

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



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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While coming to the verandah, the Swami noticed a pair of shoes and remarked, "It must be Babaji's, who else can have such big feet?" Then he went on to say—

Sri Ramakrishna would say that the physiognomy of a man was the index to his character. He used to examine us thoroughly, measure the proportion of the limbs and weigh the hand. He could easily detect the nature of a man from his physical characteristics. He had a way of classification of the aspirants into grades, but there was room in it for all.

Among us, Swami Ramakrishnananda (of Madras) also used to observe those points to a certain extent. Because Sri Ramakrishna believed in them, the Swami, too, would not write letters on inauspicious days, nor write them so as to reach their destination on those days. But I gave up those superstitions, living long in contact with Swamiji.

Swamiji used to bring with him all sorts of people to Sri Ramakrishna. At this the Master would say, "What worthless people do you bring—one-eyed, lame and so forth? You don't know good people from bad people—don't bring anyone and everyone."

Swamiji always used to help the weak. He would say, "The weaker the man, the more help he should get. If a Brahmin boy needs one teacher, engage four such for a Pariah." What a grand statement!

Once Sri Ramakrishna was very angry with a lady devotee. He asked all of us not to go to her house nor to eat from her hands. He also forbade her to come to Dakshineswar. Against this serious injunction of his, who would dare to visit her house? Swamiji, however, said to Swami Shivananda one day, "Come, let us have a walk." In the course of the walk he came to the lady's house and wanted something to eat. The lady was beside herself with joy and fed him heartily. After this Swamiji went to Sri Ramakrishna and told him what he had done. Sri Ramakrishna said, "Well, I forbade you and you went there and ate!" Swamiji replied, "Well,

what harm was there? I have also invited her to come here.”

Once he importuned Sri Ramakrishna for the sake of Hazra. The Master was then at Cossipore. Swamiji won't leave him—his persistent demand was, “You must do something for him—must bless him a little.” Sri Ramakrishna said, “He will have nothing now, but he will have it at the time of death.” It was actually the case. Swamiji was a believer at heart in grace and things of that sort.

L—— used to fall asleep early, and once Sri Ramakrishna was very much vexed with him. He wanted to remove him from Dakshineswar. But Swamiji interceded and the matter ended peacefully. It was for this reason that L—— used to say, “If anyone is a brother-disciple, it is Vivekananda.”

Once a boy came to the Math to stay. Everyone was against it. Swamiji said, “Sri Ramakrishna could read a man's heart, so his opinion as to admitting a man or otherwise used to be correct. But I have not this power. So I am prepared to give a chance to all. If you, like Sri Ramakrishna, know how to read one's mind, well, you may decline to admit the boy.”

Then he asked everyone his opinion on the matter. When my turn came I said, “I have marked this well that none can live here whom Sri Ramakrishna does not like to have. Those who are to stay will stick, and those who are not, will go away.” At this Swamiji remarked, “Well said. It is an excellent plan.” The boy stayed for some

days and then went away. When leaving, he stole certain things also!

Even men like Girish Babu* had a place with Sri Ramakrishna, who could fit in with everybody. But what we do is to try to mould all according to our own ideas. Whereas he used to take everybody where he was and push him on. He never disappointed anybody by failing in the attempt to mould him according to his own light. He had a distinct relation with each devotee and maintained that throughout. Through humour he would teach them a good deal. Ah, what a teacher he was! Where can one get a teacher like him?

Swamiji, too, was a great humorist. One day I was working with a knife when its tip broke, and I was sad. Hearing this Swamiji said, "Well, a knife has always an end like that. It certainly won't have an attack of cholera or typhoid!" At this I laughed out. Didn't he put it beautifully?

When a mother teaches her child, how deep the impression is! Though she does not give out that she is teaching, through her words alone the best teaching is imparted. Well, there is that great love behind. A teacher should put himself into line with the mentality of the pupil. Then only the instruction will be effective.

Once a gentleman came to Sri Ramakrishna from Jubbulpore. He was a scholar, an M.A., and was very frank, but he was of an agnostic turn of mind.

* The celebrated actor-dramatist of Bengal, who was notorious as a Bohemian.

Consequently he had much discussion with Sri Ramakrishna. He confessed that he had great mental unrest, but he won't pray to God, because, as he said, there was no proof of His existence! Sri Ramakrishna said to him, "Well, I suppose you have no objection to praying like this—'If Thou really art, then listen to my prayer.' If you pray like this, it will do you good." The gentleman thought over it deeply and then said that he had no objection to that sort of prayer. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to follow the advice and again come to him. I saw the gentleman since. He was a changed man. Touching Sri Ramakrishna's feet, he wept as he said, "You have saved me!"

Swamiji also once transmitted faith in God into Kidi's mind by a touch. Kidi had been a great agnostic. Sometimes Swamiji used to possess a great power, when he would impart spirituality to another by a touch. On another occasion it had been like this.⁶ It was at the Cossipore garden on a Shivaratri night. Everyone had sat down to meditate. While meditating, Swamiji asked one to touch his thigh. As soon as he did so, the young man fell into a deep concentration. Sri Ramakrishna seemed to have knowledge of everything. He sent for Swamiji, and when the latter came, he said, "What were you doing? First accumulate power and then you may spend it. Instead of that, you are frittering it away prematurely!"

Swamiji really had the power to help others. He had no secrets. But that's where we are put into difficulties. We are always afraid lest anybody

should top over us. But he was already so high up that he had not that fear. He had not the least bit of jealousy. He used to say, "Help everyone from where he is, and if you can, supply his particular deficiency. But if you can't, don't try to drag him to your own level."

How wonderfully Sri Ramakrishna taught each man so as to remove his particular wants! He used to illustrate it saying, "A mother has made various curries out of a fish. She doesn't give all her boys the same thing. She gives to each what would exactly suit his stomach." The Master followed this in practice also.

Once Swami Yogananda heard somewhere reproaches against Sri Ramakrishna. But he pocketed the affront and reported the matter to the Master. Hearing this the latter said, "They abused me and you kept quiet!" And he rebuked the Swami.

Again, sometime after this event, one day Swami Niranjanananda was coming to Dakshineswar by boat. A number of people were criticising Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami was exceptionally strong. He forthwith came out of the cabin and placing his legs across began to roll the boat saying, "You are abusing Sri Ramakrishna. I shall immediately sink this boat. I would like to see who dares to oppose me." They were all dismayed, and besought him to stop. When Sri Ramakrishna heard this he said, "You fool, if they abused me, what was that to you? Let everybody say what he will, what matters it to you?"

You see the fun! The teaching was according

to the need of the recipient. Where can you find a teacher like him?

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

“All religions,” says Sri Ramakrishna, “are so many paths that lead to God. The unillumined man in his ignorance says that his religion is the only true one and that it is the best. But when his heart is illuminated with the light of true knowledge, he knows that above all these wars of sects and creeds there presides the One Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute.” The special mission of the Prophet of Dakshineswar was to realise the fundamental unity of all religions in his own life, and to proclaim it with all the force he could command to a humanity torn asunder by warring schools of religious thoughts and systems. The irresistible power of his universal teachings is already being greatly felt both at home and abroad. It is helping mankind to usher in a new era of religious synthesis and reconciliation. The cause of this remarkable success is not far to seek. The teachings are instinct with the mighty force of a life of unique spiritual experiences. Sri Ramakrishna, a true Paramahansa that he was, did not, properly speaking, belong to only a single faith, nor did he limit himself to only a particular system of spiritual discipline. He realised the One Eternal Truth by following different forms of religious practice. And it is no wonder that his life was a veritable embodiment of religious

synthesis and harmony. His realisation of the Absolute Brahman in Nirvikalpa Samadhi—a state beyond thought and speech which the Buddhists call Nirvana, his vision of the various aspects of the Divinity by following the diverse paths laid down in different Hindu scriptures, his attainment of the highest goal of Islam by undergoing the spiritual disciplines of Sufism, his vision of Christ and God the Father obtained through intense meditation and Samadhi—all these and many more unmistakably point to the great fact that Sri Ramakrishna was not only a true Hindu, a Buddhist, a Mohammedan and a Christian, all in one, but was also at the same time above all religions, sects and creeds. The world is indeed fortunate that it could find such a man as the priest and prophet of the Religion Universal—the religion of a new humanity, the travail of whose birth we are witnessing to-day.



