

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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INDEX

TO

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XXIX.

	Page.
Abstinence necessary for Self-Realisation? Is—By Swami Prabhavananda	207
Ancient Civilisation of Egypt, A peep into the—By Khagendra Nath Sikdar, M.A.	539
Bodhananda, An Interview with Swami	126
Conversations with Swami Turiyananda 15, 73, 97, 145, 193, 241, 289, 337, 385, 433, 481,	529
Dharma and Life	513
Hindu-Moslem Tension—By Dr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji	562
Indian Village Life and its Regeneration—By Swami Vividishananda	168
Industrialism, The Menace of	260
Kumbha Mela and our Duties to the Indian Sadhus, The—By a Sadhu	214
Love and Devotion to God? How can we increase our—By Swami Atulananda	299
Malaria, How to fight—By Dr. J. F. D'Mello	464
Malaria and its Prevention—By Dr. J. F. D'Mello	504
Mayavati Charitable Dispensary	288, 431
Mayavati Charitable Dispensary, Twentieth annual Report of the	280
News and Notes 41, 89, 139, 188, 233, 283, 328, 381, 425, 477, 526,	573
Occasional Notes 3, 59, 100, 151, 197, 244, 293, 341, 388, 437, 484,	532
One in the Many, The—By Swami Yatiswarananda	397

	Page.
Poetesses of India, Ancient and Medæval, Some Religious—By "Recluse."	266
Present Movements and their Possibilities, The—By Khagendra Nath Sikdar, M.A.	312
Present Problem, Our—By Swami Madhavananda ...	10
Prohibition, Economic Aspects of—By Raymond T. Ashby, Mining Engineer	454
Prophet of Reform, The—By "Yajnavalkya" ...	119
Rabindranath Tagore and Rudolf Eucken, Dr.—By Mani Bhushan Majumdar, M.A., B.L. ...	403
Ramakrishna and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sri ...	444
Ramakrishna and Ishan Chandra Mukherjee, Sri ...	355
Ramakrishna and Narendranath, Sri—By Ananda ...	250
Ramakrishna, Reminiscences of Sri—By the late Aswini Kumar Dutt	49
Ramakrishna, The Eighty-ninth Birthday Celebration of Sri	181, 227
Ramakrishna, The Great World-Teacher, Sri—By Rao Sahib H. Cenniah	158
Ramlala	26
Religion, Its Need and Implication—By Swami Pavitrananda	316
Religions, The Verdict of the Historical—By Surendra Nath Chakravarty, M.A.	20
Religious Toleration—By Brahmachari Surachaitanya	494
Reports and Appeals	38, 86, 326, 374, 423, 524
Reviews and Notices	36, 186, 276, 325, 377, 422, 475, 520, 568
Saint Francis of Assisi—By Swami Atulananda, 459, 498, 555	
Sri Krishna and Uddhava, 32, 82, 130, 178, 223, 273, 320, 370, 417, 472, 516, 564	
To Whom? (Rig Veda, X. 121).—By D. Mitra ...	492
Vedanta in the West, The Need of—By Dr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji	219
Vedanta, The	

	Page.
Vivekananda, Swami—By Swami Nirvedananda ...	547
Vivekananda and the Present Age, Swami—By Mathura Nath Singha	211
Vivekananda's Message, Swami—By Swami Suddhananda	107, 173
Vivekananda's Message to the West, Swami—By Swami Bodhananda	407
Vivekananda, The Sixty-second Birthday Celebration of Swami	134, 182, 240
Wealth—By Brahmachari Surachaitanya ...	349
Wireless Fellowship—By Eric Hammond ...	203
World Culture, Contributions of the West to—By Arthur Geddes	68
World-State and the Great Thinkers of Modern Times, The—By Haripada Ghosal, Vidya- benode, M.A., M.R.A.S.	363
Worship—By Swami Atulananda	77
Yogin Ma—By Swami Arupananda	412

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।
Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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THE VEDANTA.*

In one aspect God is the Absolute and in another aspect He is the relative. What does the Vedanta teach? It teaches that Brahman alone is real and the world unreal. So long as the Lord keeps in us the consciousness that *we are devotees*, His world-play (*Lila*) remains a reality to us. But when He wipes out even that idea, when all ego is erased, then That which remains is the true Reality. What That is, words cannot express.

As long as He keeps in us the consciousness, 'I am', so long everything has an existence for us. The plantain stem consists of both the pith and the layers covering it. When there is the pith there are

* A free rendering from the Bengali original Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita by M.

the layers, and when there are the layers there is the pith. The pith is related to the layers and the layers are related to the pith. So when we speak of the Absolute we imply that there is also the world-play (*Lila*). When we speak of the world-play we imply that there is also the Absolute.

The Lord Himself has become both the individual soul and the universe (Jiva and Jagat). He has become the twenty-four categories (Tattwas) of the Sankhyas. When He is inactive we call Him the Absolute (Brahman). When He creates, preserves and destroys we call Him the Universal Energy or the Divine Mother (Shakti). Brahman and Shakti are not different. Water is water whether it stands still or moves.

The consciousness—'I am', does not leave us easily. And so long as that remains one cannot say that the Universe and the individual soul are not real. We do not get the full weight of the Bel fruit if we throw away the shell or the seeds.

The roof and the stairs are made of the same brick and mortar. In Him who is Brahman, Jiva and Jagat have their being.

Devotees, men of realisation, accept both the form-aspect and the formless aspect of God. Through the strength of Bhakti part of the water of the ocean (Brahman) forms into ice (manifests). When the sun of knowledge rises the ice melts again into the water.

By reasoning we cannot attain the Absolute. So long as we reason we cannot but think of the world, of sense-objects, of sight, taste, smell, touch and hearing. When we transcend reasoning, knowl-

edge of Brahman comes. The ordinary mind cannot know the Atman. The Atman can be known only by the Atman. Pure mind, pure intellect and pure Atman are one and the same.

To perceive one thing how many things are necessary—the eye, light, the mind! If you leave off one of these there will be no perception. So long as the mind continues to function you cannot say that this world does not exist, or that the ego does not exist. When the mind is annihilated, when its activities stop, then Samadhi comes, then Brahma-Jnana, the highest knowledge comes.

What does it avail simply to feel the presence of God! Don't think that with God-vision everything is accomplished. One must bring Him to one's home (heart) and talk with Him intimately. Some have heard of milk, some have seen milk and some have tasted milk. Few people have seen the king; very few have invited him to their homes; fewer still have banqueted him.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

We offer our reverential salutations for the New Year to the prophets and seers of the human race, and hearty greetings to our friends and well-wishers all over the world. At this auspicious hour that sees the passing away of the old year and the ushering in of the new, the Prabuddha Bharata steps on the threshold of the twenty-ninth year of its existence. And these noble words of benedic-

tion to "The Awakened India", which rose from the inspired lips of the great Swami Vivekananda, steal upon our soul in all their solemnity, bringing to us fresh hopes and renewed strength—

Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
 The Mother that resides in all as Power
 And Life, who works all works, and
 Makes of One the world, whose mercy
 Opes the gate to Truth and shows
 The One in All, give thee untiring
 Strength, which is Infinite Love.

It is this never-failing blessing of the Swami that has sustained the Prabuddha Bharata through many a vicissitude and trial during the long years of its life in the field of journalism.

This solemn hour reminds us of the mission which the Swami entrusted to us,—the mission of spreading broadcast the sublime teachings of the Vedanta among all people, irrespective of caste and creed, race and nationality. He wanted us to preach the wisdom kept hidden in the forest and the mountain cave to the very heart of society in the field as well as in the market-place. The Prabuddha Bharata is contributing its humble share in democratising the highest knowledge of the Upanishads—the crowning glory of Aryan culture. This year it is taking a new step which is sure to help it to reach an increasing number of readers, and thereby give it a greater scope of service to society. And we fervently hope that the "Awakened India" will be able to give a better record of its work in the future, and bring us nearer to the ideal as set forth


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by the great Swami—the ideal of uniting in one spirit the forest and the city, the hills and the plains.

The world stands most in need of the saving gospel of Unity to calm the bitter discontent and restlessness raging in the soul of mankind. At present humanity is being torn asunder by hatred and jealousy, strifes and dissensions. Race-consciousness and colour-prejudice, caste-pride and class-vanity, arrogant patriotism and blinding nationalism—all these are bringing about a lamentable cleavage, and are inflicting untold sufferings on the whole human race. Everywhere the strong oppress the weak, and the rich tyrannise over the poor. Apart from the iniquitous subjection of one nation by another, the suppression of woman and the people has been one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind. Woman, instead of being given her rightful place as man's partner in life, has been degraded to the position of a hand-maid. Man the tyrant has tried to bind her hand and foot by the shackles of customs and conventions, and has stood in the way of the free expression and the all-round development of her soul. The masses, in their turn, have been made no better than the beasts of burden of the so-called upper classes. They have been denied equal rights and privileges. And not only that, they have been ruthlessly exploited and oppressed in order to satisfy the greed of wealth and power of the privileged few. In every department of life the worst forms of tyranny have been practised, and this in the name of justice and equity.

