

Prabuddha Bharata

इत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राण्य वरात्रिबोधत।

Katha Upa. 1, iii. 4

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

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The Swami opened the conversation by alluding to a boy : The boy is very clever. He is only thirteen, but talks like a boy of twenty. His body is undergoing development. This is the most critical time. In the West it comes later—at sixteen or seventeen. . . . Boys should be presented high ideals at this age. In olden times there was a rule in our country that teachers should be householders. There is a good deal of safety in this method, and the teachers naturally come to look upon their pupils as their own children.

It is very difficult to get rid of bad influences, if once they have a hold on the mind. If the youth

are convinced of the utility of chastity and the evils of its opposite, they may afterwards marry and turn out decent citizens.

Some one said, "Those who practise gymnastics generally have their minds free from temptations."

The Swami— Yes, if they are spiritually bent; for chastity is the bed-rock of this. Utless one is chaste, the mind is never steady. "A steady mind-stuff (*Chitta*) only can give rise to a bright understanding."

The Avadhuta Gita was brought and the eighth chapter was read, from verse 11 up to the end.

The Swami quoted—

चिन्ताक्रान्तं धातुबद्धं शरीरं
नष्टे चित्ते धातवो यान्ति नाशम् ।
तस्माच्चित्तं सर्वतो रक्षणीयं
स्वस्थे चित्ते बुद्धयः सम्भवन्ति ॥

—"The body is formed of the elements and is swayed by thought. If the mind-stuff is disturbed the elements are destroyed. Therefore it should be carefully protected. A steady mind-stuff only can give rise to a bright understanding."

Then he explained : The highest element in our body is preserved by chastity. If there is no chastity the mind-stuff becomes unsteady. Then the image of the Chosen Ideal (*Ishtam*) is no more clearly reflected on it. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "If the coating of mercury is all right, then the mirror truly reflects the image and if there is any break in it, the image is defective." What is the mind-stuff? It is that which gives rise to thought,—where the first impression is received.

So it is clear that if the very source of thought is agitated, meditation is out of the question. We simply go on reading 'mind-stuff, mind, intellect,' but which is which,—one has to understand by diving deep into the interior. It is difficult to escape if the mind-stuff has already received bad impressions. Hence the Lord says in the Gita:

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

—“Therefore, O Arjuna, first control the organs and kill the wicked Lust, which destroys both knowledge and realisation.”

‘Destroys both knowledge and realisation.’
Look at the immensity of the evil !

लक्ष्यच्युतं चेद्यदि चित्तमषिद्

बाहिर्मुखं सन्निपतेत्ततस्ततः ।

प्रमादतः प्रच्युतकेलिकन्दुकः

सोपानपंक्तौ पतितो यथा तथा ॥

—“If the mind, being outgoing in its activities, is ever so slightly deflected from the Ideal, it goes down and down, like a play-ball inadvertently dropped at the head of a staircase and bumping from one step to another !” (*Vivekachudamani*).

How it goes down, and down, and stops only when it reaches the extreme limit of the fall !

Q.— Does one attain to the Knowledge of Brahman by practising chastity for twelve years at a stretch ?

The Swami— Undoubtedly. Through the power of *Ojas** the Knowledge of Brahman unfolds itself. What is the Knowledge of Brahman? The Knowledge already exists, we have only to unfold it. If

* Sexual energy converted into spiritual energy.

you can maintain your chastity for twelve years, the mind gets steady, with the result that Knowledge unfolds itself. What is the power that helped Swamiji to revolutionise the world? About Keshab Chandra Sen Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Had Keshab renounced the world, he could have done much more work." Mere professions do not count for much. You will say one thing and do some other thing.

Swamiji used to tell us, "Do you think I only lecture? I know I give them something solid, and they know they receive something solid." In New York Swamiji was lecturing to a class. Oh the tremendous effect of it! K. said that while listening to the lecture he felt as if some force was drawing the Kundalini up, as at the time of meditation. After the lecture was finished (it took an hour) — announced that he would hold a question class. Most of the audience had gone after Swamiji's lecture. Swamiji rebuked — saying, "A question-class after this! Do you want to spoil the effect of my lecture?" Just see! Oh, what a Power Sri Ramakrishna left for the world in Swamiji! Didn't he change the very thought-current of the world? Think of the strength of one whom nothing could attract. Once a monk frankly told me that for eighteen years he had been grinding at Vedanta, but was not yet above the temptation of sex. His mind had evidently imbibed some impressions. To root out impressions is an uphill task. But if one has the determination to say, "What if I have once done something wrong? Now I know what it is; so I won't do it any more,"—then one can get through.

About monks Swamiji used to say, "A Sadhu can have all his faults forgiven, but unchastity is unpardonable. He must be strictly continent." Swamiji passed through lots of ladies—beautiful, rich and gifted—but none could attract him. Rather he attracted them to himself. Can you conceive of the thing?

Once, in America, Swamiji saw a lady whom he thought very beautiful, and, without the least impure motive, wished to have a look at her again. This time he saw not a beautiful woman but a monkey's face! A higher power was always protecting him. Another time, he said, that quite unusually—he saw a woman in dream, with a veil over her head. She seemed to be very beautiful. He proceeded to remove the veil and see her face. But no sooner was the veil removed than it revealed Sri Ramakrishna! Swamiji was mortally ashamed. A householder devotee also had an experience like this. He had drunk freely and was very excited. He stopped his carriage before a house of ill fame and went up the stairs. At the head of the staircase before the door he found Sri Ramakrishna standing! He fled in shame. Unless God saves us, there is no way out. Blessed are those who have no evil impressions cast upon their minds,—whom He protects. They alone are saved. None can escape from this by one's personal exertions. But then Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "If you are sincere, Mother will set everything right." There must be sincerity—it won't do to profess one thing and meditate another. You may pass as an honest man before another, but

you cannot hoodwink yourself. You are your own witness. So, if you pray like that, with your whole heart, He cannot but listen—take my word for it. But you must not be a conscious fool. Swamiji used to say, “Such a man consciously allows himself to fall into the trap and then laments his fate!” What’s the use of weeping after the deed is done? Say like a hero, “I won’t do it any more!” Then only will the Lord come to your help.

(To be continued)

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

“**T**HE depressed classes are hastening to embrace the new faith for the very reason that they hope through it to be no longer Outcastes. The Missions, and America, which generally supports them, look upon mass conversion as the triumph of the Gospel. But without any denial of the many cases of intense personal conviction, it may be admitted that hope of release from social degradation imposed by Hinduism is largely at work in what are known as mass movements towards Christianity.” This frank admission of an Indian Christian writer, himself a social worker among the Christian “outcastes,” undisputably points to the fact how a large number of people from the depressed classes are embracing Christianity every year. This they are doing not for the sake of any spiritual illumination, but mainly for escaping from the cruel treatment meted out to them by the high

caste Hindus in South India. In the heart of Indian Christianity itself there exist invidious distinctions of race and colour. There are at present not only different churches but also different cemeteries for the white and the coloured Christians in various parts of the country. In spite of these humiliating circumstances there is a large influx of Hindu converts into the church of Christ. Each one of these people is anxious to be purged of the curse of untouchability by gathering "a cupful of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by a Padri," and to automatically rise in social status even in the eyes of the Hindus themselves. This very fact proves beyond doubt how unbearable have been the humiliations to which the untouchables have been subjected by the so-called orthodox and the caste-conscious among the followers of Hinduism. It may or may not be right on the part of Christian missionaries to receive proselytes caring mainly for the improvement of their social and economic status, and possessing little or no sincere fervour for the religion of Christ. But there is no doubt whatsoever that the high caste Hindus are guilty of a most cruel form of social tyranny which drives thousands of their co-religionists to seek shelter under a foreign faith.

