

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राण्य धरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

PART II.—XXIII.

[Place: *From Calcutta to the Math on a boat.* Year—1902.

Subjects—*The humility of Swamiji—it is impossible to understand Sri Ramakrishna aright without giving up the enjoyment of lust and wealth—who are the inner circle of Sri Ramakrishna's devotees—in all ages the Sannyasin devotees who have renounced everything have spread in the world the teachings and Meas of the Avatars and world-prophets—what the householder devotees say about Sri Ramakrishna is only partially true—man becomes blessed if he can realise one jot of the spiritual ideas of Sri Ramakrishna—Sri Ramakrishna's giving particular instruction to the Sannyasin disciples—in time the whole world will accept the catholic teachings of Sr Ramakrishna—it is good for people to serve the Sadhus who have been blessed with the grace of Sri Ramakrishna.*]

While walking on the banks of the Ganges at Calcutta this afternoon the disciple saw a Sannyasin in the distance approaching towards Aheereta Ghat. When he came near the disciple found the Sannyasin to be no other than his Guru, Swami Vivekananda. In his left hand he is holding a leaf receptacle containing fried grams and eating them like a boy he is walking his way in great joy. Finding the world-renowned Swamiji walking on the street eating the simple food, the disciple

was struck with admiration and began to think of his simplicity, humility and unostentation. When he stood before him the disciple fell at his feet and asked the reason of his coming to Calcutta unexpectedly.

Swamiji.— I came on a business. Come, will you go to the Math? Eat a little of the fried grams. It has a nice saline and pungent taste.

The disciple took the food with gladness and agreed to go to the Math with him.

Swamiji.— Then look for a boat.

The disciple hurried to hire a boat. He was settling the amount of the boat-hire with the boatman when Swamiji also appeared on the scene. The boatman asked eight annas as hire to take them to the Math and the disciple said two annas. Swamiji stopped the disciple saying, "What are you higgling with them?" and told the boatman, "Very well, I will give you eight annas," and entered the boat. On account of the strong ebb-tide in the Ganges the boat proceeded slowly against the current and took nearly an hour and a half to reach the Math. Getting Swamiji alone in the boat, the disciple got an opportunity of asking him freely about all subjects. Swamiji passed away from mortal life this year in July. The conversation which the disciple had with Swamiji that day on the Ganges will be narrated to the reader.

Raising the topic of the glorificatory poem which the disciple had composed on the last birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna singing of the greatness of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, Swamiji asked him: "How do you know that those whom you have named in your composed hymn are the near and intimate disciples of Sri Ramakrishna?"

Disciple.— Sir, I have made the association of the Sannyasin and householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna for so many years; I have heard from them that they are all the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swamiji.— Yes, they are devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. But all devotees do not belong to the group of his most intimate and nearest disciples. Staying in the Cossipur Garden Sri Ramakrishna told us thus, "The Divine Mother showed me that these are not my inner devotees." Sri Ramakrishna said so that day with

respect to both his men and women devotees.

Then speaking on the way Sri Ramakrishna would indicate different grades among devotees, high and low, Swamiji began to explain to the disciple at length the great difference there is between the householder's and Sannyasa life.

Swamiji.— Is it possible that one would serve the path of lust and wealth and understand Sri Ramakrishna aright at the same time. Or will it ever be possible? Never put your faith in such words. Many among the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna are now proclaiming themselves as "Iswarakoti," "Antaranga" etc. They could not imbibe his great renunciation or dispassion, yet they say they are his intimate devotees. Sweep away all such words. He was a prince of *Tyagis* (self-renouncers) and obtaining his grace can anybody spend his life in the enjoyment of lust and wealth?

Disciple.— Is it then, Sir, that those who came to him at Dakshineswar, are not his devotees?

Swamiji.— Who says that? Everybody who has gone to Sri Ramakrishna has advanced in spirituality, is advancing and will advance. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the perfected Rishis of a previous *Kalpa* (cycle of creation) take human bodies and come on the earth with the Avatars. They are the associates of the Lord. Iswara works by them and propagates his religion. Know this for a truth that they alone are the associates of the Avatars who have renounced all self for the sake of others, who giving up all self-enjoyment with repugnance as the castings of a crow, spend their lives for the good of the world, for the welfare of the Jivas. The disciples of Bhagavan Isha (Jesus)

are all Sannyasins. The direct recipients of the grace of Sankara, Ramanuja, Sri Chaitanya and Buddha are the all-renouncing Sannyasins. They have been through the succession of disciples spreading the Brahma-vidya in the world. Where and when have you heard that a man being the slave of lust and wealth has been able to rescue another, or to show the path of God to him? Without himself being free, how can he make others free? In Veda, Vedanta, Itihasa (history), Purana (ancient tradition), you will find everywhere that the Sannyasins have been the teachers of religion in all ages and climes. History repeats itself. As before, so afterwards, and now it will also be likewise. The capable Sannyasin children of Sri Ramakrishna, the teacher of the great synthesis of Religion, will be honoured everywhere as the teachers of men. The words of others will dissipate in the air like an empty sound. The real self-sacrificing Sannyasins of the Math will be the centre of the preservation and spread of religious ideas. Do you understand?

Disciple.— Then is it not true—what the householder devotees of Sri Ramakrishna are preaching about him in diverse ways?

Swamiji.— It can't be said that they are altogether false; but what they are saying about Sri Ramakrishna are all partial truths. According to one's own capacity, one has understood Sri Ramakrishna and so is discussing about him. It is not bad either to do so. But if any of his devotees has concluded, that what he has understood of him is the only truth, then he is an object of pity. Some are saying that Sri Ramakrishna is a Tantrika and a Kaula, some that he is Sri Chaitanya born on earth to preach 'Naradiya Bhakti,' some again that it is opposed to faith in

him as an Avatara to practise Sadhana, while some are opining that it is not agreeable to his teachings to take to Sannyasa. You will hear such words from the householder devotees but do not listen to such one-sided estimates. What he was, the packed embodiment of how many previous Avataras,—we could not understand a bit even spending the whole life in Tapasya (religious austerity). Therefore one has to speak about him with caution and restraint. As one's own capacities, to that extent has he filled him. One spray from the heaving of the ocean of his spirituality, if realised, will make Gods of men. Such a synthesis of universal ideas, you will not find in the history of the world again. Understand from this who was born in the body of Sri Ramakrishna. When he used to instruct his Sannyasin disciples, he would rise from his seat and look about if any householder was coming that way or not. If he found nobody was there or coming, then in glowing words he would depict the glory of renunciation and Tapasya. As a result of the rousing power of that fiery dispassion, we have renounced the world and become averse to worldliness.

Disciple.— He used to make such distinctions between householders and Sannyasins!

Swamiji.— Ask and learn from the householder devotees themselves about it. And you yourself can think and know who are greater—those of his children who for the realisation of God have renounced all enjoyments of the worldly life and are spending themselves in the practice of austerities on hills and forests, Tirthas and Ashramas (holy places), or those who are praising and glorifying his name and practising his remembrance, but are not able to rise above the delusion and bond-

age of the world? Who are great—those who are coming forward in the service of humanity regarding it as the Atman, those who are continent since early age, who are the walking embodiments of renunciation and dispassion, or those who like flies are at one time sitting on the flower, but at the next on a dung heap? You can yourself think and come to a conclusion.

Disciple.— But, Sir, those who have obtained his grace—what is the world for them? Whether they remain in the householder's life or take to Sannyasa, is it immaterial—so it appears to me.

Swamiji.— The minds of those who have truly received his grace cannot be attached to worldliness. The test of his grace is—unattachment to lust or wealth. If that has not come in anyone's life, then he has not truly received his grace.

When the above discussion ended thus, the disciple raising another topic asked Swamiji, "Sir, what is the outcome of all that you have worked so much for in foreign countries?"

Swamiji.— You will see only a little manifestation of what has been done. In time the whole world must accept the universal and catholic ideas of Sri Ramakrishna and of this only the beginning has been made. Before this flood everybody will be swept off.

Disciple.— Please tell me more about Sri Ramakrishna. I like very much to hear of him from your mouth.

Swamiji.— You are hearing so much about him all the time, what more? His likeness is he himself. Has he any comparison?

Disciple.— What is the way for us who have not seen him?

Swamiji — You have been blessed with the company of these Sadhus who are the direct recipients of his grace. How then can you say you have not seen him? He is present among his Sannyasin disciples. By service of them, he will in time be revealed in your heart. In time you will see everything.

Disciple.— But, Sir, you speak about others who have received his grace, but never about what he used to say about yourself.

Swamiji.— What shall I say about myself? You see, I must be one among his Titans. In his presence I would sometimes speak ill of him, hearing which he would laugh.

