

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राण्य वराग्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XX]

AUGUST 1915

[No. 229

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(*In Madras, 1892—1893.—XII.*)

Buddhism proves nothing about the Absolute Entity. In a stream the water is changing, we have no right to call the stream *one*. Buddhists deny the *one*, and say, it is *many*. We say it is *one* and deny the *many*. What they call Karma is what we call the soul. According to Buddhism, man is a series of waves. Every wave dies, but somehow the first wave causes the second. That the second wave is identical with the first is illusion. To get rid of illusion good Karma is necessary. Buddhists do not postulate anything beyond the world. We say, beyond the relative there is the absolute. So far it accepts that there is misery, and sufficient it is that we can get rid of this *Dukkha* (misery); whether we get *Sukha* (happiness) or not, we do not know. Buddha preached not the soul preached by others. According to the Hindus, soul is an entity or substance, and God is absolute. Both agree in this, that they destroy the relative. But Buddhists do not give what is the effect of that destruction of the relative.

growths from the same branch. Buddhism degenerated and Sankara lopped it off!

Buddha is said to have denied the Vedas because there is so much *himsa* and other things. Every page of Buddhism is a fight with the Vedas (the ritualistic aspect). But he had no authority to do so.

Buddha is expressly agnostic about God; but God is everywhere preached in our religion. Vedas teach God—both personal and impersonal. God is everywhere preached in the Gita. Hinduism is nothing without God. Vedas are nothing without Him. That is the only way to salvation. Sannyasins have to repeat the following, several times: I, wishing for *mukti*, take refuge in God, who created the world, who breathed out the Vedas.

Buddha, we may say now, ought to have understood the harmony of religions. He introduced sectarianism.

Modern Hinduism, modern Jainism and Buddhism, branched off at the same time. For some period, each seemed to have wanted to outdo the other in grotesqueness and humbugism.

Present-day Hinduism and Buddhism were

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

ONE complaint often made now-a-days against some of our educated people in India is that they are looking too much behind on the glories of their past, and as a result the urgent tasks that lie before them at present are being neglected. It is also pointed out that instead of dwelling so much on the past, we should "act, act in the living present," emulating the glories of the living nations and thus proving ourselves worthy of our past. A people that seeks to live simply upon the credit of a glorious past is fairly on the way to die. What credentials are we producing before other nations at present to prove that we deserve to live side by side with them?

This complaint mostly comes from a particular class of people whose views about our future we have not been left in the dark about. They are too much enamoured of modernism, and hence their impatience with those of their countrymen who, they think, pay too much attention to their past. But they little think that no amount of retrospection on the part of a people can be condemned if that serves the interests of its prospective work. The example of living nations merely can never determine what our present tasks are and how they should be performed. It is our past history which should determine for us the type of our present activities, their range being determined by modern circumstances. It is the past which should reveal to us what really we are and what we have got to do in this world. The staunchest supporter of modernism cannot ignore these claims of the past on our present-day life and thought.

But judging from how they express themselves on this subject, it seems evident that

these advocates of modernism admit the past to be a factor of some importance in our present-day strivings. Even they have their own way of looking back into our past. They are ready to accept just so much of it as furnishes scattered precedents for their own plans of action, and the rest they condemn either silently or expressly. They are moreover ready to derive self-confidence from their study of the past on the whole. But if other people in the country hold up our past with feelings transcending this limited beneficence, they appear uneasy in mind and raise the alarm of too much retrospection. If this be not the case, then what right these wise people have to assume that for the sake of our country's welfare other people should adopt *their* way of thinking with regard to our past and that they should depend on it today for solving our country's problems only *thus far* and no farther? We cannot disown our past; we cannot deny it the right to dictate to us our scheme of life, both individual and collective. Moderners may just appear to be very smart and bright in their own line of life, but we cannot, on pain of death, break off from our past history and refuse to have our own line of collective life determined by it.

Now, that is the fundamental question. The West knocked at our door and gained entrance when we were rotting in self-oblivion. Their brilliant scheme of life took our souls by surprise and we hated ourselves and fondly wished to be like them. Their scheme of life with the help of Western education sank deep into the very constitution of our mind. It enslaved our mental vision and captured our hopes and aspirations. We began to think and express ourselves in the terms of this Western scheme of life. Every-

thing in our past appeared incongruous to us, for the whole of that past had been evolved on the basis of another scheme of individual and collective life. In this way, a kind of hypnotic obsession was added to our self-oblivion, and the first great saints who were sent into our midst, like Raja Rammohan Roy or Swami Dayananda, had the momentous mission in their life of protecting us from absolutely bartering ourselves away to Western leadership in the deepest concerns of human life. Time was not ripe then for the full light of self-consciousness to impinge on our struggling self-deluded minds.

Even now, how few of us have risen above the delusion of modernism and would understand why Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa wanted us to look down upon the "âdhunikâ" (modern), while at the same time insisting that "coins of the Nawabs' regime can't circulate now." How few of us can properly distinguish the good, that we have to accept from the modern age, from the evil that we have to refuse. And this inability is wholly due to the fact that we do not yet know ourselves, we are not yet fully self-conscious. Having mastered the branches of Western learning and perhaps made some scholarly incursions into the vast domain of our ancient literature, we fancy, we are wise enough to dictate today the course of our collective activities. In this way we have formed mountain-high pretensions of intimate knowledge of our past, but actually we do not find a single leader of thought in India today who can bring the light of such real knowledge to bear, at every step, on the pressing problems of our collective life,—who can fully explain to us that comprehensive scheme of life which has been seeking to find expression throughout our past history and which, when properly understood, would successfully regulate every effort on our part today for organised thought and activity.

Thus there is ample room still left for us to study our past; there is ample need for retrospection. In fact, judging from the sad confusion of thought we are creating in every branch of collective activity, it is clear that we should rather arrest a little the hasty impulses for plunging ahead and pause for a while that our house may be put in order before we aspire after lofty achievements; for it is better that we take some time to plant a solid basis for perpetuating success in our collective life than that we waste time in snatching at success in the various spheres of that life by fits and starts. And the very first step that we have to take for establishing our collective life on such solid basis, is to enquire of our past as to what kind of basis it has been seeking to evolve for us. Have we yet taken this first step? Have we known from our past how and where we stand with regard to the present and future? Are we yet collectively conscious of any well-defined mission in this world? And even assuming that we are vaguely conscious of any such mission, do we strive to acquire those lessons which past history offers us, respecting the way we should allow that mission to regulate every department of thought and activity?

Thus we have yet to learn the most fundamental lesson from our past, and it is idle to say that we are wasting much time in looking behind. If we study the condition of society in India for the last six or seven decades, we find roughly three factors working in it to bring about some sort of permanent adjustment with modern conditions of life. First, the conservative factor, comprising people who are never willing to leave old grooves, unless very much forced to do so; secondly, the progressive factor, or the party of progress, who are impatient to bring society into line with the modern world; thirdly, the circumspective factor, or cautious people who are suspicious of modernism and would not accept any scheme of progress,

unless it properly links together past and present and is not of the nature of an experiment. Now the first party represents the inertia in the society, the second its moving impulse, and the third its caution, and all three are absolutely necessary for its welfare. It is high time that *now* we should have a combination of these three factors, so that a resultant movement may be imparted to society out of the harmony. And time has actually worked out this harmonisation; we have simply to know it.