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This mass movement towards other religions is no new thing in the history of Hinduism. This has been a constant slur on the upper class Hindus, although the blame cannot be laid at the door of the Hindu religion itself. The exclusive spirit of Hindu society forced millions of the down-trodden

people to take refuge in the fold of the religion of love and equality as preached by Buddha. Apart from the intrinsic merit of Buddhism and its wonderful sympathy for the poor and the miserable; it is the oppression of Hindu society that made the religion of the Enlightened One so great a success in India. The Vedic religion was not at fault. The ideals of love and equality were there, but these could not be fully realised in social life owing to the selfishness and exclusiveness of the privileged classes. Hindu society suffered heavily for its cruelty towards the masses during the ascendancy of Buddhism in India. And it became a little wiser by the lessons it learnt from the Buddhist church.

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During the revival that followed the downfall of the religion of Buddha, Hinduism opened its doors rather freely to people of all classes, and assimilated many of the Buddhist sects and creeds existing at the time. Those who promptly responded to the call of Hinduism were readily accepted, and were given the rights and privileges of Hindu society. But pitiable became the lot of those who tenaciously clung to one or other of the many Buddhist sects. They were declared Anacharianiyas or untouchables, and various humiliations were imposed on them. The depressed classes, too, in their turn, had to become exclusive, and the gulf between these communities and Hindu society broadened more than ever. Speaking of the untouchables in Bengal says Mahamahopadhiyaya Hara Prasad Shastri—"The so-called depressed classes, the classes with whom the Brahmins and

their followers are not in the habit of keeping any intercourse, are really, most of them, the survivals of the once most powerful royal, nay, imperial race of Buddhists in Bengal." This is also more or less true of the Buddhists in other parts of India.



The origin of the depressed classes is sought to be explained by the popular theory of the prohibited intermixture of caste and excommunication of the mixed castes by orthodox society. This may hold good in some cases. But in the majority of instances the origin is different. As the result of complete isolation and loss of tradition and culture, the Buddhist communities degenerated to a great extent. Most of them could not stand the silent influence and absorbing power of the Hindu religion. They adopted its manners and customs, and gradually came to form what may be called the outer ring of Hindu society. But the brand of untouchability could not be removed, although some of these classes were decidedly superior in culture to many belonging to the lower strata of the Hindu society of four castes. Besides these, there were a large number of Buddhist communities that stoutly resisted their assimilation into Hinduism. In consequence not only were they refused the small mercies granted to others, but were also subjected to very many additional social disabilities and degradations. To many of these Islam came as salvation. A large number of Buddhists were no doubt converted by force, but there were many others who welcomed the democratic religion of

Mohammed and gladly embraced it to save themselves from the tyranny of Hindu society. Besides, many of the partly assimilated communities also gladly took shelter under the flag of Islam with no other object than to elevate their social status. This process went on uninterrupted for centuries. And this together with conversion by force and persuasion swelled the number of Mohammedans in India, making Hindustan once the greatest Mohammedan power in the world. The Hindus suffered immensely, but mainly because of their own faults. Their religion itself was in danger. As its result the orthodox became all the more exclusive, and raised the protective walls of stringent laws and injunctions. But all this was not of much avail. It is at this critical hour that the Vaishnavite reformers appeared to save the situation.

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Hinduism has always been a proselytising religion. But the method it followed was that of peaceful penetration and silent conversion. By its impact with Islam its missionary spirit took a new turn as in the Vaishnavite reform movements. The great reformers of this momentous period liberalised Hinduism by their gospel of love and brotherhood. Ramananda gave the lead, opening the doors of Hinduism to one and all irrespective of caste, creed or religion. He was followed by great teachers, Kabir, Chaitanya and others, some of whom hailed from even the lowest classes. Says a writer on "caste"—"He (Ramananda) released his followers from the shackles of caste, laying down no special ordinances as regards eating or bathing.

Among his twelve chief disciples there were a barber and a low caste leather worker, each of whom founded a sub-sect. The liberalizing influence of Ramananda's teaching was the source of the religious revival in Maharashtra, which covered a period of nearly five hundred years. This period gave birth to various saints and prophets from among all castes, even outcastes, who manfully struggled against the exclusive spirit of caste domination." The greatest service that the Vaishnavite teachers rendered to Hinduism was that they freely admitted into their folds a large number of Buddhists and low-caste Hindus, who otherwise would have been lost for ever to Hinduism. But as time went on the sects founded by those great teachers miserably degenerated and lost their missionary zeal and catholic spirit. The great lessons of the past came to be forgotten. Hindu orthodoxy asserted itself again, and up till now it is holding its sway over the country, subjecting the lower class people to many a form of social cruelty and oppression.

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Various reform movements are no doubt liberalising the spirit of Hinduism at the present times. But their influence has not yet become so powerful and widespread as to change the whole outlook of Hindu society on the problem of the depressed classes. The outcaste is still an outcaste, spurned and hated by society. The upper class Hindus, in spite of their promises, are doing practically nothing for his social and economic uplift. What little is being done is mainly by Christian missionary bodies. Is there, therefore, any wonder that mass movements towards Christianity "have taken

place on a scale so huge that the missions have lacked men and money to enable them to minister to the spiritual needs of these people and they have frequently had to refuse to receive them ?”

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The present awakening in the country has brought home to the upper classes the importance of the elevation of the outcaste communities in India. But to bring about any permanent good it is not enough to improve their social and economic status. They must be raised in culture. Then only will be removed the root-cause of all invidious social distinctions and exclusive privileges of caste. The laudable attempts of the Vaishnavite reformers to raise the lower classes produced no permanent result. It is because that they did not take the trouble of spreading among the masses Sanskrit learning and culture, thereby connecting them with the perennial fountain of Aryan civilisation. It is unfortunate that we are not laying sufficient stress on the cultural aspect of mass education. It is high time for us to give it our full consideration, and revise the whole system of our education, giving it a stable cultural basis. Remarks Swami Vivekananda on this important question—“Teach the masses in the vernacular, give them ideas ; they will get information ; but something more is necessary ; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses. There will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same. The only safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only

way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit. The only way to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have done what you want." It is in this way alone that we can level *up* all castes and classes, and effect a permanent regeneration of our society. Levelling down is not the way; it will lead only to our national decay and death.



HINDU ETHICS.

THE Hindus built up a system of philosophy that may be said to have reached a high degree of abstraction. But in the transcendental flights of their speculative mind, it must be said, they ignored many things concerning this earth below. We search in vain in their writings for an important branch of knowledge, connected with human life—the science of morals. There are no doubt moral discourses scattered here and there in their scriptures, but it is a difficult, nay an impossible task to link those crude ideas together and systematise them into a regular science. They furnish “no basis for the direction of active life of men in society.”* In short, they do not “contain anything that can properly be called a system of ethics.”*—These are some of the sweeping remarks of a section of shallow critics biassed by an excessive degree of missionary zeal.

