



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

# Awakened India

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उचिष्ठत आमत मान्य वराधिपतेवत ।

*Katha Uda. I. m. 4.*

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हिन्दी संसार में ब्रह्मी चीज ।

# समन्वय

वार्षिक मासिकपत्र ।

मैत्रेजी दंगला से अनभिन्न हिन्दीभाषी जनता को अपूर्व लाभ । श्रीरामकृष्ण परमहंसदेव और उनके जगत् विख्यात शिष्य श्रीस्वामी विवेकानन्दजी के सद उपदेशों और व्याख्यानो का रसास्वादन कीजिये । दर्शन, समाज, शिक्षा और शिल्प-कला सम्बन्धी उत्तमोत्तम लेखों से भी विभूषित ।

माघ मास से प्रकाशित ।

वार्षिक मूल्य डाकव्यय सहित ३) मात्र ।

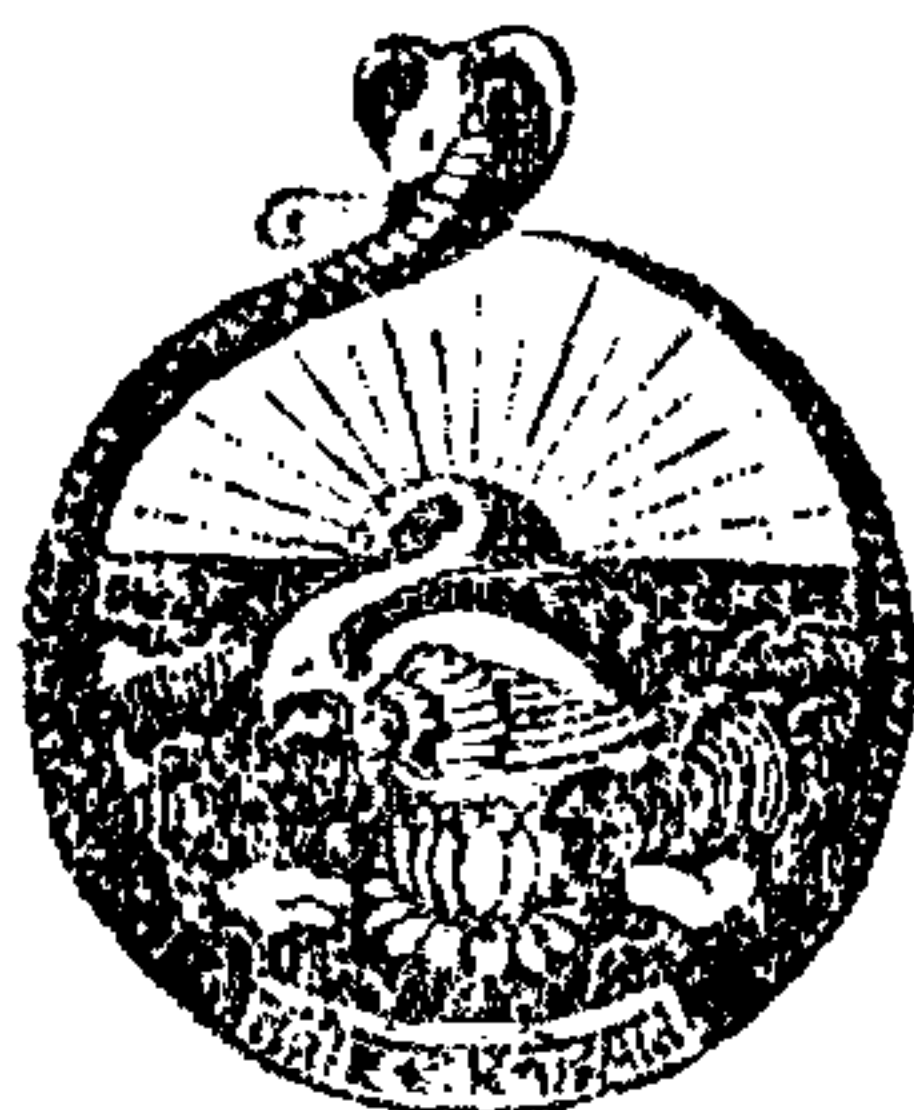
पत्रिम रुपया भेजकर ग्राहक बनिये या वी. पी. भेजने की आज्ञा आज ही लिख भेजिये ।

लिखने का पता—व्यवस्थापक, "समन्वय" ।

नं० २८ कालेज स्ट्रीट मार्केट, कलकत्ता ।

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरानिबोधत

*Katha Upan. I. iii. 4*

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA.\*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

**I**N order that a nation may rise, it must have a high ideal. Now, the highest ideal is, of course, the abstract Brahman. But as you all cannot be inspired by an abstract ideal, you must have a personal ideal. You have got that in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. In order that the Vedanta may now come to everyone, there must be a person whose life is the living embodiment of the principles of the Vedanta, and who is, besides, in sympathy with the present generation. This is fulfilled in Sri Ramakrishna. Whether one accepts him as a Sadhu or as an Avatara, does not matter.

Sri Ramakrishna used to consider himself as

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\* Notes from Class-talks.

an Incarnation in the ordinary sense of the term. I used to say he was Brahman in the Vedantic sense. But just before his passing away, when he was suffering from great difficulty in breathing, and as I was cogitating in my mind whether he could even in that pain say that he was an Incarnation, he said to me, "He who was Rama, and was Krishna, has now actually become Ramakrishna—but not in your Vedantic sense."

He used to love me intensely, which made many quite jealous of me. He knew one's character by sight, and never changed his opinion. He could perceive super-sensuous things, and judge one's character aright, while we try to know one's character by reasoning, with the result that our judgments are often fallacious. He called some persons his *Antarangas* or as belonging to his 'inner circle,' and he used to teach them the secrets of his own life and those of Yoga. His teachings to the outsiders or *Bahirangas* consisted mainly of those parables and utterances now known as 'Sayings.' He used to prepare the young men of the former class for his work, and though many complained to him about them, he paid no heed. I may have perhaps a better opinion of a *Bahiranga* than an *Antaranga* through his actions, but I have a superstitious regard for the latter. "Love me, love my dog," as they say. I love that Brahmin priest intensely and therefore love whatever he used to love, whatever he used to regard! It is not true that those who have not seen him will not attain salvation, neither is it true that a man who has seen him three times will attain Mukti.

Devotion as taught by Narada, he used to preach to the masses as also to those who were incapable of any higher training. He used generally to teach dualism. As a rule, he never taught Advaitism. But he taught it to me. I had been a dualist before.

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### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**L**IFE depends on two factors—the subjective and the objective,—and both of these undergo continuous changes. It is a well-known biological law that perfect adaptability to the environment means perfect life, and if it were possible for an organism always to adjust itself to the everchanging circumstances in the midst of which it is placed it would certainly enjoy a life that would be indefinitely long. This law is equally applicable to individuals as well as to groups of individuals—to societies and nations. The course of life is like the movement of a wave. It has its rises and falls, periods of advancement and degeneration. Progress that is never followed by any backward movement is scientifically impossible like motion in a straight line. It is the resultant of these two movements that constitutes the course of evolution. The juncture of these opposite motions—the period of transition—is the most critical point in life. For at this time is determined the course of life, which may either lead one towards perfection, the ultimate goal of life, or towards degeneration, ending ultimately in annihilation in case the downward course cannot be timely arrested

Individuals and nations, having a purpose to fulfil in the divine economy of the universe, receive fresh impulses from living forces which effect marvellous changes in their thought-life, and infuse new spirit in them to bring about a new adjustment, thus giving them a greater stability and consequently a longer lease of life. The most powerful forces to carry on this re-adjustment come from the great teachers of mankind. These teachers are not the products of chance. They are the special manifestations of the Soul of the Universe. "They are," in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "like actors whose play is over but who after their work is done return to please others. These great ones assume our forms and limitations in order to teach us." It is of these great souls that the Scripture speaks of as—

तीर्णा स्वयं भीमभवार्षव जनाः अहेतुना अन्यान्पि तारयन्तः ।

"Having themselves crossed the mighty ocean of birth and death, they try to save others also out of their infinite mercy for mercy's sake." Sri Ramakrishna was undoubtedly one of the most glorious examples of this type of God-men.

