

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



उचिष्ठत ज्ञापत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराजिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I, iii, 4

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

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

Vol. XX]

OCTOBER 1915

[No. 231

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(*In Madras, 1892—1893.—XIV.*)

Individuality in Universality is the plan of creation. Each cell has its part in bringing about consciousness. Man is individual and at the same time universal. It is while realising our individual nature that we realise even our national and universal nature. Each is an infinite circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. By practice one can feel universal self-hood, which is the essence of Hinduism. He who sees in every being his own self is a *Pundit*.

Rishis are discoverers of spiritual laws.

In *Advaitism*, there is no *Jivatmā*: it is only a delusion. In *Dvaitism*, there is *Jiva* infinitely distinct from God. Both are true. One went to the fountain, another to the tank. Apparently we are all *Dvaitists* as far as our consciousness goes; but beyond? Beyond that we are *Advaitists*. In reality, this is the only truth. According to *Advaitism*, love every man as your own self and not as your brother as in Christianity. Brotherhood should be superseded by universal self-hood.

Not universal brotherhood, but universal self-hood is our motto. *Advaitism* may include also the "greatest happiness theory."

सोऽहम्—(Soham)—I am He—repeat the idea constantly, voluntarily at first, then it becomes automatic in practice. It percolates to the nerves. So this idea, by rote, by repetition should be driven even into the nerves.

Or, first begin with *Dvaitism* that is in your consciousness: second stage *Vishishtādvaitism*—I in you, you in me and all is God. This is the teaching of Christ.

The highest *Advaitism* cannot be brought down to practical life. *Advaitism* made practical works from the plane of *Vishishtādvaitism*. *Dvaitism*—small circle different from the big circle, only connected by *Bhakti*; *Vishishtādvaitism*—small circle within big circle, motion regulated by the big circle; *Advaitism*—small circle expands and coincides with the big circle. In *Advaitism*—'I' loses itself in God. God is here, God is there, God is 'I.'

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

EVERY man carries his God within his self, and the discipline of Advaita aims at revealing this God as that self. What is now being constantly revealed as my self is indeed a poor thing spurred hither and thither by every breath of desire. This false self-manifestation has to be replaced by the true one. And this is, in a nutshell, the task which the discipline of Advaita places before itself.

The world that revolves round us,—the flux of things, the current of events,—must have its centre in God, and self is the seat of that God. It has been said that God is a circle of which the centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. But the Advaita discipline declares that God, established in self, is the centre of all things in heaven and earth, and every human experience, internal or external, describes a circle round that centre. Our self, which as God is the centre in reality, has become eccentric, straying forth constantly along the curves of experience, and the discipline of Advaita seeks to rectify this eccentricity.

It is this eccentricity which makes us think of our self as an object in time and space. It makes us locate the centre of our experiences in things which move in a stream of impermanence. It not only dethrones our God from His real seat within our self, carrying Him up and down in space and time along the gyration of our experiences, but deflects likewise everything, that we look at or think of, from its real aspect and nature. The first step in the discipline of Advaita therefore is to locate the real centre of our world of experience and to hold on bravely to it at all costs. This initial act of location is technically called *Shravana*, or listening attentively

to all the wisdom about the Real Self or our God. The pitch of eagerness in the mind which receives the wisdom determines the measure of success attained in this initial step. If the mind is possessed through and through with the fullest hankering after reality, it is said, this first step releases such spontaneous impulses in that mind as carry it on to the goal of Advaita as if in spite of itself! Hearing then ripens spontaneously into realisation.

For less fortunate aspirants, the initial task is to plant within the self the throne of Divinity. Bring back your God within your mind, regarding the latter only as a disguise thrown upon Him, your real self. In the practice of religion, every advance has to be made by assuming the ideal to be real,—by behaving *within ourselves* as if that which has to be realised is already real. So do away with the distinction between real self and unreal self, repeating to your mind constantly that this self which you are conscious of is the greatest Divine manifestation to you, only its full effulgence is obscured by the infirmities of mind and heart, which have to be constantly conquered and eliminated. These infirmities belong not to the self which shines even through them all. Never say to yourself that you are weak or imperfect. Such thoughts upset the whole attitude indispensable to the discipline of Advaita. Ascribe all imperfections that come up on the surface to mind, will or heart, and in the undoubting assurance of the Divine glory of your self, struggle on against all these imperfections. Such assertion at every step of the Divinity of self is the first habit to be acquired in the discipline of Advaita.

It is said that the human soul gets hopelessly disconsolate if there is no God to pray

or speak to within the heart. Loving reliance on God, unburdening the mind to Him when it is heavy with grief or despair, is said to be an indispensable necessity for man. But who creates this necessity for man? Man himself; he first thinks himself aggrieved, and then feels it necessary to ventilate his grief. By thinking first that the self is subject to grief, you banish Divinity out of it, and then naturally feel the indispensability of assuming some God outside that self. But the very first habit of thought to be acquired in the discipline of Advaita is to consider the self as the greatest Divine manifestation vouchsafed to us. Grief and despair never come to this self; they come only to the mind or heart. And when the mind is thus heavily burdened, speak bravely to your self which is the only God manifested to you,—say to your self, ‘Me this grief or despair does not touch, so let the tear dry up in the eye, and let the mind throw off the burden and stand nerved to greater efforts. Let the unspeakable bliss of this self, this God in me, come out and soothe my heart, *Om Santih, Santih, Santih.*’ Thus repeatedly appeal to the infinite knowledge, the infinite bliss, the infinite power stored up in the self, and the grief or despair is bound to vanish sure as mist before the rise of the wind. By such appeals to the Divinity of self, you simply apply the force of truth against falsehood, and the effect is just like that of bringing light into darkness. This very principle we tend to apply when we pray to God outside of us to relieve our burdens, only we apply it in a disguised form, and the disguise really takes much away from the full measure and permanence of the effect.

What is this life, this world, but the glorification of the Ever-perfect through a struggle amidst imperfections? So take the struggle as a matter of course, as the natural means at our disposal for glorifying the Ever-perfect self. The moment you give up the struggle,

you brutalise your life. Every fall instead of being a cause for grief should be a call for further uplift and therefore for further glorification of the Divine self. Thus there is no room for grief or despair in the whole game of life. It is no disparagement to the child that it fell down many times before it learnt to keep its balance, for this balance equally implies both the experience of falling and that of rising. So every fall goes as much to the forming of the balanced character as the rising after it, and the number of falls is no matter to fret or chafe at. Only maintain the struggle to glorify the Ever-perfect self, till it leads you on to final equipoise,—till the struggle to rise after every fall resolves itself into the struggle to remove the tendency to fall. In this way the very power of struggle will be ultimately found to coalesce in that power which is self-manifestation. The whole game of life therefore is really a continuous triumph of the Divinity of self, and when the consciousness that it is so grows upon us from day to day, the second stage of the Advaita discipline, namely *manana* or the constant brooding of the mind on Reality, is being actually passed through.

In this stage generally, doubts are apt to float into the mind seeking to distract and perplex it. All the human impulses of love and adoration have a tendency developed in them by past habit to run after personalities outside of our self. The whole of this tendency is not prejudicial to the Advaita discipline. Our love and adoration generally constitute a give-and-take affair, and Advaita seeks to maintain and develop the ‘giving’ element in it, while trying to suppress the ‘taking’ element. In this matter the motto of the Advaita attitude is: “To receive, turn only to the self, and to all others turn only to give.” If this attitude is strictly maintained in all our relations with personalities outside of our self, then a habit of disinterested love, adoration and service is easily acquired. For

instance, we may love and adore a great Saviour of men, we may hold spiritual communion with him, but all that need not imply that we have to approach him as a supplicant for favour or help. For it is not only an essential doctrine of Advaita, but it is a truth known to every great teacher of religion that the only direct source of such spiritual help is the self in every man. Even the help that comes from great Saviours of men involves the application of this fundamental truth. And the sooner we recognise this truth and allow our self to constitute itself the only direct source of all our spiritual inspiration and help, the better for our steady, solid, religious development.