Not to speak of the modern ethical schools, even Socrates, Plato and Aristotle,—their origin and source of inspiration, were not heard of when the Hindus developed the principles of their ethics. Any intelligent student who has the capacity to go through the Hindu scriptures with an

* Hindu Ethics by John Mackenzie, M. A.

attitude of sympathy, will find there ample materials for many sciences as well as ethics. Hindu philosophy, rightly observes Prof. Max Muller, "has not neglected the important sphere of ethics, but that on the contrary, we find ethics in the beginning, ethics in the middle and ethics in the end."

Hindu ethics became what it now is by passing through an evolutionary process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. At the primitive stage of thesis the Hindus, simple and unassuming, directed their energies outwards and pictured a rosy view of life on earth. Confident of their natural powers they had an inordinate craving for physical and intellectual perfection and struggled to overcome the limitations of nature. Their conception of right and wrong was therefore coloured by the naturalistic bias they had at that time. Next came the stage of antithesis—a reaction to the naturalistic view of life. By the experience of repeated failures in the domain of nature they learnt gradually the real worth of earthly pleasures and went inwards for peace. As the fruit of their undivided efforts a brighter realm, the spiritual world, opened before them with a supernatural message. Now a rigid life of simplicity and purity, self-denial and renunciation appealed to them, and consequently they loved to pass their time in fasts, prayers and meditations. The transition from full-fledged objectivity gave birth naturally to a morality that was transcendental in character, denying the values of earthly existence. By the inevitable law of dialectic this extreme needed a synthesis, and it passed to the final stage that harmonised both. Hindu ethics became now a happy union of the moral consciousness of the natural and the spiritual man. "True to the kindred points of heaven and home," it is etherial and at the same time practical. Herein lies its superiority to Zoroastrian and Islamic ethics that do not go beyond the moral consciousness of the natural man, and Buddha and early Christian ethics that are fit for other-worldly monks and nuns.

In this world of diversity no two men are exactly alike; one differs from another as regards taste, mentality and

outlook ; each man has got his own ideal and tries to realise the same in his own way. In the quest for what is best and most desirable some want such temporal things as wealth, power and the like. Others hanker after happiness and evaluate life by that standard. Others again, with the moral instinct strong in them, aim at righteousness and subordinate all other considerations to that ideal ; but only a blessed few hunger after spiritual freedom. Under these circumstances to expect that a rigid system will suit the moral and spiritual susceptibilities of mankind in general is only another name for fanaticism and bigotry. The Hindus have therefore evolved an ethical science that is broad enough to accommodate itself to all temperaments and stages of evolution. Their ethics, with its searching analysis of morality into Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika and its scientific classification of men into castes and Asramas with their diverse allotted duties, is based on subtle biological principles, providing scope for all types of men. Besides, in their conception of चतुर्वर्ग—the group of four, comprising अर्थ—material prosperity, काम—happiness, धर्म—moral righteousness and मोक्ष—emancipation, we find almost all the ends that determine the activities of man. But what they emphasise is that the minor ends, many as they are, should subserve the final end, emancipation—the be-all and end-all of existence. In other words, they grant working validity to the minor ends, giving every person full liberty to pursue the line most suitable to his temperament and capacity, only if he keeps in view the ultimate goal.

The metaphysical grounding of Hindu ethics is the synthetic philosophy of Vedanta, that may be called the rationale of all faiths and creeds. Brahman, the One without a second, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute is the only Reality. The phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, is unreal. This is the final conclusion Vedanta arrives at. But unlike Buddha philosophy that verges on nihilism, it admits the relative reality of the world and “leaves,” as Prof. Max Muller observes, “to every

man a wide sphere of real usefulness and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life." Brahman, the featureless Unity, associated with Maya, becomes Iswara, the God of religion and the goal of morality, possessing in one personality the attributes of infinite power, wisdom, truth and love. In Him the world lives, moves and has its being; He is the life and soul of all creatures including man. Hence the allegation that the Hindus with their Mayavada place before man a meaningless abstract ideal, "not one which will inspire and purify the conduct of the individuals" is altogether baseless.

In contrast with the Christian conception of sin and its horrible concomitant, eternal damnation, the Hindus have a message of hope even for the vilest of sinners, for they believe in the inborn Divinity of man. The sinner is no less a God than a saint, the difference lies only in the degree of manifestation. Moral consciousness is the prerogative of man; it is rooted in his very being; it is an expression of his inherent perfection. But within the domain of Maya he sometimes forgets what he really is and does what he should not do, mistaking the wrong for the right. Thus originates sin and crime—an accidental, temporary phase of his character, and the necessity of the moral and the legal code to regulate society. The idea of an extra-cosmic being with a rod in one hand and boons in the other, governing the moral order by punishing the vicious and rewarding the virtuous, as some religions have it, may be helpful for humanity in its infant stage, but it cannot satisfy the rational demands of this scientific age. We admit that reward and punishment have got their relative values as incentives to moral and spiritual life, but they have got no metaphysical justification. Nothing comes from outside, one reaps only the fruits of one's own acts. Hence the impulse for all change, moral and spiritual, should come from within, and the function of ethics and religion is nothing else but to help this internal growth.

The doctrine of Karma that presupposes the immortality of the human soul is the pivot on which Hindu ethics moves.

If there had been no causal nexus in the moral order, many things would have remained unconnected and therefore inexplicable. How are we to account for the phenomenon that of two men, born and brought up in the same environment, one turns out a scoundrel and the other a saint? It is the deeds done in previous incarnations that determine their present lives with their peculiar tendencies. The individual is wholly responsible for what he is and what he will be. We are the architects of our own destiny. Ignorant as we are we often lay the blame at the door of Providence and call Him unjust and whimsical. But, न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः; न कर्मफलसंयोगं ।—“Neither agency, nor actions does the Lord create for the world, nor does He bring about the union with the fruits of action.” Not to speak of the scientific and logical character of this doctrine of Karma, it has got a marvellous influence on human conduct. If a person knows for certain that his present sufferings are the results of his past bad deeds he has no reason to grumble. Like a debtor who is paying off an old debt he will be resigned to his lot and will ungrudgingly bear with all that will come as trials. Besides, having the future in his control he will give up all thought for what he cannot mend now, and put forth his best efforts to lay by a capital that will make him a happier man hereafter.

The crown and glory of Hindu ethics is its doctrine of निष्काम कर्म—the duty for duty's sake. Whenever we do anything great and noble, there is generally a desire for reward either in the shape of name and fame here or of happiness hereafter. The false ideas of 'me and mine' have so much obsessed our minds that we find it difficult to eliminate this egoistic element. But the secret of success in work lies in doing the thing perfectly without any concern for what it leads to. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।—“To work you have the right but not to the fruits thereof,” says the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita. Let every man, in whatever station of life he may be, dedicate all that he does as an offering unto the Lord. Work done in a spirit of selflessness and

non-attachment purifies the mind, clears the vision and broadens the outlook; it leads finally to the supramoral stage—a stage beyond good and evil, when “one with an eye of evenness beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.” This is the most covetable state of illumination one can aspire to, for it amounts to **जीवन्मुक्ति** or freedom in life, not in the sense of licence, but freedom that cannot degenerate into acts sinful, nor claim merit for acts virtuous.

