

# Prabuddha Bharata

इच्छितं जायते



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upan. 1. iii. 4*

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## TO AN EARLY VIOLET.\*

What though thy bed be frozen earth,  
Thy cloak the chilling blast ;  
What though no mate to cheer thy path,  
Thy sky with gloom o'ercast ;  
What though if love itself doth fail,  
Thy fragrance strewed in vain ;  
What though if bad o'er good prevail,  
And vice o'er virtue reign :—  
Change not thy nature, gentle bloom,  
Thou violet, sweet and pure,  
But ever pour thy sweet perfume  
Unasked, unstinted, sure !

VIVEKANANDA.

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\* Written to a Western lady-disciple from New York, on 6th January, 1896.

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI  
TURIYANANDA.

*7th July—7 p. m.*

After taking his usual evening walk the Swami was seated on the bench under the banyan tree. A Brahmacharin stood by, and the Swami opened the following conversation.

Q.— Did you go out for a walk? Towards the Ganges side?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Did you find the atmosphere cold?

A. Yes, quite cold.

Q. Were you alone?

A. Swami J. was with me.

Q. How many years is he your senior?

A. About three or four years. He was still in college when I joined it.

Q. What is your age? Twenty-six or twenty-seven—is'nt it?

A. Yes, Sir, twenty-six.

Q. I can guess one's age fairly well. I am generally accurate. How long after passing your examination did you take orders?

A. I came here within a month of the result being out. It wouldn't have taken me so long to appear for the degree, but once I went with my father on a pilgrimage to Chandranath. Seeing the scenery of the place and visiting the shrines I was so impressed that I liked to dwell on those things alone. I wrote to my people at home that



I would no more study at school. I had a mind to go to Benares, learn Sanskrit and read the Shastras. However, for three years I studied at home, without attending school. I couldn't come to Benares. At length my mother said, "Be educated like my other sons and go wherever you like."

The Swami— Yes, I had a talk with your mother on the subject. She too said that for her sake alone you had passed the B. A. Your mother is very sagacious, with a good deal of common-sense—is she not?

A. How she struggled single-handed to bring up her sons and her husband's brothers! That was the one thought with her.

Q. Had you ever any idea of marrying?

A. No, Sir, it never occurred to my mind. I remember, when I was comparatively grown up, if I omitted to salute my sisters, they would say, "Well, you did'nt salute us, we shall get you married and make your wife lie prostrate at our feet!"

The Swami burst into a hearty laugh. The narrative continued:

"But I used to tell them then and there that I would *not* marry—so they might be sure nobody was going to be prostrate before them.

"I shall tell you a curious dream I had some eight or nine years back. Two girls entered my room and came to my bed-side. One of them, I found, was looking at my money and property, while the other kept gazing at me. I said to them, 'Mothers, what do you want!' No one replied. To one I gave some money and she went away. But the other would not leave me nor would she

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speaking. I stepped out of the room, ran a great distance and jumped into a river, when on looking back I found that the girl had followed me up to the brink. I was floating with the tide, when some men on board a ship seeing me in that plight took me up. Getting on board the ship I found—all had the ochre robe on, they were Sannyasins. The girl could not overtake me any more.

“On the day previous to my final departure for Benares, I had an exactly similar dream. A beautiful woman, with tears in her eyes, came to my bed-side and said, ‘Well, you are going away, but tell me how I am to live in the world.’ I at once turned on my side and with my back to her said, ‘It is night and you are a stranger. I have nothing to speak to you.’ I tried my best to think out who she might be, but in vain. She certainly did not resemble my mother.”

The Swami— That is Mahamaya. It was because you had good Samskaras (past impressions) that you escaped. Well, good Samskaras are absolutely necessary. When I first went to Sri Ramakrishna he asked me if I was pure. I answered, “Yes, but not always in the subconscious state.” He then put his hand on my back and said, “Excellent. You needn’t have the least anxiety. But you must be on your guard against wilful impurity.”

There is no way out unless one is free from the tendency to evil-doing—alas, too prevalent now-a-days—from one’s very boyhood.

In answer to a query the Swami said: In my boyhood I read two books which did me much



good. They too had words to the effect that the parents or guardians should make it their duty to enlighten their boys and girls seriously on the importance of chastity, before they have fallen into the pit. This removes a lot of false curiosity. There is always great danger unless a strict watch be kept on the young. They alone escape whom the Divine Mother protects.



### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**H**INDU Society presents an endless diversity of castes and creeds, cults and denominations. It is an ocean of humanity composed of innumerable ethnic groups in all stages of evolution and culture. The religion of these multifarious units ranges from the primitive beliefs of the aboriginal tribes to the sublime philosophy of the Vedantic schools. It includes the simple worship of forms and images on the one hand, and the profound meditation on the formless, absolute Brahman on the other. Again, though the members of different social groups may try to conform to some common rules of conduct, they are at liberty to choose different religious beliefs and follow different modes of worship, suited to their varying individual temperaments and capacities. Apart from all these considerations, the vast congeries of people, calling themselves Hindus, differ widely in race and language, traditions and customs. The followers of "credal" religions are bewildered to see an infinite variety within what is known as the religion

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of the Hindus. And they find it difficult to believe that there might possibly be any fundamental unity underlying this diversity which baffles all human descriptions and classifications.

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Hinduism implies not a single faith, but a system of faiths, each marking a stage in man's spiritual progress. It means not a particular religion, but a commonwealth of religions leading the human being step by step until he realises his divine nature, until "the knots of his heart are cut, all his doubts are removed, and the effects of his Karma are destroyed." True to its all-embracing spirit, Hinduism includes any form of faith or religion which satisfies one essential condition: That it must believe in the potential divinity and perfection of man; that it must help man in manifesting this divinity and perfection in a way most suitable to him. All that the Vedic religion wants is progress in the scale of spiritual culture, or unfoldment through the free expression of the true individuality of man. Hence it is no wonder that the Hindu religion finds a place, as Swami Vivekananda says, "for every human being from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brutes, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature." This is the universal principle lying at the back of the Eternal Religion of India. But unfortunately we have perfectly forgotten this underlying ideal, and have raised insurmountable walls of creeds and dogmas between one unit and another. The



result is that no longer does the same life-current pulsate through the whole body of our mighty society, unifying and integrating the manifold parts into one organised whole. In consequence our social system is in a state of disintegration. Its members are no longer working in a spirit of co-operation and harmony. On the other hand they are trying to live a life of isolation, and some are even trying to engage in quarrels and dissensions with one another. This is disastrous not only to the individual units themselves but also to the whole system of our once strong and powerful society.

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Hindu society seems to be broken up into a countless number of castes and sects. Among these may be mentioned the various orthodox castes claiming to be the custodians of the ancient religion of the Vedas. Besides these, there are the Vaishnavite sects of the Mohammedan period, which rising in protest against Hindu orthodoxy, threw open the doors of Hinduism to all, irrespective of caste and religion, and saved Hinduism from the onslaught of Islam. Again there are the modern reform movements which are trying to set back the cultural invasion from the West, and to apply anew the principles of Hinduism to the present-day social and religious problems of the land. Most of these are divided and sub-divided into a number of small groups often differing in manners and customs, beliefs and practices. And the older the institution, the greater are its subdivisions.