But fortunately a reaction has set in. The

oppressed in every land are revolting against the heartless tyranny of the dominating classes. Inspired by new ideals and aspirations, they are struggling unto death to assert their birthright and regain their individuality. This is giving rise to wide-spread conflicts between the white and the coloured peoples, between the higher and the lower castes, between the capitalist and the labouring classes. The poor and the downtrodden are restless for salvation. The soul of the tyrant, too, is weary and is crying for peace. In short, all men and women except the most depraved, are praying for the passing away of the present world-order, and are trying to bring in a new era of peace and harmony, equality and brotherhood.

The present world-unrest is a clear indication of the earnest desire of mankind to put an end to all agencies and machineries of oppression, and to give a full and free expression to its innate powers and possibilities. Truly speaking, it is the travail of the birth of a new humanity, and with it of a new world-order. But unhappily this period of transition is marked by a great conflict of ideals, individual and collective. The materialistic ideals which made man value earthly possessions and temporal powers more than the kingdom of God, and spelled untold sufferings on him, are being greatly discredited everywhere. But unfortunately new, humane ideals are not being taken up as readily as the old selfish ones are being discarded. Most people do not know where to go for a deeper vision and a truer ideal of life. Religion can no doubt supply the spiritual



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idealism that humanity sorely needs to-day. But the religions of to-day have become lifeless mockeries. The teachers themselves are at war with one another, and the followers are at a loss what to do. The house of God is the only place where people can go for peace and shelter. But the house itself is divided by sectarianism and bigotry, and is swayed by the dominating materialism of the day.

Almost everywhere the church has become a mere appendage of the machinery of the state, and helps to further the material policies of the politician and the capitalist guiding the destinies of nations. Most of the missionaries of the "institutionalised" or "politicised" religions, obsessed as they are by the ideas of imperialism, are out to convert the "backward" races in order to make their enslavement and exploitation easier and more secure to their countrymen. Those who in season and out of season denounce the social and religious systems of the "heathens", are doing practically nothing to stop, nay are mostly helping to further, the spread of the terrible curse of racialism throughout the world. One of the greatest tragedies of modern civilisation is the introduction in the field of religion of the competitive and selfish methods of the world. And side by side with the political and economic imperialisms, the world is also witnessing to-day the new phenomenon of religious imperialism which proposes to evangelise the whole world, if possible, in one generation, and this with a view to win mankind over not to God but to Mammon.

The world never lacked in the higher ideals of

life. These are to be found even now in every great religion in some form or other. But the trouble is that although many profess the ideals, few are willing to live up to them. As a matter of fact the mere profession of high ideals seems to absolve most men from the obligation to sincerely act in accordance with them. It is the narrow interpretation of religion, and the undue importance attached to its non-essentials that are responsible for the failure of religion to act as the greatest unifying force in the world. Creedal religions can never bring peace and harmony to mankind. For each one of these desires the end of all strifes and dissensions and the establishment of world-peace through its own triumph and the suppression of others,—a condition that can never be fulfilled in our world of diversity.

The present world-unrest can be stilled only if its root-cause—selfishness and greed for wealth and power—is eradicated from the heart of men. A community of spiritual ideals alone can redeem our discordant and distracted humanity, and soothe its lacerated heart. It is the realisation of the immanent Unity in mankind that can break down the dividing walls between man and man, and unite in one spirit all the different members of the one great human family. Universal brotherhood, to be of any meaning, must be based on the solid foundation of a universal religion. And Vedanta with its universal teachings can furnish a world-ideal that will know no invidious distinctions between class and class, nation and nation, race and race. Apart from the peace and blessedness it will bring to the individual,

it will enable man to recognise the Religion in all religions, the One in the many. It will help man to sacrifice his prejudice of race and pride of caste at the altar of humanity, and to realise ultimately the fundamental unity of the human race.

This universal religion will serve as the greatest unifying factor in the world. It alone will enable the coming man—the member of a new, spiritually redeemed humanity, and the heir to the synthetic culture and civilisation of the future—to declare boldly with the spirit-incarnate of the age, Swami Vivekananda—“I am grateful to my white-skinned Aryan ancestor, I am far more so to my yellow-skinned Mongolian ancestor, and most so of all to the black-skinned Negritoid. . . . We are proud that we are descendants of the whole universe, sentient and insentient. Proud that we are born, and work and suffer,—prouder still that we die when the task is finished and enter for ever the realm where there is no more delusion.” May such a blessed day of Brotherhood and Unity soon dawn upon the world, and bring peace and happiness to the restless soul of humanity !

ओं पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

“All those that are invisible are filled by Brahman. All these that are visible are also fully permeated by Brahman. The whole universe has come out of the infinite Brahman. Brahman is

infinite although the whole universe has come out of It.”

Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

OUR PRESENT PROBLEM.

The problem of India to-day is pre-eminently the problem of the masses. It is almost a truism now-a-days that in any country it is the condition of the masses that is of paramount importance. A country may produce a few gigantic persons, it may even have a fairly educated middle class, but so long as its masses are not up to the mark it cannot be said to be a flourishing country. For in times of prosperity this handful of cultured citizens may somehow manage the affairs of the country, but in times of tribulation and danger they are powerless to cope with the situation unaided by the combined strength of the masses. A perfect social organisation is that in which every unit of the society is slowly helped to take up a higher and higher position till it fills the highest ranks in the land. If in a country there is such a system as will ensure the above process, that country is sure to be stronger and more virile in comparison with other countries of an equal or greater bulk, the resources of which are disorganised. For it is not bulk that counts, but the ability to move and make use of every part of the body. The lion is more powerful than the elephant because it can utilise its full energy whenever and in whatever way it likes. Here motion compensates for the deficiencies of bulk.

A country like China or India is for this reason inferior in status to one like Japan or England. But all this can be changed. The elephant may not attain the nimbleness of the lion, but one country can very well compete with another country—China or India can vie with Japan or England—by making its life-currents pulsate to the very farthest extremity of its body. Not only it can, but it must do so, if it has to live on earth.

Compared with the masses of any country in the West, our masses are far superior in many vital points. They are more sensible, more peace-loving and more moral than those of the West, though they may not have adequate trumpeters of their virtues like their fortunate brothers across the seas. Above all, the dependence—social as well as political—of centuries has taught them the precious lessons of patience and perseverance. All this means that the Indian masses furnish excellent material for the national regeneration with a minimum of effort, if only there be heads wise enough to manipulate them. But unfortunately there is a sad dearth of these organising heads and consequently we find our masses no better to-day than they were some centuries ago. How can we expect many ideal leaders in a country where the upper classes have steeled their hearts against the woes of their brethren of the lower strata? No wonder, therefore, that after ages of selfish scramble for power we come across a Vivekananda or a Gandhi, pouring out his heart's blood for these children of the Almighty whom their own brothers have been treating as mere beasts of burden.

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But we want not one or two but hundreds of such, who, by their lives more than their words, will again breathe a new spirit of hope and courage into the moribund souls of our countless millions. New visions of life are to be opened up to them and they must be made to feel that they also are men in a world of men. They must be fed and clothed, given a reasonable share of earthly enjoyment, and above all, educated, so that they may understand their real position. In short, we must help them "to develop their lost individuality."

