

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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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

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The Swami began to talk of the human family. He said, "The idea of the millennium, even though it may never be fulfilled, is commendable. The poet, Surendra Nath Mazumdar, says, it can come to pass only 'when men will be like women in their nature.' He is a very fine poet.—You may laugh at these lines, but I read them in my boyhood and I never laughed."

One of the audience said that the passage in question referred only to the softer feelings of women, not their effeminacy.

The Swami : Quite so. The poet says—'Man is but a beast of burden ; how absurd, then, for him

to be inflated with pride!' Men are mere drudges—they pass their lives in shouldering the burden of the family; and it is no easy matter for them to manifest the grace of women,—this is what the poet means.

Someone said: Sir, everyone says that women lead to hell and so forth. But had they written books, they would have painted men also exactly in the same colours.

The Swami: They are doing it! Don't you see how they are giving tit for tat in the West? The scriptures have not condemned women as a whole. They have distinguished between higher and lower types of women. Sri Ramakrishna also used to say in the same way. The woman who always drags a man towards sense-gratification is of the lower type, while she who helps a man Godward is of the higher type. The strictures of the Shastras were on the former class of women. You certainly do not praise one who is always dragging another towards sense-gratification. Therefore the Shastras advise aspirants to keep away from such women, and from those who associate with them. Don't you notice the great influence of association? When we were at school, some boys while returning home used to enter an opium-smokers' den and try to pose as drunkards. Opium-smokers, you know, have a dread for drunkards. One of the boys, however, in so doing, himself turned into a confirmed opium-smoker! See the dreadful consequences!

Impressions, once formed, are most difficult to root out. Sometimes they even work in the form of

somnambulism. Swamiji once described the marvellous workings of this state. He cited an instance of a Western woman who in sleep used to open graves, take away things and put them under her bed. On waking she knew nothing of all this. A girl who had not learned the alphabets even, used to deliver fine lectures in sleep. Had this been in our country, it would have been taken as a case of ghostly phenomenon. But it was in the West; so they began a research, and it was ultimately found that some ten or twelve years back, the girl had been a maid-servant with a scientist who was in the habit of lecturing and reading aloud. There they discovered a relation of cause and effect.

In Calcutta, a very good young man of character, learned and intelligent—set himself to reforming women of ill-fame. A girl unfolded to him her tale of woe, which moved his heart. He then became inextricably bound up with her. One must not be too bold, for there is always a chance of danger.

I know of another incident which is very wonderful. It is not a piece of information picked up from books—I was an eye-witness to it. A Bengalee graduate, a monk, of great renunciation, was a class-friend of Swamiji, and through him we also came to know this man. He prided himself on being a perfect master of his senses. He used to beg money for lepers and people smitten with foul diseases, and serve them. He used to say to us, “Swamiji is the only one amongst you who has got brains. You may be Sadhus, but none of you have brains.” He did not believe in the authority of the

Shastras, and used to say, "If we too write books, they will be just as good Shastras." He was much given to argument. His boldness too was remarkable. People made much of him, and deservedly too. Once I had to see him at Allahabad. He frankly told me that he had just had a fall. I rebuked him for his giving way to temptation at such an advanced age. He then disclosed to me everything, how he was befooled by a wicked woman, under the impression that he was proof against temptation. Pride humbled him down. In such cases one must never be daring. Hence the clear note of warning of the scriptures against them.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

"That country and that nation which do not respect women," said Swami Vivekananda again and again to his countrymen, "have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much degraded is that you had no respect for these living images of Sakti. If you do not raise the women who are the living embodiments of the Divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise." Whenever the Swami thought of the Indian national regeneration, the problem of the uplift of women came uppermost to his mind as forcibly as the question of the elevation of the masses. Indeed his feeling heart bled to see how these living images of the Mother of the universe suffered insult and degradation at the hands of man the tyrant who posed to be the sole arbiter

of their destiny. His mind rebelled to witness how the tyranny of men stood in the way of the all-round development and the free expression of true womanhood; how women were being brought up in abject helplessness and servile dependence on men; how their very individuality was being most recklessly crushed under the burden of customs and conventions which had lost all their meaning to those who blindly followed them.

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Few women are given sufficient opportunities for education and self-expression in modern India. Marriage and motherhood have become the truest goal and function of Indian womanhood. Women are denied the right to take the vow of life-long virginity like the Brahmavadinis of old. The doors to the highest knowledge and the study of the Vedas are shut against them. In consequence most women have lost the highest vision of life, as much as men, and have forgotten that domestic duties and functions are not ends in themselves but are only means to an end—the realisation of the Self. Leaving aside the question of religious education, even secular knowledge is denied to most women. In the generality of cases early marriage strikes at the root of all development, physical, intellectual and even spiritual. It is a lamentable fact that as the result of social tyranny, Indian women as a whole have lost the spirit of strength and courage, the power of independent thinking and initiative which actuated their mothers in the past. Naturally they feel utterly helpless, and hang like millstones round the necks

of men. For the daughters of the spiritual and heroic women—the Sitas and Savitris, the Maitreyis and Gargis of old, this is indeed a pitiable degradation. In reverting to the ancient ideals, and applying them to the modern conditions of life, lies now the salvation of India's women, as well as men. Modern women must draw their inspiration from the great women of the India of the past, whose achievements in the various fields of life have won for them exalted places in the immortal literature of the land.

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Many and deep-seated are the social evils that stand in the way of the regeneration of Indian women; and various and complex are the problems that face them to-day. But how are they to solve these problems? "Of course," says Swami Vivekananda, "they have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word 'Education.' By education, I do not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive teaching. Mere book-learning won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind increased, the intellect expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. History and the Puranas, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home-life and principles that make for the development of an ideal character, have to be taught with the help of modern science, and female students must be trained up in ethical and spiritual life..... Education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of girls to imbue them with a devotion for lofty

principles, for selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana and Mira should be brought home to their minds, and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these.....If the life of the women of this country be moulded in this fashion, then only will there be the reappearance of such ideal characters as Sita, Savitri and Gargi.” There is no doubt that an awakened womanhood will not only solve its own problems but also will be a source of inspiration and strength to men, and help them in facing boldly all the great problems that now lie before the country.

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In the present state of our society, girls having the potentiality of even a Gargi are thoughtlessly denied the opportunities for self-development, and are cruelly sacrificed at the altar of Prajapati. It is no doubt necessary for the vast majority of women, as also for men, to take up the duties and responsibilities of the family life, and pass through the training and discipline it implies. But it must not be forced on one and all. And those who want to choose the life of celibacy and dedicate themselves wholly to the service of God, society and the country, must be given every encouragement and help in living the noble life of consecration and sacrifice. Swami Vivekananda boldly upheld the equal rights of women with men to live the life of the highest spiritual realisation. The same Spirit resides equally in men as well as in women. And to the knower of Brahman there is no distinction of sex, which lies only in the relative plane. “We have actually seen

this," the Swami maintained, "in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Therefore do I say that though outwardly there may be difference between men and women, in their real nature there is none. Therefore if a man can be a knower of Brahman, why cannot a woman attain to the same knowledge?"

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It was the earnest desire of the Swami to see among the girls of the country those who, like the Brahmavadinis of old, would be fired with the strength of chastity which is innate in their life-blood, and would live up to the high ideals of perfect renunciation and life-long virginity. Just as he wanted cultured and fearless women who would be mothers of heroes, and would continue the traditions of the ideal wives of the past, so he also wanted another type of women who would be actuated by the ideals of spirituality, sacrifice and self-control, and would have no ties save of religion, no love but for all of God's creatures, no other occupation but unremitting service to the people and the country. "These celibate nuns," the Swami said, "will in time be teachers and preachers.....In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country." It is gratifying to note that the movement he inaugurated for the training of life-long Brahmacharinis and for the spread of the education of women, is slowly and steadily thriving with the march of time, and bids fair to become the nucleus of a grand intellectual movement for the regeneration of the women of the country.