To conclude, let us consider now the Hindu science of morals in relation to the world at large. A Hindu is not expected to live unto himself alone, his life should be a veritable sacrifice. All that he has he owes greatly to others—family, society, state, humanity and so on. Born as he is with so many obligations, his chief aim should be to fulfil them as best as he can within the span of a life-time if possible. A conscientious life is therefore a life that is lived in tune with the highest ideal and for the well-being of others. If we be sure that all that we see, including the individual souls, are nothing but manifestations of that one ultimate Reality—the Self, then with whom are we to quarrel and fight? All—man and bird and beast, have in essence the same being. There is nothing to exult over when an individual serves his fellow brothers, for in the persons of those men it is his own Self that is the object of his attention. As a striking contrast the utilitarian ethics that obtains almost everywhere nowadays, stands on commercial principles, specially in its application to life and activity, individual and national. It preaches a pragmatic ideal, “Do unto others as you would be done by,” and does not go beyond the limit of utility in moulding the social conscience. The cultivation of virtues is enjoined for the order of society and the individual interests of the social units. There is no doubt that we find a noble maxim and rule of life in the Christian commandment, “Love thy neighbour as thyself,” but we miss there the metaphysical reasons why we should do so and not otherwise. Hindu altruism that embraces all has its root in the idea of the unity of the Self and establishes

the fundamental identity of the higher interests of humanity. With the idea that God is worshipped best in humanity only a Hindu can say with Swami Vivekananda, "Give as the rose gives perfume. It is our privilege to be charitable, for only so can we grow. The poor man suffers that we may be helpful. Let the giver kneel down and offer his thanks. Let the receiver stand up and permit."

SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND UNIVERSAL RELIGION.*

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

(*Concluded from page 386.*)

THE nineteenth century may be regarded as a period of Renaissance in the history of Indian thought after Sankaracharya. It was in the early part of that century under the conditions above described that the subject of this discourse—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa—appeared on the scene with his Gospel of realisation through devotion to that Eternal Reality which lies beyond all philosophy and which it is the office of religion to lead to. Like Buddha before him, he did not attempt to herald any brand-new philosophy, of which, it seems, he knew India to have had more than enough, and was content with preaching the necessity for, and a method of practically bridging the gulf between philosophy and religion or between the phenomenal and the noumenal. That he had himself done so, we know on the testimony of no less a person than Swami Vivekananda who, of all those who came under the inspiring influence of that great Brahmin Sannyasin, seems to have been possessed of the greatest and the most comprehensive capacity to understand the true meaning of the life and teachings of his venerable master. "In his search after religious truth, that graduate of the Calcutta

University," wrote the author of the life and teachings of the Swami, "went to hear the teachers of all sects including even the Muhammadans and Christians. To all he put the same question, 'How do you know that the things you teach are true? Have you realised them yourselves?' And everywhere he received the same answer 'No, but they are in the books, the Scriptures teach them.' He travelled to distant places and his yearning heart would not let him rest. He must learn the truth, so he spent his time in the search of a teacher who knew for himself the truth of what he affirmed. When he was nearly in despair, he came to a simple, child-like sage who was unostentatiously teaching those who sought his aid. Again the boy put his question, 'Sir, have you seen God, have you seen the soul?' Great was his joy and astonishment when with clear and positive assertion came the unusual answer, 'Yes, I have.' 'Can you show them to me,' asked the boy. Again the reply was unhesitating, 'Yes, I can.'" Such was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva of Dakshineswar Kali temple of whom that prince among men, Swami Vivekananda, speaks in the following terms, "The time was ripe for one to be born, who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya, one who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God, as well as see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcaste, for the down-trodden, for everyone in this land, inside India and outside India, and at the same time whose grand, brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects not only in India but outside India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence. Such a man was born," he continues, "and I had the good fortune to sit under his feet for years. The time was ripe and it was necessary that such a man should be born and he came and the most wonderful part of it was that his life's work was just near a city (Calcutta) which was full of Western thought, which had run mad after these occidental

ideas, a city which had become more Europeanised than any other city in India. There he was born without any book-learning whatsoever; with his great intellect never could he write his own name, but everybody, even the most brilliant graduates of our university, found in him an intellectual giant."

In spite of his inability to write his own name, his intellectual greatness manifested itself in his homely and commonplace sayings which almost always are thought-provoking and contain in a nutshell the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads. Speaking to one of his disciples he says at one place, "Many think that knowledge (of God) cannot be attained without the study of books. But higher than reading is hearing, higher than hearing is seeing or Realisation," and again at another place, "He who has true knowledge ceases to have anything to do with talking or controversy. God the Absolute is the only one substance to be realised—not described or known (only). The sign of true knowledge or Realisation is the cessation of all doubt and therefore of all philosophical discussion." How beautifully do these words of his describe the distinction between knowledge about and a knowledge of acquaintance with God and the emphasis he lays on the latter as constituting all true knowledge! Besides this, the sense of the words bears a close resemblance to what the Upanishads mean by the three distinctive stages which mark the path of human progress towards the Divine. The first stage is that of Shravana (hearing). It is in this stage that we appropriate the stock of knowledge diffused through the language and the literature of the society in which we are born. The child has not to make his own ideas, but in the spoken language there is already a store-house of them which the child begins by appropriating under the guidance of a Guru. The second stage is that of Manana or philosophising. This is the stage of intellectual ferment accompanied by doubt and perplexity with the consequent reflection and an effort directed to re-adaptation due mainly to the intellectual progress made by the individual. The third stage is that of Nididhyasana or meditation leading to

Realisation. This is the stage where not only do we know that there is a Reality beyond but have its Vision or realise it as it were face to face. This is a stage when besides having a knowledge about God, we have a knowledge of acquaintance with Him.

When we reach the stage of Realisation, there is the end of all doubts and philosophical discussions. We then burn with a passion for that eternal Reality and have a desire to live in the transcendental. Here philosophy fails us, it can give little consolation and we feel dependent upon religion to lead up to that Beyond, of which philosophy had given an indication only.

Realisation of the Divine within is regarded as the highest goal of human effort by all religions, everyone of which, even that of savages, shows some practical method—however crude it may be—of this Divine Realisation. It is the central idea of all the great religious systems (leaving aside, of course, some sectarian and popular views), and the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna lies in this that he, above all his contemporaries, laid a special emphasis on this aspect of religion—an aspect which alone could form the true and permanent basis of any universal religion, which at that time suggested to Keshab Chandra Sen's mind the thought of broadening the spiritual structure of his movement known as the New Dispensation.

The question as to the method of this Divine Realisation was with him one of detail only. Speaking about the different methods and their practicability with special reference to the present age, he says at one place, "Yoga or Communion with the Lord is of three kinds—Jnanayoga, Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga. Jnanayoga is communion with God by means of Jnana or knowledge in the highest sense. A Jnani's object is to realise Brahman the Absolute. He says, "Not this, not this," and thus leaves out of account one unreal thing after another until he gets to a point where all discrimination between the Real (i. e. God) and the unreal ceases and the Absolute Brahman is realised in Samadhi.