So in the Advaita discipline there is room enough for love and adoration, only the latter must not be allowed to divert all the receiving impulses of our mind from their concentration on the self within as the infinite source of all our spiritual strength. This condition, if strictly fulfilled in our relations to personalities high and low, will bring about the manifestation in our life of the truest ideal of love and service. And most of the distracting doubts which we were going to speak about as being incidental to the second stage of the Advaita discipline will never confront us, if we are careful always to adhere to this Advaita principle of truest love and service. For instance, the fact of offering the highest reverence to God-men or of feeling the deepest love for our fellow-beings will never seem to antagonise with our single-minded devotion to self as the greatest Divine manifestation vouchsafed to us, if we constantly carry out the principle, namely: to receive, we turn only to this self within us and to all others we turn only to give. Even in a God-man, we only find the self within us of infinite knowledge, love and power, manifested in full effulgence through a human form, and in adoring the self within we adore that human form best. So there can even be

no antagonism between the Advaita discipline and the worship of a Divine incarnation, if from the latter are eliminated all elements of selfish return in the shape of spiritual favour.

The last stage of the Advaita discipline is the gradual absorption of the mind in the supreme reality of the self. This is termed, in Sanskrit scriptures, *nididhyāsana*. In this stage, the disguise that has been thrown upon the self, namely the mind with all its subject-object relations in knowing, willing and feeling, dissolves itself into that supreme experience which is called Atma-jnana or Brahma-jnana, i. e. perfect self-knowledge, or the realisation of self as absolute existence, (अस्ति), absolute consciousness (भाति), and absolute love (प्रिय). Language really fails to describe this absolute state, and therefore the Lord Buddha used to mean it by the negative term *Nirvāna*. In his age the positive term used in Upanishadic literature became very much misused and travestied. So in his preaching he wanted to emphasize the absoluteness of that supreme state and used the negative term. But as the negative term naturally lends itself to misuse no less than the positive term, we find within a few centuries after Buddha a *shunyahavada* (a theory of final nothingness) evolved which proved prolific of no less mischief. The central pivot of the Buddhistic discipline was the denial of the ego of ordinary consciousness, supported by the positive element of mental and moral purification. There can be no doubt that if these two elements go together, the result would be a wonderful process of spiritual development, such as may well explain the rapid growth of the band of noble Arhats (liberated souls). But what was at the outset essentially a line of practice, became soon the theory of an out and out sensationalism (क्षणिकविज्ञानवाद), and too much theorising perverted the established channels of practical enthusiasm.

Bhagavan Sankara also upheld the unreality of the ego of ordinary consciousness, but instead of denying it altogether in practice he accepted a method of transcending it by sifting its false element from the truer one. When in every mental act a man posits an 'I,' he means to refer to some self-substance, but in spite of this reference the self-substance eludes our grasp and either the body or the mind usurps its place. Now Sankara accepts the impulse of self-reference, but rejects its false consummation; he accepts the force, but rejects its false movement. This nice discrimination was a master-stroke of our ancient practical spirituality which Sankara represented in his age. The force which underlies the constant reference to self as "I" is the most immediate, and therefore the most effective, impulse at our disposal to carry us up to that real self; so let us boldly accept it and yield ourselves up to it; but at the same time let us vigilantly at every step deny, and thereby check, the deflecting tendency of this force. We take the fullest advantage of the self-ward force, but deny its deflection. This force is embodied in the postulate of "I" or "aham" and we accept and apply that postulate, but the deflection is embodied in the body or the mind and we deny this deflection towards matter. This is the secret of that constant mental analysis which those who accept for their spiritual discipline the great Vedantic principle of "tattwamasi" or "sohamasmi" are required to perform.

Now, the traditional practice of the Advaita was in former ages generally confined to Sannyasins. But as the Advaita is the ultimate rationale of all possible lines of spiritual discipline, and as the demand of the present age is for a harmonisation and systematisation of all religious paths and sects, in Sri Ramakrishna we heard the voice of the Time-spirit insisting that in matters of religious practice, we have to "take Advaita tied up in our clothes first" and then safely proceed on

as we choose. The great disciple of the Master, Swami Vivekananda, therefore preached Advaita as the philosophical basis of religious unity in the whole world. And then finding out that the root cause of all the degradation of his countrymen is the want of strength, in that false type of manhood that is being developed among them, he strove his best to bring out the practice of Advaita from the hidden custody of Sannyasins and preach it throughout the length and breadth of the country. If all truths must needs suffer by general dissemination, if we have, in any case, to count upon such truths protecting themselves as best as they can against misuse and abuse, let the very highest truth about religion diffuse itself broadcast among all modern men who have now unparalleled facilities for constantly rectifying and reorganising their ideas and sentiments. So in the modern age, the Advaita is preached to all men without distinction, and we have sought to give above a brief outline of the practical discipline of Advaita, suitable in form to the capacities of men in the ordinary work-a-day world.

RELIGION AS THE NATION-BUILDER.

III.

LAST month we discussed the problem of national unity in India and found out that the basis of that unity,—the principle that will unite us as a nation,—comes from religion. The next question is: *why* should we unite ourselves into a nation? What is the motive force in such unity?

National organisation is the only mode of successful collective existence under modern conditions of human life in this world, and we have pointed out before* how the impulse to organise herself along that line is being

* Vide page 102, Prabuddha Bharata, June, 1915.

manifested in India to-day in the various spheres of her thought and activity.

Now, is this impulse for organisation purely a response made to the demand of the modern age? Do we desire to unite ourselves into a nation simply because that is the condition of self-preservation imposed upon us by the modern age? Is it an indispensable necessity imposed on us purely from outside? The answer is in the negative.

This necessity for national organisation is really an internal necessity of our historical evolution. History in India has itself brought us to such a pass to-day that its own next problem appears to us as the problem imposed on us by the world outside. It is really the voice of our own past history that is being uttered to us through the necessities of our life in modern times as the momentous call to national organisation, and no people can fully succeed in organising themselves into a nation, if they do not feel themselves called to that task by the demand of their past historical evolution. One fundamental mistake of educated men in India is that they took over the charge of this great work not directly from their past history, but from the modern age.

Therefore the question with which our discussion was opened resolves itself into the further question, namely: what is precisely that demand of our past history in response to which we have to unite ourselves into a nation to-day.

The study of our past history from a political standpoint gives us a vast record of fitful political occurrences, linked together only by hypothetical dates and apparently attended with a fitful rise or decline, as the case may be, of the other collective concerns of human life. The West has its own experience of history, and that experience develops a historical imagination which naturally proves a potent instrument of research in those fields of history where the Western type of life-experiences lie buried. But it is equally

natural that the same instrument will utterly fail to discover the very key to the study of Indian history. At the point of this imported instrument, we find to-day, quite a wonderful mass of historical materials has really been turned up. But this alien historical imagination tends not only to choose the wrong soil where the digging is to be done, but also fails to arrange the finds round their real fundamental centre of interest. Historical research in India will perhaps long wander, mostly in this way, up and down the mere by-paths of our real past history.

