

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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उचिष्टत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XX]

SEPTEMBER 1915

[No. 230

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(*In Madras, 1892—1893.—XIII.*)

We cannot imagine anything which is not God. He is all that we with our five senses can imagine and more. He is like a chameleon; each man, each nation, sees one face of Him and at different times, in different forms. Let each man see and take of God whatever is suitable to him. Compare: each animal absorbing from Nature whatever food is suitable to it.

The fault with all religions like Christianity is that they have one set of rules for all. But Hindu religion is suited to all grades of religious aspiration and progress. It contains all the ideals in their perfect form. E.g. the ideal of *Sântam* or blessedness is to be found in Vasistha, that of love in Krishna, that of duty in Rama and Sita and that of intellect in Sukadeva. Study the characters of these and of other ideal men. Adopt one which suits you best.

Follow truth wherever she may lead you; carry ideas to their utmost logical conclusions. Do not be cowardly and hypocritical.

You must have a great devotion for your

ideal: devotion not of the moment but calm persevering, and steady—devotion like that of a *châtak* (a kind of bird) who looks into the sky in the midst of thunder and lightning and would drink no water but from the clouds. Perish in the struggle to be holy; thousand times welcome death. Be not disheartened. When good nectar is unattainable it is no reason why we should eat poison. There is no escape. *This* world is as unknown as the other.

Charity never faileth; devotion to ideas never fails in sympathy, never becomes weary of sympathising with others. Love to enemies is not possible for ordinary men: they drive out others in order to live themselves. Only a very few men lived in the world who practised both. King Janaka was one of them. Such a man is superior even to Sannyasins. Sukadeva, who was purity and renunciation embodied, made Janaka his Guru; and Janaka said to him "You are a born *Siddha*; whatever you know and your father taught you, is true. I assure you of this."

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

ASCETICISM is now-a-days coming in for a good share of jibe and sneer at the hands of many cultured people all over the world. We do not know who ever called upon these people to embrace asceticism, but forthwith they discover a poet or a philosopher defending their conception of religion against asceticism, they lionize him as a mighty deliverer of all mankind. Asceticism is the most de-humanizing doctrine and unless religion is delivered from its evil influence, the whole world would go to rack and ruin! Is this intense aversion due to any despotic sway that asceticism ever held over people of this yelk? No, nobody can say that the world of non-ascetic human beings was ever threatened with any invasion from asceticism. On the other hand, men who are called ascetics have always been supposed to constitute quite a negligible quantity in all calculations and estimates of progress in social life and culture. They are generally looked upon as aberrations,—amusing in many cases, inspiring respect in few. So how do these people merit the wrath of the mighty gods of human culture?

Perhaps it will be said that men in society imbibe from the example of these anthropological curios a bad tendency to inflict privations on themselves when practising religion. This tendency which proves very infectious is sought to be combated under the name of asceticism. But if you choose to call the self-infliction of privations in the case of men in society by the name of asceticism, then no man, we say, is free from this dreaded reproach of asceticism. Which man who has any idea or sentiment to live up to does not suffer self-inflicted privations? Every created man has to discriminate between enjoyments and enjoyments; so every man suffers self-

inflicted privations. In the practice of religion the same discrimination between higher joys and lower joys is going on at every step. And the sphere of enjoyments for every individual is not the same. What is joy to you may be an indifferent thing to another. So the discrimination of enjoyments, or more clearly, the self-infliction of privations cannot proceed on exactly the same lines in the case of every individual. Some one may feel called upon from within to deprive himself of one pleasure and somebody else quite another. Such disparity in choice is quite unavoidable, as much as the self-infliction of privations in the practice of religion is inevitable in the case of ordinary men.

So asceticism in a wider sense is a necessary factor in the practice of religion. Every spiritual aspirant has to become an ascetic to some extent, for every realisation of higher joy in his spiritual life has a fading trail of asceticism behind it. This is the everyday experience of every sincere votary of religion. It is all very well for poets who always live on the wings of phantasy to win cheap applause with "down with asceticism"! Mark, when these poets sing of the beauties of nature and assure you that it is all love with a big 'L' and enjoyment, they wind up with a fling at asceticism; but when Jesus speaks of the same beauties, of the lillies of the field, he speaks of himself as more deprived in goods of the world than even jackals and speaks of the rich as more pitiable than a camel striving to pass through the eye of a needle! When poetry is truth of realisation and not the cobweb of golden fancy it has no interest in crying down asceticism which is but the negative aspect of a life of supreme love and joy. But when mere soaring sentiment seeks to pass for the reality of spiritual vision, never

itself having to meet the claims of asceticism in spiritual endeavour, it plays the prophet of a new order of practical spirituality. Love of God when realised transcends all asceticism making no fuss at all over this most natural and spontaneous achievement, but when that love is merely idealised through nice sentiments, there is not only much vain display of a fancied conquest over asceticism, but a vindictive anxiety to hold asceticism to ridicule.

It is complained : why should man fly away from wife and children, from all the wealth of love and beauty that flows through sight, sound, smell, touch and taste greeting us on every side? Is it not all a play of unspeakable love with the Beloved? Yes, we reply, it is so ; who claims to deny what all mankind has been told from the very beginning of the world? This talk of Divine Love, of Divine *Lila*, is going on since humanity was in its cradle. It is a talk that thrills the heart no doubt, and poetry sends this thrill again and again into human mind. That is the business of poetry. But poetry is one thing and religion is another. Poetry cannot supersede religion, the thrill of imagination cannot supersede realisation. How are men to realise that this world is all a divine play with the Beloved? There is a world of difference between mere talk or sentiment and actual realisation. Even in earthly love, mere profession in nice poetic words is nothing in comparison with the condition when actual love consumes the whole man. When love actually takes up the harp of life and smites its chords, who cares whether he keeps his hold on all the other facts of his life or on all its sense-enjoyments? And this inebriation of love never comes to one who does not throw his whole mind into love. In religion also this throwing of the whole mind is the essential step. But how to get hold of the whole of my mind? Is it not the most fundamental task in the practice of religion,—

the task of detaching my mind from all domestic relations and sense-enjoyments which claim my body and soul with an inexhaustible persistence profounder far than I suspect? Blessed indeed is he who can completely effect this detachment of the mind and absolutely plunge it into love of God, without ever flying away from the relations and things of the world. But he is a very rare exception, if he is not a hypocrite.

But even if we admit that there is some possibility for us of attaining to perfect mental detachment without having to fly from the world, we cannot but admit at the same time that considering the supreme importance of the task, we cannot condemn any man who is obliged to choose any other possible way for gaining the same object. For example if Buddha or Christ found themselves obliged to fly away from the world for the sake of this supreme task of mental detachment, nobody can condemn them and say that they had better carry on the struggle from within the relations and things of the world. You have to admit that really a choice of more than one way lies in this important matter. So nobody can dogmatise that man should never fly away from the world with object of realising God. If that realisation is the *only* object in our life what matters it whether we have to live in the world or away from it for the sake of that object? So if flying away from the world is what you call asceticism, then religion consistently with its own object can never condemn it. In fact, religion itself has never been so unreasonable or ungrateful as to condemn asceticism. It is rather the modern type of culture which seeks to pose as religion for modern mankind that has come forward today to cry down asceticism both openly and insidiously. And the wine of this culture has intoxicated the minds of many educated men in India who therefore do not know what they talk about when they want

to curse away the spirit of the ascetic from their land.