Swami Vivekananda was a great believer in the potentiality of Indian womanhood. It was his strong conviction that with proper education and training, the women of India will be able to solve their own problems in the most satisfactory manner, as also to remove the many social evils to which they are subjected at present. The part of men lies only in imparting the right kind of education to the women, in helping them to know what is really beneficial to them, and in enabling them to work out their own problems themselves. The Swami's opinion on this point was most pronounced. He said—"Educate your women first, and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters concerning them who are you?" For men to think out a scheme of reform and then to impose it on women is no reform at all in the real sense of the term. True reform will be brought about only when the schemes will be devised not by men but by women, and for women. A great defender and supporter of the rights of Indian women—their freedom of thought and action—that he was, Swami Vivekananda could never brook the undue interference of men with the questions concerning solely the women of the country. And to those men who posed to be the sole leaders and guides of the womenfolk, he would exclaim in an outburst of righteous anger—"Who are you to solve woman's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems. Oh tyrants, attempting to

think that you can do anything for any one! Hands off! The Divine will look after them.”

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The spirit of renaissance is sweeping over the country. It has touched the soul of Indian women also. And there are clear indications of a new awakening among them. A passionate yearning for a new order, and an irresistible desire for emancipation from social tyranny have been born in their minds. But at this momentous period of transition, the soul of Indian womanhood is being torn asunder by a conflict of ideals. The women want some positive ideal that will help them to realise their new hopes and aspirations. But what should it be? Though kept in subjection and bred in ignorance, the women of India still possess their abiding faith in religion, their unfailing love and selflessness, their unremitting spirit of service, their native modesty and characteristic tenderness. All these sterling virtues they must preserve at any cost. They must combine with these the intellectuality of the Western woman. They should acquire the spirit of valour that actuated their mothers in the past, and should be strong enough to defend their honour and glory in times of danger. In these noble words of blessings to his spiritual daughter, the Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda summed up his ideal of Indian womanhood,—an ideal that may be profitably followed by women of all ages and countries—

The Mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,

The sacred charm and strength that dwell
On Aryan altars, flaming free ;
All these be yours, and many more,
No ancient soul could dream before—
Be thou to India's future son
The mistress, servant, friend in one.

May the mothers of our race lovingly treasure
and cherish this noble ideal, and prove by their life
and action that a regenerated womanhood does
always stand for a regenerated Indian nation !

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE.

BY SWAMI SUDDHANANDA.

Prophets come and go. When they are in our midst, a tremendous upheaval comes upon society. People find that the solution to the various problems, which they were trying to find out themselves but without any success, is within their reach, and they hail the prophets as their ideals and look upon them as gods incarnate on earth. No doubt there are sometimes heard voices which try to antagonise their clear life-giving message. And occasionally these opposing forces grow so powerful that they apparently succeed in killing the physical bodies of the prophets or in shutting them up in a criminal's cell. But their message is not killed with their death or incarceration. It assumes larger and larger proportions, perhaps in silence, perhaps in a small despised community, till at last it emerges from the obscurity in full glory before the astonished world. Such has been the history of Christianity ; such has

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 been also the history of many other noble movements of this world of ours.

Every prophet comes to deliver a particular message suitable to his age and environment. Krishna came with his message of universal toleration, or more correctly, of universal inclusion and acceptance and *Nishkama-Karma*; Buddha with his message of Nirvana or annihilation of all desires as the ideal for one and all; Sankara with his message of oneness of the individual soul and the Universal Spirit; Jesus with his message of love for the Universal Father; Mahomet with his message of oneness of the Godhead, Islam signifying resignation to the Lord and the equality of all accepting the faith; and Chaitanya with his message of impassioned love for the Divine Spouse. We shall endeavour in this short article to trace out what was the particular message of the prophet of Bengal—we mean the late Swami Vivekananda—who passed away from this world more than twenty-one years ago.

Swamiji has been called variously by his contemporaries,—the Patriot-saint of Modern India, a second Sankara, a powerful preacher of Social Service, or as he himself used to style it—the worship of the poor Narayanas, and so on. Even the so-called anarchists and revolutionaries of modern India took him as their ideal, and thought he was a great revolutionist. The social reformers are fond of quoting passages from his writings to prove that he was a great social reformer, while the rigid orthodox people also are not slow in appreciating his services to, what they call, the Sanatana Dharma.

Now let us see what was the central theme of his preaching, or in one word, what was his 'Message'.

An ardent disciple of the Prophet of Dakshineswar,—a man of an intense spiritual realisation and a wonderful eclecticism—the Swami renounced what the ordinary folk consider a promising career, for a life of perfect chastity and poverty. And after passing through tremendous *Tapasya* and devotions, which lasted for about seven years, he came before the public with his message of Hope at the end of 1893 at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and continued to deliver it in various ways all over the world, till he left his physical body in 1902.

We shall quote some significant passages from his utterances that, we think, give the key-note to his wonderful message before the world, which in his own words we want to style as 'Practical Adwaitism'.

In his paper on Hinduism read before the Chicago Parliament, we find a passage which appears to us to be a prophetic and inspired utterance on account of the loftiness of sentiment expressed by it.

After quoting a famous passage from the Upanishads, in which the Rishi calls on the whole world, as the 'Children of Immortal Bliss', Swamiji addresses his audience thus :—

"Children of Immortal Bliss! what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name. Yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of

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God, the sharers of Immortal Bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth,—sinners? It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal. Ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.”

In his reply to the address given him by the Citizens of Madras, he appeals thus to the young men of Bengal :—

“First, let us be Gods and then help others to be Gods. ‘Be and make.’ Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God.”

* * * “Let us say, ‘we are’ and ‘God is’ and ‘We are God’. ‘Sivoham’, ‘Sivoham’ and march on. Not matter but Spirit.”

In his reply to the address given by his beloved disciple, the Raja of Khetri in Rajputana, he refers to his message in the following prophetic language :

“And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier than those which preceded it, for it is the summation of them all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the Saraswati, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak of the ‘Father of

Mountains', and descended upon the plains through Krishna, Buddha and Chaitanya in all-carrying floods, has spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the realms of Light, the gates have been opened wide once more."

In this passage, Swamiji especially emphasises the doctrine of the harmony of religions preached by his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna. But how can that harmony be brought about? Whoever cares to read Swamiji's writings carefully will find that Adwaita was his key to the solution. Only he, unlike the great Sankara, did not use that Adwaita in order to refute all other philosophies and religions, but rather to reconcile them all.

We would like to give here another quotation from his famous book—'Raja Yoga'. Indeed he himself used this as the motto of his book, because, we think, it brings out in a nutshell the real purport of Swamiji's teachings regarding all religions and all possible religious practices :—

"Each soul is potentially divine.

"The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

"Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these and be free.

"This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details."

This divinity, this eternal glory, this almightiness of the human soul, he preached to the world

with a voice of thunder. When we bear this in mind, it becomes easy for us to discriminate his real message from the various conflicting opinions regarding the same.

Let us take for instance the opinion that Swamiji was a great patriot—a great nationalist. We admit that he *was* so, but we add this qualification that he avoided the narrowness of a so-called nationalist, without at the same time losing his fervid enthusiasm. However much we may try to disguise the fact, a fervent patriot, even though he might be actuated by lofty sentiments, cannot but cherish hatred and prove antagonistic to what he considers against his national interests. But a cosmopolitan or a man with international sympathies, on the other hand, loses much of the enthusiasm of the patriot. We find, however, that in Swamiji the good features of both of these types were present without their wrong tendencies. For illustration, let us read the conclusion of his lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign' delivered in Madras, where he describes the three absolutely necessary qualifications of a real patriot, *viz.*, first, feeling for the good of the masses, second, finding some sort of solution to their good, and third, sticking perseveringly to one's principle under all adverse circumstances. Again, consider many other utterances scattered throughout his voluminous writings, where we find him as a passionate adorer of his own Motherland and where the enthusiastic patriot in him comes out in bold relief. Yet he was an ardent advocate of the unification of the East and the West, and this by spiritualising the materialistic

West and by teaching the East the Westerner's power of organisation and knowledge of machinery.

