

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



इच्छितं जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XXI]

JULY 1916

[No. 240

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

(III.—Continued from page 103.)

[Subjects: *What is civilisation?—The distinctive characteristic of the ancient Indian civilisation.—How the advent of Sri Ramakrishna marks the fusion of the Western and Eastern civilisations and the dawning of a new era.—Peculiar notions in the West about the outward mien of pious men.—The difference between Bhava-samadhi and Nirvikalpa-samadhi.—Sri Ramakrishna was the lord of the realm of spiritual sentiment.—The knowers of Brahman alone are the teachers of men.—The evil of the system of family-Gurus.—Sri Ramakrishna came to remove corruption in religion.—How Swamiji used to preach his Master in the West.*]

In reply to the question: what is civilisation, Swamiji told that day that the more advanced a society or nation is in spirituality, the more is that society or nation civilised. No nation may be said to have become civilised, only because it has succeeded in increasing the happiness and the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machineries and things of that sort. The modern civilisation of the West is multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men. On the other hand, the ancient Indian civilisation by showing people the way to spiritual advancement doubtless succeeded, if not in removing once for all, at least in lessening in a great measure the material needs

of men. In the present age, it is to bring into coalition both these civilisations that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was born. In this age, as on one hand, people have to be devotedly practical, so on the other hand they have to acquire deep spiritual knowledge. Swamiji made us clearly understand that day that from such interaction of the Indian civilisation with that of the West will dawn on the world a new *yuga* (era). In the course of dilating upon this, he happened to remark in one place—"Well, another thing: people there in the West think that the more a man is religious the more demure he must be in his outward bearing,—no word about anything else from his lips! As

the priests in the West would on the one hand be struck with wonder at my liberal religious discourses, they would be as much puzzled on the other hand when they found me after such discourses talking frivolities with my friends. Sometimes they would speak out to my face: 'Swami! you are a priest of religion; you should not be joking and laughing in this way like ordinary men. Such levity does not sit well on you.' To which I would reply, 'We are children of bliss—why should we look morose and sombre?' But I doubt if they could rightly catch the drift of my words."

That day Swamiji also spoke many things about Bhava Samadhi and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. These are reproduced below as far as possible:—

"Suppose a man is cultivating that type of devotion to God which Hanuman represents. The more intense the attitude becomes, the more will the pose and demeanor of that aspirant, nay even his physical configuration, be cast in that mould. It is in this way that transmutation of species takes place. Taking up any such attitude of sentiment, the worshipper becomes gradually shaped into the very form of his ideal. The ultimate stage of any such sentiment is called Bhava Samadhi. While, the aspirant in the path of Jnana pursuing the process of 'neti, neti,' 'not this, not this,' such as 'I am not the body, nor the mind, nor the intellect' and so on, attains to the Nirvikalpa Samadhi when he is established in absolute consciousness. It requires striving through many births to reach perfection or the ultimate stage with regard to a single one of these devotional attitudes. But our Thakur, the Raja of the kingdom of spiritual sentiment, perfected himself in no less than eighteen different forms of devotion! Thakur also used to say, that his body would not have endured had he not held himself on to this play of spiritual sentiment."

The disciple, asked that day, "Sir what sort of food did you take in the West?"

Swamiji— The same as they take there. We are Sannyasins and nothing can take away our caste!

On the subject of how he would work in future in this country, Swamiji said that day that starting two centres, one in Madras and another in Calcutta, he would rear up a new type of Sadhus and Sannyasins for the good of all men in all its phases. He further said, that by a destructive method no progress either for the society or for the country could be achieved. In all ages and times progress has been effected by the constructive process, that is, by giving a new mould to old methods and customs. Every religious preacher in India, during the past ages, had worked in that line. Only the religion of Bhagavan Buddha was destructive. Hence that religion finds itself extirpated in India.

The disciple remembers that while thus speaking on he remarked, "If the Brahman is manifested in one man, thousands of men advance, finding their way out in that light. Only the knowers of Brahman are the spiritual teachers of mankind. This is corroborated by all scriptures and by reason too. It must be only the selfish Brahmins who have introduced into this country the system of hereditary family-Gurus which is against the Vedas and against the Shastras. Hence it is that even through their spiritual practice men do not now succeed in perfecting themselves or in realising Brahman. To remove all this corruption in religion, the Lord has incarnated himself on earth in the present age in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. The universal teachings that he offered, if spread all over the world, will do good to humanity and the world. Not for many a century past has India produced so great, so wonderful, a teacher of religious synthesis.

A brother-disciple of Swamiji at that time asked him, "Why didn't you preach Thakur in the West as an Avatar before all?"

Swamiji— They make much flourish and fuss over their science and philosophy. Hence, unless you first knock to pieces their intellectual conceit through reasoning, scientific argument and philosophy, you cannot build anything there. Those who finding themselves off soundings through their utmost

intellectual reasoning would approach me in a real spirit of truth-seeking—to them alone, I would speak of Sri Ramakrishna. If, otherwise, I had forthwith spoken of the doctrine of incarnation, they could have said, "Oh you do not say anything new,—why, we have our Lord Jesus for all that!"

After thus spending some three or four hours in great joy the disciple came back to Calcutta that day with other visitors.



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

IF somebody asserts that what the Gita preaches is but a gospel of work, he may be right or he may be wrong. We all know, it is usual to make a distinction regarding all the four Yogas, or paths of spiritual realisation, but we often forget that they are all but ramifications, as it were, from the one stem of a common spiritual psychology. As to **this** fact, the Gita itself does not leave us in any doubt. If it distinguishes one **Yoga** from the other, it asserts also that it is puerile to think that they are so distinguished really either in their inner psychology or in their final results. Every student of the Gita who forgets this warning to contend that it preaches only one Yoga allotting to the others a merely subordinate importance, cuts himself off from the real trend and tenour of the whole preaching. If Arjuna stood in need of a philosophy of conduct, we cannot argue that his preceptor had any reason to go beyond that need by preaching to him the *superiority* of Karma-yoga. Rather it is an important point to consider why instead of giving his disciple an exposition of Karma-yoga which would have quite served the purpose, Bhagavan Sri Krishna evidently felt himself under the necessity of introducing all the other Yogas into his discourse. Does he not thereby clearly suggest that, in a very real sense, all the Yogas imply one

another and he had better discourse on all of them to avoid a defective presentation of his subject?



The whole purport of Sri Krishna's discourse was to impart to his friend some secret of work by means of which the latter would keep himself perfectly free from such consequences of his fighting as smote his mind on the eve of battle with distracting scruples and misgivings. This central question about a real secret of work, a clever knack of doing things, was tackled by the Divine Charioteer in the long discourse he is reported to have delivered on the battlefield,—it being quite open to us to speculate as to how the report itself grew in length under the inspiration of its custodians in succeeding ages. It is quite evident that a doctrine of renunciation or the giving up of fruits of action forms the solution of this question in a nutshell, and he alone has made a successful study of the Gita who understands this central doctrine. So to keep one's bearings correctly throughout the study, one would do well to approach it with the enquiry aroused in one's mind as to how one should give up fruits of action. It should be a practical problem with every student of the Gita, and not merely a question of theoretical interest. How to give up fruits of action? Well, is it not a perplexity

in practical life? Do we not as a matter of course expose ourselves to the effects of whatever we do in life? Do we not, by whatever we do, fit in a new link in the chain of Karma which binds us to life? Sure as effects follow their causes, do we not find fruits of our action recoiling back on ourselves?