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The argument of modern culture against asceticism is that it is de-humanizing. It is easy to find that this argument draws all its force and sap from the modern theory of evolution. This theory has been imbibed into our blood, as it were, through the present-day system of our education and we religiously regard family and society as indispensable environments for bringing out the manhood in man. Now what has chiefly destroyed in us the old high regard for asceticism and renunciation is this conception of manhood as a product brought into being by external causes and their reactions. Our ancient culture understood by manhood the divinity of Atman, and regarded evolution as the unfolding of an already existent Reality. This unfolding goes on as a process of nature in our ordinary life in the world which forms the object of study for modern evolutionists. But just as modern material science conquers the processes of nature and creates arts, so spiritual science in ancient India studied the natural evolution of manhood and learned the art of hastening that evolution indefinitely. It started from its theory of man's innate divinity and discovered a process of unfolding that divinity independently of the evolving factors in our ordinary life in the world. Thus religion in India transcended the necessity of natural evolution with regard to manhood, just as science in the West transcends the same necessity of nature with regard to objects of our material utility. Renunciation and asceticism imply this process of transcending nature. But we have now-a-days learned to ignore this process, because we have accepted the false theory that manhood can only be an evolved product and never a concrete potentiality,—something, that is to say, which already exists in the real sense within man. If what is noblest and best in man is already existent

within him, the question of attaining to it resolves itself into some adequate method of introspection and family or society does not enter into that question as *necessary* factors.

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Now many of our educated men regard this old view of manhood as exploded, and therefore they condemn renunciation and asceticism as de-humanizing. They think that by flying away from family or social life, we can only deprive ourselves of the operation of those external causes which are indispensable to the development of all that is highest and best in man. It is this false notion which is ultimately responsible for the attack on asceticism in which modern culture so much delights. The great whirligig of *Sansara*, or life in the world, has of course brought us where we are at present, and if we cannot disentangle ourselves from it let us confess and wait for our time. But it is simply hypocrisy plus arrogance to condemn those who make bold to stand aloof from this universal vortex. They delude themselves fully who believe that it is easy for ordinary mortals to be *in* the world and yet not *of* it. It is only *sincere* men who, making the attempt, realise the impossibility of escaping the rolling coils of the tremendous whirligig. Others talk tall and abuse asceticism, not because their touching the feet of Reality has really made them brave enough, but because mysterious itchings of their heart incline them towards some agreeable compromise. Man, study thyself and be sincere, for that is the first condition for any the slightest advance in the domain of religion! Insincerity and frothy talk seem to be the dowry of our modern education.

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In India, it is the spirit of the ascetic which achieved for her all her abiding glories. It would be the height of ingratitude for her sons today to condemn that spirit or the institution of monasticism in which that spirit finds its stable, lasting embodiment. True, that spirit has been exaggerated, and there-

fore falsified, in many instances, but a tree does not fructify to pledge us only good fruit growing all over its branches and twigs. This ancient institution is like a great noble struggle on behalf of all mankind, in which thousands fall and rot and over them the ground is laid for the advance of the few victors. But think of the immense good that has accrued to religion and culture from this long, old struggle! Every idea which they boast of as of paramount importance has been the achievement of asceticism. To asceticism we

owe all that is best and highest in the best and highest concern of man, that is religion. It is only because the great Teachers of religion chose to mortify the flesh, that the world of today feels itself enriched with the things of the spirit. Bow therefore in reverence before the spirit of the ascetic wherever you find its formal testimony, however feebly or grotesquely borne, and in a qualified form let it diffuse itself all over our society and home-life that we may prove ourselves worthy of our great spiritual inheritance.



RELIGION AS THE NATION-BUILDER.

II.

THE first step in nation-building is to provide for the people a common ground of unity. A strong bond of common interest must unite together all the people of a country. They must have one centre of common purpose round which they have to rally.

How does religion as the nation-builder in India provide us this ground of national unity? This question occurs first, and to many of us it seems to be insoluble. Before their vision India stands hopelessly self-divided by diversities of religion, race and custom; and the only feature of unity she presents today is her political subjection to the British power. It is this great political fact which readily offers us a bond of common interest; and educated people, with their imagination fired by the Western ideals of collective life and yearning for the same, naturally accepted this bond of common political interest as the first plank in their work of nation-building.

But never was a choice more falsely or more hastily made. No people with a long history behind it can accept any present cir-

cumstance as the source of its permanent national unity. If the whole history of its life-struggles cannot forge this bond of national unity, the exigencies of no present situation will be able to forge it. National unity must be essentially the product of long evolution, and not the reflex of some casual circumstances. It can never last as a mere reaction against present conditions.

A nation receives its principle of unity from the utmost depths of its collective life. This principle is nothing if not derived from the fundamental interests of that life,—interests round which the whole history of that nation must have revolved. This true unifying principle for the Indian people must be sought therefore within the sphere of such interests of their life as have created their history. If the bond of unity does not touch the inmost depths of heart in every unit in the nation, then it is bound to prove a fickle, treacherous bond when put to any difficult but usual test.

So common political interest will never form the principle of national unity in India,

Community of political interest is a favourable condition, no doubt, but it will never be a sufficiently deep and lasting bond of national unity for us. Political interest will never touch the deepest chords in the heart of the people, Hindu and Mussalman. Therefore political interest is not strong enough to forge the permanent national bond. Our past history has determined for our life, both individual and collective, a supreme interest that is religious; and if ever we are to be welded together, truly and deeply enough, to form a nation, it is that supreme interest that must do it. Otherwise the makeshift of a political interest which appears now to be useful and promising to many who glory over the superficial unity already achieved, is bound to fling us one day into gaping chasms of faction and difference between community and community, between race and race. Even already this treacherousness of the political bond of unity accepted by our educated countrymen has made itself felt in the way in which one community allows itself to be pitted against another in the general scramble for political privileges to be received from the hands of our political rulers. The pledge of national unity must be the most solemn and sacred pledge in our life, and political interests will never evoke this solemn and sacred response from the heart of the high and low alike in India.

But many would say: let us educate ourselves into the methods and aspirations of a collective political life; let us learn, all Indians high and low, to regard our common political interest as solemn and sacred like religion. To these people our reply is: why?—why would you commit your countrymen and their future to this course of collective political aspiration? How would you justify yourselves in seeking to divert the whole current of their life-history from the channels of spiritual aspiration? What indispensable necessity is there for hazarding this fatal step? It has been already proved in our previous

article that if India has been called today to the task of nation-building for the sake of her very existence, it is quite possible for her to proceed to her task with that spiritual scheme of collective life which her past history has been evolving for her, for the Western type of political nationalism is not the *sine qua non* in nation-building. So once we accept the claims of religion to become the nation-builder in India in preference to those of politics, we cannot turn round to demand from the latter the principle of our national unity. That would amount to sliding back again into the Western type of political nationalism, giving away the whole case for religion as the nation-builder.

So in spite of all our religious diversities we must turn to religion to give us the principle of our national unity. And has religion in India ever shirked this momentous responsibility? No. Even before the problem of a religious unifying principle for nation-building was mooted in India, our religion produced on the arena of our collective life-struggles a concrete symbol of our national unity. This concrete revelation settles once for all the distracting question of our religious diversities and holds out within our easy reach the only adequate principle of our national unity. Let every educated man in India eschew for a moment all narrowness of mind and study the revelation of religion in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life. What does this revelation signify? What is its value with regard to the most fundamental problem that confronts India today, namely the problem of nation-building? Does not this life give us the most concrete demonstration of the unity of religion? Does not religion offer us this life as the most concrete symbol of that real unity underlying the diversities of creed which seem to divide us today on the surface into separate communities? Will not every patriotic Indian who sincerely longs for some deep and lasting principle of our national unity rally round this life as the God-revealed

concreté symbol thereof? What though the Hindus have preceded others in claiming Sri Ramakrishna as their own modern saint? Was he not as much a Hindu by his spiritual achievements as a Mahomedan or a Christian? And has he not left behind himself an order of Sannyasins, which being truly super-social, may as much be claimed by the Hindus as by any other community as their own?