How could he combine in him these two apparently contradictory principles? We answer, it is because his real message was 'Practical Adwaitism'. This message he gave to his disciples in the form of the following mantram—“आत्मनो मोक्षाय जगद्धिताय च” 'For one's own liberation and for the good of the world'.

What is the real significance of this Mantram? An individual worker has to work out his own liberation, which consists in rousing his potential divinity. When he realises this perfectly, he becomes one with the Absolute,—in other words, he realises the Adwaita, by following, as hinted before, whatever path he may like—whether by hearing, reasoning or meditating on the great Vedantic formula—'That Thou art'; or by loving the beautiful and beloved Divine Person with such an ardent love, that the lover and the Beloved at last become one; or by concentrating his mind on higher and higher principles, and acquiring power over them, till at last he reaches the source of all power and knowledge, and becomes omnipotent and omniscient; or by the constant practice of selfless work by which the self grows thinner and thinner, till at last he becomes absolutely selfless, in other words, he loses his 'I'ness, his 'ego', his individuality. In all these paths, the goal is Adwaita, and when a person realises this Adwaita, he may be called a 'Practical Adwaitist.'

But this is only one aspect of the message of

‘Practical Adwaitism’, and is the meaning of the first part of the Mantram—‘For one’s own liberation’. What is the significance of the second portion—‘For the good of the world’? And what connection has it with ‘Practical Adwaitism’, by which term we have tried to sum up Swamiji’s message?

We remember to have once asked Swamiji himself what he meant by the term ‘Practical Adwaitism’, and he explained thus:—“The term, of course, may mean realisation of the human soul as God Himself; but as it is rather a very far-off ideal for many, when I use the term, I use it generally in a lower sense. My Guru Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna often used to say—**अद्वैत ज्ञान आंचलि बंधे या इच्छा ता कर**—‘Securing the Adwaita knowledge in the hem of your garment, do whatever you like’. I have taken this as my motto, and I want to rouse all men and women of this world to the consciousness of the almightiness, perfection and divinity of their souls—so that every one may apply it to one’s particular need.”

The point may be made more clear by the following quotation from his ‘Reply to the Madras address’ :—

“This infinite power of the Spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality and made to act upon Itself makes of man a God”

In working for the good of the world, the remote ideal to be kept in view is the liberation (Mukti) of all people. But how can that be brought about? All countries and all people are not equally

fit for striving for this summum bonum all at once, though—

“The ideal of this world is that state when the whole world will again be Brahmana in nature. When there will be no necessity of the Sudra, Vaisya and Kshatriya powers; when man will be born with Yoga powers; when spiritual force will completely triumph over material force; when disease and grief will no more overtake the human body, the sense-organs will no more be able to go against the mind; when the application of brute force will be completely effaced from men's memory, like a dream of primeval days; when love will be the motive-power in all actions on this earth.”

To obviate this difficulty Swamiji suggests that the following method of work must be followed:—

“In some countries only spirituality is needed, in others some amount of material comfort is extremely necessary. Thus we must lead nations and individuals into the realm of spirituality through their particular path, by fulfilling the particular wants that such nations and individuals may be most suffering from.” For instance, “It is impossible for a hungry man to become spiritual, unless food is provided for him.”—(*Extracts from the Rules and Regulations of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur.*)

So we see that Swamiji believes and teaches that this good is not one and the same for all under all circumstances, but is rather different according to the difference in time, place, and person (देश, काल पात्र). We shall here deal only with two particular

forms of work for the good of the world, as advocated by Swamiji, viz. the preaching of religion in foreign countries and social service, and try to show their connection with 'Practical Advaitism'.

He advocated a systematic religious propaganda by Indians among the people of the West, and this not for any proselytising purposes, not for making the Westerners actual Hindus or Buddhists, but for making them spiritual, by rousing the sleeping divinity within them. He fully believed that in religion the Easterners, with all their defects in various other matters, could act as the religious Gurus of the West—only if they would shake off the hypnotism that the Westerners were our natural superiors in every respect.

We would like to emphasise this aspect of Swamiji's teachings, which he in his inimitable language styled 'the conquest of the West', and ask our leaders to send preachers to the people of the West by hundreds and thousands, not on any begging mission, not to poison their ears by wailings about our backward social state, which by the bye, they have little time to hear,—but by showing them the real spiritual path that will save them from the perils of utter dissolution incidental to their following too much the materialistic path. And it does not matter even if they cannot do this with perfect disinterestedness. Let them remember that the indirect result of this missionary work is not inconsiderable, as Swamiji himself points out in a letter to a friend:—

“If you could send and maintain, for a period,

a dozen well-educated strong men, to preach in Europe and America, you would do immense service to India, both morally and politically. Every man who morally sympathises with India becomes a political friend.—(*Epistles, II series, Second edition, Page 58*).

Thus we see that this good work is sure to secure respect for us and our nation,—which is sure to be a great asset to the future generations.

It has been given to understand by the Government as well as other authorities, that some revolutionaries from India now and then approach foreign Governments and ask for their help in bringing about India's political independence. If there be any truth in this assertion, they are pursuing a wrong policy which cannot but prove unprofitable and harmful. For, that very begging for help from others shows their want of self-respect and self-help and betrays their slave-mentality. If, instead of this, they would follow the path of 'Practical Adwaitism' as taught by Swamiji, and would be satisfied to live an ideal spiritual life and teach spirituality to the foreigners, they would create a profound respect for themselves as well as for Indian culture. This requires, however, a little real strength, and that strength only the 'Adwaita' can give; for it asks everyone to shake off all fear and stand on one's own feet.

We need not amplify this idea, as everyone with a little commonsense in him may understand that this sending of religious missionaries to places outside India, if carried on a big scale, will be pro-

ductive of great good to India herself in many direct and indirect ways. Do we lack such religious Gurus? We believe, we do not. What we lack, is simply the courage, and Swamiji wanted to preach the 'Adwaita' in order to inspire that courage.

Swamiji's idea of 'Social Service' or serving all human beings as Narayanas, has also this idea of 'Practical Adwaitism' as its background. Apart from its intrinsic merits—the actual help received by the helped, as well as the spiritual uplift received by the helper—it will, if also acted upon on a large scale, enable us to solve many intricate problems in our present society. The great problem of untouchability in India is of a very easy solution with this idea of serving the members of the depressed classes as 'Narayanas.' Let us hear what Swamiji says in his lecture in Madras on 'Vedanta in its application to Indian life':—

"Look upon every man, woman and every one as God. You can not help anyone, you can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. * * * I see there are some poor, because of my salvation. I will go and worship them—God is there. The poor and the miserable are for your and my salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper and the sinner."

We may quote passage after passage to illustrate our point, that what Swamiji called 'Practical Adwaitism' was at the back of all his ideas and preachings, and that he was in this age the bearer

of this particular message, but space forbids us to quote more.

Before we conclude, we earnestly ask every reader of ours to carefully go through all the writings of Swami Vivekananda, and we assure him that he will find in them the solutions to all the personal or national problems which agitate now the sons and daughters of India. This short article is only a feeble attempt to convince the reader of the necessity of carefully studying Swami Vivekananda's works before he jumps at this or that programme of life for his personal or national well-being.