Saying thus, Swamiji's face assumed a grave aspect, and he looked towards the river with an absent mind and sat still for some time. Within a short time the evening fell and the boat also reached the Math. Swamiji was then in his own mind singing the tune of a song, 'Now in the evening of life, take the child back to his home.' Hearing the song the disciple looked on the face of Swamiji with astonishment.

When the song was finished, Swamiji said, "In your part of the country in Eastern Bengal sweet-voiced singers are not born. Without drinking the water of mother Ganges, a sweet, musical voice is not acquired."

After paying the hire, Swamiji descended from the boat and taking off his coat sat in the western veranda of the Math. The golden complexion and the ochre robe of Swamiji, showed a wonderful beauty framed in the golden tint of the evening light.



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

“I have seen the blissful form of the Himalayas. Since then I have not been to leave these grand mountains but have taken my abode here. You must have also seen that blissful figure and felt its wonderful fascination and are roaming about in these hills for a long time.” Such were the words which a Sannyasin who has settled himself in a peaceful retreat in an inaccessible but beautiful corner of the Himalayas in the midst of forests and animals, addressed to a wandering monk. Such an attitude towards Nature, a blissful and conscious re-creation of her material aspect would be dismissed by the natural-rationalistic mind as a nature-myth or animism which sees a being in the gross natural objects and phenomena. The old polytheistic idea which saw a conscious Divinity in all nature, and expressed the idea of an indwelling Divine presence is common to ancient and primitive wisdom of humanity. It has been discredited by the modern rationalistic mind as an imperfect wisdom, the babbling of a child humanity, which is first awakening to the awe and grandeur of the Nature outside.

To the Indian way of thinking such a view of Nature offers no difficulty but follows readily from the truths of Spirit discovered by it. According to the Vedantic conclusion the Brahman-consciousness is at the base of all world-formation, all is Brahman, all is in the conscious Spirit, and the Spirit is in all. The Brahman manifests in the world in diverse powers, qualities and aspects, and each contains within itself the infinite potentiality of the Spirit. So behind the physical world, and its objects

and operations are powers and qualities which have a spiritual and mental significance, for both the external nature and individual being have originated from the one transcendent Brahman. As man has a physical, mental and a spiritual level of being, which are not separate, but interacting, the manifestations of the same truth and power in different levels; so the external world has behind its objects and phenomena and manifestations, a mental and spiritual significance and expression of the inward and cosmic truth of the conscious Brahman. The outward physical world and its reality and phenomena have their counterpart and correspondent reality in the mental or psychical plane and their roots in the impersonal Brahman which is the ultimate foundation of all manifested truths, aspects, powers and personalities. The physical has as its support a mental or psychical world—a *bhavarajya*, in which the ideal side, the typical forms, the epitomised thought-substance of outward physical realities, exist.

The truth of the psychical world is not the truth of our intellect, for the latter is based on promoting physical utility and cuts out only such qualities or aspects of the truth of a physical object or fact as will promote those utilities and hypostatizes them as a distinct entity and sees nothing deeper, or spiritual in it. But the psychical sight and vision gives that truth of a thing in correspondence with the ultimate truth of the conscious Spirit which permeates all objects. By seeing something inward and mental in physical object and reality, it makes pos-

sible a communion between the mind of man and the outward world surrounding him and helps in the broadening of the human consciousness till it reaches the infinite consciousness in the plane of the Brahman. The mental-psychic world, the *bhavarajya*, is an intermediate region for passing from the physical truth of things through their wider psychical contents to the ultimate spiritual foundation where all is seen in the one Self or Atman.

The psychic truths being of the mental world are perceived as of the nature of conscious forms, but not as abstract symbol or ideative construction suspended in mid-air which our intellect creates with regard to objects by its processes, but never knows the real truth of things, there being no real contact between the knower and known. But the other truth is known as the inner ideal form of the physical objects similar in kind to the mind of the knower, and with which it can be in direct communion and spiritual contact. The intellect in its dealings with an outward object is separated by a gulf and it can only bring it within the field of its operation by throwing its net externally round it and knowing it. But in the psychic realm, a getting close and a mutual fusion and contact with the substance of each other is felt. Therefore there is a greater nearness and intimacy between objects in the mental realm and a wider range of psychic truths. Only by entering the *bhavarajya*, we emancipate our consciousness from the prison of the physical and its fixed locus in one point of the infinite strand of world-manifestation and grow into sympathy and love and communion with all nature, subjective and objective outside of us.

The modern intellectual and scientific temper discounts the idea of personality or mentality in outward objects and phenomena of Nature. It explains them as independent and separate entities existing in their own right and governed by impersonal, abstract universal laws deduced from the nature of things as their inherent laws or attributes. The result has been a de-spiritual conception of the outward world and its operation devoid of all bearing on and communion with the inner Spirit or psyche of man, and a more and more material view of Nature hedging man round with its mechanical laws and imposing on his soul all the weight of its mechanical burden—a nature, the physical laws of which man no doubt discovers and exploits for himself but the more to mechanise his consciousness. The spiritual view of nature which saw a divine or ideal presence in natural objects, in hill, forests, rivers, has passed away from us, or is existing only in poets, regarded there as an imaginative fancy devoid of any substantial reality. It has impoverished our spiritual life by confining human personality within the prison of the physical consciousness surrounded by the insuperable barriers of the material Nature, instead of letting us grow, as the primitive thought did, by communion with ideal presences of Nature into unity with the surrounding life and expand our consciousness.

We have to get back to the ancient spiritual view of nature, but through the higher knowledge of the Vedanta. The idea of psychical or divine presences in outward nature is true, but on the mental plane, as the expression and psychic embodiments of the truth of the one Conscious Spirit of the Universe in the limitations of

the cosmos, in the form of one of its aspects, powers and qualities,—as the physical objects and attributes are true on the physical plane. For the same truth, power and qualities of the Spirit, work in different levels of our consciousness and produce different, but altered forms or aspects. The same absolute Spirit being the ultimate foundation of both our individual being and the physical world outside, interchange and communion between them are possible on the psychic level, where the ideal presences in outward nature are felt to be in touch with man's psyche. By this communion they are even able to re-create their powers in human lives, expanding the consciousness, giving spiritual strength, sense of security and peace, and great divine enthusiasm and power; for those ideal presences are the living powers of the Soul of the world, and by entering into communion with them we build their spiritual power in us and a fuller life beyond the limitations of the physical consciousness opens out before us.

Therefore the seeing of living powers and presences in the outward objects and powers is a true seeing, for by that we break beyond the limitations of the physical consciousness, enter into communion with a more extensive range of the manifested Soul of the Universe. It is not the highest communion of the individual soul with the Infinite soul in the highest spiritual plane but a communion with the cosmic soul-manifestation behind the outward physical world and its operations, in the intermediate mental-psychic world. It gives a greater extension to our being and admits us to a wider range of truth than the physical personality and the suggestions of the physical world, and through it we enter into the highest plane where the

soul becomes one with the Infinite Spirit in the transcendent super-cosmic plane.

The child sees an intelligence everywhere; it connects a living power with trees and stones, hills and forests, star and sky, wind and rain, thunder and lightning; and so did the primitive mind of man. This had an element of truth, for the ultimate truth of the world is a conscious Self. But being only physically-minded, it associated crude physical ideas with these powers. As the physicality melts, man becomes susceptible to mental suggestions; he sees in them manifestations of ideal principles and philosophic truths, as in the psychic vision of God creating as Brahma, preserving as Vishnu and destroying as Shiva, or as presiding power over Nature and its dealings with man, or as God in the form of His qualities, as the God of love or the God of Shakti. The reason of all these worships lies in giving extension to the soul-vision of man beyond the confines of body, and of the outward world beyond its outward physical appearance, to admit him to a wider vision, to enable him to look at the world from a lofty view-point in the mental-psychic plane, as from that of the first creative principle, the principle of universal love, or the primal creative energy of the world as the *Adyasakti*. The forms of these Gods have no meaning to the physical consciousness, as they are psychic truths, but are real on their own plane as the physical objects are on the material plane. As Swami Vivekananda said: "The Gods are not merely symbols, but they are the forms the Bhaktas have seen."

Again the perception of the psychic truths and presences has a real effect on our own lives and transmutes also the

appearances of outward world and pours a new meaning into it. By taking us out of the confines of the body and putting us in communion with the more extensive ideal or divine presence which is behind cosmic objects and phenomena, it has a great stimulating effect on our lives giving us strength, security, calm and superiority to the influence of physical facts and phenomena. It gives a new meaning to life by changing it in the image of the ideal presence which is behind it. Asked whether the Pythagorean conceptions of love as present even in the attraction of heavenly bodies is true, Swami Vivekananda said that it is not poetry, but true, and one could see for oneself the truth when one attained knowledge. He further explained that "matter and spirit, though to all appearance they seem to be two distinct things, are really two different forms of the same substance and all the different forces known to us whether in the material world or the internal world, are but varying manifestations of the One Force. The same force which presents in the material world as attraction is felt in its finer and subtler state as love and the like in the higher spiritual stages of realisation." (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part V. p. 253).