It is a great pity that the generality of us are satisfied with taking only a superficial view of the teachings of harmony as lived and preached by Sri Ramakrishna. There is no doubt that all doctrines are so many paths leading to God—the Verity of all verities. But the dualist thinks that he is a servant of the Lord; the qualified monist feels that he is part and parcel of the Eternal Being; the monist realises that he is one with the Divine which is beyond all name and form. All these are different states of spiritual consciousness, bringing infinite bliss and eternal peace to the individual devotees.

But do not all these different realisations contradict one another? Wherein then lies the harmony of all religions and spiritual visions?—These are some of the questions which often rise in the mind of the sincere inquirer who wants to go into the problem more deeply. Merely to say that each path helps the aspirant to realise a particular aspect of the Divinity is no satisfactory answer. To clear up the questions, it is necessary to establish a synthetic connection between the different kinds of spiritual realisation.

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“While I identify myself with the body, I am Thy servant; when I consider myself as an individual soul, I am Thy fragment; and when I look upon myself as the *Ātman*, I am one with Thee—this is my conviction.” In these illuminating words of Hanuman to Ramachandra, Sri Ramakrishna found the real connection between the different states of spiritual consciousness which the three types of devotees come to experience in their religious life. He himself realised in the course of the long years of his strenuous *Sadhana* that the three states do not contradict, but fulfil, one another. They are in fact three stages in the spiritual unfoldment of man, one leading to another until the third is reached, when the worshipper loses himself in the object of his worship, which is no other than the One without a second. “Brahman the Absolute and Unconditioned”, said Sri Ramakrishna from his direct experience, “is realised in *Samadhi* alone, and then

there is all silence; all talks of delusion or non-delusion, knowledge or ignorance, are hushed. There remains the *is-ness* or Existence and nothing else.....The Absolute is, as it were, an infinite ocean; and as extreme cold freezes the waters of the ocean into ice, and sets it afloat in masses of various forms, so under the cooling influence, so to say, of Bhakti, the Infinite reduces Itself into the finite and appears before the devotee as a Being with form."

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A never-ending quarrel is going on even among the various schools of thought, drawing their inspiration from the same scriptures in different parts of the world, particularly in India—pre-eminently a religious country. The Dvaita, Visishtadvaita and Advaita systems have been trying their level best to interpret the scriptures from the particular standpoint of each, and to read their own meanings into the texts which clearly support the opponent's point of view. These ingenuous attempts on the part of religious teachers are responsible to no small extent for unsettling the minds of many a sincere seeker after Truth, and for leading them to quarrels and dissensions which draw them away from the true spirit of religion. In the midst of these deplorable creedal controversies and strifes, Sri Ramakrishna's wonderful life with its unique realisations and universal teachings is indeed proving to be a living commentary on the scriptures and is making for peace. It is throwing a new light on the various texts speaking of the One Truth from different points

of view, and is unravelling to us the great mysteries lying hidden under the conflicting explanations and expositions invented by sectarian commentators. The three apparently discordant systems are now looked upon by many as but inseparable parts of the one system of spiritual experience culminating in Unity.

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Every world-religion more or less speaks of three definite states of spiritual consciousness, and contains three distinct systems of thought and spiritual discipline corresponding to these. All great religious teachers, fully conscious as they were of the psychological limitations of their disciples, laid down different paths suited to the spiritual evolution, temperament and capacity of the different types of their followers. To the man of undeveloped intellect God cannot but be extra-cosmic and seated on a throne in a far-off heaven. "For the ordinary man with strong attachment to the senses," as Sri Ramakrishna prescribes, "the dualistic forms of religion, which allow some amount of outside help such as music and symbols, are necessary." The same devotee, when he advances spiritually, comes to look upon God as omnipresent, as the Soul of all souls, as the Eternal Being in whom all live, move and have their being. By him, when he realises his spiritual ideal, "the Absolute and the Relative are seen to be equally real; the Lord's name, His abode and He Himself are found to be composed of one spiritual substance. Everything is

spiritual, varying only in the form.” Again when the same person proceeds still further in his path of spiritual progress, he realises that God, soul and the universe merge in the One Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, and he attains to a state which cannot be described as “either to cease or to live” in the ordinary sense of the terms. “The Advaita,” says Sri Ramakrishna, “is the last word about Realisation. It is something to be felt in Samadhi, for it transcends mind and speech.”



Although many of us may not be aware of this fact, most of the great religions and religious teachers speak of this unity with the Divine, which the Prophet of Dakshineswar described as the ultimate truth in religious experience. “I am Brahman”—says the Upanishad. “I and my Father are one”—declares the Prophet of Nazareth. “I am Arab minus Ain,” *i.e.* Rab or God—proclaims Moham-med. Buddha, too, speaks in his inimitable words of this blessed state which he terms Nirvana—“There is, O Brethren, that Abode where there is neither endless space, nor infinite thought, nor nothingness, nor birth, nor death. Without foundation, without origination, beyond thought is That. The destruction of sorrow verily is That.” In our study of comparative religion we find references of dualism, qualified-monism and monism in the different scriptures of the world-religions, whether they are the products of the religious genius of individual teachers or of whole races. But in spite of

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 this each scripture seems to lay greater stress on one or other of the three great conceptions with the result that the religion or creed founded on it is characterised especially by that particular idea.

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Says Swami Vivekananda, "All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Visishtadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion. The Vedanta applied to various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism. The first stage, i.e. Dvaita, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe, is Christianity, as applied to the Semitic groups, Mahomedanism. The Advaita as applied in its Yoga-perception form, is Buddhism, etc." Thus when we realise the true relation between the dualistic, qualified-non-dualistic, and non-dualistic experiences, we find that they are but three distinct stages in man's march towards the Ultimate Goal. And therefore these three paths leading to the different realisations,—whether followed by the same individual at different periods of his life, or by different persons at any particular time,—are not antagonistic, but are synthetically connected with one another. If the followers of the various religions and creeds could but understand and remember this great truth, the world would have been spared from many an unhappy quarrel, bloody persecution and devastating war—all undertaken in the holy name

of religion with blinding bigotry and fanaticism which are often taken for true religious zeal and devotion.

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The surest way to promote the spirit of harmony and reconciliation which the world so sorely needs to-day, is to intensify our own spiritual life, and to try to realise the true spirit of the Religion Universal, lying hidden under the encrustations of doctrines and dogmas, rites and ceremonies. By religious harmony and toleration Sri Ramakrishna did not imply that we should profess a lifeless eclecticism, but he meant that we must be intensely devoted to our own ideals and spiritual practices, and look at the same time with real sympathy and regard upon those followed by others. Mere toleration of other religions and creeds is not enough. We must be sufficiently liberal to accept all religions as true, and declare with the Prophet of toleration and harmony — “Diverse are the ways of approaching God, and every religion in the world shows one of these.” This alone can bring permanent peace and goodwill to the distracted followers of the different warring religions of the world.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT  
WORLD-TEACHER.

BY RAO SAHIB H. CENNIAH.

From the sacred books of the different nations we learn that in the course of the spiritual history of the

world great teachers or Avataras appear on earth from time to time when, as stated in the Gita, religion goes down and irreligion prevails. These teachers come to stem the tide of man's degeneration and his wandering from the path of God, to turn mankind to healthier channels of activity and to re-establish the truth. Sri Krishna was born when the Kshatriyas in their material success and glory had left the path of righteousness. Lord Buddha appeared when Brahminism had degenerated into mere rites, ceremonies and sacrifices. Sri Sankaracharya came when Buddhism had lost its original spirit and became a bundle of meaningless forms so foreign to its grand ideals. Such were also the circumstances under which Christ, Mahommet, Ramanuja, Chaitanya and other teachers were born. Sri Ramakrishna came at a time when in this land of ours the West had introduced new ideas of life and conduct by its wonderfully powerful organisation ; when our religion, long the subject of onslaughts from outside and misinterpretation from inside, had lost its spirit and retained only its form ; when the onrush of Western culture, beneficent as it was in many respects, had been threatening to undermine our national institutions and national faith ; and when the minds of the youths of this land, whose propensity to imitate the superficialities of foreign civilisation was greater than their desire to assimilate the good things in it, had been growing more and more sceptic. At a time when men and women were groping in the dark amidst a thousand and one conflicting ideals, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna appeared like a spiritual polestar to show to mankind the way to peace and blessedness. After realising the universal truths of Religion through intense spiritual practices, he sent forth a power which not only checked the baneful tendency of the people at home and restored the waning prestige of our religion, but also reached the very ends of the earth, elevating and spiritualising thousands of men and women.