In this harmonisation, the resultant force of progress has to operate on social inertia, holding the other two factors in perfect equipoise. The whilom party of progress has to give up its infatuation for modernism and the party of caution its over-suspicious attitude. For a new wisdom has dawned upon society which is able to bring our past inheritance to the performance of duties which the modern age imposes upon us. We have discovered what our *national* standpoint is, from which we have to fulfil the demands of the present age. We have revealed before us that national scheme of life which our past history had all along been seeking to evolve and which will not only correct our slavish partiality for modernism or the Western scheme of life, but will also make us strong to achieve in our own way almost all the ends which the Westerners achieve under their scheme of life. The predominant note may be different, the principle of systematisation may be unlike, but all those higher ends towards which humanity is striving today will have their pursuit adequately, if not more fully, provided for under our own scheme of collective life. The one thing needful just at present for educated people all over India is to study, to discuss, to understand this, our own scheme of collective life; and that surely involves a good deal of looking behind towards our past.

So let those of our countrymen who used to constitute themselves the party of progress in India give up their complaining attitude. Let them rise above the fascination of the Western scheme of life, individual and collective. No people can ever succeed by seeking to live upon the achievements of another people. No people can take any other people for its model. But when circumstances demand that the good points in the life of one people have to be adopted into the life of another, the latter has first to make sure that *it is already living its own life*. Only a living nation can really and truly absorb what is good in another living nation. Our past history has settled once for all our own *mode* of living in and for this world; the idea for which we should live, the form of collective life through which that idea is to be realised, the tune to which we should adjust our harp of time,—all these have been fixed for us, and if we have to adopt variations on the surface, they must also be attuned to the keynote. The sooner we recognise these undeniable facts, the better for us, for already the waste of time and energy is growing really alarming.

AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

WHENEVER we accept any truth, we accept it ultimately on the authority of direct experience. Either it is our own direct experience or that of any other person or persons.

But it may be pointed out that the authority of reason also is admitted by all of us to be strong enough for the same purpose; reason also is another foundation of our belief. We comprehend truth not only by direct experience, but also by inference. So truth may as much be a matter of direct experience as a matter of correct inference.

Still it must be admitted that the testimony of direct experience is stronger than

inference. In practical life, there is a good deal of difference between truth obtained through direct experience and truth obtained through inference. Again, though in individual life we may find inferential truth given equal importance and place with the other kind of truth, not so in collective life. Society never builds itself up on the basis of inferential truths. Neither does science, which claims to conduce to collective interests, accept inference, more than direct experience, for its foundation. So it insists on distinguishing between truth and hypothesis, however much its conclusions may be tending now-a-days to come under the latter category.

A matter of inference may even be recognised as strong enough to determine the conduct of an individual or a society in many particular instances, but truths which lie at the basis of the evolution of individual or social life can never be mere inferential truths. In an age of intellectualism like the present one we may find many associations or bodies of educated people springing up through the motive force of inferential truths and actually doing much good to society. But nobody says that the human intellect is not at all a power for good; and such bodies of people represent the organised activity of the human intellect in its beneficial aspect. But it is idle to expect that their influence on society and its progress will be as lasting and deep as that of movements which grow out of the direct experience of truths.

Thus if direct experience is the highest authority for the acceptance of truth, no religion is worth even the name if it is not founded on that kind of authority. Religion claims to affect the most vital interests of man and to supply him the foundation of his life. But if it depends for all its tremendous worth and importance on the testimony of inference and not on that of direct experience such as challenges everybody's personal

corroboration, then all the wind is taken out of its sail and it gradually drifts into the position of a superstition and imposition.

So every religion, which, as a mighty tree, has struck its roots permanently into the soil of human heart and does not float as a passing shade of belief on another system of religious culture, must derive its authority from direct experience. And this is what we find to be the case with the great religions of the world. All of them claim *revelation* to be their source,—not any revelation through intellectual operations, but a revelation through a higher process of knowledge, a higher mode of direct experience, usually called inspiration. Now all who profess a revealed religion do not themselves pretend to such revelation. So they have to take on trust the direct experience of some person or persons, and have to refer to certain records, mainly, which have come down to them, for the authority of that direct experience. Thus every religion which builds itself on the foundation of direct experience must have its great seer or seers and its Veda or Bible. It is a necessary feature which every such religion must possess, no matter whether it lays its claim on single or on repeated revelations.

But modern culture, which favoured intellectualism to a fault, could not reconcile itself to this feature of religion. It wanted to dismiss all talk of revelation, of a higher mode of direct experience, as mysticism, a term which used to sound like a bad name given to the proverbial dog—, and it also wanted to regard the allegiance of people to certain books in revealed religion as superstitious. So modern culture evolved a new creed of rationalism to be pitted against that feature of revealed religion which consisted in the belief in inspiration and infallibility of Vedas or Bibles.

This antithetical attitude of the human intellect, as embodied in the high-sounding doctrine of rationalism, served some useful purposes no doubt. It established the fullest

right of the intellect or reason as an instrument of knowledge, laying down the principle that truth can never contradict reason, even when its pursuit leads us beyond intellect. At the same time, it revealed to us the fact that the range within which intellect exercises its right is after all limited.

But the logic of rationalism if pursued with the strictest fidelity leads us to agnosticism. All the rationalistic theories of God proceed on a-priori reasoning, assuming in one way or other necessary forms of thought; and so long as these latter are claimed to be explained by the a-posteriori reasoning of other schools of thought, the controversy, at least, will never end. But religion should never build on such controversial ground. Its appeal to man must come out of depths lying beyond intellectual operations. Its seat of authority must be placed beyond the din and clash of intellectual activities. The human intellect does not bear an immutable or immobile aspect. Its outlook, its view of things, its interpretative standpoint, its range of interest, its temperament and predilection, are all ceaselessly changing. Can this human intellect be entrusted with the eternal verities of religion? Impossible.

But at the same time, religion does not dispense with the function of the human intellect. No religion maintained that impossible position. Our life in the world looks upon intellect as the most important instrument of knowledge, whereas religion looks upon intellect as a good instrument of study. In the sphere of religion, intellect regards itself as a humble student of religious experiences and spiritual laws. There it must recognise its own limitations and admit its subserviency to a higher instrument of knowledge. When the atmosphere of our culture is congenial to this self-avowal of inferiority on the part of our intellect,—a self-avowal, which of course does not imply any slackening of its vigorous, soaring, comprehensive activities,—it is then only that the most

exemplary relations are maintained between religion and intellect. But when intellect overshoots itself and waxes overweening, it seeks to monopolise the whole range of human knowledge, constituting itself the only instrument thereof, and calling religion by the name of superstition when the claims of a superior instrument of knowledge are pressed forward. No true religion can favour this attitude of the human intellect, for by doing so it would be digging its own grave.

So while allowing intellect its due scope, religion should always place its authority beyond the changing moods of the intellect, so that in no case it would be affected by the latter. Nowhere we find this important principle so clearly and fully acknowledged and established as in the Vedic religion, and its strict fidelity to this principle gives us the key to understand some of the most critical situations in its history. We come to understand, for example, how such systems of religious practice as the Sankhya, the Jainism, or the Buddhism, which exerted at some period of their history a good deal of dominating influence on the Vedic religion, failed ultimately to receive at its hands anything like whole-hearted acceptance, while innumerable sects claiming much less glorious tradition have been gladly admitted into its comprehensive fold. The criterion for eligibility or otherwise in all these cases will be found to be the acceptance or non-acceptance, on the part of these sects, of the Vedic revelation as the highest source of authority in their respective religious systems, and even the most new-fangled system will be regarded as a legitimate development within the fold of Vedic religion, if it favourably fulfills the one criterion.

Now, granted that the Vedic revelation is the highest authority for us in every theory and practice of religion, the question of interpreting that authority in every case leaves again, it may be said, quite an ample room for the authority of reason or inference.

