

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Katha Upan. 1. iii. 4

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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CASTE-CONSCIOUSNESS AND COLOUR- PREJUDICE.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali*)

NOW-A-DAYS we hear it from the lips of people of all castes in India that they are all full-blooded Aryans—only there is some difference of opinion amongst them about the exact percentage of Aryan blood in their veins, some claiming to have the full measure of it, while others may have one ounce more or less than another. And it is also reported that they and the English race belong to the same stock—that they are cousin-german to each other, and that they are not ‘natives.’

*Written *en route* to the West to a brother-disciple

And they have come to this country out of humanitarian principles. Their religion is also of the same pattern as that of the English! And their forefathers looked just like the English, only living under the tropical sun of India they have turned black! * * *

All modern races have sprung from an admixture of different races. A country which has a preponderance of one or other of these races, has also its language and physiognomy mostly like those of that particular race. It is not a generally accepted theory in the West that a warm country produces dark complexion and a cold country white complexion. Many are of opinion that the existing shades between black and white have been the outcome of a fusion of races. * * *

The little tendency that remained in me for taking to European ways vanished thanks to the Americans. I was sorely troubled by an overgrown beard, but no sooner did I peep into a hair-cutting saloon than somebody called out, "This is no place for such shabby-looking people as you." I thought that perhaps seeing me so quaintly dressed in turban and *gerua* cloak, the man was prejudiced against me. So I should go and buy an English coat and hat. I was about to do this, when fortunately I met an American gentleman who explained to me that it was much better that I was dressed in my *gerua* cloak, for now the gentlemen would not take me amiss, but if I dressed in European fashion, everybody would chase me away. I met the same kind of treatment in one or two other saloons. After which I began the practice of shaving

with my own hands. Once I was burning with hunger, and went into a restaurant and asked for a particular thing, whereupon the man said, "We do not stock it." "Why, it is there." "Well, my good man. in plain language it means there is no place here for you to sit and take your meal." "And why?" "Because nobody will eat on the same table with you, for he will be outcasted." Then America began to look agreeable to me, somewhat like my own caste-ridden country.

Out with these differences of white and black, and this nicety about the proportion of Aryan blood among the 'natives'! How awkward it looks for slaves to be over-fastidious about their pedigree! The excesses about caste distinctions obtain most among peoples who are least honoured among mankind.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

HINDU society is at present guided to some extent by the ancient injunctions of the Smritis but still more so by the all-powerful rules and customs which came into existence from time to time to meet the changing needs of society, and gradually made their way into the pages of the Social Codes and Institutes now extant. The vast majority of the Hindus move, in their thoughts and actions, along the way their forefathers have gone. We try to bathe and dress according to Shastric rules, we eat and drink following the injunctions of the scriptures. Our birth, marriage and death—in short all our actions, commencing from the prenatal rites

and ceremonies and ending with the post-mortem ones—are to be controlled and guided by rules and injunctions, scriptural or social. This excessive dependence on authorities has in consequence greatly blocked the spring of our original thinking, and has practically converted us into living machines. With the loss of freedom—the first condition of growth—our life, both individual and social, has lost miserably its vitality and strength. As degeneration has taken its hold on our society, it is no wonder that *desacharas* and *lokacharas*—varying practices and customs peculiar to different parts of the country,—and even petty village and family habits and customs, exert a paramount authority in our social and even religious matters. The rules of eating, drinking and marriage are at present more valued by the so-called orthodox Hindus than the spirit and principles underlying their religion and society.

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No society can ever remain in a static condition. It must always move, either backward or forward. Hindu society, which is by no means an exception to this rule, has also been following the general laws of degeneration and progress. A comparative study of the different authorities followed in different parts of India—the Samhitas of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parasara and others, the Smritis of Raghunandana and other authors of comparatively modern dates—brings home to us the truth that with the change of time and environment, Hindu social laws have been undergoing very great, sometimes even revolutionary changes. How widely the social rules and customs of one place or one age vary

from those of another. And all these are sanctioned by the Shastras, whether expressly or tacitly. "Sea-voyage, flesh-eating, living by arms, and drinking of intoxicant liquors are allowed to the Northern people, as not violating Dharma" (Marichi). "Eating meals in the company of those not invested with the holy thread, eating meals in the company of women, and eating stale food—these are the customs peculiar to the South. Sale of wool, drinking intoxicants, wearing weapons, and sea-voyage—these are the local practices of the people of the North" (Bodhayana). "Marriage with the maternal cousin is prevalent in the South, eating of meat is customary in the North." Instances of a similar nature, some of which are no longer current in society, can be quoted indefinitely. Meat-eating and even the use of beef was a common practice in ancient India. Drinking of liquor was not uncommon, as we learn from the great Hindu Epics, the Puranas and lots of other ancient works, of both Hindu and Buddhistic origin. But in course of time respect for the cow became universal, and beef-eating disappeared entirely from Hindu society. Gradually abstention from meat and wine came to be more and more practised especially by the higher caste Hindus all over India except only in certain parts. *Anuloma* marriages, that is, marriages of men of the higher castes with women of the lower castes, were current in ancient India, but these are now discountenanced by the orthodox society, though they are still prevalent in some form or other in certain tracts of India and in Nepal. The age of marriage too has not been the

same with all sections of the Hindu people, and has differed with the change of time, place and circumstances, as it does to some extent even now. Thus the social history of the Hindus prove beyond the shade of a doubt that society has all along been trying to adapt itself to the everchanging circumstances brought about by causes both internal and external.

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The impact of the civilisation and culture of India with those of the West has been effecting for some time past a great change in the environment, and with it a change in the life and thought of the people. And to adjust itself to the changes brought on by time, the laws and customs of society are passing through rapid changes—changes which our forefathers could never dream of in the past. These inevitable changes, references of which cannot be found in the social codes now extant, are looked down upon as unorthodox, and are attributed to the Kali Yuga or Iron Age by the so-called orthodox people. But in course of time these innovations are sure to find their legitimate place in the Smritis that are to come, and will then, no doubt, be accepted by the future generations, as being thoroughly orthodox. That such a thing happens actually, though it may not be welcome to all classes of people, is fully corroborated by the past social and religious history of the Indian people.

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In the case of the vast majority of men and women, marriage and domestic life are necessary for their evolution. The fulfilment of the many duties and

responsibilities of the family life, the workings of sentiments and feelings evolving from close contact and relation among human souls; the varied lessons and experiences derived from worldly and human affairs—all these have a chastening influence on the generality of men and women, and help them mediately in the realisation of the Spirit—the common goal of mankind as set forth in the Hindu spiritual scheme of life. The ancient Hindu seers of Truth, though they were deadly opposed to 'unchaste' celibacy, never recognised that each individual member of society must have to pass through the sacrament of marriage. Men who were thought competent to devote themselves exclusively to the realisation of the Self were allowed to embrace the life of continence, either as lifelong Brahmacharins or as Sannyasins, and lived for the service of God and mankind in general. Women, too, the Brahmavadinis as they were called, though their number was comparatively small, could take the vow of lifelong virginity and pass their days in the study of the Vedas, and in the pursuit of the realisation of Brahman. But in later days the right to the discipline of Brahmacharya as also to the study of the Vedas was denied to women, and marriage was made compulsory in their case. Every girl, even if she possessed the potentiality of a Gargi, came to be sacrificed at the altar of the Hindu Hymen, Prajapati. Gradually Brahmacharya, which was the very stepping-stone to social and spiritual life, came to be utterly neglected by society, and its practice became practically limited to widows. Most of the evils and abuses of Hindu

society of to-day are the direct fruits of this giving up of the noble and ancient ideals of life.