Society has oppressed them enough. Now shackles must be removed from their feet. Let them come out and walk in the sunshine of God's grace. No more grovelling, no more crouching in fear, no more cursing of life for being born in this land! But each party must atone for its sins. The masses must give up their lethargy, their disregard of education and culture, and gain their lost ground by making rapid strides. Instead of cursing the higher classes, they should try to imbibe their culture, which alone will set them on a par with their present masters. These have been wolves because they themselves chose to be sheep. Let them assert their own rights and the tightening grip of their oppressors will be slackened. On the part of the upper classes also there is a solemn duty to perform. If they consider themselves to be really possessed of a higher status, they should show it before the public by acting in accordance with this notion. Let them prove their worth by lending their miserable brothers a helping hand. It is their bounden duty at the present



moment. For let them not take shelter under the comforting thought that they at any rate are unaffected by the misery of the lower classes. Not so. If they think like that, they totally misjudge the situation. Already, before the powerful civilised world, we Indians—masses and classes alike—are no better than semi-barbarous savages. This is the general accepted opinion of the educated Westerner regarding us, notwithstanding the passing generosity, under pressure of circumstances, of a stray voice here or there. This sweeping condemnation is the price that India has had to pay for allowing class privileges to go on unchecked. But still our eyes are not opened. Still we are sitting in judgment over the fancied incapacity of people other than Brahmins for the study of the Vedas, and declaring them ineligible for this most fundamental right of man. It is high time we turn over a new leaf and look upon birth not as a passport to all the honours that a land can bestow, but as an insignificant factor—one might say, an accident—in the economy of life. A tree is known by its fruits. If the son of a member of the so-called depressed classes shows intellectual and moral powers equal or superior to those of a born Brahmin, a healthy society should ungrudgingly extend to him the privileges of that noble caste. This cannot but produce beneficent results to the country as a whole, by raising the common mind. But so long as selfishness and egotism reign in our heart, in spite of our vaunted superiority of birth, we are, in the eyes of God and His chosen people, the seers, but human



brutes. We may hoodwink men but not God, and woe unto us when the day of retribution comes!

Not only in social matters, but in religious matters also, the lower classes are under a ban. God is no longer the Father of the Universe but the monopoly of our aristocrats of religion. They think that God also will be duped by the pomp of birth or position. The result, as too often seen, is a vindication of the time-honoured Indian proverb—under the lamp is the shadow. If the privileged classes love to trade, let them trade in other things than religion. Let them no more shut the gates of temples—where the common Father of all resides—against persons as noble-souled as themselves, whom the mere exigency of birth has shoved into a corner. Large-heartedness is always a rarity in the world. But our high caste brethren should lose no time to culture this virtue, lest in the inevitable reaction that will follow the present long-continued oppression, they too may not be swept away along with religion itself. We want a band of selfless workers—men of renunciation in spirit if not in form—who, laying aside all privileges of birth or position, will devote themselves to the uplift of their suffering fellow-beings, who by their precept and example will teach these sinking millions how to stand on their own feet, who will give them an all round education, theoretical as well as practical, who will save them from the jaws of famine, pestilence or natural disasters, who, in short, will be their true friends in weal and woe. We want such heroes in every town and every village. Number does not count, we want sincerity. Let them start

with a small beginning and act before they speak. Slowly they will be able to build up a huge organisation having its branches all over the country. Self-help will be their watchword, faith in themselves and God—their source of power, and their reward—the satisfaction of trying to bring about “a regeneration of man the brute into man the God.”

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

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## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

*9th July, 1920.*

The Swami narrated the story of Sukadeva's birth to a boy, and in the course of delineating the sweetness of his character said: The author of the Bhagavata thus salutes Suka—

“As he was going out alone renouncing the world, Vyasa smitten with pangs of separation called out, ‘my son!’—And the trees responded on his behalf, being one with him, for he could penetrate the heart of all. To that wonderful Saint I bow.”

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that in the case of Suka three things tallied. When Sukadeva went to King Janaka, he successfully went through the tests, whereupon Janaka said, “What your father has taught is the same as what I have taught, and that is exactly what you, too, have realised.” In other words, the Knowledge of Brahman depends for its



manifestation on the teachings of the Shastras and the Guru as also on one's own realisation.

You practise meditation, don't you? Meditation can be on divine forms as well as on Om. As one goes on meditating, the mind is absorbed in Om. तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम् । As one goes on "repeating Om and reflecting on its meaning," the mind becomes steady, that is to say, it does not give it up.

"Through surrender to God all the obstructions to the concentration of the mind are destroyed and one realises one's Self."

Then Patanjali says about the obstructions to Yoga. What are those distracting influences? They are as follows: First is *disease*. Either the man becomes mad or has some serious illness that prevents any further progress. *Lassitude* is inaction of the mind or torpitude. *Doubt* is cogitating whether a thing is of this kind or that,—whether a particular course of action will produce the desired results or not. Not doing that which will lead to Samadhi or Yoga is *inadvertence*. *Laziness* is the want of proper care or exertion owing to an excess of Tamas or dullness. *Attachment* is our attraction for sense-objects. *Delusion* is mistaking one thing for another. Not reaching the higher states of Samadhi is what is called *non-attaining of heights*. There is one more, *viz.*, the *inability to stay on* in a particular state of Samadhi already attained. These disturb the mind and prevent Yoga. All these obstructions are removed if one meditates on Om. But a man may not be at all disposed to meditate!

Quoting a Sanskrit verse the Swami said:



When one has got a bilious complaint, even sugar-candy tastes bitter. But that is the medicine for it. If one regularly uses it, the disease will disappear and the sugar-candy also will taste sweet. Similarly with the name of God. If a man under nescience takes it every day, even as a medicine, it again becomes sweet. The trouble will go and he will also be able to taste the sweetness of the Lord's name. It will destroy the very roots of the disease of nescience. Therefore one should practise repeating it even against one's wishes. He who gives it up is lost.

The Gita says— अभ्यासिन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते ।  
'The mind, O Arjuna, is controlled by practice and non-attachment.' It also says—

“One should slowly withdraw one's mind from sense-objects through patient discrimination. Fixing the mind on the Self, one must no more think of anything.”

The author of the Yoga-Sutras says, “By carefully persisting in practice long and without intermission, the concentration becomes steady.” We must attain to a steady concentration. The young plant needs to be hedged round, but when the tree is big enough, it no more requires protection. We must have steadfastness to the ideal. As soon as we decide that a certain course is right, we must resolve to give up our life for it. We want a decisive judgment.

“O Arjuna, the decisive judgment here is one, but people of unsettled minds have innumerable varying ideas.”

We must decide on a particular course and devote our whole life to it.

ब्रह्मचर्यादौर्ध्वलाभः—‘From continence comes strength.’ We must make ourselves ready. Before taking up any work, make yourself fit. Because Ramamurti has stopped a running motor car, must I try to do the same? It would be foolish. But it is not an altogether impossible feat. If one watches how he does it, and makes oneself gradually fit, then one can do it, as Gobar is doing. Most people do not know their own strength. It was Jambavan who roused the power of Hanuman. Angada asked the monkeys which of them would be able to cross the sea for the sake of Rama and return after finishing His work. Someone said he could go but not return. Then Jambavan said, “Here is one who can both go and return.” Then he narrated the valiant deeds of Hanuman—how immediately after his birth he had jumped in the sky to devour the sun. This had the effect of rousing Hanuman. He started on his aerial journey. On the way, Surama, assuming the shape of a serpent, confronted him and said, “Pass through my mouth before you go.” Hanuman first saluted her and said, “Now I am going on Rama’s errand. Let me finish it first. On my return I shall pass through your mouth.” See how courteous he was. Policy of least resistance. Surama said, “No, you must do it now.” Hanuman was in a fix. However he increased his bulk, but Surama, too, did the same. Each vied with the other in increasing the stature. Finding it was of



no use, Hanuman suddenly shortened his body to a tiny size and passed through.

The best servant is he who acts reading his master's mind; he who obeys his master's command is the mediocre servant; and the worst servant is he who gets the order but neglects to carry it out.

Couriers were being sent out in search of Sita. Everyone started. But Hanuman, before starting, asked for credentials. From this Rama understood that he would do the work. He whispered to him the required message. Reaching Lanka, Hanuman gave ample proof of his bravery also, by humiliating Ravana.

Books on Yoga say that all power is in us. We must control the mind through proper discipline, then only will its powers be manifest. For the accumulation of spiritual power absolute continence is needed.

It is very difficult to be a disciple. Haven't you heard the story? A man wanted to be a disciple. He went to a Guru and said, "Sir, make me a disciple." The Guru replied, "Will you be able to be one? A disciple has to raise water, fetch wood, and serve the teacher. Will you be able to do all this?" Then the man said, "And what has the Guru to do?" The teacher replied, "Not much to speak of. He sits at ease and now and then gives a little instruction. That's all." Then the man said, "If you think it difficult to make me a disciple, why don't you make me a Guru instead?" The thing is, everybody wants to reap the harvest without sowing. The fit man overcomes his defects bit by bit. If you



try to do it all of a sudden, you won't succeed, for they will persist. Therefore "one should slowly withdraw the mind," &c.

(*To be continued.*)

## THE VERDICT OF THE HISTORICAL RELIGIONS.

Fearlessness (Abhayam) occupies the first place in the hierarchy of virtues according to the conception of the divine author of the Gita.\* The Upanishads and the Puranas\* also regard it as the fundamental characteristic of a knower of Brahman or a true devotee of the Lord. This is also the unanimous verdict of all historical religions.