And actually we find all over India various schools of Vedic interpretation springing up almost like the Prophet's gourd, their number being still added to. In this vast arena of Vedic interpretation again, it is not simply intellect closing with intellect in endless strife, but inspired revelations are found to conflict with inspired revelations. Therefore the question may be pertinently asked as to what the Vedic revelation, as the ultimate authority for decision, has to say about all these conflicting interpretations and revelations, for if in this matter the final appeal fails to lie before this highest tribunal, then the Vedas practically forfeit all their sovereign authority and the unity of the Vedic religion becomes a myth in view of irreconcilable sectarian controversies.

Do the Vedas fulfill this important condition? Do they reveal to us a higher ground of harmony where all conflicting revelations find their ultimate reconciliation? And it must not be a harmony which it is left to our intellect to work out. This harmony must not be a matter of inference, but a distinct Vedic revelation.

So let us look a little closely into what we call the Vedic revelation. By the Vedas we mean the Samhitas, Brahmanas and Aranyakas or Upanishads. The Samhitas contain mantras or poetic utterances of Rishis invoking the Vedic gods to the aid of people desirous of some material objects. These mantras obviously formed part of certain ceremonies and from this fact they derived all their direct importance and meaning. So the primary construction to be put on these mantras must seek to follow the direct object to which they were subservient. That is to say, the mantras must make mention of the material ends of the worshippers, the power of the gods to fulfil these ends, precedents of such fulfilment, and so on. The mantras must primarily contain, a greater portion of them at least, a meaning which expresses these dealings of the gods with men on the

plane of material ends. But these mantras were first uttered by Rishis, who were not ordinary men. They were men who acquired the power of inspiration and had easy access beyond this gross world of material objects. Efforts of poetic expression and introspection would naturally carry the minds of such inspired men from gross external objects to that divine immanence behind them which spiritualises all their relations with men, transforming them into mere symbols. It is impossible for an inspired Rishi to detain himself long enough, in such poetic moods, in the ordinary plane of consciousness, and so we are bound to find in the Samhitas constant spiritualisation of secular objects and relations. Keeping this fact in mind we have constantly to put on the mantras a symbolic construction whenever plain construction fails us. In studying the mantras we have constantly to rise from the standpoint of the ordinary people in whose interest these mantras were uttered to the standpoint of the Rishi who was moving in the higher planes of inspiration. The Rishi himself often made a pointed distinction between these two standpoints, as in passages like the following:—

यमृत्विजो बहुधा कल्पयन्तः

सचेतसो यज्ञमिमं वहन्ति

योऽनूचानो ब्राह्मणो युक्त आसीत्

कास्त्रित्तत्र यजमानस्य संवित् । ८ म, ५८, १।

“Whom the priests conceiving of in various forms, in their (exalted) awareness, carry on this sacrificial worship, who exists united thereto a silent Brahmana, what consciousness the Yajamana would have about Him?” (*Anūchāna* = ‘well-versed,’ ordinarily.)

So even the Karma-portion of the Vedas constitutes itself a proper revelation, if the frequent inspired flights of the Rishis are carefully taken into account. Therein we find inspired utterances which yield us lofty spiritual laws and realities. In the Brahmanas also we find the same twofold strata of thought. In one, we find the development

and explanation of ceremonials; in the other, records of philosophical truths revealed through inspiration. It does not matter if these truths come down to us in a peculiar garb due to their close bearing on the Vedic mode of worship. Their permanent elements may easily be sifted. Lastly, the Upanishads present to us Vedic revelation in all its unalloyed glory. They are not of course first-hand records of the revelations, being subsequent compilations of them as handed down by tradition through different lines of successive discipleship. But in these revelations we find the inspired mind of the Rishi uttering forth, though in language not very closely preserved, its highest experiences, untrammelled by ceremonial obligations to any *Yajamana*. And the supreme importance of such revelations has been fitly recognised by our ancient culture, in that it has sought to rivet for ever the intellect of the country on them by means of those wonderful aphorisms called the *Brahmasutras*.

So the Vedic revelation is a system of revealed spiritual truths of which the shining apex is the Upanishads and the base is the mantras of the Vedas, between them ranging all those revealed forms of religious discipline and worship, which time-factors mint out, as it were, with the mould of the latter and in the light of the former, that is, under the guidance of their eternal wisdom.

Now therefore we come to the wisdom of the Upanishads, as being the fountainhead of all authority in the Vedic religion. In the light of this wisdom all later revelations in the history of the Vedic religion have to be examined and confirmed. It is this condition which maintains the unity of the Vedic religion. But our question was whether this revealed wisdom of the Upanishads is capable of harmonising all existing or possible differences in revelation; and the reply is in the affirmative. For, as Swami Vivekananda said, "this Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upanishads, has been the first as well as the

final thought on the spiritual plane that has ever been vouchsafed to man. You cannot find anything new. You cannot go beyond a perfect unity, which is the goal of all knowledge; that has been already reached there, and it is impossible to go beyond this unity. Religious knowledge became complete when *Tat-tvam-asi* was discovered." (Lectures from Colombo to Almora).

Absolute Truth is one and this unity was reached in the Upanishadic revelations. From this highest standpoint all religious truths can be harmonised. So the Upanishads boldly declare that all interpretations of the Vedas, based on revelation, are true, proceeding out of the Absolute Truth.

अस्य महतो भूतस्य निःश्वसितमेतद्यद्ग्वेदो
युजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्वाङ्गिरसः इतिहासः
पुराणं विद्या उपनिषदः श्लोकाः सूत्राण्यनुव्या-
ख्यानानि व्याख्यानान्यस्यैवैतानि निश्वसितानि ।

This claim of the Upanishads or the Vedanta to constitute the highest authority for all revelations of religious truth is admitted by all the Hindu sects. Just as all followers of Islam pray with their face turned towards Mecca, so all sectarian developments within the fold of Hinduism look up to the Vedanta for their highest authority. But only one discordant note is heard sometimes from some Vaishnavas who maintain that the doctrines of the Vedanta fall much short of the highest development of the philosophy of love which is embodied in the *Bhagabatam* or the *Gita*, for example. But this position is quite untenable, inasmuch as when the Vedanta, which reveals the Absolute Truth, itself speaks of It as the Absolute Love, all that may be considered as left for the later scriptures to add to that revelation is the working out in detail possible aspects of the relative manifestation of that Love; and to insist on placing these aspects of manifestation or *Lila* on a higher altitude of truth than the Absolute Love itself is to put a premium on narrow sectarianism.

The Vedas and the Vedanta clearly admit two orders of spiritual revelation, the superior order establishing the higher truth of the all-comprehensive synthesis of the Vedic religion and the lower order establishing the truth of its various distinct aspects. The experiences of such Rishis of the Vedas who declared “एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति,” “यमृत्विजो बहुधा कल्पयन्तः”, “महद्देवानामसुरत्वमेकं” etc. belong to the superior order of revelation, as also the utterances of Sri Krishna in the Gita and the latest revelation as embodied in Sri Ramakrishna. These revelations reiterating the highest truth of harmony are evidently capable of explaining and reconciling all differences and diversities in revelations and modes of worship, thus maintaining the unity of the Vedic religion.

EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.
XLXIII.

Alambazar Math. Cal.

26th Feb. 1897.

Dear Mrs. B.

S. sends £20 to be placed in the Famine relief in India. But as there is famine in his own home, I thought it best to relieve that first, as the old proverb says. So it has been employed accordingly.