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\* \* \*

In an age when the tidal waves of materialism threatened to sweep away before it all that is noble and of permanent value to the human race and tended to make humanity forget the eternal glory of the God-in-man, when the burden of blind forms and dogmas seemed to stifle the very soul of religion and engage the attention of mankind more than the spirit of religion itself, the world certainly stood in sore need of one who could demonstrate

the eternal glory of the Atman and proclaim with all the intensity of his soul that the true spirit of religion is universal, that religion is realisation and does not consist in the mere observance of rituals and ceremonials. Further the ancient and glorious civilisation of India was greatly endangered. The grand teachings of the Rishis and the saving gospels of the Prophets came to be evaluated as objects of laughter, to be branded as superstitions, pure and simple, by a people dazzled by the glamour of the present-day materialistic civilisation of the West. Renunciation, the real background of all the religions of the world, came to be discredited and book-learning became the badge of education and culture. It is at this hour that Sri Ramakrishna, himself an illiterate of illiterates as the world understands it, was born to vindicate the teachings of the Eternal Religion and preach to the world dominated by lust and gold what the Upanishads has been proclaiming from times immemorial:—“Neither through work, nor through progeny nor through wealth, but through renunciation alone can permanent peace and blessedness be attained.”

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\* \*

The greatest of the achievements of Sri Ramakrishna was that he proved in his own wonderful life that religion is a reality, that the realisation of the Atman—the real Self of man—is truer than the empirical reality of the external world. “Sir, have you seen God?” was the question put to Sri Ramakrishna by Swami Vivekananda, the greatest of his disciples, at their first meeting. “Yes, my

boy, I see Him, just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense"—replied the Master. And it is this God-vision that brings peace that passeth all understanding, and blessedness that neither waxes nor wanes. To man, buffeted by the troubles and tribulations of life, tormented by the cares and anxieties with which his earthly existence is inextricably associated, there is open no other way leading to supreme happiness. Sri Ramakrishna's life is indeed a living commentary to the great teaching of the Upanishads:

तमेवैकं जानय अत्मानम्, अमृतस्यैष सेतुः—

“Know the One Self. This is the way to immortality.”

\* \* \*

To a world troubled by sectarian hatred and intolerance Sri Ramakrishna's life presented a grand synthesis. His unique personality embodied the full development and perfect harmony of head and heart. He represented the harmonious blending of the utmost possibilities of Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga. He was the symbol of the unity of all religions and creeds, whether monistic, qualified-monistic or dualistic. The great need of the present times—when the impact of the Eastern and the Western civilisations is bringing about a remarkable change in the life and thought of all races, when every land is coming to be the meeting place of diverse nationalities, cultures and religions,—is the spirit of toleration and mutual understanding which Sri Ramakrishna preached by practice as well as by precept. He showed in his own superhuman life that it is possible for one to



be fully true to one's own religion and culture and at the same time to be in perfect sympathy with all schools of thought, nay, to accept all religious creeds as true paths leading to the one common goal of humanity—the realisation of the Divine. The great task before him was to intensify the spiritual life of mankind, and thus to save the benighted humanity from perishing between the Scylla of scepticism on the one hand and the Charybdis of bigotry and exclusiveness on the other.

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\* \* \*

Speaking of his Master says Swami Vivekananda —“The idea of sex and the idea of money were the two things, he thought, that prevented him from seeing the Mother.” These are the greatest impediments standing at present in the way of all human progress also. Love of power and possessions dominates the world to-day. It is for its sake that individuals and nations are fighting unto death with one another, bringing untold misery to mankind. It is the root-cause of the terrible struggles that are being waged between the dominating and the subject races, between labour and capital, between the privileged and the non-privileged in different parts of the world. In spite of his boasting of science and vaunting of knowledge the modern man is utterly unable to solve the many intricate problems of his life and attain any permanent peace. This is possible only in case he gives up his inordinate greed for gold and power. Herein lies the significance of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings which put great stress on the renunciation of Kauchana, the very touch of which he could not even bear during the latter days of his wonderful life.

At the dawn of a new era in which women are destined to play a great part in the regeneration of the world at large, Sri Ramakrishna realised and preached the doctrine of the Motherhood of women, that the Divine Mother Herself lives in all female forms, that the worship of the Mother in women is the key to freedom and bliss while to look upon them as objects of enjoyment, to worship them for the sake of youth and beauty is the greatest dishonour to true womanhood and the surest way to spiritual ruin. We see before our eyes how women are slowly coming out of their seclusion even in India. We find them in schools and colleges, on pulpits and public platforms and in various departments of life working for the national weal side by side with men. No power can stop the spirit of the age and no time, therefore, needed more to realise the Divine in women as well as in men, to ensure the maintenance of a spiritual atmosphere even in the midst of the manifold activities of modern times, in which all persons, irrespective of caste, colour or sex, are to join hands to bring about a new order all over the world. And without perfect purity of character and motive the great work can never be accomplished. It is possible only if all men and women, following in the footsteps of the great Prophet of Dakshineswar, try to realise that all beings are potentially divine, that the Self is sexless as the Sruti declares:

नैव स्त्री न पुमानेष न चैवायं नपुंसकः ।

यद्यच्छरीरमादत्ते तेन तेन स युज्यते ॥

“The Atman has no sex; It is neither feminine, nor masculine nor neuter. Whatever body It takes, with that It is joined.” Thus the great message of

Sri Ramakrishna to mankind is "Be spiritual first of all and realise the Truth for yourself." And this was the message of India of the glorious past and this will be the message of India that is-to-be, of India completely rejuvenated and fully awakened to the consciousness of the high mission that has ever been her proud privilege to fulfil in the divine scheme of the universe:

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S SANNYASA

[ Rendered and condensed from Swami Saradananda's  
"Lilaprasanga." ]

**“YOU** seem to be a fit aspirant. Would you learn from me the mysteries of the Advaita Sadhana?”—thus did Totapuri address Sri Ramakrishna at their very first meeting in the open portico of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. A new monk arrived there and many clustered around him. Sri Ramakrishna too was present, a young man in plain clothes, with nothing particular about him. But no sooner was the intuitive sight of Totapuri riveted on his beaming countenance, radiant with the halo of austerity, than the monk could at once realise that he was not an ordinary man. Amazed and wondering the monk scanned the person of Sri Ramakrishna and then put to him the above query. “I don’t know what to do. Everything my Mother knows. I shall carry on your behest if She wills it”—replied Sri Ramakrishna to the interrogation of the monk, tall and naked, with matted hairs flowing over his back. “Go then, my boy,” again said Totapuri, “Ask your mother about it; for I shall not tarry here long.”

Sri Ramakrishna calmly walked to the Kali Temple and in a state of trance heard the Mother saying, "Yes, my child, go and learn it from him. The monk has come here to teach you the Vedanta Sadhana." In a state of semi-consciousness and with a face illumined with joy Sri Ramakrishna hurried back to Totapuri and said to him about the permission of his Mother.

Totapuri next told Sri Ramakrishna that he must be initiated with proper ceremony into the sacred order of the Sannyasin before beginning to practise the Advaita Sadhana. He should leave behind all the insignia of the present state of his life—the tuft, the sacred thread and all that denoted that he was a Brahmin or so-and-so. Sri Ramakrishna hesitated for a moment and then said that he had no objection to obey the command if it were possible for him to go through the ceremony secretly. Otherwise his poor mother, bent down under the weight of infirmity as well as of many family bereavements, would be agonised to see such a heart-rending scene. "That's well," said the good monk, "I shall initiate you secretly. Now let us wait for the auspicious moment."