Therefore the spiritual conception of outward Nature, the seeing of ideal presences in natural objects and phenomena, which fill the middle region of Hindu religion, in the Puranas with the psychic forms of different Gods and the mythological lore and worship of natural objects have a real basis of substantial truth, which the primeval mind of man saw. Only where the primitive mind in its crude, ill-developed, physical state saw

them with a physical eye and burdened them with physical conceptions, as ministering only to his physical needs, through the higher knowledge of Vedanta they are seen to be the higher embodiments of the truth, power and qualities of the Soul of the Universe in the mental-psychic plane. They are not extraneous to the physical realities but immanent in them, the inner core of which the physical is the more outward shell. They give to our souls living messages of freedom, beauty, bliss and spiritual power and by building these in us, we give an extension to our vision and a new meaning to our life. By winning back this spiritual consciousness, we shall deliver ourselves from that mechanised consciousness, which sees in the physical world and its operations, only utter materiality and mechanical laws, devoid of all bearing on human consciousness and with no spiritual values attaching to them.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

[RENDERED FROM SWAMI SARADANANDA'S
"LILAPRASANGA."]

(His second and third meetings.)

Continued from page 251.

WHETHER on account of there being a crowd of visitors in Dakshineswar, or for any other reason, Sri Ramakrishna invited Narendranath that day to accompany him for a walk to the neighbouring garden of Jadunath Mallik. Jadunath himself and his mother were much devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and had given orders to the chief officer of the garden that if in their absence at any

time Sri Ramakrishna comes to the garden for a walk, they should at once open the drawing-room facing the Ganges for him to sit and rest. Walking for sometime with Narendranath that day in the garden, in course of conversation with him he came and sat in that room. After sitting for some time, he was absorbed in Samadhi. Narendranath sitting at a distance was observing the condition of Sri Ramakrishna, when as on the previous occasion he suddenly came and touched him. In spite of his being cautious from before Narendranath was overwhelmed by that touch charged with spiritual power. But this time, unlike the previous occasion, he altogether lost all external consciousness. After some time when he regained consciousness, he found that Sri Ramakrishna was gently passing his hand over his chest, and smiling on finding him come to himself.

Narendranath never spoke to us about the experience which he felt within himself that day after the loss of his external consciousness. We thought that being a matter of deep secrecy with him he did not disclose it to us. But we understood from what in the course of conversation Sri Ramakrishna told us one day about that event that it was quite natural that Narendranath could not remember the particulars of it. Sri Ramakrishna said:

“After the loss of external consciousness I asked Narendranath many things that day—who he is—where he has come from—with what mission he is born—how long he will remain on earth, etc., etc. He also in that state, going deep within himself, gave right answers to all my questions. What I had previously seen and felt about him was confirmed by his answers then. I am prevented by divine will from disclosing those things.

But from that I have understood this that the day when he (Narendranath) will be aware as to who he is in reality, he will not remain on earth any more, but with firm resolve ascend the path of Yoga and give up his mortal body. Narendra is a great soul perfected in Dhyana (meditation).”

Some particulars about the vision which had previously come to Sri Ramakrishna with regard to Narendranath, he related to us later. For the convenience of the reader we will relate them now. For hearing about that vision from Sri Ramakrishna we concluded that it came to him before the coming of Narendranath to Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna related:

“One day I observed that my mind was ascending higher and higher along the effulgent path of Samadhi. Easily passing the bounds of the lunar, solar and stellar gross worlds it first entered the subtle psychic world of thought. As the more it ascended the higher and higher layers of that world, the more I found the divine psychic and conscious forms of many Gods and Goddesses on both sides of the path of the mind's ascension. Gradually it reached the final limit of that psychic world. There I found a luminous barrier extended and separating the divided world of names and forms from the undivided world of Akhanda-Satchidananda (the transcendent Brahman). Overpassing that barrier the mind gradually entered the homogenous and undivided world of Akhanda and found—that there was no formed beings or any formed object. Even the Gods and Goddesses of divine and psychic forms as if afraid to enter this world were spreading their respective spheres of rule far below it. But the next moment I found that seven ancient Rishis of divine and effulgent forms were

seated there immersed in Samadhi. I understood that in knowledge and virtue, in love and sacrifice, they had surpassed even the Gods and Goddesses, what to speak of men. Wonder-struck I was thinking of their greatness, when I found that part of the undifferentiated, homogenous and effulgent space of the world of Akhanda was condensing and took the form of a divine child. This divine child approached one among them and with his superbly graceful arms held him by the neck in love; and in his wonderfully sweet voice of heavenly music calling on him with great love was trying much to rouse him from Samadhi. By that tender touch of love, the Rishi awoke from Samadhi and with half-open eyes, motionless in meditation, looked steadfastly at that wonderful, divine child. Seeing the placidly delightful and luminous expression of his face I thought that the boy was the treasure of his heart and long familiar to him. The wonderful divine child expressing unbounded delight began to say. 'I am going; you have to come with me.' The Rishi speaking nothing in reply to his request, expressed with his eyes full of love the consent of his heart. Then continuing to look at the boy with eyes of deep love he again merged in Samadhi. Astonished I observed that a part of his mind and body taking the form of an effulgent light was descending on earth in the inverse order of evolution. Seeing Narendranath I at once understood he was that person."*

Sri Ramakrishna told us about this vision in his wonderfully simple and expressive language. The use and application of that wonderful language is impossible for us. So perforce we have related it in brief here keeping the spirit of his language as much as we can. Asking about the divine child of the vision we learned later that he himself assumed the form of the child.

Whatever it be, it needs no saying that finding such mental transformation come on him for the second time by the superhuman power of Sri Ramakrishna Narendranath was thoroughly astounded. He felt in his heart that before this unsurpassable divine power, how insignificant was the power of his mind and intellect. His previous idea of Sri Ramakrishna as a mono-manac was changed, but it cannot be said that he understood the significance and purport of the words which Sri Ramakrishna addressed to him in private on the day of his first arrival at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna in Dakshiniswar. He understood that Sri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary personality endowed with divine powers. By his mere wish he can turn the mind of men and give it a high direction, but perhaps his will being identified thoroughly with the will of the Lord, such a desire with regard to all does not arise in him. It is matter of no small good luck for him to get unmasked the grace of a superhuman person.

Narendranath was forced to come to the above conclusion, and he had to change in accordance with it many of his previous ideas. Previously he had great objections to accept a man like himself, with human failings, limited power and vision as the guide of the spiritual world or Guru and to follow his words without questioning. Entering the Brahma Samaj, it needs no saying, this idea of his was much strengthened. But as a result of the events of the above two days this idea of his received a great shock. He understood that although rare, such men are really born on earth whose extraordinary renunciation, Tapasya, love and purity surpass by far all conceptions of God made by the little human mind and intel

lect; therefore the acceptance of them as their Guru conduces to their great well-being. As a result, although willing to accept him as his spiritual guide, he did not yet agree to accept without questioning all his words.

The idea was deeply rooted in Narendranath's mind, as a result of his innate Samskaras, that without renunciation it is impossible to attain to God. Therefore entering the Brahmo-Samaj, he did not still feel inclined to join its movement relating to the reform of the married life. Meeting with the all-renouncing Sri Ramakrishna and getting to know of his wonderful power, his idea of renunciation now gathered still further strength.

But most of all, one subject was the subject of great concern and thought to him. He understood that coming in contact with such powerful personalities the human mind easily places its credence on all their words without examining or only imperfectly examining them. He has to save himself from that. Consequently although the events of the two days produced in his mind feelings of great reverence and regard towards Sri Ramakrishna, he made a firm resolve from now that he would not accept as true any of his wonderful realisations or visions without carefully examining or himself experiencing them, and if he incurs his displeasure by that he will risk it. Therefore, on the one hand, he was careful to keep an open mind to the novel and wonderful truths of the spiritual realm, on the other hand, he set himself to test hardly every realisation and act of Sri Ramakrishna.

It was easily manifest to the sharp intellect of Narendranath that the words of the first day for which he accounted Sri Ramakrishna as a mono-maniac, get their significance only if he is regarded as an

incarnation of God. But how can his enquiring and reasoning mind at once acknowledge it? So if God at any time gives him the capacity to understand the words, then only will he discuss them. Thus settling in his mind, he did not try to come to any definite opinion with regard to them, but from now coming to visit Sri Ramakrishna he set himself to the study and learning of the means of being blessed with a vision of God.