The problem is to fight this law of causation and neutralise its operation in life. Karma-yoga may therefore be briefly defined as the science and art of neutralising Karma by Karma. The Gita teaches this Karma-yoga, starting from the central injunction that we have to give up the fruits of our action. But we must bear in mind that this central commandment only serves to introduce the real issue, and does not fully solve it for us; for the real difficulty in the practice of Karma-yoga confronts us when we try to give up the fruits of our action. What makes it so difficult for us to give up these fruits? Karma-yoga points out that the difficulty arises from the attachment or bondage of heart to the agreeable results we naturally look forward to when we work. By nature we do our work with an eager eye to its agreeable results, with our heart sold away to some prospective happiness. Here in this very act of bargaining for something that we want besides the actual work in hand, we yield ourselves to the operation of the law of causation or Karma. Work, of course, consists of means pursued to bring about some end contemplated. But all this may well proceed without involving any wrong attachment or setting-on of our heart,—the *Sangam* of the Gita. Here lies the crux of the whole question.

Any work we undertake may call forth all the energy, physical or mental, we are capable of, and yet may have no reference in the motive behind it to any form of gratification centred exclusively in the agents as

distinct individuals. Karma-yoga enjoins on us this ultimate purity of motive in every action. Work always consists of means leading to some end, but this end must not involve any element of *wrong* self-reference. The Gita from the beginning to the end preaches against this wrong self-reference in the motive. The *sangam* or attachment we are required by Karma-yoga to give up is but the tendency in thought, feeling and will towards this wrong self. This tendency is deeply ingrained in our nature through habitual indulgence in many births, and all the four Yogas or methods of spiritual discipline are directed against this deep-rooted tendency. In Jnana-yoga, this tendency towards the wrong self is sought to be combated by a knowledge of the real self. In Bhakti-yoga this tendency is sought to be diverted from the wrong self to the selflessness of love. In Raja-yoga, this tendency towards the wrong self is counteracted by an introspective dive beyond the wrong self. In Karma-yoga this tendency towards the wrong self is sought to be inhibited through work for work's sake,—the "*yuddháya yuddhyaswa*" of the Gita.

But every individual human nature through all its manifold impulses offers scope, more or less, for all the four Yoga methods. Each of the four moods which characterise the different Yogas—contemplation of truth, devotional sentiment, psychological introspection and enthusiasm of work—, may lay its claim sometime on every human mind maybe with varying strength and duration. None is left perfectly unrepresented in any individual nature, however much we may classify human nature into different types of temperament. Specially in such a heroic nature as Arjuna possessed, all the moods and temperaments may be safely supposed to have commingled in all their fervour. So in teaching a disciple like him the secret of working without any wrong self-

reference in motive, Sri Krishna would have betrayed prodigious unworthiness as a preceptor had he left out from his exhortations a discourse on the Real Self or on the devotedness of love or on the introspective control of mind. For all these methods being equally calculated to eliminate wrong self-reference in the motive of action must have to be combined to great advantage in the case of Arjuna who is called upon to practice on the battlefield the principle of work for work's sake.

So if it is Karma-yoga which Sri Krishna preached to Arjuna, it is not the Karma-yoga of the modern controversialist who is eager to prove the superiority of any one Yoga as against the others and interprets the Gita to make out his case. Any such question of comparative excellence did not disturb the mind either of the teacher or of the disciple in the Gita; and if it was once raised at all, it was but a transient doubt of Arjuna, a passing phase perhaps of his weakness to seize upon some excuse for withdrawing from battle. His Charioteer having just described in terms of Jnana-yoga the blessed state of resting in Brahman consciousness, it struck Arjuna for a while that this Jnana-yoga offered him a way of escape from this awful work of fighting one's kith and kin. So he raised the question as to why work involving such lamentable consequences should have to be pursued even when by practice of Jnana-yoga one can reach the goal so glowingly depicted by the teacher. Sri Krishna argued in reply that it is only through work that one can go beyond work, so there can't be any giving up of work both as a matter of course and as a matter of means for highest self-realisation or highest self-expression. But Arjuna again returned to the question, encouraged by Sri Krishna's extolling of Jnana as the sword that cuts through every kind of obstacle in our way of realisation. And this time he was more

explicit and wanted to commit his teacher to some decision as between Jnana-yoga and Karma-yoga (Chap. V—1). But all the same, Sri Krishna positively refused to draw any such hard and fast line between the two Yogas and hold up either against the other. He said, the path of Jnana proves distressing to one who has not been a Karma-yogin (*ayogatah*) and a successful Karma-yogin (*yoga-yuktah*) again does not get entangled because he thinks himself, after a Jnana-yogin, to be identified with the self of all creatures.

And as we go on following Sri Krishna's teachings, we find almost every line and verse implying the one underlying assumption that no one of the fourfold Yogas is really divorced from the other, but they all have rather a concurrent application in the life of everybody sincerely yearning for spirituality. Of this spirituality Sri Krishna had no mere intellectual conception, which revels in analysing and synthesising, sectioning and re-adjusting. He knew what spirituality always is as one undivided entity, as a realized unity. So however much the circumstances might have demanded, apparently to us, an invidious, decisive, emphasis on Karma-yoga, the teacher in the Gita did nothing of the kind, but preached a Karma-yoga that is but the name which the *ensemble* of the fourfold Yogas as comprised in one system assumes, just when it applies itself to that aspect of life marked out as work. The religion which developed in ancient India out of the Vedas and which may therefore be called the Vedic religion was not like a bureau of separate drawers in which to stow away the blessings and rewards which belong to the various paths of spiritual realisation. It was not even a unity in diversity, although it may be quite congenial to human intellect to study it under that category. It was in fact a simple entity of inalienable unity, and it was realised as such in the life of its greatest exponents,

the ancient Avatars like Sri Krishna and Sri Ramachandra.

The Gita upholds this essential unity of the Vedic religion and defies all intellectual attempts to infect its teachings with the taint of any controversial distinction born of our individual taste or predilection for one Yoga or the other. Let therefore the Gita be interpreted in the same spirit in which it was first given unto Arjuna. In it the whole gospel of the Vedic religion, in its fourfold aspects of Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga, was given to the world; and if this one complete gospel proved to Arjuna in the special phase of his life's activity to be a gospel of

work, it was bound to prove to him in other phases of his life's activity to be as much a gospel of Jnana or Bhakti. And so for everybody who studies the Gita, it should equally meet in the varying moods of his spiritual practice the varying claims of his life's problem. The spiritual needs of a modern man cover a larger ground of his life and thought than any exclusive form of Yoga can preside over, and however much a man may be marked out by temperament for one form of Yoga more than any other, he has no right to impose on mankind his own special conduit of inspiration from the Gita as the universal law of its interpretation.

ART AND MORALITY.

FOR some time past this interesting subject is coming in for a good deal of attention in the Bengali press, and evidently also in Bengali literary circles. And the question is no doubt important for our national pursuit of art and literature, the question, namely, as to how far and in what way the moral end in life affects and regulates that pursuit. A brief consideration of the subject cannot be out of place here, seeing that it intimately concerns the modern reconstruction of our collective life and thought.

The ideals and methods in art which a particular people pursues are necessarily shaped upon its peculiar reading and view of life. Every people on earth does not view or interpret life in the same way, and in spite of many points of contact and community in the views or schemes of life to which different peoples have committed themselves, we should never lose sight of essential differences if we want to assure a steady and healthy growth to our national art and literature.

And if in India, art and literature always

chose to have their development and destiny governed by religion, we have absolutely no cause for regret. For in India, religion was always broad and deep enough to offer unlimited scope to the genius of art and literature, and never will science or art in this country have any occasion to complain that the guiding spirit of religion lags behind even any remotest flight of their efforts.