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The so-called orthodox Hindu society is as vast as it is old. Naturally it has got within its fold thousands of ramifications, sometimes with widely divergent and even opposite rules and usages. Broadly speaking, the orthodoxy of the North differs greatly from that of the South. Such divergences have existed since early times, as the ancient codes clearly record. "Eating meals in the company of those not invested with the holy thread, eating meals in the company of women, and eating food kept overnight—these are some of the customs peculiar to the South. Sale of wool, drinking intoxicants, bearing weapons, and sea-voyage—these are some of the local practices of the people of the North"—such is the testimony of Bodhayana. "Marriage with the maternal cousin is prevalent in the South, eating of meat is customary in the North." Anuloma marriages or marriages of men of the higher castes with women of the lower castes, which were prevalent in the days of Manu, are still current in Nepal, although this practice is condemned by orthodox society in other provinces in India. Again, the native Brahmins of Malabar in South India, who claim to be the most orthodox in the whole of India, follow a number of customs which are abhorred even by the lower caste people in other parts of the country. The rules of eating, drinking and marriage, and the conceptions of 'touchability' and 'untouchability' are all that concern mainly the so-called religion of the orthodox; and these vary greatly from province to province, if not from district to district. But every social group is ever prepared to quote some scripture or



other in its support. It is a great mistake to think that the same Smriti or socio-religious code is current throughout the country. In some part the code of Manu may hold its sway, in another the code of Yajnavalkya, in a third the code of Parasara. In others again some comparatively modern compilations of Smriti are generally obeyed. But in spite of its pride in following the letters of the scriptures, modern orthodoxy is often guided by local customs and practices which are vehemently condemned by the injunctions of both the Srutis and the Smritis—the highest authorities in social conduct. Every man thinks, ‘Orthodoxy is my doxy—heterodoxy is another man’s doxy!’ Such is the real state of affairs with the most conservative section of Hindu society. It is needless to enter into the contradictions of others.

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The authors of the ancient Hindu social system were by no means against the diversity of caste and creed. While recognising the need of a variety of institutions in the evolution of individuals born with different tendencies and potentialities, the ancient Rishis laid stress on certain universal ideas and ideals calculated to serve as the common basis of all castes and creeds in Hinduism. The system of spiritual laws as embodied in the scriptures, the doctrine of the potential divinity of man, the laws of Karma and re-incarnation, the possibility of every individual to attain to emancipation from all forms of bondage, here and hereafter,—these are some of the beliefs underlying all our socio-religious institutions. However greatly people may differ as to their conceptions of these

universal principles, they share them in common with all castes and creeds. It is these ideas that serve as links between the different members of Hindu society, and unite them into one organised whole. Besides, a network of holy places, sacred rivers and mountains, visited by all classes of pilgrims, brings together people of distant parts, and helps them to exchange their thoughts and ideas with one another. This institution of pilgrimage and the existence of a common sacred language in Sanskrit, no doubt contribute to Hindu unity, but their influence is felt only by a small percentage of people. It is *deshacharas* and *lokacharas*—local usages and popular customs—that hold almost paramount authority in social and religious matters. Our castes, sects and denominations lay more stress on the points of dissension than on our common heritage and on other factors promoting social solidarity. Owing to the want of proper association, and the consequent correction, adaptation and broadening of outlook, the manifold sections of our community have become very exclusive. The result is that conservatism has grown more rigid than ever. And this along with caste-prejudice and sectarian bigotry has cleaved society as it never did in the past, and has brought about the present stagnation and degeneration of the entire Hindu society.

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In spite of some revivalistic movements springing up here and there, Hindu society as a whole is still no better than a disunited and disintegrated mass. Religion and society have become hopelessly static, and in consequence the people are mostly



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weak and disorganised. The present passivity and physical deterioration of almost all the sections of the community are indeed appalling. As many recent events clearly showed, the majority of the Hindus have lost even the virility to protect their hearth and home, to defend the honour of their religion and women when attacked by the bad elements of another community. Besides, in many parts of the country the Hindu population is gradually on the decrease. From these facts some thoughtful writers have even predicted that if the Hindus deteriorate at the present rate, they will be a 'dying race' after the lapse of a few centuries only. All this presents a deplorable state of affairs. But it is a hopeful sign that Hindu society is becoming more and more alive to the danger ahead. Many of the thoughtful leaders of the community are anxious to arrest its increasing degeneration and weakness. To this end they are trying to organise and improve the present disjointed sections in Hinduism. The ready response which their appeal met at the last session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was an unmistakable proof that the Hindu community as a whole was feeling the need of co-operation and concerted action among its manifold members. It further showed that the majority of the thoughtful and educated classes had come to realise that social and religious reforms were absolutely necessary to stem the tide of degeneration, as also to rejuvenate both society and the country. Certain sections of the Indian people have misunderstood this Hindu movement. Some of the Hindu

leaders of political thought apprehend that it is directed against the present political movements, and is likely to break down the edifice of Hindu-Muslim unity which they are so laboriously trying to build up. A section of the orthodox Hindus entertain the fear that it will give a death-blow to what they understand as Hindu religion and society. Some of our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen again hold that the Hindu movement is nothing but a challenge to Islam. But these apprehensions are without any foundation. All that the Hindus sincerely want to do is to set their house in order. And this with the ultimate object of effecting a real union and solidarity of the Indian people, which can be based only on the secure foundation of strength and equality. What the Hindu movement further implies is this : Some sections of the Indian people have enjoyed an unequal advantage over others. This inequality must go, be it intra-communal or inter-communal. The heartless oppression of the lower classes must be a thing of the past. The bar of untouchability, which disgraces Hinduism and imposes social and religious disabilities on millions of Hindus belonging to the so-called depressed classes, must be removed in order to make the union of all Hindus an accomplished fact. Unless the privileged classes are prepared to forego all forms of unfair privileges, Hindu social unity and Indian national solidarity will ever remain as ideals never to be realised in the actual life of the people.

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To revive the Hindu community it is of utmost importance to make Hinduism dynamic. We must



have, as the Sister Nivedita says, "instead of passivity, activity; for the standard of weakness, the standard of strength." This is possible if all sections of the Hindus are willing to be thoroughly loyal to the ideals and principles of their religion. The spirit of renaissance is already at work. Under its impulse the orthodox sections are becoming more and more liberal in spirit. The reformed sects which tried up till now to lead a life of isolation are broadening in their mental outlook, and are feeling the urgency of co-operation with others. All the social units are coming to be actuated more and more by a feeling of brotherliness towards one another, and are recognising their underlying unity—their common ideals and aspirations, their common heritage of tradition and culture. All the scattered spiritual forces working for the regeneration of Hindu society are now to be united. This alone can generate a mighty power that will not only vitalise the Hindu community, but will also help in the rising of a new India—a healthy, vigorous and rejuvenated India.