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Marriage has come to be the truest goal of life in modern times, and that particularly in the case of women. Pictures of a married life are placed even before the girl of tender age, and she is fed, as it were, with the thoughts of domestic happiness until she forgets that marriage is but a means to an end, and learns to look upon it as an end in itself. In orthodox Hindu society no girl can be allowed to remain single, even if no suitable bridegroom is available for her, though such a course has the full sanction of Manu. Every girl must pass through the formal ceremonies of marriage at any cost, even if the bridegroom be deaf or dumb, blind or deformed, old or diseased. Otherwise, the parents and other relatives who are responsible for the girl's welfare would be outcasted from society. And the modern Shastras, not content with this, very generously make a further provision for them in hells in the life to come! Parents and guardians must give away the girl in marriage at an age when she can by no means understand the significance of marriage and has no idea of the responsibilities of a married life; otherwise, they would share the same fate as above.

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What Hindu society has done for woman is by no means insignificant. Marriage and a home are assured to every Hindu girl. No woman in Hindu society has to live the life of forced virginity as in Western societies. Besides, the institution of

Brahmacharya—the life of self-control and self-discipline—having practically ceased to exist, early marriage no doubt tends to check immorality to some extent, and may also contribute in many cases to conjugal and family felicity. But there is another side to the question. Girls become mothers at a tender age, when child-bearing, even according to the ancient Hindu medical authority, Susruta, is dangerous not only to the young mothers but to their weak offspring as well. Child-marriage is also directly responsible for the creation of a large number of child-widows in Hindu homes. These unfortunate girls are made to live a life of forced widowhood, and that in the most unfavourable environments, where they cannot remain always unaffected by the suggestions of sense-enjoyment they get from those around them, not infrequently from even their own parents and elders. For unfortunately the present day Hindu household is no longer an Ashrama, and the ideals of self-control and duty are rarely practised there as of old. These are some of the evils of early marriage—the prices we have to pay for our deviation from the ancient ideal of Brahmacharya. But marriage after puberty, too, has its peculiar evils. And without a proper religious and moral training, the high standard of chastity and morality which the Hindu seers hold before society, can on no account be attained, though the children of the post-puberty marriages have a greater chance of being physically strong. Thus each system has merits and defects peculiar to itself.

Chastity is the soul of the Hindu race; and it must be preserved at any cost to keep the nation alive. At the same time the Hindus cannot afford to allow themselves to degenerate physically and intellectually without being threatened with eternal misery and even extinction from the face of the earth. Is it possible to combine a high standard of chastity and morality with great physical strength and intellectual vigour? It can certainly be accomplished. But to bring about this synthesis are needed the re-establishment of the ideal of Brahmacharya, and the earnest co-operation of all thoughtful men and women, who would be fired by the ancient Indo-Aryan ideals and actuated by the noble traditions and culture of the Hindu race, but at the same time would be fully awake to the duties and responsibilities of modern life, individual and collective.

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Our society sorely needs root and branch reform. We must all hold on again to the spiritual ideals which underlie our social institutions, and try to apply them to our society, adapting them to its present day conditions and necessities. We must raise the age of marriage of our boys and girls, impart to them proper education, and give them sufficient scope for self-development and self-reliance. We should no longer enforce marriage on all boys and girls, and if they choose the life of chaste celibacy, and prove themselves to be qualified for it, we should further help them heart and soul to live that life devoting themselves solely to the service of God, society and the country. Such a step would, no doubt, be a departure from the custom now current in society, but it would be fully in

keeping with the ancient spiritual scheme of life, which laid the greatest emphasis on the necessity of self-control and purity in persons of every stage of life—in the student, the householder, the recluse and the monk.

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Hindu society is reforming itself though at a rather slow speed. Early marriage is dying out gradually ; and boys and girls are now married after they grow a little older than before. But still the vast majority of the Hindus are not yet alive to the great urgency of reforms. This is evidenced by the protests and oppositions that are being made against the bill introduced in the Indian Legislative Assembly to raise the age of consent. And the words which Swami Vivekananda spoke nearly two decades and a half ago, soon after the Consent Bill was passed into law, hold almost equally true even to-day :—“ The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man, under the threat of penalty, to live with a girl under twelve years, and at once all the so-called leaders of your religion, raised a tremendous hue and cry against it, sounding the alarm, ‘ Alas, our religion is lost ! ’ As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen ! ” Our boys and girls should no longer be burdened with the cares and anxieties of the family life before their body attains its full growth, and their mind is developed enough to take up the duties and responsibilities that are so often thoughtlessly thrust upon them at quite an early age.

Our society, to bring about reforms, must have the noble inspiration and loving guidance of the mothers of the race. But our women are still being brought up in abject helplessness. And it is the tyranny of men which has stood in the way of the the all-round development and self-expression of India's womanhood. Man the tyrant in the form of the unscrupulous social reactionary still tries to bind woman hand and foot by rules and customs, treat her as his chattel, and train her in servile dependence on men. The tyrant may again appear in the form of the reckless social revolutionary. He may also attempt to take up the role of the arbiter of the destiny of women, and forge yet stronger fetters to make their miserable lot all the more miserable! There can be no greater calamity than this. Man in his vanity still thinks himself to be the sole ruler and guide of women-folk, although he may have changed his attitude. It is to raise his voice against this sense of self-assumed superiority and undue interference of men in matters concerning women primarily, that the illustrious Swami Vivekananda uttered these memorable words in his famous Madras speech 'Vedanta and Indian Life'—“I am asked again and again what I think of the widow problem, and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all. Am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman, that you ask me the question again and again? Who are you - to solve woman's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.”

Our women, however incapable they may be supposed by certain sections of our countrymen, have already given sufficient proofs of their ability to work out their own problems. And with proper education they are sure to get a new inspiration, regain their power of self-dependence, and manifest their latent capacity more fully. They now stand, first of all, in need of the education which would preserve their sterling chastity, develop in them great intellectual power, and endow them at the same time with a broad outlook on life—all of which will fit them admirably not only to solve the problems of primary importance to themselves, but also to stand by men in facing boldly the various complicated questions lying before the country. This educational work we are to take up, in the spirit of service to the Mother Divine, for “She verily has manifested Herself as all the women of the world.”



GAUTAMA, THE BUDDHA; JESUS, THE CHRIST.

THE infinite Compassion of the Buddha, the flaming Love of the man of Nazareth, is an old new quality common to all Social Reformers or Saviors, a selfless emotion which by its beautiful might makes irrelevant and trifling distinctions between persons expressing it. Yet contrasts between these great lovers, Gautama and Jesus, are marked.

Who was Gautama? A man living 500 years before the Christian era who after spiritual apprenticeship, fasts and questings, became the Buddha, Enlightened, and preached a doctrine which transformed India of that time into a heaven of blessedness and harmony,—a doctrine which as its founder prophesied would endure for 5000 years.

Who was Jesus? Some say he was the Maitreya, the future incarnation or expression of the Buddha—the next Buddha, Arimadeya. This is unlikely since Gautama's dispensation yet has 2500 years to run, and since Jesus was not of the Buddha type. Buddha had his Judas, whom the Burmese call Dewadat, who even claimed to be the real Teacher and who tried in various ways to betray and destroy Gautama. Some hold Jesus to be the expression of this man, since the religion sprung up from Jesus' works has endeavored unceasingly to betray Buddhism. The Siamese speak of the evil Dewadat as the God of Europe and the cause of all the evil in this world. In truth, the mission of the white-skin has been one of conquest, pillage, and destruction. In contrast to the more loving Oriental his life has been as that of a carnivorous animal, murderous, cruel, vindictive, wantonly destructive of all life—animal, vegetable and mineral—heedless of others' good and hence of his own. The Chinese spit after the white man passes and say that they can smell the cadaver about him.