A spirited mind feels a great obstacle in accepting new truths subversive of his own previous ideas, and so it happened to Narendranath. Recognising the wonderful power in Sri Ramakrishna he could not yet accept him wholly and feeling attracted to him, was still trying to stand at a distance from him. We will relate hereafter what was the result of his endeavour and how far it went.

(To be continued)

THE INFLUENCE OF VEDANTA ON HUMAN THOUGHT.

THE world is full of diversity. From dull dead matter up to sentient man it presents a bewildering variety as regards form and qualities,—life contra-distinguished from insentience, intelligence from non-intelligence or semi-intelligence, species varying from species and individual from individual, nay the same individual undergoing a thousand changes of mood in the course of a single day. All this stupendous variation naturally leads a man to think: whence came this strange differentiation? Is it all the working out of a single principle, or of many forces? The answers to the question have been various; some have ascribed the whole panorama to one supreme principle, others to more than one principle, each party adducing arguments in support of its particular view. We propose to

examine here some of these views in a brief compass.

It required no very great effort on the part of man to perceive that in spite of the seeming multiplicity there was some sort of likeness in certain things which divided the totality of phenomena into groups, which again were ranged in a certain relation to one another. Thus generalisation led to the development of science. Science, in its turn, began to perfect itself, and ultimately brought all things under the rule of what it called Force. Evolution, which is the latest accepted doctrine on the subject, has emphatically declared that, however nondescript the vulgar man may take the world to be, to the scientist it is a system, evolving out of one Force.

Now a difficulty presented itself. The explanation of the physical universe by reference to a primal Force may be all right so far as it goes, viz., with regard to material phenomena, but how to apply the same rule to mental phenomena, from which they differ as light from darkness? Are such wonderful faculties as reasoning and imagination also products of the same force which gave birth to the physical phenomena of heat and electricity? And if so, what are the relations between them? In other words, how does mind stand related to matter?

There was but one way of solving the problem—to cut the gordian knot by saying either that matter has produced mind, or that mind has produced matter. There was no *via media* between the two, for, as we shall see, to admit it is only to push the question a step further, without furnishing any explanation. That there existed a relation between mind and body could not be doubted, and adherents stepped forward to support either of the extreme views. One party gave the predominance to mind and said that matter evolved out of mind,—these were the Spiritualists; while another party, the Materialists, boldly asserted that the body produced the mind. The arguments in favour of the latter view are plausible and apparently very convincing to the ordinary man, for nobody ever saw the mind apart from the body. Given nourishing food, the brain develops and with it the mind. Injure the brain ever so little and the corresponding mental faculty is also injured. Thus a strong case was made out for the Material-

ists, as their range of phenomena was much greater and liable to testing and proof. But the opponents were not without their reasons too; if dyspepsia produced melancholy, they argued, melancholy also produced dyspepsia! There was the evidence of extraordinary will-power performing miracles which a mere reference to physical phenomena would not suffice to explain. The Yogi's mental powers, to all appearances, set at naught the physical limitations of time, space and causation, and men rubbed their eyes to see what it all might mean. Thus the tug-of-war was not to be ended; in fact, it persists to this day and will, to all intents and purposes, last as long as humanity itself.

To escape the above dilemma, one school of thinkers hypothesised a third principle, to which they attributed both physical and mental phenomena, and started with a true philosophical gravity that the relation was brought about by "Pre-established harmony!" But how did this harmony come to be pre-established? Evidently there was no answer except that it *was*, and there was an end of the matter. It was, on the face of it, no explanation—it was a *deus ex machina* invented to save the situation, and convinced no true thinker.

Just as there cropped up ultra-exponents of the materialistic view, for instance, the Charvakas of India, who deified the body and considered physical comforts the *summum bonum* of life,—so there were extreme adherents of the idealistic view who questioned and by means of criticism rendered thread-bare our naive conceptions of things and events, so that the solid universe of ours was reduced to a mass of ideas only in their hands. The upholders of the theory of "momentary consciousness" among the Buddhistic fold held that in the universe there was nothing permanent, everything was in a flux, even our own identity was a most questionable thing, being nothing but a series of passing, momentary states of consciousness! Thus a dangerous scepticism was ushered into being.

Other explanations also came, but tested by the light of reason every one was found to be more or less defective and would not hold water. Such, for instance, were the doctrines of the Kanadas (the Indian Atomists), the Naiyayikas and their development, the Vaiseshikas. We shall not enter

here into the details of their philosophy, nor how they missed their mark in failing to furnish true explanations of the universe (in spite of the most marvellous display of brain-power which some of their exponents showed), for a brief survey of which the student is referred to the pages of the Brahma-Sutras, but suffice it to say, that out of this chaos of conflicting argumentation there arose one man who almost hit the mark. This was Kapila, the father of Psychology. He laid it down that the universe was the manifestation of one Primal Substance—the Pradhâna—which was the equilibrium of three component forces, attraction, repulsion and balance, and out of which evolved cosmic intelligence which again produced egoism, and this in its turn was subdivided into the mind, organs and fine essences and gradually, out of the combination of these fine essences, the gross universe was manifested. The great credit of this school lay in a masterly analysis of human experience; they showed (long before Kant) how every perception was a compound* of two factors, something impinging on our senses as it were and giving them the suggestion, while in response to that stimulus our mind goes out and coats that something with a layer of its own, and then cognition is possible. So, our knowledge is neither wholly mental, nor wholly physical—it partakes of a two-fold character, presenting the 'something' external (the thing-in-itself which remains unknown, as it is) in terms of our senses. The Pradhana is anterior to both intelligence and matter, which are of the same *kind*, though varying in fineness, and as such act and react upon each other. Thus the Sankhya Philosophy gave one good explanation of the interaction of mental and physical phenomena.

But there were two great flaws in this doctrine, otherwise almost perfect. One was that the Sankhyas called Pradhana insentient, and at the same time described it as an independent principle, acting in the mere presence, without intervention, of Purushas or souls which were the principle of intelligence. It is the sentiency of the Purushas, it was held, that reflected itself in the apparent sentiency of the modifications of Pradhana, e. g. the human mind and so on. The Purushas were considered as infinite, eternal and immutable, and strangely enough, in the same breath it was stated

that they were infinite in number. We might expect more rational considerations from the father of human Psychology, who perhaps to bring himself within the easy comprehension of the average man, postulated the plurality of souls, so as not to upset all on a sudden their cherished notions. The practice of suiting the instructions to the mental capacity of the students has been a time-honoured custom in India where, in consequence, religious toleration is most in vogue. Or was it that the Sankhya as Kapila formulated it was not the system which in modern times goes under the name? Be that as it may, it should have occurred to the sage that there cannot be two Infinities, that Infinity implies also transcendent unities. A finishing touch, as it were, was given to the remarkable deductions of the Sankhya Philosophy and the most rational explanation of the universe offered by the Philosophy which stood up to challenge the last two conclusions of the Sankhyas viz. independence of the *insentient* Pradhâna and the plurality of *infinite* Purushas.

To remedy the weak points in the armour of the Sankhya Philosophy Vedanta, culminating in Advaitism, identified the Pradhana, or Prakriti as it is called in this Philosophy, with the Purusha, or Brahman, which is the name used in Vedanta, asserting that Prakriti is the Shakti or Power of Brahman, the static and dynamic aspects, as it were, of the same Principle. Brahman, like the Sankhyan Purusha, is eternal and infinite, but One without a second and therefore transcends thought and speech. No predication is possible of It. It is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. The Prakriti is neither existent nor non-existent, you cannot admit it to be real, for it disappears in the state of highest Realisations, nor can you deny its existence, seeing that this it is that causes all the differentiation that we see in the universe. All the changes that we see are really in the Prakriti which is like a veil thrown over the Atman, the thing-in-itself, the eternal Witness which man is in reality, and through rents in that veil more or less of the Reality behind manifests itself. This positing of the Atman as the eternal subject—without which no consciousness is possible—is the crushing reply to the absurd position of the Buddhistic Idealists who assume that there might be a flux without an absolutely steady cog-

nising subject. We erroneously attribute the changes of Prakriti to the immutable Atman. This is super-imposition—*Adhyasa*, born of ignorance without beginning. Each man has somehow come to identify himself with bits of Prakriti which is a supervening adjunct (*Upadhi*) casting its false image upon the real Self, so as to create the illusion that the Self also is actually undergoing the changes of the Prakriti; just as we attribute scalding properties to hot water, although we know water is cool by nature. Remove the superimposition through discrimination, and right knowledge ripening into the Realisation of Nirvikalpa, Samadhi will result. This is the whole task of man. He has covered his eyes with his hand, and calls himself blind. He came to play as an actor and has forgotten his identity. All he has got to do is to remember that he is not the little, puny being he now considers himself to be—it is a mask he has himself put on—but he is the glorious Atman.—He cannot die for he is the Essence of Existence; he cannot be ignorant for he is Knowledge Absolute, and he cannot suffer misery for he is Bliss itself. He has never been bound, for if he were, he could never attain liberation either. The whole mischief lay in a wilful wrong identification, a self-hypnotisation, and the way to deliverance lies not in vain argumentation but in boldly facing the Truth, and breaking the dream. Thus roars the lion of Vedanta—"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!"