The happy day arrived at last. Sri Ramakrishna performed during day time the Sraddha ceremony of his ancestors. He next offered oblation for the gratification of his own soul—henceforward considered dead to this world—and with it gave up all hankerings for enjoyment whether in this or in other worlds. Further, he collected various articles as directed by Totapuri and waited at the sacred Panchavati for the holiest moment of his life, when the highest flight of the Vedanta realisations was to be revealed to him. The day passed in pleasant expectation and the night too wore on. In the hushed silence of the early dawn, when the

gentle twilight cast on all sides a dim spiritual light, the Guru and the disciple met each other in the hut under the sacred Panchavati. After the preliminary ceremony was gone through the holy sacrificial fire was lighted. Grave and sombre chanting of *mantrams*, uttered many a time, from times immemorial by successive lines of Gurus during the most sacred occasion when the Sadhaka's life was to be completely consecrated to the realisation of God—the divine dedication that has still maintained the proud position of India as the spiritual teacher of the world—resounded sonorously through the silent groves of the Panchavati at that still hour of the early dawn. The sound reached the sweet splashes of the holy Ganges and travelling over her rippled bosom, still trembling by its gentle touch, gave her, as it were, a happy lease of life. With the vitality of a new strength, she flowed on melodiously proclaiming in a sweet and low tone the glad tidings of a real Sadhaka about to enter into a new life by renouncing everything for the welfare of India and the uplift of the world at large. The Guru uttered the holy Mantrams, the disciple first heard them attentively and then repeated them after him in a sweet voice and clear accent. With every chanting, offerings were thrown into the lambent flame of the sacrificial fire. The holy Viraja Sacrifice was completed; the disciple said lifting his high voice after the Guru "I give up all hopes of enjoyments in this and in the celestial worlds. I give assurance of safety to all beings of the universe." He arose from his seat—radiant, rejoicing, strong—and offered into the holy fire, still burning with a flickering flame, the tufted hairs and the sacred thread—the insignia of his past life, now dead and gone. Totapuri gave him the *Gerua Koupina* and cloth, the emblem of his new life.

Then the Guru began teaching Sri Ramakrishna the cardinal truths of the Advaita Philosophy. "Brahman alone," Totapuri said addressing the disciple, "Ever-pure, Ever-wise and Ever-free, untrammelled by time, space or the law of causation is true. Though seemingly divided into Name and Form through the instrumentality of the inscrutable Maya, apparently capable of performing even the impossible, Brahman, in reality, is not so. Because when the Sadhaka is merged in the beatitude of Samadhi, he does not experience even the barest trace of time and space or Name and Form—the products of Maya. What falls within the category of Name and Form cannot be real. Do leave that off. Pierce through the snare of Name and Form and rush out from it with the irresistible force of a lion. Dive deep in search of the Truth—the Atman—which is always your true Self, and be firmly established in It through Samadhi. You shall then find that the phenomena of Name and Form would vanish away into nothingness and this 'little' self would merge and disappear in the Cosmic Consciousness. You shall forthwith realise the Indivisible Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, as your own Self. That knowledge by which the subject experiences the object or a man sees or hears another man, is paltry and mean. What is mean is despicable. That can never give supreme felicity. But the Knowledge by which a man does not see another man, nor sense any outside object, is Great and Real. That alone enables a man to enjoy the Supreme Bliss. How can you know through the mind or the intellect what shines always in the heart of all as the Eternal Knower?"

Reasoning and arguing in this way, Totapuri tried that day to fix the mind of Sri Ramakrishna in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He was determined, as

Sri Ramakrishna said later on, to make the disciple transcend the many spiritual experiences of the past period of his Sadhana and make his concentration steadfast in the Pure Self. "Just after my initiation," Sri Ramakrishna used to say, referring to the incident of his first Nirvikalpa Samadhi, "the Nengta\* began teaching me the various conclusions of the Advaita Vedanta and asked me to withdraw the mind from all objects, gross and subtle and fix the soul totally in the Pure Spirit. But it so happened with me that in spite of all my attempts I could not transcend the domain of Name and Form, nor bring my mind to a state of Pure Consciousness where no distinction is recognised between the subject and the object. Easily I withdrew the mind from all other objects but at last the ever-familiar figure of the Blissful Mother, radiant and resplendent, appeared before me as a living reality and foiled all my efforts to pass beyond the realm of relativity. I pondered over the conclusions of the Advaita Vedanta and sat to meditate; but again and again the same phenomenon repeated itself till at last I almost despaired of attaining the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. I opened my eyes and said to the Nengta, being practically hopeless, "I am undone! I cannot completely make my mind unconditioned nor am I able to merge myself totally in the meditation of the Pure Self." He was greatly exasperated and exclaimed in a tone of bitter reproach, "What! You can't do it! Let me see." He looked around and saw a

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\* The word literally means 'the naked one.' Sri Ramakrishna used this epithet when referring to Totapuri. This is due to the fact that Totapuri belonged to a class of monks who go about without anything to cover their body, and also because a disciple generally does not speak of his Guru by name.

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piece of broken glass. He took it up and forcibly piercing its sharp edge at a point between my two eye-brows, said, "Withdraw your mind and concentrate it on this point alone." With a stern determination, I again sat to meditate. No sooner did the figure of the Mother of the Universe come before my vision, than I imagined knowledge as a sword and with it, mentally severed the figure into two. There remained nothing to obstruct the soaring of my mind which at once rushed upwards and transcended the realm of Name and Form. I lost myself in the Consciousness of the Quiescent Immense."

When Sri Ramakrishna thus sank deeply in the beatitude of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Totapuri sat by him for a long time. Then without making any noise whatsoever he came out of the room and closed the door from outside and locked it lest any body might disturb the disciple within. He walked over to his usual seat under the Panchavati and eagerly awaited the call of Sri Ramakrishna to open the door. The day passed on and the night covered the earth with her black drapery. Another day dawned and was followed by night. Thus three days and three nights passed off, but there came no call to open the door. Totapuri's astonishment knew no bounds. He himself left his seat, opened the lock and entered the room to learn about the condition of the disciple. He saw before him Sri Ramakrishna seated in the very same posture as he saw when leaving the room three days ago. There was no manifestation of life in the body, but the calm and serene countenance was radiant with a divine illumination. Totapuri at once realised that the disciple was still dead to the objective world—his mind absorbed in the Self steadfast like the unfluttered flame of the lamp



Totapuri, an adept in the mystery of Samadhi, stood dumbfounded and thought within himself, "Is it, then, true? Is it possible that this saint has attained, only in one day, the Nirvikalpa Samadhi which I could realise after a strenuous practice of long forty years?" Doubt crossed his mind. Totapuri again began examining the body of Sri Ramakrishna with utmost scrutiny. He minutely marked if the heart was beating and the nostrils were drawing in or giving out even a particle of air. Again and again he touched the motionless body of the disciple fixed like a log of wood. There was no change or modification in external symptoms, nor was there any reaction of life or consciousness. Overwhelmed with joy and astonishment Totapuri exclaimed, यह एता दैवी माया—“What an inscrutable Maya! It is indeed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the consummation of the Advaita Sadhana! Oh, what an inexplicable play of the Divine!”



## EPISTLE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.\*

(*Extracts*)

High View, Caversham,  
Reading.

27th April, 1896.

Dear—

Let me write something for you all. It is not for gaining any personal authority that I do this, but for your good and for fulfilling the purpose for which the Lord came. He gave me the charge of you all, and you shall contribute to the great well-being of the world though most of you are not yet aware of it—this is the special

\*Translated from Bengali.

reason of my writing to you. It will be a great pity if any feeling of jealousy or egoism gains ground amongst you. Is it possible for those to establish cordial relations on earth, who cannot cordially live with one another for any length of time? No doubt it is an evil to be bound by laws, but it is necessary at the immature stage to be guided by rules; in other words, as the Master used to say, the sapling must be hedged round, and so on. Secondly, it is quite natural for idle minds to indulge in gossip, faction-mongering and so forth. \* \* \*

May the Lord guide you in the right direction! Two persons went to see the Lord Jagannath. One of them beheld the Deity—while the other saw a trash that was hunting his mind!