Others believe Jesus was the Hindu Krishna who was born of a virgin in a cave, announced by a star, hidden from a massacre of innocents, and who later performed miracles, raised the dead, healed the sick, championed the poor, and so forth, conforming to details common to all so-called 'avatars.' Others maintain that there is no more relationship between one avatar and another than there is between one man and another. "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?"

Be that as it may, both Buddha and Christ, the Anointed, lived in eras when many gods were worshipped, when symbols for *being* were popular.

"Come unto Me...I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet he shall live," said Jesus.

"Verily one is the savior of oneself; what other savior should there be? A man pays in himself for the evil he has done, and in himself is he purified. The good and bad are purified by oneself; no one can purify another," said Buddha.

Both were attesting one Power, yet their expressions of It were as black and white. Christ, the mystic: "I and my Father are one...I that speak unto thee am He."

Buddha, the philosophical monist: "Self is an error, an illusion a dream. Ye that are slaves of the I,...receive the good tidings that your cruel master does not exist !"

"I am the light of the world...Ye are from beneath ; I am from above : ye are of this world ; I am not of this world."

And in one of the Buddhist scriptures it is written, "It is bootless to worship the Buddha...The earth and the Buddha are alike in themselves inert."

Jesus, living on the fringe of the Occident, knowing that the hideous tide of Western materialism was too strong to stem, turned revolutionist to denounce violently all materiality within Judaism. Buddha's revolt took the form of an abrogation of Brahmanism itself and all current Hindu religions to found a completely new cosmology and movement of which "a little saves from much sorrow."

Jesus, knowing that it was too late to accomplish brotherhood (although he could not refrain from declaring it), expressed his activity in acclaiming the Kingdom, the Father, the Spirit.

Gautama held that Spirit *could not be spoken of*; he refused to define Nibbana, and confined his activity to the presentation of an ethical-social program with rules to be followed as the only practical way for Society as a whole to attain a harmony with 'the Law.'

Jesus was a mystical poet and a metaphysical doctor. Buddha was (in active life) (since he refused to speak of the One) a social re-former. He presented four Noble Truths,—that misery is the essence of and inherent in all component existence ; that a cessation of this 'life' is the only possible remedy for suffering caused by what we might call Desire ; that destruction of Desire only can be achieved by an ineffable Nibbana ; that such a realisation is possible by following a 'Noble Eightfold Path' of right or whole belief, aims, speech, action, means of livelihood, thought, effort, and

meditation. Here was a delineation of an empirical system without a god or savior which actually was adopted with complete success (so far as systems go) by a Society finer, kinder, and more simply profound than any we even dream of to-day, a Society which as a result of the teaching of this *Dhamma* still persists after 2500 years in Ceylon, Bali, Burmah, and parts of China.

“Love one another,” said Jesus.

“Refrain from all hatred; generate good thoughts: this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.”

Buddha said: “If a man foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more the hate that comes from him, the more shall be the love that goes from me.”

“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

“The man of restless mind, of passions fierce, with eyes only for the pleasing—craving in him grows great: He forges a heavy chain.”

“Thou shalt not steal.”

“The member of a Buddha's order should abstain from theft, even of a blade of grass.”

In forgiveness, Jesus taught: “I say not unto you, until seven times: but until seventy times seven,” and Buddha: “Though a man with a sharp sword should cut one's body bit by bit, let not an angry thought arise, let the mouth speak no ill word.”

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another,” said Jesus.

“For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time,” said Buddha, “hatred ceases by non-hatred: this is an old rule.”

Always behind the simple command of Gautama was a continuation, a signpost pointing to a plan of self salvation more detailed. “Who here has forsaken all lust, who is vowed to the homeless life, who has dried up the craving for

existence, who has done with delight and undelight, come to coolness, rid of the bases of being.....” And then followed a great metaphysic, an intricate instruction showing how to demolish ‘the bases of being,’ a logic, ethic, and Yoga that cut deep into esoteric thought. There were thinkers to be upset intellectually as well as the simple folk to be guided and the indolent to be appeased : Buddha had to be all things to all men to establish the Law over the immortal Vedas !

‘The time seemed short to Jesus who made his life a rich rebuke to current materiality and who was concerned with the soon-coming end of this world and a subsequent entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.’

Buddhism, on the contrary, was willing to take the material illusion less hastily, declaring that while we might progress into ‘Heaven’ there were innumerable heavens and hells in the world-system (that is,—the subjective thought-system) and that to attain to any of them (there were instructions for that too) only could be to prolong the illusion, Nibbana being an undefined, utterly beyond the pairs—good and non-good, desire (love) and hate, pleasure and pain, bondage and liberation, and so forth. Gautama Buddha was the supreme teacher of the way, but there had been three Buddhas before him in the present world-period and an indefinite number in the unceasing (for the fettered.) revolutions of the great world-wheel of life and death.

“Put away anger, lay aside pride, pass beyond all fetters. Whoso clings not to the constituents of existence, to nothing whatsoever, suffering comes not nigh him.”

Miracle-working was considered ‘clinging to the constituents of existence’ and perhaps the most obvious difference between Jesus and Buddha was that the latter declared himself absolutely against the working of miracles. These tricks with nature were always common to Hindu civilisation and did not signify any particular spirituality ; if Hindus had allowed themselves to judge their god-men by their works they would have had a galaxy of false prophets. Buddha’s chief objection to tricks or nature-feats was that they were a far less

efficient and lasting method of teaching than the concrete word-thought-action propaganda. He was more practically concerned with the progress of mind and the practice of training it to free itself from itself and the trammels of matter.

Yet to those who feared extinction he declared, "It is true that I preach extinction, but only the extinction of pride; lust, evil thought and ignorance; not that of forgiveness, love, charity, and truth." His tremendous compassion for all suffering, in man, the animals, and down to the last atom, led him to seek a means of wholly eliminating it. Jesus' love seemed more immediately concerned with the salvation of *humanity* by a release into heaven, a method certainly obtainable at least in some degree by the power of miracles. It was in this way that Jesus could "save" the world. Buddha held heaven to be only a partial salvation and therefore to be foregone. Yet he never would define his end:

"If any teach Nibbana is to cease, say unto such they lie;

If any teach Nibbana is to live, say unto such they err."

Knowing that even God-consciousness subtly implied a lack of it, he only could indicate that truth was beyond utterance. On the contrary, Jesus drew many parables of 'the Kingdom of Heaven' and spoke constantly of 'the Father.'

Buddha saw the trinity—ignorance-activity-spirituality, inertia-flux-balance, birth-fruiting-passing on, the embassy—the Word—the Father—repeated ceaselessly, a game played on creation as if it were its essence as it is indeed the essence of suffering. It was this illusion that he warred against,—the inability to unite the three into a realised one. Jesus was more opportunely concerned with lifting men out of the second to the third, from blind activity to spirituality, from the Word to the Father. Again: Jesus' love was immediate; Buddha's compassion was calmer, more thoroughly Oriental, for it recognised that the whole trinity including spirituality had to be surmounted, that the seeds of hell itself were planted in heaven.