All these important facts which no patriotic Indian can afford to ignore go to conclusively prove that religion has already solved for us the problem of national unity, and that in the most concrete way possible. It only remains for us to accept this solution and work on its basis. But where are the workers who will take up this spiritual principle of national unity and consecrate their lives to preaching it to all the various races and communities in India and to working it out in their own lives and in those of their countrymen? Where are those workers who would devote themselves whole-heartedly to the study, practice and preaching of religion as the nation-builder in India? The whole field of our present-day culture is split up into two divisions; on one side are ranged people who stick to the old conception of religion as the architect of individual life and on the other side clamour people who strive to force our collective life into the mould of political aspirations. Thus all the forces that would make for real, steady progress in the country are being baffled for want of a common rallying centre. The leaders of the political party feel themselves committed to the course that their immediate predecessors have chosen and have very little open-mindedness left in their nature. What with constant stargazing into the political firmament to study the bearings of political events on their fondest dreams, what with constant distractions coming from all sides of their own political camp which grows day by day more and more self-divided, they have no time to look round to see how hopelessly they are

making themselves and their countrymen the victims of the most denationalised type of nationalism. The vast army of religious aspirants in India, on the other hand, crowd along the old grooves which religion as the master-builder of individual life had long ago carved out for them. They have either no enthusiasm for national life, or else think that life to be a political phenomenon beyond the direct province of religion. They concede to religion the power of indirectly inspiring the formation of a nation but not that of directly building it up. It is their attitude and example which have very often induced the belief in political workers that religion is a thing quite out of date as a factor in collective life.

In the midst of all these confusing circumstances, bold, self-consecrated, and inspired should be those who would bear aloft the standard of religion as the nation-builder in India. These noble standard-bearers will have to practice and preach to-day the unity of religion as demonstrated in Sri Ramakrishna's life, it being the only possible basis of our national unity. They have to carry out the noble behest of Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of *Indian* nationalism: "In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India. There must be the recognition of one religion throughout the length and breadth of this land. What do I mean by one religion? Not in the sense of one religion as held among the Christians, or the Mahomedans, or the Buddhists. We know that our religion has certain common grounds, common to all our sects, however varying their conclusions may be, however different their claims may be. So there are certain common grounds, and within their limitation, this religion of ours admits of a marvellous variation, an infinite amount of liberty to think and live our own lives. We all know that, at least those of us

who have thought, and what we want is to bring out these life-giving common principles of our religion, and let every man, woman, and child through the length and breadth of this country, understand them, know them and try to bring them out in their lives. This is the first step and therefore it has to be taken. We see how in Asia, and specially in India, race difficulties, linguistic difficulties, social difficulties, national difficulties, all melt away before this unifying power of religion. * * * Therefore the first plank in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of the rock of ages, is this unification of religion."

It may be complained that this unification of religion will take ages to materialise, while what we actually require as a principle to unify the people of a country is a clear, distinct, tangible idea, not too high even for the proletariat. Yes, the actual unification of religion is not of course a result to be worked out in every unit of any nation. The unity of religion is a unity in variety, and while the many represent this variety, it is only few men who would be able to embody this unity of religion. But what we have to accept as the ground of our national unity is not the actual unification of religion, but, as Swami Vivekananda puts it, "the recognition of one religion throughout the length and breadth of this land." In fact the idea which our people need accept to-day as the principle of their national unity has been put before them in Sri Ramakrishna's well-known apothem "यत् मत, तत् पथ," "as many faiths, so many paths,"—that is, to the same goal. No country in the world helped mankind more to recognise the fact that there is one God for all men, as India has done; and it is only here in India that you will find even the lowest proletarian declaring that God is one for all men. And is it then a large demand on their mind to ask them to rise to the idea that as God is one, so is also religion, only it takes different men by different paths

to the same goal? The fact is, we never properly approached our masses and do not know how well-prepared their minds are to receive this religious idea of unity. Our itinerant Sadhus know a bit.

The masses move through impulses, the classes through ideas. So what really matters is the acceptance of the principle of religious unity by educated people all over the land. It is these people who are longing today for national life, and it is they that have, for all practical purposes, to recognise this idea of religious unity, and if their reason is slow to accept this idea in the abstract, they have in Sri Ramakrishna a concrete symbol wherein this idea appears realised. If these educated classes once veer round from the direction of a hollow political unity which is proving treacherous day by day to that of religious unity, they will meet with easier success in ranging the masses behind themselves than what they can expect to meet with if they go on as now with their political programme.

So the ground of our national unity is found out. We clearly see before us *where* we have to unite, and it remains now to find out *why* we have to unite. Recognition of religious unity may be the ground of our national unity, but what is to be the motive of such unity? Why is it that we should unite on this common ground to form ourselves into a nation? Religion as the nation-builder in India shows us that the common interest to bind us together as a nation is religious, but it has still to define this common interest. Simply the knowledge that religion is essentially one cannot organise a nation unless there is some common national mission or purpose to which that knowledge has to be applied. We take up the subject in our next.



EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XLXV,

Almora,
3rd June '97.

Dear—

* * * *

As for myself I am quite content. I have roused a good many of our people and that was all I wanted. Let things have their course and Karma its sway. I have no bonds here below. I have seen life and it is all self—life is for self, love for self, honour for self, everything for self. I look back and scarcely find any action I have done for self—even my wicked deeds were not for self. So I am content; not that I feel I have done anything specially good or great but the world is so little, life so mean a thing, existence so, so servile—that I wonder and smile that human beings, rational souls, should be running after this self—so mean and detestable a prize.

This is the truth. We are caught in a trap and the sooner one gets out the better for one. I have seen the truth—let the body float up or down, who cares?

It is a beautiful mountain park I am living in now. On the north, extending almost all along the horizon, peak after peak of the snow-clad Himalayas—forests abounding. It is not cold here, neither very warm, the evenings and mornings are simply delicious. I would be here this summer and when the rains set in, I would go down to the plains to work.

I was born for the life of a scholar—retired, quiet, poring over my books. But the Mother dispenses otherwise—yet the tendency is there.

Yours etc.

Vivekananda,

LECTURE
BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

(Hindu Temple, San Francisco, March 18, 1915.)

Subject: *UNITY AND HARMONY.*

IT fills my heart with sadness to think of the past unfortunate things that have happened in this auditorium. Our brother, Swami Trigunatita, was a great soul. I have known him many years. Even before he became Swami Trigunatita, we were together at the feet of our divine master, Sri Ramakrishna. We lived together and worked together. Before he came to this country I was here. In 1901, after Swami Vivekananda left the Pacific Coast and after he left New York for Paris, at the time of the Paris Exposition, I came here. So I have known many friends here who were not only the students of Swami Trigunatita, but also the students of Swami Turiyananda and of Swami Vivekananda who was the first to come to this coast.

I have seen a great many changes that this movement has gone through, and probably I shall see many more changes that it will go through in the future, but still our ideal is harmony, peace, love, brotherhood—not only brotherhood, but absolute oneness in the spirit.

Why "Love thy Neighbour."