I have not a moment to die as they say, what with processions and tom-tomings and various other methods of reception all over the country; I am almost dead. As soon as the Birthday is over I will fly off to the hills. I received an address from the Cambridge conference as well as one from the Brooklyn Ethical Association. One from the Vedanta Association of New York as mentioned in Dr. J—'s letter has not yet arrived.

Also there is a letter from Dr. J— suggesting work along the line of your conference,

here in India. It is almost impossible for me to pay any attention to these things. I am so, so tired. I do not know whether I would live even six months more or not, unless I have some rest.

Now I have to start two centres, one in Calcutta, the other in Madras. The Madras people are deeper and more sincere, and, I am sure, will be able to collect funds from Madras itself. The Calcutta people are mostly enthusiastic (I mean the aristocracy) through patriotism and their sympathy would never materialise. On the other hand, the country is full of persons, jealous and pitiless, who would leave no stones unturned to pull my work to pieces.

But as you know well, the more opposition, the more is the demon in me roused. My duty would not be complete, if I die without starting the two places, one for the Sanuyasins, the other for the women.

I have already £500 from England, about £500 from Mr. S. and if your money be added to it, I am sure I will be able to start the two. I think, therefore, you ought to send the money as soon as possible. The safest way is to put the money in a bank in America in your and my name jointly, so that either of us may draw it. In case I die before the money is employed you will be able to draw it all and put it to the use I wanted. So that, in case of my death, none of my people would be able to meddle with it. The English money has been put in the bank in the same position in the joint name of Mr. S. and myself.

With love to Saradananda and eternal love and gratitude to yourself.

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

—
XLXIV.

Darjeeling
April 28, 1897.

Dear M.—

A few days ago I received your beautiful letter. Yesterday came the card announcing

H's marriage. Lord bless the happy pair.

* * * The whole country here rose like one man to receive me. Hundreds of thousands of persons, shouting and cheering at every place, Rajahs drawing my carriage, arches all over the streets of the capitals with blazing mottos etc., etc.!!! The whole thing would soon come out in the form of a book and you will have a copy soon. But unfortunately I was already exhausted by hard work in England and this tremendous exertion in the heat of Southern India prostrated me completely. I had of course to give up the idea of visiting other parts of India and fly up to the nearest Hill Station, Darjeeling. Now I feel much better and a month more in Almora would complete the cure. By the bye, I have just lost a chance of coming over to Europe. Rajah Ajit Sinha and several other Rajahs start next Saturday for England. Of course, they wanted hard to get me to go over with them. But unfortunately the doctors would not hear of my undertaking any physical or mental labour just now. So with the greatest chagrin I had to give it up, reserving it for a near future.

Dr. — has reached America, by this time, I hope. Poor man! he came here to preach the most bigoted Christianity, with the usual result that nobody listened to him. Of course, they received him very kindly, but it was my letter that did it. I could not put brains into him! Moreover, he seems to be a queer sort of man. I hear that he was mad at the national rejoicings over my coming home. You ought to have sent a brainier man anyway, for the Parliament of Religions has been made a farce of in the Hindu mind by Dr. —. On metaphysical lines no nation on earth can hold a candle before the Hindus; and curiously all the fellows that came over here from Christian land have that one antiquated foolishness of an argument that because the Christians are powerful and rich and the Hindus are not, so Christianity must be

better than Hinduism. To which the Hindus very aptly retort, that, that is the very reason why Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not; because, in this beastly world it is blackguardism and that alone which *prosper*s, virtue always suffers. It seems, however advanced the Western nations are in scientific culture, they are mere babies in metaphysical and spiritual education. Material science can only give worldly prosperity, whilst spiritual science is for eternal life. If there be no eternal life, still the enjoyment of spiritual thoughts as ideals is keener and makes a man happier, whilst the foolery of materialism leads to competition and undue ambition and ultimate death, individual and national.

This Darjeeling is a beautiful spot with a view of the glorious Kanchanjanga 27579 ft. now and then when the clouds permit it, and from a near hilltop one can catch a glimpse of Gouri Shanker 29700 ft. now and then. Then, the people here too are so picturesque, the Thibetans and Nepalese and above all the beautiful Lepcha women. Do you know one Colston Turnbull of Chicago? He has been here a few weeks before I reached India. He seems to have had a great liking for me with the result that Hindu people all liked him very much. What about J—, Mrs. A—, Sister J— and all the rest of our friends? Where are our beloved "mills"? Grinding slow but sure? I wanted to send some nuptial presents to H— but with your 'terrible' duties I must reserve it for some near future. Maybe I shall meet them in Europe very soon. I would have been very glad, of course, if you could announce your engagement and I would fulfill my promise by filling up half a dozen papers in one letter.

* * * * *

My hair is turning grey in bundles and my face is getting wrinkled up all over; that losing of flesh has given me 20 years of age more. And now I am losing flesh rapidly, because, I am made to live upon meat and

meat alone, no bread, no rice, no potatoes, not even a lump of sugar in my coffee!! I am living with a Brahman family who all dress in knicker-bockers, women excepted of course! I am also in knickers. I would have given you a surprise if you had seen me bounding from rock to rock like a chamois, or galloping might and main up and down mountain roads.

I am very well here, for life in the plains has become a torture. I cannot put the tip of my nose out into the streets, but there is a curious crowd!! Fame is not all milk and honey!! I am going to train a big beard, now they are grey. It gives a venerable appearance and saves one from American scandal-mongers! Oh! thou white hair, how much thou canst conceal, all glory unto thee, Hallelujah!

The mail time is nearly up, so I finish. Good dreams, good health, all blessings attend you.

With love to father and mother and you all.

Yours,

Vivekananda.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA : THE GREAT MASTER.

Chapter IV.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO GAYA AND THE BIRTH OF GADADHAR.

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According to the Hindus, the beautiful Goddess of Fortune has an extremely variable mind, so that there is no knowing when she would turn her back upon one, whom she has been favouring with her smiles, or when she would begin to bestow favours upon another, whom she has been neglecting hitherto. She did not however appear very much in her latter aspect to the little family of Khudiram, who had an especial share

of her frowns for years successively, until at present, when their financial affairs were placed on a much better footing. For during the years that followed the pilgrimage of his father to Ramesvara, the earnings of Ramkumar increased steadily and the fame of his being a competent knower of the Smritis (Laws and Old usages) began to spread around. It seems moreover that he had earned a little reputation by his knowledge of Astrology at the time. For the story runs in the family how Ramkumar, who had inherited the devotion and the psychic temperament of his parents, was blessed with a vision, one day, of the Divine Mother, Whom he used to worship daily, appearing before him and touching his tongue with power while he was in meditation; and from that moment he was enabled to see future events and tell people about them before they turned out to be true. It is said, that he foretold thus the death of his wife, and said that she would meet her death as soon as she would become the mother of a child! And strangely enough, she died while at the age of thirty-six she gave birth to her only boy Akshaya! Numerous other instances are cited by the family even to the present day, about Ramkumar's power of predicting future events; but we need not enter upon an enumeration here. Sufficient for our purpose to know that he helped to increase the income of the family not only by his knowledge of the Scriptural laws but also by making use of the power that he possessed of seeing future events. For it endowed him with especial aptitude in the eyes of the people to conduct services and ceremonies for propitiation of the gods in the interest of those that were in trouble or were laid up with incurable maladies. Thus passed ten years one after another and Khudiram finding himself free to devote his time and energy entirely to religion, made plans for a visit to the shrine of Gaya in the year 1835 A. D.