Without travelling far into this historical topic, it may be stated here, as the result of every true study of Indian history, that the whole stream of events in that history is found to have a deep spiritual maincurrent, developed in the very earliest ages and maintained up to the present moment. The real history of India has to be studied by following the course of this maincurrent, and then only we shall be able to take the correct bearings of every event and understand the peculiar problems which arose in every period and the way they were solved. The whole mass of materials will then become inter-linked to one ultimate purpose, and we shall see how through all those profound vicissitudes, of which records are preserved, that one constant purpose of Indian history has wonderfully succeeded in maintaining its fulfilment, sometimes, maybe, at heavy costs.

The makers of Indian history in the earliest Vedic ages adopted the practice of religion as the supreme end of life, both individual and collective. This supreme end or *param-ârtha* by governing all the other ends of human life created society and history in ancient India. Since that time the pursuit of this supreme end has formed the one maincurrent of the whole life-history of the Indian people, and the problem of keeping up that maincurrent has ever been the fundamental historical problem in every age, all other problems, social, political or economical,

having their value and significance assessed and ascertained in the light of that fundamental problem. It will thus be seen that a type of spiritual nationalism implying an organic system of collective ends governed by a supreme spiritual end has actually been anticipated throughout the course of Indian history. This type of spiritual nationalism, which we have already explained in the first article of the present series, could not have chosen a better time than the modern age for asserting itself in its full articulated form. The whole past history of our country has gravitated towards this fruition, and judging from the way circumstances from all sides are pressing home to us to-day the necessity for national organisation, it was not a moment too early when Swami Vivekananda called upon us to commence the task of nation-building on the spiritual basis.

The demand therefore for organising ourselves into a nation comes really from our own past history. The one fundamental problem of keeping up the spiritual main-current of our life-history is urging itself on us to-day under all those new conditions of a successful solution which the modern age has created. Besides the presence of the Islamic and Christian cultures which have to be harmonised with the old spiritual maincurrent of the Indian collective life, new economic, social and political circumstances have arisen which demand a new solution of the old historical problem. In fact, religion in India to-day has not only to rise to the higher plane of religious unity from which the harmony of all creeds has to be constantly preached and practised, but it has also to work out in full that organic system of collective ends which defines the type of spiritual nationalism.

Now it devolves upon every son of India to help to carry this great problem of her religion, aye the very problem of her existence, to its complete solution. Every person who calls himself a son of India must rally

round the great purpose of her history, the one supreme end of her existence, namely, the practice and preservation of the Spiritual Ideal in which is focussed and harmonised the whole world-culture in religion, or in other words religion in its real comprehensive sense. It is for this religion, religion in its real glory, that India stands to-day among the nations of the world, and none of our countrymen can call himself a son of India unless his life is consecrate, directly or indirectly, to this central aim of his country's existence,—the preservation, practice and preaching of Religion.

Thus our own past history defines our patriotism, and to be of service to his motherland none of us has to import patriotism of the Western type. Too often have we uttered of late the noble cry of *Bande Mātaram* with the borrowed fervour of political patriotism; let us all Hindus, Christians and Mahommedans, hail the motherland to-day as the great embodiment of the synthetic Spiritual Ideal for the whole of the human race. This is her real self revealed throughout her history, while the India of political patriotism is a grotesque travesty creating a false inspiration fizzling out in constant failures. Why should we serve India with a borrowed patriotism, and then strike our foreheads and break our hearts away in begging for her the honour of being admitted into a political empire? Turn, oh! sons of India, turn for a moment to her real self which already occupies the most honoured position among the nations of the world, calculated to command the deepest reverence of gods and human beings. Will not any imperialistic political nation of this world deem it its greatest fortune and privilege to be able to admit this real India within its political empire? What though the world perverted at present by a political craze fails to recognise this real self of India; if you yourself, oh! sons of India, recognise it now when it is not too late and do your duty by

it, the day is not far off when even the mad political world would modify its petty standpoint of pound, shilling and pence, and begin to regard India in her true light as the most valuable and honoured inspirer of humanity in its march towards real progress.

Therefore we have to work for the rise of real patriotism in India round the recognition of her real self. A keen sense of responsibility is the groundwork of practical patriotism. So let the main purpose of our historical evolution, the aim of our country's existence, manifest itself in every individual as the fundamental aim and purpose of his life. Let the aim of the whole become the aim of every unit, for that is the essence of practical patriotism. Let every child in India be bred up in the consciousness of the supreme end of our collective existence, namely the preservation, practice and preaching of the Spiritual Ideal, and let the keenest sense of responsibility grow up in every mind from childhood so that every individual life may be lived unto that one collective end. "Have you not read," asks Swami Vivekananda, "the proud declaration of Manu regarding the Brahmana, where he says that the birth of the Brahmana is 'for the protection of the treasury of religion'? I should say that *that* is the mission not only of the Brahmana, but of every child, whether boy or girl, who is born in this blessed land—for the protection of the treasure of religion".

This responsibility is the cornerstone of the true Indian patriotism, and what is really meant by a national system of education in India is the training up of every child born therein in a way best fitted to the fulfilment of this responsibility. The first step, we have seen last month, for every Indian, Hindu, Mussalman or Christian, is to rally round the Spiritual Ideal or the idea and practice of religious unity. It is not meant by this that a Hindu has in any sense to give up his particular creed, a Mussulman his own creed, or a Christian his. But each has to proceed on his

respective lines of spiritual development while recognising one common goal and profiting wherever or whenever possible by the spiritual culture of the other. This harmonious development of all the creeds and faiths, already existing and yet to exist, under the auspices of a powerful body of spiritual leaders who have fully consecrated their lives to the practice and preservation of the ideal of perfect religious unity will fully solve the central Indian problem of national unity. The second step is that of the diffusion of true patriotism,—a patriotism, which, we have seen, will develop the keenest sense of responsibility in every son of India to uphold and maintain by his individual life the one aim and mission of the Indian nation. These two steps solve the question as to where we shall unite and why; to form ourselves into a nation.

Now it remains for us to see in another article how when the groundwork of national unity is once laid in this way, the problem of organising the pursuit of all the other ends of our collective life on a national scale becomes easy of solution.

EPISTLES OF

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XLXVI.

Almora, 9th July, 1897.

Dear—

I am very sorry to read between the lines the desponding tone of your letter, and I understand the cause; thank you for your warning, I understand your motive perfectly. I had arranged to go with A— to England but the doctors not allowing, it fell through. I will be so happy to learn that H— has met him. He will be only too glad to meet any of you.

I had also a lot of cuttings from different American papers fearfully criticising my

utterances about American women and furnishing me with the strange news that I had been out-casted! As if I had any caste to lose, being a Sannyasin!!

Not only no caste has been lost, but it has considerably shattered the opposition to sea-voyage—my going to the West. If I should have to be out-casted, I will have to be done so with half the ruling princes of India and almost all of educated India. On the other hand, a leading Raja of the caste to which I belonged before my entering the order got up a banquet in my honour, at which were most of the *big-bugs* of that caste. The Sannyasins, on the other hand, may not dine with any one in India as beneath the dignity of gods to dine with mere mortals. They are regarded as *Narayanas* while the others are mere men. And dear M—, these feet have been washed and wiped and worshipped by the descendants of kings and there has been a progress through the country which none ever commanded in India.