The whole teaching of the Vedanta stands for one thing. That is love. Five hundred years before Christ was born, Buddha taught that hatred is never cured by hatred, but by love. This is the everlasting law. This is the everlasting ethical law. And what is love? Love means expression of oneness. Jesus, the Christ, said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." But he did not explain why we should love our neighbours as ourselves. The explanation you find in the Vedas, in the Vedanta philosophy, in the Upanishads. The Upanishads, which are the earliest writings of this universal philosophy, teach that we should love our neighbours as ourselves, not because they have done some good to us, not because they have been merely kind to us, but even if they have taken wicked steps against us, even if they are spiteful and jealous against us, still we should love them because we are one with our neighbours in spirit. There is only one spirit. The

apparent man appears to be different, to be separated from that universal spirit, which we regard as the Absolute, the Infinite Being, the Brahman. This universal spirit is abiding in all of us. We are like so many instruments which hold the reflection or the image of Divinity which is universal and one. You may think of each individual soul as a reflection, as an image of the infinite divine Spirit which is perfect and one.

I may give you an illustration. Suppose you hold in the sunlight hundreds of small teacups, and let the self-effulgent sun, this luminous heavenly body, reflect upon the water of the teacups. In each teacup you will see an image of the sun, of the same nature, brilliant, luminous, but very small. Think of the immensity of the size of the sun compared with the earth. The diameter of the earth is eight thousand miles, and the diameter of the sun is eight hundred and eighty thousand miles. And this vast luminous body is reflected in a teacup which is infinitesimally small compared with the sun. Yet there is the reflection, perfect. When comparing the earth with the sun, the earth is like a geometrical point which has no parts and no magnitude. When you begin to study Astronomy, you will find that the first step is to regard this earth as a geometrical point, which has no parts and no magnitude; or in other words, the surface of the earth is the same as the centre of the earth—no diameter at all. Now, if this earth, with all its volume and mass, be compared as a geometrical point, then where are we? We are like sands, even smaller than sands, when we compare our physical bodies with the universe. In these infinitesimally small particles of human bodies we find the reflection of the divine and self-effulgent sun of the universe. That is the image of God in man. But, as the image of the sun cannot exist independent of the sun, so the human soul, which is the image of Divinity, cannot exist, even for a second, as independent of the Divine Sun, the Divine Being, whose reflection it is. We are all one in that Infinite Being, the Supreme Spirit, God, the Absolute, the Brahman, the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Mother, the Divine Mother. The names only vary, but the ideal is one.

Peace—a Vedantic ideal.

And this Oneness is the fundamental principle of Vedanta. Starting from oneness, we should go

on destroying all the differentiations, all the ideas of separateness, variations, which are only upon the surface. The undercurrent of the whole universe is one. And if we cannot see the undercurrent, what is the use of studying Vedanta or any other philosophy or religion. I do not regard as a student of Vedanta him who does not see that oneness underlying all variety of manifestation, because that is the fundamental principle. "That which exists is one; men call it by various names." And standing at that point of oneness, we should renounce everything that makes us exist as separate individuals, as independent of each other, as differentiated from each other. We shall combine them into that one harmonious whole. God is one stupendous whole of which we are but parts. And that is the truth.

And if you start from that point, where is the disharmony? How can there be any war? How can there be any fight, or jealousy or hatred? In other words, there should be nothing but peace, not only in our own hearts, but we should see that spirit manifested among our brethren, in our community, among all the students, among all men and women of the whole world—nay, in all living creatures. That is the ideal. There cannot be any war. There cannot be any distinction, when we see God as the Supreme Being, in whom we live and move and have our being in actual reality. Then there cannot be disharmony, but there will be eternal peace and happiness.

What is Harmony?

Vedanta was brought into this country to prove to the world that the fundamental ideal and the ultimate goal of all religions are in that Oneness. If you study the evolution of this world—what does evolution mean? By the term 'evolution,' we mean the expression or change from one homogeneous mass into a heterogeneous variety. Now we are heterogeneous. There are men and women, lower animals, plants, and different nations, nationalities, casts, creeds, denominations. This is variety, but this has come from one source. Why should we not realise that one source, and in that one source we shall find harmony. But if you see the surface, we can never find harmony. If we try to make our faces look alike, we will destroy our faces. There will be no face left. But that is not the plan of nature. On the contrary, the plan of nature is

unity in variety, and we cannot work against the plan of nature. We must learn to be natural. We must learn to be in perfect harmony with the plans of nature. Let nature do the work. We must not resist the force of nature. Nature is trying to harmonise everything, to combine all the forces and show the beauty and grandeur of oneness. Nature is evolving to manifest that oneness in the end, and spirituality means the climax of natural evolution, or the climax of the evolution of the forces of nature. In the end, we find the truth which was told by Jesus, the Christ—"I and my father are one." So, that oneness between the son and the heavenly father is the goal.

Harmony of religious views.

But shall we stop there? Shall we merely see our individual oneness with the universal being? No. We shall also see our oneness with all, whether they are of the same belief or not. Our personal differences of opinion we must learn to sacrifice for the sake of the cause. The cause is that oneness. If you are practising renunciation, renounce your personal opinions. The self-conceit of the mind which is struggling for spiritual upliftment is the cause of great degradation. We must guard against it. We must learn to be humble. Humility is the first virtue. Learn to see goodness in others. Learn to find your own faults. Do not be elated. Do not think you are greater than others. You are sowing the seed of your downfall. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." You have no right to judge. Vedanta tells us that if you have chosen one particular path that is good for you, you have no right to tell others that they should not follow their path which is good for them. Be just. And that is the spirit which was taught in this age for the first time by Sri Ramakrishna, that all religions are like so many paths which lead to the same goal. We do not come to destroy anything, but we come here to harmonise everything, so that there would be no more quarrel, no more fight, no more animosity, no more discord, but peace and harmony everywhere.

Source of disharmony.

And if, among the students of the Vedanta, there be any disagreement, you must watch your own feelings, and you must learn to renounce the cause of that disagreement, which is in yourself, not outside. Renounce that and be free from it.

Get rid of it. Then you will see harmony. We are the cause of our troubles, and we blame somebody else outside of us. But we should be brave enough to take the whole blame upon our own shoulders. And that is what Vedanta teaches. If there be any discord, you are the cause of it. Do not blame anyone else. And you can unmake what you have made. We are the creators of our own future. We are the makers of our own destiny. By our thoughts and deeds we are creating all the time. We are creator in miniature forms, because we are parts of the infinite creator. We are building every minute. Do you not see how we are taking in new particles of matter in the form of food and drink and everything, how the old forms are eliminated, and we are manufacturing new atoms, new molecules, new cells, new tissues, every moment? Do you not see that you create your own environments wherever you go? Who is the cause of your troubles? Who is the cause of your happiness and pleasure, and the misfortunes and sufferings that you go through? There is no other devil or creator outside of our own minds. We are the causes. Vedanta has given this as a death-blow to that dualistic theory that there are two creators, one creator of good and the other of evil, sitting on the clouds and forcing the children of Infinite Being to do right and wrong according to their whims. That is not the ideal. Everything is governed by laws. These laws are as eternal as God Himself. His laws are manifested in nature, and we are here to study these laws, to realise the grandeur, the beauty and the wonderful powers that are latent in each individual soul.

True renunciation.

And if we cannot study this, if we cannot realise this, what have we learned in all these years? Anyone can fuss and fight. But if anyone smites you on the right cheek, turn the left, and show your love and humility. And then you will be like the salt of the earth. Then you will be the fishers of men. If you cannot put yourself on the lowest plane of humanity, how can you serve humanity? It is self-conceit that gives us bondage. The life of the Sannyasin means that you have renounced everything. What is everything? Your attachment. You may live in a palace, you may have all the pleasures of life around you, and if you have no

attachment, then you are a Sannyasin. But if you walk like a beggar in the street, if you sleep under a tree on the grass, and if your mind is hankering after wealth and all the pleasures of senses, you are a beggar and not a Sannyasin. It is the mind. So, if you have not control of your mind, you have not learned the first a-b-c of Vedanta.