The readers of the history of the Sikh religion are familiar with the heart-thrilling story of the courage of the great Guru who gave his *Sir* (head) but not his *Sar* (substance). The untold sufferings and the horrible persecutions which the intrepid Sikhs voluntarily suffered for the sake of religion at the hands of the brutal persecutors, form a glorious chapter in the religious history of India. It is their fearless defiance of the ruthless powers for preserving intact the integrity of their religion and God, and their consequent martyrdom that has made the traditions of the Sikhs so dear to the lovers of

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\* See the writer's articles "The Condition of a Religious Life (Prabuddha Bharata, June and July, 1922), and "The Voice of the Upanishads and the Puranas" (June, 1923).—Ed., P. B.

humanity, and their names so honoured to the Indians.

Those who are acquainted with the history of the Vaishnavic movement in Bengal inaugurated by Lord Gauranga—who showed that it was possible for a human being to realise in life an ideal love whose idyllic, impalpable and ethereal beauty no human poet, ancient or modern, Asiatic or European, seems even to have limned, or rather conceived of—must be familiar with the devotion of Nama Brahma Haridas as also with the story of the conversion of Jagai and Madhai. There are many who are constitutionally incapable of appreciating the indescribable sweetness of the love of Lord Gauranga for Sri Krishna of Brindaban. But there is none perhaps in the world, except an abandoned soul or a sneering cynic, whose heart would not be thrilled with reverence for humanity on hearing the story of Haridas being flogged to unconsciousness in twenty-two Bazars for his constancy and his proud declaration—“Even though the body is torn to pieces and life expires, still my mouth shall not desist from taking the name of Krishna.”

The episode of the conversion of the two boisterous and barbarous drunkards, one of whom hurt Nityananda so badly as to cause blood to gush out from his temple fills the heart of people with similar admiration for Lord Gauranga and Nityananda, the heroic pair who fearlessly set out to reclaim the two recalcitrant sinners. Indeed, we shall not perhaps be far from the truth if we say that it is the martyrdom of Nama Brahma Haridas



and the reclamation of Jagai and Madhai, which have always exercised a peculiar fascination on the mind of men and furnished themes of unending delight to all believers, that have perhaps contributed most to the enhancement of the popularity of Sri Chaitanya's Vaishnavism with the laity who are not initiated into the arcana of esoteric Vaishnavism. No pains need perhaps be taken to prove what seems to be plain to everybody that it was fearlessness which constituted the essential characteristic of the memorable phenomena in the history of the Vaishnavic movement in Bengal.

Before coming down to our own times it will not be unprofitable perhaps to divagate a little into the regions of the Christian and Mohammedan religions and European ethics to see whether the ultimate lesson inculcated by them are of a piece with the teaching of Sri Bhagavan in the Gita as regards the utility of fearlessness in the evolution of religious life. With the blood of the martyr has the church been cemented is a trite saying with which every student of the history of the Christian religion is familiar. How the Christian Fathers and their followers braved the greatest tyrannies and cruelest tortures invented by the ingenious brains of the blood-thirsty children of Baal in Europe, has hardly a parallel in the world, and how by their unexampled fortitude and superior trust in the righteousness of their cause, they succeeded in breaking through all barriers, bearing down their truculent opponents and planting the banner of Christianity almost in all parts of the world, are stories which have been

loudly bruited all over the world by the Christian missionaries.

The word "virtue" is derived from Lat. Virtus (bravery)—Vir (a man) with which should be compared Gr. Heros and Sanskrit Vira (a hero). From the very derivation of the word it is clear that in Europe bravery or fearlessness, apart from every other good quality, forms the very essence of virtue, or to go further, of manhood. The mere possession of the physical attributes of a male as also of all softer virtues does not make a man. A coward is not a man at all. In order to be a man we must have courage. Fearlessness constitutes the differentia of the species man. Indeed under the various guises of physical courage, temperance, fortitude, Christian suffering, vicarious sacrifice etc., which it has had to assume to adapt itself to the requirements of society at the particular stages of its growth, courage has been always playing a very important role in shaping the ethical life of a European. The conception in European ethics of the categorical imperative "ought", which appears to have been definitely evolved by Kant—one of the most impressive intuitionists in the world—connotes the pre-existence of an absolute courage in the ethical individual who must implicitly obey the mandate of the imperious dictator "ought", heedless of all consequences. Philosophers whose minds are cast in softer moulds and who are consequently unable to seize the grandeur of the conception of "ought" which predicates a living faith in the existence of a supreme moral Being at the apex of creation and in



the "still small voice of conscience" as coming direct from Him, a faith which upholds the faithful man—numerically a mere spark compared with the hundreds ranged against him—in his dreadful struggle against the self-engrossed hydra-headed multitude,—such philosophers will not, of course, be wanting, who would mollify what appears to them to be the rigorism of this doctrine and truncate it so as to bring its height down to the level of their own stature. But still like the Mayavada of Sankaracharya, the "ought" of Kant seems to have a peculiar vitality of its own which baffles the insidious attempts of philosophical pruners to shear it off according to their taste.

The Mohammedan religion is famous for the physical courage of its adherents. Mohammed himself was noted for his wonderful courage. Indeed the test of the courage of a follower of Mohammed was his capacity to stand by the Prophet in the field of battle. Oman and Hamza—the two titans who guarded the Prophet—were distinguished for their leonine strength, courage and fierceness. The story of Zaffar who first held the standard of the crescent with one hand, transferred it to the other hand when the former hand was lopped off, and lastly held the banner with the stumps of the two arms when both were felled down, and ultimately gave his life in the battle for the sake of religion, cannot but send a thrill of admiration through the hearts of all lovers of manhood. The events of the Muharrem or the murder of Hassan and Hosein by Ezid as recorded by the author of

“Vishada-Sindhu” (“Ocean of grief”), are replete with so many examples of unparalleled courage, devotion and sacrifice that a study of the book cannot but excite the profoundest admiration for the devotees of Medina who followed Hassan to death. Indeed it can be safely asserted that it is the matchless courage, almost fanatical, of the Mohammedans resting on their faith in the Prophet that accounts for the rapid spread of Mohammedanism. In this also must be sought a partial explanation for the dearth of re-converts from the Mohammedan religion. Once a Mohammedan, always a Mohammedan—this seems to be the rule, with solitary exceptions which only prove the rule.

We may now resume the thread from where we left and proceed to show that fearlessness has always been the main determinant in moulding the growth of real religion down to our own times. Says the Shiva Samhita, a very important treatise on the Yoga system—फलित्वतीति विश्वासः सिद्धेः प्रथमलक्षणम् । “The first sign of success is the faith that it shall succeed,” or in other words the devotee must have absolute faith in his capacity for achieving the end and must not allow a shadow of fear to cross his mind. The Tantras abound in sayings which require a Sadhaka (devotee) to become extremely courageous. Quotations are unnecessary to prove that courage is essentially necessary for the Tantrika Sadhaka.

The celebrated Raja Rammohan Roy and Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founders respectively of the Brahmo and the Arya Samaj movements



which have exercised a tremendous influence on the English-educated section of the Hindu community, were both noted for their exemplary moral courage. Indeed it is the love of truth,—by no means a virtue of the cowards—which the pioneers of the Brahma religion preached and practised with an enthusiasm that made their names venerated even by their opponents. It would not perhaps be an exaggeration to say that it was the fearless moral courage of the heralds of the Brahma movement that contributed greatly to the elevation of the moral tone of the earnest Hindus and to the awakening of a healthy critical consciousness in them, which had long been slumbering under the influence of the opiate of a sense of false security which is undoubtedly one of the greatest enemies of mortals.

SURENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY, M.A.

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### RAMLALA.

[Adapted from Swami Saradananda's *Lila-Prasanga*.]

The incident of Ramlala is one of the sweetest episodes in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. By its naive simplicity and deep pathos, this sweet relation between Sri Ramakrishna and Ramlala stands as a unique consummation among the Master's many divine realisations. Its tenderness, hedged round by a mystic simplicity, carries one from the sordid preoccupations of life to a divine realm of undiluted felicity. This chapter of Sri Ramakrishna's life has a particular fascination for us, for we find in it the play of human feelings and sentiments, very akin to those we evince in our everyday relationship. The supreme God was approached and realised through

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the channels of these human sentiments and ultimately the Sadhaka enjoyed the same divine felicity as is the reward of followers of any other path. The relation between Ramlala and Sri Ramakrishna Deva is sweet because it is expressed in terms of human intimacy, only infinitely more intense and infinitely more tender. Through this relationship one finds that God is neither a hard taskmaster nor an eternally receding abstract entity, but our nearest and dearest relation, always anxious to establish this relationship with the devotees. If we but stretch one hand to reach Him, He stretches both hands to embrace us. He is so kind and so loving!