It will suffice to say that the police were necessary to keep order if I ventured out into the street! That is out-casting indeed!! Of course that took the starch out of the missionaries, and who are they here?—No-bodies. We are in blissful ignorance of their existence all the time. I had in a lecture said something about the missionaries and the origin of that species except the English church gentlemen, and in that connection had to refer to the very churchy women of America and their power of inventing scandals. This the missionaries are parading as an attack on American women *en masse* to undo my work there, as they will know that anything said against themselves will rather please the U. S. people. My dear M—, supposing I had said all sorts of fearful things against the “yanks”—would that be paying off a millionth part of what they say of our *mothers* and *sisters*? “Neptune’s waters” would be perfectly useless to wash off the hatred the

Christian “yanks” of both sexes bear to us, “heathens of India,”—and what harm have we done them? Let the “yanks” learn to be patient under criticism and then criticise others. It is a well-known psychological fact that those who are ever ready to abuse others cannot bear the slightest touch of criticism from others. Then again, what do I owe them? Except your family, Mrs. B—, the Leggets and a few other kind persons who else has been kind to me? Who came forward to help me work out my ideas? I had to work till I am at death’s door and had to spend nearly the whole of that in America, so that they may learn to be broader and more spiritual. In England I worked only six months. There was not a breath of scandal save one and that was the working of an American woman which greatly relieved my English friends—not only, no attacks, but many of the best English church clergymen became my firm friends, and without asking I got much help for my work and I am sure to get much more. There is a society watching my work and getting help for it and four respectable persons followed me to India to help my work, and dozens were ready, and the next time I go, hundreds will be.

Dear, dear M—, do not be afraid for me. * * * The world is big, very big and there must be some place for me even if the “yankees” rage. Anyhow, I am quite satisfied with my work. I never planned anything. I have taken things as they came. Only one idea was burning in my brain—to start the machine for elevating the Indian masses and that I have succeeded in doing to a certain extent. It would have made your heart glad to see how my boys are working in the midst of famine and disease and misery—nursing by the mat-bed of the cholera-stricken Pariah and feeding the starving *chandála* and the Lord sends help to me and to them all. “What are men?” He is with me the Beloved, He was when I was in America, in England, when I was roaming about unknown

from place to place in India. What do I care about what they talk—the babies, they do not know any better. What? I, who have realised the spirit and the vanity of all earthly nonsense to be swerved from my path by babies' prattle? Do I look like that?

I had to talk a lot about myself because I owed that to you. I feel my task is done—at most three or four years more of life is left. I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity, in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep, without caring what will be next; and may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,—and above all my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

“He who is the high and the low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent, break all other idols.

“In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship, break all other idols.”

My time is short. I have got to unbreast whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates others. Therefore, my dear M—, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the power behind me is not Vivekananda but He the Lord, and He knows best. If I have to please the world, that will be injuring the world; the voice of majority is wrong seeing that they govern and the sad state of the world. Every new thought must create opposition,—in the civilised a polite sneer, in the savage vulgar howls and filthy scandals.

Even these earth-worms must stand up erect, even children must see light. The Americans are drunk with new wine. A hundred waves of prosperity have come and gone over my country. We have learned the lesson which no child can yet understand. It is vanity. This hideous world is *Maya*. Renounce and be happy. Give up the idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond. Marriage and sex and money are the only living devils. All earthly love proceeds from the *body, body, body*. No sex, no possessions; as these fall off, the eyes open to spiritual vision. The soul regains its own infinite power. * *

Yours ever affly.

Vivekananda.

THE RETURN TO SELF.

Ah, sing the joy of self-return to self,
 And peace and love and glory, filling all,
 When false outsiders, God or man or beast,
 Do fade away like misty, dreamy, pall
 That hid the vast and glorious Within!
 Oh, sing the Atman free, whom vain the dream
 Of bondage strives to bind with tempting Gods
 Who save,—with creeds and cultures to illumine
 A darkness false that never was but taught
 And wrought into the mind from birth to birth.
 Will mud with mud be wiped? Will thorn a thorn
 Dislodge when held in trembling hand of him
 Who suffers from the thrust? Be bold and call
 A spade a spade, refusing dream to take
 As Truth; let that refusal be to thee
 Thy highest religion.

Or else, what breaks
 A dream but dreaming mind denying it?
 Who else exists outside the dream but self
 To shake thee up? So let thy mind deny;
 Till jerking mind is bound to break its dream!

When once the thought in dream that "I but dream"
Just flashes up, that thought becomes at once
The strongest clue to drag the dreaming mind
Out of that state ; but if some joy intense
Thrills out the mind from dream, who knows

perchance

The lingering infatuation false
May leave the moping mind in doubtful state
To lapse again in dream ! For this, declare
The Vedas high, "Fold up the sky in roll
Like leather sooner than gain freedom, man,
Without self-knowledge true !"

Deny, deny—

That is the only way ; deny in thought
And will and feeling strong with every breath
The bondage of the self : I am the Pure,
The Knowledge-Bliss-Existence Absolute ;
Not this, not this,—that worship ye in dream !
And let the web of false duality—
Man, God, impious, pious, low and high—
In love, the feeling deep of self in all,
Just melt away to never rise in view !
From whom to take, or say, to whom to give ?
—Each moment yielded up as fast it comes
To acting, thinking, feeling self in all !
The shuttle of the mind and heart and will
Goes, weaving time so long as time remains,
From self to self in feeling, thought and act.

—P. S. I.

THE DUSSERA.

Nature lifts her hood of cloudy gloom.
The sky reveals her glory, and the breeze
In blissful abandon blind moans through trees
And green and glistening things in autumn bloom.
Hark thou, oh ! soul, deep comes the Mother-call
—"Up, up, my child," and soft she touches all !

*

Wake up, my soul, and spread the puja bright
Of Mother with the glowing, smiling face,
With hands outstretched in houny all through space,
With wealth and wisdom, might and arts, bedight.
Away with sorrows all awhile, and say,

"All hail, oh ! Mother of Dussera gay !"

—P. S. I.

THE VAIRAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 177).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

परेषां चेतांसि प्रतिदिवसमाराध्य बहुधा
प्रसादं किं नेतुं विशसि हृदय क्लेशकलितम् ।
प्रसन्ने त्वय्यन्तः स्वयमुदितचिन्तामणिगणो
विविक्तः संकल्पः किमभिलषितं पुष्यति न ते ॥६१

61. Why, oh heart, dost thou set thyself on winning good graces, so hard to secure, by daily propitiating other men's minds in various ways? When, being serene inwardly and free from society, thou hast gems of thought rising up of themselves (i. e. when desires do not induce your thinking), what objects mere wish (even) would not bring to thee?

[The idea would come out more clearly, if we read, as many have done, क्लेशकलिलं and चिन्तामणिगुणः; the first expression would then mean 'a (chaotic) mass of troubles', instead of 'hard to secure', and the verb विशसि would have its primary sense of 'entering into.' स्वयमुदितचिन्तामणिगुणः would then mean "having the virtue of a philosopher's stone developed of itself in thee,"—i. e. one of the eight Yogic powers, 'प्राप्तिः' । विविक्तः we prefer to render as 'free from the company of others,'—a state opposed to what is implied when we have to depend on others for gratifying our desires.]

परिभ्रमसि किं मुधा कचन चित्त विश्राम्यतां
स्वयं भवति यद्यथा भवति तत्तथा नान्यथा ।

अतीतमननुस्मरन्नपि च भाव्यसंकल्पय-

अतर्कितसमागमाननुभवामि भोगानहम् ॥३२॥

62. Why dost thou, my mind, wander about in vain? Rest (thyself) somewhere. Whatever happens in whatever way, happens so by itself, and not otherwise. So not thinking over the past nor resolving about the future, I realise enjoyments that come without engaging my thoughts.

एतस्माद्द्विरमेन्द्रियार्थगहनादायासकादाश्रय

श्रेयोमार्गशेषदुःखशमनव्यापारदत्तं क्षणात् ।

स्वात्मीभावमुपैहि संत्यज निजां कल्लोललोबां गतिं

मा भूयो भज भङ्गुरां भवरतिं चेतः प्रसीदाधुना ॥

63. Desist, oh heart, from the troublous labyrinth of sense-objects; take that path of (highest) good which is capable of bringing about in a moment the destruction of endless troubles; get thee to the state of thy Atman; give up thy stream-like agitated flux; be calm and never again seek transient worldly attachments.

