on the roadside, on the newly-acquired site in front of the Ashrama, the present dispensary being too small for the purpose, and having no operation room. Besides it being situated in the interior of the Ashrama, people get no opportunity to know that there is such a dispensary to minister to their wants. When this new building is completed, the present dispensary may be used for the purpose of the Night School for the depressed classes, which is at present housed in an open verandah and leaves the students exposed to wind and rain in the rainy season and winter. Next is the need of a separate General Ward with 12 beds, for patients other than Sadhns; the present indoor Ward being exclusively meant for Sadhus leaves these other sufferers in the lurch when they need prolonged nursing and treatment. Add to this the need of funds for the general expenses of the Ashrama as well as for its permanency.

The total cost of erecting these Wards will be about Rs. 8,000. But we are confident that considering the supreme value of human life and the effective aid the Ashrama bestows, this sum will be quickly raised through the generosity of our kind-hearted countrymen. In the name of suffering humanity we appeal to all sympathising souls for funds to place the Sevashrama on a secure footing as also to facilitate its working. Persons desirous of perpetuating the cherished memory of their dear relatives may do so by removing any of the above wants.

Contributions, however small, towards any of the above funds may be sent to Swami Kalyanananda, R-k. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, or to Swami Brahmananda, President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah.

THE PANAMA CONGRESS OF RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHIES

A correspondent writes from San Francisco, California, U. S. A. :—

The enlightenment of the Twentieth Century civilisation and the marvellous achievements of science concentrated in the Panama-Pacific-International-Exposition, are producing a far-reaching

influence which is bringing people from the remotest parts of the world.

Of the many congresses and conventions on the varied programme of the Exposition, the Congress of Religious Philosophies, held on July 29, 30 and 31, was by far the most interesting.

First on the programme was the "Christian Day," devoted to the expounding of the different denominations of the Christian faith. The inaugural address by Rev. Charles F. Aked on "The faith of a Universalist," and an intensely interesting lecture, "The Philosophy of Atheism" by Miss Emma Goldman, deserved the hearty applause accorded them by the audience.

On July 30, which was called the "Hindu Day," various speakers discussed the different phases of Hinduism. A paper on "Zoroastrianism," was read by Mr Fredon D. Birdi. Pandit K. D. Sastri, M. D., delivered a fine address on "The Philosophy of the Vedas," which brought forth interesting questions and discussions from the audience. Swami Prokashananda of the Ramkrishna Mission, and in charge of the Pacific Vedanta Centre of San Francisco, gave a most brilliant and eloquent address on "The Universality of Hinduism." It came like a thunderbolt, this message of truth, and electrified the audience which was composed mostly of Christians, and many of them who had come to criticise the Oriental faith, were deeply impressed by the broad and universal teachings of Hinduism, and found, by the generous reception and applause which greeted the speaker during his lecture, that not a few in the West are realising truths outside of Christianity. According to J. C. Misrow, M. A. of Stanford University, the lecture was the best exposition of Hinduism given in America since the memorable address by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in 1893.

The convention closed successfully with the "Oriental Day," when Buddhism, Mahomedanism, Theosophy and other Philosophies were freely discussed by representatives from all parts of the world.

Swami Prokashananda, while acting as Vice President of the International Buddhistic Congress, which was held in August 27, gave two inspiring addresses on "Relation of Vedanta to Buddhism," and "Ethics of Buddhism."

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

THE *Tithi* of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda comes off on Thursday, the 27th January, 1916, being the seventh day after full moon of the month, *Pous*. Therefore the public celebration of his birthday anniversary falls on the next Sunday, that is, the 30th January, 1916. The *Tithipuja* of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa comes off on Monday, the 6th of March, 1916 and the public anniversary will be celebrated on the 12th March, 1916.

THE annual report of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary is not published, like previous years, in December. The dispensary was started in Nov. 1903, being accommodated in a portion of the Advaita Ashrama premises. Every yearly report of the Dispensary, therefore, used to give an annual record of work carried on from November of the previous year to October of the current one. But the Dispensary having been removed to its present building in Jan. 1915, it is considered desirable to count from now its session from Jan. to Dec. of each year. The record of this year's work therefore will cover, over and above the usual period of one year, the two months of Nov. and Dec. of the year 1914, during which months the work of the Dispensary was conducted from the Advaita Ashrama premises. The Twelfth Yearly Report of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary will be published in the Feb. and March number of the Prabuddha Bharata, as well as in separate booklet form for the sake of wider publicity.

IN addition to the Ashrama, opened in 1907 by Swami Abhedananda, on a site 370 acres in area, in the heart of the beautiful hills of the Berkshire Range in Connecticut, about four miles from West Cornwall Station (about 3 hours' journey from New York), the Swami has established a Vedanta Library, 721 West 23rd Street, New York, where he meets the public every Sunday, 10-30 A. M. A Bhagavad-Gita class is also held here every Wednesday, 7-30 P. M. and a Yoga class every Friday, 7-30 P. M. During absence of the Swami this year, Mr. F. K. Caswell was in charge of the classes.

SWAMI Paramananda, Ramkrishna Mission, Vedanta Centre, Boston U. S. A., during his recent tour in California, delivered four public lectures in Los Angeles and two in Long Beach. These lectures were all well-attended and people very much regretted that the Swami paid them such a short visit. At the Hindu Temple at San Francisco he spoke on "True Universality and Tolerance," and at the Pacific Vedanta Centre in the same city, he delivered a lecture on "True Spiritual Culture, the Crying Need of the Day." At San Francisco also the Swami was very much requested to prolong his stay.

THE Bharata Dharma Mahamandal holds its Sixth All-India Convention at Benares from the 24th to the 30th December, 1915. The programme consists of conferences to decide important issues of Hindu social and religious life, a small exhibition of indigenous arts and industries, a Mahayajna for the well-being and success of our Emperor and his Empire, a grand procession with the Veda Bhagawan at its head and the presentation of titles for distinction in Arts and Letters, Scholarship and Piety etc. All believers in the Sanatana Dharma and the spokesmen of all sects and classes are invited, as well as the members of the Society.

WE have received copy of a pamphlet written on the life of Sri Ramana Maharshi of Arunagiri, a living saint of Southern India. He is described to be a great Raja Yogi who has attained the goal of the Vedic Religion. Saints like him really maintain the unique glory of India and her national ideal in this modern world with its heart bleeding from the effects of the ambitious worldliness of nations. They constitute the very salt of the whole humanity, the prop which supports its ultimate hopes, the subtle power which protects these from being crushed by rampant materialism. This interesting pamphlet may be had of S. S. Narasimhayya, Telegu Munshi, Police Training School, Vellore.