Sometime between the years 1864 and 1865 Jatadhari came to Dakshineswar. He was an itinerant monk and a worshipper of Ramachandra. He was one of those Sadhus and devotees who, happening to visit the Kali temple of Dakshineswar, mixed closely with Sri Ramakrishna Deva and guided him in one or other of the various modes of worship. The Master often said that Jatadhari's love and yearning for God was peerless. Ramlala or the "Child Rama" was his favourite deity and he engaged himself heart and soul in his service. By long meditation and worship Jatadhari had made a great progress in spirituality and as a result of his lifelong practice he was blessed with a wonderful vision of Ramachandra. His mind always rested on a high level of spiritual consciousness and a perpetual state of divine communion always kept it turned inward. Thus he left the distractions of the world far behind and always saw in the tiny image of Ramlala which he had with him, the effulgent form of young Ramachandra. Ramlala would respond to his prayers and caresses and gladly accept his devoted service. Though this vision was at first not steady, yet it was enough to send a thrill of joy into his heart, and with the progress of his Sadhana, it gradually became constant, till at last it was a matter of his everyday experience. To him Ramlala was no longer a metal image but his actual Ishta Deva, moving with him day and night as a living presence, and cheering

every moment of his life. Jatadhari looked upon Ramlala with the loving care of a father and his sole preoccupation was to nurse and feed him or to play with him. At nightfall he would take him to bed and put him to sleep. The service of Ramlala became the Sadhana of his life and he forgot everything else—his own personal comfort and pleasure—in his attempt to make Ramlala happy.

Jatadhari never made it known to anybody that he was thus blessed with the actual vision of Ramlala. Unsuspecting people would find that he served with passionate love a metal image of Ramachandra and nothing more. But he could not hide it from one man. This was Sri Ramakrishna. Intimately familiar with the various states of divine consciousness, he at once probed this cherished secret of Jatadhari's heart. He observed the ecstasy that constantly overpowered the new Sadhu, and requesting him to stay at Dakshineswar, looked to his comforts. He would spend hours with Jatadhari and scrutinise his impassioned devotion to Ramlala. They became intimate, but Jatadhari was hardly prepared for the subsequent developments of this intimacy. It would be better to reproduce them as far as possible in the words of Sri Ramakrishna himself.

“The Babaji,”* said the Master to a group of disciples, “was the lifelong devotee of Ramlala whom he would carry wherever he might go. He would cook whatever he got by begging and offer it to Ramlala. Not only that, but he would actually find that Ramlala was taking that food or insisting upon other things. Sometimes Ramlala would go out with him for a walk and make all sorts of importunities like an indulged child. He was thus engaged day and night in the service of the image and felt a constant bliss. I could see these movements of Ramlala. So I used to spend the whole day with the Babaji and watch Ramlala. Days rolled on in this way and Ramlala became more and more intimate with me. As long as I remained with Jatadhari, Ramlala was cheerful but the moment I came away, he also

* An appellation for Vaishnava Sadhus.

followed me to my room. He would not mind my repeated dissuasions. At first I thought that this vision might be an hallucination, or how could Ramlala prefer me—love me, practically a stranger—to Jatadhari, whose whole life was spent after him? But I argued that I could be deceived once or twice; but this scene was being repeated every day. I saw Ramlala as vividly as I see you all,—now dancing gracefully before me, now springing on my back or insisting on being taken into my arms. Sometimes I would carry him on my lap. He would not remain there, but go to the fields, run in the sun, pluck flowers from thorny bushes, or jump into the water of the Ganges. I would prevent saying, ‘Don’t run in the sun, you will get blisters on your sole. Don’t remain so long in water, you will catch cold and get fever.’ But Ramlala would turn a deaf ear to it. He would fix his beautiful eyes on me and smile, or like a naughty boy he would go on with his pranks, or pout his lips or make faces at me. Sometimes I would lose my temper and cry, ‘Wait, you naughty boy, I am going to beat you black and blue.’ I would drag him away and diverting his mind with various toys, ask him to play inside the room. But sometimes I lost patience and gave him one or two slaps. With tearful eyes and trembling lips he would look at me. Oh the pains I would feel then for punishing him! I would take him into my arms and console him. All these were actual occurrences.”

“One day,” Sri Ramakrishna continued, “I was going to bathe. Ramlala insisted on accompanying me. Well, I took him with me. But he would not come out of water and would not mind my remonstrances. Then I got angry and pressing him under water said, ‘Now play in it as much as you like.’ Ah, I saw him struggling for breath. Then repenting of my act I took him into my arms. Another incident pained me greatly and I wept bitterly for it. He was insisting on having something which I could not supply. To divert him, I gave him some parched rice not well husked. As he was chewing them, I found his tender tongue was scratched. The sight

was too much for me. I took him on my lap and cried out, 'Mother Kausalya used to feed you with cream or butter with the greatest care, and I was so thoughtless as to give you this coarse stuff!' " In recounting the incident he was again overpowered by the same feelings, and wept so bitterly that his hearers were moved to tears. They thus got a glimpse, however faint, of that impassioned love which the Master bore to Ramlala.

"Sometimes the Babaji", the Master went on, "after cooking food would not find Ramlala. Being sorely distressed he would run to my room and find Ramlala playing with me. In wounded pride the Sadhu would address him, 'I am ready with the food and am searching for you, while you are playing here at your ease! Well, this is your nature. You do whatever you like. You don't feel for anybody. Hard and unkind, you left your parents and went to the forest*' The father died of a broken heart, but you did not return even to see him in his death-bed.' With such admonitions he would take Ramlala away and feed him. The Babaji stayed here for a long time, because Ramlala would not go away from me and he too could not leave behind his dearly beloved Ramlala.

"One day Jatadhari came here and said to me weeping, 'Ramlala out of his infinite grace has fulfilled my desire. He has revealed himself to me in the form I liked most and told me that he would not go anywhere, leaving you behind. But I am no more distressed on his account. I am filled with joy to see him live here happily and play with you. Now I am satisfied with his happiness. I shall gladly leave him with you and go my way. It will gladden my heart to think that he is happy in your company.' With these words Jatadhari left Ramlala with me and bade adieu to Dakshineswar. Ever since Ramlala has been here." †

This, in short, is the story of Sri Ramakrishna's wonderful motherly relation to Sri Rama. Human love cannot

* The allusion is to the famous episode of the Ramayana.

† The metal image of Ramlala may still be seen on the altar of the Kali temple.

reflect even a fraction of divine love. Our attachments are most often guided by worldly considerations and depend upon time, place or circumstances, while divine love is constant, undecaying and unconditioned. Even death cannot intervene between God and His devotee, who is ever in His presence, in death as well as in life. God is so near, but because our vision is blurred by a thousand petty desires, therefore He seems so far off. Thousands of people pass over a rich subterranean mine without knowing what treasures are hidden underneath. Only an expert can get a clue to them and dig them out. Thousands of men and women have been witnessing Ramlala, but to everyone of them he is nothing but the little metal image. If they are reminded of this marvelous episode of Sri Ramakrishna's life, they would consider it as a poet's fancy. Otherwise some one at least from among them might find the image instinct with life. But they forget the ocean of difference between their mentality and that of Sri Ramakrishna. Which of these thousands can say that he pined sincerely for God and got no response? Which of them can satisfy himself that he searched for God with all his body, all his mind, all his heart and all his soul, and yet did not feel Him speaking to him as did Ramlala to Sri Ramakrishna?

The world is full of tall talk with no practice. But God exists for all that. If the experiences of a single devotee are true, then in spite of all assertions to the contrary God is sure to be sensed by others too who have the requisite fund of sincere zeal. He always reveals Himself to the true devotee in the form that pleases him most. Yes, we can see God and that more intensely than we see the world. For He is the only shining Reality of which all else is but a passing shadow. Let us seek Him in the right spirit and we will find Him. We are unwilling to go through the necessary discipline. We want everything here and now. For a material thing we can patiently wait for years, but in this most momentous of pursuits we are dreadfully impatient. Hence we miserably fail. It was because Sri Ramakrishna applied himself to the task in

hand with a wonderful amount of sincerity, renunciation, patience and one-pointed zeal that he achieved success in it within an incredibly short time, beating all records of history.

ANANDA.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from Dec. 1923.)