Religion broods over the whole sphere of human thought and sentiment which unfolds itself as life and the world just as God broods over His self-manifestation or creation. And nowhere except in India, the human mind won its way to this true conception of religion and its all-sufficiency. So is it ever possible in India for any ideal of art or literature to reach beyond the guiding inspiration of religion? We reply in the negative.

The function of religion is to lead us from life as it appears to be to life as it really is. So it has to stand by us amidst life's appearances, giving us a progressive method of reading beyond them to life's realities. Reli-

gion does not seek to lead us blindfolded through life's appearances. Rather it is its peculiar interest to keep our eyes open to all that constitutes life as we find it on the surface, for then only we can more fully enrich and confirm its process of reading beyond life's appearances. Provided, therefore, that the leading of religion is for us what it should be, we have absolutely no reason to complain if art goes on faithfully depicting life in all its richness and depth of colour. In the ancient literature of India, we find this perfect freedom allowed to art side by side with the strong efficient leading of religion.

For instance, take an important phase of temple architecture in post-Vedic India. When Vedic ritualism gradually yielded place to Pouranic and Tantric worship in temples, the Indian spiritual culture did not incorporate this custom of temple-worship into its own methods without casting it in the mould of its peculiar Vedic ideals. The Vedic conception* of the Atman, Self or God driving in the chariot of the human body or material existence left a very deep impression on Indian spiritual culture. Even there is good reason to believe that this sacred simile travelled beyond the bounds of Vedic India and gave birth in Jewish consciousness to the mystery of the Merkabah (chariot) which played such an important part in Jewish mysticism. This Vedic conception of profound influence, namely that of God driving in a chariot, gave an important artistic foundation to temple architecture in India, if not also elsewhere, while the sacred ceremony of chariot-driving evidently owes its origin to the same conception. Now if the temple represents the chariot of God, and the chariot in its turn represents, according to the Vedic conception, the human body, we must expect art to portray on the temple walls the needs

and functions of the human body. And wherever it cared to do so, Indian art did it to perfection, just as it took care to leave the inmost chapel, where the God of the temple resided, as much cave-like as possible to fulfil His Vedic characterisation as the "guhahitam gahwarestham." But do we not find the carvings on temple walls relating to bodily needs and functions done with as much freedom as may be ever demanded by art even while executing, as it were, a direct order from religion?

And the important point is that this freedom was not merely countenanced by, but originated from, religion. If in India the whole of life itself was spiritualised, practically abolishing all distinction between the secular and the spiritual, it is small wonder, to say the least, that art in India found itself with all that it implied spiritualised as well, so that to the deeper minds at least there was no difference between art as art and art as religion.

So long, therefore, as we in India are true to our traditions, we would not expect our religion, or for the matter of that, our morality to cavil or feel jealous when we pursue art to the utmost as an *end unto itself*, for our religion should always know how unfailingly to realise itself through such pursuit of art by ourselves. But unfortunately people do not generally rise to the level of that truest and broadest religion which belongs to every Hindu by birthright. Their own stage in a life of religion and morality naturally makes them jealous of the freedom that is due to art and they invariably want to make art a means to their own ideal of religion and morality. In these commoner stages of religion and morality, the human mind is bound to be a bundle of distinctions and naturally distinguishes its spiritual concern as an end that must govern and regulate other concerns as so many means to itself. To the generality of men therefore the pursuit of art comes

* आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च, Kathopanishad, III—3.

naturally to be governed by their own ideas and ideals of religion and morality, and they are bound to raise an alarm when art portrays such aspects and details of life as their own nature, or that of those in whose moral life they are interested, is not yet strong enough to read beyond,—to use an expression we have already explained.

Thus the real important question for decision is: whether art should keep pace or not, in realising its inherent freedom, with the religious and moral development of people at large in a country. It is easy to find that art and literature more usually attune themselves to popular tastes and predilections, but it is quite impossible to carry this choice of convenience to any compulsion of law. It is the very soul of art to remain free like the elements which build up the cosmos, and if we find in the products of these creative elements much that we would fain turn away our faces from, art is also prepared to expect that many minds would remain alienated from pretty much it produces. Just as there are many atrocities of nature which pious people would explain away in vain, so there would crop up atrocities of art every now and then! Art like nature must be allowed to flourish and live through congenialities and repugnances, and always there will be people withal who are able to rise, or strive to rise, beyond this divided vision of nature as well as this divided enjoyment and pursuit of art.

It is of the very essence of art to surrender itself to the creative impulse quite as much as nature herself does. We must put up with the same *self-abandon* in both cases and it would not do to say that because creative art is human, it must submit itself to the discretion of human motive. For if art is not pursued as an end unto itself, it is sure to lose its creative potentialities. However man may pride himself upon harnessing nature to his uses, will nature ever submit to be defined by human utility? Nature will rather

remain always what it is, both the lure and the despair of human reason, larger far than the compass of its categories. Similarly, art is larger than the compass of man's moral needs and we can never pledge the whole of its creativeness to the service of moral ends.

Even when we claim that nature is but the *Leela* of God, His play divine, we merely express a standpoint, perhaps the highest, of man's spiritual hope, but never an *exhaustive* deduction of human thought or sentiment. If it is the reciprocal love between God and the devotee which materialises itself in infinite creation, alas for that love if it cannot enjoy itself apart from its creative necessity and must in that enjoyment forget itself as in the lives of many who are not devotees. Human thought and sentiment cannot follow out the process of a love that plays itself into *real* forgetfulness. So it is impossible to compress the whole of nature even into this highest category of love as we know it. Nature is the inexplicable mystery; it both is and is not. We cannot know the *why* or *how* of it. It is unknown and unknowable *as* nature.

And right into the heart of this unknown and unknowable we find the human intellect and sentiment shot forth to function out an impossibility. And they go on conceiving and pursuing end after end till every pull of the tether develops and enriches a sense of the Beyond where they are not—that is, the pursuit of reality in terms of end and means is not. This 'sensing' beyond the correlation of end and means constitutes the highest enjoyment of nature as well as art. But how few rise to this serene altitude of enjoyment!

So the real evil is in throwing ourselves into every piece of experience and thereby making of it a mess of ends and means. We do not allow an experience simply *to be*; but must drag it in to have our egoistic calculations of end and means coloured and

affected by it. This obtrusive egoism of moral ends is a bitter medicine for susceptibility to moral disease; but a medicine however useful has got nothing to do with the joys which belong to the innate health of our spiritual being. Real art always appeals to this innate healthy responsiveness of our spiritual nature, and that education is indeed poor which does not create in students of culture an adequate scope for such responsiveness. Rather than bind art hand and foot by an obtrusiveness of moral ends, we should seek to quicken and develop this healthy response to the beauties and joys of art from those depths of our nature which lie beyond the egoistic pursuit of ends and means.

For nature both within and without man does not trouble herself with ends and means. She simply flowers into her creations out of abundant bliss of spontaneity; and every man has an inalienable right to be in tune with this bliss welling up within and without, and art is but the exercise of this right.