## THE TANTRIKA MODE OF WORSHIP.

[ *Adapted from Swami Saradananda's "Lilaprasanga."* ]

**M**AN has a natural tendency to enjoyment, and does not generally welcome renunciation. He finds it difficult to call upon the Lord in a pure and simple way, and instinctively hugs to his bosom some amount of impurity in the midst of purity. Even though renouncing lust and wealth, he would like to have a passing glimpse of them. Hence it is that we find that immediately after stating distinctly in his

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sacred books that the worship of the Divine Mother should be performed in the purest way possible, he also makes room for some queer sensuous songs in them on the plea that these will be pleasing to the Goddess. There is nothing to be wondered at in this tendency of the human mind. It only shows in what strong and unbreakable ties of sense-attraction the Mother of the universe has bound Her creatures hand and foot. The idea is painfully impressed upon our minds that unless She out of Her infinite grace leads us out of this intricate maze, there is no way out for us. She only knows through what particular ways She would lead particular individuals across this ocean of ignorance.

In tracing the origin of the Tantrika mode of worship we have to go back to the Vedic times when both enjoyment and renunciation were sought to be combined in the Karma-kanda or the ritualistic portion of the Vedas. The goal of human life then seems to have been the regulated enjoyment of the sense-objects, by propitiating the gods through prayers and sacrifices. When in this way the mind was somewhat purified—when it became tolerably divested of lower desires, then the man took up the purer course of discipline prescribed in the Upanishads. But with the advent of the Buddhistic age things took a different turn. The methods of worship which were suited to pure-souled recluses alone, were prescribed for the ordinary householder, irrespective of his taste or capacity, while the laws of the State also lent countenance to this course. The result was that the Vedic sacrifices, which had in view the object of gradually weaning the aspirant's mind from the enjoyment of the senses, were replaced by a system of clandestine worship—conducted in dreary, out of the way places, at dead of night—so that outsiders, and especially the emissaries of law, might get no clue to it. There is a good deal of truth in the statement that the Tantrika rites were introduced by the Lord Shiva in place of Vedic rituals, which had fallen into disuse in course of time. For not only do they combine enjoyment and renunciation like the Vedic rites of old, but one finds in them an intimate



connection between the ritualistic portion and the philosophy—which were distinct branches in the Vedic age. Each act of worship according to the Tantras necessitates some sort of meditation on the unity of the aspirant with the Lord—of the Jiva with the Paramatman. For instance, sitting down to worship, one has to mentally raise the Kundalini Sakti—the resultant of the past impressions or the entire potentiality of a man supposed to be coiled up at the lowest extremity of the spinal column—to the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain, and think of this symbol of the aspirant himself as identified with God residing there. Then he imagines himself as separated from Him, and the spirit of the Lord as condensed into the luminous form of his chosen Ideal. He projects Him out of himself on the image or symbol in front and proceeds to worship Him. After the worship is done the aspirant imagines the Deity to resume His former place in the brain. Now, on reflection it will be found that in the foregoing process of worship a fine attempt has been made to realise the ultimate object of human life, viz. identification with the Lord through love. It is true that only one in a thousand will be able to perform the above meditation in a proper way, but none can deny the fact that all at least can try to do so, and this in itself is a great advantage, for thereby they will slowly advance towards the goal. Thus, every Tantrika rite invariably directs the mind of the worshipper to the underlying unity of Existence.

Another speciality of the Tantras is that they preach the motherhood of God, and simultaneously with it, a glorification of the woman. Neither in the Vedas nor in the Puranas do we come across this idea, which is only to be met with in the Tantras. In the Samhita portion of the Vedas one finds only the rudiments of this idea, where the husband is instructed to look upon the body of his wife as sacred and to worship the gods therein, so that she may be the mother of a worthy child. The Tantras sublimated this old idea and developed it in new lines, with conspicuous results, for it was found suited to certain temperaments of the age in which



these Tantras came into vogue. This may have been the origin of the Virachara form of Tantrika practice, in which wine and women play a part. The gifted authors of the Tantras were right in their assumption that the average man must go in for a share of the good things of life. So the best course of turning his mind Godward in the midst of all these enjoyments is somehow to create in his mind a sincere regard for the objects of enjoyment. For having this, he will not be carried away by his pursuit after the senses, but cry halt at some moment of his life and set himself to cultivate self-control and renunciation. Hence they declared that the woman's body is sacred, that one should always look upon a woman as a goddess, and realising the manifestation of the Mother of the universe in her, treat her with all respect. Maltreatment to women was strictly forbidden.

But in spite of all this forethought on the part of the inaugurators of this system, the followers of this school also became, with the lapse of time, slaves to passion, and instead of trying to realise God, they sought to acquire small physical powers with the help of the Tantrika rites. This was the age which marked the origin of such grotesque forms of worship as that of ghosts and demons, and led to the abominations which we find in the Tantras of to-day. Hence, in every Tantra one meets with a two-fold division—a higher and a lower form of worship, and people choose between them according to their taste.

The main idea of the Tantras then is the deification of the objects of the senses, which ever lure mankind and bind them in an endless chain of births and deaths, preventing their realisation of God. The Tantras seek to accustom the struggling soul to look upon these sense-objects as visible representations of the Lord, so that their inordinate attachment to them may be curbed. According to the qualifications of the aspirants, the Tantras prescribe three modes of practice. They are called Pashu-bhava, Vira-bhava, and Divya-bhava,—or animal, heroic and divine,—in an ascending order. In the devotee of the first type there is a predominance



of animal propensity. For him the instruction is that he should avoid all objects of temptation as far as he can, and engage himself in Japam and such other practices with strict regard for purity. In the second class of aspirants, who are comparatively advanced, the devotion to God supersedes the cravings of the senses, and the sense-attractions only heighten their longing for God. So they are advised to live in the midst of these temptations and try to concentrate their mind on the Lord, unshaken by those jarring elements in the outside world. While the third and the highest type of Sadhaka is he who is far above the reach of the sense-impulses—which have been swept away from him by a tidal wave of yearning for God-realisation—and to whom the practice of truth, forgiveness, compassion, contentment, and such other attributes has become natural like respiration. These are the general distinctions among the three classes of Tantrika aspirants. From what has been written above the readers will perceive that the practices of the Tantras will bear fruit if only the aspirant makes self-control the bed-rock of his endeavours, and in default of this he will be no better—if not worse—than an ordinary man.

The Tantrika influence permeates every system of worship in India at the present day, including Vaishnavism. Only, the Vaishnavite Acharyas have introduced certain changes in the mode of worship of the Tantras, which are worth noting. They considered dualistic teachings more beneficial to men, and accordingly laid stress only on that portion of the Tantrika rites, viz. its theory of Mantras and external worship. Into this worship they also infused a new spirit, and advised people to serve the Lord according to the promptings of their heart. The Tantrika gods purify the offerings made to them by their sight only, and the devotee by partaking of this consecrated food gradually becomes pure in mind. The Vaishnava reformers taught that the gods take the essence of those offerings, and not only that, but in certain cases they also take material quantities of the food, which depends on the devotion of the aspirant. Among many other changes these teachers

introduced into the method of worship, the most important was the emphasis they laid on the preliminary course of Tantrika worship—the Pashu-bhava—and they gave strict injunctions about purity being observed in every act of the aspirant—his food and mode of life and everything. They also laid great stress on Japam or repetition of the Lord's name as a means to God-realisation.

But in course of time evils crept into this cult also. Forgetting the inner significance of the Masters' teachings the followers adopted measures to suit their own tastes. The Acharyas had cited the great attraction between a lover and his mistress as an example to emulate in their quest after God. But they went the length of carrying it into actual practice, and thus made a horrible compromise between the old, pure form of worship and their own tendencies. It is the same old story everywhere.