Karmayoga," he continues, "is communion with God by means of works. Ashtanga-yoga or Rajayoga is Karma-yoga if practised without attachment. It leads to communion through meditation and concentration. The doing of duties by householders—doing them without attachment to the end that God may be glorified—is Karmayoga. Again Puja or worship according to the Shastras, Japa or silent repetition of the name of God and other Karma of the kind is Karmayoga if done without attachment, to the glorification of God. Bhaktiyoga is communion with the Lord by means of Love, devotion and self-surrender. It is specially adapted to the Kaliyuga, this age. This is the law for the present age." As regards the practicability of these three methods in the present age, he says, "Pure work without attachment is exceedingly difficult in this age (Kaliyuga). In the first place, there is hardly time in this age for doing the various works laid upon us by the holy books. In the second place, thou mayst form a resolution to work unattached, without expectation of any reward or fear of any punishment in this world or the next. But the chances are that knowingly or unknowingly thou gettest attached to the fruit of thy works unless indeed thou art already a perfect man. The path of Absolute Knowledge or communion by philosophy is also exceedingly difficult in this age. In the first place, our life in this age is, so to say, in food. Secondly, the term of human life in this age is much too short for the purpose. Thirdly, it is almost impossible in this age to get rid of the conviction that the self is the same as the body—which clings to us. Now what is the conclusion which the Jnani must come to? It is this—I am not the body, gross or subtle. I am one with the Universal Soul, the Being Absolute and Unconditioned. Not being the body I am not subject to the necessities of the body, i. e. hunger, thirst, birth, disease, grief, pleasure, pain etc. One subject to the necessities of the body and calling himself a philosopher, is like a person suffering from intense pain caused by a thorny plant. It scratches and tears the hand and causes it to bleed. But

he nevertheless says—why, my hand is not at all scratched or torn. It is all right.” Speaking of Bhaktiyoga of which he was the only apostle of the time, he says, “The path of communion by Love, devotion and self-surrender to God, is the easiest of all paths. It brings Karma (work) to a minimum. It teaches the necessity of prayer without ceasing. It is in this age the shortest cut leading to God,” and again at another place he says “Communion by love of God will enable us to see God with far less difficulty than any other kind of communion. In the first place, love of God,” says he, “reduces the quantity of one’s work by fixing one’s mind upon one’s ideal, i. e. God. Secondly, it helps one to work unattached. One cannot love the Lord and at the same time love riches or pleasure, fame or power. He who has once tasted the drink prepared with good sugarcandy does not care for that prepared with molasses.”

The three methods or paths spoken of by the Paramahansa in the above quotations, correspond to the three psychic functions of the soul, viz. knowing, willing and feeling, and Realisation is the attainment of the ideal state of any of these functions. They are, to ordinary mortals at least, all necessary, the first two as parts of a discipline or as a warrant for a well-disciplined mind and as a security against such vagaries of the third as are not uncommon among many of the followers of that path. The fact that the Paramahansa had attained the state of Samadhi at a comparatively early age and that his sayings even at that age contained the best that philosophy could teach, seems to show that he had not to start like ordinary mortals in this course of Divine Attainment, but that he had on the contrary been preparing for the arduous task for many lives before this present one; so that he had reached the third and the final stage on that path before he took birth in the present body. For it is in this Samadhi that all the three kinds of communions above referred to, are harmoniously combined into one. It is not, as is usually thought, a sort of meditation, for in meditation we cannot go beyond the limits of the phenomena. It is a supernatural

process in which we leave behind the phenomenal experience and enter into the Unknown Beyond. "It is the process of Realisation without which," to quote the author of the Exposition of Yoga, "the very springs of philosophy will be dried up and the human soul will remain of no more consequence than simply a bubble likely to disappear now and then in the vast ocean of phenomenal appearance. We cannot say anything of its nature besides that it is a state of Unconsciousness. To say anything more would be impudently profane."

OUR LAST DURGA PUJA

THE Durga Puja is over and along with it the universal rejoicings and feverish excitement which swayed the unsophisticated minds of countless millions for the four blessed days in the month of October last, have also been hushed into silence. Fervent but silent were the artless prayers that welling up from the depths of human soul were consecrated at the holy feet of the Mother—the visible embodiment of Eternal Creative Energy. The affluent worshipped Her with pomp and splendour and the helpless poor with no other paraphernalia than the humblest tribute of love. Thus the Mother—the destroyer of the Asuras—received the homage of love and devotion all over India from the highest to the lowest and from the proudest to the humblest.

But a black curtain has been withdrawn; and the past glimmering with all its scintillating variety is unfolded before our blurred vision. The golden days of hoary antiquity are forced upon our imagination,—the days when the Mother was worshipped by Ramachandra—the Incarnation of love and piety—in splendid simplicity and self-abnegating devotion. That was an age when the fertile soil of India bringing the comforts of life within easy reach left men sufficiently at leisure to indulge in genial mirth and gaiety. The country

was then rich and her children were not handicapped by the besetting struggle for existence as now;—and their minds could be easily abstracted from all sublunary concerns into a region of unalloyed peace and joy during the worship of the Mother. Hundreds of souls congregated at the houses of the rich on those festive occasions to gorge their hungry stomachs with dainty delicacies. Mirth and merriment were manifest in the contented looks of the simple village folk and in the humblest cottages of the poor peasants.

But how striking is the contrast between the past and the present! The voiceless pain from conscious helplessness is now an unerring indication of what depths of misery India has reached by an unholy alliance with those vaunted ideas and ephemeral culture of the West, which do not suit the genius and temperament of her children! But to all outward appearances, India—the land of holy cities and sacred rivers—is still the same. The Mother Bhagirathi still rises in solemn silence from the heart of the snow-hooded Himalayas and roars down in unequalled rapidity to disgorge her sacred waters washing the accumulated impurities of the land into the placid bosom of the “mighty main.” But notwithstanding this apparent immutability in the panorama of India’s glossy present, what a pity it is to think that she is not in reality what she was in the past or even a century and a half ago! There is indeed a rift in the lute. The huge temples still stand as visible symbols of Hindu religion and as inspiring monuments of their spiritual activity; but lo! the janitors and priests—the custodians of spiritual interests of humanity seem to be so many lifeless statues tottering to their grave! A hectic flush has spread over their limbs, as it were. But all the same, the Mother was worshipped as before!

But where is that spontaneous joy of the human heart, which once heightened the solemnity of the occasion? The lusty swains—the country’s pride—do no longer sing their immortal songs of love in unpremeditated art, nor do the village children, bent as they are under the sledge-hammer blows of

manifold diseases, dance in merry ring and frolic in rural simplicity in their happy homes.

“Times are altered ; trade’s unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.”

The joyful mirth and contentment have now become the vague traditions of the past and even the reminiscences thereof are sleeping in dull and muddy forgetfulness.

“Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene
Lived in each look, brightened all the green,—
These, far departing seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.”