Thus, there is a higher mode of contemplating nature as well as art other than that of projecting into them our own pursuit of ends and means. This higher contemplation is but the counterpart of the higher activity preached in the Bhagavad-Gita, for in both we just let experience be, without ruffling it with any puff of egoism, any reaction of self-interest. In this higher mood of being we think, feel and act just for the sake of thinking, feeling and acting, without any reference to loss or profit accruing to ourselves. In this mood, the world-current of facts flows in and registers itself in our thought, sentiment and action just as it would and not as we like to have it registered in our book of ends and means. It is only in this mood that the serene beauty and joy in all things reveals itself and nothing is too ugly and vulgar for our artistic enjoyment. For it is in this mood that we enter into the real soul of all things and activities, which is bliss,

And it is enough if the artist's pen or pencil be steeped deep in this bliss of spontaneity—this letting things be what they are, this uninterfered self-sufficiency of facts; and if in this, art is true to itself, it is sure to create beauty when picturing as much the sublimities of heaven as the vulgarities of hell. It is immaterial to quarrel over art being realistic or idealistic. The real and the ideal interpenetrate each other in actual experience and the distinction is an outcome of abstract intellectual analysis. So let not the technique of idealisation be carried too far from its realistic basis, for then art would lose itself in an abstract intellectualism which sterilises before long all the springs of creative impulse. Nature herself is both real and ideal, for what right have we to wrench mind and nature apart from each other? They came forth together, live together and die together; so it is a delusion to say that mind idealises nature which is in itself real to nakedness. The truth is that we take the real to be nature and when this nature idealises itself we call it mind. In fact, it is what we have accepted as the real, the same nature within and without, which goes on idealising itself. *Our reality itself is self-transcendent*; so why should art accept a distinction between the real and the ideal? At least, real art is above this distinction.

To return to our subject, art is true to itself in proportion as it embodies that spiritual mood of mind in which no reaction of motive interferes with the self-sufficiency of facts. Every creation of art should be a perfect *self-creation* of facts, internal and external, on canvas or in word; and the artist's mind simply sponsors the new birth, held on to it as a witness through which the divine afflatus works on the pen or the pencil. And this peculiar self-suppression, this peculiar detachment of self from the usual agitated existence of motivated activities, is not only the secret of successful art but also of its successful study. If the student of art puts

himself, as he should always do, into this higher mood of mind, art will always receive its own proper response from the healthiest part of his nature too deep for reactions from immoral susceptibilities.

But art is neither always pursued nor studied in this purely artistic mood of mind. Many people there are who cannot help regarding nature or art as a system of means for fulfilling more intimate purposes of life. They must try to drag every creation whether in nature or in art into the noisy factory of ends and means which they have made of their life. Nature and art are to them purely instrumental, and their attitude to both marks out a large plane of human thought and sentiment. Art that is pursued and studied from this plane must tag itself on to the tail of this, that or other ends of life. The beautiful in art then becomes either moral or immoral and ancillary to diverse other sentiments cultivated by men as ends. The throne of beauty in art becomes the pedestal for all human sentiments, good or bad. In a word, art loses its soul of spontaneity and becomes artificial.

And it is only in this artificial pursuit of art that there is room for questions of adapting it to moral or immoral ends. But in this plane of art-life, the dispute will never cease, for immoral sentiment will never forego its own claim on creative art, and neither will moral sentiment ever hush up its clamour against what it regards as an usurpation by its opponent. So the dispute is endless, and real art would raise its voice neither on one side nor on the other, for like creative nature, creative art may well afford to yield itself up to good and evil purposes of man and yet maintain all its true inwardness intact for the true culture of art-consciousness, and we have seen already how this true culture is but a counterpart, nay an efflorescence, of our national spirituality.

BRAHMOPANISHAT.

ब्रह्मोपनिषत्

(Continued from page 118)

प्राणदेवतास्ताः सर्वा नाड्यः । सुष्वपे शेनाकाश-
वद्यथा खं श्येनमाश्रित्य याति स्वमालयमेव
सुषुप्तो ब्रूते यथैवैष देवदत्तो यष्ट्याऽपि ताड्य-
मानो न यत्येवमिष्टापूर्तैः शुभाशुभैर्न लिप्यते ।
यथा कुमारो निष्काम आनन्दमुपयाति तथैवैष
देवदत्तः स्वप्न आनन्दमभियाति । वेद एव
परं ज्योतिः ज्योतिष्कामो ज्योतिरानन्दयते ।

Prana belongs to the *nâdis* (a) or subtle nerve-chords as their *devatâ* or indwelling deity (b). One in dreamless sleep (c) goes through that state to one's own Abode, like a falcon and the sky,—just as a falcon goes (to its nest) borne on the sky. To state (the reason of going back in such sleep to one's Abode, the Brahman)—just as this Devadatta (i.e. one in dreamless sleep) runs not away even when struck with a stick (d), even so he does not also attach himself to good or evil consequences of his life's ordained activities (e); just as a child enjoys itself (spontaneously) without motive (f), even so this Devadatta (the subject of dreamless sleep) enjoys happiness in that state. Consciousness by itself is Light absolute (g); (so he has) this Light for his object, for his enjoyment.

(a) The *nâdis* are the channels developed by Prâna for its manifestation and function, and just as this functioning ranges from the gross to the subtle, so also these channels or chords. The ancient Vedic mind by its introspective method traced the evolution of Prana from above downwards, and so the results of its analysis are couched in terms which cannot exactly correspond with those used by the modern scientific synthesis which proceeds on generalisation of facts observed by the senses. For example, Susumna is the name of the *nâdi* or channel, as expressed in the terms of Vedic analysis, for the descent of Prana to the



plane of its physiological manifestation, and as scientific synthesis does not yet rise beyond this plane with its sense-observations or material instruments, it is possible to represent only very imperfectly and indirectly the location of this *nādi*, and so also in the case of many *nādis*.

(*b*) Prana is the devatā of the *nādis*, because they represent its functions. We have been told in the foregoing texts that Prana evolves the complex of man's psycho-physical activities. The *nādis* are here stated to form the media for such evolution as well as for involution. We have therefore the conception of one Prana becoming many and then functioning through determinate channels built up with matter,—Brahman in its self-manifesting process becoming determined as action and reaction, as Prana and Akasha, force and matter.

(*c*) Sushupti (or as here, *sushwapa*) comes in for a marked attention and analysis in Vedic philosophisings, for in this unique phenomenon the subject-object consciousness which gives us everything we call real in this life becomes attenuated beyond itself. In such dreamless sleep this relative consciousness vanishes, but consciousness in itself does not die, for otherwise there could have been no resurrection for the former. This fact of potential resolution of ordinary consciousness into absolute consciousness is described as the return of the former to its own abode. But though this return offers the closest analogy to Samadhi, or actual unification barring even the potentiality for reverting to the illusory relative existence, we must remember that the difference, for purposes other than purely theoretical, counts as much as any other difference. Just as moonlight does not make day, though it is the very sunlight that makes it, so the bliss of dreamless sleep is not Samadhi although a little analysis shows that it is the same supreme bliss. Here it is the reflecting medium, as it were, of potential reversion, mentioned just now, (or the seed of Avidya), which makes this difference. To us, therefore, in dreamless sleep, the supreme bliss comes infected with ignorance and impotence, but it is far more recognisable in this form than in those in which it pervades ordinary life. (Compare, for this idea of return to Brahman, Chandogya, VIII-3,

VI-8, etc; for its defficiency from real self-realisation, Chandogya, VIII-11).

(*d*) The law of causation operates on us only so long as we distinguish ourselves as subjects from objects of thought or activity. One in dreamless sleep is not caused to run off by the application of a stick so long as he fails to objectify the situation. Similarly being beyond the law of causation, one in dreamless sleep becomes detached from enjoying the fruits of his actions of the wakeful state.

(*e*) Literally, "the good and evil belonging to sacrificial and other works prescribed for man in the scriptures." The *ishta* comprises all the sacrifices performed for the sake of worldly possessions, other-worldly possessions and progeny, and *purta* comprises works of civic utility, such as planting trees, excavating water-tanks etc., ordained in the scriptures.

(*f*) i. e. without setting before itself some end to be pursued through definite means.

(*g*) Here the enjoyment of dreamless sleep is characterised by a new factor other than bliss, namely that of light supreme. Ordinary consciousness has the threefold aspects of knowing, feeling and willing. So to describe the supreme state of consciousness in the terms of these aspects, the terms,—light, the enjoying of light, the desiring of light,—are introduced.