मोहं मार्जय तामुपार्जय रतिं चन्द्रार्धचूडामणौ

चेतः स्वर्गतरंगिणीतटभुवामासङ्गमङ्गीकुरु ।

को वा वीचिषु बुद्बुदेषु च तडिल्लेखासु च श्रीषु च

ज्वालाश्रेषु च पन्नगेषु च सुहृद्गणेषु च प्रत्ययः॥६४

64. Clear off delusion and earn devotion to Him whose crown is bejewelled with the crescent. Oh heart! accept attachment to some spot on the banks of the celestial river. What reliability is there on waves or bubbles, flashes of lightening or (smiles of) fortune, in tongues of flame, serpents or hosts of friends?

(To be continued).

SOME LETTERS OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

(3)

Mylapore

8. 9. '09.

My dear Mr. Ray,

We have received the price (2/2 as) of the book.

1. You shall not have to be a God, you are a God already. What is the use of imagining yourself to be a sinner? You *are* infinite, it is sheer Ignorance that makes you imagine that you are finite. It is not wrong to set a watch over your thoughts when you want to drive all weakening ideas from out of you. नाइ नाइ करिले सापेर विष थाके ना, say 'no' 'no' and there can be no snake-poison even in you. "I am not a sinner, I am God's own child,"—he who believes firmly in this, knows, in course of time, that he is the child of God.

2. "नरबलि" means "Sacrifice of the lower self—that imagines itself to be weak and sinful." The sacrifice of the animal in one's own self goes by the name of नरबलि । And that can be done only by a true hero. "जितं जगत् केन ननो हि येन" (By whom is the world conquered? By him who has conquered his mind). It requires the greatest strength of mind. If you want to give up one bad habit, you must have to develop the corresponding good habit, which requires tremendous Rajas or activity on your part.

3. Read the discourse upon "Bhakti" in "the Universe and Man" from beginning to end very carefully and you will find the required answer.

4. Incessantly keep before your mind your sonship of God and everything will come up all right.

With my best love and blessings,

I am yours truly,

Ramakrishnananda.

P. S.—Having not been well for the past few weeks I could not reply you earlier.

(4)

Madras,

23-7-07.

My dear Mr. Naidu,

I am very sorry to hear that you are not at all in peace of mind, owing to some domestic and social troubles. As you are a very good, pious, and thoughtful man, allow me to point out to you, that peace is one's own mental property, and hence you should never allow either household or social affairs to intrude into the holy precincts of your mind where only Parama Shivan should reign supremely, showering all peace and bliss upon you. Hoping that this will find you in good state of mind ; with my best love and blessings,

I am yours affectionately,

Ramakrishnananda.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA : THE GREAT MASTER.

Chapter V.

A FEW WORDS ON THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES OF GADADHARA'S PARENTS.

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WE have recorded the fact of some unique experiences occurring in the lives of Khudiram and his wife before the birth of Gadadhar. There are some more of the kind to relate to the reader before we proceed to express our humble opinion on them. The simple-minded rural people of the village and Khudiram's own relations, whom we found still living while we first visited Kamarpukur in 1887, soon after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, had told these to us. The words of such people would not satisfy, perhaps, the modern idea of competent evidence, but the fact that they had no axe of their own to grind by relating such stories and that they had very little idea then of the unique greatness of the Master, even from hearsay, go a great length to convince the unbiassed mind that those facts should

have our careful consideration. Again we should always remember that the qualitative value of what we call competent evidence, would always vary according to the predisposition of the mind that goes to test it, and that therein the mind set against itself not to accept anything beyond the most ordinary of human experiences, is as much a hindrance to arriving at truth, as the mind that always holds itself ready to receive anything and everything and is described aptly by the term 'credulous.'

Besides the descendants of Khudiram's own children, we had the good fortune of meeting the sons and a daughter of Dharmadas Laha, the survivors of the family of the Pynes who had seen better days and were great friends of the Chatterjeas, as well as the members, both male and female, of various other families who were connected more or less intimately with the Chatterjea family during the birth and childhood of Gadadhar. They gave their evidences in support of the unique experiences independently and without any selfish motive whatsoever. What could she, for instance, have expected of us, when Prasanna—the widowed daughter of Dharmadas Laha, the rich Zemindar-friend of Khudiram—whom we had the good fortune to meet several times, related to us such facts as the following:—

"Chandrá was looked upon by me and my companions as a queer woman and as one perfectly unacquainted with the ways of the world, for telling us all her extraordinary visions and experiences. She not only saw gods and goddesses and held conversations with them but used to smell sometimes exquisite fragrance of flowers and incense where there was none, and heard frequently the tinkling of a child's anklets about her while she was deeply engaged with her household duties before the birth of Gadadhar.

"She used to have such strange experiences at times, even after the child was born. Well do we remember the row that she made one day by calling us all and her husband too, because, as she said, she found the child so heavy that she could not manage to lift it in her arms with her utmost efforts! And still on another day she entreated her husband and every one whom she knew to call in the assistance of an able exorcist, for she saw her sleeping child, who was seven months old at

the time, transformed into a big man for a while! She fancied that ghosts were playing such tricks with her baby on such occasions and feared they might finally take it away from her. We, of course, always laughed at her for her wild fancies and fears."

When asked if she knew anything of Chandrá's vision before the Shiva-temple, she said, "Don't I? And didn't I warn her solemnly not to repeat that and the dream in which she fancied herself to be in another's arms, for the wicked might go the length of imputing a bad character to her? But still she would go on repeating them sometimes before her friends—such a self-forgetful, confiding and unsuspecting nature had Chandrá!"

The late learned professor Max Muller in his little book entitled, "Sree Ramakrishna, His Life and Teachings," in going to deal with these unique experiences in the life of Gadadhar's parents, has discussed at length on the fact of the growth, round an ordinary nucleus of facts, of accretions by what he calls "the dialogic process." He has gone the length of suggesting that such accretions must have taken place around Chandrá's vision before the Shiva-temple and transformed it gradually to its present form, making it appear very much like the fact of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Jesus the Christ.

The only reason he advanced for such a suggestion is the fact that the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were almost all of them well-versed in English and acquainted with the Christian idea of the immaculate conception; that in their subconscious attempt to look up to the greatness of their Guru or spiritual guide in every respect, they had gone on transforming unawares words and phrases in their narrative of the vision little by little, while they repeated it among themselves or for the enlightenment of the new proselytes; and that changes, that appeared at first to be insignificant and were overlooked and accepted, assumed perceptible proportions in a short time, though they themselves were perfectly innocent of this process of their gradual introduction and acceptance.

With due deference to the learned professor, we must say that he has missed or overlooked a strong point against his statement of the case. For if it be true that the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were

gathered from the class of youths who had received a tolerably good Western education, then it goes without saying that they had acquired at the same time, the Western habit of careful statement of facts; and that for that reason they would have been the persons least likely to lay themselves open to "the dialogic process." The fact is that they heard of the vision before the Shiva-temple first from the lips of the Master while he spoke to them about his mother and her strange visions from time to time, and then had it corroborated by such persons at Kamarpukur who were most likely to know of it. Again, as the Hindu scriptures, the Puranas in general, are full of instances of different degrees of immaculate conception, we do not see the force of the argument that the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had to go to the Christian Purana, the Holy Bible, to get their idea of it.