Hridayram, son of Hemangini, the favourite niece of Khudiram, related to us a strange event as the immediate cause of the undertaking of this pilgrimage. Katyayani, the eldest daughter of the family became obsessed, he said, by an evil spirit at the time. And when Khudiram had told it in the name of God to depart elsewhere, the spirit leaving his daughter free, promised never to come near her again, but entreated him at the same

time to liberate it in turn from the dreadful state of bondage, to which it had brought itself by its evil deeds in the past, by undertaking to offer prayers for its sake at the Shrine of Gaya. The fond father had mercy on the sad plight of the spirit and agreed readily to its proposal. Be that as it may, the story supports the fact that all the members of the little family of Khudiram were possessed of highly sensitive nerves and had their psychic faculty developed in some form or other.

The pilgrimage to Gaya was undertaken by Khudiram at the age of sixty. Tall, slim and fair, and graceful of form, he was blest besides with an iron constitution. He did not hesitate now to undertake the journey to that distant place on foot even at that advanced age, and started early in the year so that he might reach his destination by the beginning of March after a short visit to Benares. For as a genuine Hindu, he believed firmly in the injunction of the Scriptures that offerings and prayers made at the shrine of Gaya during the 'sweet' * month of Chaitra (March) bring infinite blessings to the departed spirits of one's ancestors.

It is impossible to realise in these days of hurry and bustle, the joy that used to thrill the pilgrim's soul in India, in olden times. The mild climate of the country, the beautiful scenery that confronted him at every step, the life in the open air face to face with nature and with all ideas of responsibility that troubled and worried him at home dropped for the time,—all combined to bring home to his mind a sense of freedom which he had not tasted since his days of childhood. The shackles of artificiality which grow round one as one advances in years used to drop off one's soul on such an occasion, and the spirit asserting itself over matter made one think deeply on the whence, why and wherefore of all human affairs. Again the uncertainty of getting much of the creature comforts of life and the dangers that beset the roads, brought the idea of man's helplessness and the wisdom of dependence on the Lord, into the pious mind, which seldom experienced that before

* The Chaitra or the last month of the Hindu year has been designated in old Sanskrit literature as the month of 'madhu' or sweetness, the literal meaning of the word being 'honey'. It may have been so named on account of its being the last month of the Springtide.

in the safe surroundings of its daily life amongst friends and relations. Thus a deep sense of calm and repose used to pervade the mind of the pilgrim, as he wended his way slowly, day after day, to realise the fulfilment of the long-cherished desire of his heart. And thus rivers and rocks, and shrines and images of a long-standing antiquity, nay the very stones and the dust of the pilgrimage, used to be idealised, worshipped and surrounded with a bright halo by the mind of the faithful devotee.

Such must have been the experiences of Khudiram as he approached the portals of the old city of Gaya, the place which had a tradition and fame for sanctity all its own dating from even the pre-Buddhistic era. For did not the mighty Buddha prefer the hilly tract of Gaya-Shirsa for his meditations and austerities above all other sacred places? And does not the meaning of that itself, the head of Gaya (a mythological demon), point unmistakably to the existence of a long-standing tradition before his time?

About a month passed for Khudiram in offering prayers and observing customary ceremonials in the minor shrines in the hills and plains around, before the priest directed him to do the same in the central temple of the place, containing the hallowed relics of the foot-print of the Lord. It is natural that he should find himself overcome with emotions at the very sight of the holy relics, aye, he could even see with eyes open what he was directed to meditate upon,—the vast concourse of the spirits of the departed, and amongst them his own ancestors, standing in worshipful reverence around the throne of the mighty Saviour of Souls, Who had taken upon Himself the task of saving mankind from pursuing for ever their evil habits and Who in His Great mercy had left His foot-print and the privilege of worshipping the same to poor, self-forgetful mortals! Then after worshipping that effulgent Being, when he began to do the same to the members of the assembly in whose line he had taken his birth and presented them with his humble offerings, he felt himself inspired with a peace that 'passeth all understanding' in the joy of reunion, in the Lord, the essence of infinite love, with those who had passed out of his daily life long long ago.

The ceremony ended, after prostrating himself before the sacred relics with tears of devotion in

his eyes, he came away to his humble lodgings to pass the rest of the day. But his mind dwelt with fond eagerness again and again on the bright vision that came to him within the holy precincts of the shrine. And at night when he laid himself to rest, the self-same vision came to him in sleep a hundred times brighter and more vivid than what it had been during the day. And amidst the hushed silence of devotion in the great conclave of the departed he heard a voice calling him by his name with infinite tenderness and compassion. He looked forward in wonder to find what it meant, when, lo! he found that the great Saviour, the effulgent Being, Who formed the central figure of the assemblage was Himself addressing him. With trepidation and awe, and all his faculties concentrated, Khudiram now heard the inspiring and hopeful words—"I take my birth again and again to save mankind; I find for them new ways to Dharma to bring them to perfect enlightenment; the time has come for me to be born again soon to fulfil the same purpose and I shall honour your humble devotion and love for me by appearing as your child!"

Khudiram, entirely taken aback at this wonderful proclamation, felt elated, nevertheless, at the great honour that was thus accorded to him. But remembering his poor circumstances and his unworthy self, the very next moment, he began to plead with a heavy heart, to decline the same. For he was then overcome with the idea that it was not in his power to serve the divine-child in the way that it should be done! And while he was in the midst of his pleadings the dream vanished and he awoke with a sudden start.

The strange dream created such a deep impression in the mind of Khudiram that he could not understand for some minutes after awakening, whether he was in this world or in that of the departed. And, when he became perfectly conscious of the real situation, he went on thinking deeply within himself to find out the answer to the question: was it really the phantasy of the overburdened brain that had haunted him thus, ere-long, or something higher that came through the mercy of the Deity? For the belief prevailed among the religiously disposed of his countrymen that dreams relating to God or the Great Saviours, which left such strong impression on the mind,

were to be regarded as visions obtained from higher planes of consciousness, going to be fulfilled in the near future. Khudiram decided in the end to keep silent about the affair and to wait and watch carefully the turn of events in his future life.

(To be continued).

Swami Saradananda.

LESSONS ON BHAKTI-YOGA.

[*Unpublished Class-notes given by the Swami Vivekananda.*]

II.

We now come to *Worship through Love.*

It has been said, "It is good to be born in a Church, but not to die in it." The tree receives support and shelter from the hedge that surrounds it when young; but unless the hedge is removed the growth and strength of that tree will be hindered. Formal worship, as we have seen, is a necessary stage, but gradually by slow growth we outgrow it and come to a higher platform. When love to God becomes perfect we think no more of the qualities of God,—that He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and all those big adjectives. We do not *want* anything of God, so we do not care to notice these qualities. Just all we want is Love of God. But anthropomorphism still follows us; we cannot get away from our humanity, we cannot jump out of our bodies; so we must love God as we love one another.

There are five steps in human love.

1. The lowest, most commonplace, 'peaceful' love, when we look up to our Father for all we want—protection, food &c.

2. The love which makes us want to serve. Man wants to serve God as his Master, the longing to serve dominating every other feeling; and we are indifferent whether the master is good or bad, kind or unkind.

3. The mother-love. In India this is considered a higher love than that to a father; because the latter has in it an element of fear.

4. The love of a friend, the love of equals—companions, playmates. Man feels God to be his companion.

5. The love of Husband and Wife; love for love's sake,—God the perfect Beloved one.

It has been beautifully expressed: "Four eyes meet, a change begins to come into two souls; Love comes in the middle between these two souls and makes them *one*."