भूयस्तेनैव स्वप्नाय गच्छति जलौकावत् । यथा
जलौकाऽग्रमग्रं नयत्यात्मानं नयति परं संघय ।
यत्परं नापरं त्यजति स जाग्रदमभियते । यथैवैष
कपालाष्टकं संनयति । तमेव स्तन इव लम्बते
वेददेवयोनिः । यत्र जाग्रति शुभाशुभं निरुक्तमस्य
देवस्य स संप्रसारोऽन्तर्यामी खगः कर्कटकः
पुस्करः पुरुषः प्राणो हिंसा परापरं ब्रह्म आत्मा
देवता वेदयति । य एवं वेद स परं ब्रह्म धाम
क्षेत्रज्ञमुपैति ॥१॥

So also he goes into the dream-state, like a leech (*a*): just as a leech carries itself on to the other points in front—(first) fixing upon the next point. And that state which he does not give up for a next one is called

the waking state. (He carries all these states within himself) just as a (Vedic) deity bears the eight sacrificial cups (*b*) simultaneously. This (expanding and contracting self) the wakeful state suspends like the female breast, being itself the source of the Vedas and Devas. (For) in this waking state good and evil obtain for the shining being (i. e. man's self) as particularly (*c*) ordained. This being or self is fully self-extended (*d*) (into world-forms), he is the indwelling controller of things and beings, he is the Bird (*e*), the Crab (*f*), the Lotus (*g*), he is the *Purusha* (*h*), the *Prana*, the destroyer (*i*), the cause and the effect (*j*), the Brahman and the *Atmā* (*k*), he is the *Devatā* (*l*) making everything known. Whoever knows all this attains to the transcendent Brahman, the underlying support, the subjective principle (*m*).

(*a*) The movement of the leech affords a favourite example in the Upanishadic teaching for the self-transference of consciousness from one object-world to another, as experienced in the transition through death or through the three states of dreamless sleep, dream and wakefulness. The point emphasised is that each state is complete by itself, no one overlapping the other, so that there is a peculiar one-pointedness in our consciousness when just it enters into any of these states, followed by an unconscious withdrawal from contact with the last state.

(*b*) Just as in particular sacrifices the libation of butter is offered from eight different cups or pans and the deity invoked accepts them all at once in his undivided individuality though in divided capacity, so the self, though self-divided in three states of consciousness, supports this dividedness by its transcendent oneness.

(*c*) The prefix *nir* in *niruktam* conveys the sense of 'particularly.' For the scriptures speak of good and evil even in the dream-state of man. But really man in his wakeful state whether here-on-earth or hereafter forms the essential theme of all Vedic ordinances and injunctions. It is man, wide-awake, who projects out of himself and for himself all rules of conduct, all conceptions of

rewarding or punishing agents as Devatas, and so on.

(*d*) All planes of existence, gross or subtle, mundane or supra-mundane, consist of the self-extension of man's selfhood. The distinction of the subjective and the objective, we must remember, is intellectual and does not therefore operate beyond that limit.

(*e*) *Khaga* is literally 'going in the sky,' i. e. a bird. The self in man is 'the bird,' because it moves in space without any support other than itself. Consciousness is beyond space and appears to move therein borne on itself. (The idea of time may be taken as included here in that of space).

(*f*) *Karkataka* is literally 'the crab.' The self in man is said to be the crab, because moved by desire it moves at all angles with the help of its sense-organs.

(*g*) *Pushkara* bears many meanings. But we prefer it to mean 'lotus' in keeping with the symbolism of the foregoing words. Man's self like the lotus blooms in space, time, and causation, but draws its sustenance and substance from beyond them. The causal sphere of being is symbolised by waters.

(*h*) *The Purusha* is literally one 'lying in the abode of body,' i. e. the person behind embodied existence, or seen through it as such.

(*i*) *Hinsa* literally means 'the killing propensity.' Man's self in its aspect of sustaining itself through hunger and food (Brihadaranyaka I, 2, 3) appears to impersonate the above-named propensity. Or the aspect of self-dissolution inseparable from self-creation may seem to impart to self this characteristic of 'killing.'

(*j*) *Para* and *apara* may mean both 'the unmanifest or transcendent and the manifest or immanent' or 'the cause and effect.'

(*k*) *Atmā* or self has been perhaps specifically mentioned here to bring to clearer view the essential identity of all the substantives variously referred to under the various epithets with the real self of man.

(*l*) This term *devatā* is evidently being used in the texts quite freely. We had it to mean the

indwelling deity of a sense-organ or *nādi*, and now twice here, we find it used in the general sense of 'the glorious or shining one,' as if the distinction between a man and a god is being ignored with great advantage to the exposition of truth going on.

(*m*) The reader may be referred here to the *Kshetrajna* of the Gita (Chap. 13). In more ancient literature, we meet with this term, as in one Brahmana, in the sense of subjective knower, "Upadrashṭa," as man. But here also this sense of the subjective principle inclines more towards the background of Supreme Self than towards the foreground of embodied existence. In the Gita Sri Krishna speaks of himself as the one knower-principle or *Kshetrajna* in all individualised existences. Brihadaranyaka has the well-known text, "No other knower there is except That One."

THOUGHTS ON BROTHER LAWRENCE.

II.

IN May last, one American friend presented to our readers a short account of Brother Lawrence and the saintly life to which he rose through the practice of the presence of God. This account, able and luminous though short, we propose to suppliment now with some extracts from the sweet, inspiring words, spoken or written by that glorious man of God and recorded in the booklet mentioned in the opening line of that account.

We have seen how at the age of eighteen Brother Lawrence had his conversion,—how the sight of a leafless tree changed the whole course of his life. He spoke of the "view of Providence and Power of God" which flashed upon his soul at that time as having "perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled in him such a love for God, that he could not tell whether it had increased during the more than forty years he had lived since." It seems as if there was a master-spring in his nature sleeping beneath the superposition of Karma that took eighteen years to wear off, and when the crust was thin enough, a slight accidental

touch sufficed to release this dormant spring of wonderful spiritual energy. Any psychology that fights shy of the theory of reincarnation is helpless to explain such a phenomenon.

For the antecedent of a leafless tree was not at all commensurate with the whole sequence. The flashing thought of God's immanence and power behaved not like an accident, but at once took absolute possession of the whole life of the man, governing its course and destiny as if it was just restored to its habitual sway over them. That Nicholas Herman repaired to the Carmelites and became Brother Lawrence was but an insignificant part of the whole consequence; but look at the easy, unwavering attitude with which he brushes aside all the doubts and distractions that belong to a life of devoted love to God!—The instinctive discrimination of essentials from non-essentials that lightens up only a heart which has steadily loved for long.

The thought of God's justice fulfilling itself even through an eternal hell gives a gloomy hue to the Christian devotional attitude towards God. Even faith in vicarious atonement makes a poor apology for a Divine love that must adapt itself to Divine justice by any such laborious process. The human heart has lived long enough to learn to pity a love that must set a price on its forgiveness. But the Christian dogma is there, standing like a watchdog by the portals of devotional life, and Brother Lawrence had quite a tough tussle with it. It is recorded "that he had been long troubled in mind from a certain belief that he should be damned; that all the men in the world could not have persuaded him to the contrary; but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it: 'I engaged in a religious life only for the love of God, and I have endeavoured to act only for Him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God. I shall have this good at least, that till death I shall have done all that is in me to love Him.' That this trouble of mind had lasted four years; during which time he had suffered much. But that at last he had seen that this trouble arose from want of faith; and that since then he had passed his life in perfect liberty and continual joy."