(*To be concluded*).

THE PROPHET OF REFORM.

BY "YAJNAVALKYA."

A friend who describes himself as an enthusiastic admirer of the Swami Vivekananda writes with an expression of disappointment that the Swamiji's disciples are not following their master in that they are not actively helping the attempts that are being made to improve the political status of the country. Occasionally a similar complaint reaches us from those who are commonly designated as "social reformers." In the press and on the platform the message of the Swami has been discussed so often, and yet the misunderstanding referred to above is not altogether inexplicable. For, the Swamiji's mission was no common one. He was both a prophet and a pioneer of a new order of evolution. It was, to put it briefly, to realise and exchange the highest ideals of the East and the West. Only by a careful study of the ways in which the Swami has attempted to fit this new ideal into the details of practical life can one get a clear idea of the essential aspects of his glorious mission.

In the first place, his life's mission was to preach and spread the message of his Master to the world. The Master's wonderful life and realisations are the key to the Swamiji's works and undertakings. As he himself has explained it in so many places, he was no preacher of any momentary reform, nor was he trying to remedy any particular evil. His special aim was to push forward and to complete the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress, that has been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors. He taught us to realise more and more the Vedantic ideals of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature.

His life-work then might be analysed into two broad divisions. One was to carry the message of the Vedas and the Upanishads to the Western countries, to move the whole world to a realisation of the Immanent Unity, the Truth of all Faiths. Even in the manner of preaching this ideal of the East there was this peculiarity which the Sister Nivedita characterises as follows:—"He had no dogma of his own except the Vedas and the Upanishads. His doctrine was no academic system of metaphysics, of purely historic and linguistic interest, but the heart's faith of a people who have struggled continuously for its realisation in life and in death for twenty-five centuries. Books had been to him not the source and fountain of knowledge, but a mere commentary on and explanation of, a life whose brightness would without them have dazzled him and left him incapable of analysing it." About this aspect of his work this is not the occasion to enter into any more details, but we shall take up for our consideration now the other aspect of his message.

As regards India, his object was to seek and emphasise the common bases of the different sects and branches of the Hindus, to make Hinduism, in his characteristic words, dynamic and aggressive. His idea was that the Sanatana Dharma must become active and proselytising, should send out special missions, make converts and take back into its fold those of its children who had been lost to it, and should also set about assimilating new elements.


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Taking his stand upon the broad and all-inclusive platform of spiritual truth as a matter for the individual's realisation, he would not exclude from the Hindu fold the Jains, the Sikhs, the Arya Samajists and the Brahmos. He emphasised and carried into practical application the unique but too often forgotten feature of the Sanatana Dharma, the Doctrine of Ishtam, i.e. the right of every individual to perfect freedom of thought and belief. It would appear that the recent Hindu Mahasabha, the Suddhi and Sangathan movements are to some extent fruits of the Swami's attempts to sow broadcast the message of his Master.

We began by saying that he was a pioneer of reforms. His special contribution lay in the fact that instead of directing his attention to one or other of various departments of life, he had the knack and the genius to grasp the problem as a whole and hit upon the proper remedy. To the social reformer, the politician and those who cry for economical redress the Swamiji's advice was to find out the very centre of the nation, the principal note, the theme of its life. This theme as we need hardly point out is religion in the case of India. So long as this backbone of religion is intact there is no cause for fear. The intense faith in the other world and the equally strong contempt for this world, the intense power of renunciation, the abiding faith in God and in the immortal Soul, if these are revived and kept burning, then all the problems that face the country would get automatically solved. If one could but read the signs of the times impartially, one could scarcely have any doubt that the Swami was in the right. We do not hereby mean, nor was it the Swamiji's idea, that the political and social reform work should be abandoned in favour of religious propaganda, but that every attempt towards political freedom or social uplift should be on lines which would go to strengthen the religious life of the nation. The Swamiji in his lecture "My Plan of Campaign," points out:—"If you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics or society, or any other thing as your centre, as

the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct.....So in India social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring ; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants—its spirituality.”

Perhaps the most notable as well as the most far-reaching of all his achievements is the new turn and direction that he gave to the old tradition of the monastic life. He set up a new precedent in the life of the monks, namely that of dedicating their entire life to the service of society, and to the evolution of new forms of civic duty. This is very difficult to imagine for us now, we who are witnessing the transformation (it was nothing short of a revolution) as an accomplished fact, but none save a heroic mind like that of the Swamiji's could have dared to go in the face of accepted ideals hallowed by tradition. For, as a matter of fact even at the present day the spirit of conservatism, both among the monks and house-holders, is only gradually learning to submit to the change as inevitable rather than as beneficial.

The Vedanta, it is true, has given as a kind of concession some place to systems of devotion and worship as leading to Chitta-suddhi ; more particularly Bhagavan Sri Krishna perhaps for the first time laid special emphasis on Nishkama-Karma, as an independent path to the Supreme Goal, but owing to various causes this teaching came in course of time to be neglected and even lost sight of. At a most critical time, as if in confirmation of the teachings of the Gita, the Swamiji not only re-emphasised this teaching but very largely extended the idea of worship to all kinds of selfless and useful work. He argued that Chitta-suddhi or purifying the heart means the getting rid of selfishness, and so every act of selfless service is holy and pure. In consequence, works of famine relief, sanitary improvement, medical help, aid to the poor and educational activities were all taken up by the members of the Order as so many forms of worship. Herein lies the difference between the ordinary reformer and the

Swamiji. Every little act undertaken by the Order is considered not only from a national but also from a sacred and religious point of view. This then is the meaning of Swamiji's insisting repeatedly that he was not a reformer of this or that evil, but that he stood for root and branch reform. He preached manliness, strength, in a word Man-making. Let India be herself—was the sole burden of his song. From the experiences and achievements of the Mission (however much these might fall short of his expectations) within the short period of a quarter of a century, one sees the far-reaching vision of the Swamiji in having sublimated work to the highest of spiritual Sadhanas.

The special charge which he entrusted to his brother-monks on an historic occasion is well worth recalling here. Having pointed out that they must be ready to serve their millions of brothers, and be prepared to die gladly in that attempt, he observed:—"In our country the old idea is, to sit in a cave and meditate and die. To go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brothers. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate the fields. You must be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Sastras now and the next moment to go and sell the products of the field in the market. You must be prepared for all menial services not only here but elsewhere also." What glories could not the future bring forth if only the children of India and particularly her lakhs of monks would take these words to heart and readily respond to the call!

Our presentation of the Swamiji in the light of the "Prophet of Reform." would without doubt be deemed incomplete if we do not refer to another aspect, for nowhere else does his genius and far-sighted vision come into greater prominence than in his judgment of the current system of education in India and the reforms he suggested

in that connection. Nearly a quarter of a century ago when culture was more or less completely identified with a smattering of English education and aping of the Westerners in dress, customs, manners etc., and the supreme goal of life was to get a subordinate post in the Government Service, and when most of our countrymen were only too ready to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, the Swami with an unerring intuition at once realised how the slow poison of the alien and unnatural methods and ideals of education was eating into the very vitals of our nation, and hit upon the most suitable remedy. In harmony with the genius of the nation he proposed that the land should be deluged with spiritual ideas before preaching the socialistic or political ideas. He stood for scattering broadcast the wonderful truths embodied in the Upanishads, Puranas, and other scriptures, which till now were confined to select castes and societies, or sealed in books and monasteries. He did not shut his eyes to the advantages of the Western education in India, but his only quarrel with it was that it was purely negative and not a man-making education. His diagnosis went much further and deeper than the modern cry of "slave-mentality." He pointed out truly:—"A negative education or any training that is given to negation is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing, that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing, that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth, that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless. And the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced one original man in the three presidencies. Every man of originality that has been produced has been educated elsewhere and not in this country, or they have gone to the old universities once more to cleanse themselves of superstitions." The remedy suggested by him is that we must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. He wanted the whole education of the country, spiritual and secular, to be in the hands of the people,