The life of such a great teacher cannot but be instructive and interesting. It is necessary for us to appre-

ciate fully the lessons which the magnificent life holds out to us. Sri Ramakrishna was born on the 17th February, 1836, at Kamarpukur in the district of Hugli (Bengal) in a Brahmin family highly regarded by the people of the place for the truthfulness, hospitality and strong religious principles of its members. The child is the father of the man, and even in his early days Sri Ramakrishna displayed such extraordinary qualities of head and heart as astonished his parents and neighbours. Though very precocious and possessed of a wonderful memory, young Ramakrishna was not particular about attending school, and had no education in the modern sense of the term. He sought the company of Sadhus who visited his village. He was fond of religious plays and books, and became well acquainted with the national epics. To a mind naturally inclined towards spiritual matters, a suitable opportunity came when he removed to Calcutta with his brother Ramkumar, and finally became the officiating priest at the temple of Dakshineswar, dedicated to the Goddess Kali. He found the occupation most congenial to his temperament and growth. From that time forward the earnest desire to realise the Divine Mother in his own life took a strong hold on him, and he commenced his religious practices from which he never rested until he attained his goal. An attempt was made by his people to draw him away from his austere life. Sri Ramakrishna was married to a little girl, Sarada Devi, later known as the Holy Mother. He, however, continued in his religious practices at Dakshineswar, while the girl wife remained with her parents in her native village. When she came of age, she came to Calcutta with her father. It was not possible for the husband, a saint, to lead the family life. Sarada Devi became a nun and wife at the same time. She proved to be a true helpmate to her husband, and led a spotlessly pure and saintly life like him. It is stated that on one occasion Sri Ramakrishna worshipped her, and prostrated before her as he would do before the Mother Kali. Such was the blessed relation between the husband and the wife.



In renouncing the natural joys of a mother, she became with her husband the spiritual parent of many children. As Sister Nivedita says—"Nothing in Sri Ramakrishna's saintly life is more wonderful than the pure radiance shed upon it by the pure and perfect love of one of the purest and most perfect of women."

When Sri Ramakrishna was engaged in his search after the Divine Mother, a Sannyasini came and taught him the practices of the Tantras, and later on came Totapuri, a great Sannyasin, who instructed him in the sublime doctrines of the Vedanta and initiated him into the Sannyasa Ashrama. This proves the truth of Sri Ramakrishna's own saying—"If thou art in right earnest to learn the mysteries of God, He will send the Sadguru or proper teacher to thee." At the end of his practices, the highest realisation dawned upon him. Thus says Sister Nivedita—"Driven by his own nature, impelled from within by that irresistible necessity that had called him into being, without one rest or relaxation, for twelve years at least, he persisted in that inner welfare. Then at last the goal was attained. The Mother revealed Herself."

In the course of his practices Sri Ramakrishna determined to eradicate from his mind all those ideas which would come between him and the enjoyment of the Supreme Bliss. To get rid of sex-distinction and to conquer the passions he looked upon every woman as his Mother. Woman according to him was unconquerable by man except as a son. To annihilate the pride of superior social birth he would go to a pariah's house and cleanse the dirtiest corner of his hut with his long tuft of hair. To kill the desire for wealth he would take a piece of silver in one hand and a lump of earth in the other, and after passing them from one hand to the other he would finally throw both into the river. The secret of his success may be ascribed to the intensity which formed a part of his nature from early childhood. Whenever he made up his mind to do a certain thing nothing daunted him. He could not rest till he achieved his

object. In his estimation all theories and ideas were of no value unless they were actually pursued in practice and realised. He used to say that theories and learned disquisitions were like rain predictions in the calendar. One of his sayings runs thus: "Take the calendar and squeeze it in your hand; will there be a single drop of rain? No amount of talk or theorising will make you religious. Religion is realisation." Whenever he wanted to overcome an obstacle to his spiritual path, he would reduce it to a concrete instance and combat it. This is a splendid and wholesome example for all people to follow in whatever walks of life they may be.

The foundation for the universal character of his teachings was laid in the days of his religious discipleship under various teachers. He actually practised Hinduism in all its aspects. Not merely that, he made up his mind to know the truth in other religions also. He realised the ideals of Mahomedanism, living and praying like a Mahomedan. Similarly did he realise the goal of Christianity. By these means he cultivated a spirit of toleration and realised unity in diversity, and found harmony among all religions which he said were only different paths leading towards the same goal, namely God. The world was not long to recognise and appreciate the great soul. From about 1879 to 1886 were the busiest years of his life, and, during this period it was that men of light and leading sat at his feet to drink of the fountain of his knowledge and wisdom. He made no distinction of caste, creed or colour in his spiritual ministrations, and imparted knowledge to all who came to him.

An account of his life would not be complete without a description of his unique and divine personality which left such a deep and lasting impression on the world's spiritual history. He is thus described by a contemporary of his, Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, a Brahmo Missionary—"He is a Brahmin by caste, he is well formed in body naturally, but the dreadful austerities through which his character has developed appear to have dis-

ordered his system. Yet in the midst of this emaciation, his face retains a fulness, a childlike tenderness, a profound visible humbleness, an unspeakable sweetness of expression and a smile that I have seen on no other face that I can remember..... His dress and diet do not differ from those of other men, except in the general negligence he shows towards both...He shows impatient displeasure at any exceptional honour which people try to pay him, and emphatically disclaims the knowledge of secrets and mysteries..... He merges into raptures, ecstasy and outward unconsciousness often during the day, oftenest in conversation when he speaks of his favourite spiritual experiences or hears any striking response to them." It was such a personality that could make a whole life change by his one touch, or one glance. The secret of it lay in his tremendous purity and his tremendous renunciation. As Swami Vivekananda says, "Renunciation is the background of all religious thought wherever it be," and Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of renunciation.

Sri Ramakrishna's method of teaching was as simple as his life itself. His lack of regular scholastic training helped him in abandoning the old classic method of long disquisitions, and he talked in clear homely words with directness and simplicity of the deepest spiritual truths which went home into the minds of the hearers. He sought no one, on the other hand, people flocked to him in hundreds. By his purity and renunciation, he had gained a spirituality which naturally drew men to his feet. His favourite illustration was, "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey; so let the lotus of your character be fully blown and the results will follow." Sri Ramakrishna came as a world-teacher at a time when on the one hand, people professing different religions were denouncing one another and were claiming superiority over others, and on the other hand, the ancient civilisation and religion of India were in danger of being superseded by Western materialism. He came to this world as a spiritual and unifying force, and a living embodiment of harmony and peace. He

did not preach any new religion to the world, nor did he expound a new system of philosophy. The central note of his teachings was, "Let each man seek God after his own fashion". Sri Ramakrishna's universality in religion is the greatest and most unique contribution to the world. His is a religion which takes in its embrace all the religious sects on the globe. It is this great and wonderful gospel which is most needed in this warring age. It is this tolerance and harmony of religions, which is the greatest spiritual achievement of the times, and which was heralded round the world to admiring races by Sri Ramakrishna's great disciple, Swami Vivekananda. This fundamental truth he has illustrated in a variety of ways. He says, "God is one but His aspects are different ; as the one master of the house is father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third and is called by these different names by those different persons, so the one God is described and called in various ways according to the particular aspect in which he appears to his particular worshipper."