When a man has this last and most perfect form of love, then all desires vanish, forms and doctrines and Churches drop away, even the desire for freedom (and the aim and the end of all religion is freedom from birth and death and other things) is given up. The highest of love is the love that is sexless, for it is perfect unity that is expressed in the highest love and sex differentiates bodies. It is only therefore in spirit that union is possible. The less we have of the physical idea the more perfect will be our love; at last all physical thought will be forgotten and the two souls will become one. We love Love always. Love comes and penetrates through the forms and sees beyond. It has been said, "the lover sees Helen's beauty in the Ethiop's brow." The Ethiopian is the suggestion and upon that suggestion the man throws his love. As the oyster throws over the irritants he finds in its shell the substance that turns the irritants into beautiful pearls, so man throws out love, and it is always man's highest ideal that he loves, and the highest ideal is always selfless, so man loves Love. God is Love, and we love God—or love Love. We only *see* love, Love cannot be expressed. "A dumb man eating butter," cannot tell you what butter is like. Butter is butter and its qualities cannot be expressed to those who have not tasted it. Love for Love's sake cannot be expressed to those who have not felt it.

Love may be symbolised by a triangle. The first angle is: Love never begs, never asks for anything. 2nd. Love knows no fear. 3rd, and the apex: Love for Love's sake. Through the power of Love the senses become finer and higher. The perfect love is very rare in human relation, for human love is almost always interdependent and mutual. But God's love is a constant stream, nothing can hurt or disturb it. When man loves God as his highest ideal, as no beggar, wanting

nothing, then is love carried to the extreme of evolution and it becomes a great power in the universe. It takes a long time to get to these things and we have to begin by that which is nearest to our nature; some are born to service, some to be mothers in love. Anyhow, the result is with God. We must take advantage of Nature.

ON DOING GOOD TO THE WORLD.

We are asked what good is your Religion to Society? Society is made a test of Truth. Now this is very illogical. Society is only a stage of growth through which we are passing. We might just as well judge the good or utility of scientific discovery by the use it is to the baby. It is simply monstrous. If the social state were permanent it would be the same as if the baby remained a baby. There can be no perfect man-baby; the words are a contradiction in terms, so there can be no perfect society. Man must and will grow out of such early stages. Society is good in a certain stage, but it cannot be our ideal; it is a constant flux. The present mercantile civilisation must die, with all its pretensions and humbug,—all a kind of "Lord Mayor's Show." What the world wants is thought-power, through individuals. My master used to say, "Why don't you help your own Lotus flower to blow; the bees will then come of themselves." The world needs people who are mad with the love of God. You must believe in yourself and then you will believe in God. The history of the world is that of six men of faith, six men of deep pure character. We need to have three things: the heart to feel, the brain to conceive, the hand to work. First we must go out of the world and make ourselves fit instruments. Make yourself a dynamo. *Feel first* for the world. At a time when all men are ready to work, where is the man of *feeling*? Where is the feeling that produced an Ignatius Loyola? Test your love and humility. That man is not humble or loving who is jealous. Jealousy is a terrible, horrible sin; it enters a man so mysteriously. Ask yourself, does your mind react in hatred or jealousy? "Good works" are continually being undone by the tons of hatred and anger which are being poured out on the world. If you are pure, if you are strong, *you, one* man, are equal to the whole world.

The brain to conceive, the next condition of doing good works, is only a dry Sahara after all; it cannot do anything alone, unless it has the *feeling* behind it. Take Love, which has never failed, and then the brain will conceive and the hand will work righteousness. Sages have dreamed of and have *seen* the Vision of God. "The pure in heart shall see God." All the great ones claim to have "seen" God. Thousands of years ago has the Vision been seen, and the Unity which lies beyond has been recognised and now the only thing we can do is to fill in these glorious outlines.

THE VAIRAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 134).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

अर्थानामीशिषे त्वं वयमपि च गिरामीशमहे यावदर्थे
शूरस्त्वं वादिदर्पव्युपशमनविधावक्ष्यं पाटवं नः ।
सेवन्ते त्वां धनाढ्या मतिमलहतये मामपि
श्रोतुकामा
मय्यप्यास्था न ते चेत्त्वयि मम नितरामेव
राजन्ननास्था ॥५२॥

52. Thou exercisest kingly power over riches, we do the same over words (i. e. ideas or scriptures) in all their senses. Thou art a hero (in battle), while we have never-failing skill in methods of subduing the pride of disputants. It is the rich who serve thee, while, intent on learning (higher truths), men serve us to have all imperfections of mind destroyed. If thou hast no regard for me, well, oh! king, I have absolutely none for thee.

वयमिह परितुष्टा बल्कलैस्त्वं दुकुलैः
सम इव परितोषो निर्विशेषो विशेषोः ।

स तु भवतु दरिद्रो यस्य तृष्णा विशाला
मनसि च परितुष्टे कोऽर्थवान्को दरिद्रः ॥५३॥

53. Here we are satisfied with bark of trees and you with rich garment; (and yet) our contentment is alike, (so) the distinction makes no difference. Poor indeed is he whose desires are boundless. If the mind be contented, who is rich and who poor?

[One who is satisfied with even what little he possesses is as good as rich.]

फलमलमशनाय स्वादु पानाय तोयं
क्षितिरपि शयनार्थं वाससे बल्कलं च ।
नवधनमधुपानभ्रान्तसर्वेन्द्रियाणा-
मविनयमनुमन्तुं नोत्सहे दुर्जनानाम् ॥५४॥

54. Fruits for food, pure water for drink, bare ground to lie upon, barks of trees for clothing, are sufficient (for us). I cannot bring myself to approve of the misbehaviour of evil men whose senses are all led astray by drinking the wine of newly acquired wealth.

अशीमहि वयं भिक्षामाशावासो वसीमहि ।
शयीमहि महीपृष्ठे कुर्वीमहि किमीश्वरैः ॥५५॥

55. Let us eat the food we have begged; let the sky be our clothing, let us lie down on the surface of the earth; what have we to do with the rich?

[आशा—the four quarters.]

न नटा न विटा न गायका
न च सभ्येतरवादचुञ्चवः ।
नृपमीक्षितुमत्र के वयं
स्तनभारानमिता न योषितः ॥५६॥

56. Who are we to go to see a king—not court jesters, pimps or singers, nor experts in (learned) disputes with others in a court, nor youthful court mistresses! (That is, we have absolutely no business to go to a king).

(To be continued)

SOME LETTERS OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

(2)

Mylapore
26 6 '09.

My dear friend,

1. By "Brahma" Swami Vivekananda means there personal (सगुण) God. You should look upon Sri Ramakrishna as God Himself. There is no difference between the Father and the Son, or Mother and the Son. If by worshipping a stone Image of God a man attains salvation, much more it is possible to attain salvation by worshipping a living Image of Him. Sri Ramakrishna is God Incarnate, and hence God Himself. You cannot worship God directly, for you have no conception of Him except through such man-gods. If man-gods like Sri Ramakrishna did not take their birth here who could know anything about God? They are Columbuses in the land of spirituality. God never dwells somewhere beyond clouds, but in the hearts of all living beings. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति (Gita).—The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the heart of all beings.—Ordinary living beings do not know it. He who is able to know it losing himself fully in Him, he is the Personal God, and as such Sri Ramakrishna is the Personal Deity of the present age.

2. There is no harm, on the other hand, much help can be derived in studying the Upanishads. In Kali Yuga the caste distinction should not be made much of. You can worship God by worshipping His Incarnations.

3. It is very good to look upon God as Father or Mother.

4. Does not the child ask of the Father or the Mother whatever he wants, fully knowing that his prayers are sure to be answered? Just in the same manner you should also pray to your God for everything needful for your realisation. Why do you want to be the son of God? In order to get rid of जगत् ज्वाला—(miseries of the world); so where is the difference between Bhakti or Jnanam?