उद्धव उवाच ।

यथा त्वामरविन्दाक्ष यादृशं वा यदात्मकम् ॥

ध्यायेन्मुमुक्षुरेतन्मे ध्यानं मे वक्तुमर्हसि ॥ ३१ ॥

Uddhava said :

31. O lotus-eyed Krishna, please tell me how and in what aspect, personal or impersonal, a seeker after liberation should meditate on Thee.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

सम आसन आसीनः समकायो यथासुखम् ॥

हस्तावुत्सङ्ग आधाय स्वनासाग्रकृतेश्चक्षुः ॥ ३२ ॥

प्राणस्य शोधयेन्मार्गं पूरकुम्भकरेचकैः ॥

विपर्ययेणापि शनैरभ्यसेन्निर्जितेन्द्रियः ॥ ३३ ॥

The Lord said :

32-33. Sitting on an even seat at ease¹ with the body erect, placing the hands on the lap and with the eyes directed² towards the tip of the nose, one should purify the passage³ of Prana by means of inhalation,⁴ retention and exhalation of the breath, and should also practise slowly in the inverse order, with the senses under control.⁵

[1 *At ease*—The Lord does not prescribe any particular posture. According to Patanjali also, posture must only be “steady and pleasant.”

2 *Directed etc.*—This helps concentration.

3 *Passage etc.*—the *nadis* or nerves. Prana is the vital principle,

the very source of all motion in the body, not to be confounded with breath which is only an external manifestation.

4 *Inhalation etc.*—This is Pranayama or regulating the Pranas.

5 *Under control*—not allowing them to run to the sense-objects. This is Pratyahara.]

हृद्यविच्छिन्नमोकारं घण्टानादं विसोर्णवत् ॥

प्राणेनोदीर्यं तत्राथ पुनः संवेशयेत्स्वरम् ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Raising¹ the syllable Om to the heart by means of Pranayama one should add to it the vowel. The Om is like the continuous² peal of a bell, and extending in a thin line like a thread in a lotus stalk.

[This and the next verse recommends the repetition of the sacred syllable Om along with the Pranayama.

1 *Raising etc.*—What this process actually means is known only to adepts. We leave it as it is, without trying to explain it.

2 *Continuous etc.*—The reference is to the Anahata sound which is continually rising up from the region of the navel and which Yogis only hear.]

एवं प्रणवसंयुक्तं प्राणमेव समभ्यसेत् ॥

दशकृत्वस्त्रिषवणं मासाद्वर्गाजितानिलः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Thus one should practise the Pranayama coupled with Om, ten times, thrice daily. Within a month one will then control the Prana.

हृत्पुण्डरीकमन्तस्थमूर्ध्वनालमधोमुखम् ॥

ध्यात्वोर्ध्वमुखमुन्निद्रमष्टपत्रं सकर्णिकम् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Within the body there is the lotus¹ of the heart, with its stalk² above and point below, and with eight petals and a pericarp.

[This verse describes the seat of the object of meditation.

1 *Lotus etc.*—the nerve plexus in the spine corresponding to the heart.

2 *Stalk etc.*—this is the position of the 'lotus' before meditation, and it is also a bud. When meditating, one should think of this as pointing upwards and full-blown. It is interesting to note that Sri Ramakrishna, during his Sadhana period, actually saw these things done, and the lotus remained in its new posture. All true Yogis probably have this experience.]

कर्णिकायां न्यसेत्सूर्यसोमाग्नीनुत्तरोत्तरम् ॥

चह्निमध्ये स्मरेद्रूपं ममैतद्ध्यानमङ्गलम् ॥ ३७ ॥

37. One should meditate on this as inverted with the flower upwards and opened, and in the pericarp should think of the sun, moon and fire, one within the other. In the fire, again, one should reflect on the following form of Mine which is good for meditation :—

[Slokas 37-42 set forth the personal aspect of the Lord for meditation.]

समं प्रशान्तं सुमुखं दीर्घचारुचतुर्भुजम् ॥

सुचारुसुन्दरग्रीवं सुकपोलं शुचिस्मितम् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Symmetrical, serene, of a benign face, with four long and beautiful arms, with a well-formed and beautiful neck, beautiful cheeks, and a graceful smile :

समानकर्णविन्यस्तस्फुरन्मकरकुरण्डलम् ॥

हेमाभरं घनश्यामं श्रीवत्सश्रीनिकेतनम् ॥ ३९ ॥

39. With shining alligator-shaped pendants in the well-matched ears, with a golden cloth, dark-complexioned like a cloud and with the peculiar marks¹ known as Srivatsa and Lakshmi on the chest :

[1 Marks—formed by particular curls of the hair.]

शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालाविभूषितम् ॥

नूपुरैर्विलसत्पादं कौस्तुभप्रभया युतम् ॥ ४० ॥

40. Adorned with conch, disc, mace, lotus and a garland of wild flowers, with the feet adorned with ringing anklets, and the chest resplendent with the gem Kaustuva :

द्युमतिकरीटकटककटिसूत्राङ्गदायुतम् ॥

सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरं हृद्यं प्रसादसुमुखेक्षणम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Decked with a shining crown, bracelets and a waist-band, beautiful in every feature, appealing, with the face and eyes beaming with graciousness and exquisitely tender.

सुकुमारमभिध्यायेत्सर्वाङ्गेषु मनो दधत् ॥

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो मनसाकृष्य तन्मनः ॥

बुद्ध्या सारथिना धीरः प्रणयेन्मयि सर्वतः ॥ ४२ ॥

42. One should meditate on this form, concentrating the mind on all the features. The man of self-control should withdraw the organs from the sense-objects with the help of the mind, and with the intellect as guide, direct the mind to My whole body.

तत्सर्वव्यापकं चित्तमाकृष्यैकत्र धारयेत् ॥

नान्यानि चिन्तयेद्भूयः सुस्मितं भावयेन्मुखम् ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Then one should concentrate that mind—distributed all over My body—on one part,¹ and think of the smiling countenance alone and nothing else.

[Verses 43-45 describe higher and higher stages of the meditation—thinking less and less of attributes—culminating in Samadhi.

¹ One part—viz. the face.]

तत्र लब्धपदं चित्तमाकृष्य व्योम्नि धारयेत् ॥

तच्च त्यक्त्वा मदारोहो न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Drawing the mind which is concentrated on that, one should fix it on the Supreme Cause.¹ Then leaving that too, one should rest on Me² and think of nothing³ whatever.

[¹ Supreme cause—the Lord as projecting the universe.

² Me—as the pure Brahman, divested of all attributes. This is followed by Samadhi.

³ Nothing etc.—Such as, one is meditating, this is the object of meditation, and so forth.]

एवं समाहितमतिर्मामेवात्मानमात्मनि ॥

विचष्टे मयि सर्वात्मज्ज्योतिर्ज्योतिषि संयुतम् ॥ ४५ ॥

45. With one's mind thus absorbed, one sees Me alone in oneself and sees oneself united to Me, the Self of all,—like light united to light.

[This is the culmination of Knowledge known as Vijnana.]

ध्यानेनेत्थं सुतीव्रेण युञ्जतो योगिनो मनः ॥

संयास्यत्याशु निर्वाणं द्रव्यज्ञानक्रियाभ्रमः ॥ ४६ ॥

46. A Yogi who thus concentrates his mind through intense meditation will soon blow out¹ the delusion about objects,² finite knowledge and action.

[1 *Blow out etc.*—This is the result of the Samadhi.

[2 *Objects etc.*—Comprising the whole range of relativity.]

Here Chapter XIV ends.

(To be continued).

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

The New Japan.—By James H. Cousins, D. Litt. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 328. Cloth-bound. Price Rs. 4.

In these brilliant impressions and reflections Dr. Cousins gives us a glimpse of the inner life of Japan. The author's deep insight into the psychology of the Japanese people, his keen observation of their manners and customs, his sympathetic and critical study of their art and poetry, music and drama,—all these fit him admirably to interpret the culture of Japan, old and new.

Japan, like every other country in the world, has her merits and defects. These did not escape the scrutiny of the author. He has no sympathy with the Westernisation of the Japanese people in various spheres of their life and thought, art and music, and he deplores in unmistakable terms the incoming tide of the cultural conquest of Japan by Europe and America.

Speaking of the art-instinct of Japan the author observes :—“The side of each lantern towards the foot-path bore a coloured picture. I gathered that those represented connected incidents in well-known stories. To my great delight and edification I watched one day a tiny mite of a girl copying one of the pictures with a pencil

into a note-book. It was a revelation to me of the art-instinct of Japan, just as the respect for common property and mutual pleasure was revelation of the sense of civic unity and responsibility even in school-children." Dr. Cousins quotes the following confession of the foremost progressive painter of modern Japan—"We Japanese have no originality. We do not invent or think. We take pleasure in going over and over the same subjects. Our art is all in its technique. We look to India for ideas." "The India of ideas," observes the author, "was not necessarily a geographical entity but a psychological degree. It was from India (by way of China and Korea) that Japan in the sixth century received in the form of Buddhist religion and art, the sublime impulse of spiritual idealism which awoke her to great dreams and great achievement in expression."