My friends, many have, no doubt, served the Master, but whenever any one would be disposed to consider himself as an extraordinary personage, he should think that although he has associated with Sri Ramakrishna, he has seen only the trash that was uppermost in his mind! Were it not so, he would manifest the results.

The Master himself used to quote, "They would sing and dance in the name of the Lord but come to grief in the end." The root of degeneration is egoism—to think that one is just as great as any other. Indeed! "He used to love me too!"—one could plead. Bear in mind that through his grace lots of men will be turned out with the nobility of gods—aye whenever his mercy would drop. \* \* \*

Obedience is the first duty. Well, just do with alacrity what I ask you to. Let me see how you carry out these few small things. Then gradually great things will come to pass.

Yours

Vivekananda.

P. S. \* \* He who is the servant of all is the true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end and never stops to consider high or low has the whole world lying at his feet

## THE INDIAN IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD.

**H**OW do you feel in the presence of a woman?—Sri Ramakrishna once asked one of his beloved disciples, a young man of austere habits and leading a life of utmost restraint and continence. “Why, Sir,” replied the young disciple, “I feel an abominable hatred for women. From boyhood I have been training myself to look upon them with hatred and disgust. At times I feel as if a lion resides in me, which rages and roars as soon as a woman appears before me.” “How you speak like a fool, my boy!” said the Master, “Why do you hate a woman? Certainly that is not the way to fly away from her. And after all why should you hate her? She is the Divine Mother—Her earthly manifestation. Worship the Mother in her and she would be propitiated. He who is face to face with Reality, who is blessed with the vision of God, does not regard woman with any fear. He sees her as she really is, the image of the Divine Mother of the Universe. So he not only pays to woman honour and respect, but actually worships her as a son does his mother.” This, in a nutshell, represents the attitude of that stern Sannyasin—a man of uncompromising purity and renunciation—towards the members of the fair sex. His whole life stands as the glorious vindication of the honour and worship which is woman’s due.

“स्त्रियः समस्ता सकला जगत्सु”—“Thou, oh Mother, hast incarnated as all the women of the world.” Thus did the gods praise the Divine Durga. The Hindu scriptures, without any exception, enjoin upon all to look upon women as the manifestations of the Divine Prakriti or the Great Cause of the Universe. Manu says that the gods remain satisfied where women are worshipped. In fact, this worship of woman as the visible representative of Divinity, forms a glorious chapter in the history of Indian civilisation. It is here alone, that every unknown woman, even a beggar of the street, is addressed as mother. Woman has two aspects to her character, two

modes of attraction. Her Vidya Sakti or divine aspect gives salvation while the Avidya Sakti or the satanic mood entangles man in the meshes of ignorance. The beauty of her divine aspect shows the way to eternal beatitude and shatters all darkness, while the apparent charm of her dark aspect draws man more and more into the terrible darkness of ignorance. The real Sadhakas know this secret, and by propitiating the Goddess in her pave their way to the attainment of supreme wisdom, whereas the average men look upon her with an evil eye of lust and passion and thus cannot reach the inner repository of her true beauty.

For a long time past, the wind of various revivalistic movements has been passing over this country. And it gladdens one's heart to see that the womanhood of India has emerged from its narrow seclusion and is contributing its quota for the reawakening of the motherland. No nation can progress if the dead weight of its women clings round its neck like a heavy millstone. No nation can advance if its course is slackened by constantly looking back at one-half of its population that cannot keep pace with its onward march. Man and woman must walk *pari passu*. Nay, in some respects she must lead. She must play the part of a chastiser and monitor of the unbridled passions of man. But in this reawakening of India's womanhood there is an element of danger which, if not taken in time by the forelock, may fill the country with the sigh of woe and anguish. In all renascent movements there always exists a tendency and proneness to overstep the natural bounds in the mad struggle for self-assertion. Indebted to a certain extent to Western inspirations for their own reawakening, our mothers and sisters seem to be dazzled by the brilliance of Western womanhood. The chivalry and gallantry of Europe still exercises over their mind some fascinating influence. But this is not the line of our progress nor the line left on the track of time by the women of ancient India. In truth, it must be confessed that the general trend of Western chivalry towards her womenfolk is not instinct with that amount of divine fervour which can discover the Goddess in

her. However greatly the Westerners may respect and regard the members of the fair sex, whatever may be the lavish display of their eagerness and attention for the convenience and comfort of the latter, still in the generality of cases, it is not the worship of the Mother in woman but the worship of her outward charm that finds a place in the hearts of men.

Indian womanhood is faced to-day with a conflict of ideals. The one points out to the ideal past when the daughters of India, the emblem of purity and sacredness, died a moth-like death in the nook of their hearth in vindication of their glory, while the other draws attention to the modern women of the world, bold and assertive, who are elbowing their way to come to the forefront of society and fast taking the place of man in social service, state-craft and other spheres of life so long reserved for the strong fibre of the male sex. Even in this confusion, the conscience of India directs woman to look up to the ancient ideal of her mothers for inspiration and guidance. A programme, keeping intact the sublime ideal of the past, but suited to the exigencies of modern times, is sure to revive the glory of Indian womanhood. And that ancient ideal is not altogether barren of deeds and acts which any nation may justly feel proud of. To quote the eloquent words of one of the gifted daughters of India,—“ Her womanhood enjoyed a freedom and franchise unknown in the modern world. For the woman of ancient India had her lofty and legitimate place and function in the daily life of her race. Not only was it her sweet privilege to tend to hearth-fires and sacrificial fires in the happy and narrow seclusion of her home, but wide as humanity itself were the opportunities and occasions of her compassionate service, her intellectual triumph, and her saintly renunciations. Her agile and brilliant mind had access to the most intricate sciences and occult philosophies. Not seldom in her capacity as queen regnant or regent, was she called upon to prove the subtlety and sagacity, the breadth and daring of her state-craft. And age after age, she vindicated the fidelity and fortitude, the courage and devotion of her love, on the funeral pyre

which was so often the crucible of her purity, on the battlefield which was so frequently the altar of her heroism in defence of Indian honour of which she was at once the symbol and the shrine." Behind this galaxy of her glorious deeds, behind the plethora of her dash and push, a few extant and many buried in the unregistered catalogue of oblivion, there shines out in prominent relief the sweet and tender ideal of her motherhood which could at a glance tame the most recalcitrant spirit and shower benediction and blessing upon all who sought shelter at her gracious feet.

Rightly or wrongly, woman is rushing to occupy a position in society from which she feels she has been illegitimately forced out. It seems to be almost a certainty that she will stand beside man in business, in politics, in the factory or even in the battlefield. Her increasing association with man in almost every theatre of life is sure to precipitate a catastrophe upon society and humanity at large if it is not accompanied by the only redeeming feature—that is, a change of the angle of vision of both the sexes. Man must learn to discover in woman the inherent divinity that will sustain him in his hours of trial and weakness. He must look upon her as the great Sakti, the manifestation of the Divine Mother—the perennial source of strength and inspiration. Woman too must have the same spiritual outlook and recognise the Divinity in man.

People may smile and say, "Oh, these are all vain talks. It is not possible to give a practical demonstration of such an ideal in the present age." But in this age of materialism and doubt there lived a man who said, "When I see good women of respectable families I behold in them the Divine Mother as Purity personified; and when again I look on public women seated in their open verandahs, arrayed in the garb of immorality and shamelessness, in them also I see the Divine Mother sporting, only in a different form." He regarded all women as portions of that Blessed One and looked upon them as mothers. By his very life Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated what should be the ideal of a man's relation to the members of the other sex. He not only discovered

the inherent divinity in woman but carried it into his every day practice. Renunciation of woman and wealth was his great precept and still we find him accepting a woman as his Guru in one of the most delicate modes of Sadhana and leading a close life with his wife for a long time at Dakshineswar and Kamarpukur. Yet not even for once did those eyes cast an evil look upon woman or think of her, even in dream, in any other relationship except as Mother. People often flare up at the ideal of Sannyasa, the gravamen of their charge being the uncompromising attitude of the Sannyasin towards woman who is often described as "the gateway to hell." Woman has been described by monks as the greatest impediment in the path of religion. The ideal of Sannyasa, no doubt, utterly abhors woman, but certainly not in her divine aspect. It enjoins man to shun her Avidya Sakti, for then and then only can one realise the fullest glory of her divinity. This we find practically demonstrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He looked upon even his own wife as the manifestation of the Goddess Kali and finished his long Sadhana of twelve years by giving the final offering of worship at her feet. This is the greatest homage that can be paid to woman. Surely there cannot be a greater worship of woman nor a truer homage to her intrinsic worth. This is the sublime ideal left by a man living in our age. It is one of his greatest legacies for the uplift of humanity.