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CLXXXIII.

(Original)

Hotel Belle Vue,
Beacon Street, Boston.
19th September, '94.

Dear Mother S—,

I did not forget you at all. You do not think I will be ever as ungrateful as that? You did not give me your address, still I

have been getting news about you from Landsberg through Miss Phillips. Perhaps you have seen the memorial and address sent to me from Madras? I send some to be sent to you to Landsberg.

A Hindu son never lends to his mother, but the mother has every right over the son and so the son in the mother. I am very much offended at your offering to repay me the nasty few dollars. I can never repay my debts to you.

I am at present lecturing in several places in Boston. What I want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my thoughts. I had enough of speaking; now I want to write. I think I will have to go to New York for it. Mrs. Gurnsey was so kind to me and she is ever willing to help me. I think I will go to her and sit down and write my book.

Yours ever affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. Kindly write me whether the Gurnseys have returned to town or are still in Fishkill.

V.

CLXXXIV

Salutation to Sri Ramakrishna!

Allahabad.

5th January, 1890.

My dear Sir,

I am very sorry to hear of your illness from your kind note. The gist of the letter I wrote to you about your change to Baidyanath was that it would be impossible for a man of weak and extremely delicate physique like you to live in that place unless you spent a good deal of money. If change be really advisable for you, and if you have deferred it so long simply to select a cheaper place and that sort of thing, it is certainly a matter of regret. * * Baidyanath is excellent so far as the air is concerned, but the water is not good, it upsets the stomach. I used to suffer from acidity everyday. I have

already written you a letter; have you got it, or finding it a bearing letter, have left it to its fate? In my opinion, if you *have* to go out on a change, the sooner the better. But, pardon me, you have a tendency to expect that everything should fit in exactly with your requirements, but unfortunately, such a state of things is very rare in this world. **आत्मानं सततं रक्षन्**—“One must save oneself under any circumstances.” “Lord have mercy,” is all right, but He helps him who helps himself. If you simply try to save your purse, will the Lord arrange the change for you by drawing on His ancestral capital? If you think you have so much reliance on the Lord, don't call in the doctor, please. * * If that does not suit you, you should go to Benares. I would have already left this place, but the local gentlemen would not give me leave to depart! * * But let me repeat once more, if change is actually decided upon, please do not hesitate out of miserliness. That would be suicide. And not even God can save a suicide. Please convey my compliments to T— Babu and the rest.

With best regards,
Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

CLXXXV.

(Original)

My dear F—,

* * A word for you. Remember always I may not see you again. Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man.—Strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind. Try to love anybody and everybody. Be a *man* and try to make those immediately under your care, namely R—, K— and I—, brave, moral and sympathising. No religion for you, my children, but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, no weakness,—the rest will come of itself.

* * And don't take R— with you ever or ever allow him to visit a theatre or any enervating entertainment whatever.

Yours affly.

Vivekananda.

My dear R—, K— and I—,

Bear in mind, my children, the cowards and those who are weak only, commit sin and go to hell. The brave are always moral. Try to be moral, try to be brave, try to be sympathising.

Yours

Vivekananda.

STORIES OF SAINTS.

(Retold by G.)

IV.

HOW PAOLO BECAME A HERMIT.

ANTONIO, the hermit, lived in the desert, working and praying. And the waste places of the wilderness he made habitable, and other pious men, fired by his holy example, came and lived with him. These men became his disciples and they made little cells to dwell in and they tilled the ground as Antonio did and were instructed by him.

And they lived each in his little cell and when they came together to cultivate the land they kept silence, discoursing only on feast days. And the land began to bear fruit and the hermits through labour and prayer increased in holiness.

So exceeding gentle and sweet was the conduct of these men that even the wild beasts became tame in their presence. Yet was their life very austere and difficult and many coming there grew faint-hearted and returned to the world.

One day a husbandman, Paolo by name, of advanced years, but pure in heart and of simple manner, came to Antonio, seeking

speech with him. And the saint seeing the old man bade him express his wish. Said Paolo: "Father, I desire to become a hermit." Antonio made reply: "An old man like thee cannot become a hermit; return to thy fields and serve God." Paolo said: "Father, if thou wilt teach me I can become a hermit." Antonio answered again: "Thou art too old to become a hermit, for the life is hard and even the young grow faint-hearted. But if thou wilt not return to thy fields go to a monastery where the life is not so austere and where there are many brethren to guide thee. I live here alone in this little cell, eating only once in fifteen days. How couldst thou live with me?" Then Antonio entered within his cell, leaving Paolo without and he remained inside his cell three days and three nights.

On the fourth day, Antonio stepping forth from his cell found Paolo still waiting there. And knowing that Paolo had brought with him neither food nor drink, Antonio marvelled much at his constancy. Then Antonio said: "If thou desirest to become a hermit, do as I bid thee." Paolo made reply: "Right gladly will I obey thy commands." Then Antonio wanting to test his sincerity put him to such difficult tasks that hardly a man could accomplish them.

First Antonio said: "Paolo, stay in this cell till I return, then will I appoint thee thy task." And Antonio observing Paolo secretly saw him remain motionless in the cell for a space of seven days, though the heat in the cell was well-nigh unbearable.

Then Antonio called Paolo to come forth from the cell and giving him some palm-stalks soaked in water bade him weave a rope. And Paolo working diligently wove till the hour grew late. But when Antonio saw the rope he showed great displeasure as if the work had been done badly and he bade Paolo undo the rope and weave it again. And Paolo without demurring and with right cheerful countenance undid the rope and with great labour wove it again.

And Antonio observing Paolo so meek and nowise cast down in spirit and remembering that Paolo had fasted seven days, nor had he touched water to moisten his lips, wondered at the old man's constancy. But wanting to test him still further he said: "Paolo, wilt thou eat a morsel of bread?" Paolo made answer: "If it seemeth right to thee, O Father." And Antonio observing his humility brought the bread. And as the bread was placed upon the table, Antonio read a psalm and said a prayer. And this psalm and this prayer he repeated twelve times. But Paolo, far from being impatient, joined in the reading and praying with great devotion. Then, when they were seated at the table, Antonio said: "Paolo, look at the food but do not eat till evening."

And when evening was come and Paolo was still seated at the table looking at the food, Antonio said: "Paolo, rise from thy seat and lie thee down to sleep." And Paolo rising from his seat, did as he was bidden. But at midnight Antonio woke him up to pray. And they continued in their prayers till morning. And during the day they laboured and towards sunset they read and prayed as on the evening before and then they sat down and ate. And when they had both eaten one little loaf of bread, Antonio said: "Old man, eat." Paolo said: "If thou eatest then will I eat." Antonio said: "One small loaf is sufficient for me, for I am a hermit." Replied Paolo: "It is enough for me who wish to be a hermit." And rising from the table they said again their prayers and sang psalms and they slept till the middle of the night when they prayed again till morning.

And many a sore and difficult task did Antonio lay upon Paolo. And when some brethren came to visit Antonio, Antonio said to Paolo: "Serve the brethren but do not speak till they have departed from here." And Paolo, in obedience to Antonio, remained silent for the space of three days, serving the brethren.

Then the saint seeing how ready Paolo was to obey and how great his humility, said to him : " Brother, if thou art able to continue to do as thou hast done, thou shalt remain with me." Said Paolo : " Father, God helping, I will continue to labour and obey thee as before! Then Antonio rejoiced and said : " Now art thou a hermit." And he gave him a little cell some distance from his own and there Paolo lived, perfecting himself in the sight of God, working and praying as Antonio did. And when the body was worn out the soul fled to its place of eternal rest in God.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Continued from page 259.)

असत्पदार्थानुभवेन किञ्चि-

न्नह्यस्ति तृप्तिर्न च दुःखहानिः ।

तद्व्यानन्दरसानुभूत्या

तृप्तः सुखं तिष्ठ सदात्मनिष्ठया ॥५२३॥

523. From the perception of unreal things there is neither satisfaction nor a cessation of misery. Therefore, being satisfied with the realisation of the Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, live happily in a state of identity with the Real Brahman.

[Neither satisfaction &c.—Compare the celebrated verse—"Never is desire appeased by the enjoyment of sense-pleasures," &c.]