It was for this reason that the disciples—if they could be called such—of the fourth Buddha understood him so much

better than the disciples of Jesus understood their preceptor; it is for this reason that the line of Buddhas is so distinctly separate from the more populous line of savior-avatars.

Jesus may have used 'the Father' as a blanket term for the unification of the three states of being and introduced 'Heaven' only to popularise the inexpressible. He may have incorporated ignorance-activity into one concept, eliminated spirituality or the third state entirely, and contrasted his (devil) concept with his Truth. This however is improbable and perhaps impossible since his characteristics were so meticulously similar to all other world-saviors, since if he had meant this his terminology could no longer have been that of a mystic and qualified dualist, since he held Heaven and the end of the world so seriously, and since he felt his mission to be for eternal salvation (with the unsubscribing damned) whereas Buddha had nothing to do with the saving of souls, holding them to be unreal, and projected a frankly temporary, practical doctrine of selflessness, non-killing, non-hatred, and the rest.

Difficult as it is to draw distinctions accurately between two prophets living so far in the past and themselves 500 years apart, easy as it may be to declare superficially the parallelism of the good brothers, it is nevertheless apparent that on the questions of divinity, vicarious sin-expiation, social reformation, the Absolute, and miracle-mongering, there were sharp differences between them.

Jesus was one with the Father—Buddha would not discuss it; Jesus was somehow suffering for the whole world—Buddha's last words were "work out your own salvation with diligence"; Jesus presented a general pacifist ethic—Buddha was far more detailed in mind-salvation instruction; Jesus promised a heaven for the elect and a contrasting punishment—Buddha tried to dispel the illusion of heaven *and* hell; Jesus performed miracles in order to make the world more like heaven—Buddha refused to employ or to allow his pupils employ such means of teaching, always throwing the individual's salvation back on the individual himself.

Like Krishna, Jesus claimed Godhood—Buddha declared himself merely a man and hence a figurehead. Jesus declared himself the only-begotten son of God (at least it is so presented)—whereas Buddha was active in demolishing beliefs in *long lines* of avatars.

In short, Jesus was another Osiris, Horus, Indra, Prajapati, Mithras, Attis, Dionysus, Montezuma, Quetzalcoatl, a bonafide ‘savior,’ a redeemer (as all Sun-gods had been), a Presence and a Life that men thought they in some manner had lost, and therefore worshipped. Buddha, unlike all avatars, holds a unique position as the one enlightened teacher presenting a salvation solely by oneself, a simple instruction of how without saviors to attain this, and a repudiation of all divinations and god-spells (gospels). Buddhism never has been a religion but an ethic, the one movement that (while it remained Buddhism) never has taken life, animate or inanimate, nor subscribed to the outward symbol trumpery that is the very groundwork of all ‘religions.’

Jesus’ suffering and resurrection was the sign of all men coming to God, the proof that death would be swallowed up in victory. But this conquest of death indicates a fear of it (which accounts for the crucifixion) and Buddha saw this as another illusion in time and progress which had to be passed beyond,—that the birth-death-resurrection unit had to be balanced equally and then melted into an undefined. Here was the whole distinction between Greek and Hindu Monism, or, more exactly, between two stages in the Oriental initiation. At the earlier stage, if death had not been wholly embraced, the novitiate had to die. Again,—to say God is Love shadowed a smaller love to be transformed; to refuse to say—indicated either a *thorough* at-one-ment with “Love” or an honest materialism.

Yet as Kabir says,

“No avatar can be the Infinite Spirit
For he suffers the results of his deeds.”

“Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One,

that is, God." But then again comes the "I and my Father are one!"

Other prophets who are not concerned with salvaging the world or re-forming Society said what apparently neither Jesus nor Buddha dared teach. Vasishtha declared, "The wise man knows no bondage or liberation, nor any error of any kind: all the three are only in the conceptions of the ignorant."

Krishna taught Arjuna—"He who thinketh It to be a slayer and he who thinketh It to be slain—both of these know not, for It neither killeth nor is killed. Neither is It ever born, nor doth It die. He who knoweth It to be imperishable and eternal, unborn and unchanging, whom and how can that man kill or cause to be killed?"

And Sankaracharya: "There is neither death nor birth, neither bond nor striving for freedom, neither seeker after liberation nor liberated—this is the absolute truth."

But the truth that even the teacher and disciple are dreams—relative lies—impermanent sections of cosmic emotions—karmas—is rarely ever accepted by teacher and disciple.

Indeed, it is the peculiar characteristic of the Savior-Teacher type, lost in an ecstaticly sorrowful spacial love-forest, that its clinging to illusion to destroy it, its compassion for the apparent reality of matter, should be immense,—that the Master ever should postpone his own 'freedom' in order to 'help' others to freedom. So Buddha declared that until the last atom went into Nibbana before him, it was not for him. The type does not see or rather *realize* an Absolute in which all qualities (including non-good, murder, destruction and the evil-suffering attributes) are one; it does not see error dispelling itself (and hence a fixed postulate perfect per se) but rather sees itself descended willingly to abet error's elimination. Others than avatars, *the saviors from salvation*, may have uttered higher truth or seen only one inexpressible in Christs or Buddhas, but theirs has not been the compelling sympathy of the Savior-Teachers. The world still seems to need its kings of humility, its princes of love.

Perhaps the comparison between Gautama and Jesus is unfair for, whereas we have authentic stone-tablet records of the life and sayings of Buddha, the Jesus we know apparently was foisted on the Occident by the Roman empire out of a political necessity arising from the threatening growth in Rome at that time of Mithraism which became so popular a religion (sculptural evidences of it still remain in England) that it had to be suppressed by physical force and perhaps by *imitation* of its baptism, eucharist, twelve disciples, cave birth, and so forth, all current in the religion of Mithra (and many others) and possibly available in a newer (by 600 years) less dangerous priestcraft *calling itself* Christianity, *one of a number* of smaller priest-cults, persecuted and (being weaker-willed and more compromising than other *minority* Christian groups) no doubt willing to be subsidized (like the majority-socialists!) even if some facts and ethical standards had to be distorted and denied, and to become a Church,—which itself became thoroughly corrupt, ‘excommunicating,’ and ‘church-like’ by the time of the Nicæan Council, 325 A. D.

Even if there had been little or no bases of fact in the Christian cult *as a whole*, the current common avatar (Christ) life was widely known and easily available (even in the form of an antique Babylonian Mystery-play in the crucifixion scene of which one player, usually taken from a gaol, had to die in actuality); there was an abundance of pre-Christian gospels and sayings practically identical with ‘Jesus’ to draw upon; and the numerous sects of Gnostics, Therapeutæ, Essenes, all of whose teachings were of the same mould, easily could have supplied a ‘demand’ for gospels, as Edward Carpenter explains in his “Pagan and Christian Creeds.”

At any rate, if there was a real man, Jesus, his teachings certainly must have been far more full and complete than the story we have to draw upon. It is quite probable that ‘Christos’ was originally a derivation of ‘Krishna’ and that “Jesus” never lived, but that a certain Apollonius whose life paralleled the gospel’s account of Jesus, and who went to Egypt and India for instruction, was the physical basis for

the Roman Christ-myth. For Europeans in those days, a 'religion' was as necessary as an 'art' is to us; both can be sops to man's spirit and convenient preservers of bourgeois and class-ruled governments.

All this however does not invalidate the variance between two great Orientals; a philosophical teacher who re-formed Society, and a religious mystic yet unnamed who condemned it and who probably had to amend his words to suit an Occidental (pagan) civilization decaying with undue rapidity.