5. Mornings and evenings are the best times for meditation and prayer. You can repeat any name of the Lord, you like most.

6. Your feeling of want will make you pray for what you want. Hunger makes one search for food, thirst makes one search for water, lust makes one search for a woman &c.

7. God is both the Father and Mother of you:

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव
त्वमेव बंधुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव
त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव ॥

Thou art my mother, thou art my father, thou art my friend, thou art my companion; thou art my learning, thou art my wealth, thou art my all in all, Oh! my Lord of Lord." And Sri Ramakrishna is all these.

8. Complete self-surrender comes to him only who is free from Egotism, the most invulnerable enemy that man has to deal with. If a man actually places himself under the guidance of Sri Ramakrishna he is sure at once to be saved by Him. But very few, almost none, can do, it as every man is more or less an egotist. If by vicarious atonement you mean complete self-surrender, and I think that is its proper meaning, then there is almost none in the world qualified for it. Hence the other alternative is left. If I am here, and if I like to be happy here, I must do that which will make me perfectly happy. I must be the son of God and then alone I can be absolutely happy, free from all fears, as God, the all-powerful and all-merciful, is to take care of me, I being His son.

9. दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मन माया दुरत्यया ।

नामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ (Gita)

"Verily, this divine Maya of Mine, consisting of the Gunas, is difficult to cross over; those who devote themselves to Me alone, cross over this Maya." Maya is God's Power, there is no difference between God and His power. Just as sugar can not be imagined apart from its sweetness, milk cannot be imagined apart from its whiteness, so God cannot be conceived of apart from His Sakti (Power). We don't pray to a powerless man knowing such prayers to be useless. God is all-powerful and therefore we pray to Him. So whoever prays to God worships Sakti. Everyone is a Sákta in the world for who is there that does not worship Power?

10. Read those books over and over again; the meanings only come out by repeated readings. Read

all the old books such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, and the Complete Works of Sri Swami Vivekanandaji, and of all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Read the Sree Sree Ramakrishna Kathâ-mrita (Gospel of Sree Ramakrishna) written by M—all your doubts will be cleared.

With my best love and blessings
I am yours truly,
Ramakrishnananda.

A PLEA FOR A VEDANTA MONASTERY IN AMERICA.

[This short statement of ideas regarding an American monastery was found among papers left by Brahmachari Amritananda whose untimely death we noticed last March in our columns. This writing will strongly bring back to all who knew the Brahmachari his resolute, whole-hearted devotion to the monastic ideal.—Ed. P. B.]

RELIGION to be a living reality must express itself through men who have explored its source—the spiritual world. Religious systems based on mere dogmas or philosophic speculation may flourish through the number of their followers and acquire great temporal power, manifesting in external forms which pass for the name of religion. But systems that are not kept alive by a continual influx of the spiritual life and rest on the unstable foundation of human reason will have to change and readjust their doctrines from time to time as science and knowledge advance until in the end they are swallowed up in the abyss of universal scepticism. Religion demands men and women who will sacrifice themselves for her sake, who dare to cut away every tie that binds them to the world, to serve her and her alone. The internal strength of the Catholic Church consists in the number of her monks and nuns who remain true to this ideal.

If the Vedanta religion is to be a living power in the West, the truths must come not only by hearsay but through spiritual realisation. In other words, we have to follow the method of the East and get our supply direct by producing men amongst ourselves who can penetrate the fount and thus maintain an ever-open flow of the spiritual current. To further this end a Vedanta monastery

is proposed, of which I submit a brief outline of the general plan and object, it being obvious that details cannot be entered into in a paper of this kind.

The monastery will be an asylum for men who have renounced the world once for all to consecrate their lives to the cause of religion, a place where the aspirant, free from external cares and distractions, shall have full opportunity to turn his energy to the highest use. The first object of the institution will be the training of novitiates for religious work. Guided by the principle,—quality rather than quantity insures success,—the beginning will necessarily be small, with but a few young men. Only those will be admitted who seem fitted for the spiritual life and the training essential for the qualification of religious work.

The monastery will enforce strict discipline and have a systematic regular routine, e. g., regular time for meditation, study, recreation, meals, sleep, etc. All slovenly practices will be discouraged. The educational branch will include courses in :

Logic,
Philosophy,
Metaphysics,
Comparative Religion,
Works on Science,
Sanskrit (classic and Vedic),
Indian Scriptures and works of Philosophy
(in their original).

While it is, of course, recognised that book-learning can never play more than a secondary or subservient part in the religious vocation, it has nevertheless an important use. The novice cannot pass all the time in pure contemplation; hence, it is well that he be encouraged to acquire a taste for classical culture and a love to dwell in the regions of the immortals, where the mind feeds on ennobling thoughts and lofty ideals which tend to starve out all lower impressions by leaving no room for their nourishment.

REMARK.

The monastery will not fritter away its energy by taking up different things but will keep to one definite line, namely the spiritual and educational. No cheap advertisement, but silent, real work that is lasting.

A Western Disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.

(Report of the 24th June '15)

Since we published our last report, the condition of the people in the famine-stricken areas of Tippera and Noakhali districts have gone from bad to worse. To meet the increased demand, three new centres have been opened as sub-centres of Hajiganj, namely, Suchipara, Sahapur and Dhodda, all in the district of Tippera. The distress, in the Noakhali district has been very severe too; but for want of funds we have not yet been able to extend our relief to many villages which are crying piteously for it. The work of the Ramganj centre in the district, however, has gone up by leaps and bounds, as will be seen from the details of the whole work given below:—

Centre	Number of Villages	Total Number relieved	Quantity of Rice	Mds.—Srs.
Hajiganj (Tippera)	45	607	31	14.
Do. (next week)	45	711	37	0.
Paikpara (Tippera)	52	711	32	13.
Do. (next week)	55	907	52	25½.
Suchipara (Tippera)	27	315	17	20.
Sahapur (Tippera)	23	162	11	20.
Dhodda (Tippera)	12	130	7	0.
Ramganj (Noakhali)	63	786	48	38½.
Do. (next week)	86	1223	68	2½.
Khalispara (Noakhali)	22	400	25	18½.
Do. (next week)	23	399	24	30.

It is with great pleasure that we note that the Collector of Noakhali has kindly allowed us the use of the Government Dak Bungalow of Ramgunj for our quarters, and the Divisional Commissioner Mr. Lang, I. C. S., who paid a visit to the place, was pleased with our work and made a personal donation of Rs. 20 to our famine relief-fund.

Our workers are daily sending us reports of distress, which would move the hardest hearts to pity. Want of space prevents us from giving here an elaborate account. It is one long chapter of misery, which no sunshine relieves. Every house tells the same sad tale: no food, no clothing, no employment, so many mouths to feed, disease due to insufficient and improper food, and the gloomiest

prospect! The task before us is so arduous that with our best efforts we can but partially alleviate the widespread sufferings, and to do this, we require prompt and energetic co-operation of the generous public.

(Report of the 7th July '15)

Since we published our last report the misery of the famine-stricken people in the districts of Tippera and Noakhali has assumed a still graver aspect. Though the figures in our last report were heavy enough the number of people since relieved has almost doubled itself as will be seen from the following brief summary:—

I. DISTRICT TIPPERA.

Name of centres	No. of Villages	No. of persons relieved	Quantity of rice given	
			Mds.	Srs.
Hajiganj	97	1315	65	30
Do. (next week)	111	1379	69	0
Paikpara	81	1054	52	28
Suchipara	62	716	35	32
Sahapur	58	455	22	30
Do (next week)	65	637	31	34
Dhodda	37	352	17	24

II. DISTRICT NOAKHALI.

Ramganj	90	1158	57	36
Khalispara	38	672	33	24

Besides, 34 mds. 14½ srs, of rice were distributed as extra alms from all the centres.