and as far as possible to be conducted on national lines and national methods. He had definite schemes and plans, and a rough outline of these, as he gave to a Madras audience, might be read in his lecture on "The Future of India," (Complete Works, Vol. III., Pp. 302 and 303). It has taken more than two decades for the leaders of the country to become awakened to the serious dangers of the foreign ideals and methods of education, and as yet not even a beginning of a satisfactory solution is sighted. We are aware of the most praiseworthy attempts at national education, especially since the advent of the Non-co-operation movement, but as some, who have studied these at close quarters, inform us that not even a proper foundation has been laid so far. There is no need to get impatient or run into despair; the problem is no doubt a gigantic one, but as the Swamiji used to assert with confidence, provided a sufficient number of young men with faith and enthusiasm are forthcoming, money and every thing else must come. "Must" was the word with him. He appealed for a number of young men with their hearts at the feet of the Lord and hands ready to serve His children, and ready to sacrifice everything in that service. To all those who are inclined to lay the blame at the door of the Mission, for not carrying out the Swamiji's plans, we would repeat the following appeal of the Swami:—"Life is short but the soul is immortal and eternal, and one thing being certain, death, let us therefore take up a great ideal and give up our whole life to it. Let this be our determination and may He, the Lord, who 'comes again and again for the salvation of His own people'—may the great Krishna bless us and lead us all to the fulfilment of our aims."

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 AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI BODHANANDA.

( FROM OUR OWN REPRESENTATIVE )

Q. Swamiji, I understand that you have been away from India for a long time. Will you kindly tell me when and how you went to America?

A. In the beginning of 1906, I was asked by our then president, Sri Swami Brahmanandaji, if I would go to America to assist the work inaugurated by the Swami Vivekananda. I was then staying at Bangalore. At first I hesitated, but after some considerations I obeyed the president's order and gave my consent. I left India in the middle of April that year and reached New York in the last week of May.

Q. Please tell me something about your work there.

A. I was in charge of the New York Vedanta Society for eight months. Then I went to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and was in charge of the Vedanta Society there until October 1912. In that month I received a letter from Swami Brahmananda asking me to go to New York and take charge of the work of the Society there. In accordance with his wish, I left Pittsburg and went to New York. Since that year I have been conducting the work of the New York Society. In the year 1921, a member of the Vedanta Society donated a permanent home to the Society. That has greatly facilitated the work there, and shortly after, I planned to visit India but owing to many reasons that has not been possible. Last summer Swami Raghavananda was sent from the Math to assist me. He got some training for five or six months, and in the beginning of the season I started him to hold classes and give lectures. Then I found it convenient to leave the work in his charge and come to India on a short visit.

Q. What is your impression of the American people?

A. The American people are very practical. Although they are very materialistic, I have found many good people among them, developed both ethically and spiritually. But in America I never met a man of the

type of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda. America needs the spiritual help of the Hindus and we in India their practical skill and ability. I was deeply impressed by the culture and education of the American woman. She is the guiding spirit of the American life. She is most generous, artistic and ethical. I was specially interested in three things of the American life.

(1) Education :—Every American boy or girl up to the age of fifteen must attend school ; if the children are poor the State supplies them with books, clothing etc. The children are inspected by physicians periodically in regard to their health. If the parents have not got the means to attend to the defects pointed out by the physicians, the State gives all the necessary aid.

(2) Public health :—The streets are all kept very clean, and the city takes every precaution to prevent the outbreak of any disease. For instance, if there is a case of small-pox many physicians would be employed by the city to find out the cause and root out the disease altogether. There are sanitoriums for the invalids where they receive the best attention. The hospital system is very wonderful. People do not dread to go to hospitals, for in the hospitals they receive better care and attention than what is possible at home. The houses are built on the most up to date and approved sanitary models ; they are provided with fire-escapes. Schools, theatres, operas, and lecture halls are all well ventilated and comfortable. Although the streets are congested with traffic at certain hours of the day, the police take every precaution to prevent accidents.

(3) Economic condition :—There is no poverty in America in the sense in which we have it here. Any workman can earn at least four dollars a day (a dollar is equivalent to three rupees and odd annas). A skilled labourer, for instance a carpenter, can earn an average of ten dollars per day. The cost of living is no doubt very high. For a bare sustenance one would require about eighty dollars per month. Recently the Government has enacted the prohibition law. This has proved

a blessing to the labouring classes. Since the passing of this law every labourer has saved more money than before. A labourer with a family of four persons, if they can all earn, can save proportionately more than a single labourer. Although the distribution of the wealth is very unequal, the labourer has always some savings to fall back upon in hard times. Neither the farmer nor the labourer is ground down by poverty and indebtedness as in India. America, in short, is a country of great opportunities. The theory of equality on which the American constitution is based, if not carried into full practice, is always there as an ideal before the people and the very atmosphere is charged with the spirit of freedom. Every citizen, rich or poor, has but one vote and has the same freedom to express his opinion of the Government. The Government exists for the benefit of the people and not the people for the Government. In fact, the Government is the servant of the people.

Q. Is the Vedantic Ideal spreading in America? Do you think it is our duty to be sending out preachers to that country?

A. Vedanta is spreading among the cultured classes of Americans ; but it will never be popular among the masses of the people as it is too deep for them. Vedanta could be made more popular if we could introduce healing and similar methods into it. But we will not lower the ideals of the Vedanta by doing such things ; and Swami Vivekananda was opposed to compromise the teachings of the Vedanta. As regards sending out Vedantic preachers to America, I should say it is our duty to do so for two reasons. First, because it is the best contribution of India to the spiritual life of the West. Secondly, the West needs it more now than ever before. The Western nations with all their scientific advancement are undeveloped spiritually. They attach greater importance to external embellishments than to the inner development of man for the establishment of peace and harmony among mankind. Vedanta teaches that peace is a thing that belongs to the Soul and only if man by his moral and



spiritual development can realise peace within himself, can he be peaceful. So long as the savage instincts, such as lust, greed, revenge, hatred etc., remain with man, merely external methods like Disarmament Agreements, International Conferences, Arbitration Courts etc. can never bring about any permanent peace. This is the message of Vedanta to the Western world—to show to the West the truth of the Christian teaching, “Love thy neighbour as thyself,” not by force of external laws but by love as a result of spiritual growth from within. To reach this Ideal, man must practise Yoga (inner discipline of the mind), and Vedanta sets forth clearly the practical methods by which this control and serenity of the mind can be attained.

Q. What can India learn from America?

A. India can learn from America her practical skill. In these days when the economic prosperity of India is very low, she must develop her natural resources which means that India should adopt the latest scientific discoveries and improvements in regard to agriculture, industry, commerce and banking. Young men from India might derive great advantage by going to America and studying the industrial and commercial conditions there. India should also bring some experts from America and employ them in schools specially started for imparting technical training. We can also learn something from their educational system, domestic sciences and their methods of organisation in general. Above everything else our society can become more efficient by learning the dignity of labour and the spirit of equality from them.

## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 86)

श्वेतद्वीपपतौ चित्तं शुद्धे धर्ममये मायि ॥

धारयन् श्वेततां याति षडूर्मिरहितो नरः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Concentrating the mind on Me, the pure embodiment of virtue and the Lord of Swetadwipa, a man becomes pure and beyond the sixfold wave.<sup>1</sup>

[Now the ten secondary powers mentioned in verses 6 and 7 are taken up one by one.

<sup>1</sup> Sixfold wave—viz. hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death.]