These are the immortal words of Oliver Goldsmith, which find an echo in the heart of every feeling patriot of all climes and ages when the country reaches the lowest water-mark of desolation and misery. A deep and careful analysis of the present situation leads us to the irresistible conclusion that the strangulation of industrial life, the depression of agricultural activities and the influx of materialistic refinement bringing in its train hate and pride—the two invincible armours of the pampered rich and wiseacres in this land of renunciation and love—have cast a lurid light over the jubilant faces of the children of the country and have almost frozen the genial current of their soul. And to crown all, an abject spirit of dependence and helplessness is manifest in all the walks of Indian life. Bands of religious enthusiasts are crowding into India from outside as if she required their “celestial balm” to call back her lost spirituality! This being the state of things, how can there be a real worship of the Mother when all the channels of life have been silted up?

However the Puja is at an end ; it has ended but left men athinking of the glorious past as well as of the present sad

lot of humanity. Mother, will you not sound a final death-knell to the overwhelming forces arrayed against mankind? Let the benighted world find its way out of the whirlpool of confusion to the region of peace and light; let the curtain of oblivion be dropped for ever over these scenes, and let the merry jubilant faces of men freed from the octopus of political, industrial, moral and intellectual serfdom, and not the sad despondent looks of mankind, greet us next year on the occasion of the worship of the Mother!

शरणागतदीनार्तपरित्राणपरायणे ।

सर्वस्यार्तिहरे देवि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

“We bow down to Thee, O Mother, who protectest the poor and the afflicted taking refuge in Thee—who removest the misery of all.”

KHAGENDRA NATH SIKDAR, M. A.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 391.)

CHAPTER IX

उद्धव उवाच ।

वदन्ति कृष्ण श्रेयांसि बहूनि ब्रह्मवादिनः ।

तेषां विकल्पप्राधान्यमुताहो एकमुख्यता ॥१॥

Uddhava said :

1. O Krishna, the teachers of Brahman speak of various means of attaining well-being. Are all of them equally important, or only one is the foremost of them?

भवतोदाहृतः स्वामिन्भक्तियोगोऽनपेक्षितः ।

निरस्य सर्वतः सङ्गं येन त्वय्याविशेन्मनः ॥२॥

2. Thou too hast described the path of Devotion to the Lord, which is independent (of other means),—by which the mind getting rid of attachment to everything merges in Thee.

[“Thou hast eulogised Devotion and other sages speak of other means. What is their relative merit?”—Uddhava asks.]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कालेन नष्टा प्रलये वाणीयं वेदसंज्ञिता ।

मयादौ ब्रह्मणे प्रोक्ता धर्मो यस्यां मदात्मकः ॥३॥

The Lord said :

3. These words of Mine known as the Vedas, which had been destroyed by Time at the dissolution of the universe, I first¹ revealed to Brahmâ. In them is set forth that religion² which inclines the mind to Me.

[“Devotion is the highest means as it directly leads to Realisation; others are only of relative importance”—is the Lord’s answer. Slokas 3-9 give the different views of different people on this matter, all advocating minor instruments.

¹ *First*—at the beginning of the next cycle.

² *Religion &c.*—He means devotion.]

तेन प्रोक्ता च पुत्राय मनवे पूर्वजाय सा ।

ततो भृग्वादयोऽगृह्णन्सप्त ब्रह्ममहर्षयः ॥४॥

4. He declared it unto his eldest son, Manu, from whom the seven Patriarchs and sages, Bhrigu and the rest¹ got it.

[¹ *Rest*—i. e. Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu.]

तेभ्यः पितृभ्यस्तत्पुत्रा देवदानवगुह्यकाः ।

मनुष्याः सिद्धगन्धर्वाः सविद्याधरचारणाः ॥५॥

किं देवाः किन्नरा नागा रक्षः किंपुरुषादयः ।

बह्व्यस्तेषां प्रकृतयो रजःसत्त्वतमोभुवः ॥६॥

5-6. From those fathers it passed on to their sons—the Devas,¹ Asuras, Guhyakas, men, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, Charanas, Kindevas, Kinnaras, Nagas, Rakshasas, Kimpurushas, and others. Various are their natures,² being the outcome of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas :

[¹ *Devas &c.*—all these are different types of beings in the universe, *Kindevas* are half-gods, *Kinnaras* half-men.

² *Natures*—Sridhara Swami explains it as ‘desires.’]

याभिर्भूतानि भिद्यन्ते भूतानां मतयस्तथा ।

यथाप्रकृति सर्वेषां चित्रा वाचः स्रवन्ति हि ॥७॥

7. By which¹ beings are differentiated as well as their minds. And according to their natures their interpretation (of the Vedas) is various.

[¹ *Which*—refers to ‘natures’ in verse 6.]

एवं प्रकृतिवैचित्र्याद्भिद्यन्ते मतयो नृणाम् ।

पारंपर्येण केषांचित्पास्त्रण्डमतयोऽपरे ॥८॥

8. Thus, owing to the difference of natures, people differ in their ideas; while some¹ differ owing to instructions handed down to them through a succession of teachers, and others even go against the Vedas.

[¹ *Some*—who are not learned.]

मन्मायामोहितधियः पुरुषाः पुरुषर्षभ ।

श्रेयो वदन्त्यनेकान्तं यथाकर्म यथारुचि ॥९॥

9. O best of men, people deluded by My Maya describe various things as means to the highest good, according to their occupation and taste.

धर्ममेके यशश्चान्ये कामं सत्यं दमं शमम् ।

अन्ये वदन्ति स्वार्थं वा ऐश्वर्यं त्यागभोजनम् ।

केचिद्यज्ञतपोदानं व्रतानि नियमान्यमान् ॥१०॥

10. As means to the goal some mention duty;¹ others fame, self-gratification, truth, control of the senses and control of the mind; yet others mention splendour, gifts and food; and some, again sacrifice, austerity, charity, vows, or moral rules, universal and particular.

[¹ *Duty &c.*—Duty is extolled by the Mimamsakas, fame by Rhetoricians, self-gratification by Vatsyayana and others, the next three by the Yoga-school, splendour by pragmatic politicians, the next two by materialists, and so on.]

आद्यन्तश्चन्त एवैषां लोका कर्मविनिर्मिताः ।

दुःखोदकास्तमोनिष्ठा शुद्धानन्दाः शुचार्पिताः ॥११॥

11. The results attained by these means, being the outcome of work, have a beginning and an end, produce misery, and end in infatuation. They give but transient joy and are attended with grief.

[Hence they cannot compare with devotion.]

मय्यर्पितात्मनः सञ्जय निरपेक्षस्य सर्वतः ।

मयात्मना सुखं यत्तत्कृतः स्याद्विषयात्मनाम् ॥१२॥

12. My friend, how can one attached to sense-objects have that bliss which a man, with his mind given up to Me and indifferent to all objects, derives¹ from Me, their (Blissful) Self?

[¹ *Derives &c.*—His bliss is eternal and absolute.]

अकिञ्चनस्य दान्तस्य शान्तस्य समचेतसः ।

मया संतुष्टमनसः सर्वाः सुखमया दिशः ॥१३॥

13. To the man who craves for nothing, who

has subdued his senses and mind, who is even-minded to all, and is satisfied with Me, all¹ the quarters are full of bliss.

[¹ *All &c.*—He finds bliss everywhere.]

न पारमेष्ठ्यं न महेन्द्रधिष्यं न सार्वभौमं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भवं वा मय्यपितात्मच्छति मद्भिन्नान्यत् ॥

14. Neither the position of Brahmá nor that of Indra, neither suzerainty nor the rulership of the nether regions, neither powers that come through Yoga nor Liberation—the man who has surrendered his mind unto Me desires nothing else¹ but Me.