Here is an extract of a letter from one of our workers:—

“Famine is wearing a grimmer aspect. We are vigorously carrying on inspection-work. We get out after our morning repast and return to our quarters in the evening. In almost every village we come across families, the heads of which have gone away no one knows where, unable to see their children suffering the pangs of hunger. Some of the orphan children are stealing cooked rice from neighbouring houses to keep themselves from starvation. Save a few well-to-do families, and a limited number of families who are living on one meal a day, the rest are getting their meals every two or three days. I have myself seen famished boys and girls standing wistfully before gentlemen's doors when they sit to dinner. Whenever we happen to enter a village for inspection we find boys and girls stretched in a line on the ground, looking like half-dead. They piteously appeal to

us for help, when they see us. Boys and girls are mostly clad in rags. The women have very scanty cloth about them, and sink away at the sight of us. They have not even got a cloth in which to take the dole of rice, and have to bare their shoulders to do so! We met a woman particularly distressed in this way, and could not help giving her one of our clothes to cover herself. This year's crops promise well, but it is raining so incessantly that they are menaced in many places. One shudders to think what will become of the people if the water accumulates in this way and destroys the crop."

Here is another extract from the letter:—

"People are now in a much worse state than before. The number of those who are deserting their families is on the increase. People are be-taking themselves to arum roots, jute leaves and things of that sort, and are becoming more and more a prey to dysentery, Cholera and other stomach troubles. Gripes have been a common complaint with 40 per cent. of the famine-stricken people."

We have just received intimation that some more centres are going to be opened. The necessity of opening cholera-relief is daily growing too. We are doing as far as lies in us. We have doubled the number of our workers, and are trying to send out more. But it all depends upon funds and it now rests with the generous public to make our aid effective. We are glad to announce that the Chairman of the District Board, Noakhali, has made over Rs. 1000 to our famine Relief Fund.

(Report of the 17th July '15).

Since the publication of our last report some places in the famine stricken area of Tippera and Noakhali districts have shown signs of improvement, while others have become worse. We have accordingly arranged to close certain old centres and open new ones. Centres have been opened at Laksham, Kuthi and Bitghar in Tippera and at Duttapara in Noakhali. We have not yet received the report of distribution of the Kuthi centre. We have received information that five centres namely, Hajiganj, Paikpara, Suchipara, Sahapnr and Dhodda, in the Tippera district are soon going to be closed. The public will know all about it from the contents of our workers' letter which we summarise later on in this report. Here

is a brief account of another week's distribution from the several existing centres:—

TIPPERA DISTRICT.

Centres	No of villages	Total No. of recipients
Hajiganj	113	1173
Paikpara	24	970
Sahapur	10	662
Suchipara	65	853
Dhodda	37	362
Do (next week)...		275
Laksham	45	222
Bitghar	7	57

NOAKHALI DISTRICT.

Ramganj	92	1285
Khalispara	38	763
Duttapara	14	155

Besides 27 mds. 3 srs. of rice were distributed as extra alms from all the centres. Our workers write:—

"In Hajiganj Thana they are reaping the 'Aush' crop, so the following centres will be closed after distribution on the specified dates. Hajiganj on 14th July, Suchipara on the 15th, Paikpara on the 16th, Sahapur on the 17th and Dhodda on the 19th.

The reason why the relief work is closed in this part is that fortunately it is now in a better state. The following details will make the situation clear.

In the Hajiganj thana leaving out thana Kachio there are 286 villages each with an average of 50 families, of which thirty are in affluent circumstances. That is, they can have as many as four meals a day. Of the rest about 14 families have most of them got lands. The 'Aush' crop is ready and they have begun reaping or will begin it in a week. These families could get one meal a day many of them getting two even. The remaining 6 families have got no land and live on wages. They were unemployed so long but are now getting employment. Most of those who were obtaining relief from the Mission admit that only two percent. of them may be threatened with starvation. They are unanimous in saying that the crisis is over and that now they will be able to maintain themselves by labour.

The closing of the Mission's work in this part will, as we have said, leave only two or three

families per village helpless, but they too are sure to be provided as in previous years from the gratuity of the affluent families in the village. Let us assure the generous public that if there were real danger the Mission would never have closed the relief.

There are 332 villages in Chandpur thana including Faridganj; of these the Mission is helping 84 from the Paikpara centre. The Government has opened test work in this part and the 'Aush' crop is also being reaped. People are better circumstanced here than at Hajiganj, owing to these two kinds of labour. There are also good workers like Babus Hardayal Nag and Sarat Ch. De who with the recent help of rice from the merchant community of Chittagong will be able to maintain the villages that are under their jurisdiction for two or three months, if they inspect the villages thoroughly before giving help. In both places not more than 5 or 6 families per village will be entitled to receive help if this method be adopted. That the people in the southern part of Chandpur are getting something by the sale of chillies, mentioned in the Government report is admitted by themselves. But if the relief be extended indefinitely then the people will certainly prefer it to any other form of maintenance.

The above is a true statement of facts. There has not been a single case of death or theft ever since the mission commenced work in Hajiganj. Previous to that cases of theft were numerous. Though the Mission's work in Thanas Hajiganj, Faridganj and Kachua is going to be closed, yet Thanas Lakshmipura, Raipura and the part of Ramganj in which Government was working have come under the work of the Mission.

The area of the Mission's work is thus increased on the whole. On the other hand Thanas Muradnagore, Debidwar, Kashla, Kotali and Nabinagor etc. are in floods. Unless this water subsides, there is no chance for the 'Aman' crop. Jute and the 'Aush' crop have almost been totally damaged. The local people are of opinion that relief should be quickly started in these places and continued till October and some of the workers of the Mission are of the same opinion too.

There is again a cry for help from the quarter of Sandwip, Noakhali and Tippera are in the same sort of distress but are not receiving equal at-

tention, it seems. Our work in the Noakhali district will continue from three to four weeks. The kind-hearted Collector of Noakhali has placed two new Thanas in the charge of the Mission and is helping it with funds for the purpose. Work has been started with Bitghar in Thana Nabinagar and Kuthi in Thana Koshba as centres. We expect the work will soon extend in that quarter.

The Mission has received appeals for help from many parts of the Tippera Thana. Workers will soon go out for inspection.

We are glad to announce that the merchant community of Chittagong has given us 180 mds. of rice for distribution among the famine-stricken people.

It is also with great pleasure that we note that the Collector of Noakhali kindly introduced at Laksham one of our workers to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal who graciously asked him many questions about our relief work. His Excellency was then shown our monthly report for June.

The task before us is yet a difficult one and requires prompt co-operation from all communities, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. We all of us spend every day odd bits on hundreds of trifling things. It now behoves us to collect these together and utilise them to save hundreds of precious lives who but for our help will fall victims to the clutches of famine.

Contributions of money and old and new cloth will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:—(1) Swami Brahmananda, President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, P. O., Dt. Howrah. (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

WE have received the fourteenth annual report of the Sree Ramakrishna Sevak Samiti, Rangoon. It was established in the year 1900, by the Bengalee inhabitants of the place, through the influence of the Late Babu Kali Pado Ghose and Babu Akshoy Kumar Sen, disciples of Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Since that time the work of the Samity is progressing day by day. The object of the Samity is to mould the character of its members on the teachings of Sree Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, to propagate their religious doctrines in this country in the vernacular of the land and to feed and nurse the poor and the sick as far as practicable. We wish every success to this institution.