मथ्याकाशात्मनि प्राणे मनसा घोषमुद्बहन् ॥

तत्रोपलब्धा भूतानां हंसो वाचः शृणोत्यसौ ॥ १९ ॥

19. Reflecting with the mind on the subtle sound in Me as possessing the supervening adjunct of ether<sup>1</sup> and Cosmic Prana, the Jiva hears (from a distance) the varied speeches of beings manifested in that ether.

[<sup>1</sup> Ether—which has sound for its primary attribute.]

चक्षुस्त्वष्टरि संयोज्य त्वष्टारमपि चक्षुषि ॥

मां तत्र मनसा ध्यायन्विश्वं पश्यति सूक्ष्मदृक् ॥ २० ॥

20. Connecting the eye with the sun and the sun with the eye, and reflecting on Me there<sup>1</sup> with the mind, the man of sharpened vision sees everything (from a distance).

[<sup>1</sup> There—in the junction of the sun and the eye.]

मनो मयि सुसंयोज्य देहं तदनु वायुना ॥

मद्धारणानुभावेन तत्रात्मा यत्र वै मनः ॥ २१ ॥

21. Effectively joining to Me<sup>1</sup> the mind and body together with the nerve current that follows the mind, the Yogi, through the influence of this concentration on Me, can take the body (swiftly) wherever the mind goes.

[<sup>1</sup> Me—the Spirit controlling the mind etc.]

यदा मन उपादाय यद्यद्रूपं बुभूषति ॥

ततद्भवेन्मनोरूपं मद्योगबलमाश्रयः ॥ २२ ॥

22. Using the mind as material,<sup>1</sup> whatever forms the Yogi wishes to assume, he assumes them all, by resorting to the power of concentration on Me.

[<sup>1</sup> *Material*—for forming the new bodies.]

परकायं विशन्सिद्ध आत्मानं तत्र भावयेत् ॥

पिण्डं हित्वा विशेत्प्राणो वायुभूतः षडङ्घ्रिवत् ॥ २३ ॥

23. Wishing to enter another's body, the Yogi should imagine himself<sup>1</sup> there. Then leaving the gross body and betaking himself to the subtle body, he should pass through the external air, like a bee.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> *Himself*—as possessing Pranas etc. which are presided over by Me.]

<sup>2</sup> *Like a bee*—as a bee flies from one flower to another.]

पाष्ण्यापीड्य गुदं प्राणं हृदुरःकण्ठमूर्धसु ॥

आरोप्य ब्रह्मरन्ध्रेण ब्रह्म नीत्वोत्सृजेत्तनुम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. Sitting on the heel and lifting the Prana to the heart,<sup>1</sup> chest, throat and head, and taking it to Brahman<sup>2</sup> through the subtle orifice in the head, one should give up the body.

[<sup>1</sup> *Heart &c.*—i.e. the corresponding nerve centres in the spinal cord.]

<sup>2</sup> *Brahman*—or any other coveted goal.]

विहरिष्यन्सुराक्रीडे मत्स्थ सत्त्वं विभावयेत् ॥

विमानेनोपतिष्ठन्ति सत्ववृत्तीः सुरस्त्रियः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Wishing to play in the parks of the gods, one should think of the Sattva in Me ; then celestial nymphs, who are the offshoots of Sattva, will come in aerial cars.

[<sup>1</sup> *Sattva in Me*—i.e. My pure form.]

यथा संकल्पयेद्ब्रह्मा यदा वा मत्परः पुमान् ॥

मयि सत्ये मनो युञ्जंस्तथा तत्समुपाश्रुते ॥ २६ ॥

26. In whatever form, at any time, a devotee of Mine may reflect on a particular thing with his intellect,

concentrating the mind on Me as possessed of infallible will, he gets that very form.

यो वै मद्भावमापन्न ईशितुर्वशितुः पुमान् ॥

कुतश्चिन्न विहन्येत तस्य चाज्ञा यथा मम ॥ २७ ॥

27. He who has imbibed<sup>1</sup> the nature of Me, the self-contained Lord,<sup>2</sup> never has his command been disobeyed anywhere, like Mine.

[1 *Imbibed*—through concentration.

2 *Self-contained Lord*—the independent Ruler of the universe.]

मद्भक्त्या शुद्धसत्त्वस्य योगिनो धारणाविदः ॥

तस्य त्रैकालिकी बुद्धिर्जन्ममृत्यूपबृंहिता ॥ २८ ॥

28. The intellect of the Yogi whose mind is purified by devotion to Me and who knows how to concentrate on God,<sup>1</sup> encompasses the past, present and future, unaffected by birth and death.

[Now the five petty powers mentioned in verse 8 are being explained, the third being implied by the first, in this verse.

1 *God*—as fully conscious of the projection, maintenance and dissolution of the universe.]

अग्नादिभिर्न हन्येत मुनेर्योगमयं वपुः ॥

मद्योगश्रान्तचित्तस्य यादसामुदकं यथा ॥ २९ ॥

29. The Yogic<sup>1</sup> body of the sage whose mind is pacified by union with Me, is not destroyed<sup>2</sup> by fire and the like, as aquatic animals by water.

[1 *Yogic*—made invulnerable by Yoga.

2 *Not destroyed &c.*—He is in his elements among them. The second of the petty powers is included in this.]

मद्विभूतीरभिध्यायन् श्रीवत्सास्त्रविभूषिताः ॥

ध्वजातपत्रव्यजनैः स भवेदपराजितः ॥ ३० ॥

30. One who meditates on My Manifestations<sup>1</sup> with their Srivatsa, weapon, ornaments, banner, umbrella and chowry, never suffers a defeat.

[1 *Manifestations*—any of the Incarnations, potent enough to triumph over the universe.]

उपासकस्य मामेवं योगधारणया मुनेः ॥

सिद्धयः पूर्वकथिता उपतिष्ठन्त्यशेषतः ॥ ३१ ॥

31. To the sage who worships Me in the foregoing ways through Yogic concentration, the above-mentioned powers come in their full measure.

जितेन्द्रियस्य दान्तस्य जितश्वासात्मनो मुनेः ॥

मद्धारणां धारयतः का सा सिद्धिः सुदुर्लभा ॥ ३२ ॥

32. No power<sup>1</sup> is beyond the reach of the sage who has controlled his mind, senses, nerve currents and disposition and concentrates on Me.

[1 No power &c.—What is the use of concentrating on so many forms? Concentration on the supreme form mentioned in verse 18 is sufficient,—says the Lord.]

अन्तरायान्वदन्त्येता युञ्जतो योगमुत्तमम् ॥

मया संपद्यमानस्य कालक्षयणहेतवः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. For one who practices the best<sup>1</sup> kind of Yoga and seeks union with Me, these powers have been called obstacles and things that cause waste of time.

[1 Best &c.—i.e. devotion for devotion's sake. This is referred to in the next verse as 'that Yoga.']

जन्मौषधितपोमन्त्रैर्यावतीरिह सिद्धयः ॥

योगेनाप्नोति ताः सर्वा नान्यैर्योगगतिं व्रजेत् ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Through that Yoga one obtains all those powers which come to men through birth, or drugs, or austerities, or Mantras, but one cannot attain that Yoga by any other means.

[An echo of Patanjali's Yoga Aphorism IV. 1. Some are born with those powers, e.g. the gods; fishes also can live in water, birds fly in the air, and so on. Certain medicines are said to confer extraordinary powers. Mortifications also develop them, as also certain Mantras. The effects of these are short-lived, but perfect concentration on the Lord ('Samadhi' of Patanjali) through pure devotion confers liberation.]

सर्वासामपि सिद्धीनां हेतुः पतिरहं प्रभुः ॥

अहं योगस्य सांख्यस्य धर्मस्य ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ ३५ ॥

35. I am<sup>1</sup> the Lord of the powers, for I am their cause and maintainer ; I am also the Lord of Yoga, of knowledge, of religion and of the teachers of Brahman.