The words 'faith' and 'liberty' in this simple record of a glorious triumph, which human love achieved over human dogma, mean more than meets the eye. When Brother Lawrence reasoned within himself, it was purely his love arguing with itself. It was clearly his love defying all ethical ends to alloy its own absolute self-satisfaction which makes itself heard when he cries out, "Whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved." Hells and heavens fade into shadowy nothingness, when the cup of love is brimful, for all misery and happiness lose their meaning in the transcendent self-sufficiency of love. And Brother Lawrence spoke only of faith in this self-sufficiency, only of the liberty into which it admits the human soul too long preyed upon by intellectual dogmas.

And this plant of love in Brother Lawrence was watered and watched over by his Beloved; for love is its own method of growth; it is both the means and the end. Even it is not our love which makes us strong to give our heart to God; He wins it for Himself by His own love for us. Left to itself, our love loses itself in the maze of religious disciplines, and it avails us only when attracted by His. The testimony of Brother Lawrence in his own unassuming language runs: "That when an occasion of practising some virtue offered, he addressed himself to God, saying, Lord, I cannot do this unless Thou enablest me; and that then he received strength more than sufficient." Or again: "That when he had failed in his duty, he only confessed his fault, saying to God, I shall never do otherwise, if You leave me to myself; it is You who must hinder my falling, and mend what is amiss. That after this, he gave himself no further uneasiness about it."

This giving oneself "no further uneasiness" about a lapse is the secret of a healthy spiritual life. Brother Lawrence got at this secret by his whole-hearted reliance on the reciprocity of love. His heart was full of faith in the workings of God's love in his mind and heart, and it requires nothing but this loving faith to elicit response from God's love.

It was through this language of love that Brother Lawrence gave himself all the spiritual training that he had. In all his efforts, whether of mental concentration or physical activity, he had himself

wafted on the wings of love. In India, it is the method of *Japa* that is most generally followed for bringing about such permeation of life by love. Let us see how Brother Lawrence illustrates essentially the same method although instead of a *mantra* he had his own *faith* in God to fix constantly his mind on, and we know how he was wonderfully initiated with this wordless *mantra* when he had that experience of a leafless tree.

"Being questioned by one of his own society (to whom he was obliged to open himself) by what means he had attained such an habitual sense of God? he told him that, since his first coming to the monastery, he had considered God as the end of all his thoughts and desires, as the mark to which they should tend and in which they should terminate." This process of resolving all eddies of thought and desire into one flowing stream impinging constantly on one point forms also the essential method of *Japa*.

But Brother Lawrence like a true *Jâpaka* or pursuer of this method, did not limit his pursuit by time or place, and herein lies the key to the unfoldment of his all-engrossing love of God:

"That at the beginning he had often passed his time appointed for prayer, in rejecting wandering thoughts, and falling back into them. That he could never regulate his devotion by certain methods as some do. That nevertheless, at first he had meditated for some time, but afterwards that went off, in a manner he could give no account of."

"That it was a great delusion to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times: that we are as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in the season of prayer."

As to how this one and the sole method of unremitting *Japa* had its fullest operation in his case, we are given clear glimpses of in the following extracts:

"That in the beginning of his noviciate, he spent the hours appointed for private prayer in thinking of God, so as to convince his mind of, and to impress deeply upon his heart, the Divine existence, rather by devout sentiment, and submission to the lights of faith, than by studied reasonings and elaborate meditations." "That

when he had thus in prayer filled his mind with great sentiments of that infinite Being, he went to his work appointed in the kitchen (for he was cook to the society); there having first considered severally the things his office required, and when and how each thing was to be done, he spent all the intervals of his time, as well before as after his work, in prayer."

"When he began his business, he said to God, with a filial trust in Him, "Oh my God, since Thou art with me, and I must now, in obedience to Thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech Thee to grant me the grace to continue in Thy presence; and to this end do Thou prosper me with Thy assistance, receive all my works, and possess all my affections."

"As he proceeded in his work, he continued his familiar conversation with his Maker,—imploping His grace, and offering to Him all his actions."

"When he had finished, he examined himself how he has discharged his duty; if he found *well*, he returned thanks to God; if otherwise, he asked pardon; and without being discouraged, he set his mind right again, and continued his exercise of the *presence* of God, as if he had never deviated from it. 'Thus,' said he, 'by rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God as it was at first to accustom myself to it.'"

By this practice of Bhakti-yoga through a process and discipline wonderfully akin to *Japa*, Brother Lawrence won for himself all the blessings of Karma-yoga: "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

It is evident that this supreme illumination of love that filled his heart would overflow the bounds of internal being, and people who came in contact with Brother Lawrence testified in one voice: "His very countenance was edifying, such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it as could not but affect the beholders."

Turning from these conversations of Brother Lawrence from which we have been so long quoting to letters written by him and preserved in the small publication, we find it impossible to do any justice to them by making extracts, for although when Brother Lawrence writes he seems to stand out of his inner self for making the effort, still every word he writes, irrespective of context, is permeated by the sweetness and authority of religious experience firmly established in the goal it set before itself. In the second letter, he lays before a revered correspondent the happenings of his spiritual life, so that the latter may send him his opinion about them. After describing the past vicissitudes of experience, he writes:

"As for what passes in me at present, I cannot express it. I have no pain or difficulty about my state, because I have no will but that of God, which I endeavour to accomplish in all things, and to which I am so resigned that I would not take up a straw from the ground against His order, or from any other motive than purely that of love to Him."

"I have quitted all forms of devotion and set prayers but those to which my state obliges me. And I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention, and a general fond regard to God, which I may call an *actual presence* of God; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great, that I am forced to use means to moderate them and prevent their appearance to others."

About his experiences during the "set hours of prayer," he writes: "Sometimes I consider myself there as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue; presenting myself thus before God, I desire Him to form His perfect image in my soul, and make me entirely like Himself." "At other times, when I apply myself to prayer, I feel all my spirit and all my soul lift itself up without any care or effort of mine; and it continues as it were suspended and firmly fixed in God, as in its centre and place of rest."

"I know that some charge this state with inactivity, delusion and self-love. I confess that it

is a holy inactivity, and would be a happy self-love if the soul in that state were capable of it; because, in effect, while she is in response, she cannot be disturbed by such acts as she was formerly accustomed to and which were then her support, but which would now rather hinder than assist her."

"Yet I cannot bear that this should be called delusion; because the soul which thus enjoys God desires herein nothing but Him. If this be delusion in me, it belongs to God to remedy it. Let Him do what He pleases with me; I desire only Him, and to be wholly devoted to Him. You will, however, oblige me in sending me your opinion, to which I always pay a great difference, for I have a singular esteem for your reverence, and am in our Lord, yours etc."

In another letter, where he is describing himself and the wonderful success of his method of practising the presence of God under the guise of a third person and his experiences, he writes:

"He (this third person) complains much of our blindness, and cries often that we are to be pitied who content ourselves with so little. God, saith he, has infinite treasures to bestow, and we take up with a little sensible devotion, which passes in a moment. Blind as we are, we hinder God, and stop the current of His graces. But when He finds a soul penetrated with a lively faith, He pours into it His graces and favours plentifully; there they flow like a torrent, which, after being forcibly stopped against its ordinary course, when it has found a passage, spreads itself with impetuosity and abundance."

In the same letter he says: "We must, nevertheless, work at it, because not to advance in the spiritual life is to go back. But those who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep."

In his letters to those who sought his advice, he naturally lays the greatest emphasis on the method which led him to success. He says in one place: "Were I a preacher, I should, above all other things, preach the practice of the *presence* of God; and were I a director, I should advise all the world to do it, so necessary do I think it, and so easy too."