Think of the great king Janaka, who was an emperor in India and the greatest teacher of Vedanta. He lived in a palace, but unattached, doing all the works of emperor, of prime minister, of general, of father and husband; but yet, when the palace caught fire he said, "If the whole kingdom is destroyed, it does not hurt me. It does not impoverish me, or make me feel poor."

Do you not see that you cannot enrich the soul by earthly possessions, nor can you impoverish your spirit by renunciation, but it is the attachment to material conditions that holds the soul down on this plane which is the lowest plane.

The Wisdom of Vedanta.

Vedanta tells us that we must not separate God from the world, but we must learn how to harmonise God and the world; not to see God and think of Him as beyond nature as we have been taught in the orthodox churches, but to bring God in our midst, to learn to realise that every kind of work, whether manual labour or intellectual or mental work, is an act of worship. When you scrub the floor, remember that you are worshipping the Lord, and every expression of your energy should be devoted as a offering to the Supreme. That is the ideal. Then there is no more cause of fear. The greatest devil that ever existed is that fear, fear of death, fear of punishment, and it is ingrown, inborn with us. We have almost inherited that because we have learned it from our childhood. Even the prenatal conditions of our parents, of our mother, have inoculated that germ of fear in the tender brain of the child. For that reason we have fear of death, fear of punishment, fear of eternal hell. We think we are born in sin and iniquity. But we are not born in iniquity. Sins are nothing but errors, mistakes. And those mistakes we can overcome when we have removed the cause of all ignorance and superstition by the light of knowledge, by the light of wisdom. We have the light of wisdom practically given in Vedanta. Vedanta gives the best commentary of

the true religion of Christ—not of Churchianity. With the true religion of Christ there is perfect harmony. And this interpretation we need today. The whole world needs it. And in a few years you will see that Vedanta is going to be the religion of the world. Theosophy, Christian Science, New Thought are stepping stones. Vedanta is the highest goal. They are all going towards it. You may not appreciate what Vedanta is to-day, because you are a few people. But how many did believe in Christ? Only twelve disciples. Out of those twelve, many denied him; one betrayed him. In two thousand years what Christianity has not done, Vedanta will do in two hundred years. Just wait, and during your lifetime you will see that the seed that has been sown is bound to grow everywhere. The souls are hungry to receive this truth. I have come from Los Angeles where four or five hundred people were clamouring for me to give more lectures. They were begging me to come and stay there and make my home in California. Wherever I go I find these hungry souls. They are not satisfied with Christian Science, New Thought and all other cults. Time will not permit me to show you the condition. We stand beyond all cult-limitations. There is truth in these teachings. Without doubt they are all trying to help towards the evolution of the spiritual ideals of the nation, but Vedanta is on the top round of the ladder. Yet its different phases embrace them all. Vedanta has a dualistic phase, a qualified nondualistic phase, and a monistic phase, with innumerable branches. The Vedanta philosophy embraces them all. And it is not only a philosophy, but also a religion, because it gives the fundamental principle of all unsectarian religions and includes all the sectarian religions of the world. Christianity is a sectarian religion. So is Mohammedanism. So are Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. But Vedantism is the fundamental principle of all religions. And yet it is a philosophy and embraces all scientific truths. It is one with science, and absolutely logical and rational. Therefore, we must consider Vedanta as the system which teaches the harmony that exists between science, logic, philosophy, metaphysic and religion.

The Vedanta is practical.

It is a system of philosophy, yet it is a religion. What is the difference between religion and philo-

sophy? Philosophy gives the theoretical side of religion and religion gives the practical side of philosophy. They both go together. First of all, you understand the theory, which clears away all the doubts and difficulties that arise in the mind, and answers all the questions which disturb the peace of the mind, and then shows the way by which we can bring those ideals into our daily lives. Therefore Vedanta is most practical. You can apply it in every action of your daily life, in your household duties, when you walk in the street, or dress, or eat, or perform any duties; in your attitude towards your children and your brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, friends and relatives. You can spiritualise all these relations, if you understand the principles of Vedanta. Then you will be a true Vedantist. Then you will be a true Christian, a true follower of Christ, a true follower of all the great teachers and spiritual leaders of the world. It is a harmonious whole. And in this harmonious whole there is no room for jealousy, hatred or inharmony. Jealousy, hatred and inharmony all proceed from ignorance, and they are all evils. They are poisons. If you encourage jealousy, you create a poison in your system. One of the best physicians in New York City said, the other day, that a man or woman who is extremely jealous would create a poison in his or her system that would kill twenty people. And it is a fact. So there is no room for jealousy.

It is positive in its ideals.

All the evils are the negative side. There should not be any evils. Always take the positive path. Send out currents of love, sympathy, harmony; and every time when you find any trace of inharmony or hatred, just crush it right then and there. Then you will have peace, and you will emanate the vibrations of peace wherever you go, and you will attract all. Everybody will look at you and everybody will find comfort in your presence. You will have to create that vibration in your own system first and radiate it. You will spiritualise your home. You will spiritualise the place where you work, in your office and everywhere. You should be able to make a crook appear as straight and simple in your presence. He will be confused. All his crookedness will disappear. A crook cannot be a crook in the presence of a saint. Why

cannot you be a saint, and you will be able to reform all the crooks. You do not need any police systems, reform systems. Live the life and set an example, and in your presence all the crooks will be changed.

There was a great saint in India who lived in an underground cave, in the garden of a temple. The garden was surrounded by high walls. For years and years he would not see anybody. There is a difference in India between real Yogis and those who pretend. Real Yogis hide themselves from the public. They are not like those we see here, who advertise and draw people through the newspapers. They hide themselves because they do not want to be molested or disturbed. This great Yogi lived in this cave and would not come out for days. He would go without food and drink. But his presence in that town created such reform that there was not one single robbery or burglary or theft committed in ten years. The police commissioner was put out of commission, and the police centre was removed from that village because there was no job for them. That is a fact. That shows that a spiritual man or a spiritual woman will emanate spirituality and will convert and reform all those who would come within his or her zone of consciousness.

Zones of consciousness.

There are zones of consciousness. You have a certain zone within which you are the centre, and anyone who comes within your zone will be electrified, magnetised, spiritualised. Every magnet has a zone. You take a magnet and hold a needle. As soon as it comes within the zone of the magnet it is drawn in. Remove it outside of the boundary, there is no action. So you have a zone around you, and anyone who comes in contact will be magnetised, spiritualised. But if your zone is too narrow and cannot pass outside of the automatic centre in your brain, then there is no hope of expanding, enlarging, strengthening by practice. But remember that every individual soul possesses infinite powers, potentialities and possibilities, because we are all, as I said in the beginning, creators in miniature. We are infinitesimally small; yet when we think of ourselves as one with Spirit, we are infinite. There can be nothing greater than man. When we think of our bodies we are smaller

than atoms, smaller than electrons. But when we think of ourselves as spirit, as divine, we are infinite, we are one with the Supreme Being. And that realisation will make us rise above all fear, in-harmony and disagreement, and will establish oneness with all the members of different denominations, sects, religions, societies, and so on. And then, and then alone, we shall be able to live a really spiritual life on earth, and the kingdom of heaven will then be established upon this plane. First of all, we will have to establish the kingdom of heaven within us. Realise that God is within, the kingdom of heaven is within. Then you will realise that the kingdom of heaven can be established upon earth by our examples. We must set the example consciously, and towards that end we must struggle, keeping our minds open to truth, subject to correction, and earnestly striving with humility and sincerity towards that one goal, always sending out the current of love and forgiveness, and always sending out the feeling of blessedness towards all. We must learn to bless all who curse us, to love all who hate us, to give all to those who deny us. And if we can do this, we shall be true students of Vedanta, and we shall realise in time that perfection which Christ meant when he said, "Be ye perfect as the Father which is in heaven is perfect."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: THE GREAT MASTER.