From the above sketch another thing will have struck the reader. It is this that for the criticisms usually levelled against the Tantras—or for the matter of that, any abused form of practice—not the Tantras but the innate tendency of man to gravitate towards enjoyment, is responsible. The Tantrika rites can be practised in the purest form possible, without a touch of wine or sex-indulgence, and this is amply proved in the lives of numerous saints of this school.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

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## BUDDHISM AND EARLY BENGALI LITERATURE.

BY HARIPADA GHOSAL VIDYAVINODE, M. A., M. R. A. S.

**L**ATER Buddhism had a great influence on the early Bengali literature. Of the threefold vows which a newly initiated votary of that faith had to take, e. g. I take shelter in Buddha, I take shelter in Dhamma, I take shelter in the Sangha or congregation—the worship of



Dhamma appealed most to the Buddhists of later times. In the eighth or ninth century, a saint named Minanath established an order of Yogis and his cult laid a great stress on an unswerving obedience to the Guru. Of the Yogis Lui and others composed many songs or couplets which have been discovered by Pandit Haraprasad Shastri in Nepal, and published under the name of "Bauddha Gân O Dohâ." They were written in Sandhya Bhasha or in a language which is partly light and partly darkness, i. e. in which the idea is half revealed and half concealed. They convey the idea that the esoteric meaning of true religion can only be revealed and fathomed by the Guru, and its elucidation is a task far beyond the power and comprehension of ordinary mortals.

This religion—the religion of the Nath Panthis—was a mixture of Saivism and Buddhism, and it became paramount in many parts of Northern India. The unworldly nature of Saivism was incorporated into the renunciatory facts of Buddhism. But the Siva whom these Buddhists held in reverence was not the Siva with whom we are familiar and who occupies so high a place in the later Hindu pantheon. The Nath Panthis had a great leader named Gorakshanath. Born at Jhalundhar in the Punjab, this Gorakshanath had many disciples in Bengal. The only remnant of their literary work lives in the recently discovered book Goraksha-Bijay—a work of Faizulla in the 13th century. The language is plain and can be read without difficulty. It is supposed that the book was written about the 10th century, but it had been re-written by Faizulla and others in later times. Still the poems breathe the spirit of an earlier age. The manners, customs and social condition of the 10th century or thereabout have been reflected as in a clear mirror. The saintly character of Goraksha Yogi stands like a beacon-light to show our path in that remote benighted age. The metre is fine and the story is charming. It is refreshing to see that such a beautiful work could be produced at such an early age. The way in which the great saint had kept his character free



from stain in spite of temptations thrown in his path and the manner in which he saved the lost soul of his Guru Minanath from eternal perdition are indeed wonderful. They elicit our admiration even now and we bow down before the great man for his high ideal, great faith and stainless character.

Shunya Puran of Ramai Pandit, a work of the 11th century, is another great book in which the influence of Buddhism has been thoroughly reflected. Here the God Siva has been made an instrument of the worship of the god Dhamma. The poet takes pity on Siva for his wretched condition—for his mendicancy and tattered rags. He advises him to till the ground and sow cotton for food to eat and cloth to put on. The early Bengali poets were daring. They had the courage to disregard the Pauranik tradition, and humanised the all-destroying god—one of the Hindu Trinity—and made him live, breathe and move in the mundane atmosphere of our globe.

The unworldly and unsocial nature of Siva could not inspire the Bengali poets. This great god has been banished from the world of men. His high ideal was not for the ordinary man of flesh and blood to follow and imitate. Both the Hindus and the Buddhists had been vying with one another to enlist the sympathy of the common run of men by putting before their ignorant minds such ideals as could be easily followed and appreciated. Anthropomorphism had vigorously begun. The history of religion never shows such an example of high ideals brought down to such lower levels. The evolutionary process had been reversed. The Brahmins came down from the lofty summits of philosophical monism and adapted their doctrines to the intelligibility and receptivity of their followers. Animism, idolatry, and speculative monism came step by step in the evolution of religious ideas in the minds of men. But in Bengal those who had the charge of the spiritual conscience of common men in their hands, changed their highly speculative ideas to suit the ordinary mind. Bengali poets too did not lag behind. They



wrote poems and songs in honour of the deities whom the custodians of popular religion invented, admitted or incorporated into the Hindu pantheon from the Buddhists and even from the non-Aryan dwellers of forests and hills. Hence the old Bengali literature abounds in the stories of gods and goddesses of non-Hindu origin, how their devotees were put into troubles and saved in the long run after various reverses and turns of fortune—how the refractory worshippers were punished for their supposed or real faults, how these angry deities were at length propitiated and how their worship was popularised among the people. These Hindu Lares and Lemures were innumerable in number and found their advocates in many Bengali poets who celebrated them in metrical verse which still endures. They are for the most part monotonous and uninteresting, but on the whole repay perusal for the wealth of materials for reconstructing the social and literary history of the times. Thus later Buddhism had a great influence in shaping and forming the early Bengali literature, and in awakening the genius of the Bengali Muse.



## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND UNIVERSAL RELIGION.\*

BY PROF. L. C. MEHTA, M. A.

**T**HE war of the Mahabharata may be truly regarded as an episode in the history of Indian thought. It was the natural outcome of the process of disintegration that had set in a few centuries before that epoch-making event. The record of the events that led to it as well as of those that followed in its wake bears a clear testimony to the fact that there was among the people at that time no organised

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\* A lecture delivered at Nagpur, on the eighty-eighth birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

community of interests and singleness of purpose such as characterised the Ramayana period (to say nothing of the Vedic period beyond that) in the domain of religion and philosophy. There are passages in the Mahabharata itself that contain descriptions of the many philosophical acts flourishing at that time. Professor Max Muller quotes from Chap. XXIV of Anugita a passage which runs as follows :

“ We observe the various forms of piety to be as it were contradictory. Some say that piety remains after the body is destroyed, some say that it is not so. Some say that everything is doubtful and others that there is no doubt. Some say that the permanent principle is impermanent and others too that it exists and does not exist. Some say that it is one form or twofold and others that it is manifold. Some Brahmanas too who know Brahma and perceive the truth, believe that it is one, others that it is distinct, and others again that it is manifold. Some say that both time and space exist and others that it is not so. Some have matted hairs and skins and others are clean-shaven and without any covering. Some people are for bathing, some for the omission of bathing. Some are for taking food, some are intent on fasting. Some people extol actions and others tranquillity. Some extol final emancipation and others various kinds of enjoyments. Some work for riches and others for indigence.”

Though the names of the sects referred to in the above passage are not explicitly stated, we know them from other sources.

From time immemorial it has been an article of faith with the people of India to regard the Vedas as of divine origin and as a supreme and controlling authority on all matters, religious and philosophical, besides regarding them as the sole unifying and harmonising principle in the midst of the various seemingly different systems of philosophy, or to use Professor Max Muller's phrase, 'as a large common-fund of philosophical thought which like language belongs to no one (system) in particular, but which was like the air breathed by every living and thinking man.' Besides this, the Brahmanas



and the Kshatriyas have always been regarded as their (of the Vedas) intellectual and military custodians respectively; so that when the war of the Mahabharata deprived India of almost all the true Brahmanas and Kshatriyas then living, their places were taken by others, who persisted in enjoying all the rights and privileges, which their predecessors and ancestors had enjoyed, without in the least caring for the duties and obligations which their high intellectual and social position had laid down for them. They began to consolidate their position by founding an order of priesthood based more on heredity than on merit and occupation.