Dr. Cousins' intimate acquaintance with Indian life and thought has enabled him to draw a comparison between the Indian and the Japanese people in certain respects. He remarks, "I perceived that . . . poetry containing an abstract idea, or singing a spiritual experience (Tagore's or A. E.'s poetry, for instance) found no comprehension. . . . This struck me as an interesting psychological problem. With my Indian students (heirs of long ages of metaphysical disquisition) the temptation was to over-emphasise the abstract element in literature. I perceived that there was a very deep fissure between these two groups of the great Asian family." He says again, "A fellow professor confessed that he had tried to translate my drama 'The King's Wife,' into Japanese, but had given it up. It was 'too mystical.' Yet its mysticism was the commonplace of intelligent thought and conversation in India. I remembered that in my talks with Japanese men and women I had not succeeded in getting any response of an abstract nature, any glow of spirit."

Dr. Cousins writes with great sympathy and frankness. His criticism is free from contempt, and his praise innocent of flattery.

There is a number of beautiful illustrations which

enhance the value of the book. The printing, paper and get-up are superb.

The Cage of Gold.—By Sita Chatterji. Rendered into English from the Bengali original by Mr. A. E. Brown, Principal, Wesleyan College, Bankura. Published by R. Chatterji, 210-3-1, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pp. 200. Price Rs. 2-8.

The writer of this novel draws a vivid and faithful picture of modern life in non-orthodox Bengali households. The characters are admirably depicted. Miss Chatterji has a keen sense of humour and power of observation. It is a nicely written little book.

The Coming Race.—By Nolini Kanto Gupto. Published by the Arya Publishing House, College Street Market, Calcutta. Pp. 94. Price Re. 1-4.

As its title shows, the book under review speaks of the advent of a superior race of humanity—not of course of the Nietzschean type—that 'will supply the missing link between men and gods.' In that connection it considers many other interesting topics. It appears that the author draws his inspiration from Sri Aurobindo Ghose and his new school of synthetic yoga. The style of the book is simple but forcible. The get-up is nice.

REPORTS AND APPEALS.

The Twenty-second Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar, for 1922.

The report is a good record of service to suffering pilgrims, Sadhus and local inhabitants. The number of persons relieved during the year came up to 14,876, of whom 374 and 14,502 were indoor and outdoor patients respectively. Besides, the Sevashram has been conducting an elementary free night school, having 37 boys on its rolls, for the education of the local depressed classes, as also a small library for the benefit of voluntary workers, Sadhus and Vidyarthi of the place. The total receipts

during the year including the previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 19,437-2-6 and the expenses to Rs. 13,722-10-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 5,714-8-6.

A comparative survey of the work done by the Sevashram will beyond doubt prove the steady progress of its activities. We hope the generous public will come forward with their liberal support to enable the institution to cope with the increasing demand on its service.

The First Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Outdoor Dispensary, Bhubaneswar, for 1920-1922.

That this charitable dispensary is a redeeming feature of the locality whose inhabitants are extremely poor and which pilgrims frequent throughout the year, is undeniable. From a very small beginning the work of the institution has now assumed larger proportions. At present it has got a building of its own with a good stock of homeopathic and allopathic medicines. The number of patients treated during the three years under report were 9,019, 8,377 and 8,510. The total receipts during the period amounted to Rs. 2,637-14-0 and the expenses to Rs. 2,306-4-6 leaving a balance of Rs. 331-9-6.

To put the work on a stable basis a permanent fund is badly needed. The generous public will, we hope, heartily respond to this appeal.

The Report of the Ramakrishna Sevashram, Tamluk, Midnapore, for the years 1919 and 1920.

This charitable institution has been carrying on its work of service against many odds. Medical relief, indoor and outdoor, to the sick, help to poor students and the like are some of its humanitarian activities. The night school which it had been conducting for the education of the poor labouring classes had to be closed owing to the collapse of the Ashram building by the devastating Tamluk flood of 1920. The Sevashram's valuable service to the people in the distressed flooded area during that crisis deserves special notice. The total receipts during the

years including the previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 3,508-10-3 and the expenses to Rs. 3,153-9-9 leaving a surplus of Rs. 355-0-6.

The new place with a one-storied pukka building where the Ashram has been shifted is quite insufficient for its accommodation. The Ashram authorities are under the pressing necessity of purchasing the adjacent lands for which a sum of Rs. 1,000 is badly needed. They also appeal for another sum of Rs. 1,200 to pay up their debt incurred in connection with the purchase of the present quarters of the Sevashram. We hope the generous public will kindly respond to this appeal for help.

The Fourth Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, for the year 1922—1923.

The institution is a small ideal home for Students. It proposes to supplement the education received in schools and colleges by giving boys a thorough religious training at home. During the year under review there were in all sixteen boarders who mostly managed their affairs themselves. The total receipts in the year including previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 5,033-11-7 and the expenditure to Rs. 1,933-4-6 leaving a balance of Rs. 3,100-7-1.

The home is located at present in a rented house. To meet the increasing demand it is in urgent need of a permanent building of its own, accommodating at least forty students. The estimated cost is about Rs. 20,000. Subscriptions and donations will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary of the Home.

NEWS AND NOTES.

E. I. RY. CO. AND THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

The public are perhaps aware by this time from various newspapers that the East Indian Railway Company intends to acquire some plots of land in the village of Belur, Dt. Howrah, for a store-yard and a siding from Belur Station to river Hooghly. The selected plot covers all the adjoining lands to the north and west of the Ramakrishna Mission compound at Belur and even includes part of the land recently purchased by the Mission for the furtherance of its philanthropic activities and specially its scheme of technical education.

The religious life of the permanent inmates of the Mission, no less than that of the countless devotees who look upon the monastery as a place of pilgrimage and resort there every now and then, is naturally composed of spiritual meditation and devotional practices which require an atmosphere of more than ordinary tranquillity and seclusion so long enjoyed by the Belur Math. The proposed acquisition if carried out will completely throttle the activities of the Mission and the monastery situated therein with its large temples built at a great cost will have to be abandoned as a religious centre for ever. This would wound the susceptibilities of that large section of the Indian public who hold the ideas and the work of the Mission in deep veneration and would create a deep resentment in their minds. Moreover, it will cut short in a drastic manner all those projects of progressive expansion which the Mission authorities contemplate.

Swami Saradananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has sent a protest to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal against the acquisition of this land by the E. I. Ry. Co., extracts of which we have tried to give in the above note.

We fully endorse these views and hope the Government will consider the matter over again and not sanction

any scheme of wanton interference with the Mission and its activities.

TAXILA, THE ANCIENT SEAT OF LEARNING.

In remote antiquity when the far-famed universities of the West were not in existence, India had a unique cultural atmosphere which she can justly be proud of. Of the many educational centres the name of Taxila stands foremost, next in importance comes the sacred city of Benares. Taxila was, so to say, the intellectual metropolis of the Indian continent of those days. It exercised a sort of intellectual supremacy over the then known world of letters. Many erudite professors of established reputation, who were past masters and authorities in the subjects they professed, lived there. Therefore students from far and near flocked to the place and prosecuted their studies there.

By his learned research Prof. Radhakumud Mukerjee has nicely brought out in an article appearing in the October issue of the *Viswa Bharati Quarterly*, many interesting features of the university life at Taxila. Being a seat not of elementary but of higher education, Taxila attracted advanced students who spent years at the university to complete the education received at home. The subjects taught were many and various, secular and spiritual, due attention being paid to both the theoretical and practical sides of each course. Besides, the education imparted was so liberal, so well-organised and so all-round that it exercised a chastening influence on the character of the pupils. "Youths of all sorts and conditions of life," observes Prof. Mukerjee, "of different classes and castes had all their divisions and distinctions merged in the democracy of learning. Princes and nobles, merchants and tailors, as well as the poor students who were maintained by charity and could not pay their tuition fees all rubbed shoulders with one another as fellow-alumni of a common school and teacher. The poorer students had to undergo daily a course of exacting and low kind of menial service for the school, but the recogni-

tion of the dignity of all honest labour secured to them a status of equality with its aristocratic section. What further levelled all distinctions within the school was the insistence upon certain standards of simplicity and discipline in life to which all its members had to submit."

It should be noted here that the educational system of the times manufactured not only men of affairs, expert in the different walks of life, but produced as well other-worldly Sannyasins, consecrating their lives to the realisation of Truth. The education given in schools and colleges had its further development or fulfilment in the hermitages that were generally the seats of higher philosophical speculation and religious training.