Chapter IV.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO GAYA AND THE BIRTH OF GADADHAR.

(Concluded)

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Khudiram returned to his native village sometime in the following April. The first thing that drew his attention within a short time of his arrival, was the change that seemed to have come upon his dear wife during his absence. She appeared to him like one, transformed by Divine touch, in the profusion of her heart's sympathy for every one

around her. Possessed always of an active temperament, she had daily kept herself busy ere long in ministering to the wants of her little family, and in looking after the proper arrangement of the daily offerings and services of the family Deity, Sri Raghubira. But now the mother in her would not be content to remain within those bounds and would make her constantly look after the wants and comforts of her poor neighbours even before those of the family. And though it did not mean any neglect of those whom she called her own, it was nevertheless often at the cost of great personal sacrifice that she could help them. For she herself was not rich and had not much to give away after meeting the wants of her own family. Khudiram found that she would not partake of her daily meals before inquiring first, personally, whether her poor neighbours had enough to eat on the day. And if she found that for some reason or other any one of them had not been able to procure it, she would privately give her own meal away; and that she would do even for the beggars who visited her door.

Then, as days passed, Khudiram became aware of the strange turn that her devotions to God had taken at present. For instead of looking up to the family Deity with awe and reverence as she used to do before, she would regard and love Him as her own eldest child, who can never feel offended with the short-comings of His poor, weak mother! An unforeseen sweetness also surrounded her while she performed her daily duties about the worship-room. Strong emotions would overcome her at times in the midst of them and she would see visions of strange gods and goddesses appearing before her as lovely little children, addressing her in sweet familiar words and asking sometimes for food-offerings!

But the astonishment of Khudiram knew no bounds on the day that his simple-minded wife told him of the strange experiences that came to her while he was at Gaya. She said, "I had a dream one night that you had come; and that before I could know it, you had entered the room and was locking me within your loving embrace, and I felt so happy! But on looking up to your face the next moment I found that you had been so transformed as I could hardly recognise you! Your

appearance seemed to be more like the effulgent forms of those whom we worship than of any man I had ever seen. A strange feeling then possessed me as if I was in another's embrace. I shrieked and struggled to free myself, and in the attempt awoke with a sudden start to find myself alone on my bed shivering all over with fright and dismay! Then again, a few days later as I was standing one day with my poor companion Dhani, the daughter of our blacksmith neighbour, before the temple of Shiva in front of our cottage, I was so startled to find the image alive, and it began to radiate ethereal waves of exquisite, supernatural light, at first slowly and then with a rapidity which can hardly be imagined! The waves filled the room, then gaining in volume and strength suddenly darted towards me like the mighty bore in the river and deluged me completely as I was struggling to get away,—and I fell flat on the ground losing my consciousness! I awoke to find myself in the arms of my companion, who however was perfectly unaware of what had taken place. But instead of feeling weak for it, I felt myself stronger than ever and borne upon a strange elation of spirit. I have the impression since then, as if a part of the self-same waves is still within me, making me to feel as I did at the time of child-bearing."

Strange as were the dream and the vision, Khudiram could but feel in them a confirmation of his own wonderful experience at Gaya. He told her that he too had been blessed with some strange visions of late, which seemed to point to the fact of the birth of the Divine child in the family in the near future; but it was best not to relate such experiences to every one. So Chandra kept quiet, though the fullness of her heart shone through her face and made her look tender and graceful, more than she ever did before; and it soon transpired that she was really in the way to renewed maternity even at the advanced age of forty-five.

Days and even months passed in cheerful performance of duties with a perfect dependence on the Lord, and the time arrived at last when Chandra would soon be blessed with the birth of one, whose coming into the world was heralded to her by such strange visions and experiences. She felt happy and withal anxious for the future turn

of events. For who can ever feel certain about things, which are beyond the farthest limits of reason?

It was on the morning of the 6th day of the month of Falgun, corresponding to the 17th day of the English calendar month of February, 1836 A. D.—the beginning of spring-tide in Bengal, when all nature was revelling in joy with the fresh waves of life and energy that had come upon it, that Chandra felt as if she could no longer perform her daily duties in the worship-room and the kitchen. She grew anxious, for there was none to take her place in their performance on the day, and expressed her fear to her husband. But Khudiram assured her that it could not be so, that however ill she might feel, the Divine-child would never make its entry into the world by creating any disturbance in the services of the Deity. And strangely enough Chandra felt herself stronger than ever from that very moment and attended to all her duties throughout the day. Nevertheless, everything was kept in readiness for the advent of the child and Dhani was requested to sleep with her during the night.

All went on well, until at dead of night, in that auspicious mystic hour when all things aflush with a solemn stillness seem to brood over the birth of a new day, Chandra felt sure that the time had come, and removed herself with the help of her companion to the hut in which she had her open oven for boiling paddy and the wooden machinery for husking the grains. For besides the two rooms in the cottage, which served as bed-rooms to Khudiram and Ramkumar there was no other place in it which could be used for the purpose. Then, as the eastern horizon became tinged with red in spite of the darkness that still covered the earth below, she gave birth to the child, whom she had been expecting with such deep anxiousness.

And after helping the mother when Dhani came to help the new-born babe in its turn, she started to find that the child had slipped gradually away into the cool oven and was lying there besmeared with wood-ashes! The sacred sound of the conch-shell then announced to the world the advent of the child, and the ladies of the rich Laha family, who had been great friends to Chandra and who

had come there on hearing that she was ill, found at that time to their astonishment that the baby looked almost as big as a child of six months !

The necessary rites were performed, then, on the sixth day after the birth of the child ; and the ceremony of taking the babe out of the room to look, for the first time, at the moon and the wide world took place when it was about three weeks old. Then after propitiating the Gods the child was given the name of Gadâdhara, or 'the wielder of the club', in memory of the strange dream, that came to its father while he was at Gaya to worship the foot-prints of Gadâdhara or Vishnu.

The astrologers were called in next to read the pre-natal influences that would help or hinder to shape the life of the babe in the world, and they prophesied great things, after necessary calculations, about the future life of it. They said, that the child would not only have a strong religious consciousness to liberate himself from the bonds of *maya*, but would discover a new path to liberation for the good of the many, and would pass his days in a temple surrounded by many seekers after religion and would be looked upon by men as the Deity incarnate ! He would thus be a strong spiritual light to illumine the minds of men and would help to establish the religious consciousness which had grown dim in the world.

The ceremony of giving the first diet of boiled rice, the food which the child would have to take for nourishment as long as it would be in this life, then took place when it was six months old ; and Khudiram was able with the help of his rich Zemindar friend, Dharmadas Laha, to feed not only the gentry of the village but also a great number of people who came to his door on the occasion. And the child grew in loveliness as days passed, so much indeed as to hold in fascination, all the ladies of the neighbourhood who would henceforth make time to visit Chandra everyday at some hour or other simply for the pleasure of taking her beautiful baby into their arms for a while. And they said that the little Gadadhar became extremely naughty as he grew in years.

Swami Saradananda.