Of the three paths leading to salvation, namely, Karma Marga—the path of disinterested work, Jnana Marga—the path of knowledge and Bhakti Marga—the path of devotion, the last one is according to Sri Ramakrishna the easiest and the one most suited to this age. Work without attachment is difficult, and as for Jnana Yoga, our life is too short and too much otherwise occupied, and to comprehend the difference between body and Soul is not easy for all. Hence devotion, self surrender and love of God are the only means that are easy of practice. Sri Ramakrishna says, "He finds God quickest whose yearning and concentration are the greatest"

Though Sri Ramakrishna accepted all the various and apparently conflicting creeds and sects as but different paths to the same goal, still his own religion was reformed and simple. "His religion," as Mazumdar says, "unlike the religion of ordinary Hindu Sadhus, does not mean too much dogma, or controversial proficiency, or the out-

ward worship with flowers and sandalwood, incense and offering. His religion means ecstasy, his worship means transcendental insight, his whole nature burns day and night with the permanent fire and fever of a strange faith and feeling." As his great disciple Swami Vivekananda says, "Religion is not talk, nor doctrines, nor theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God. How can it be made into a society? It would then degenerate into a business and wherever there is business, or business principles in religion, spirituality dies. Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building churches or attending public worship. It is not to be found in books, nor in words, nor in lectures and organisations. Religion consists in realisation." In an age when this land was full of numerous sects and creeds, and religion was lost in ceremonies and sacerdotalism, when forms were everything and their meanings, if any, were sunk in oblivion, when people were beginning to lose their faith in their own religion as it appeared to them to be a meaningless conglomeration of conflicting doctrines and unintelligible usages, Sri Ramakrishna appeared on the scene preaching the grand eternal verities bereft of all the non-essentials that had grown round them, gave a new life and impetus to Hinduism and rescued many a person who would otherwise have left the fold. He said, "The ancient rules and commands of our scriptures must be pruned and purged of all their accretions to make them suit the wants of modern times." Sri Ramakrishna's conception of religion is in consonance with the spirit of modern times, with the spirit of individual freedom in following one's own method of worship, which refuses to be bound down by traditional forms and methods. Could there be a grander ideal than this which makes no distinction in the matter of worship of God between caste, creed or religion, which has perfect tolerance for all creeds and faiths and which recognises the equality of all men and women in the eyes of God?

There are people who say that religion and renun-

ciation are inconsistent with the service to humanity and that it encourages mysticism and quietism. This idea is a fairly strong one, and there is a tendency of its gaining further currency. It is high time for people to realise that there is really no contradiction between real spirituality and real service. Sri Ramakrishna's life itself is a repudiation of this statement. Real spirituality and unselfish work go together, and the ideal of the Bhagavad Gita is in fact active work without attachment. Matthew Arnold says, "Moral forces govern the standing or falling of nations," and Principal Seeley points out that, "You must not only believe but act on the belief that the real strength of nations as of individuals is in moral and spiritual resources." If we are at present in a degenerate state in India, it is not because of the excess of religion but because of our clinging to forms and superstitions and letting slip the spirit of our religion.

The world has been able to know only a fragment of the great life of the Master and all that is left of the words of wisdom that fell from his lips are the sayings recorded by his disciples. But they are enough to show "his universal catholicity, profound introspection and deep spiritual fervour." Regarding the existence of God he says, "Thou seest many stars at night in the sky but findest them not when the sun rises. Canst thou say that there are no stars, then, in the heaven of day? So man, because thou beholdest not the Almighty in the days of thy ignorance say not there is no God." How convinced he was of the necessity of religion is evident when he says, "As the lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God." He puts the essence of Vedanta in a nutshell when he says, "Every being is Narayana. Man or animal, sage or knave, the whole Universe is Narayana, the Supreme Spirit." Again he says, "So long as one does not become simple like a child one does not get divine illumination. Forget all the worldly knowledge that thou hast acquired and become as ignorant about it as a child, and then thou wilt get the knowledge of the True." It shows how exalted the

nature of his faith was. He has a very wise saying with regard to the present divisions and disputes over doctrines—"So long as the bee is outside the petals of the lotus and has not tasted its honey, it hovers round the flower emitting its buzzing sound, but when it is inside the flower it drinks its nectar noiselessly. So long as a man quarrels and disputes about doctrines and dogmas, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith ; when he has tasted it he becomes still." Sri Ramakrishna was fond of thinking of the motherhood of God, a thing which sounded strange to Westerners, but how happy is the conception ! He explains, "Why does a lover of God find such pleasure in addressing the Deity as Mother? Because the child is more free with its mother, and consequently she is dearer to the child than any one else." He covered in his teachings practically the whole field of human activities and aspirations. He came as an Avatar to guide the erring humanity towards virtue and to foster its growth. From his corner in Dakshineswar he generated a power which is ennobling, inspiring and transfiguring humanity to-day.

It will be thus seen that Sri Ramakrishna preached the harmony of religions and freedom of action to everyone in matters spiritual, and that the Hindu religion, bereft of all unhealthy growths and superstitions, is catholic in character, broad-based and all-embracing. Such in brief were the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, and India could well be proud of being once again the giver of a prophet to the world. But profit and not pride should be the object of our study of his life, and if we cannot act up to the ideal held out by him, we should, as he said, try to practise one-sixteenth part at least of what he did. It behoves all true lovers of India to do everything in their power for the spread of this Gospel throughout the length and breadth of the land. Let me end this brief but incomplete sketch by quoting one of Sri Ramakrishna's great Western admirers, the late Prof. Max Muller :—

"If we remember that these utterances of Rama-

krishna reveal to us not only his own thoughts, but the faith and hope of millions of human beings, we may indeed feel hopeful of the future of that country. The consciousness of the Divine in man is there, and is shared by all, even by those who seem to worship idols. This constant sense of the presence of God is indeed the common ground on which we may hope that in time not too distant the great temple of the future will be erected, in which Hindus and non-Hindus may join hands and hearts in worshipping the same Supreme Spirit, who is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being."

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## INDIAN VILLAGE LIFE AND ITS REGENERATION.

It is in the village that we feel the heart-beats of the Indian nation. The life as well as the growth of the two are closely, nay indissolubly, wedded together. Being a vital part of the body-politic, the village ever plays a significant role in the evolution of the national destiny. Not only does it contribute substantially to the wealth and culture of the nation, but it also serves the purpose of a bulwark in times of need. Hence to neglect the rural part and its interests is to undermine the national cause itself.

The exalted position ancient India occupied was mostly due to the flourishing condition of her countryside that was full of life and vigour, peace and plenty. Really there was nothing to mar the enviable and serene contentment of the village folk of those good old days. With plain living and high thinking as their life's principle, they lived in harmony, co-operating with one another in their weal and woe. If the common welfare of the community demanded the sacrifice of individual interests, they did not shirk it by any means. Besides, in the village Tols, of which there were many in ancient times, the culture of Sanskrit—the storehouse of all that is noble and great—kept the people in touch with the



traditions of the race. Then again the many religious festivals, such as the Durga-Puja or Nava-Ratri, Janmash-tami, and Dewali that were observed from time to time, inspired them, through worship, merry-making and re-joicing, with a spiritual fervour and softened the hard-ships in the daily discharge of their duties. It is not a wonder therefore that even the illiterate peasant of the India of the past, born and brought up in such an intensely spiritual atmosphere, could speak familiarly of such subtle eternal verities as God, soul and immor-tality, and ultimately withdraw from this world with a smiling face.

But now unfortunately, 'as the old order changeth yielding place to new,' the Indian village life, bereft of its native simplicity and beauty, presents altogether a different picture. And one may grieve with the poet—

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms  
withdrawn ;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
 And desolation saddens all thy green.

(GOLDSMITH).

That genial sunshine of joy and hope that illumined every home and made it so sweet and charming is no longer to be seen. The people, young and old, seem to have lost that robust optimism for which they were once so well known. Wherever we go what we come across and hear is a sad tale of want, suffering, dis-content and break-down of economic and even moral life. On account of the lamentable ignorance of the people social evils of various kinds have crept in, and nurtured by superstition, these have crystallised into settled practices.