THE DRINK EVIL IN INDIA.

Innumerable have been the benefits of the complete prohibition of alcohol in America. And the "dry" regime is bringing about not only a remarkable moral improvement but also an increasing material prosperity of the American people. This is the unanimous opinion of all those who have taken the trouble to study the past and the present conditions of affairs in the United States. The "Indian Social Reformer" of Bombay published sometime back an informing and thought-provoking correspondence from the Rev. J. H. Wilkie who has recently gone to America on furlough. After giving authentic facts and figures, which speak in glowing terms of the blessings of prohibition, observes the writer—"Everywhere there are figures, complete or less comprehensive and detailed but all telling of waning drunkenness, vice and crime; emptying hospitals, asylums and jails; rapidly accumulating savings, overflowing schools, sturdier, happier children; better, more prosperous homes; increasing and more wholesome recreation, healthier social life and increased fruits of human labor."

But turning to India we find a pitiable picture. In all towns under the domination of industrialism an alarmingly increasing number of persons, especially among the poor labouring classes, are taking to the disastrous habit

of drinking. The declared policy of the Indian Government is no doubt to minimise temptation to those who do not drink, and to prevent excess among those who do. But in its inordinate desire to obtain the "maximum of revenue with the minimum of consumption" the Government has adopted an excise system which positively helps the spread of the evil throughout the land. All Indian religions are against the curse of drinking. But like the opium trade, the liquor traffic also enjoys the 'legal' sanction and the 'moral' support of the Government. And this militates against its total suppression in India.

Mr. C. F. Andrews very rightly deplures the present attitude of the Indian Government in a thoughtful article "The Drink and Drug Evils in India," contributed to the *Indian Review* for October—"It has been frequently acknowledged by the highest authorities in Church and State among the rulers of this land, that the Indian people, if left to their own devices, would choose almost to a man prohibition, and that the British Government in this matter is standing in the way of the wishes of the Indian people. Religion still holds its sway in this country among the masses, and the voice of all Indian religions without exception is against the liquor traffic. Even those persons who do actually take intoxicating liquors to-day in India, are ashamed of themselves when they take it. They keep their drinking habits out of sight and conceal them as much as possible. There is almost none of the open drinking habits and the open advocacy of drink, which may be witnessed every day in England and Scotland. . . The immemorial traditions of Indian religion are not easily broken, and their sanctions may still be recovered, if only the people in this matter can express their will and choice."

The drink evil must be rooted out from the soil of India at any cost. To achieve this object it is absolutely necessary to carry on all over the country an organised campaign against the immoral traffic in liquor. Thus alone can we create a strong public opinion and a powerful moral force which are sure to make the bureaucratic Government change its entire excise policy, and thus put

a complete stop to the exploitation of human weakness for considerations of revenue.

THE RELIGIOUS AND THE GROTESQUE IN INDIAN ART.

“India alone of all civilisations dared and had the power to put into creative form what other civilisations hide under a cover of mutual understanding and silence.” Thus writes Dr. Stella Kramrisch about the grotesque element in Indian art in an illuminating article contributed to the *Modern Review* for November. The grotesque is often found side by side with the god-like. It is sometimes set against the latter to express the divine all the more vividly by means of the striking contrast between the two.

Till now the grotesque in Indian art has not attracted the serious attention of students of art. There is, therefore, no wonder that it is looked upon as a mere creation of wild fancies freely indulged in by the Indian artist. But great ideas lie hidden under the dreadful or laughable forms. Remarks the writer—“The Christian imagery which is so fond of surrounding God by a host of angels, serves as pure-minded advertisement for the life conditions of Godhead ; the Indian visualisation on the other hand never is oblivious of either the terror that precedes and surrounds peace or of the fear that has to be overcome if equanimity shall be reached. One of the most frequent and most expressive gestures of Buddha as well as of gods of Hinduism is the Abhayamudra, the gesture of the raised hand assuring fearlessness. Only the fearless is spiritually free and calm for he has overcome the terror and the pang.”

Monsters with elephant's body and crocodile's head, terrific figures with lion's face and other fantastic emblems are found everywhere in India and Javanese temples—the shrines of Eastern art and architecture. As Dr. Kramrisch says, these are “ pictorial supplements to religious systems that seem to grant fearlessness to their followers. They prove that vitality is stronger than faith in popular Buddhism as well as in Hinduism and this plas-


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 ticity, which is the most generous gesture of Hinduism, makes it invincible.”

Besides these ornamental devices there are the grotesque images of Vishnu, Siva, Durga, Kali and other gods and goddesses. These are highly symbolic. To the superficial observer, who sees only the external form but not the underlying idea, they all appear to be characterised by cruelty, gruesomeness or passion. But “all of them,” very truly observes the writer, “are uncontrolled expressions that occur involuntarily when soul and body are stirred to their depth by the antagonism of spirit and matter. Only when this antagonism is strongly felt, can religion be strong. Without this struggle being reached in personal experience religion degenerates into dogma and convention and art becomes anæmic and allegorical.” “The grotesque,” concludes Dr. Kramrisch, “is a deep undercurrent of Indian art. Its water has many different tastes and the religious always is unmistakable.”

#### THE TASK BEFORE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

The subservience of the Christian Church to the State is one of the greatest tragedies in modern Western civilisation. In their anxiety to solve their economic difficulties Christian missionary societies sought the support of the State. By the help they received, they no doubt gained materially, but they lost their true spirit, and came under the domination of the politicians and the capitalists who represent the State. Most of the missionary bodies thus became the direct and indirect instruments for furthering the political and economic policies of their Governments. Says a thoughtful writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* (America), —“The last century has contained instance after instance, in the Far East, in the Near East, in Africa, and in the islands of the Sea, in which the preaching of the Gospel has seemed to the natives only preliminary to political or economic outrage. Sometimes the two have gone hand in hand. Not soon will educated Chinese forget that the charter under which the Christian missionary operates in his land was a part of that same Treaty of Nanking that

legalised the importation of opium. So it is that these peoples wonder in bewilderment why the bodies that proclaim their devotion to the setting-up of the rule of God can be content with the individual type of missions, while sins that give the very Christian concept of God the lie grow luxuriant."

Political injustice, economic exploitation, racial discrimination, material standards of success—these are some of the worst international sins that threaten the present and the future well-being of the world. Apart from the other evils, economic exploitation is bringing untold sufferings to the industrially backward races, and is tending to break down their social and moral life. So observes the writer—"The ruthless manner in which the ancient handicrafts of India were destroyed to favor the mill-owners in England is a matter of parliamentary record. And the tale of the developing industrial life of India, China, and Africa is being written in blood. Western business demands, and secures, all sorts of governmental exemptions and favors to ensure its profits when it goes abroad. And again and again, when there, it follows a policy of inhuman hours and starvation wages that is sowing the wind against the future."

So long as the various international sins hold unrestricted sway over the world and the missionary bodies side with the ruling and exploiting classes, it is futile to talk of the success of Christian missions in non-Christian lands. Truly does the writer conclude that unless the missions effect an entire change of missionary method, and face boldly the international sins, "their bid for a place among the world's moulding forces will end in a formal sterility."

#### SRIMAT SWAMI BODHANANDA BACK TO INDIA.

We are glad to learn that Srimat Swami Bodhananda, head of the Vedanta Centre at New York, U. S. A., landed in Bombay on the 10th of December last. A correspondent from Bombay writes under date December 11th:—

"Swami Bodhananda arrived yesterday. He has come alone. Sister Christine and her friends who were



to come with him start on the 20th of December from Genoa, and arrive in Bombay in the first week of January. They like to see the continent before they come to India.

The Swami is stopping at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Santacruz. An address of welcome will be given to him by the citizens of Bombay on Thursday at the Cowaji Jehangir Hall. He leaves Bombay for Calcutta on Saturday next.

The whole of yesterday I was with him. He is such a simple and kind man. There is no change in him though he has come after 17 years of stay in America. He is that pure, simple and sincere old-type Indian monk.

From what he told me, the secret of his success in America appeared to lie in simple living, sincerity, love and practical devotional life. The little work he has done, he said, was due to his trying to live the real life unaffected."

Since we received the above note from our correspondent, the Swami arrived here on the 20th Dec. last after a few days' stay at Bombay. He is now putting up at the Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. We are glad to hear that the Calcutta public also are going to give him a suitable address of welcome at an early date.

#### THE BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

The birthday (*tithi*) of Swami Vivekananda falls this year on Monday, the 28th January, 1924. We request all Maths, Ashramas and Societies observing the birthday to send us the reports of their celebrations at their earliest convenience.