THE VAIKAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 155).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

विपुलहृदयैरीशैरेतज्जगज्जनितं पुरा

विधृतमपरैर्दत्तं चान्यैर्विजित्य तृणं यथा ।

इह हि भुवनान्यन्ये धीराश्चतुर्दश भुञ्जते

कतिपयपुरस्वाम्ये पुंसां क एष मदज्वरः ॥५७॥

In ancient times (the kingdom of) this world was created by some large-hearted monarchs ; by some was it sustained (i. e. ruled) and by others was it conquered and given away like (a bundle of) straw. Even now, some heroes enjoy the fourteen divisions of the world. For what then is this feverish pride of men having sovereignty over a few towns only ?

[चतुर्दश भुवनानि—The fourteen divisions of the world, that is, the entire created universe.]

अभुक्तायां यस्यां क्षणमपि न जातं नृपशतै-

भुवस्तस्य लाभे क इव बहुमानः क्षितिभृताम् ।

तदंशस्याप्यंशे तदवयवलेशेऽपि पतयो

विषादे कर्तव्ये विदधति जडाः प्रत्युत मुदम् ॥५८॥

58. What high dignity, as it were, is there for kings in gaining that earth which has never for a moment been left unenjoyed by hundreds of rulers ! The stupid owners of even a shred of the limb of a fraction of its fraction (i. e. of the most minute particle) feel delighted whereas, on the contrary, they ought to grieve !

मृत्पिण्डो जलरेखया बलयितः सर्वोऽप्ययं नन्वणुः

स्वांशीकृत्य तमेव संगरशतै राज्ञां गणा भुञ्जते ।

ते दद्युर्ददतोऽथवा किमपरं क्षुद्रा दरिद्रा भृशं

धिग्धिकतान्पुरुषाधमान्धनकणान्वाञ्छन्ति

तेस्योऽपि ये ॥५९॥

59. It (the earth) is but a lump of clay circled by a trace of water! Even the whole of it is but a particle. Hosts of kings having partitioned it after fighting hundreds of battles enjoy it. These very poor insignificant persons might give while giving, or otherwise. But downright shame on those mean fellows who would beg bits of coin from them even!

स जातः कोऽप्यासीन्मदनरिपुणा मूर्ध्नि धवलं
कपालं यस्योच्चैर्विनिहितमलंकारविधये ।
नृभिः प्राणत्राणप्रवणमतिभिः कैश्चिदधुना
नमद्भिः कः पुंसामयमतुलदर्पज्वरभरः ॥६०॥

60. That man is indeed born (truly great) whose white skull (after death) is placed by (Shiva) the enemy of Madana (Cupid) high on the head as an ornament; (and) what is (worth) this rising fever of exceeding pride in men, who are now-a-days adored by some people with minds intent on the preservation of their lives!

[The great Shiva is called Kapáli, and Kapála meaning "skull", the popular belief is that he puts on his head the skull of a hero whose wonderful life lived on earth merits this distinction.]

(To be continued).

THE STORY OF ANDAL.

(Adapted from the Swami Ramakrishnananda's *the Life of Sree Rāmānuja.*)

BY BRAHMACHARI BHAKTICHAITANYA.

THE name of Andâl is familiar among Southern Vaishnava poets as that of a great saint and poet. She composed some three hundred beautiful songs in the Tâmil language. They are still regarded as the most precious devotional gems by the devotees. She was born about the fourth century B. C.

It is said that Goddess Lakshmi divided herself into three forms. Her first form is Sree Devi. She is the sweet and loving heart of the Lord Vishnu. Bhudevi is another image of Her. She is

most beautiful and charming in appearance, and Nârâyana enjoys her by only gazing at her form. And Niladevi is Her third manifestation. In this form she praises the glory and sweetness of Nârâyana and thinks herself fortunate and blessed in remaining always emersed, as it were, in the 'sea of divine Love'! This Nilâdevi came to our earth in the form of Andâl.

One day the great saint, Peria Alwar, the father of Andâl, was picking *tulsi* leaves in the garden to worship Lord Vishnu. Suddenly a tiny figure attracted him. He went to it and to his great astonishment and delight, he found that a young little girl, with smiling face, was lying on the ground there. He had no child and he thought this daughter to be God-sent. So, he thought himself blessed in adopting this young child as his daughter. The name of this daughter was Andâl. Andâl had a great devotion for Nârâyana from her very childhood. She would not like to spend her time in playing with other boys and girls. She would sit before the temple of the Lord and speak to herself many nice things. Sometimes, she would laugh and then become angry, as if with the Lord, and cry; and the next moment she would be pacified and would dance, clapping her hands in joy. She behaved quite like a mad girl in this way. Sometimes, when there was nobody present she would enter the temple and wear the garland meant for Nârâyan on her own neck and then would keep it back again. One day while she was thus wearing the garland of Vishnu, her father detected her, and reproached her seriously for this conduct. That day the garland was not of course offered to the Lord. At night, Lord Vishnu appeared before him in dream and said, "Why have you not offered me the garland of *tulsi* this day? I become more pleased at things which have touched the body of my devotees. Don't regard Andâl as an ordinary human being. She is my greatest devotee." Next day Peria Alwar found that the garland worn by Andâl the day before was not dry but was shining with bright lustre, rather brighter far than a fresh-made garland. He, at once, without any hesitation took the garland and offered it to the image. That day, he saw in his *Ishta Deva* with that beautiful garland the manifestation of the greatest beauty possible, and he enjoyed the greatest peace of mind and blessedness, the hairs of his body standing on

their ends, his heart full of joy and tears of love coming out of his eyes.

Andál was simple like a child even when she was grown up and her heart was always filled with thoughts of the Lord. When she was quite young she used to say that she would marry none else but Nárâyana. As she grew older her father was very anxious to give her away in marriage. But she was not to move an inch from her resolution. She would marry only Nárâyana. At this her father was at a loss to find out what to do and so the only means left was to pray and meditate. It is said that on one such night Vishnu Himself gave him the fullest assurance in dream, saying, "Don't hesitate to give thy daughter in marriage to me. She is Lakshmi Herself." On that very night this command was also conveyed in dream to the priest of the temple of Vishnu; "Tomorrow morning, you must go to the house of the father of Andál with all things necessary for holding a marriage ceremony and dress Andál with beautiful raiment and carry her to my temple on a palanquin." The priest did so the next morning. When Andál's father heard this, his joy knew no bounds. Andál was going on a palanquin to marry Sree Purushottama—the Supreme Person! So numerous people followed her. When she entered the temple, Nárâyana stretched out his hands and embraced her, and being so embraced, Andál melted away and was made one with the image. None could see her on earth any more. Finding her father very anxious, Purushottama with a smile said, "From this day, you have become my father-in-law. Go back to your own home. Don't be anxious for your daughter. She will always remain with me." At this, Perîâ Alwár was greatly delighted at heart and bowed down to the highest Purusha, Vishnu, the protector of all beings, and returned home enjoying bliss and eternal peace of mind.

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

THE grim famine which our people and the Government are trying hard to cope with in East Bengal calls for a word of comment. While in the West, we find to-day the spirit of organisation expressing itself with a vengeance in

undreamt-of brutalities of war, in India the great evil of disorganisation is driving human beings on the slightest pretext to the brink of death. History is teaching us the greatest lessons by striking contrasts,—on one side the cruelest misuse of organised power, on the other the saddest spectacle of disorganised impotency,—on one stage is played the tragedy of organisation misdirected, on the other that of organisation neglected. In one case humanity is suffering profoundly from misorganisation, in the other from disorganisation.