A close examination of the Hindu scriptures will reveal to us the fact that while they acknowledge universally the occurrence of extraordinary experiences in the lives of the parents of great religious geniuses who were regarded in later times as Incarnations of Iswara or the Ruler of the Universe, they did not hold it necessary that their birth in each case should take place through supernatural process. The parents of Rama, of Krishna, of Buddha and of all the other Incarnations had all had unique experiences more or less, before and after the birth of their noble sons, and yet the Puranas have not recorded the fact that their mothers had borne them through such a process. Again the fact of immaculate conception has been explicitly recorded by them in certain cases of individuals who were not as great. As an instance of the latter kind we may point out to the reader the birth of Karna, the noble hero of the Mahabharata. It is a well-known fact that Kunti, the mother of the hero, gave birth to this child of hers through the touch of the Sun-God, and yet retained her virginity, and getting married afterwards became the mother of the five Pandava brothers. Considering the facts stated above the conclusion seems to us to be inevitable that the Hindu scriptures rather point to the fact that the extraordinary experiences that come in the lives of the parents of Incarnations, do not go against the possibility of the natural process through which human births take place.

The conclusion to which we have arrived above by our examination of the Hindu scriptures is in harmony with the mandates of reason and the discoveries of modern science besides. For the theory of heredity which supports the fact of noble parents having noble progeny, if acknowledged to be true, will compel us to conclude that the minds of the parents of a Krishna, a Buddha and a Jesus, must have lived and moved in much higher planes than those of ordinary humanity. And does not the rise of the mind to higher planes of thought and unselfishness enable us to get glimpses of things which the ordinary sense-bound mind can never have? Thus the theory of heredity leads us to acknowledge the occurrence of unique experiences in the lives of the parents of the Incarnations as quite probable.

The Hindus who believe in transmigration, however, do not go to the theory of heredity to find the final solution to the problem of what causes men to be born with different degrees of power physically, mentally, morally, even spiritually. Heredity according to them can find the answer only to the material side of it, but not to its spiritual counterpart. For it has nothing to say when the problem is pushed a step forward into the form,—what causes particular individuals to go to parents who can transmit to them particular physical and mental capabilities? The answer to it, they hold, can only be found in the theory of individual Karma, which makes one fit to receive a particular kind of heredity only.

But on going to examine the lives of the great religious geniuses, the Hindu mind came face to face with facts, which could not be explained by this theory of heredity and individual Karma even. For Karma, which is only a finer form of the theory of cause and effect, can be said to exist only in cases where the effects produced are of the nature of their causes. For the effect is the cause transformed, and therefore there cannot be anything in it that is not in the cause itself. But the lives of the Incarnations appear on examination to be so dissimilar in nature to those of their parents who have to supply the causal link of heredity, both in regard to the quality and the quantity of power expressed in them, that it is not possible to regard them as related to each other in the

form of cause and effect. For where do we find even a thousandth part of the purity, unselfishness, love for their fellow-beings and spirituality that a Krishna, a Buddha and a Jesus manifested, in the lives of their respective parents? There were hundreds of Kshatriya chieftains and thousands of carpenters living almost the same kind of life at the time, as did Bashudeva, Suddhodana and Joseph, the fathers of Krishna, Buddha and Jesus respectively. Therefore, nothing can be more unreasonable than to suppose that the lives of the Incarnations are but the necessary effects of such ordinary lives. And then again, if it be said by those others who believe in Karma that the lives of the parents supply only the material conditions through which Karma operates to bring about effects in the present lives of Incarnations commensurate with causes in their previous lives, who will explain how even after the destruction in their present lives of this whole Karmic chain of cause and effect with the bondage of Maya, the fact of constantly doing good to humanity remains as a residuum, as it were, defying explanation by any theory of causation? This residuum, unaffected by the law of Karma and distinctly beyond the plane of its operation, forms the real purpose of these divine lives and consequently the real explanation of their birth. The Hindu scriptures therefore, have come to the conclusion that such giant personalities could not have come to the world through the ordinary process of Karma or causation even when combined with the operation of heredity, and that they, in fact, were beyond all bondage to Karma and must have appeared in the world out of their own free choice to do good to humanity. Then as time went on, the belief in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, independent and immanent personal Ruler of the creation made people to look upon the incarnations as but different manifestations of that self-same Being, Who in His infinite grace, takes birth from time to time among men by accepting human limitations to enlighten and liberate them from sense-bondage.

Such in short is the history of the development of the theory of incarnations, as we find it in the present day, in the whole range of the Hindu philosophy. It remains for us to see now whether this theory is compatible or not with the subject of

the present discourse, namely, the birth of the Incarnations through the ordinary process and the fact of their parents having unique experiences at the time of their appearance. It is evident from what has been stated above that the Hindu scriptures deny the bondage of Karma to the Incarnations themselves but not to their parents. Therefore every thing, besides the event of giving birth to such personalities, in the lives of the latter must occur not through any kind of supernatural process but as results of their previous Karma or in other words, through the operation of the ordinary law of cause and effect. The latter event would take place in their lives, on the other hand, only through the grace of the Lord. Now the question is: does that grace presuppose any standard of fitness in its recipients? The answer given to it has always been in the negative, if we do not take into account the one universal condition common to all religious aspirants, that there should be an intense struggle in their minds to proceed Godward.

The origin of grace has thus been placed beyond the limits of human reason, for it depends entirely on the supreme Will, that is above all conditions of causation. But the effects of it have been recorded; and it has been found out that in every case it uplifted the mind of its recipient to higher planes of thought and unselfishness and enabled it to have glimpses of things transcending the sensuous plane. Thus the occurrence of extraordinary experiences in the lives of the parents of the Incarnations is supported and confirmed by the theory.

Again, when we consider the fact that the birth of the Incarnations through compassion is altogether a free act of condescension on the part of the Deity, for raising and enlightening the human kind, it is not possible for us to set a limit to the depth of human level to which He would come down for the purpose. Therefore the argument that sets up immaculate conception as necessary to his appearance in the human plane, loses its force completely. The Hindu scriptures on the other hand assert that when the Deity condescends to take His birth among men He assumes the frailties and weaknesses common to human beings and by transcending those by intense struggle sets up an ideal before men that they might follow for liberating themselves from all such bondages. It is evident therefore, that to

ascribe any kind of supernatural power to the Incarnations which they do not earn here as a result of their intense struggle to conquer the flesh and the frailties of the mind—or to make them appear in the human plane with such singular advantages as the ordinary run of humanity can never have, would be, according to the Hindu scriptures, an attempt to contradict the very purpose for which the Deity undergoes incarnations. And does not the theory of immaculate conception in its attempt to ward off the touch of carnality from the birth of the Incarnations, suggest, at the same time the circumstance of their starting in this life with such unequal advantages as regards purity and power? The Hindus therefore, can understand the greatness of a Jesus depending entirely on the will of the Father and suffering crucifixion at the hands of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, while he could have called in legions of angels to help him to baffle their machinations,—but cannot very well do so when his advent into the world is described to have taken place under conditions which equipped him with advantages, which are not granted to even a single individual of the human kind.