Indeed, all Buddhas and Christs only appear in decadent ages, and are at best only symbols of the One—prophets of a Golden Age (just as that age is itself a symbol of *That* beyond ages) in which there shall be no need of Buddhas, when every man will be his own Christ. This, granted that Buddhas or Christs, the apparent writer or the reader, ever exist at all....

DON WILLIAM LEET.

THE LASCARS OR INDIAN SEAMEN.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

BENGALEE servants are employed now-a-days in almost all ships that ply between Calcutta and Europe. They are gradually forming a class by themselves.....The body of lascars and coalmen have each a head who is called 'Serang,' under whom are two or three 'Tindals,' and under these come the lascars and coalmen.

The head of the Khansamas or 'boys' is the butler, over whom there is a European steward. The lascars wash and

* From Memoirs of European Travel. Swamiji sailed a second time for the West on 20th June, 1899, on board the B. I. S. N. steamer "Golconda."

cleanse the ship, throw or wind up the cables, set down or lift the boats and hoist or strike sail (though this last is a rare occurrence in steamships) and do similar kinds of work. The Serang and the Tindal are always moving, watching them and assisting in their work. The coalmen keep the fire steady in the engine-room, their duty is to fight day and night with fire, and to keep the engines neat and clean. And it is no easy task to keep that stupendous engine and all its parts neat and tidy. The Serang and his assistant (or 'Brother' in the lascar parlance) are from Calcutta and speak Bengali; they look gentlemanly and can read and write, having studied in school; they speak tolerable English also. The Serang has a son, thirteen years of age, who is a servant of the Captain and waits at his door as an orderly. Seeing these Bengali lascars, coalmen, servants and boys at work, the feeling of despair with regard to my countrymen which I had was much abated. How they are slowly developing their manhood, with a strong physique,—how fearless yet docile! The cringing, sycophant attitude common to 'natives,' even the sweepers do not possess—what a transformation!

The Indian lascars do excellent work, without murmur, and go on a quarter of a European sailor's pay. This has dissatisfied many in England, especially as many Europeans are losing their living thereby. They sometimes set up an agitation. Having nothing else to say against them—for the lascars are smarter in work than Europeans—they only complain that in rough weather, when the ship is in danger they lose all courage. Good God! In actual circumstances, that infamy is found to be baseless. In times of danger, the European sailors sometimes drink freely through fear, and make themselves stupid and out of use. Indian sailors never take a drop of liquor in their life, and up to now, not one of them has ever shown cowardice in times of great danger.



CONDITION OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

II—TAINT OF KARMA AND ITS SOLUTION.

WE have found that the Gita first lays down that for a living individual, work is indispensable, and then commands each individual, with all the emphasis of a moral "ought," to do work even though it is tainted with evil. But this does not satisfy the human soul. This taint continues to disturb the tainted soul, in the same way as a mote of sand continues to trouble an eye until it is entirely removed. Synchronous existence of purity and taint in the same soul, without marring its happiness, seems to be an obvious impossibility. It is like asking for a round square or a golden stone-ware. It seems directly to run counter to the supreme principle of analytical judgment, viz the principle of contradiction. How to make possible this apparently impossible thing? The attempt to solve this seemingly insoluble problem, to seek a way out of this quandary must have cost, and be still costing, excruciating agonies of mind in countless millions who have ever chosen to tread in the path of God.

Thousands and thousands of men must have tried to untie this Gordian knot, but most of them have failed. There are many possessed of inordinately active energies, and less gifted with speculative faculties, who, stumbling against this inconvenient problem, contemptuously dismiss it as a purely academic question. There are others again who like a Pope of Rome, would describe conscience as an evil monster invented to torment people. Next, there are the pragmatists who would perhaps apotheosise action per se, and make the quality of action the sole determinant of the rightness or wrongness of the action itself. Then there are master-thinkers like Plato endowed with a transparently lucid and penetrative intellect and unrivalled powers of analytical exposition and literary expression, who would shape society and the forces going to build it up, according to a clear-cut, well-defined

and logically perfect system which has its seat in the brain of the thinker alone without the possibility of its ever being reduced into action, because by their very nature they refuse, like the elemental forces of nature, e. g. the waves of the ocean, or the blasts of wind, to be tethered to any man-made post. All these gropings of the human intellect in the murky region of Karma, to find out with the dim light vouchsafed to it, an entrance to the vestibule of the heavenly mansion of Peace, have hardly if ever been attended with fruition. The attempts of many idealists to get completely away from Karma, owing to its inherent impurity, have only succeeded in mangling the features of Karma and presenting its picture in a lurid light. Instead of spiritualising Karma, they have degraded it. The inevitable effect of all this is the loss of the salt of life, viz. enthusiasm for work, and consequent disruption, and moral, intellectual and physical pauperisation of society. The danger is all the greater in India which is the home of speculation.

The Gita now comes with its solution of the momentous problem. The Lord says:—

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

“Equal in success or failure, O Dhananjaya, and enseatd in Yoga, do thou thine (appointed) duty, without any (egoistic) attachment to it: equanimity is Yoga.” The import of this may not be readily understood by all. The Lord, therefore, explains his message more fully so as make it accessible to all :

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥

“One who consecrates his duties to God and performs them without attachment, is not stained with taint even as a lotus leaf is not soaked with the water (on it).” He explains further by saying “निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ।” “Be merely an agent (of God), O Savyasachin,” consider yourself as a mere agent for the execution of God’s designs in the ensemble—designs which are embosomed in the heart of that omnipotent,

omnipresent and omniscient Being who alone knows the comprehensive purpose of creation and which has not been vouchsafed to an individuated being to comprehend in its entirety.

Believe that you are an instrument in the hand of God for furthering his ends, change the pivotal point of your activities from your self to God, make your life God-centric instead of Ego-centric, and you will find that the limitations of work have ceased to have their terror for you, its angularities have been rounded off and the path which seemed to have been thickly interspersed with horrid thorns, will appear to be bestrewn with soft and odorous flowers,—which will carry you direct to the portals of Heaven—this seems to be the glorious message of the Gita to the countless millions who with bleeding hearts have been toiling to unravel the mystery of Karma. The Gita appears to have unmistakably seized and possessed the truth of Karma. It stands on an unassailable pinnacle of certitude. “ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृदयेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।” “The Lord resides, O Arjuna, in the heart of all beings,” says Sri Bhagavan. By making each feel that each in his own walk of life is a God’s agent in fulfilling the divine purpose, the Gita invests all work, be it as humble as it may, with a sacred dignity. It adds thousandfold to the energy with which work is done. It makes all work more sublime, more beautiful and more perfect. It makes the saint a better saint, the householder a better householder, a citizen a better citizen, a ploughman a better ploughman, and a statesman a better statesman. It adds zest to life, zest to action, it ensouls the body and makes man look upon it as the temple in which God resides—a temple which should not be defiled, a temple on which no one should be allowed to lay violent hands with impunity.