Organisation implies a higher unity, and the trend of human evolution is towards higher and higher unity. Organisation therefore is the essential method of human evolution, and the modern age seeks to bring out this method in the boldest relief. This clear, distinct tendency of the modern age must have to be recognised and respected, and that society or country only is permitted to live a progressive life in modern times, which readily takes its cue from this universal tendency. The fate of our country seems still to tremble in the balance, and famines and epidemics bring this precariousness on the surface. Shall we organise ourselves and live, or drift away into sure, steady dissolution through our present state of disorganisation? This was the vital question put before us by the great Sphinx of time at the dawn of the modern age. Our history in the past decades, clearly proves that we have already responded to this question by the universal yearning, within all awakened minds in India, for a new collective life. Yes, we want to live, unto a future more glorious than our past.

But then, the next question of the Sphinx rings clear before us to-day: Rising from disorganisation, shall we make a general bid for misorganisation or for true organisation? And to this question we have not as yet made any clear universal response, the inevitable result being continued disorganisation. Do we call the political movement in the country a movement towards organisation? Apart from the false choice of politics as the organising principle, a choice which can only carry us towards that Western misorganisation of national and international life which unerringly tends to keep humanity deprived of its higher birthright of

spirituality, peace and good-will, what has your politics done during the last fifty years to organise rural life in India to protect itself against commercial exploitation? During these fifty years your politicians could not reach the masses and teach them how to organise their rural interests for withstanding the drain of subsistence from their homes. In fact, the political choice, the political craze, has really alienated the educated minds from the deeper currents of rural life in India. A new political sympathy will never make amends for the loss of that intimate touch with all classes of society which a collective spiritual life was once calculated to bring about. By making a general bid for the political organisation of our collective life, we can simply aggravate the disorganisation which is preying to-day upon all the limbs of our society.

So the Sphinx has to be boldly answered to-day, no matter what becomes of our big political speculations and reconnoiterings through the past decades of our history. Let us organise ourselves on the basis of the noblest interests of human life. Let us approach the masses with this principle of true organisation, for religion is the only cementing principle in India between the high and the low, the educated and the uneducated. The soul of the Indian people is encased in religion, as in Europe it is encased in politics. So it is religion which will bring them together and cure all the evils of disorganisation. Nothing else will solve the problems of poverty and insanitation in India, if the people do not help themselves to that solution. No Government help can really help a people helpless from within. So let the soul of India come out and organise the people. Adapting from the language used by the Bishop of London while sermonizing a political nation from the steps of the St. Paul's Cathedral on the 25th July last, let this appeal be sounded forth to our own countrymen:

We summon then the soul of *India* to arise in all its grandeur and strength at this crisis of the day of God. Come from the four winds, thou Breath of Spirit, and breathe upon this great people, that hope and faith and love may once again revive and the world be saved again by the "Soul of a People."

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.

Extracts From

The Report of August 7.

Since the publication of our last report the condition of the famine-stricken people in the Noakhali District has greatly improved owing to the harvesting of the 'aush' crop, which has been plentiful this year. Accordingly, all our centres in this district have been closed. The sum of Rs. 2,000 contributed by the Collector, Noakhali, has been spent in relieving distress in that district, and the sum of Rs. 100 given by the District Engineer has been spent in clearing tanks under the supervision of the Badalkot centre. For a similar reason, our centres in south Tippera have been closed too. But north Tippera, and specially Cachar, have come under the ravaging influence of heavy floods, and our attention is at present directed towards relieving distress from this scourge. We have inspected the Brahmanbaria Subdivision in north Tippera, and Silchar in Cachar and have opened relief centres at different places, viz., Kuthi, Bitghar, Akhaura, Gangasagar, Debagram, Brahmanbaria and Silchar. Other centres will be opened shortly.

The report of the existing centres will be given later on.

The condition of Silchar is very serious, and demands prompt assistance. Nearly 80 per cent. of the houses in the villages near the town has been pulled down, and the loss of cattle is reported to be very great. The crying needs in Silchar are of four kinds:—Paddy seeds, rice for consumption, reconstruction of houses and fodder for the cattle. The floods in this district were as high as they were violent. It is, therefore, that though at present all the water has subsided, the greater part of the people are left without food and habitation.

We have not taken field at Sandwip as the local relief committee is working there. The miserable plight in which the inhabitants of Silchar and Brahmanbaria, specially the former, are at present, calls for immediate relief; and no one who can imagine what the pinch of hunger is in the midst of a flood-washed country will be able to remain a complacent spectator of their sufferings.

We earnestly appeal to all sympathising souls to open their purse-strings in the cause of suffering humanity.

It is a pleasure to note that the Lohapati merchants of Barabazar have contributed through the "Hitabadi" Office Rs. 1,500 to our famine relief fund, the Metropolitan Institution Rs. 1,000 and Messrs. Beinroy Hookumchand of Barabazar have given 100 pairs of new cloths.

Contributions, however small, and clothes old and new, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:—(1) Swami Brahmananda, President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur P. O., Dt. Howrah; or (2) the Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukerji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

WE are glad to receive the First Report of the Ramakrishna Sevashrama at Lucknow. It was started in September 1914, with a view to afford relief and help to the diseased and distressed people. During the period under report 14 families and 35 individual persons altogether received help in cash and kind, and at present there are 4 families and 9 individual persons receiving help from the Ashrama. Sir S. P. Sinha, Late Law Member Government of India and Dr. Sundar Lal Rai Bahadur, B.A., L.L.D., C.I.E., Vice-chancellor of the Allahabad University when visiting Lucknow kindly contributed Rs. 100 each to the Sevashrama. We would request the generous public to follow this noble example, and wish steady growth and success to this institution.

THE Thirteenth Annual report of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, is to hand. The object of the Society is to further the study and practice of the Vedanta as taught by the Swami Vivekananda. A weekly class on Saturdays is held for the study of the Shastras. There has been a steady increase in the attendance.

WE have received the tenth Annual report of the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur. We are glad to learn that one Tamil School has been opened in the Ashrama premises. The members of the institution are greatly active in spreading

religious education among students and the masses, and regular classes are held for the study of religion and for instilling a spirit of service into the hearts of the students.

His Holiness Swami Nirmalananda of the Ramkrishna Mission during his Malabar tour this year visited Kottayam on the 7th August. As had already been settled, the Swami reached the southern entrance of the town where the members of the local Ramakrishna Bhaktajana Sangham and several gentry of the place were waiting to receive him. His Holiness was thence escorted with a *Bhajana* party to the residence of Mr. K. Padmanabham Thampi, the Divisional Police Superintendent. Reaching the Bungalow, the Swami blessed the young boys of the Ramakrishna Sunday School who had taken part in the *Bhajana*. On the same evening His Holiness gave a discourse on religion to the members of Young Men's Hindu Association. Next day there was a public discourse given by the Swami in the Rama Varma Union Club, where several disputed religious questions were put to him by the Hindus and non-Hindus and Swamijee explained them all with his natural eloquence and lucid reasoning. Private engagements were also held by the Swami. The next morning he left the place for Alleppey on his holy mission.

WE have received two important publications in Bengali,—one *Banger Bahire Bangali*, and the other *Asoka Anushasana*. Of the former, the author is Babu Jnanendra Mohan Das and the publisher Babu Anathnath Mukherji, 50 Baghbazar St., Calcutta. The book is an interesting record of notable Bengalees and their life-work in northern provinces of India outside Bengal. The author of *Asoka Anushasana* is Babu Charu Chandra Bose, whose reputation as an exponent of Buddhist culture in Bengal is well-known. The present book is a valuable addition to his other contributions in this respect. We also take this opportunity to acknowledge receipt of the first seven parts of the works of Swami Ramatirtha translated into Marathi by S. J. Bhasker Vishnu Phadke and S. J. Ramakrishna Vasudeva Varve, (Hirji Asu's Wadi, P. O. Matunga, Bombay).