BRAHMACHARI DINESH.

### THE GREAT PROPHET OF HARMONY.\*

**D**URING the years which I lived in India it has been my privilege to come in very close touch with the Hindus. As a member of the Ramakrishna Mission to which our Swamis here belong, I was accorded a hearty welcome by the monks of that Mission. When I arrived in India I made my

\*Read on the eighty-sixth birthday of Sri Ramakrishna in Native Sons' Hall, San Francisco, California.

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way at once to the Belur monastery, the headquarters of the Mission. It is situated on the western bank of the beautiful Ganges, five miles north of Calcutta.

Shortly after my arrival the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna took place. It was a brilliant morning in February. As the sun rose across the river, devotees from different parts of India began to gather to do honour to the saint. By hundreds and thousands they arrived. They came in little boats, in carriages or on foot. And at eight o'clock in the morning the spacious grounds of the monastery were filled with joyous pilgrims—men, women and children. Among this vast assembly moved the monks dressed in orange coloured tunics, the most picturesque of all this picturesque crowd.

Along the banks of the Ganges little open stalls had been erected where books and pictures of saints were sold and a large variety of Indian fruits and sweetmeats. But the great centre of attraction was an enormous tent where Sri Ramakrishna's picture was installed among flowers and plants. Large carpets were spread on the ground, and hereon the devotees sat in adoration facing the picture. With folded hands and bowed heads they prayed to the saint, and then got up to make room for others.

At ten o'clock in the morning monks came in procession from the monastery and made their way to the tent. They were headed by a band of native musicians who played till all the monks were seated. Then one of the monks rose and performed a religious ceremony. He waved before the picture a candlestick holding little lights. Then he waved incense and chanted Mantrams in Sanskrit. When this part of the ceremony was over, he sat down and the monks chanted together a Sanskrit hymn composed by the Swami Vivekananda in honour of Ramakrishna. This ended the simple ceremony.

But in the temple connected with the monastery another ceremony took place—a very remarkable one, which lasted all day. This ceremony was so remarkable because in it not



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only Ramakrishna but also other incarnations of God were worshipped. Krishna, Buddha, Rama, Jesus and others, received the worship of the devotees. This, I think, is very unique and speaks for the catholicity of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna brotherhood.

At eleven o'clock one of the monks delivered an address in the open, and large crowds gathered to hear his speech. He spoke of the Master, how he had withdrawn his physical presence from this world, but how to the devotees he was still present in spirit.

He told us that Ramakrishna was born eighty years ago in a little village in Bengal. And, lifting his right hand, he pointed towards the north. "There," he said, "is the temple of Dakshineswar. There Ramakrishna spent most of his earthly life; there is the place where he struggled for twelve years to attain to the greatest spiritual height that man can attain." And then he pointed towards a spot across the Ganges. "There is a garden house," he said, "where the Master spent his last days on earth. There he entered into eternal bliss."

He spoke of his own life with Ramakrishna. How he had come to the Master when still a boy, and how he felt intoxicated in his spiritual atmosphere; how he lived with Ramakrishna and was taught by him. He spoke of the wonderful period of his life, how it passed like a waking dream, full of intense life, filled with spiritual visions.

Ramakrishna, the monk told us, worshipped God as the Divine Mother of the Universe. And so touching were his appeals to the Divine Mother that the people who heard him shed tears of sympathy. Then the Mother answered his prayer. She revealed Herself to him in visions. During these visions Ramakrishna would lose all consciousness of the external world. He would enjoy unspeakable bliss in the presence of the Divine Mother. And then the Mother would instruct him. Under Her direct guidance Ramakrishna practised the eightfold path of Yoga.

And then came the great event of the day. Under spreading mango trees and in the shade of graceful palms, the monks

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had spread a feast for the visitors. This feast was especially for the poor who had been invited for the occasion. From three to four thousand poor people were going to have a good meal. It was no easy task to fill so many hungry mouths. For three days, twenty cooks had been busy to prepare the enormous amount of food. The food consisted of rice, peas, vegetable curry and sweetmeats.

The people squatted on the lawn in long rows, five hundred at a time. Each guest had placed before him a large leaf of the banana plant. This served as a plate whereon the food was placed. When the meal was over, each one took his empty leaf away, and a new group of people sat down. In this way it was comparatively easy to feed such a large number of people. But even then it kept the monks busy all afternoon serving the guests,

Ramakrishna's heart always beat in sympathy for the poor. It distressed him to see the people half-clad and half-nourished. Inspired by this sentiment his disciples wanted to make this day a specially happy one for the poor.

And so evening drew near, and the devotees returned to their homes. As I watched them leave the grounds, I asked myself this question: "How is it that such a vast concourse could meet so orderly and so friendly?" For we must remember that ten thousand people of different sects had met, and still, not once had I heard a note of discord. The answer to this question I found in the teachings of Ramakrishna. For it was he who taught, in word and in deed, that man should bow down and worship where others kneel. It was part of the great mission of the Master to bring to the religious world the spirit of sympathy and freedom. He taught that different religions are so many paths leading to the truth. "Be firm in your own religion," he said, "but do not despise other religions, honour them all. It is the same Divine Spirit that comes to the world at different times, in different places, under different names. Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Mohammedans should regard each others' religion, for they all worship the same God in different manifestations."

And so, in India I learned the secret how East and West may be united in a great worship of the One Living God.

BRAHMACHARI GURUDASA.

(Continued from page 105.)

पिङ्गला नाम वेश्यासीद्विदेहनगरे पुरा ।

तस्या मे सिद्धितं किञ्चिन्निबोध नृपनन्दन ॥२२॥

22. In days of yore, there was a courtesan named Pingala in the city of Videha. I have learnt something from her. Listen to it, O King.

[ The lesson of satiety or disgust for worldly things received from Pingala is narrated in these Slokas up to the end of the chapter. ]

सा स्वैरियेकदा कान्तं संकेत उपनेष्यती ।

अभूत्काले वहिर्द्वारि विभ्रती रूपमुत्तमम् ॥२३॥

23. One day that courtesan, with a view to conduct some lover to the trysting-place, took her stand at the door in the evening, beautifully dressed.

मार्गं आगच्छतो वीक्ष्य पुरुषान्पुरुषर्षभ ।

तान् शुल्कदान्वित्तवतः कान्तान्मेनेऽर्थकामुका ॥२४॥

24. O best of men, seeing men coming along the way, she, who was greedy after money, considered them to be rich, and persons likely to yield her some income.

आगतेष्वपयातेषु सा संकेतोपजीविनी ।

अप्यन्यो वित्तवान्कोऽपि मामुपैष्यति भूरिदः ॥२५॥

25. As they came and passed by (one by one), she who lived upon the proceeds of such a life, thought that some other rich man would approach her and bring her a lot of money.

एवं दुराशया ध्वस्तनिद्रा द्वार्यवलम्बती ।

निर्गच्छन्ती प्रविशती निशीथं समपद्यत ॥२६॥

26. Thus she kept at the door—now going in, now coming out—with her sleep upset by this fond expectation, till it was midnight.

तस्या वित्ताशया शुष्यद्वक्त्राया दीनचेतसः ।

निर्वेदः परमो जज्ञे चिन्ताहेतुः सुखावहः ॥२७॥

27. When through this expectation of money her countenance sank and she was very much down in spirits, then as a result of this brooding an utter disgust came to her, that made her happy.