The reader must not imagine however, from what has been stated above as the outlook of the Hindu scriptures on the theory of God-Incarnations that there is no record of cases in them of manifestations of supernatural powers or of extraordinary conditions of birth with regard to them. The miracles stated to have been performed by Sri Krishna from almost the very day of his birth, the conception of the widowed lady who gave birth to Sankara by the powerful touch of the God Shiva and various other instances of the kind, would have gone against us, had we attempted to do so. Our point of contention in the above discourse has been to impress on the reader the fact that the Hindu scriptures while they acknowledge the occurrence of extraordinary cases of birth and of manifestations of super-human power in several of the Incarnations, do not hold them to be inevitably necessary in the formation of their lives; that they have recorded certain cases as God-Incarnations in spite of there being any display in them of such extraordinary birth and powers; and that they seem to support the fact that unique experiences had entered and would enter into the lives of

the parents of all the Incarnations even though they had taken or would take their birth in this world in the common human way. The humble opinion to which we have arrived, therefore, by our examination of the Hindu scriptures on the subject is that the theory which regards superhuman births to be necessary to God-Incarnations must have been a later growth, and that the record of the strange experiences that came invariably to the parents of them before and after their birth, and a great deal of which can be explained to have occurred in the natural way with the help of the Yoga philosophy of the Hindus—must have contributed much to the growth of the same in the hands of the ignorant and the credulous.

Swami Saradananda.

REVIEWS.

The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct. Being class-lectures on the Bhagavadgita, by Prof. M. Rangacharya M. A., Rao Bahadur,—Vol. I, published by the Law Printing House, Mount Road, Madras. Pp. 636,—price Rs. 5.

In the preface of this superbly got-up volume, the learned author speaks of an earnest endeavour on the part of many patriotic educated men in our country “to bring together and harmonise by means of suitable and accurate interpretation and exposition the old thought of the East with the new thought of the West, so that they may as early as possible become fused into one wisdom.” “These lectures on the Bhagavadgita have been intended,” he tells us, “to serve as a humble contribution towards the fulfilment of this high purpose of thought-harmonisation.” Another object kept in view in undertaking the publication of these class-lectures on the Bhagavadgita is to help to impart “general non-sectarian religious and moral instruction, in accordance with the ordinarily accepted principles of Hinduism, to such Hindus as are desirous of rounding off therewith their modern liberal education”, for such instruction is best calculated to remove that well-known defect in the present system of University education which consists in emphasizing too much “reason, liberty,

privilege and personal conviction” at the expense of “faith, duty, obligation and obedience.”

On perusing the book, we find that the author has succeeded well in making out a strong case for those beliefs which go to make up Hinduism in its generally accepted form, and this pleading is made up of arguments in which both the logic and authority are mostly supplied by Western thought. So the lectures may well serve to fulfil in some measure the second object in view of the author as expressed in the preface, for they will help many students of our Universities to argue themselves back into the fold of Hindu beliefs when “a too free rationalism and a leaning to self-assertion at the expense of faith and obedience” may seduce them away from that fold.

Besides providing strong arguments in favour of Hindu beliefs, the volume may also be regarded as a good medium of moral and religious instruction through a peculiarly independent study of Gita texts, such as many people may find attractive in these days of reaction against traditional methods.

Thus while one of the purposes underlying the publication of these class-lectures bids fair to fulfil itself in some measure, we cannot say the same thing of the other purpose. Before “the old thought of the East” can successfully proceed to bring itself into harmony with “the new thought of the West” so that a happy fusion of both may be effected, the former must first organise and reduce itself into the unity of a synthetic wisdom, which is capable of reconciling all the various sectarian and sectional views of truth which exist within the domain of Indian culture. This type of synthetic wisdom must be acquired by every individual who proposes to make any contribution to the real harmonisation of Eastern and Western thought. But we regret to have to say that the present exposition of the Gita is neither informed with, nor inspired by this higher type of synthetic wisdom.

The wisdom of the Gita itself, on the other hand, is pre-eminently synthetic, and only that intellect which can rise to the altitude of this synthesis is in a position to interpret it truly. The Vedanta philosophy in its theoretical sphere affords room to the threefold doctrines of Advaita, Qualified Advaita and Dvaita, and in its practical sphere to the fourfold paths of Jnanayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga

and Rajayoga. Every student of the Gita will find that all these phases of the theory and practice of Vedanta have been incorporated into this "Song Celestial." Now the traditional way of interpreting the Gita is to give a free hand to one's individual temperament and predilections and thereby to uphold some of those phases of theory and practice to the exclusion of the others. But in order to organise our national thought in view of what the learned author of the book under review has called "thought-harmonisation," what we surely have got to do to-day is to subordinate our individual predilections to the interests of a synthesis of all the phases in the theory and practice of Hinduism. This synthetic wisdom has then to be brought to bear upon our interpretation and study of the three Prasthânas, the fountain-head of our national spirituality.

Of all other scriptures again, the Gita demands most our study and interpretation of it in this lofty synthetic spirit, which rises above traditional sectarianism, not by ignoring sectarian differences but by explaining and reconciling them. It is a matter of regret that in the present publication got-up with so much care and expenditure, this synthetic spirit essential to every modern study of Gita is not in evidence. For example, verses beginning from the 19th in Chapter II of the Gita evidently speak of One Atman pervading the whole universe, undoubtedly an Advaitic doctrine, while verse 26 expressly comes down to a lower plane and speaks of the individual aspect of that One Atman, an aspect which the Dvaitic standpoint assumes as real. Now to one who holds the key of the synthetic wisdom, this blending of the Advaita and Dvaita by Sri Krishna does not mar the consistency of the Gita. But the author of the present publication prefers to explain all the verses referred to from the plane of Dvaitic truth and therefore puts himself into an unnecessary difficulty while elucidating the expression, "It does not kill, nor is it killed." He insists on taking the human body carrying on within itself the fruits of Karma as the real responsible agent in killing and not the individual human self which he accepts as the subject referred to by the pronoun "it." But by no amount of psychological analysis can this individual "I" be dissociated from the sense of self-agency or responsibility. So to avoid doing

violence to the text, we ought to rise to the Advaitic standpoint while interpreting the expression, "It does not kill; nor is it killed." In the same way there may be many other passages in the Gita where the texts naturally admit of only a dualistic standpoint.

In studying the Gita, again, it is inexpedient and impossible to overlook tradition in the matter of interpreting texts and terms. In the case of almost no other scripture, interpretative tradition has so much claim on our attention, and while even outgrowing that tradition, we must not ignore it altogether, but should rather seek to explain and reconcile differences between it and our own exposition. This method of combining tradition with progressive interpretation has not been always employed in the present book under review. For instance, the terms Sankhya and Yoga have been explained by the author in page 109 as the theoretical and the practical aspects of a man's life in this world. This is evidently an explanation quite independent of tradition. But in pages 475-477, these terms are again almost given back their old sense of being two different paths of discipline. So it is evident that no real advantage has been gained by breaking off from interpretative tradition in this instance.

Still, on the whole, everybody who goes through the whole volume will readily admit that it is a notable addition to the present-day religious literature of our country, at least for the dispassionate and masterly way in which moral, social and spiritual problems have been brought forward and discussed in it, however questionable may be the spirit of aloofness, its pages breathe, from our national task of synthesizing the past traditions and the future problems of our collective culture. Every educated man who wants to make a thorough study of the peculiar problems connected with the understanding of the texts of the Gita would do well to give this volume a careful perusal.

The Mysore Economic Journal. A High-class Monthly Periodical devoted to the Discussion of all Economic Topics of Interest. Published under the auspices of The Mysore Economic Conference. (Vide description in detail in the advertisement columns).

We welcome this new journalistic enterprise

under distinguished auspices. The July and August numbers which we have received justify expectations formed regarding a really useful career. The pages of the journal are full of interesting and valuable informations on economic subjects dealt with.

The Industrial Mirror, Attungal, Madras, (Subscription Rs. 2 per annum) is another monthly magazine, started last month, which is expected to prove useful in disseminating industrial informations and stimulating economic enterprises. We congratulate our countrymen in Madras on the way they are evincing a real practical spirit in regard to the industrial problems of our country. We hope these industrial magazines may reflect real industrial progress in that province. From its first number it is evident that the Industrial Mirror will prove a well-conducted useful journal.