[¹ *Nothing else &c.*—Such a devotion comes after realisation. It is love for love's sake.]

न तर्था मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्न शंकरः ।

न च संकर्षणो न श्रीर्नैवात्मा च यथा भवान् ॥१५॥

15. Neither Brahmá, nor Shiva, nor Balarama, nor Lakshmi, nor My own form is so very dear to Me as you.¹

[¹ *You*—i. e. devotees like yourself.]

निरपेक्षं मुनिं शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम् ।

अनुव्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥१६॥

16. With a view to purify Myself¹ by the dust of his feet, I always follow the sage who cares for nothing, is calm, bears enmity to none, and is even-minded.

[¹ *Myself*—Even though eternally pure. Such a statement fits well in the mouth of the Lord Sri Krishna whose reverence for real Brahmíns and sages is well-known.]

(To be continued.)

THE LATE SRIMAT SWAMI ATMANANDA.

We are pained to record the sad news of the passing away of Srimat Swami Atmananda, better known as Sukul Maharaj amongst Sri Ramakrishna's followers, lay and monastic. The event took place on the 12th of October last at the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, where he had been staying for the last few months.

Everyone who came in close contact with the Swami felt the silent influence of his unassuming and saintly character and loved and respected him. He combined in his life the hard rigour and discipline of an ascetic with the quiet inward disposition of a Yogi. And every minute detail of his activity was a clear demonstration and proof of that particular phase of his personality. Though naturally of a retired bent of mind, he never spared himself when the mission authorities asked for his service for the good of others. He was, truly speaking, a genuine worker and could not tolerate the idea of doing a thing haphazardly. Sincerity of purpose, obedience to authorities and above all the spirit of renunciation—the keynote of his life—lent a special grandeur to his character. By his death the Mission has sustained a loss which it will be impossible to make good.

The following interesting facts of the Swami's life, mostly gleaned from a letter of Swami Suddhananda, one of his brother-disciples who knew him from his boyhood, will throw some light on his wonderful personality and show its real greatness:—

He was about fifty-five at the time of his passing away. As to his academical career he was a student of the Ripon College (Calcutta) and read up to the B. A. standard. His full name was Govinda Chandra Sukul. Though a Hindu-thani by birth he was a domiciled Bengalee and his native place was Maldah. He was a married man before he renounced the world,—so we heard. While a student he

happened to be acquainted with Khagen Maharaj, afterwards known as Swami Vimalananda, through whom he came in close touch with the Math. At first he used to put up in some private house in Calcutta, but subsequently he came to live with Khagen Maharaj at their place. It was there that I came to know him intimately. From the very beginning he had a quiet turn of mind. Being not much in favour of the many discussions and argumentations that we used to have there amongst ourselves, he sometimes even went so far as to express his annoyance at them. Since then he had a great mind for travel.

Most probably he joined the Alambazar Math and began to live there some time before the return of Swamiji to Calcutta from the West. He had a passion for meditation and was well-read in some of the Sanskrit scriptures on Vedanta. Swamiji initiated him into Sannyasa. He was a vegetarian from his boyhood. One day in order to test the firmness of his principle Swamiji gave him some fish to eat. As he had a profound respect for his Guru he was going to eat that notwithstanding his inborn tendency to the contrary, but he was dissuaded from doing so by Swamiji himself.

In 1898 plague broke out for the first time in Calcutta, and the Mission started relief work in the distressed area with Swami Sadananda at its head. Sukul Maharaj was one of those workers that rendered valuable service at that critical period. For some time he also worked under Swami Trigunatita at the Udbodhan office. After the Mahasamadhi of Swamiji he, with another monk of the Order, used to besmear his body with ashes and pass his time mostly in contemplation and meditation, somehow resting his head under a thatched shed, got up somewhere close to the present memorial temple of his master. Even the night he used to pass there, only coming to the Math to take his midday meal, as also to attend the Vedanta class conducted by Swami Saradananda. As for his supper some one of us would carry a few chapatis for him and leave them at his place.

In 1904 Sukul Maharaj went to Madras at the urgent

request of Swami Ramakrishnananda, and under his guidance took over the Vedanta work started by him at Bangalore, thus becoming the first resident Swami of the Mission there. He conducted regular classes in rented buildings and was for a time assisted by Swamis Vimalananda and Bodhananda. He was at Bangalore for nearly six years and kept agoing the work of the centre against many odds. He built the present handsome Ashrama by collecting subscriptions. He spoke little in public, but yet exerted a tremendous influence by the life he lived. He is still remembered there for his childlike simplicity, unobtrusive piety, stern renunciation and overflowing love for the rich and the poor alike. As his health broke down, he left Bangalore in 1909. In 1911 he accompanied the Holy Mother in her pilgrimage from Calcutta to Rameswaram and back. After some time he went for a change to Sambalpur. He lived there for about two years and a half with a friend of his until he recouped his lost health. Then he was asked to go to Dacca where he lived for three years in charge of the Mission centre there. The last few years of his life he spent at Bhubaneswar, Belur Math and finally at Benares.

Swami Suddhananda writes :—

Wherever he lived he used to hold classes on the works of Swamiji. For some time past we noticed in him a special fascination for the religious dramas of Girish Babu (the well-known dramatist of Bengal). He would have regular classes on Kalapahar, Purnachandra and other dramas with some of the younger members of the Order. Even here at Benares I observed that one or two boys used to go to him to read from those books and get in that connection many a salutary counsel from him.

He was quite healthy for ten or twelve days after my arrival at Benares. At times he used to say to me, "I am sick of useless talks and discussions. How I would like to see worship, spiritual practices, Bhajan, recitation of hymns etc. going on everywhere!" Sometimes he would observe, "Incapable as I am, I cannot do anything myself here. I do not therefore like the idea of being in a working centre.

However, I am here in obedience to the dictates of Swami Shivanandaji. I wish I could lead a solitary life in a place like Hardwar situated on the banks of the Ganges. But now I have not strength enough to go about for alms or draw water. If some one would live with me and help me a little, I can cook my own food."

He was an expert in playing on the Tabla. Lately he evinced a great desire for listening to songs. During his last illness he heard songs from one of the Swamis. Delighted at the prospect of Swami Ambikananda's coming to Benares he asked me to inform him that he would be very glad to hear a number of good songs from the Swami if he would happen to come and stay there for some time. But that desire of his was not fulfilled.

One day he narrated to me a dream that he had seen (perhaps some years ago):—He was floating, as it were, on the surface of an ocean, lying in the lap of the Mother. At last he felt an unspeakable bliss—as if torrents of bliss were gushing up everywhere—and he lost all outward consciousness. As he came back to his senses after a long time he found himself to be a little child, dancing in the arms of the Mother. "I had never," he said, "the experience of Samadhi in life. It may be that what I felt in dream was something like that covetable state."

Soon after my arrival at Benares, one day he brought to me a trunk, and after handing over its key requested me to keep it. The trunk had in it two good warm wrappers which he might have got as presents from Swami Brahma-nandaji and the Holy Mother. "Did not Swamiji formulate the rule," he observed, "that a monk should give away all that he has to the president of the Order? Please send these things to him and relieve me from the anxieties they involve in taking care of them. I shall get a cheap Balaposh (a kind of thin quilt-like wrapper) made for me and use that in the coming winter."