स्वमेव सर्वथा पश्यन्मन्यमानः स्वमह्यम् ।

स्वानन्दमनुभुञ्जानः कालं नय मह्यमते ॥५२४॥

524. Beholding the Self alone in all circumstances, thinking of the Self, the One without a second, and enjoying the Bliss of the Self, pass thy time, O noble soul!

अखण्डबोधात्मनि निर्विकल्पे

विकल्पनं व्योम्नि पुरप्रकल्पनम् ।

तद्व्यानन्दमयात्मना सदा

शान्तिं परामेत्य भजस्व मौनम् ॥५२५॥

525. Dualistic conceptions in the Atman, the Infinite Knowledge, the Absolute, are like imagining castles in the air. Therefore, always identifying thyself with the Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, and thereby attaining Supreme Peace, remain quiet.

[Quiet—as the Witness. How he is to live, is explained in the next verse.]

तूष्णीमवस्था परमोपशान्ति-

बुद्धेरसत्कल्पविकल्पहेतोः ।

ब्रह्मात्मना ब्रह्मविदो महात्मनो

यन्नाद्वयानन्दसुखं निरन्तरम् ॥५२६॥

526. The restful state of the mind—which is the root of unreal imaginings—of the noble knower of Brahman, in a state of identity with Brahman, is Supreme Quietude, in which there is constant enjoyment of the Bliss Absolute,—the One without a second.

नास्ति निर्वासनान्मौनात्परं सुखकृदुत्तमम् ।

विज्ञातात्मस्वरूपस्य स्वानन्दरसपायिनः ॥५२७॥

527. To the man who has realised his own nature, and drinks the undiluted Bliss of the Self, there is nothing more exhilarating than the quietude that comes of a state of desirelessness.

गच्छंतिष्ठन्नुपविशञ्छयानो वाऽन्यथापि वा ।

यथेच्छया वसेद्विद्वानात्मारामः सदा मुनिः ॥५२८॥

528. The illumined sage whose only pleasure is in the Self, ever lives at ease, whether going or staying, sitting or lying, or in any other condition.

[He is perfectly independent.]

न देशकालासनदिग्यमादि-

लक्ष्याद्यपेक्षाप्रतिबद्धवृत्तेः ।

संसिद्धतत्त्वस्य महात्मनाऽस्ति

स्ववेदानं का नियमाद्यवस्था ॥५२९॥

529. The noble soul who has perfectly realised the Truth and whose mind-functions meet with no obstruction, does no more depend upon conditions of place, time, posture, direction, moral disciplines, objects for meditation and so forth. What regulative conditions can there be in knowing one's own self?

[*Place*—holy places are meant. Similarly with time.

Posture: Which is an important thing with beginners. 'Asana' may also mean 'seats.'

Direction—facing north or east.

Moral disciplines—The *Yama* and *Niyama* observances mentioned in Ashtānga Yoga.

Objects of meditation—gross or fine.]

यदोऽयमिति विज्ञातुं नियमः कोऽन्ववेक्ष्यते ।
चिना प्रमाणसुष्ठुत्वं यस्मिन्सति पदार्थधीः ॥५३०॥

530. To know that this is a jar, what condition, forsooth, is necessary except that the means of knowledge be free from defect, which alone ensures a cognition of the object?

[*Means of knowledge*—e. g. the eye in the case of vision, and so on.]

अयमात्मा नित्यसिद्धः प्रमाणे सति भासते ।
न देयं नापि वा कालं न शुद्धिं वाप्यपेक्षते ॥५३१॥

531. So this Atman, which is an eternal verity, manifests Itself as soon as the means of right knowledge are present, and does not depend upon either place, or time, or (internal) purity.

[*Means.....knowledge*—Realisation, to which direct perception, inference etc. are subordinate aids.]

देवदत्तोऽहमित्येतद्विज्ञानं निरपेक्षकम् ।
तद्ब्रह्मविदोऽप्यस्य ब्रह्माहमिति वेदनम् ॥५३२॥

532. The consciousness that I am Deva-datta is independent of circumstances; similar is the case with the realisation of this knower of Brahman that he is Brahman.

भानुनेव जगत्सर्वं भासते यस्य तेजसा ।
अनात्मकमसत्तु क्वं किं नु तस्यावभासकम् ॥५३३॥

533. What indeed can manifest That whose lustre, like the sun, causes the whole universe,—unsubstantial, unreal, insignificant—to appear at all?

[An idea of the famous Sruti passage—'He shining, everything also shines, through His light all this is manifest.']

वेदशास्त्रपुराणानि भूतानि सकलान्यपि ।
येनार्थवन्ति तं किन्नु विज्ञातारं प्रकाशयेत् ॥५३४॥

534. What, forsooth, can illumine that Eternal Subject by which the Vedas and Puranas and other scriptures, as well as all beings are endowed with a meaning?

[An echo of Brihadāranyaka II. iv. 14.

Other scriptures—may mean the Six Systems of Philosophy or anything else.]

एष स्वयंज्योतिरनन्तरक्ति-
रात्माऽप्रमेयः सकलानुभूतिः ।
यमेव विज्ञाय विमुक्तबन्धो
जयत्ययं ब्रह्मविदुत्तमोत्तमः ॥५३५॥

535. Here is the Self-effulgent Atman, of infinite power, beyond the range of conditioned knowledge, yet the common experience of all,—realising which alone this incomparable Knower of Brahman lives his glorious life, freed from bondage.

न खिद्यते नो विषयैः प्रमोदते
न सज्जते नापि विरज्यते च ।
स्वस्मिनसदा क्रीडति नन्दति स्वयं
निरन्तरानन्दरसेन तृप्तः ॥५३६॥

536. Satisfied with undiluted, constant Bliss, he is neither grieved, nor elated by sense-objects, is neither attached nor averse to them, but always disports with the Self and takes pleasure therein.

Undiluted &c.—i. e. Absolute Bliss.

Neither attached &c.—Compare Gita XIV. 22-25.

धुषां देहव्यथा त्यक्त्वा बालः क्रीडति वस्तुनि ।
सथैव विद्वान् रमते निर्ममो निरहं सुखी ॥५३७॥

537. A child plays with his things forgetting hunger and bodily pains; exactly so the man of realisation takes pleasure in the Reality, without ideas of 'I' or 'mine,' and is happy.

चिन्ताशून्यमदेव्यभक्षमशनं पानं सरिद्वारिषु
स्वातन्त्र्येण निरंकुशा स्थितिरभीर्निद्रा
श्मशाने वने ।
वस्त्रं क्षालनशोषणादिरहितं दिग्वास्तु शय्या मही
संचारो निगमान्तवीथिषु विदां क्रीडा परे
ब्रह्मणि ॥५३८॥

538. Men of realisation have their food without anxiety or humiliation, by begging, and their drink from the water of rivers; they live freely and independently, and sleep without fear in cremation grounds or forests; their clothing may be the quarters themselves, which need no washing and drying, or any bark, etc.; the earth is their bed; they roam in the avenue of Vedanta; while their pastime is in the Supreme Brahman.

[This is a splendid setting forth of the free life of a true Sannyasin.

Without fear—because of their identification with Brahman, the One without a second.

Quarters &c.—He goes nude, that is.

Any bark etc.—this is suggested by the word वा in the text.

Bark or cloth, anything may be their dress.

विमानमालम्ब्य शरीरमेतद्
भुनक्त्यशेषान्विषयानुपस्थिताद् ।
परच्छया बालवदात्मवेत्ता
योऽव्यक्तलिङ्गोऽननुपक्तवाह्यः ॥५३९॥

539. The knower of Atman, who wears no outward mark and is unattached to external things, rests on this body without identification, and experiences all

sorts of sense-objects as they come, through others' wish, like a child.

[*No outward mark*: Hence it is so difficult to know them.

Sense-objects—food etc.

As they come—in the working out of Prârabdha work.

Through others' wish—as asked by his devotees or friends.]

दिग्म्बरो वापि च साम्बरो वा
त्वग्म्बरो वापि चिद्म्बरस्थः ।
उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा
पिशाचवद्वापि चरत्यवन्याम् ॥५४०॥

540. Established in the ethereal plane of Knowledge Absolute, he wanders in the world, sometimes like a mad man, sometimes like a child and at other times like a ghoul, having no other clothes on his person except the quarters, or sometimes wearing clothes, or perhaps skins at other times.

[*Ghoul*—with no sense of cleanliness. It should be noted that these are some of the devices to avoid the company of vulgar people.

Skins—the word in the text also means 'bark.']

कामान्निष्कामरूपी संश्रत्येकचरो मुनिः ।
स्वात्मनैव सदा तुष्टः स्वयं सर्वात्मना स्थितः ॥५४१॥
541. The sage, living alone, enjoys sense-objects, being the very embodiment of desirelessness,—always satisfied with his own Self, and himself present as the All.