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.

The Report of August, 30.

In our report dated Aug. 7 we have acquainted the kind-hearted public with the ravaging influence of the heavy floods in the subdivisions of Silchar and Brahmanbaria. The situation has not shown any signs of improvement in these three weeks. Consequently our work in this area, though commenced on a very moderate scale is daily growing in bulk, as new villages are inspected and added to the list of recipients. The fields in the Brahmanbaria subdivision are still deep under water which is not likely to subside in a month or two. It is clear that the relief in this part is to be carried on for yet a great length of time. Besides, this state of affairs has to a certain extent hampered our work, as it was not a very easy task to decide where the permanent centres should best be made. Our centres at Kuthi, Devagram, Akhaura and Gangasagar have been closed after carrying on short temporary relief work, such as is needed in flooded areas. Six new centres have been opened at Nasirnagar, Sultanpur, Shuilpur, Ashtagram, Gokarna, Bholakot. These together with the three old centres at Silchar Brahmanbaria and Bitgha make up nine centres. Paddy-seeds have been

distributed in Silchar and an attempt has been made to help indigent middle class people and widows in Brahmanbaria, as far as practicable. Clothes also were distributed from all the centres, wherever there was urgent need. Below is given a summary of the distribution of rice:—

Names of Centres	No. of Villages	No. of Recipients	Quantity of Rice	
			Mds.	Srs.
Gangasagar	16	152	7	24
Do. (next week)	15	138	6	36
Sultanpur ...	6	53	2	26
Do. (next week)	12	282	14	4
Shuilpur ...	10	268	13	16
Do. (next week)	20	534	26	21
Nasirnagar ...	8	155	7	30
Do. (next week)	15	382	20	0
Bitghar ...	8	52	2	24
Do. (next week)	12	148	7	16
Do.	16	219	12	35
Ashtagram ...	8	174	8	28
Brahmanbaria ...	28	291	14	34
Do. (next week)	30	394	19	28
Gokarna ...	7	394	4	0
Bholakot ...	10	205	10	10
Do. (next week)	13	228	12	28
Silchar ...	25	480	24	0
Do. (next week)	53	1147	57	14

Besides, 55 mds. 24 srs. of rice were distributed as temporary relief from all the centres.

We wish now to bring another painful fact to the notice of our kind-hearted countrymen. We are informed from authentic sources that the people of Balasore in Orissa are in the grip of distress and need prompt relief. The mass people in Orissa are not literate enough to voice forth their sufferings in the newspapers, and have not been able to enlist public sympathy. In a day or two our workers will proceed to inspect the affected areas and we shall in due course publish the report they submit.

Bankura, too, has been developing grave symptoms of distress, and we have friends there, who are watching the situation and will open relief work on a small scale in a week or ten days with our pecuniary help and guidance.

The task before us is thus an arduous one, and we eagerly look forward to sustained and energetic help from the generous public in aid of these distressed men and women. With the Indian, charity is

an inborn virtue and we are confident we shall not have to complain of the lack of funds.

Contributions, however small, and cloth, old and new, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at either of the following addresses—(1) Swami Brahmananda, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur P. O., Dist. Howrah; (2) The Manager, 'Udbodhan' Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

ALMORA AND THE EAST BENGAL FAMINE

A correspondent from Almora writes:—

At the instance and under the auspices of His Holiness, the Swami Shivanandji Maharaj of the Ramkrishna Mission, now residing at Almora, a subscription was organised in that place to assist the Ramkrishna Mission Bengal Famine and Flood Relief Fund and a sum of nearly Rs. 121, one hundred and twenty one, was realised. The Swami, accompanied by others, visited the bazar and practically everyone, Mohammedan as well as Hindu, contributed according to his means. Even Europeans were approached and readily gave their bequest to the common cause of suffering humanity. The Swami, in publishing the following list of donors and donations of Re. 1 or over, takes occasion to publicly express his gratitude to the citizens of Almora for the great kindness they have shown to those for whose benefit the subscription was opened.

List of names of donors and donations of a rupee or more to the Ramkrishna Mission Relief Fund started in Almora:—

Rs. 5 each, from Mr. Myron H. Phelps, Mr. Krishna Hari Tamta Merchant, Dewan Hemet Sing Khem-sing visitor, Mr. Udhoram S.M., Rev. A. Warren, Prof. Ramsay College. Lala Badridas, Merchant, Rs. 4. Rs. 3 each, from Mr. L. E. Hampton Hd. Master Govt. H. E. School, Rev. E. S. Oakley Principal Ramsay College. Lala Lachiram Sah Thulgharia Merchant and Banker Rs. 2-4. Rs. 2 each, from Mr. Madhoram C. Thadani visitor, Lala Govindlal Sah Thulgharia Contractor, Pt. Lakshmi Dutt Joshi Rais, Lala Badri Sah Thulgharia Pleader, Sheikh Mahamad Hussain Merchant, Pt. Badri Dutt Joshi Rai Bahadur Vakil, Pt. Gopinath Misra Manager Sri Jagannathji's Estate Kumaon, Mr. Tara Singh of Shikarpur visitor, Mrs. Sita Advani, Pt. Mariram Pande Vakil, Kunwar Shiva Sing Tashil-

dar Almora, Captn. Khushal Sing Retired. Re. 1 each from Haji Neaz Mahamad, Lala Badri Sah Thulgharia, Lala Antiram Sah Thulgharia Bankers, Pt. Jagannath Bhutt Dy. Ins. of Schools, Lala Devalal Sah Gangola Merchant, Mr. Mahamad Hussain Sub Insp. Police, Capt. Chamu Sing (Retired), Sukdev Babajee Retired, do. Pt. Bhola Dutt Joshi Hd. Master, Pt. Badri Dutt Pande Editor 'Almora Akhbar', Baboo T. B. Barat Hd. Clerk Dy. Commr. Mrs. Narayandas visitor, Mrs. Hashumebor visitor, Miss E. Harlan, Pt. Mathura Dutt Joshi, Mr. Pritham Das, Aunt of Mr. Pritham Das, Lala Din Dayal Govt. Pleader Naini Tal, Pt. Kamptaprasad Dube, Pt. Lokmani Bhutt, Lala Shankarlal Sah, Pt. Lakshmi Dutt Pande Vakil.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

In the first seven months of the present year the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama at Brindaban had 29, 59, 65, 22, 29, 15, 27 indoor patients consecutively, the daily average attendance of outdoor patients being 95. 111.5, 127.32, 102.76, 115, 88.5, 107, in consecutive months. In August last the number of indoor patients was 55, 25 being discharged cured, 3 leaving the hospital and 22 still under treatment in the first week of September. and the number of outdoor patients averaged 126 daily. The public have been informed of the dire necessity of permanent and extended accommodation for the hospital, and through the generosity of some kind-hearted gentleman it has been possible to secure a plot of land on the Jumna for the purpose. Now the Sevashrama fervently appeals for contributions to the building fund, and considering the immense utility of the institution and its significance as the national temple for the worship of the Lord of Brindaban through the service of His Jivas or creatures, we hope the appeal will not be made in vain.

From the report of the Ramkrishna Mission outdoor dispensary at Allahabad, we learn that altogether 2757 patients have been treated during the month of August, 15. The subscriptions and donations amounted to Rs. 62-4-0, from which total expenses met are Rs. 55-9-0. There is an urgent necessity for erecting one out-door dressing room by the side of the dispensary. It will cost about Rs. 100. We appeal to the generous public to help to raise this sum. All contributions are to be sent to—Swami Vijnanananda, Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthigunj, Allahabad.