The Charvaka system was more or less in the nature of a protest—an insignificant one no doubt—against this and other similar attempts at exploitation of the faith of the ignorant and orthodox masses in the name of religion and the Vedas. All the authoritative books on this system, generally associated with the name of Vrihaspati, seem to have been lost, but the fact that this system found a place in Madhavacharya's "*Sarva Darshan Sangraha*" or an epitome of all the philosophical systems, is enough to show that Madhavacharya looked upon the system as one not to be ignored in any catalogue of philosophical forces in India. The Charvakas denied the Divine origin of the Vedas. With them the highest end of man consisted in sensual enjoyments. They denied the other world and considered death to be the end of all things. The chief character of the system was practical rather than metaphysical, "teaching," as Prof. Max Muller says, "utilitarianism and crude hedonism in the most outspoken way."

In a country like India where religion forms as it were the very life-breath of the people, such sensualistic doctrines (hostile as they were to all religious feelings) could not flourish for any considerable length of time. If those doctrines, involving as they did some very fundamental principles, were to be considered as constituting anything but a passing phase in the history of philosophical thought in India, it was absolutely necessary for them to be so modified as



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to make them look both religious and philosophical.

This was done by Buddha whose marked personality, far more than his teachings, gave him a great influence on his contemporaries and on so many generations after his death; and the whole of India at that time seemed once more to have been absorbed in religion and philosophy as perhaps it never did since the Mahabharata period. As is usual with all religions where personalities rather than principles play the important part, with the disappearance of Buddha from the scene, the old anti-theistic doctrines and un-Vedic rites of the Charvaka system began again to find acceptance amongst his disciples and followers. The very Buddha who declared against the existence of a Personal God had not died fifty years before his disciples manufactured a god out of him.

Just as the Charvaka system marked a revolt against the exclusive tendencies of the priesthood after Mahabharata, so the Vedantic system of philosophy, as expounded by one of its commentators, Swami Sankaracharya, marked the revolt of the priesthood against the anti-theistic tendencies of the later Buddhism. Swami Sankaracharya with his war-cry of "Back to the Vedas," "Back to the Upanishads" succeeded in driving Buddhism out of the land and once again established the supremacy of the Vedas. The Vedantic doctrines, preached at a time when owing to the decay of free national life among the Indians, the individual found himself thrown back upon the resources of his inner life for support to the sense of his human dignity, which could no longer be found in civil and political life, were instrumental in producing a set of persons, with whom the realisation of the Self within was the be-all and end-all of all human activities in this mundane life. To this category belong Kavir, Chaitanya and Guru Nanak Dev.

It was about this period of the Indian history that the European nations were being roused from their dogmatic slumbers by a set of persons—with whom study of natural sciences was a passion and who may truly be called the prophets of modern thought in Europe. It was due to the



ceaseless efforts of such persons that the study of natural sciences came to the fore-front, so much so, "that," to quote Professor Fraser, "in the 19th century the things of the sense and the means of making ourselves comfortable through skilful application of the laws of the material world, occupy people's imagination as perhaps they never did before. Faith in moral agency and in God are lost in doubt, because they do not admit of verification by the senses, being implicates of our spiritual experience. That scientific reality," he goes on to say, "which is reached through verification by the senses—although it involves faith—is held permanent; the certainty that is reached without an appeal to the material world of the senses, because it involves faith, is regarded as illusory. That is to say, faith in the physical order which in the end is moral trust in God—the basis of our inference in the sciences of nature—is strong. Faith in inferences which expressly presume ethical or spiritual postulates, not less lawfully rested on these implicates of moral experiences, is weak."

India had also by this time come in contact with some of these enterprising European nations, specially the British, who, "when they came to India found in it a people," to quote from Lord Ronaldshay's lecture in London, "distracted and exhausted by internal dissensions and incapable; consequently, or at least indisposed to offer any strong resistance to the virile civilisation which they carried with them from the West. On the contrary, a class of Indians sprang up which adapted indiscriminately everything Western, the bad along with the good. It became the fashion amongst a certain section of the educated middle classes in Bengal during the middle of the 19th century, to mimic the Englishman in everything and to adopt his habits both good and bad. Thus we find in the autobiography of a well-known Bengali gentleman of the 19th century, Babu Raj Narain Bose, the following comment, 'It was a common belief of the alumni of the college that the drinking of wine was one of the concomitants of civilisation and, he adds, 'at the



beginning of 1884, I became dangerously ill and the cause of it was excessive drinking.' A graphic picture of the state of affairs at that time has been painted by another Bengali gentleman, the Rev. P. C. Mazumdar, who was himself a college student at this critical period in the history of Bengal. 'Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian,' he declares, 'held in such supreme reverence but a few years before as the only source of wisdom, were (now) looked down upon with supreme contempt.' The young men of the day sought for inspiration in 'the wide unclean waters of inferior works of English fiction,' and following hard upon this new spirit of contempt for their own past, came religious scepticism, which eat its way deep into the moral fibre of young Bengal. 'The ancient scriptures of the country, the famous records of the spiritual experiences of the great men of numerous Hindu sects, had long since been discredited. The Vedas and Upanishads were sealed books. The whole religious literature of India presented an endless void.' And the result is painted with an unsparing hand. "All faith in religion and morality everyday became weaker and tended to decay. The advancing tide of a very mixed civilisation with as much evil as good in it, the flood of fashionable carnality threatened to carry everything before it." "Young Bengal," he continues, "was rapidly becoming both demoralised and denationalised." Swami Vivekananda, a keen observer of men and things, while referring to that period, says, "There was a time when the tidal wave of occidental materialism washed the land with its destructive flood, when the intoxication of Western ideas was too great for young minds to see any truth in Hinduism, when they were losing all faith in the religion of their forefathers and going out to borrow foreign ideas and invest with them." The above account though it has a special reference to Bengal, may be said to have held good more or less for the whole of India at that time, and a reaction was bound to come.

(To be concluded).

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 351.)

असत्त्वादात्मनोऽन्येषां भावानां तत्कृता भिदा ।

गतयो हेतवश्चास्य मृषा स्वप्नदृशो यथा ॥३१॥

31. As objects<sup>1</sup> other than the Atman are unreal, the diversity<sup>2</sup> caused by them is false, as also its passage to other spheres with its causes,<sup>3</sup> as in the case of a man seeing dreams.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Objects &c.*—i. e. the body etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Diversity*—of caste and order of life etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Causes*—viz. works. ]

यो जागरे बहिरनुत्तणधर्मिणोऽर्थान्

भुङ्क्ते समस्तकरणैर्हृदि तत्सदृशान् ।

स्वप्ने सुषुप्त उपसंहरते स एकः

स्मृत्यन्वयात्रिगुणवृत्तिदृगिन्द्रियैः ॥३२॥

32. He who in the waking state enjoys, through all his organs, objects with ever-changing attributes in the outside world, who in dream has experiences similar to them in his heart, and who withdraws them in profound sleep, are one<sup>1</sup> and the same Atman—the Witness of the three states and the Ruler of the organs. This is proved from the persistence of memory in all these states.