Can the ideal of निष्काम कर्म or selfless work, as preached in the Gita, be reached by all? The answer is in the negative. It can be reached only by men possessing “दैवी संपत्” or celestial assets. “दैवी संपत्तिमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता”—The godly assets make for salvation and the ungodly ones for

bondage. It follows, therefore, that before the universal ideal of "निष्काम क्रम" preached by the Gita which is a real and practical panacea for all the evils of Karma, can be actualised in life, it is necessary to concentrate our attention on the mastery of the means for its acquisition. As Pavhari Baba whom even the great Swami Vivekananda looked upon with the greatest reverence, used to say "जौन साधन तौन सिद्धि" (The means are as good as the end). The Gita specifies twenty-six attributes which constitute divine assets. Such lists are never exhaustive. They are merely indicative or suggestive. According to the standpoint from which a problem is approached, a list of this kind may either be amplified or abbreviated. But there are certain generical virtues, root principles from which sprout forth ancillary virtues or principles. These cannot be eradicated from a system without killing it. In the colonnade of virtues which support the system of morals, all the columns are not absolutely necessary for holding it up. Some are essential and some ornamental. The list of heavenly attributes enumerated in the Gita, on the wings of which the human soul is transported to the mount of delectation, contains a mention, among other things, of virtues which are not primary. What these are may be left to be culled out by the discriminative intellect of each individual. But it is clear that "अभयं" (fearlessness) is the supreme virtue, the king-royal of all virtues, according to the conception of the author of the Gita.

SURENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY, M. A.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 228.)

एकचार्यनिकेतः स्यादप्रमत्तो गुहाशयः ।

अलक्ष्यमाण आचारैर्मुनिरेकोऽल्पभाषणः ॥१४॥

14. The sage should wander alone, be homeless, ever alert and resorting to caves¹; he should not

betray² his real worth by his actions, and be without companions, and reticent of speech.

[The resemblance between the life of a snake and that of a saint is brought out in this and the next Sloka.

¹ *Caves*—i. e. solitudes.

² *Betray etc.*—just as one cannot tell by the mere sight of a snake whether it is venomous or not.]

गृहारम्भोऽतिदुःखाय विफलश्चाध्रुवात्मनः ।
सर्पः परकृतं वेश्म प्रविश्य सुखमेधते ॥१५॥

15. It is extremely troublesome, and useless, for a man to build a house, since his body is so frail ; the snake enters a house¹ made by others and is happy and prosperous.

[¹ *House etc.*—e. g. a rat-hole.]

एको नारायणो देवः पूर्वसृष्टं स्वमायया ।
संहृत्य कालकलया कल्पान्त इदमीश्वरः ॥१६॥

16. Through the Energy of Time, the Lord Narayana, who is One, draws back, at the end of a cycle, this universe which He created before through His Maya¹ ;

[The analogy of the spider and its web, to explain the evolution and involution of the world, is delineated in verses 16-21.

¹ *Maya*—the inscrutable Power of the Lord through which He projects, maintains and dissolves this universe, Himself remaining unchanged all the while. This has led the Advaitic philosophers to conclude that this universe is merely an *appearance*, it is Brahman seen through the prism of ignorance.]

एक एवाद्वितीयोऽभूदात्माधारोऽखिलाश्रयः ।
कालेनात्मानुभावेन साम्यं नीतासु शक्तिषु ।
सत्त्वादिष्वादिपुरुषः प्रधानपुरुषेश्वरः ॥१७॥

17. The principles of Sattva¹ etc. being put into equilibrium by Time, which is His own Shakti (Power),—the Primeval Being,² the Lord of Prakriti

and Purusha, then remains One without a second, Himself His own support—though supporting the whole universe.

[¹ *Sattva etc.*—the three component forces of Prakriti.

² *Primeval Being.*—Brahman, the substratum of the soul and matter.]

पराचराणां परम मास्ते कैवल्यसंज्ञितः ।

केवलानुभवानन्दसन्दोहो निरुपाधिकः ॥१८॥

18. He, the Supreme Lord of the high and low,¹ remains as a mass of transcendent Knowledge and Bliss, known as the Absolute, and without attributes.

[¹ *High and low*—all beings and things from Brahmâ down to grossest matter.]

केवलात्मानुभावेन स्वमायां त्रिगुणात्मिकाम् ।

संचोभयन्सृजत्यादौ तथा सूत्रमरिन्दम ॥१९॥

19. O queller¹ of foes, He, through His transcendent power (of Time) stirs into activity His Maya consisting of the three Gunas, and through that projects first the Sutra.²

[¹ *Queller etc.*—King Yadu.

² *Sutra*—The Cosmic Energy variously known as Prána, Hiranyagarbha, Sutrâtmâ, Mahat, or even Vayu. In the Puranas this is called Brahmâ who projects the world. It is the next link after Prakriti in the creative process and is subtler than both mind and matter, which evolve later on from this.]

तमाहुस्त्रिगुणाव्यक्तिं सृजन्तीं विश्वतोमुखाम् ।

यस्मिन्प्रेतमिदं विश्वं येन संसरते पुमान् ॥२०॥

20. (Sages describe) this manifestation of the Prakriti (viz. the Sutra) as projecting¹ the universe,—in which the universe is strung,² and through which³ the Jiva transmigrates.⁴

[¹ *Projecting*—through the Ahamkara or Egoism—its next step.

² *Strung etc.*—The reference is to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad III. vii. 2.

³ *Through which etc.*—i. e. as Prana.

⁴ *Transmigrates*—from one body or sphere to another.]

यथोर्गनाभिर्हृदयाद्गुणी संतत्य वक्रतः ।

तया विहृत्य भूयस्तां असत्येवं महेश्वरः ॥२१॥

21. As the spider spreads its web from its heart through the mouth, and after playing with it, swallows it again, so¹ the Lord also does (with the universe).

[¹ *So etc.*—Isvara projects the universe out of Himself, maintains it and reabsorbs it at the end of a cycle into Himself. Hence the universe is not essentially different from Brahman whose real (according to Dualists) or apparent (according to Advaitists) projection it is.]

(To be continued.)



REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

The Inner Consciousness—How to Awaken and Direct It.—By Swami Prakashananda. Published by the Vedanta Society, San Francisco, California. Pp. 28.

This admirable booklet treats of a great subject in a clear and simple manner. Man can never rest contented with the consciousness of the objective world. Our constant dependence on things external brings us misery and suffering in the end. That is why we have to awaken our inner consciousness—consciousness of something distinct from external perception and sense-impression—consciousness of the Divine in the soul. Concentration, as the author rightly prescribes, is the method by which we can call forth the spiritual energy latent in us—“unfold that Divine, cosmic, universal, absolute consciousness, which alone can make us really happy and blessed.”

Krishna's Flute.—By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 135. Price Re. 1-8 as.

In spite of destructive criticisms directed against his historicity and character, Sri Krishna stands as the great inspirer of mankind. And his immortal message is the message of Love—“love for all men—love which embraced in its widening circle even the animal world.” The Gita, which embodies the noble teachings of Sri Krishna, is a true philosophy of life, and preaches perfect harmony and toleration. “The Message of the Gita,” says Prof. Vaswani, “is a beautiful synthesis of action, knowledge, and love—*karma, jnan, and bhakti*.... Karma-marga, jnan-marga, bhakti-marga—are not three separate paths but three stages in the one path—one ascent of the soul to God. *Karma, jnan and bhakti*—we need all the three to have a philosophy of life.”

Sri Krishna lays bare before mankind the Vision Universal—the Vision of Humanity. And this “faith in Humanity and in the Atman whose breath is in the Human Race is, to my mind,” says the author, “essential to a satisfactory study and solution of the complex world-problems of the age.” Prof. Vaswani has succeeded in interpreting in an admirable manner the message of Sri Krishna, and has also clearly shown its great significance to the spiritual awakening of the world in general and of India in particular. “The message of the Flute,” he observes, “is the world’s piteous need to-day. For hate and passion have wrecked the life of the Nations.”

A Soul's Posy.—By Zero. Published by the Panini Office, Bahadurganj, Allahabad. Pp. 46. Price 8 as.