तस्या निर्विण्णचित्ताया गीतं शृणु यथा मम ।

निर्वेद आशापाशानां पुरुषस्य यथा ह्यसिः ॥२८॥

28. Hear from me how she, disgusted, sang; for disgust is like a sword to cut asunder a man's fetters of expectation.

नह्यंगाऽजातनिर्वेदो देहबन्धं जिहासति ।

यथा विज्ञानरहितो मनुजो ममतां नृप ॥२९॥

29. One, my dear, does not desire to get rid of the bondage of the body until he has become disgusted, as a man without illumination, O King, the clinging<sup>1</sup> to things.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Clinging etc.*—lit. "mineness." ]

पिङ्गलोवाच ।

अहो मे मोहवितर्ति पश्यताऽविजितात्मनः ।

या कान्तादसतः कामं कामये येन बालिशा ॥३०॥

30. Pingala said :

Alas, behold the extent of my infatuation,—I am a fool, whose senses are not under control!

Therefore I seek the satisfaction of desires from such puny creatures as men.

सन्तं समीपे रमणं रतिप्रदं वित्तप्रदं नित्यमिमं विहाय ।  
अकामदं दुःखभयाधिशोकमोहप्रदं तुच्छमहं भजेऽज्ञा ॥३१॥

31. I am so foolish as to neglect this eternal Atman who lives near, who is a fit lover and can satisfy me, and who can give me wealth ;—leaving Him I am courting a puny man, who cannot satisfy my desires, and who causes misery, fear, disease, grief and infatuation !

अहो मयात्मा परितापितो वृथा सांकेत्यवृत्त्यातिविगर्ह्यवार्तया  
स्त्रैशान्नराद्यार्थतृषोऽनुशोच्यात्क्रीतेन वित्तं रतिमात्मनेच्छती

32. Oh, in vain have I afflicted my soul by this despicable mode of living, viz. that of a courtesan ;—I have sought wealth and pleasure from pitiable men who are greedy and slaves to women, after selling my body to them !

यदस्थिभिर्निर्मितवंशवंश्यस्थूणं त्वचारोमनसैः पिनद्धम् ।

क्षरन्नवद्वारमगारमेतद्विशमूत्रपूर्णं मदुपैति कान्या ॥३३॥

33. Who but myself should make much of this body<sup>1</sup> which consists of bony structures such as the spine, ribs and limbs (like the ridge-pole, rafters and posts of a house), and is covered over with skin, hair and nails, with its nine doors for secretion, and full of filthy stuff ?

[ <sup>1</sup> *This body*—the human body which she looks upon as ‘lover.’ The body which is so full of impurities cannot be a source of enjoyment. It is the Atman from whom all enjoyment comes. ]

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

*The Spirit and Struggle of Islam.*—By Prof. T. L. Vaswani.  
Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. xvi + 179.  
Price Re. 1-8.

The true spirit of a religion is to be judged not by the life and work of those whose action is in direct opposition to its precepts but by its contribution to the world-civilisation and human progress, and by its high ideals and fundamental principles that find expression in the life and thought of its greatest teachers and prophets. Judged by this standard the achievement of Islam is certainly considerable. To quote the words of Prof. Vaswani, "Islam has given the world a religion without priests :.....Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence from drink.....At a time when Europe was in darkness, the Muslim scholars of Spain held high the torch of science and literature. They taught medicine and mathematics, chemistry and natural history, philosophy and fine arts.....Arabian scholars translated some of the Hindu books ; and helped by these translations Hindu wisdom travelled to some of the seats of learning in Europe. ....Islam has enriched the art and literature, the poetry and philosophy of India.....Muslim philosophers translated, interpreted and corrected the systems and speculations of Greek thinkers." Very ably does the author interpret the spirit of Islam also. He says—"Islamic civilisation, too, has subordinated money to the immaterial values of life ; it has not, like Europe, worshipped Mammon as its God. 'The love of the world,' said the Prophet, 'is the root of all evil.' "

The author pleads again and again for Hindu-Muslim unity and he wants both the Hindu and the Muslim to realise that "they have a common centre ; the bond between them is spiritual.....Islam has made contribution to the life of India, and the Prophet of Islam has a message which the Hindus should understand and appreciate. Nor should the Muslim

be slow to appreciate the culture and civilisation of Aryavarta and the beauty and wisdom enshrined in the teachings of India's sages and prophets." Unity on such a spiritual basis alone can be a true union of hearts.

*Mahadji Sindia.*—By M. W. Burway, Secretary, Special Branch, Foreign Office, Indore State. Published by the author. Pp. 15 + 299. Price Rs. 5.

The book is the third volume of the "Indian Historical Series." The author is well-known for his labour in the field of Maratha History and in the present volume is seen the same stamp of laborious and critical research as in his previous works. The life is authentic as it is based on all available authorities and original Marathi documents and unpublished letters connected with the subject. It is not uncommon that writers on Maratha History depend too much on Mohammedan authorities, and hence does Mr. Burway very pertinently ask—"Why should Mohammedan authorities be believed at the cost of Maratha documents?"

The appendices and the index will, we are sure, be highly valued by students of Maratha History.

*My Motherland.*—By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. viii + 168. Price Re. 1-8 as.

This neatly printed book is a collection of illuminating essays and discourses breathing the purest form of patriotism that is in perfect harmony with India's high spiritual idealism. By Swaraj the author means "democracy not based on greed and violence but upon idealism, *dharma*, a vision of life,—upon *ahimsa*, a *Swaraj* such as may be a symbol of the Indian Ideal of Civilisation." "Only to serve Humanity," says Prof. Vaswani, "India must *know herself* and *gather her inner strength*." "Let it be our privilege," he says further, "to love freedom without race-pride; let be ours to have the patriotism that will hate none, will bear malice towards none but strive for India's greatness only that India may save the nations greatly."

*The Philosophy of Shankara.*—By M. A. Buch. Published by A. G. Widgery, The College, Baroda. Pp. 276.

The volume is a faithful exposition of the philosophy of Shankara and is based mainly on his Bhashyas on the Gita, the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras.

Very rightly does the author remark—“It was in response to a practical need that Hindu philosophy arose.....Hindu philosophy is essentially a philosophy on the right understanding of which depend the eternal interests of Man.” He touches the central theme of Shankara’s philosophy when he says,—“The system attempts to penetrate the very secret of being to explain the ultimate nature of thought, to grasp the kernel of Reality. It is a brilliant analysis of the Self as the centre of man’s cognitions, feelings and volitions and of the Self as the source of the intelligibility of the outer world.”

The chapter containing a comparison of Shankara’s system with some Modern Philosophies is very interesting and brings out in relief the grandeur of Shankara’s philosophy. We heartily recommend the book to our readers.

*The Pilgrims’ March: Their Messages.*—Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 136. Price Re. 1.

The book contains a series of lively and appealing messages from some of India’s imprisoned non-co-operation leaders and others who love the Motherland.

*To India : The Message of the Himalayas.*—By Paul Richard. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 30.

The brochure comes from the inspired pen of one of those Westerners who draw their inspiration from the hoary, spiritual culture of the East, specially of India. In his silent retreat on the slopes of the Himalayas the author sees the vision of greater India—her glorious future—the spiritual leadership of humanity. But in his great admiration he does not forget to remind the children of the sages of the grave responsibility and the necessary purification required for carrying out this lofty mission.



# THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH BIRTHDAY ANNI- VERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

## Belur Math

**T**HE eighty-seventh birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with all the solemnity that the occasion demanded, at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur (Howrah). The *tithi* fell on the 28th February, and the customary worship and other ceremonials were gone through at daytime and at night. The new steamer-station at Belur being opened on this day, it was a great facility to the devotees to attend the day's observances. There was Bhajan, and over a thousand Bhaktas partook of Prasad. Towards the end of the night a Homa was performed and three Brahmacharins of the Math were initiated into Sannyasa by the venerable President of the Math.