[ <sup>1</sup> *One &c.*—They are not separate, since a man remembers his experiences of the waking and dream states as also his ignorance of anything in dreamless sleep, and the one unchanging Witness of these is the Atman. ]

एवं विमृश्य गुणतो मनसस्त्यवस्था

मन्मायया मयि कृता इति निश्चितार्थाः ।

संख्येय हार्दमनुमानसदुक्तितीक्ष्ण-

ज्ञानासिना भजत माखिलसंशयाधिम ॥३३॥

33. Thus reflecting that the three states of the mind due to Gunas are created<sup>1</sup> in Me by My Maya, and being thus sure about the Reality, destroy egoism which is the receptacle of doubts with the sword of knowledge sharpened by inference and competent testimony,<sup>2</sup> and worship Me who is seated in the heart.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Created*—i. e. imagined.

<sup>2</sup> *Competent testimony*—including Srutis. ]

ईक्षेत विभ्रममिदं मनसो विलासं

दृष्टं विनष्टमतिलोलमलातचक्रम् ।

विज्ञानमेकमुरुधेव विभाति माया

स्वप्नस्त्रिधा गुणविसर्गकृतो विकल्पः ॥३४॥

34. One should look upon this universe as an hallucination, being a phantasm of the mind, now seen and the next moment destroyed—like a dream, and extremely shifting like a circle<sup>1</sup> of fire. It is the One Consciousness that appears as multiple in form. The threefold distinction<sup>2</sup> due to the transformation of Gunas is Maya.<sup>3</sup>

[ <sup>1</sup> *Circle &c.*—producing an appearance of a connected whole.

<sup>2</sup> *Distinction*—of the states of waking, dream and profound sleep.

<sup>3</sup> *Maya*—i. e. unreal though appearing to be real. ]

दृष्टिं ततः प्रतिनिवर्त्य निवृत्ततृष्णा-

स्तृष्णीं भवेन्निजसुखानुभवो निरीहः ।

संहश्यते क्व च यदीदमवस्तुबुद्ध्या

त्यक्तं भ्रमाय न भवेत्स्मृतिरानिपातात् ॥३५॥

35. Withdrawing the organs from the universe one should be immersed in one's own Bliss ;



one should give up desires, be silent and free from action. If ever<sup>1</sup> the universe is experienced, it will not lead to error, being once discarded as unreal,<sup>2</sup> but will linger as a memory only, till death.<sup>3</sup>

[ <sup>1</sup> *If ever &c.*—For a man must needs come down to the sense-plane.

<sup>2</sup> *Unreal*—like water in a mirage.

<sup>3</sup> *Death*—when there will be Videha-Mukti or absolute emancipation. ]

देहं च नश्वरमवस्थितमुत्थितं वा

सिद्धो न पश्यति यतोऽध्यगमत्स्वरूपम् ।

दैवादपेतमुत दैववशादुपेतं

वासो यथा परिकृतं मदिरामदान्धः ॥३६॥

36. The perfect man does not behold<sup>1</sup> the evanescent body, sitting or standing, removed<sup>2</sup> by chance or restored by chance,—for he has realised his true nature,—as a man<sup>3</sup> dead drunk does not care about the cloth he wears.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Behold*—i. e. treat as real.

<sup>2</sup> *Removed &c.*—i. e. whether it goes out or comes back.

<sup>3</sup> *Man &c.*—The drunkard is the one extreme ( that of ignorance ) and the man of realisation the other extreme ( that of perfect illumination ). ]

देहोऽपि दैववशगः खलु कर्म यावत्

स्वारम्भकं प्रतिसमीक्ष्यत एव सासुः ।

तं सप्रपञ्चमधिरूढसमाधियोगः

स्वप्नं पुनर्न भजते प्रतिबुद्धवस्तुः ॥३७॥

37. The body is verily under the sway of destiny, and must remain,<sup>1</sup> together with the Pranas, so long as the work that originated it has not spent itself. The man who has attained Samadhi in Yoga and realised the Truth, no more attaches

himself to the body and its appurtenances,<sup>2</sup> which are all like dreams.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Remain*—so one need not be particularly anxious about its preservation.

<sup>2</sup> *Appurtenances*—such as the sense-objects. ]

मयैतदुक्तं वो विप्रा गुह्यं यत्सांख्ययोगयोः ।  
जानीतमागतं यज्ञं युष्मद्भविष्यत्तया ॥३८॥

38. O sages, I have told you what is the inmost secret of Sankhya<sup>1</sup> and Yoga.<sup>2</sup> Know Me to be Vishnu, come here to enlighten you on religion.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Sankhya*—the science which discriminates between Self and Not-Self.

<sup>2</sup> *Yoga*—the science which teaches how to attain the complete independence of the Self. ]

अहं योगस्य सांख्यस्य सत्यस्यर्तस्य तेजसः ।  
परायणं द्विजश्रेष्ठाः श्रियः कीर्तिर्दमस्य च ॥३९॥

39. O best of sages, I am the supreme goal<sup>1</sup> of Yoga and Sankhya, of Truth in practice and theory, of valour and opulence, of glory and self control.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Goal*: All these are of value if only they lead to God. ]

मां भजन्ति गुणाः सर्वे निर्गुणं निस्पेक्षकम् ।  
सुहृदं प्रियमात्मानं साम्यासङ्गादयोऽगुणाः ॥४०॥

40. All the eternal<sup>1</sup> virtues, such as sameness of vision and non-attachment etc., wait on Me who is beyond attributes and Absolute, the beloved Friend, the Self.

[ <sup>1</sup> *Eternal virtues*—lit. 'Virtues that are not virtues'—because they lead us out of this network of Maya. ]

इति मे छिन्नसंदेहा मुनयः सनकादयः ।  
सभाजयित्वा परया भक्त्याऽगुणत संस्तवैः ॥४१॥



41. Having their doubts thus removed by Me, the sages, Sanaka and the rest, worshipped Me with great devotion and sang My praises.

तैरहं पूजितः सम्यक् संस्तुतः परमर्षिभिः ।

प्रत्येयाय स्वकं धाम पश्यतः परमेष्ठिनः ॥४२॥

42. Being duly worshipped and praised by those great sages, I returned to My abode, before the very eyes of Brahmá.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

*Satkatha* (Bengali).—Compiled by Swami Siddhananda. Published by Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Bagh-bazar, Calcutta. Pp. xi + 120. Price As. 10.

The book under review contains some of the inspiring utterances of Srimat Swami Adbhutananda, better known as Latu Maharaj, a chosen disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. As the teachings embodied therein are the outcome of the singular experiences of a life of realisation that had nothing to do with our so called education and learning, they are really marvelous for their appealing directness and revealing power. We are sure the book will be appreciated by all devout people. The sale proceeds will go to the memorial temple of the Swami erected at Benares.

*Madhuri*.—A Hindi monthly journal on literature and general subjects. Edited by Messrs. Dularelal Bhargav and Rup Narayan Pande. To be had of its office at 30 Aminabad Park, Lucknow. Annual subscription Rs. 6-8. Printing and paper good.