We cannot do better here than put below some of

the gems of advice which are strewn all over his valuable letters:—

"Believe me; make immediately a holy and firm resolution never more wilfully to forget Him, and to spend the rest of your days in His sacred presence, deprived for the love of Him, if He thinks fit, of all consolations."

"I do not say that therefore we must put any violent constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in a holy freedom; we must do our business faithfully; without trouble or disquiet, recalling our mind to God mildly and with tranquility, as often as we find it wandering from Him."

"I do not advise you to use multiplicity of words in prayer: many words and long discourses being often the occasions of wandering. Hold yourself in prayer before God, like a dumb or paralytic beggar at a rich man's gate. Let it be *your* business to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord. If it sometimes wander and withdraw itself from Him, do not much disquiet yourself for that: trouble and disquiet serve rather to distract the mind than to recollect it: the will must bring it back in tranquility."

"One way to recollect the mind easily in the time of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, is *not to let it wander too far at other times.*"

"I wish you could convince yourself that God is often (in some sense) nearer to us, and more effectually present with us, in sickness than in health."

"Whatever remedies you make use of, they will succeed only so far as He permits. When pains come from God, He only can cure them. He often sends diseases of the body to cure those of the soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of the soul and body."

"Pains and sufferings would be a paradise to me while I should suffer with my God; and the greatest pleasures would be hell to me if I could relish them without Him. All my consolation would be to suffer something for His sake."

"I have been often near expiring, but I was never so much satisfied as then. Accordingly, I prayed for strength to suffer with courage, humility and love. Ah, how sweet it is to suffer with God! However great the sufferings may be,

receive them with love. It is paradise to suffer and be with Him."

"I must, in a little time, go to God. What comforts me in this life is, that I now see Him by *faith*; and I see Him in such a manner as might make me say sometimes, *I believe no more, but I see.*"

In his last letter to the friend who had been ailing and to whom he communicated the spirit in which he should bear up with disease, he wrote: "I cannot thank Him sufficiently for the relaxation He has vouchsafed to you. *I hope from His mercy the favour to see Him within a few days.* Let us pray for one another." (The Italics are ours). This hope to see God within a few days was fulfilled to the letter, for we are told, "He took to his bed two days after and died within the week."

REVIEWS.

Principles of Tantra: Part II; The Tantratattva of Sriyukta Shiva Chandra Vidyarnava Bhattacharya Mahodaya; with an introduction by Sriyukta Barada Kanta Majumdar. Edited by Arthur Avalon. (Luzac & Co., London).—

The publication of these two volumes, as we said before, is an event of great interest and importance. The religious beliefs of the modern Hindus have been represented to English readers from various points of view, but the peculiar mould into which they have been sought to be cast in comparatively modern centuries has not received adequate attention. The exponents of the religion of modern Hindus take cognizance more of the matter and source of their beliefs than of the change of form they have been undergoing through the many centuries. The volumes under review, as well as other publications brought out by Arthur Avalon, serve to carry this important question of form to such a prominence as almost makes it obligatory for every exhaustive exposition of Hindu doctrines in future to acknowledge and discriminate in them the formative influences of the Tantric restatement. In the Tantratattva, the presentation and vindication of the Hindu religious beliefs and practices avowedly

and closely follow the methodology of the Tantras, and the learned Pundit has fully succeeded in establishing the fact that what lies behind these beliefs and practices is not mere prejudice or superstition but a system of profound philosophy based on the Vedas. Every student of modern Hinduism should acquaint himself with this, namely, its immediate background of Tantric philosophy and ritualism.

The Hindu religious consciousness is like a mighty Ganges emerging from the Himalayas of Vedic wisdom, receiving tributaries and sending out branch streams at many points in its course. And though the nature of the current, its colour, velocity or uses, may vary at different places, the Ganges is the same Ganges whether at Hardwar, Allahabad or Calcutta. The stream is not only one but it has also its one main channel in spite of all the many tributaries and branches. And the whole of the stream is sacred, though different sects may choose special points and confluences as of special sanctity to themselves, deriving inspiration thence for their special sectarian developments. Now, though the rise of Tantric philosophy and ritualism created in former times new currents and backwaters along the stream of Hinduism, it was essentially an important occurrence in the main stream and channel; and instead of producing a permanent bifurcation in that stream, it coalesced with it, colouring and renovating, more or less, the whole tenour of the Hindu religious consciousness. As a result, we find Tantric thought and sentiment equally operative in the extreme metaphysical wing of Hinduism as well as in its lowest matter-of-fact phases.

This actual permeation of Hindu religious consciousness by Tantric thought and sentiment should receive the fullest recognition at the hands of every up-to-date exponent. His predecessors of former generations might have to strengthen their advocacy of Tantric doctrines by joining issue with the advocates of particular phases of Hindu religion and philosophy. But the present epoch in the history of our religious consciousness is pre-eminently an epoch of wonderful synthesis. Naturally therefore it jars upon the synthetic mood of thought and sentiment, which is gradually pervading the Hindu religious consciousness ever

since Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa embodied in himself its immediate possibilities, to find in the literature that is being so admirably provided for English readers by Arthur Avalon an occasional tendency to use Tantric doctrines as weapons for combating certain phases of Hindu belief and practice. This tendency seems to betray quite a wrong standpoint in the study of the Tantras, their relation to other scriptures and their real historical significance; and as the subject is obviously very important, we propose to discuss it more fully in future.

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The Vishnu-sahasranama, with a translation in English. By S. N. K. Bijurkar B. A., (partly printed at the "Vande Jinavaram Press," Nipani and partly at the "Jainendra Press," Kolhapur). Price, annas two.

The recital of the thousand names of Sri Vishnu forms a notable ceremonial for innumerable Hindu worshippers, the English-knowing among whom will be greatly benefitted by this translation, no doubt. The translation is literal and perspicacious, avoiding recondite issues.

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Vira-vani: a collection of the verses, poems and songs composed by Swami Vivekananda in English, Bengali and Sanskrit; published by the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta; fifth edition; pp. 59; price 4 annas. To be had of the Secretary, Vivekananda Society, 1/4 Sankar Ghose's Lane, Calcutta.

As the book is printed only in English and Bengali characters, it will mainly command a sale in Bengal, as it has so successfully done through its first four editions. The value of this book is inestimable to those who seek inspiration in life from the writings and utterances of the great Swamiji. The get-up is excellent and the price is cheap.

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We thankfully acknowledge (i) the 10th part of the Mahratti translation of Swami Ramatirtha's works, and (ii) the Guzerati Laghu-lekh-samgraha, part II. The former is published by S. J. Bhaskar Vishnu Phadake, Hirji Asu's Wadi, Matunga, Bombay; and the latter from the Sastum Sahitya-Vardhaka Office of Amedabad.

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION

IN BANKURA AND TIPPERAH.

From the last monthly report of the work in Bankura dated the 26th of May and published in the Udbodhana, the Bengali organ of the Mission, it appears that absence of rain was greatly aggravating the distresses of the poor people, suffering not only from want of food but also from want of drinking water and despairing about this year's harvest. Almost all the ponds in the fields used for cultivation were dried up and those that supplied drinking water were now full of mud and disease germs, so that Cholera and other diseases were breaking out among people who had been using the latter.