[*As the All*—knowing his identity with the whole universe, as Atman.]

कचिन्मूढो विद्वान् कचिदपि महाराजविभवः
कचिद्भ्राम्तः सौम्यः कचिदजगराचारकखितः ॥
कचित्पात्रीभूतः कचिद्वसतः काप्यकिदित-
श्रत्येवं प्राज्ञः सततपरमानन्दसुखितः ॥५४२॥

542. Sometimes a fool, sometimes a sage, sometimes possessed of regal splen-

dour: sometimes wandering, sometimes behaving like a motionless python, sometimes wearing a benignant expression; sometimes honoured, sometimes insulted, sometimes unknown;—thus lives the man of realisation, ever happy with Supreme Bliss.

[These are some of the impressions which the phases of a saint's life produce upon the outside world. People judge him diversely, but he is supremely indifferent to what others think of or do towards him.

Prithu—which seldom moves but waits for the food to come to it.]

(To be continued.)

A NATIONAL POET OF BENGAL.

(A STUDY.)

HERE are two, the *Prana* and the *Virat*, the one who is the seed, the other who is the full-grown tree; what that one implants, the other blows into leaf and fruit, beauty and bloom. If Chandidas is the seed-poet of love, in the national literature of Bengal, in her national life-culture Chaitanya is its full-ripe master-expression. So also in the field of Shakti-worship, the seed-ideas which Sri Ramakrishna in a later age developed into perfect maturity and living realisation, was sown nearly two hundred years ago by Sri Ramprasad, travelling from mouth to mouth and ingrained into the very vitals of our village heart are an invaluable national treasure. If Chandidas has plucked the roots of love from a higher heaven and transplanted it in our national soul through his songs which are the living records of his *Sadhana*, so also has Ramprasad, the eternal child, brought down the germ-ideas of the Mother-cult from the plane of dreams to the plane of practical spirituality. As the one nursed in his bosom an age of Love, so the other involved in his heart an age of Shakti. The twin poet-priests of Bengal's national culture deserve immortal memorials in the temple of the national heart. Had

we been a fitter progeny, we should have paid a worthier reverence and conserved their gifts in eternal frames of gold.

Ramprasad was a national poet, for he created a national literature. Ramprasad was a national *sadhaka*, for he has left the greatest spiritual legacy that one has ever conferred upon his people—the Mother's Name, in living letters of fire, every syllable of which is surcharged with his spiritual power, his burning *sadhana* and realisation. He was not only a *sadhaka*, but the *siddha*-child of the Divine Mother and the *mantram* he has left on the nation's lips is the immortal *siddha mantram* of our national Yoga and *sadhana*.

The great bard of Kumardhatta, an insignificant village down the Bhagirathi, in the Halisabar purganna of the 24 Purgannas, was born between the Saka-eras 1640 and perhaps in a family belonging to the Vaidya caste. But all is misty and shadowed in oblivion and nothing can be very surely known or told about his birth, parentage, caste or early life. Ramprasad lives really in his songs and all that can be gathered about his life from his songs and many-voiced rumours afloat in the neighbourhood and abroad, can be given in a very uncertain language to curious readers. We shall therefore leave that difficult task to abler hands and meanwhile busy ourselves within our scanty columns with a brief study of his immortal songs.

Kaviranjan Ramprasad's first song has an interesting history attached to it. He was then a mere urchin yet in his teens, a poor orphan, charged after the death of his father with the heavy burden of a many-branched Bengali family on his shoulders and he had to accept service, it is said, in the house of some wealthy gentleman of Calcutta, as a clerk. The young lad of deep spiritual yearnings from the first day of his work, while immersed in his solitary thoughts burst into a song, burdened with his heartfelt devotion and unconsciously, the pen in his hand moved amidst the account-books and scribbled out a lyric song of original melody, music, and beauty. "O give me, Mother, the charge of Thy purse. I shall never prove an embezzler." This was the first line of his song, inscribed on the first page of his account *Khata*. The devoted child, forced to

work at arithmetics, had his heart set elsewhere and he longed to keep an immortal account not of material dust and drum, but the eternal treasure of his Mother's feet. Imagine the wonder of his employer, when he came upon the performance of the boy! But the Mother's will was more wonderful and Ramprasad, instead of being turned out in anger by the noble-hearted rich man, who had seen through those black lines and in appreciative admiration had understood and penetrated into the heart of him who could produce those lines, was gifted with a life-long pension of thirty rupees for the support of himself and his family. Wonderful, indeed, were both Hindu heart and Hindu system of spiritual culture!

The caged bird was now free to swim in the infinite sky. He made himself a *Pancha-mundi Asan*, a celebrated *Tantric* seat upon five kinds of skulls buried underground, similar to the one, which Sri Ramakrishna sat upon in Dakshineswar during his days of *sadhana* and there plunged himself into a fathomless sea of devotion. Soon the fame spread and people flocked to his place to hear his sweet songs and it was not long before it drew the attraction of Maharaja Krishna Chanda, the Vikramaditya of Bengal, a noble patron of learning, and he wanted to take the powerful bard with him to Navadwip and there give him a reverential place in his court beside another mighty poet Rai Gunakar Bharat Chandra of undying fame. The simple-hearted poet was not a man of letters primarily, a votary of Muse, not Saraswati, but Kali, the Power-Mother was his Deity. He refused the great Maharaja's request and chose to remain a completely free child of nature and shunned the royal court with an abrupt answer. The powerful Zemindar, far from being displeased, admired the noble courage of the man, and as a token of his appreciation made him a liberal grant of hundred 'bighas' of rent-free land. In addition, he was given the title of Kavi-ranjan, which comes down to this day with his name. Wonderful again were Hindu heart and the influence of Hindu spirituality! It is said, that Ramprasad wrote about a lakh of lyric-songs. "O Mother, I have reared a lakh of my spokesmen to Thee, what more lies within my capacity?" The poet was not ungrateful to the Maharaja, he finished a mythical ballad. *Kali-kirtan* by title

and made a gift of it to the honoured name of the noble-minded Zemindar. He wrote two other poems. *Siva-kirtan* and *Krishna-kirtan*, only broken remnants of which are extant, but authorship was not his avocation. "My books shall toss on the grounds, I shall drown myself in songs."

There is pretty story current about the wonderful magic influence of his melodies, which subdued even such a heart as that of Nawab Sirajuddaulla. The Nawab was out in a launch on a river-trip under dusk. The bard was along with Maharaja Krishna Chandra in another Buzra, singing his usual songs. The Nawab heard from a distance and at once summoned the poet to his own Buzra, and bade him sing a song to him. He complied and thinking that it would most please his Excellency, he began a Hindi *Guzal*. The Nawab nodded in dissent and said, "Not that but the one, you were singing interspersed with the word Kali, Kali." Then Ramprasad understood and fell into his deeper rapture and burst into a flood of divine melody, which melted the heart of the Ruler of Bengal, and all that were present.

In his own village of Kumarhati, there was a rival poet, Ayodhyarama by name and a Vaishnava by religion. In those days, there was a bitter rivalry between the followers of the Shakta and the Vaishnava cults in Bengal. The two *sadhakas* were however fast friends at heart, but often indulged themselves in amusing controversy in rhymes, each trying to put the other to ridicule, to the amusement of the simple-hearted village-folk. While Ramprasad sang, "This world is a place of doubtful taste; O brother, I toss in the bazar of joy." Aju Gosain, as he was popularly called, in his witty retort, corrected the *Tantric* by his fuller Vaishnava views singing, "This world is an abode of felicity, O you, I do eat and drink and revel in a merry fun.....O you *Seu*. (Ramprasad's family surname) of little knowledge, you can understand only in a very crude manner. When Ramprasad said, "The remains of Karma, the dregs beneath an oil pot, and the remnants of a mad man's mania, do not melt away even in death,"—his astute rival would make of him fun as he would sing, "yes the rope of Karma the inborn habit of pilfering and along with these the drowsiness of intoxication cannot be avoided

even in death! It is needless to say in that Ajo was flinging a very prickly and pungent reflection of sarcasm at the God-intoxicated great Tantrika, whose Sadhana enjoined on him strong drink as one amongst the five "Makras" of Tantric practice, the physical emblem, according to its view, representing divine drunkenness of soul. The wit and depth of thought displayed in these mutual attacks was a thing of pure enjoyment to village people. Often Maharaja Krishna Chandra enjoyed the controversy, at times, when things appeared to be carried to the extreme, he would invite the Vaishnava poet and forbid him to compose songs any more, out of deference to his greathearted rival — The Standard Bearer.