In August, 1923 this excellent Hindi monthly reached its second year. From its very inception it has made a landmark in the domain of Hindi periodical literature, in point of its size, its variety of readable articles and poems—some of

which are from the pen of veteran Hindi writers, its illustrations, and notes. The present number (152 pages, crown quarto) is in commemoration of the greatest Hindi poet, Goswami Tulsi Das, the tercentenary of whose birth fell this year, and contains some valuable appreciations of the poet-saint, who has been dominating the thought-current of Northern India as no one else has done. The success of the journal also seems to have been phenomenal. We venture to suggest an improvement. In a big magazine like this, some pages may profitably be devoted to extracts from current periodicals, which cannot but make it more popular. As it is, the magazine can compare favourably with the premier magazines of any other vernacular in India, and we heartily recommend it to all lovers of Hindi.

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*A brief History of the Hindi Language* (in Hindi).—By Pandit Ram Naresh Tripathi. Published by the Hindi Mandir, Allahabad. Pp. 98. Price As. 6. Good paper and printing.

This is a revised reprint of the author's introduction to his Anthology of old Hindi Poems (*Kavita-Kaumudi*, Part I), and presents in a nutshell the salient features and tendencies of the Hindi language. The lucidity of treatment and gracefulness of style make the book an exceedingly pleasant study. We wish it a wide circulation, which it assuredly deserves.

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*The Reign of Law*.—By C. Jinarajadasa, M. A. (Cantab.). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 144. Price As. 12.

The booklet is a brilliant exposition of Buddhism. The author has clearly shown what a mighty influence the personality of Buddha exerts on the life of the Buddhist devotee. Very truly does he observe, "To the learned professors in the West, Buddhism is a system of philosophy, a religion, a morality, a splendid intellectualism; to the Buddhist reared in a Buddhist land, Buddhism is the Buddha!"

The author has pointed out the relation between Buddhism and its mother-religion, Hinduism. He remarks, "The work



which Gautama Buddha did has been called a reformation of Hinduism... Many of his ideas others had proclaimed before Him. But the way He enunciated them, the commanding and tender personality that men saw in Him—these were new. He proclaimed nothing new, but enabled each hearer to see the same old facts for himself from a new dimension.”

Buddhist Nirvana is the same as Advaita Mukti, and implies a state “beyond the ken of speech and thought,” as the Upanishads declare. But many, especially Western scholars, interpret it as annihilation. This the author refutes with all the strength he can command. He says, “Whatever Nirvana is, one thing can be predicated of it—it is *not* annihilation.” It is “an existence, when the aggregated soul vanishes, whose joy is indescribable.”

The little book is written in a simple and fascinating style:

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*My Experiences in America.*—By Swami Satyadev. Translated into English from Hindi by A. Rama Iyer, M. A., Lecturer, National College, Trichinopoly, and published by the same. Pp. 197. Price Re. 1.

The present volume is a nice translation of “America Digdarshan,” a collection of articles which originally appeared in the monthly magazines, Saraswati and Maryada. Written in a simple and graphic style it is as interesting as a novel and gives many valuable first-hand informations regarding American society, life and culture. We recommend the book to the Indians in general who will do well to compare notes and accept and assimilate from the Americans what is worth having,—their science, co-operation, organisation and dignity of labour.

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*The Complete Works of Swami Ramakrishnananda, Vol. I:*  
Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras:  
Pp: 271: Price Re. 1-8.

The Madras Centre deserves thanks for undertaking the task of publishing at a low price the lectures and discourses

of the great Swami and offering them to the public in uniform volumes in order to popularise them. The volume, under notice, consists of the following books, 'The Universe and Man,' 'The Soul of Man,' 'The Path to Perfection' and 'The Necessity of Religion.' The rest of his works will come out gradually.

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*The Visvabharati.*—By Rabindranath and Andrews. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 51. Price As. 8.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore explains in this pamphlet the aims and ideals of the International University founded by him at Santiniketan, Bolpur. Mr. C. F. Andrews, the poet's co-worker, gives a beautiful pen picture of the working of the institution.

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*Book of Proverbs and Quotations.*—Compiled by C. P. Raju. Published by the East India Press, Madras. Pp. 66.

This is a neat little book of 500 proverbs and quotations, mainly from Western sources. The booklet would have been more valuable had the compiler included also a large number of proverbs and quotations from Indian literature.

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*Raja Ravi Varma.*—By C. R. Ramanujacharya. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 80. Price Re. 1-8.

An exposition of the art of the popular South Indian artist. The author's spiritual interpretation of the late Raja's art at places appears to be far-fetched.

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*India's Flag.*—By C. Rajagopalchar. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 39. Price As. 2.

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*Sketches of Great Truths.*—By Wayfarer. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 170.



## REPORTS AND APPEALS.

*The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre at Koalpara, Bankura, for 1922.*

The report speaks of the useful work done by this village institution in various fields of service. The total number of patients treated in the charitable dispensary conducted by the centre was 2181, a number of whom were helped also with diet and money. Thirteen students were imparted general education, while in the technical department one student was taught the art of weaving, and two others the art of making cotton varnish healds. The centre also gave instructions, both practical and theoretical, on improved methods of agriculture to a number of students and cultivators of the locality.

The total collection, including the previous year's balance, amounted to Rs. 125-11-3, and the total expenditure to Rs. 123-14-0, leaving a balance of Re. 1-13-3. It is a pity that this philanthropic institution is suffering from want of funds. We hope the generous public will come forward with the necessary help. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Keshavananda, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre, Village Koalpara, P. O. Kotalpur, Dt. Bankura.

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*The Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Asrama, Sarisha, Diamond-Harbour, 24 Pergs., from 1921 to 1922.*

Located as the Asrama is in a village it has taken upon itself the much needed task of regenerating village life on a model that combines a high idealism with present-day practicality. With this lofty object in view it has been conducting a free night school where poor country folk receive education, a charitable dispensary where the sick get medicine and diet, and a free library containing a good stock of books, journals and periodicals. Besides, it has got two or three orphan boys who are being trained according to Hindu ideals. The main

feature of the Asrama is its encouragement to the cottage industries of weaving and spinning by starting a free weaving school. It is running eight looms under the supervision of an expert and is manufacturing Swadeshi clothes of various kinds.

The Asrama is at present located in a rented house with no sufficient accommodation for all its activities. We hope in these days of constructive Swadeshi an institution like this will not lack in funds to carry on its scheme of work.

*The Ramakrishna Sevasrama, Lucknow.—An Appeal.*

The Sevasrama, founded in 1914 to relieve the distress of the poor and the destitute, has been conducting at present an outdoor charitable dispensary, a free elementary school and a free reading room and library. Besides, it helps poor students to prosecute higher studies, gives monthly aid to poor families, widows, orphans and invalids, and organises relief in times of famine, flood and the like. It is a pity that even after a decade of useful service the Sevasrama is handicapped for want of a permanent home. Though the local municipal board has placed at its disposal a suitable plot of land, it is in need of funds for constructing a building with a minimum accommodation for the dispensary, the school and library and quarters for workers. The cost for the entire building has been estimated at about Rs. 15000.

We have every hope that the generous public will promptly respond to this appeal in the name of suffering humanity.