With but limited resources at the disposal of the workers, they had already excavated four ponds and three wells in villages under two of their centres and four other ponds would be soon completed. They had also commenced re-excavating a small canal, one mile in length and 25 feet in breadth, which when restored would supply drinking water and irrigation to many people and is even now giving work to a good number of the famished poor. A new centre had to be opened at Khatra during the month under report; and the area brought now under the relief work of the Mission amounts to about 125 sq. mls. while the total number of men receiving maintenance, besides those employed in digging work, amounts to about 3300. In addition to this work of supplying food and water, the workers had to cope with the outbreak of fire which burnt down almost all the houses in three villages. This new scourge is the indirect outcome of the great heat-wave passing over the district, the temperature registered usually now being 111 degrees! Workers had to help many people to rebuild their demolished dwellings.

The clothes distributed from all the centres numbered 168 and the report expresses gratefulness to the General Relief Committee for the supply of these clothes.

The scale of weekly distribution from all the centres during the month is shown by the follow-

ing table in the report, which includes occasional doles of help besides regular distribution:—

Names of Centres	No. of Villages	No. of Recipients	Amount of Rice	
			Mds.	Srs.
Sonamukhi ...	66	706	36	30
Do. (next week)	66	759	39	0
Do. ...	66	711	36	0
Indpur ...	63	742	39	0
Do. (next week)	63	737	39	0
Do. ...	62	737	38	0
Bankura ...	46	340	17	10
Do. (next week)	47	351	19	0
Do. ...	48	366	19	0
Koniamara ...	30	354	18	30
Do. (next week)	30	370	18	0
Do. ...	30	368	19	30
Birdra ...	30	573	30	0
Do. (next week)	30	575	28	30
Do. ...	30	585	30	0
Chaharabad ...	33	334	17	0
Do. (next week)	34	339	17	0
Do. ...	34	337	17	4
Koalpara ...	19	233	6	16
Do. (next week)	19	194	5	30
Do. ...	20	163	4	19

Besides this work in Bankura, urgent call for help having reached again from some parts of District Tipperah, two workers of the Mission had to be deputed there. They opened a centre at Bitghar distributing in the first week of inspection 22 mds. of rice and the same quantity of potatoes to 372 people in 12 villages. Financial help for this work in Tipperah apparently came from special quarters.

The report appeals in conclusion for more liberal continuance of public co-operation, for the aggravation of distress renders it impossible to save the people with the present amount of pecuniary help received by the workers.

Contributions, however small, in every suitable form, will be thankfully received and duly acknowledged by:—(1) Swami Brahmananda, President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, P. O., Dist. Howrah, or (2) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazari P. O., Calcutta.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

DURING the month of May, 1916, the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashram at Brindavan had in its indoor department 15 old cases and 34 newly admitted cases, of which 29 were discharged cured, 2 died, 1 left treatment and 17 were still under treatment at the end of the month. There were 3439 out-door cases of which 731 were new and 2708 repeated entries. Four persons were treated in their own houses with medicines and doctor's visit free of charge. Some of them were helped with diet. Subscriptions and donations during the month amounted to Rs. 167-1-0 and the donation to the Building Fund to Rs. 50. The expenses incurred for the Sevashram were Rs. 169-2-3 and the same for Building works Rs. 876-8-9.

THE birth-day anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva was celebrated on Sunday, the 11th June, with great eclat at the Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Vaniyambadi. The programme consisted of Pooja and Bhajanam, feeding the poor of all castes, Stotra Arathana and lectures on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. At 5 p. m. there was a large gathering of Hindus and Mahommedans, and almost all the leading people of the town were present on the occasion. Rao Sahib P. Ponnukrishnaswami Pillai, B. A. delivered a thoughtful and eloquent lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Guru Maharaj. He explained with great clearness the mission of Sri Ramakrishna's life. "A fuller appreciation of the work and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna," he said, "would contribute towards the health of the society in all its religious and social spheres and advance the interests of the country at large." He was followed by C. Venkataswami, the president of the Mutt, who gave a very interesting lecture in Tamil and then read the report of the Mutt and the work of its different branches in Amburpet, Periapet, Nattarampalli, Pudupet and Mittoor. Then the Dewan Bahadur A. Subbarayalu Reddi Garu, B. A. B. L., Cuddalore, formerly a member of the Legislative Council, who was in the chair, delivered his presidential address with a thoughtful speech on Sri Ramakrishna and his Mission. He showed great interest in the work of the Mutt and

that of its branches. The meeting terminated with Mangalārthi and distribution of Prasadā.

FROM the revised Rules and Regulations of the Vivekananda Society of Calcutta (1/4 Sankar Ghose's Lane), we make a noteworthy extract dealing with the objects and the present scope of the Society:—

1. OBJECTS: (a) To study and realise the principles of the Vedānta in its universal aspect as set forth in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda and his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Deva; (b) To spread the above principles and teachings amongst the people at large; (c) To serve humanity as veritable manifestations of God by ministering to their physical needs and helping them in their intellectual, moral and spiritual development.

2. PRESENT SCOPE: In order to realise the above-mentioned objects the society will—(a) Organise religious or other useful lectures at least twice every month; (b) Hold religious classes at least once a week; (c) Hold conversation classes at different parts of, or places near, the town once a month—to be presided over by a member of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, if available; (d) Publish religious books and pamphlets; (e) Set apart a room for meditation—where the members will be encouraged to practise meditation and to worship and thereby helped to realise the spiritual truths taught; (f) Maintain a public library and a free reading-room containing mainly religious and philosophical books and periodicals; (g) Start a students' fund for helping poor students with books, money etc.; (h) Celebrate the birth-day anniversary of Swami Vivekananda every year; (i) Organise relief works, if practicable, and help other charitable and philanthropic institutions, especially the Ramkrishna Mission, with men and money; (j) Take in hand any other work that may help to realise the objects mentioned above.

SWAMI Paramananda, Tanakpur, Dt. Naini Tal, who announced in the P. B. of January, 1915; a local movement, started by him, for the protection of cows, with the help of sympathetic people in Tanakpur and in the neighbouring hills, sends for general information the report of a meeting of local gentlemen, held on the 14th of April last, at Tanakpur, with Thakur Tilak Singh,

Tehsildar of Kichha, Naini Tal, in the chair. The resolution passed unanimously in the meeting affirms that since the foundation of the Goshalā was laid three years ago by the people of Tanakpur, all the heavy work and responsibility of starting the institution on a sound basis have devolved solely on Swami Paramananda, who with great difficulties collected funds from place to place, constructed a pucca brick-built well and the plinth for a stone wall around the 5 acres of land acquired for the Goshala and erected temporary huts for the cows and for stocking sal-wood timbers in view of permanent constructions; that the accounts leaving a balance of Rs. 113 are hereby passed and a General Committee is formed constituting from among its members an Executive Committee and a recognised body of workers and thus giving to the whole work a permanent constitutional form. Before the conclusion of the meeting, the members present collected among themselves the sum of Rs. 300 and it was also agreed that the shopkeepers of the Tanakpur Bazar should pay regular yearly contributions to the general fund for the maintenance of the institution. A special fund has been started for the construction of the stone enclosure, to protect the cows from wild beasts, and of the permanent cowsheds, and Swami Paramananda, as the Secretary of the Goshala, appeals to the sympathetic public to send their kind contributions to this fund, from which the estimated cost of Rs. 5000 will have to be met on account of this urgently needed work of construction.

READERS of this journal have been already informed (Dec. 1914, July 1915) of the formation of an information Bureau and an Advisory Committee in London for the benefit of Indian students intending to go to England or living there, as also of the formation of local advisory committees in several provinces of India. We have received a third notice from the Secretary to the U. P. Government calling attention to these arrangements.

THE Mayavati Charitable Dispensary provided two children patients in its indoor department with small presents of food and clothing on the 20th June last, for which purpose the Civil Surgeon of Almora sent it Rs. 2/- from the fund started by H. E. the late Lady Hardinge for this noble all-India celebration.