Malaria, black fever, cholera, influenza and such other fell diseases that were once rare, are now doing havoc, and counting their victims by hundreds. Many among the educated section, who are men of means, have lost all attraction for their village homes and have

removed themselves to the towns mainly for the safety of their life and property. The present inhabitants of the village, the illiterate masses and the poor middle class people who are always busy to make both ends meet, have no time or regard for the laws of sanitation and hygiene. Naturally the country-side is becoming from day to day unfit for human habitation. The tanks and ponds that used to supply drinking water to the people are now breeding germs of all sorts of diseases, as they are not being cleansed of the weeds and re-excavated from time to time.

Next come the ravages of growing poverty. It is eating into the vitals of the village community inch by inch and has gone so far as to dislodge the people from the ancient ideals of life. Leaving out of account the big land-holders and money-lenders who do not, of course, know what actual want is, the majority of the country folk have to pass through a hard struggle for existence, dragging from day to day a miserable life. Cottage industries that were once thriving and were a source of wealth to the people are now dying out for want of encouragement. The produce of the land—rice, wheat, vegetables, etc., and other articles of food such as milk, fish and the like are being daily exported for the consumption of the townspeople, while the villagers are left to their own fate, groaning under the weight of scarcity and want.

Added to this economic crisis there is another great danger—the country folk are divided against themselves by their own selfishness, jealousy, quarrel and fight. Far from having any co-operation among themselves, many are on the look-out for ruining one another by useless litigation. The higher castes, specially the priests, having no broader vision before them, are creating a yawning gulf between the so-called upper and lower castes by trying to deprive the latter of their legitimate social rights and privileges. The higher ideas of religion that could unify the people under a common standard are being generally ignored and flouted. And what is

taken into consideration and emphasised in religious matters is the letter of the Shastras—the set of dogmas, rituals and ceremonies, and not the spirit they involve. Then the evil influence of the Western civilisation—its unusual craze for the pleasures of the senses, its luxury and intemperance, is gradually infecting the village life and is adding fuel to the fire of destruction.

This is the long and short of the sad history of our modern village life. At this momentous period when we are faced with the important problem of Indian national regeneration, the rural parts should receive our foremost attention. The leaders of the country who are seeing visions of Swaraj in the distant future, may cry themselves hoarse from the platform and the press and carry on agitation, constitutional or unconstitutional, in the town. But their activities, though sincere, will produce no result, if these are kept confined only within the limits of cities and towns. In view of the lamentable degradation and the amount of misery that have come upon the village people, we admit that the task of regenerating them is a herculian one, involving infinite sacrifice and patience. Nevertheless, it must be tackled immediately and this in right earnest and at all costs.

Our young men who are forward in every noble cause and so full of energy and enthusiasm should take up this task as pioneers. In addition to the rare qualities of love, sacrifice, hardihood and patience, the band of workers who will volunteer their services, should be equipped with a fair knowledge of sanitation, hygiene, agriculture and industry. Ready to stake all if necessary, let them go from village to village with a message of hope and strength, inquire into the wants of the people and help them out of their present miserable condition.

But any amount of outside help that we may render to the village people, may only bring them some temporary relief. It will never do them any lasting good, unless they themselves learn to stand on their own legs. God helps those who help themselves—goes the noble maxim. Therefore first of all a spirit of self-reliance as

also a feeling of mutual co-operation should be infused into the minds of the people, so that they may gird up their loins and themselves grapple with the situation unitedly. Only a comprehensive scheme of a man-making education, conducted on national lines, and not any so-called book learning, can bring this about. Rightly observes Swami Vivekananda, "We have had a negative education all along from our boyhood. We have only learnt that we are nobody. Seldom are we given to understand that great men were born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet. \* \* \* An education which does not help one to fight out successfully the battle of life, which does not mould one's character, nor create the idea of self-sacrifice for the common weal, do you call it education!" The kind of education introduced for the uplift of the rural population should be positive. It should aim at a harmonious development of the limbs, the brain and the heart and include both the theoretical and practical aspects of training. It will then bring back the lost spirit of Shraddha, will make every man a man in the true sense of the term and enable him to cope successfully with the hard struggle for existence. At the outset a good number of free elementary schools should be started, so that all sections of the people may receive education easily. Over and above the rudimentary knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, sanitation and hygiene, there should be a sufficient scope for the training in arts and crafts, such as spinning, weaving, carpentry, pottery, agriculture and the like. In that case the people after finishing their education will be able to take to some independent industries or professions and earn their livelihood without going for government service. To supplement the education imparted in schools, occasional lectures illustrated by stories from the lives of national saints and heroes may be helpful in driving home to the people the higher ideals of religion and patriotism.

The scheme of education proposed above, if carried

on vigorously, will lead us to the destined goal. It will manufacture bands after bands of sturdy, practical, resourceful and liberal citizens and set on foot a powerful reformatory movement that will solve all the important questions of village sanitation and its economic, moral and spiritual uplift. Then all the paraphernalia of an ideal village commonwealth,—good drainage, pure drinking water, charitable dispensaries, co-operative credit societies, arbitration courts, cottage industries, agricultural and industrial exhibitions, etc., which a sociologist dreams of, will ere long become, in their natural course, accomplished facts.

SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA.

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE.

BY SWAMI SUDDHANANDA.

*(Concluded from page 119)*

One thing more, however, we are tempted to deal with in the light of Swamiji's message before we take leave of the reader. It is the Hindu-Mahommedan problem, which is now engaging the attention of the Indian people more than anything else.

Every reader of Swamiji's works knows that he wanted to have a Vedantic brain in an Islamic body in his ideal rejuvenated India. In order to bring home to the reader the true significance of the expression, we quote almost the whole of a letter written by Swamiji to a Mahommedan gentleman at Naini Tal :—

“Whether we call it Vedantism or any *ism*, the

truth is that Adwaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. We believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical Adwaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, is yet to be developed among the Hindus universally.

“On the other hand, our experience is that if ever the followers of any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable degree in the plane of practical workaday life,—it may be quite unconscious generally of the deeper meaning and the underlying principle of such conduct, which the Hindus as a rule so clearly perceive—it is those of Islam and Islam alone.

“Therefore we are firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of *the religion* which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

“For our own Motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta Brain and Islam Body—is the only hope.

“I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.”  
(*Epistles, 3rd series, 1st edition, Page 21*).

In order to bring about this consummation, comparative study of Hindu and Islamic cultures, by both the Hindus and Mahommedans is absolutely necessary. But this can be undertaken by only a few cultured minds belonging to both these great systems. We would suggest here two other methods, following, of course, those indicated by Swamiji himself, which can be undertaken by the lesser minds at once and with comparative ease.

All the antagonism between different religions or any two different sections of people arises out of ignorance, as Swamiji used to call in the language of the Vedanta—‘Avidya’. He wanted to have it overcome by spreading universal education. How should the Hindus begin according to Swamiji? It is by bringing all their knowledge, especially their Vedas—the source according to them of all knowledge, to the masses. Let the Hindu learn his own ancient history and understand that the present customs of his own little village are not the whole of his religion. Let him travel at least in the different provinces of India, and observe the divergent and almost contradictory customs prevailing everywhere in the name of the Hindu religion.

For instance, one who has travelled in Bengal, the Punjab and Madras, will find that in these provinces the rigidity or laxity regarding the caste and food questions is widely different. In Madras,

there is so much rigidity that the Brahmana there does not touch the food even seen by a Sudra, whereas Bengal just stands midway between Madras and the Punjab which is more lax in these matters. But in order to justify all these divergent practices the authority of the same Hindu religion is invoked. So also regarding the marriage customs. In Nepal they still follow the laws of Manu, and according to the custom of *anuloma* marriage the Brahmanas there do not hesitate to marry Kshatriya or even Vaisya wives, while in Bengal marriage is strictly confined to the particular sub-caste to which one belongs. In Madras, the strange custom of marrying one's cousin prevails, and often the orthodox Brahmanas will not look for marriage anywhere else if they can get their maternal uncles' daughters as their wives. Besides observing all these different customs, if a Hindu studies also his own Vedas, or even the Smritis or Puranas, he will be astonished to find many things which the ancients considered sacred, but which according to present notions are looked upon as shocking.