This booklet contains some valuable thoughts and reflections of a seeker after God. The author shows in an illuminating manner that the conclusions of Western science and philosophy are in harmony with the laws that govern spiritual life, and that the former also help in the unfoldment of the human soul.

God, the Highest Truth, is sought by all in some form or other. “Nothing, nothing,” says the author, “altogether without Thee. If we nominally exile Thee, it is only to bring Thee back, often unconsciously, by some strange deification. The Buddhist made Buddha their God. The Agnostics make Law their God. The Materialists make Nature their God. No one can do without Thee. The Good, the Beautiful, the True are ideas which never disappear from our field of vision.”

REPORTS AND APPEALS.

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, P. O., Dt. Muttra, U. P., January—May, 1922.

Indoor patients—Altogether 49 cases were admitted, of which 35 were discharged cured 4 left treatment; 4 died and 6 were still under treatment.

Outdoor patients—There were 4900 cases in all, of which 1130 were new and 3770 repeated cases.

	Rs.	as.	p.
Balance of last year ...	283	9	6
Receipt * ...	1729	0	6
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>			
Total ...	2012	10	0
Expenditure ...	1887	7	9
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>			
Balance in hand ...	125	2	3

*Including Rs. 713 taken as loan from the R. K. Mission, Belur, and Rs. 50 from the Brindaban Sevashrama Building Fund.

It will be seen that the financial condition of the Sevashrama is far from satisfactory. In fact, it is in debt by several hundred rupees. It is a great pity, since for nearly two decades the Sevashrama has been carrying on its noble and useful work of alleviating the distress of suffering Narayanas in a systematic manner in one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in India where the demand for a Sevashrama is very great. We earnestly hope that the generous public will not allow it to suffer for want of funds. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Hony. Secretary.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, Belur, Dt. Howrah, for the year 1921.

The work of this charitable dispensary, we are glad to note, has been steadily and rapidly growing. The total

number of patients treated during the year under report came up to 11,942, of which 4024 represented new cases and the rest repeated ones. Messrs. B. K. Paul & Co. of Calcutta very generously supplied the greater part of the annual stock of medicines free of cost. The Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd., Calcutta, the Indian Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, Calcutta, as also many chemists and other gentlemen kindly helped the institution with medicines. The Bally Municipality contributed in 1921 the sum of Rs. 120 for the upkeep of the dispensary, as in previous years: We hope the municipality will make a more generous contribution to this philanthropic institution which ministers chiefly to its ratepayers.

The total receipts during the year, including the last year's balance, amounted to Rs. 529-2-3, and the total expenditure to Rs. 123-10-8.

Contributions in aid of the dispensary, both in the shape of money and medical necessaries, will be thankfully received by (1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Dt. Howrah; (2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1 Mukherjee Lane, P. O. Baghbazur, Calcutta.

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*The Report of the Vivekananda Tamil School, Kuala Lumpur—*for 1921.

This institution was started in 1914 for the purpose of imparting instructions in the vernacular to the children of the Tamilians who rank third in point of number in these parts of the Malay Peninsula. Its object is to assist the children in bringing about a harmonious development of both body and mind. There were 63 children on the rolls, of which 36 were boys and 27 girls. Besides the general classes, a religious class was also held to teach healthy and liberal principles of religion, that are indispensable for making the moral and spiritual basis of character safe and sound. The income of the school for the year under report was \$4,128, 57½ cents, and the expenditure was \$2574-65 cents, leaving a balance of \$1553-92½ cents. Contributions, however small, will be

thankfully received by Swami Videhananda, The Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S.

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur, U. P., December 1921—April 1922.

Indoor patients—There were 2 old and 84 new cases, of whom 56 were discharged cured, 10 died, 13 left treatment and 7 were still under treatment.

Outdoor patients—Of the total number 9445, there were 4193 new and 5252 repeated cases.

	Rs.	as.	p.
Balance of the previous month	... 4919	2	9
Receipts	... 6135	6	6
Total	... 11054	9	3
Total Expenditure	... 5426	15	9
Balance	... 5627	9	6

The following gifts in kind need special mention:—Mr. Horjivandass Jogjivandass, Bombay—one bale of 100 bed-sheets; Mr. S. C. Dass, Calcutta—Allopathic medicines worth Rs. 231-8-6; Mahant Seva Ram, Kankhal—55 seers wheat-flour etc.

Any contribution will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Kalyanananda, the Hony. Secretary.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Plain Living and High Thinking

“Plain living and high thinking” was the motto followed by our great forefathers. But attracted by the glamour of modern civilisation we have departed from the ancient and noble maxim, and are raising our standard of living without caring to raise at the same time our standard of life. By our inordinate fondness for fine dress, comfortable lodgings and surroundings, and costly and palatable but often unhealthy food, we are not only increasing our wants and miseries, but are also setting very bad examples to the masses. Following

the so-called higher classes, they are giving up their plain life and habits, simple food and dress, thereby bringing untold miseries on themselves in these days of great economic distress and struggle.

Dr. P. C. Roy has struck a note of timely warning in an article on 'Civilisation as measured by the standard of living,' published in the "Servant" of Calcutta. He says,—“The majority of the college going population of our young men, by their life and action, show that they are fully alive to the needs of modern civilisation and strive to show off a high standard of living. Civilisation is measured by the amount of soap and cosmetics consumed; by the amount of glass and hollow metalware used; by the mileage of Railway travelling; by the yards of cloth and so forth....Imbued with ideas like these our youngmen go through their course of education and come out as a lawyer or a doctor or a professor; they live the life of a high standard, and disseminate discontent and a taste of articles of higher standard to the masses.”

But is the so-called higher standard of living really higher, and does it help us to live a higher life?—asks Dr. Roy very pertinently. He says, “I should consider that to be higher standard of living which contributes to a higher or nobler life. According to that standard the less the animal needs and creature comforts are pandered to, the better it is for the man concerned. If I can manage with one piece of cloth I shall not hanker after two. If food worth two annas per day sustains me I shall not hanker after more. And such ought to be the standard of living, call it high or low. I do not personally claim to have lived up to that standard, but that is not the point. I am putting down what I think should be the standard.”

“Plain living and high thinking, while engaged in agricultural, industrial or other professional pursuits, should be set,” Dr. Roy says further, “as an ideal before our countrymen. Bliss is our aim and we should measure our success by the amount of Bliss we attain. And wherein lies Bliss? Not in the possession of 'Cows, horses, elephants, piles of gold, servants, wives, land or houses' but in the realisation of Self. When that is achieved one becomes 'Swarat,' or king of one's own self.”

Wanted a Change of Heart

Conferences after conferences are being held in the West to establish the peace of the world. Each nation professes to be war-weary and particularly anxious for permanent peace, but still the prospect of peace is seen nowhere! The authors of the conferences talk of the reduction of naval and

military strength, of reparations and indemnities, but few think of disarming the brute in man and regenerating the human soul. Speaking on the poor achievement of the Peace Conferences held during the past three years and a half, the "Looker-On" of Calcutta says very truly—"Of what use holding these *pow-wows* unless the participants are all more or less actuated by genuine motives for the good of mankind at large and the pursuit of unselfish aims? What is wanted is a real change of heart as between man and man. Whether it is in the sphere of European politics, International conflict, or British-Indian administration, the root difficulty is the same; viz. presence of ingrained selfishness and greed in man. Unless we can accustom ourselves to thinking in terms of humanity, to visualizing something in the nature of a World State of which we are all parts—not all the Meetings at Genoa and Washington, not all the Imperial Conferences, will solve the quarrels, jealousies and antagonisms inherent in our hateful system of national vanities and petty local pride." We need to-day that sincerity of purpose which would strengthen us to gladly undergo any sacrifice, however great. This is necessary for the realisation of the higher ideals which all profess but few care to follow scrupulously.