[1 I am &c.—Therefore have refuge in Me alone.]

अहमात्मान्तरो बाह्योऽनावृतः सर्वदेहिनाम् ॥

यथा भूतानि भूतेषु बहिरन्तः स्वयं तथा ॥ ३६ ॥

36. I am the Self of all creatures, being their indwelling Spirit ;<sup>1</sup> I am also outside them, not being enveloped by anything. As the elements<sup>2</sup> are both inside and outside the bodies of all creatures, so also<sup>3</sup> am I.

[1 *Indwelling Spirit*—an echo of Brihadaranyaka III. iv. I.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements*—earth, water etc.

<sup>3</sup> *So also &c.*—I am all-pervading.]

## THE SIXTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

BELUR MATH.

The sixty-second birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in a very grand and impressive manner on Monday, the 28th January, 1924. From morning till evening hundreds and thousands of men, women and children arrived at the monastery to participate in the celebration. A few Western lady disciples and devotees of the great Swami also heartily joined in the festivities.

Long before the break of day the Sannyasins, Brahmacharins and devotees of the Math went round the premises singing devotional songs, and imparted to the place a highly spiritual atmosphere which was continued throughout the day by many Sankirtan parties pouring into the Math from various localities. The special feature of this

year's celebration was the opening of the Swami's Memorial Temple in which only the non-sectarian symbol "Om" was installed on a marble pedestal. Poems composed by the Swami were recited by a number of little boys and girls, and prizes and medals were awarded to them by Swami Bodhananda.

One of the noteworthy items of the celebration was that from noon till evening about 5000 people, irrespective of caste, creed and social position, were sumptuously fed by the monks of the Order, who thus demonstrated the spirit of service to the Lord in human form, as preached by the Swami. In the afternoon a largely attended public meeting was held, when Swami Bodhananda delivered an instructive lecture in Bengali on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. There was also convened another meeting addressed by Swami Abhedananda who in a nice little speech dwelt on the message of the illustrious Swami.

Towards the end of the day a Homa was performed, and after offering oblations into the sacrificial fire, five young men took the vows of Brahmacharya and life-long service to the Lord.

#### BENARES.

The birthday was duly celebrated at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares city. The *tithipuja* was observed on the 28th January. The public celebration came off on the 3rd February when two thousand poor Narayanas were fed with *Puris* etc. At 4-30 P.M. under the presidentship of Prof. P. Seshadri, M.A. of the Hindu University a public meeting was held with a fair gathering. The President in his opening speech paid an eloquent tribute to the great Swami's unique presentation of Hinduism, alike for its substance as for its language. Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal spoke in powerful Hindi about the wonderful position which the Swami Vivekananda gained for India in the eyes of the West which was long accustomed to consider it a benighted country. The Swami, he said, wanted to

lead people to a realisation of God through the worship of His living symbols, viz., all creatures. The lecturer exhorted the followers of the great Swami to take up the spread of spiritual knowledge among their countrymen along with their *Seva* work. A Mahomedan gentleman referred in Urdu to Swamiji's "Vedanta brain and Islam body." Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramathanath Tarkabhushan, in a neat Bengali speech, dwelt on Swamiji's harmonising of all religions like another Sankara. The President then spoke a few words on Swamiji's patriotism, after which, with an effective vote of thanks to the chair and the lecturers by Swami Suddhananda, the meeting terminated. Leaflets containing some choice extracts of Swamiji's writings and utterances were distributed along with Prasad.

#### BOMBAY.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Santa Cruz, Bombay, on the 3rd February last. A big portrait of the Swami was tastefully decorated and placed in the central part of the spacious terrace of the Ashrama building. Mr. Shroff of the Parsee Music Institute sang some songs composed by him in memory of the Swami. A Pravachanam was conducted by Mr. Dhurandhar in Marathi, and was highly appreciated by the audience. Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar of Bangalore read some of the sayings and utterances of Swami Vivekananda for about half an hour to the great edification of the listeners. Some of the prominent citizens of Bombay attended the function. One of the notable features of the celebration was the presence of a large number of Parsees who are taking a keen interest in the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission.

A public meeting was held in the afternoon at the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall, Bombay, with Mr. K. Natarajan in the chair. There was a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen. Swami Viswananda, Mr. G. B. Trivedi, Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar, Dr. Rajabali Patel and



Mr. J. B. Wadia spoke on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, and on his service to the world in general and India in particular. The President wound up the proceedings in a few well-chosen words. With a vote of thanks to the chair the meeting terminated.

#### MADRAS.

The birthday was celebrated with due eclat at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on the 3rd February last. Bhajanas were sung in the morning. The next item was the feeding of about 2,500 poor Narayanas. In the afternoon there was a Harikatha Kalakshepam which was much appreciated by the audience. This being over, Mr. Narayana Ayyar, M.A. M.L. delivered an interesting lecture in Tamil on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. Mr. Arcot Swaminatha Ayyar, B.A. spoke in English on "Sri Swami Vivekananda's Teachings and some Present-day Problems", the Hon. Sir A. P. Patro presiding. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair and the distribution of Prasad.

#### CONTAI (Bengal).

The anniversary was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Sevashram, Contai on the 28th January last. The Brahmacharins and devotees of the Ashrama conducted special Puja and Homa in the morning. In the afternoon Bhajans were sung and Prasad was distributed among the people assembled.

In the evening a well attended public meeting was held in the High School hall with Srijut Surendranath Banerjee, a local pleader, as president. Brahmachari Para Chaitanya read an interesting paper on the life, work and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Srijut Pramatha Nath Banerjee spoke about the patriotic activities of the Swami. The president in conclusion dwelt on the significance of the Swami's work, and spoke highly of the philanthropic activities of the local Sevashram.

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**TINDIVANAM (Madras).**

The birthday was also celebrated by the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Tindivanam on the 28th January last. In an open Verandah the Swami's photo was tastefully decorated with garlands and flowers, in front of which devotees worshipped and prayed. At about 3 P.M. a large number of poor Narayanas and a few Sadhus were sumptuously fed.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the local National School with Mr. T. K. Venkata Ramiah in the chair. An interesting paper on the Swami's life was read by Mr. Sundaresa Sarma. Pandit S. Narasimhachariar, B.A. B.L. gave a brilliant address in Tamil on the life and teachings of the Swami. The celebration came to a close with the distribution of Prasad.

**OTHER PLACES.**

The anniversary was also celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ramna, Dacca ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Moradpur, Patna ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavan-gudi, Bangalore City ; the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. ; Sri Ramakrishna Sevashram, Baliati, Dt. Dacca ; Sri Ramakrishna Bhakta-jana Sangham, Kottayam, Travancore ; Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati ; and at various other Ashrams, Maths and Societies in India, America and other places.

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## NEWS AND NOTES.

## SWAMI NIKHILANANDA'S TOUR.

On behalf of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Swami Nikhilananda is on a tour through Rajputana, whence he will proceed to Gujarat and Kathiawar. His object is to popularise the religious literature of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement among the Hindi and English-knowing public and to seek help for the Ashrama. The Swami recently visited Alwar, where he was a State guest at the marked kindness of His Highness the Maharaja, who not only made every arrangement for the Swami's comfort but has also made a generous donation of Rupees two thousand towards the circulation of the Hindi monthly organ of the Ashrama, the Samanway. The President of the Advaita Ashrama takes this opportunity to offer his sincere thanks to His Highness for his keen interest in the cause and for his liberal munificence. The following letter addressed by him to Swami Nikhilananda speaks for itself and will, we are sure, be read with interest by all our readers :—

ALWAR, RAJPUTANA,  
CAMP BANSUR,

*February, 24.*

PUJYAVAR SWAMIJI,

My Pranam.