The public celebration came off on Sunday, the 5th March. There was an excellent steamer arrangement and devotees began to gather from the very morning. Grand preparations had been made for the day's feeding. A life-size oil-painting of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a pandal, amid charming settings of foliage and flowers. By 11 o'clock the assembled Bhaktas began to partake of the holy Prasad in big batches, and the total number of such Bhaktas, both men and women, was about 12,000. By 1 o'clock the spacious lawn of the Math was full, and the rush between 2-30 and 4 p. m. was simply indescribable. Besides the ordinary Kirtan parties, too numerous to mention, there was the soul-stirring Kali-kirtan of the famous Andul party, and the exquisite concert of Prof. Dakshinaranjan, both of which kept the audience spell-bound. Cooling drinks were freely distributed, and the untiring service of volunteers made the day's programme a complete success. Towards the evening the huge crowd gradually began to disperse and after a beautiful display of fire-works—a kind present from the manufacturer—the festivities came

to a close. This assemblage of men, women and children, of all stations of life, in the Math premises to do honour to Sri Ramakrishna amply testifies to the unique place of reverence which the Prophet of Dakshineswar holds in the heart of all.

### **Madras**

The anniversary was publicly celebrated on Sunday, the 5th March, 1922 at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. In the morning Bhajanas were sung and later on a large number of poor people were fed. In the afternoon there was a Harikatha Kalakshepam. It was followed by a public lecture by Rao Bahadur S. Baskara Iyer. Mr. M. O. Parthasarathi Iyengar presided.

The chairman in the course of his preliminary remarks said that the message of Sri Ramakrishna was universal brotherhood, tolerance, sympathy and love, and he exhorted the audience to practise these in their daily life. The lecturer dwelt at length on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and said that the life was a practical proof of the efficiency of the Bhakti-marga as a means to the realisation of the Self. With a vote of thanks to the chairman and the lecturer the function came to a close.

### **Bangalore City**

The anniversary was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City on Tuesday, the 28th February and on Sunday, the 5th March, 1922. On the former day, the day of the Tithipuja, there was a select gathering of devotees and admirers. Bhajanas were sung in the evening and the children of the locality were given a sumptuous treat.

On the 5th March was observed the public celebration. Bhajana parties came to the Ashrama carrying in procession the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna. At about noon nearly a thousand poor Narayanas were fed. The evening functions commenced at 4 p. m. with a Harikatha Kalakshepam. It was followed by a speech in Kannada by Mr. T. S. Venkanna-aiya, M. A. The lecturer emphasised that the chief point in the Master's teachings was that he did not adopt a universal

prescription for all, but took into account individual temperaments and showed each the path that was most suited to him. The next speaker was Mr. B. Nagesa Rao, M. A., who drew special attention to Sri Ramakrishna's mystical consciousness even as a child, to his intense longing to realise God and to his superhuman Sadhana, which was full of lessons for the doubting soul.

The first issue of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Granthamala in Canarese was brought out on this day.

### Benares

The anniversary was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares City, on the 5th March, 1922. A number of Sadhus were sumptuously fed at noon. There was Sankirtan from 2 p. m. In the afternoon was held a public meeting presided over by Sri Jut Prasanna Kumar Bose, M. A. Miss Veale, M. A., Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramathanath Tarkabhusan and Swami Prem Puri spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The meeting being over the audience was treated to a Rama-lila Sankirtan. With the distribution of Prasad the function came to a close.

### Trivandrum

The anniversary was celebrated at the Prabuddha Keralam Office with Puja and Bhajana on the 28th February. On the 5th March some 300 poor Narayanas were served with food. In the evening there was Bhajana and distribution of Prasad. A public meeting was held at 4 p. m. on the following Sunday, the 12th March, under the presidency of Mr. K. Padmanabha Tampi. Mr. H. Ganapathi Iyer, M. A., M. L. spoke on some of the lessons from the Life of Sri Ramakrishna, and Mr. S. Padmanabhachary, B. A. dwelt on the importance of Sri Ramakrishna's advent to fulfil the present-day needs of the world. The meeting dispersed after Aratrik and distribution of Prasad.

### Alampur

The anniversary was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Bhajan Mandir, Alampur, for three days beginning from the 28th February, 1922. The Tithipuja was

observed with the worship of Sri Ramakrishna in the morning. In the evening a public meeting was held with Mr. A. Shama Rao in the chair. Mr. R. R. Juzb and Mr. Krishna Sarma gave lucid discourses on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. At night a large-sized and beautifully decorated picture of Sri Ramakrishna was taken round the city accompanied with instrumental music. The proceedings of the first day came to a close at night with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

On the second day Puja was performed in the morning. Lectures were delivered in the evening on various subjects. At night the audience was treated to a music by experts invited for the purpose.

On the third day poor Narayanas were fed during daytime. The celebration came to a close with Bhajan and distribution of Prasad at night.

#### Kim (Guzrat)

The anniversary was celebrated at Kim Station under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Arogyasala. Early in the morning Puja and Aratrik were performed and the holy Prasad was distributed to the public. From 8 a. m. to noon Bhajans were sung and selected passages were read from Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita and other holy books. In the evening was held the public meeting. Dr. Balawantray delivered a lecture on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. The lecture was followed by Harikirtan. The proceedings came to a close with Puja, Aratrik and distribution of Prasad.

#### Lucknow

The anniversary was celebrated at the Lucknow Ramakrishna Sevashrama on the 5th March, 1922. In the morning a Sankirtan party went round the city singing songs of devotion. From 11 a. m. to 5 p. m. nearly 1200 poor Narayanas were fed. The public meeting commenced after 5 p. m. with the Hon'ble Mr. C. Y. Chintamony in the chair. Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee, M. A., P. R. S., PH. D. and Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee, M. A., P. R. S., PH. D. most eloquently

addressed the meeting on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The celebration came to a close at night with Aratrik and distribution of Prasad.

#### **Vasco de Gama**

The anniversary was celebrated in the Damodar Temple at Vasco de Gama on Sunday, the 5th March, 1922. A picture of Sri Ramakrishna was placed close to the temple Deity and was profusely garlanded. In the morning Puja was performed with chantings from the holy Scriptures. Mr. Mangesh Atma Ram delivered a lecture vividly pointing out the great significance of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna in this age of materialism. The proceedings came to a close with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

#### **Kankhal**

The anniversary was celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal. The Tithipuja was performed on the 28th February, 1922, with Puja, Homa and Bhajan. On the 5th March the public celebration commenced with Bhajan lasting for nearly an hour. Swami Satyananda delivered a lecture in Hindi, which was much appreciated by the Sadhus present. The lecture being over nearly 300 Sadhus were sumptuously fed. The festivity came to a close with Sankirtan.

#### **At Other Places**

The anniversary was also celebrated at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Koalpara (Bankura); Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajpur; Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Gauhati; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sylhet; Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur; Vedanta Society, Boston; Vedanta Society, New York; Hindu Temple, San Francisco; Sri Ramakrishna Samity, Faridpur; at Cuttack, Bahugram (Cuttack Dt.), Rambag (Tajpur), Deoghar, Jamshedpur, Nagpur, Kadir, Wellington and at the various branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and other places too numerous to mention.

## MAHASAMADHI.

SRIMAT Swami Brahmananda, the beloved spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna, and the Head of the Order started in the name of the Prophet of Dakshineswar, has gone back to the eternal abode from which he came to carry on the great Mission of his Master. From our midst has suddenly been removed a magnetic personality possessing the naïve simplicity of a child, a calm and venerable figure whose serene eyes always spoke of peace and goodwill to men whose blessed presence never failed to bring solace and comfort to all world-weary souls taking shelter at his feet. With marvellous devotion, patience and tact the Swami silently nurtured and developed the infant organisation handed over to his care by his brother-disciple, the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. And the various monasteries and Homes of Service he has left behind stand now as monuments of his glorious achievement on earth. A mighty soul in tune with the Infinite, and endowed with superhuman love and sympathy, he was ever ready to take upon himself the burden of his fellow-men suffering under the weight of the miseries and cares of life. The country is indeed poorer to-day by the passing away of one who applied the best fruits of his spiritual Sadhana to alleviate the sufferings of men and women of all castes, creeds and religions.