What will be the result of this study and travel? The views of the Hindu will surely broaden, and certainly he will not be able to remain in his narrow groove. He will remain, of course, a Hindu of Hindus, but still he will not be able to look down upon his Mahomedan brethren with contempt and term them 'Mlechchhas'. For, after this travel and study, not only will he not consider a certain social custom as indispensable for becoming a pure and orthodox Hindu, not only will he learn that the



Spirit resides in the body of a Hindu as well as of a Mussalman, not only will he learn that Ram and Rahim are the same and identical, but also he will find in turning over his own holiest scriptures—the Vedas—that what he considers in a Mlechchha the most abominable thing, namely, the killing and eating of the bovine species, has not only been tolerated by his ancestors but oftentimes has been considered even sacred! So with this knowledge growing within him, will he have the heart to insist on his Mahommedan brethren in season and out of season to desist from cow-killing?

Our Mussalman brethren will have equally to spread the knowledge of their Koran and other holy books among their masses. They will have also to study their Sia, Sunni and other sub-divisions, undertake to travel at least in a few of the Indian provinces and Mahommedan countries, and find out for themselves what the real Islam consists of. Let the Hindu Sangathans and Moslem Leagues be such centres of education and educative propaganda, both religious and secular, and we ferevently believe that both the mighty limbs of our body-politic will grow equally strong and become ultimately not antagonistic but helpful to each other.

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# SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

## CHAPTER XI.

उद्धव उवाच ।

त्वं ब्रह्म परमं साक्षादनाद्यन्तमपावृतम् ॥

सर्वेषामपि भावानां त्राणस्थित्यप्ययोद्धवः ॥ १ ॥

Uddhava said :

1. Thou art the Supreme Brahman in visible form, without beginning or end and uncovered.<sup>1</sup> Thou art the Cause of the protection, maintenance, death and birth of all beings.

[1 Uncovered—by anything. Hence Absolute.]

उच्चावचेषु भूतेषु दुर्ज्ञेयमकृतात्मभिः ॥

उपासते त्वां भगवन्याथातथ्येन ब्राह्मणाः ॥ २ ॥

2. O Lord, in beings high and low, the Brahmanas<sup>1</sup> worship Thee as Thou art, but Thou art unknown to less fortunate people.

[1 Brahmanas—those who know the real import of the Vedas.]

येषु येषु च भावेषु भक्ता त्वां परमर्षयः ॥

उपासीनाः प्रपद्यन्ते संसिद्धिं तद्वदस्व मे ॥ ३ ॥

3. Tell me in what beings the highest sages worship Thee reverentially and thereby attain to perfection.

गूढश्चरसि भूतात्मा भूतानां भूतभावन ॥

न त्वां पश्यन्ति भूतानि पश्यन्तं मोहितानि ते ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Thou Originator of the universe, as the Self of all Thou roamest hidden in all beings. Deluded by Thee, creatures do not see Thee, but Thou seest all.

याः काश्च भूमौ दिवि वै रसायां विभूतयो दिक्षु महाविभूते ॥

ता मह्यमाख्याह्यनुभावितास्ते नमामि ते तीर्थपदांघ्रिपद्मम् ॥

5. O Thou of wonderful forms, tell me all those manifestations that Thou hast projected on earth, in

heaven, in the nether regions and in all quarters. I bow to Thy lotus feet in which are centred all holy places.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

एवमेतदहं पृष्टः प्रश्नं प्रश्नविदांवर ॥

युयुत्सुना विनशने सपत्नैर्जनेन वै ॥ ६ ॥

The Lord said :

6. Thou art skilled in questioning. This very question<sup>1</sup> I was asked by Arjuna about to fight his enemies at Kurukshetra.

[1 Question &c.—The reference is to the tenth chapter of the Gita, which should be compared in this connection.]

ज्ञात्वा ज्ञातिवधं गर्ह्यमधर्मं राज्यहेतुकम् ॥

ततो निवृत्तो हन्ताहं हतोऽयमिति लौकिकः ॥ ७ ॥

स तदा पुरुषव्याघ्रो युक्तग्रामे प्रतिबोधितः ॥

अभ्यभाषत मामेवं यथा त्वं रणमूर्धनि ॥ ८ ॥

7-8. When under the popular impression, "I am the slayer and this other is slain," he considered the killing of his relatives for the sake of kingdom as a despicable sin,<sup>1</sup> and turned away from that,—then, on the eve of battle, I roused that valiant soul through reasoning, and he (then) addressed Me exactly as thou hast done.

[1 Sin—which it was not, being a vindication of justice.]

अहमात्मोद्धवामीषां भूतानां सुहृदीश्वरः ॥

अहं सर्वाणि भूतानि तेषां स्थित्युद्भवाप्ययः ॥ ९ ॥

9. O Uddhava, I am<sup>1</sup> the Self of all creatures, their friend and Lord ; I am all creatures, and the cause of their birth, life and death.

[Here begins the enumeration. The various representations of the Lord are for the purpose of meditation. Each of them has some distinctive merits which raise it above the rest of that group. Of the words in the possessive case in the text, some imply qualities and others, selection.

1 I am &c.—I am the general object of worship of all. The details commence from the next verse.]

अहं गतिर्गतिमतां कालः कलयतामहम् ॥

गुणानां चाप्यहं साम्यं गुणिष्वौत्पत्तिको गुणः ॥ १० ॥

10. I am the motion of the moving, and among conquerors I am Time. Of virtues I am even-mindedness, and in things possessing attributes, I am their primary attribute.

गुणिनामप्यहं सूत्रं महतां च महानहम् ॥

सूक्ष्माणामप्यहं जीवो दुर्जयानामहं मनः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Among those possessed of attributes, again, I am the Cosmic Prana, and of all vast things I am the Cosmic Intelligence. Of all subtle things I am the soul,<sup>1</sup> and of things difficult to subdue I am the mind.

[1 Soul—So called because of its subtle superimpositions, from which it is most difficult to discriminate this.]

हिरण्यगर्भो वेदानां मन्त्राणां प्रणवस्त्रिवृत् ॥

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि पदानि छन्दसामहम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. With regard to the Vedas I am Brahmâ,<sup>1</sup> and among Mantras I am the Om,<sup>2</sup> consisting of A, U and M. Of letters I am A, and of metres I am the three-footed Gayatri.

[1 Brahmâ—who first taught them.]

<sup>2</sup> Om—considered the most sacred of them.]

इन्द्रोऽहं सर्वदेवानां वसूनामस्मि हव्यवाद् ॥

आदित्यानामहं विष्णू रूद्राणां नीललोहितः ॥ १३ ॥

13. Of all gods I am Indra, and of the Vasus I am Agni. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, and of the Rudras, Nilalohita.<sup>1</sup>

[1 Nilalohita—a name of Shiva.]

ब्रह्मर्षीणां भृगुरहं राजर्षीणामहं मनुः ॥

देवर्षीणां नारदोऽहं हविर्धान्यस्मि धेनुषु ॥ १४ ॥

14. Among Maharshis (great seers) I am Bhrigu, and

among Rajarshis (royal seers), Manu. Among Devarshis (divine seers) I am Narada, and among cows, Kamadhenu.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> *Kamadhenu*—which has the power of producing anything at will.]

सिद्धेश्वराणां कपिलः सुपर्णोऽहं पतत्रिणाम् ॥

प्रजापतीनां दक्षोऽहं पितृणामहमर्यमा ॥ १५ ॥

15. I am Kapila<sup>1</sup> among the great Siddhas, and Garuda<sup>2</sup> among birds. Of the Patriarchs I am Daksha, and of the Pitris I am Aryama.

[<sup>1</sup> *Kapila*—the Father of Sankhya Philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> *Garuda*—the powerful king of birds, who carries the Lord Vishnu.]

(To be continued.)

## THE EIGHTY-NINTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

The eighty-ninth birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on a grand scale at the Belur Math—the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. The *tithi* fell on Friday, the 7th March, 1924, and was observed with special worship and other ceremonies lasting practically throughout the day and night. More than three thousand devotees attended the celebration and partook of Prasad. Towards the end of the night a Homa was performed, and nine youngmen were given the vows of Brahmacharya and fifteen Brahmacharins were initiated into Sannyasa by the revered president of the Order.