I have been much interested in your mission in my Province which is not only a noble one but demands the enthusiastic support of all India's lovers.

Your object, I understand, is to seek support for a paper your Mission desires to propagate in Hindi, wherein you intend to publish the great works of the Swami Vivekananda translated into Hindi. My estimation of the great Swamiji—even my gratefulness to him and his teachings—can never be expressed in words and I have often wished that all his teachings and those of

his Guru Paramahansa Ramakrishna—so excellently collected already in English—could, with equal facility be obtainable for the wider public in our own literature—Hindi—which is now fast becoming, as I hope it will, the national language of Bharat.

You come with that Mission. That it commands my devoted support goes without saying. That the object of the Ramakrishna Mission may be fulfilled in sending you round Rajputana and other States is my earnest wish. As a grateful tribute to the Swami Vivekananda I send you the small donation of (two thousand) 2000 rupees. I hope you will receive warm support throughout my Province.

If this letter of mine can be of any service to the noble cause on which you have embarked, you are welcome to make free use of it. If any of my kind friends, after reading it, are able to help you, I should be personally grateful to them.

With sincere good wishes,

One with you in the "Great Cause,"

I remain,  
(Sd.) JEYSINGH.

To

THE SWAMI NIKHILANANDA,  
of the Ramakrishna Mission,  
(Bansur Camp).

LOVE AND FREEDOM IN EDUCATION.

That education is now the crying need of the country is unanimously accepted. But few care to probe the question deeply and try to find out the most effective and natural method of imparting it. There have been enough of schools and colleges, turning out students with certificates, degrees and diplomas under the existing educational system. But, as we know from bitter experience,

it has lamentably failed in its object of producing *men*. The pupils, after they finish their educational career, are found to lack that life, vigour and serviceableness that the country naturally expects from them.

Human psychology requires that the individuals under training should have the fullest scope and opportunity of growing in their own way along the lines of their native aptitude and proclivity. Among the many defects of the modern educational system, its outstanding 'universal, standardised, mechanical teaching' deserves mention here. For by its foolish cult of driving round pegs into square holes it has nipped in the bud individualities of many a young learner. It does not set the pupils on the path of freedom and responsibility by throwing open before them the portals of individual initiative.

In a thought-provoking article appearing in the December issue of the *Welfare*, Mr. N. K. Venkateswaran, B.A., L.T., has nicely dealt with the subject. "Our vaunted education," observes the writer, "leaves little room for the play of love. There are no individual pupils in our schools. We have only regiments of them that cannot love or be loved. The living, loving, lovable units are forgotten. The non-living, unlovable, mythical entity, usually called *the class*, is pushed to the fore and is endowed with an unnatural and harmful importance."

Incidentally the writer suggests the Dalton Laboratory Plan as one of the best methods for educating our boys. This system marks a distinct 'revolt against the tyranny of the snippety, shoddy class-instruction.' In keeping with the spirit of freedom of the times it aims at the socialisation of all educational institutions. It is "at once an amplified and simplified form of our ancient Gurukul system tested and passed by the touch-stone of science."

It is high time for our educationists to cry halt. Let them profit by the new experiments in education in other lands, and reform our existing educational system by imparting life to its dead bones.

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## INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION.

The conflict between labour and capital that is waxing from day to day is a menace to the future development of the industries of the world. In view of the widespread chaos, material, economic and moral, that has followed in the wake of the Great War, the idea of industrial co-operation seems to be a Utopian dream. But the statesmen who guide the destinies of the nations are trying to bring about a conciliation to safeguard the imminent industrial dead-lock in every country.

It is quite in the fitness of things that there is a general awakening among the labouring classes nowadays. The labourers are becoming more and more self-conscious and feeling keenly that they have been and still are being wronged and ill-treated. Naturally whenever the occasion arises, they rally round a common standard and demand loudly their legitimate rights and privileges. This movement is a reaction against the extreme form of capitalism that has been the cause of so much tyranny and exploitation of the poor. Now it is quite probable that the days of the capitalist ascendancy are drawing to a close. But that will not solve the question.

In a thoughtful article contributed to a recent issue of the *Calcutta Review*, Mr. R. V. Ramchandra Dikshitar has discussed the problems and has also given some suggestions that deserve our consideration. "To attain harmony and eliminate strife," rightly observes the writer, "in the industrial world, neither group should be dominating or domineering. But both should be comrades-in-arms and should feel not as masters and servants but as brothers. They should often meet together and have a frank and fair discussion of all things connected with their business. These frequent intercourses of the employers with the employees would result in generating trust and mutual understanding."

Above all, the grievances of the wage-earners—their unemployment, the absence of their regular employment as well as the want of proper education among them—should be removed. If they have regular employment

throughout the year, they will not feel the pinch of poverty. And the light of education will enable them "to understand the import and the economics of business, the significance of sanitary principles and the value of leisure and rest." If all these conditions be fulfilled, we shall see in the near future a whole-hearted co-operation between labour and capital.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA.

The Society has been established at 11, Eden Hospital Road, Calcutta, under the presidentship of its founder, Srimat Swami Abhedananda. The main objects of the Society are—(1) To impart, promote and propagate the study of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta in all its phases and in its relation to other religions of the world. (2) To remove social inequalities and untouchability. (3) To carry on educational work among the masses. (4) To help the sick and the distressed. (5) To promote and encourage home industry.

Under the auspices of the Society Swami Abhedananda is now holding classes on the Raja-Yoga, Gita and Vedanta on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday respectively. The Society has also started a library and a reading room, and also a charitable dispensary to help the sick. A carpentry class and a class of cane work have been opened already, and classes on tailoring, knitting etc., are expected to be started soon. The Society has also a publication department which proposes to publish books by Swami Abhedananda on Indian culture, and comparative religion and philosophy.

All persons, irrespective of caste, colour or creed, sympathising with all or any of the objects of the Society, may become members.

#### RECEPTION TO SWAMI BODHANANDA IN CALCUTTA.

A very large number of the citizens of Calcutta assembled on Sunday, the 20th January last, at the University Institute Hall to accord a fitting reception to Srimat Swami Bodhananda of the Ramakrishna Mission,

who has returned to India after seventeen years of successful work as a religious preacher in America. Mr. B. Chakraverty, Bar-at-Law presided.

The President in a neat little speech spoke eloquently of Swami Bodhananda's success in the West as a preacher of the universal religion of the Upanishads. He further observed that the Swami's selfless life and activities had greatly strengthened the cause of the cultural unification of the East and the West. The president concluded by saying that he hoped that the Swami would soon return to the scene of his activities, and wished that his noble work would be crowned with further success.

Dr. H. W. B. Moreno, Prof. Prabhu Dutt Sastri and Sriyut Sachindranath Mukherjee dwelt on the great talents of the Swami in the course of their lectures.

The President next presented an address together with a silver mounted Kamandalu to the Swami.

In reply Swami Bodhananda thanked the organisers for the kind reception and present. He observed that many Americans had now realised the true spirit of Hinduism. Speaking from the economic point of view, he said that the Americans were more prosperous than the Indians because of their perseverance and industry. America was a free country, and unless a country was made free it was useless to build up a nation. In conclusion, the Swami urged his countrymen to lay special stress on education and sanitation, and thereby make the land enlightened, healthy and prosperous.

With a vote of thanks to the chair the meeting terminated.

#### SWAMI BRAHMANANDA MEMORIAL TEMPLE.

The opening of the memorial temple and the birthday of Srimat Swami Brahmananda were celebrated on a grand scale at the Belur Math on the 7th February last. There were special Puja, Bhajan and music by experts. About 3,000 devotees joined in the celebration. The festival came to a close with a beautiful display of fireworks.

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