The Agony on the Volga

Under the above head-line the "Review of Reviews," April 15th, 1922, publishes a heart-rending description of the acute and doleful misery prevailing in the famine-stricken areas in Russia. The Volga valley known as the richest wheat-growing province in the world is in the grip of a terrible famine and its once prosperous inhabitants, twenty million peasants, hitherto supplying half the loaves of entire Europe, are dying like flies, inch by inch. Last year owing to the failure of rains the crops withered away, and on account of the devastation of war and other kindred causes the peasants had no reserves. So there now prevails in the Volga valley starvation absolute and complete. The people have taken to eating grass. "The only grass that grows is a coarse, stiff kind, which, in ordinary times, neither horses nor cattle will touch, and only the camel will eat. This stuff is pounded up and mixed sometimes with water and a little linseed, sometimes only with water, sometimes with meal made of the ground up bones of cats and dogs, sometimes with twigs and earth." As a result of this menu the people have been suffering from all sorts of intestinal complaints. "The stomachs of the children are monstrously distended, their limbs swollen, their soft, pliable bones deformed and displaced." In one district the peasants pounded up and ate hemp-straw and they all went raving mad. To crown all they

have just passed through a terrible winter when heavy icicles hung from the eaves of the roof of their house, and the fields and streets were covered over with white snow two feet deep. People had scarcely any garments and many were frozen to death. "In all the houses we visited," writes a worker, "sick and dying people, men, women and children were lying on the floor or on the stoves. We found no food in any of the houses, save the 'bread' made up of leaves and sticks that tortures the children who eat it." In one village of 1900 families 900 only are left. And everywhere the eyes meet with the sight of the dead, frozen, stiff and heaped like faggots besides the frozen cemeteries. But the trying monotony of this tragic drama is now and then relieved by the gracious hospitality of these suffering peasants, and the darkness of the shadow of death itself is lightened by their exhibition of the sweet amenities of human nature which only requires the lashing of misfortune and tribulation to rouse them up. Many wonderful tales are told of the amazing sacrifices of these dying peasants to save the life of friends and relatives. Most pitiable of all is the account of a small child of ten, "who had come to the kitchen for two rations, neither of them for himself. He stumbled away across the snow, hugging the can of soup and the cup of cocoa, with two bread rations buttoned under his coat. I thought the child would collapse at any moment. His face was colourless, his lips drawn back. He was shivering and crying tearlessly, as so many do. We went with him and found the mother trying to cook some grass flour, adding twigs of wood. The soup and bread were handed to the younger children, and the boy stood watching them, following every movement of the wooden spoons, but not attempting to take anything for himself." Here Life struggled with Death, and proved victorious in the end.

All-India Hindi Literary Conference

The 12th annual session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was held at Lahore, the stronghold of Urdu and Gurumukhi, under the presidency of Pandit Jagannath Prasad Chaturvedi of Calcutta, on the 27th, 28th and 29th May last. The President in his address ably reviewed the present state of Hindi language and literature, and suggested many timely improvements. He exposed the hollowness of the idea of English taking the place of a lingua franca in India. His remarks on the Khari Boli school of poetry, however, need not deter its adherents from improving in their line. They can, we think, take a lesson from Bengali, and use a *slightly* altered form of diction in poetry from that of prose, which will remove its present awkward dulness. They should also use freer metres.

Resolutions were passed expressing satisfaction at the spread of Hindi amongst South African Indians, and urging the Indians in Fiji, Trinidad and Mauritius to follow the lead given by the African Indians. The Sammelan noted with pleasure the introduction of Hindi in the Indian National Congress, urged upon the Congress to publish its reports in Hindi, and requested the leaders of all provinces to teach it in National Schools, thus helping the spread of Hindi as a common language for Indians at home and abroad.

An Address on Sri Ramakrishna

Mr. Eric Hammond, a student of comparative religion, well-known to the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata, gave an interesting address at Compton Hall, Wimbledon, on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, which are gaining an ever-increasing appreciation both in the East as well as in the West. The London correspondent of the 'Hindu' writes on this topic.—

The saint of the East, said Mr. Hammond, was a most impressive personality. He had what might be called the cosmic consciousness, for he told Swami Vivekananda, his devoted disciple, that he had seen God. He studied the great religions of the world very closely identifying himself with all that was highest in each of them. The conclusion which he arrived at, was that there was after all only one religion, though it took various forms.

This appreciation of one of India's modern seers (who was still regarded as a 'heathen' by his orthodox Christian contemporaries) was all the more significant in view of the fact that it was delivered at an ordinary religious service in a Christian place of worship. It was an instance of the new spirit which is leavening the Christian churches of Britain.

Swami Abhedananda at Shillong

On the 30th May, 1922, at 6 p. m. the representatives of the residents of Shillong met together at Quinton Hall to offer an address of welcome to His Holiness the Swami Abhedananda, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Mission. People of all communities, young and old, were present on the occasion and received the esteemed visitor with a high ovation. The Hall was packed to its full capacity.

Punctually at 6 p. m. the proceedings began. The opening song being over, Rai U. N. Kanjilal Bahadur made a short speech about the work of the Swamiji in distant lands, and proposed the election of Mr. S. P. Desai I. C. S. to the chair. The proposal was duly seconded by Rai Saheb K. K. Brooah, and Mr. Desai was voted to the chair.

Mr. Shib Nath Dutt, one of the oldest citizens of Shillong, read the address of welcome on behalf of the citizens, and handed over to the Swamiji a copy of the address enclosed in a box of sandal-wood, inlaid with silver and ivory.

Amid loud shouts of cheers the Swami rose to give a reply to the address given to him. His Holiness spoke eloquently for an hour and a half, explaining the nature of the work started by the world-renowned religious hero, the Swami Vivekananda, and nurtured hitherto under the fostering care of himself and a few other Brothers of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna. He next gave to the audience a brief idea of the essential features of the Sanatana Dharma.

Miscellany

A public meeting was held under the auspices of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society on Saturday, the 27th May last, in the hall of the Theosophical Society, College Square, Calcutta. Dr. H. W. B. Moreno was voted to the chair. Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee, who has recently returned from America, delivered a lecture on the influence of Indian thought on the Western world. The learned lecturer in the course of his address said that the teachings of the Indian sages will put down the materialistic tendency of the present day Western civilisation. The lecturer concluded by relating some authentic anecdotes illustrating the marvellous influence of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda over the people of the United States. Dr. Moreno in the course of his presidential address remarked that though he was a Christian, he recognised that the teachings of the Hindu sages alone could overcome the forces of materialism, and realise the ideal of the Brotherhood of Nations.

The Ramakrishna Library, Shanbazar, Calcutta, observed at its premises a celebration in honour of Srimat Swami Brahmananda, the late president of the Ramakrishna Mission, on Sunday, the 11th June last. A number of members and sympathisers were present. Bhajans and Kirtans were sung. The celebration came to a close with the distribution of Prasad.

We note with great pleasure the progress of the Vedanta Society, New York. This society was one of the first to be established in America by Swami Vivekananda. Its work for the last several years has been carried on in rented quarters. Through the untiring efforts of Swami Bodhananda, the present head of the Society, it now possesses a permanent residence of its own. We sincerely hope that the Society will now increase in its usefulness, and extend the influence of the Vedanta in America.