REVIEWS.

The Problem of National Education in India, by
Lala Lajpat Rai. Messrs. Ganesh & Co.,
Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 4.

This book of 247 pages from the pen of one who has been associated with educational institutions and interests of this country deserves the attention of all educationists. In it the author has brought together by quotations from acknowledged authorities the recent thought on educational topics, its methods, scope and ideals from the writings of the educational thinkers of the West; it therefore has an interest for all who desire to bring up our educational institutions to the level of the most recent advanced thought, ideals and methods of the day. Lately a survey of the educational machinery of England was undertaken by Mr. Fisher, and methods for improving, extending, and strengthening it was embodied in the form of a Bill. In a chapter of this book the author brings out the principal lines of educational reform and the changed angle of vision with regard to education as embodied in Mr. Fisher's Educational studies. The chief points of emphasis are the recognition of the great value of Education in the life of a nation and the imperative necessity of extending it, so that the nation may get the highest value out of life and increase national efficiency in all departments of activity. For

education is the most fruitful investment giving a return of the highest value in the increased efficiency of national life. The second idea about education is that a more all-round education of the whole man, spiritually, intellectually and physically must supplement the older over-emphasis on merely literary education, and that mind, body and character should be harmoniously developed by Education, so that it may be best employed to the advantage of the community and of the individual as a member of it. As a result of this, as on the one hand the claims of industry drawing away the juvenile population to special callings before a grounding in general knowledge and mental equipment has been made are sought to be curbed by providing a school-life for a sound ground-work of general knowledge; on the other hand the evil of education unrelated to the future work of life is remedied by providing for practical instruction at appropriate stages and by a variety of courses to fit a man for the line of work and calling to which his aptitudes and turn of mind take him—to enable him to reap the greatest benefit from life. Another great item of educational reform is the great need of physical education and of improving the physique of the children and juvenile persons under instruction in order to get the fullest benefit of education. In the application of these principles of reform to Indian Educational conditions, the author emphasises the duty of the State to provide for education as one of its first functions, but he does not minimise the importance of the educational activities of private agencies. He emphasises the need of technical and industrial education, and the provision for the physical development of the young. In a different chapter the author points out the importance which the teaching of patriotism has assumed in the national policy of Western countries, regularly imparted as part of the general curriculum. The inculcation of the sentiments of patriotism and loyalty to country will enable the citizens to take an intelligent interest in and bear with enthusiastic loyalty all the burdens and duties of citizenship. This is also fostered by the patriotic teaching of history. The author also advocates the teaching of patriotism in our schools and colleges for quickening national consciousness and the sense of pride in the country's past and future. But he is careful

in warning against chauvinism or fostering the spirit of aggressive nationalism, which has been in some cases its sad defection. Intense and devoted patriotism is consistent with love of humanity. In India this side of the teaching should take the form of inculcating love of India, its material and physical aspects—rivers, hills, landscapes, scenes, also its cultural achievements, the heroic figures of history, its language, tradition, laws and customs—all that constitutes its individual character. But the love of India should be taught as that of the whole of the nation, regardless of the various religious creeds and castes—in short of the universal aspects of national and cultural life, the common basis, apart from its regional, racial elements.

In the chapter on Physical Education, the author lays stress on the great importance which it has assumed in educational schemes in view of the modern strenuous conditions of life making a great demand on the vitality of the race and hence the necessity of securing and conserving the health. The author describes in detail the items in the health-programme of the recent educational schemes of the West. It includes first, health examination for the detection of physical defects in the pupil, mental examination co-relating the programme of the pupil with his dominant interest and the grades of studies with grades in physical education, secondly, a healthful environment in home and school, thirdly, instruction in health problems, fourthly, physical activities, with different kinds of exercises. The above considerations are collected by the author by a study of educational institutions, methods in Western countries and we would profit by digesting them and seeking to apply them to the solution of our educational problems. The Lalaji deserves the thanks of his countrymen for bringing them within their reach.

With regard to the bearing our national and cultural ideals on the Educational problems we are afraid the author has been led by the view of ultra-progressiveness on Western lines to a mistaken estimate of their value, bearings and possibilities. We cannot believe with him that our religion and philosophy all tend towards negation of life, or that only the gospel of life, in its crude, raw, vitalistic sense is the only saving truth needed to resurrect us. We believe that

our culture, religion and philosophy, have great practical possibilities and point beyond the appearances of outward life, deepening it to the highest possibilities of Spirit or God—the ultimate goal of all human endeavours. Indeed a mere secular, mundane view of human life and endeavours have brought the present material-economic civilisation to a blind alley, and it is now trying to escape from its limitations by opening beyond the horizon of secularism to the possibilities of the Spirit. It is in this direction that the higher mind of humanity in its collective march is opening, and it would be a folly that containing the secret of the knowledge—the Brahma-vidya—enshrined in our Sanskrit literature, we should eschew it and follow the same exclusive concentration of view and effort on outward life and progress and commit the same mistake of one-sidedness from which the West is trying to escape. For the spiritual nature and destiny of man, representing his basic truth of being, cannot be suppressed or whittled away in the interests of his vital interests, and mankind will be the poorer for it, and will commit grievous mistakes in life. No more can over-emphasis of Spirit be allowed to suppress practicality of life for the majority of people without devitalizing them. But both the interests can be served in the right measure and balance, life taken for what it is worth, its disciplines accepted, its values worked out, but only with the ultimate goal of unfolding the spiritual possibilities. For this to be successful, spirituality must be the basis even of life's activities, in order that the latter may not degenerate into vitalistic exaggerations and riot of passions and desires but be the proper rhythms of Spirit. Therefore the author's diatribe against Sadhus, Fakirs, monks and his deploring of the spirit of renunciation in the Scriptures of the world is too crude and material; for they have a place and must form part of a healthy and comprehensive scheme of living and culture.

The Saint Durgacharan Nag. The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras Price Re. 1.

This is a book describing the incidents of the life of a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. Although passed in the obscurity and unknownness of a householder's life in a remote village of

Eastern Bengal, still the greatness of heart and soul showed forth in a passionate, self-forgetful service of others, in a concentrated thought on and living in God, constituting a source of spiritual illumination to others. Lives like these bring home to us, the nobility of living and opportunity of service and enlightenment which even the humble circumstances of life offer to a really **God-anointed soul**. Never a predominant spiritual culture obtains on earth, making possible a more wide-spread spirituality in the lives of collective humanity and a more general turning to God as the centre of life's activities and yearnings. It will certainly be presaged by the creation of such consecrated lives in numbers among men, taking their place in human society and diffusing illumination and spiritualising the life of its members—not by any mere adjustment of the outward mechanism of society. The life of the subject of this is indeed one of an ideal *grihasta*, whose whole soul has gone to the Divine and expressing itself in a consecrated service of humanity as the embodied Narayan and bringing the wealth of spiritual inheritance to the lives of men around.

Mundaka and Mandukya Upanishads, by Swami Sharvananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Price 12 annas. With Sanskrit Text; Paraphrase with word-by-word literal translation, English rendering and comments.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE *Ardha-kumbh Mela* will be held next year in Hardwar in the month of March, 1921. The full Kumbha is held after an interval of 12 years and Ardha (half) after an interval of 6 years. The Kumbha-mela is one of the most imposing and sacred melas of India, in which Sadhus from different parts of India come together and meet. The most imposing processions are held of the different orders; and it being an occasion when Sadhus who are generally scattered at other times assemble together, opportunity is found for meet-

ing with remarkable personalities among the Sadhus—that most wonderful and fascinating element of the Indian peoples.

THE Vedanta Society, San Francisco, California, the Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, under the leadership of Swami Prakashananda is growing rapidly and doing useful work in propagating Vedanta philosophy to the Western parts of the United States. Lately its financial difficulties have been reduced and it has got an increase of membership varying round one hundred. Swami Prakashananda is working untiringly to further the cause of Vedanta in the West.

A new Ashrama has been established in 86 Hurish Chandra Mukherjee Street, Bhowanipur, Calcutta, on the 17th Dec. 1920, by Swami Shivananda. The picture of Sri Ramakrishna has been installed and arrangements for worship have been made. We hope that the Ashrama will be an instrument for the diffusion of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the light of spirituality among the inhabitants of the northern part of the city.

Manager's Notice.

It has been decided to improve the paper of the foreign edition of Prabuddha Bharata from the coming year. The annual foreign subscription from 1921 will be Rs. 4 (about 8s. 6d.). It is hoped our foreign readers will welcome the improvement. Should anyone like to discontinue subscribing to the paper, the Manager will be much obliged by a timely intimation. Foreign subscribers who are in arrears are requested to kindly send their dues at an early date.

Manager, P. B.

Mayavati P. O., Dt. Almora, India.