He had not a single pice with him. After his passing away we also found out that he had not even an extra

cloth. He was indeed a man of great renunciation and austerity. It cannot be said that he lacked in humour, for he composed many a long doggerel verse in Bengali and sent them to me, while he was living outside the Math. Recently very often he used to express his high regards for the Holy Mother.

The Swami had, at first, a slight attack of fever, and was kept under proper medical treatment. But unfortunately the fever did not subside, and gradually he developed broncho-pneumonia. During his last days he became extremely weak. He suffered for nearly two weeks before he passed away.

His body was taken to the Manikarnika Ghat, and after the usual ceremonies, it was consecrated to the holy waters of the Ganges.

Om Shantih! Shantih!! Shantih!!!

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Yogic Sadhan.—By Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Published by the Arya Publishing House, College Street Market, Calcutta. Pp. 71. Price As. 10.

Abandoning the lengthy processes of Hatha-yoga and Raja-yoga, the author propounds in the book a new line of spiritual practice that starts directly with the will. According to this system of Sadhana an aspirant may easily bring his mind, Prana, Chitta, and physical body under control by disciplining his will, till at last he realises the ideal—the free play of the Divine in all the details of his life.

Eternal Truth.—By Jwala Prasad Singhal, M. A. Published by Sat Gyan Prakashak Mandir, Mamubhanja Street, Aligarh City. Pp. 187.

This philosophical treatise of sixteen chapters proposes to deal with some of the vital questions of metaphysics and ethics. The theories propounded herein seem to be peculiar, and mark an appreciable departure from the main schools of Indian thought. The primal reality of the author is neither the impersonal Brahman of Advaitism, nor the personal God of theism. It 'exists with extension and seed-consciousness as its essential qualities and with space and time as the

essential conditions of its existence.' Being 'non-atomic and continuous' it is 'much softer, lighter, finer and subtler than any material thing of our experience.' It is 'such that it can expand or contract.' Creation with its multiplicity is a product of 'the variations in the two essential qualities of the primal being.'—This is the sum and substance of our author's conception of God and the world. It seems that he has been much influenced by modern science. To be frank, the work has been a regular mess of science and philosophy, that cannot stand the test of reason. The get-up of the book is beautiful.

Flowers at the Feet of the Lord, or Essays, religious and philosophical.—By R. G. R., B. A. Published by Ramachandra Govind Riswadkar, B. A., 1418 Kasba Peth, Poona City. Pp. 91. Price As. 12.

This little book contains twelve thoughtful essays on subjects most vital to man,—“Predominance of Karma,” “What should be the Ideal of man?”, “The Theory of Re-incarnation,” “The Problem of Life and Death” etc. “In the realisation of our true nature which is divine in its aspect, can the real and everlasting bliss be found. The only ideal that admits of being set before us hence, can be nothing but the realisation of our God-head, which in other words is the Existence Absolute, Bliss Absolute, Knowledge Absolute.”

The book unfortunately contains numerous spelling mistakes, evidently for want of a careful reading of proofs. These and other defects, we hope, will be remedied in the second edition of the book.

NEWS AND NOTES.

The Indian form of Democracy

The political system of the East, particularly of India and China, is marked by group organisation and group consciousness. Western political organisation, on the other hand, is characterised by the centralisation of the authority of the State. While the East has been trying to appreciate and assimilate the Western form of polity, the West in her pride has never cared to study, far less profit by, the values of the Eastern system. However, unbiassed students of comparative polity are gradually coming to realise that the apparently opposite systems are in reality complementary.

The old political systems have failed egregiously, in the East as well as in the West. The reason is that both the systems, in spite of their distinctive merits, failed on one essential point. They neglected to unite in one spirit the central government and the group organisations, such as the village community and the like. In these days of reconstruction every nation should try to remedy the peculiar defects of its own political system and assimilate what is best in others, thereby bringing about a synthesis between the two. Says Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee in a highly instructive article, "The Communal Polity of the East," published in the July issue of the 'Visva-Bharati Quarterly'—"In England and France, one of the fundamental problems that await solution, when their reconstruction is afoot, is the revivification of local group-life; in India and China, the fundamental problem is to incorporate the local and communal life into the substance of the national state, to create as much and the same kind of interest and enthusiasm in national, as in local and communal problems."

India has her own conception of democracy. Nothing can be farther from the truth than to say that the form of popular government evolved by the West, is the only one which democracy can possibly take. Very truly does Prof. Mukherjee remark—"The indigenous forms of democracy that still persist in India and the methods adopted to keep them going, under the steam roller of the foreign bureaucracy, or under the world-wide operation of the forces of political exploitation, should now be reviewed afresh, not merely to safeguard our genius and traditions, but also to help in the evolution of the world-ideals and forms of democracy of the future, that will know neither white nor black, but only Man, and his inalienable right to self-government in elastic groups of his free creation."

The School of Religions, Bombay

We are glad to learn that an institution called the School of Religions has been started in Bombay under the presidency of Mr. K. Natarajan, Editor of the Indian Social Reformer. The institution aims at promoting inter-communal harmony and brotherhood through a sympathetic study of the different religions of the world. To further its object it proposes to hold public lectures, organise religious classes, maintain a library, publish books and also start a quarterly journal. We note with pleasure that the followers of all the principal religions are among the members forming the board of management of the School. It is a happy sign of the times that all thoughtful men and women are coming to

recognise more and more the value of religion as the greatest unifying force in the world. Peace and harmony will be established in the world only when the different groups of the human family are actuated by the community of cultural and spiritual ideals supplied by religion.

The late Mr. W. W. Pearson

We are grieved to learn about the sad and untimely death of Mr. Pearson, a truly devoted friend of India. The deceased was a high-souled Englishman, and was best known as a colleague of Mr. C. F. Andrews at Poet Rabindranath's Santiniketan. His selfless love for India and disinterested service to her cause drew the sincere esteem and admiration of all who knew him.

Mr. Pearson had gone to Europe to regain his health and was about to return to India, when the sad event took place as the result of a railway accident in Italy. During his last days he spoke constantly about India and expressed his sorrow for not being able to return to the land he dearly loved. May his soul rest in peace!

Miscellany

Srimat Swami Abhedananda delivered an instructive lecture on the "Spiritual need of the present age" at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta, on Sunday, the 30th September last. The lecture lasted for more than an hour, and was highly appreciated by the large audience. In the course of the lecture the Swami said that he expected much from the youth of the country as it was the young who were the pioneers in all movements. To the Hindu students he said that the much talked of Hindu-Moslem unity would be a myth if they could not inculcate love among the members of their own community, and remove the ban of untouchability and hatred on their fellow-brothers of the so-called lower castes.

We are glad to receive the report of the sixth session of the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya, Ranchi. The institution was started by the Maharaja of Kasimbazar and is managed by a band of self-sacrificing Sannyasins. Run on the model of an ancient Ashrama it lays special stress on Brahmacharya and aims at giving a moral and religious training to little boys over and above the education imparted in ordinary high schools. The country is badly in need of such institutions. We wish the Vidyalaya all success.