The Swami had an attack of cholera during the last week of March, and before he could recover from its effects he developed symptoms of a very serious attack of diabetes. Eminent doctors and Kavirajas of Calcutta after a few days treatment declared his condition hopeless. During the last days of his life on earth he seemed to be absorbed in deep meditation and was quite unconscious of the ailments of his body. He spoke now and then of high spiritual truths and spiritual visions. The night previous to that of his passing away he heartily blessed those present at his bedside and

spoke in a voice marked by extraordinary love and sweetness. Sometimes he talked aloud of losing himself in the 'blessed feet' of his Master, and of merging himself in Brahman. At 8-54 p. m. on the 10th of April last he left his mortal body and entered into Mahasamadhi.

May the Lord who has recalled His dear child to His bosom after his play was done, give us strength to bear the irreparable loss we have individually and collectively sustained in the passing away of our beloved leader and guide!

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!



## NEWS AND NOTES

### **Synthesis between the East and the West**

Following in the wake of India's close contact with the Occidental peoples there came a great conflict between the ideals of India and those of the West. For a time it seemed as if India would lose her soul, her unique civilisation and culture, and be entirely transformed after the ideals of the West. Indeed so great was the demoralisation of the Indian people that even the best minds in the land, oblivious of the great heritage handed down to them from their ancestors, the great Rishis,—turned for inspiration to the savants of the West and attempted to inoculate themselves and their countrymen with the lymph of Western culture. The result has been disastrous for it has led to a loss of individuality, self-confidence and self-reliance. There was no true assimilation of what is great and noble in the culture of the West, but only a servile and thoughtless imitation in learning and even in religion.

In his recent convocation speech Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, the able Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, clearly pointed out the vital defect in the present day university education in India and deprecated in no uncertain terms the tendency to Europeanise the children in Aryavarta. He

said,—“Be it remembered that the attempt to modernise the East by the importation of Western culture in our midst to the complete suppression of our native ideals has proved a failure. Indian Universities have not yet been able to take root in the life of the Nation, because they have been exotic. India was and is civilised. Western civilisation, however valuable as a factor in the progress of mankind, should not supersede, much less be permitted to destroy the vital elements of our civilisation.”

The culture of the East contains factors which are of vital importance to mankind and the culture of the West, too, has points which are indispensable to human progress. Such being the case a synthesis between the two mighty streams of civilisation is certainly desirable. Speaking of India's assimilating of Western culture says Swami Vivekananda—“The one point to note is that when we take anything from others we must mould it after our own way. We shall add to our stock what others have to teach but we must always be careful to keep intact what is essentially our own. We must mould it after our own fashion, always preserving in full our characteristic Nationality.” He wanted the people of the West, too, to be true to their National Soul and assimilate the spiritual culture of the East to replenish their own civilisation. This is what he meant by an exchange and assimilation of the highest ideals of the East and the West.

Till now the true synthesis between the best cultures of the East and the West has been attained in the lives of only a few individuals—men of gigantic wills and of mighty moral and spiritual strength. The great lesson which these lives teach is that true synthesis is possible only between two equally strong factors. The union between the weak and the strong would lead only to absorption ending in the destruction of the weaker element. The gulf between the ideals of the East and the West can be bridged over in India and a true union established when India would shake off her weakness, become strong, regain her true self and distinctive individuality. To accomplish this India can do no better than to follow the call of her Patriot-saint:—“Back to the strengthening, life-giving teachings of the Upanishads. He who thinks that he is weak is weak; he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!”

### **Female Education in Ancient India**

Prof. Bhababihuti Vidyabhusan M. A. of the Bangabasi College, Calcutta, read a paper on Female Education in India in the Section of Social and Religious History of the last Oriental conference held in Calcutta. A summary of the paper is given below:



Among the daily household duties prescribed in details by Vatsyayana in his Kama Sutra, Book III, Chap. I, the following equipments were indispensable for every mistress of a house; viz.—1. Gardening, preparing flower beds and fields for household vegetables and regularly pruning and watering them. 2. Good and careful cooking. 3. Preparing ghee from surplus milk; pressing out oil from mustard-seeds and molasses from sugarcaues; making condiments and jellies. 4. Paying wages to the servants; keeping daily accounts; observing strict economy by making an annual budget adjusting expenses according to the income. 5. Watching over the comforts of domestic birds and beasts. 6. Making lamp wicks and wrappers (Kanthas) out of used and worn out clothes. 7. Making ropes or rope-made articles. 8. The most important among these being spinning and weaving (Sutra 32), which is unhappily no longer in vogue among our women.

As regards the culture of *Æsthetics* and Fine Arts e. g. painting, music, dancing etc. which were meant for princesses and fashionable ladies of high rank—our Puranas and legends, epics and dramas are replete with illustrations. Vatsyayana has a lengthy chapter devoted to this topic. Even physical exercise was not barred to our women, which Vatsyayana calls “Vaiyamiki Vidya.” Thus in ancient India the system of education for women was based equally on practical and theoretical lines and followed the ideals of Indian womanhood.

### Sir J. C. Bose on Plant Life

Sir J. C. Bose combines in him the idealism of India and the scientific spirit of the West. To him belongs the great credit of elaborately demonstrating, with the help of wonderfully delicate instruments invented by him, what his ancestors intuitively perceived—that plants, too, are endowed with life. In the Bose Institute there are picturesque small parks where various plants are growing under diverse conditions of light, moisture or drought. Instruments of marvellous ingenuity are recording the history of the life of plants. There is a contrivance by which the plants send electric signals inside the laboratory to record the quantity of food absorbed by them from the soil from moment to moment. The difference in the rate of absorption which varies under altered conditions, the period of pause—these and many more are to be found in the mysterious hieroglyphics transcribed by the plants.

Sir J. C. Bose made the startling discovery three years ago that plants perceive and respond to the vast etherial spectra, both visible and invisible. His recent discoveries show how wireless signals affect even the transpiration

of plants. He has opened out a new vista by his recent discovery of the mechanism of the ascent of sap, which had for a century baffled all enquiries. With the latest type of the Wireless Apparatus supplied by the British Air Ministry to the Bose Institute, experiments are in progress on the effect of the various lengths of ether waves on the life-activity of plants.

### **The Ramakrishna Students' Home Residential High School, Mylapore, Madras**

Started in the year 1905, the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, has been providing for nearly the last 17 years free boarding and lodging to absolutely indigent students of all castes and creeds. Till now the instruction given in the Home has been practically confined to the religious side, the boys being sent for secular instruction to the various educational institutions in the city. It is now proposed to start the three higher forms of Secondary School, so that the younger members of the Home at least may derive the full advantage of the Institution.

The classes will be located in the first floor of the spacious new buildings. The extensive play-ground and the good library containing nearly 5000 books attached to the Home will be available to the school.

The Madras Secondary School Leaving Certificate scheme will be followed. A prominent feature will be the provision for Vocational training in the Technical Institute that will be started shortly in the Home compound itself. We are glad to note that the regular staff will consist of four graduates, all past students of the Home—one being a distinguished Honours graduate in Chemistry and two others possessing previous experience in teaching—who have offered with considerable self-sacrifice to work as teachers and live whole time with the boys. There will be in addition part-time teachers for languages, drawing and drill.

The recurring expenses of the School are estimated at Rs. 6000 per annum, towards which a grant of Rs. 2,000 might be expected from the Government. The recurring expenditure of Rs. 4000 per annum will have, therefore, to be found, as also a sum of Rs. 6000 at least for a decent laboratory for the teaching of Science, as a non-recurring item of expenditure. The authorities of the Home appeal to the generous public for help towards the realisation of the ideal of a Gurukulam which the scheme sketched above aims at.

Subscriptions, however small, may be sent to the Secretary, the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.