The public meeting came off on Sunday, the 9th March. The whole Math, particularly the temples, presented a picturesque appearance, being decorated with flags and festoons, evergreens and flowers. There was an excellent arrangement of steamers, a number of which plied the whole day between Calcutta and Belur.

Devotees began to gather from early morning, and as the day advanced the whole Math premises became one sea of human heads.

A life-size oil-painting of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a large pandal, splendidly decorated with garlands, foliage and flowers. Thousands of men and women offered their worship here. There was also a very great rush of devotees to the different temples at the Math. Besides many others, the famous Kali-kirtan party of Andul and the admirable concert party of Prof. Dakshinaranjan added considerably to the enjoyment of the people assembled. The whole atmosphere was animated by a spirit of devotion.

Grand preparations were made for the day's feeding. About 11,000 people—men, women and children—of all castes and social conditions, sat down together, batch after batch, to partake of the great feast. There was an unrestricted distribution of Prasad, which formed the special feature of the celebration. The unremitting service of an organised band of volunteers to the pilgrims made the festival a grand success.

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## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

### KUALA LUMPUR.

The anniversary was celebrated at the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. on the 3rd February, 1924.

The Ashrama was decorated with evergreens and flowers, and was illuminated with electric lamps of variegated colours. Numerous Bhajana parties went round the town in the morning. They all met on the way, and arrived at the Ashrama in a combined procession at 9 A.M. and continued their music till 11 A.M.

The next and the most important item of the day

was the sumptuous feeding of poor Narayanas including Chinese and Malayas. This was done with the help of a body of organised young volunteers under the direct supervision of Swami Vivekananda, the Head of the Ashrama. Cloths were also distributed to the deserving poor people numbering about 400.

There was a Harikatha Kalaskshepam in the Hall of the Ashrama from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M.

The public meeting commenced at 6-30 P.M. under the presidentship of Mr. Sant Singh. Mr. O. Candiahpillai spoke in Tamil and Mr. K. A. Narayana Iyer in English on the life and mission of Swami Vivekananda. The meeting terminated with the singing of Devaram.

#### MADRAS.

The anniversary was celebrated by the Satchidananda Sangha at the Corporation Model School, Tiru-watteswaranpet, Madras on the 17th February last. In the morning there were Bhajana and the feeding of a large number of people. In the afternoon Brahmachari Prabodhachaitanya delivered a lecture in Tamil on "Vedanta Siddhanta Samarasam" with Mr. C. Selvaraja Mudaliyar in the chair.

Then took place an interesting dialogue on the "Necessity of Religious Education" by the girls of the Saraswati Balika Pathasala.

Mr. V. C. Seshachariar, B.A., B.L., next delivered a lecture on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the Hon'ble M. Justice V. Masilamani Pillai, B.A., B.L., presiding. He was followed by Swami Sharvananda, President of the Sangha. The meeting came to a close with a vote of thanks to the chair and the lecturers.

#### KANKHAL.

The Tithi-puja was performed at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, on Monday the 28th January. The programme consisted of Special Puja, Homa, Bhajan and readings from the Upanishads. In a

meeting presided over by Srijut Mahendra Nath Dutt, Swami Atulananda, Br. Nishkal Chaitanya and Mr. C. E. S. Narayana Sastry read papers on Swami Vivekananda's work, life and teachings.

The public celebration come off on the 3rd March. The Ashrama was beautifully decorated with flags, festoons and flowers. The musical party of Kankhal enlivened the occasion with their melodious songs. A well attended public meeting was held in the afternoon under the presidency of Dandi Swami Narayana Tirtha. Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Dutt of Gurukul, Kangri, spoke in English on the life and mission of Swami Vivekananda. He was followed by Swami Devananda who read a paper on Swamiji's life and teachings. At about 5 P.M. more than one thousand Daridra Narayanas were sumptuously fed. The celebration was brought to a happy conclusion at night with Bhajan and Aratrikam.

#### PATNA.

The sixty-second birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great eclat by the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Muradpur, Patna, on Saturday and Sunday, the 2nd and 3rd February, 1924. Srimat Swami Bodhananda, Head of the Vedanta Society, New York, who is now in India, came on special invitation to take part in the celebration. In the afternoon of the 2nd February there were sports, athletic show and recitation by children, and prizes were distributed amongst them. At 6 o'clock in the evening a very largely attended public meeting was held at the house of Srijut Tripurari Charan Palit under the presidentship of Srijut Rajendra Prosad, the eminent leader of Behar. Swami Nirvedananda read an interesting paper in English on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, which was listened to with rapt attention. Swami Bodhananda next delivered an instructive lecture which was highly appreciated by the audience. There were also other lecturers, some of whom spoke in English and some in Hindi.



On the 3rd February there were Bhajan and distribution of Prasad in the morning. About two thousand poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed from 11 A.M. to 4-30 P.M. The celebration came to a close with Bhajan and music in the evening.

#### BANGALORE.

The birthday was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City on Sunday, the 3rd February last. Bhajan parties came to the Ashrama from different parts of the city and cantonment, and sang Bhajan till noon. About a thousand hungry Narayanas were fed till 3 P.M. at the Anjaneya Temple, Basavangudi.

There was a Harikatha Kalakshepam at 3-30 P.M. This was followed by lectures in Kannada and English. Mr. K. H. Ramiah, B.A., Bar-at-Law, Registrar of Co-operative Societies in Mysore, spoke in Kannada on the "Message of Swami Vivekananda to Modern India," and read extracts from the works of the Swami, containing his advice to the students, social reformers and workers for the depressed classes. Mr. K. Sampathgiri Row, M.A., Head-master, National High School, delivered an impressive lecture in English on "Swami Vivekananda, the Prophet of India and the World." With the usual vote of thanks to the president and lecturers and distribution of Prasad, the meeting terminated.

#### MADANAPALLE (MADRAS PRESY.)

The birthday was also celebrated at Madanapalle on the 3rd February last. The people of the town took a keen interest in the celebration. Pujas were offered in the morning. About 1500 people were sumptuously fed from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.

An open air meeting was held at 5 p.m. under the presidency of Mr. G. Srinivasiah Garu. The elite of the town as also a large number of students were among the audience. Mr. K. Krishnaraya Sastrulu and Mr. K.

Ekambaram spoke on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekanandas. Sriman Krishnamoorthi, a boy of 14 years, delivered a lecture on Bhakti.

After the lectures were over, a procession with the photos of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, especially decorated on a Mandapam and followed by an Indian band, went round the principal streets of the town. The procession was received with enthusiasm and devotion by the public. A local Mahommedan gentleman displayed fireworks when the procession passed by his house.

#### LALGUDI (MADRAS PRESY.)

The birthday was celebrated on the 2nd February by the members of the Students' Literary Club, Lalgudi, Trichinopoly. Special prayers and Puja were offered. A meeting was held under the presidentship of Mr. L. S. Swaminatha Iyer, when Mr. T. A. Krishna Sartrigal spoke on the life of Swami Vivekananda. The celebration ended with the distribution of sweets to the people assembled.

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#### REVIEWS.

*Lectures of Swami Abhedananda.*—Published by the Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur. Pp. 116. Price As. 8.

The book contains four lectures on Sanatana Dharma, Universal Religion, Progressive Hinduism and the Message of Vedanta, delivered by the Swami at Jamshedpur in January, 1922, shortly after his return from America. We hope the lectures will be well appreciated by the public.

*Bhagwan Shri-Krishna.*—Vol. I. By S. N. K. Bijurkar, B.A., Coondapoor, S. Kanara Dt. Pp. 63. Price As. 12.

It is a short account of the early life of Sri Krishna, up to his killing the tyrant king, Kamsa. This little book is written in an easy, popular style. We hope it will be appreciated by the English-reading public, and the author will bring out the subsequent parts of the divine life of one who is regarded by many as the greatest incarnation of God.

*Hints on National Education in India.*—By Sister Nivedita.

Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Pp. 180. Price Rs. 1-8.