Contributions may kindly be sent to the following address: Babu Nalin Behari Halidar, Honorary Secretary, Ramakrishna Sevasrama, 18 Hewett Road, Lucknow.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### **The Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief work in Behar**

Up till now we have opened seven centres in different parts of the flooded area and have obtained reports from the three centres at Manar, Lai and Bihta. The reports of the



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remaining centres will be published as soon as we get them. Our workers have distributed from these centres 45 mds. 4 srs. of rice among 890 persons in 37 villages. The condition of the people is very serious. They have got neither any cloth to cover their body, nor any food to appease their hunger, nor any place to take shelter during these days of scorching sun and heavy showers. If these poor souls remain in this miserable plight any longer, most of them will surely die either of disease or starvation. We hope the generous public will lend a helping hand to these poor helpless persons. Contributions, both in coin and kind, will be received and acknowledged by: (1) The President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah. (2) The Secretary, R. K. Mission, 1 Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

### Freedom in Education

Freedom is the first condition of growth. This is particularly true of the growth of the child through proper education. The present educational system in India is both antiquated and outlandish, and is a positive barrier to progress. Fettering the child by means of convention and tradition, enforcing discipline through the 'school-sceptre,' imparting knowledge, or rather forcing informations into the mind of the child even when it feels no interest in study,—all these do more harm than good to real development, physical as well as mental.

Mr. W. W. Pearson deals with the problem of Indian education in a highly interesting and thought-provoking article, "Swaraj through Education," contributed to the Modern Review for September, 1923. He deplores the present system of education in the country, and points out how it suppresses the individuality of the child in a most thoughtless manner. He observes that education in India "has been so bound by a tradition entirely foreign that the children in India have never known what it is to launch out with a free spirit into the realms of a hopeful and unfettered life."

The first task before the educational reformer is to remove



the impediments to growth, and make our schools and colleges breathe an atmosphere of freedom. This is essential to the free expression of the potentialities—the wonderful energy and idealism of the child. Very rightly does Mr. Pearson observe—“In India we ought to start Schools entirely free—free from Government control whether that Government be British or Indian in personnel—Schools and Colleges free also from the deadening effects of the old conventions and traditions of the present-day educational system—Schools especially where children from their earliest years may be given the opportunity to develop, in an atmosphere of complete freedom, the divine faculties of spirit and creative imagination which are the natural birth-right of every child born into this world.”

Unless the children in India are rightly educated and are given perfect freedom for self-expression, true self-government can never be realised in the life of the Indian nation.

### **The Hindus Under Muslim Rule**

At this critical hour when unity and amity between the Hindus and the Mohammedans are badly needed we are grieved to notice a tension of feeling that works to the contrary. Not unoften this tension rises to the undesirable extreme and takes the form of bloody riots. But past Indian history bears testimony to the fact that generally speaking the two communities lived side by side as brothers on a liberal understanding of mutual co-operation, toleration and assimilation. In a learned article appearing in the August issue of the Indian Review, Dr. Syed Mahmud beautifully shows how some of the Muslim rulers respected the religious susceptibilities of their Hindu subjects specially with regard to the killing of cows.

Although they did not issue any general order for prohibition, the Muslim rulers from the very beginning of their rule in India imposed a tax, called Jazari, on butchers for the slaughter of cows at the rate of twelve Jetal per animal. After the establishment of Mohammedan suzerainty here this tax was in force for two hundred years up to the time of Feroz Shah Tughlak who had to abolish it on account of complaints from the butchers. The detailed description of the royal kitchen that we have of the time of Mohammed Shah Tughlak brings to light the fact that beef was neither cooked there and nor was it an item of the royal meal. Babar, the first Moghul



emperor, left to his son a confidential will that contains some lofty and salutary counsels as regards government. The original copy of the document is still preserved in the Bhopal State Library. We give below a translation of some of its beautiful clauses :—

“(1) You should not allow religious prejudices to influence your mind and should administer impartial justice, having due regard to the religious susceptibilities and customs of all sections of the people.

(2) In particular, refrain from the slaughter of cows. \* \*

(3) You should never destroy the places of worship of any community. \* \*

(4) The propagation of Islam will be better carried on with the sword of love and obligation than with the sword of oppression.”

From the *Ain-i-Akbari* we come to learn of the conciliatory measures of Akbar and of his distinct orders for the total prohibition of cow-killing in his dominion. True to his father's policy Jahangir went a step further and ordained besides that no animal whatever should be killed on Sunday and Thursday, the birthday of Akbar and the day of his own coronation respectively. Above all, the liberal among the Musalman kings and emperors joined the Hindus in some of their religious festivals such as Dewali, Sivaratri, Dasarah and the like and had respect for the Hindu recluses. Sir Thomas Roe, an ambassador from the court of James I, relates that he saw one day a half-naked Hindu Yogi talking in the open *durbar* with Jahangir, the latter addressing the former respectfully as ‘father.’

### **Swami Videhananda's Lecturing tour in Perak (F. M. S.)**

At the earnest invitation of the Y. M. H. A., Taiping, Swami Videhananda, in charge of the Vivekananda Asrama, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S., proceeded to Taiping on the 3rd August, 1923. Besides holding religious classes and conversations, the Swami delivered three instructive lectures on “Religion,” “Bhakti Yoga” and “Realisation of God and its Methods.” He also inspected the local Tamil school and presided over the distribution of prizes.

The Swami also visited Sitiwan on the 7th August. Here he spoke on the “Harmony of Religions” to a large gathering under the presidency of Captain Webber. The lecture was translated into Tamil. There was a large number of Europeans among the audience. The meeting being over, the Europeans thanked the Swami for his address. They talked



to him in a familiar and appreciative manner, and became very much absorbed in his conversation.

The Swami also paid a visit to Kuala Kangsar and gave a public address on the 10th August.

At each of the principal places visited by the Swami a large number of poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed in his honour.

### The Earthquake in Japan

Japan became of late the unfortunate victim of a disastrous catastrophe unprecedented in her history. A severe earthquake accompanied by conflagrations, volcanic eruptions and tidal waves devastated some of her flourishing cities, busy ports and smiling villages such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Kamakura and neighbouring places, and resulted in an appalling loss of life and property. The terrible disaster has rightly enough evoked deep sympathy for Japan all over the world. And India, too, is trying to alleviate the distress of the unfortunate Japanese people in her own humble way, though her own needs are not less pressing. This is as it should be.

### Miscellany

We are glad to receive the report of the Ramakrishna Sevasrama, Baliati, Dacca, for the last twelve years. The institution conducts a free primary school, helps the poor and the diseased with food and medicine, and renders service to society in various other ways. The Sevasrama also holds regular religious classes for all people irrespective of caste or creed. Contributions in aid of the institution may be sent to Brahmachari Dhyana Chaitanya, The Ramakrishna Sevasrama, P. O. Baliati, Dacca.

The third annual report of Sri Satchidananda Sangha, Tiruvateswaranpet, Madras, is a record of the useful work done by the institution. The Sangha held regular religious classes, and conducted a free primary school for boys and girls. Moral and religious instruction also was imparted to the children, numbering 20 at the close of the year. We wish the Sangha every success.

The annual Sri Ramakrishna festival was celebrated with special Puja, Kirtan and distribution of Prasad at Yogodyan, Kankurgachi on the Janmashtami day, which fell on the 3rd September last.