The book under review contains a series of illuminating discourses on national education—the crying need of India. It was at first published as a booklet under the title—*Hints on Education*. A few interesting articles, originally contributed to the “*Modern Review*” and the “*Karma Yogin*,” have been included in this edition. The writings of the Sister are marvellous for their suggestiveness, and are calculated to implant civic interests in the hearts of Indians. Following in the footsteps of her great master, she exhorts us herein to be faithful to the lofty traditions of the *Punya Bhumi* in thought, word and deed. The get-up and printing are attractive. We hope the book will have an extensive circulation, and will awaken a hankering for true national education among our countrymen.

*The Light of Ancient Persia.*—By Maneck B. Pithawalla, B.A., B.Sc., M.R.A.S. The Asian Library Series. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. XI and 263. Price—Cloth Rs. 3 ; Board Rs. 2-8.

The book attempts to present all that is of the very best in Zoroastrianism and ancient Persia. It speaks to us of the message of the Iranian Prophet Zoroaster,—his system of religion and morality, and his Gospel of the Brotherhood of all living beings and the Fatherhood of the Avestan God—Ahura Mazda. It further tells us of the significance of the worship of the sacred fire—the symbol of the Divine Light, as also of the Law of Right-

eousness and Cosmic Order as interpreted by Zoroaster, and embodied in the Zend-Avesta.

“Zoroaster,” says the author, “lived at once the life of a heaven-born saint and of a worldly man.” He was a practical idealist who asked his followers to be true to heaven and home at the same time. The Prophet preached a monotheistic religion, and inculcated “the doctrine of personality, in that all Zoroastrian prayers are personal, daily conduct rules are personal, and rewards and punishments are also personal.” He laid great stress on industry and purity. And according to him the pursuit of agriculture was only next to righteousness.

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## NEWS AND NOTES.

### HINDU MOSLEM UNITY.

Hindu-Moslem unity is essential for our national solidarity and national well-being. But to bring about this union it is indispensable to remove the tension of feeling that unfortunately divides the two great sister communities at present. The question of cow-killing is one of the greatest causes of friction. And apart from its great economic value, the preservation of the cow is necessary for the establishment of the much desired Hindu-Moslem unity. But this can be done not by the Hindu's persistently demanding it of his Mohammedan brother, but by the latter's willingly giving up the practice of cow-killing out of his regard for the religious sentiments of his Hindu fellow-countrymen. The Hindus, too, are indirectly responsible for cow-killing. For many of them sell cows after they cease to give milk, and these often fall into the hands of butchers and others who slaughter them for food. Again there are some among the Hindus who, in spite of their profession of reverence for cows, do not hesitate to sell them even to butchers. Special steps should, therefore, be taken for the protection of dry cows

by the Hindus themselves if they sincerely want cow-killing to be stopped, or reduced to a very small proportion. Thus the only solution to the question of the protection of cows lies in the mutual consent and co-operation of both the Hindu and Musalman communities in India.

The root-cause of the present Hindu-Moslem friction can be removed only by mutual sympathy and help in each other's woes and trials. If the Mohammedan sincerely wants the Hindu to make any sacrifice for him he must also be ready to undergo sacrifices for the latter. Again if the Hindu is really anxious to receive any sympathy and help from the Mohammedan, he must also be willing to sympathise and help the latter in his hours of need. What love and kindly help can achieve may be seen from the noble example of Mahatma Gandhi who has identified himself with the cause of the Musalmans in India. Maulana Mahomed Ali, President of the last Indian National Congress, spoke eloquently of this matter in his remarkable address. He said, "I know how sacred a cow is in the eyes of my Hindu brothers, and who knows better than my brother and myself how anxious our absent Chief was to secure its preservation? His action in so selflessly leading the Khilaphat movement was no doubt characteristically generous and altruistic ; but he himself used to say that he was trying to protect the cow of the Musalmans, which was their Khilaphat, so that this grateful community which had learnt from its Scriptures that there could be no return for kindness save kindness, would be induced to protect his own cow in return. This was, however, only Mahatma Gandhi's way of emphasising his love for the cow. And even before he so picturesquely called the Khilaphat our cow, my brother and I had decided not to be any party to cow-killing ourselves. No beef is consumed since then in our house even by our servants, and we consider it our duty to ask our co-religionists to act similarly."

Hindu-Moslem unity to be an established fact must be based not on political expediency or opportunism, but on a real union of hearts actuated by a sincere spirit of

sacrifice and amity, toleration and harmony. There must be the recognition of the "features common to all faiths and the spirituality characteristic of them all," as the Maulana has rightly pointed out. Besides there must be an emulation in sacrifice ; and it goes without saying that the community that excels in this respect will be the possessor of the greatest moral force. We wish the members of both the Hindu and Mohammedan communities to always bear in mind these memorable words of Maulana Mahomed Ali—"If there is to be competition among the communities that form the Indian Joint Family, let it be a competition in forbearance and self-sacrifice, and I maintain that the community which willingly surrenders more of its cherished rights and strongly-entertained sentiments for the sake of sister communities and the peace and harmony of India, will prove the most invincible in the end."

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### THE MESSAGE OF KHADDAR.

Hand-spinning and hand-weaving are India's two most ancient industries, probably as old as her agriculture itself. All along until the advent of the East India Company, these widespread national industries supplied all the cloth and all the yarn necessary for the Indian people. But to the country's misfortune, these have now become practically things of the past, and are sometimes looked upon by even the children of the soil as innovations in India. Owing to the practical destruction of the cloth industry by the East India Company, and the forced dependence of the Indians on Lancashire cloth, the country has suffered a great economic drain, and has become quite degraded and destitute at present. **For the well-being of the country it is absolutely necessary to revive the spinning wheel and the hand-loom which served in the past to supplement India's main occupation—agriculture. Thus can crores of rupees be prevented from being drained from the country, and the amount distributed among the**

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poor men and women living in the cottages throughout the land. This was the reason which led Mahatma Gandhi to lay so much stress on the use of Khaddar.

In his appealing address at the opening ceremony of the Khadi Exhibition held at Cocanada in connection with the last Indian National Congress, Sir P. C. Ray passionately spoke on the message of Khaddar. He whole-heartedly advocated the universal adoption of the Charka as a means to the economic amelioration of the people. He observed—"An easy, healthy and natural process of increasing the wealth of the country, and smooth and automatic way of universalising the incidence of the wealth—that is what the Charka represents.....When we come to the question of a practical programme, however, it is easily understood that this message of Charka is essentially a message for our peasants and workers, the teeming millions of India, who have got their leisure time to devote to this work. And.....this labour, which brings a profit that means a mere pittance to the favoured few, spells to them the difference between semi-starvation and a full meal. It is the salvation of the Indian proletariat."

One of the arguments brought forward against Khaddar is that it can never successfully compete with mill-made cloth. But "really this question of competition," says Sir P. C. Ray, "this economic bogey that is paraded by theorists, we do not contemplate.....We mean this that spinning be taken up as an essentially domestic programme, worked in every household, out of cotton grown in the cottage compound, the thread woven into cloth by the family or by the neighbouring village-weaver on the payment of a nominal remuneration, and intended for the use of the family members themselves. Just as kitchen-work is undertaken in every household by the members of the family and eatables are not indented or purchased by cash-payment from any huge hotel or restaurant, in exactly similar a fashion should clothing be provided for. The question of sale or purchase, price and competition, would simply not arise."

Sir P. C. Ray very feelingly appealed to the educated communities of the country to take to the use of hand-spun and hand-made cloth. He said that if they would do so, their example "will filter down and help to usher in a new era in our industrial, economic and also assuredly in political life."

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CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT THE HINDU TEMPLE,  
SAN FRANCISCO, U. S. A.

The auditorium was tastefully decorated with flowers, green boughs and wreaths. The pictures of Jesus and Sri Ramakrishna were banked with lovely flowers, while choice incense made the place prayerful and holy. There were a special service and a discourse by Swami Prakashananda, the subject being "Birth of Christ-consciousness."

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A NOTICE.

To prevent any possible misconception, the President, Ramkrishna Mission, desires us to inform the public that the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Society at 11 Eden Hospital Road, Calcutta, is being conducted by the Swami Abhedananda as an independent institution, not as yet connected in any way with the Ramkrishna Mission.

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