

# 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.

*19th July, 1920.*

Someone informed the Swami that Chameli Puri, a celebrated monk, had breathed his last.

The Swami : When ?

Answer : Yesterday afternoon.

The Swami : Doesn't any of you know any more details? He was very old too—108 was his age. For sixty years he lived in that very garden. How spirited he was ! Because, as you know, he was a perfectly chaste man. I went to see him once. He was uttering, "Shiva Kedar ! Shiva Kedar !" What a tremendous strength was in that call ! The death of such people is like a ripe fruit dropping of itself from the tree. They don't feel any pain. Well, I am fifty-four, and the world appears so old

to me. But he was 108 years of age—just double that of mine—and how very old must the world have appeared to him! He must have known a lot of the old history of Benares. A—Babu served him for three or four years. He told me that when he had first gone to see the monk, the latter had said to him, “I am fasting the whole day. What has the Mother sent through you? Give it to me and I shall eat it.” Ever since he has been supplying him with food. His assistant, Pandit —, used to go to the monk’s place.

Pandit — has a long nose. Can you tell me what a long nose stands for? You must have read in Napoleon’s Biography how he says, “Had I got a few men with long noses, I could have done everything.” A long nose is a sign of great faithfulness.

There is another Sadhu here named Magni Baba, near the Asi Ghat. He too is very old. He has been living long at Benares. He is a Naishthika Brahmacharin, and a good scholar, but of the orthodox type. He got to that stage which is called in the scriptures Vidwat Sannyasa, when monasticism comes naturally to a man. He has great vitality in him, and gets rid of serious attacks of illness without much effort. Once he was seriously ill, which hampered his attending to all the duties of a Brahmacharin. Then he went to the bank of the Ganges and himself took the vow of Sannyasa according to the scriptural rites. I have seen him a number of times. He was in the habit of being always absorbed in contemplation, which perhaps brought on him the title of Magni Baba (‘the absorbed monk’). The orthodox attitude has both advantages and disadvantages. D—Babu used to look upon him as his Guru, and went to worship him on the



Guru Purnima day. But he has not got actual initiation or the like from him.

I was reading Hirananda's Life to-day, and liked it very much. He, too, was a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and was much liked by the Master. During his last illness, Hirananda came from Sindh to see him. He brought some sweets and loose trousers for Sri Ramakrishna, who wore the trousers for a day. One day he set Hirananda to argue with Swamiji. The latter spoke from the standpoint of knowledge, while Hirananda did from the standpoint of devotion. He did not argue. He was a disciple of Keshab Babu also.

Noticing some birds moving in search of food on the lawn near by, the Swami said: They have got their young ones; so they are in search of food. How marvellous! They won't eat the food themselves, but take it to their young ones. Again, as soon as these are a little grown up, they will peck at them and drive them away. They are doing the Divine Mother's work. See how She is having Her work done through them. 'Thou dost Thy work, Mother; but people only lay claim to it.'\*

Animal bodies are for the experience of pleasure or pain only (the result of past work). No fresh work can be done through them. When the present body is gone, animals will take on another body by drawing upon their storehouse of past work (Sanchita Karma). They have no conscience, hence they have no merit or demerit. They have obviously got intelligence, but there it ends. Only men can do fresh work, because they have got a conscience. They only have got the idea of bondage, which other

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\* A line of Ramprasad.

creatures have not. Only when there is the idea of bondage, can there be the real effort for liberation. Don't you see how a prisoner struggles to get his release? It is only with the idea that the world is a cause of bondage, that a man can strive for liberation. It is his failure to understand this that takes him through the endless labyrinth of births and deaths.

You, of course, know the story of a bird called Homa which Sri Ramakrishna used to relate. As soon as the young bird gets its eyes opened and sees that it is falling to the ground, it straightway flies up. Therein lies the way to safety. There are found many men also, who, as soon as they are conscious of their position, go straight up.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "The granny likes the play to go on." I said to him, "But what of that? Why should *I* play?" He at once rebuked me saying, "Bah! How selfishly you talk! The whole bliss is in the continuance of the game. The granny dislikes those players who prefer to loiter about her. But she stretches forth her hand to one who after a vigorous play comes back to touch her. Haven't you noticed how, in a game of dice, the expert player sometimes gives up an invulnerable position willingly? He plays again and by a few masterly throws of the dice gets back to his former position."

I asked him if this was possible. He answered, "Yes, quite possible. Must not a man believe in the infinite power of God? Should a man who, when a fish-bone sticks in his throat, touches the feet of a cat in humble supplication and makes obeisance to a date-tree, dare to deny God! What do you mean? Well, you prattle about knowledge, but He has subjected man to the curse of sleep which renders him so helpless that even a dog



might kick him in that state and he might not know anything of it !”

Ah, how forcibly he would impress things on us !

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## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Is the caste system an essential part of Hinduism? This is one of the most important questions that are often asked both in the press and on the platform. Different people give different answers to this question. There is an extreme section of the reformers who hold that the caste system has nothing to do with the Hindu religion. Perhaps the inequalities, anomalies and excrescences of the caste system, as it exists to-day, are so very prominent in the eyes of this school as to outweigh all other considerations. In their just and moral indignation at the cruelties practised in the name of caste and in their natural eagerness and enthusiasm to see this disgraceful stain removed from Hindu Society, they are irresistibly driven to the conclusion that the caste system itself need not and does not form an integral part of Hinduism.

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Although the social reform movement is nothing new in our country, the problem of the depressed or suppressed classes, as some would regard them, has come into great prominence only after Mahatma Gandhi threw himself heart and soul into it. So early as 1920, he wrote :— “If the inhuman treatment of the Panchamas were a part of Hinduism, its rejection would be a paramount duty both for them (the depressed

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 classes) and for those like me who would not make a fetish even of religion and condone every evil in its sacred name. But I believe, untouchability is no part of Hinduism. It is rather its excrescence to be removed by every effort.”

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As is characteristic with Mahatma Gandhi, he could not rest satisfied with simply arriving at a conclusion. He sought an effective means for its solution with all his energy and will power. He gave to the question of the removal of untouchability the first rank in importance in his Non-co-operation movement. Rightly did he observe :—  
 “Swaraj is unattainable without the removal of the sin of untouchability, as it is without Hindu-Muslim Unity. Untouchability could not be given a secondary place on the programme. Without the removal of the taint, Swaraj is a meaningless term. Workers should welcome social boycott and even public execration in the prosecution of their work.” Mainly through his influence the Indian National Congress, for the first time, began to devote its attention to this question, and a comprehensive resolution was adopted at its annual session.

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As for ourselves, we too are deeply interested in this question, though our methods are different. The great Swami Vivekananda who was a patriot and a saint in one, gave the following plan to his followers. “You must,” said he, “make all and every thing work through the vitality of your religion; let all your nerves vibrate through the backbone of your religion. \* \* \* 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.” The life of Sri Ramakrishna, so grand and great, also furnishes a key to the most effective solution of the problem of untouchability. It is well known how that Brahmin Sannyasin, born and bred in an orthodox family, used to wake up at the dead of night, enter surreptitiously the house of a Pariah and cleanse his latrine with the long tuft of his hair day after day in order that he might be the servant of all. His life as well as teachings show how by humble and loving service of all a Hindu should seek to uplift himself and the masses that are generally looked down upon.

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Even those of the orthodox section of the Hindus who have a soft corner in their hearts for the Varnashrama Dharma, cannot defend the practice of untouchability on any valid and rational grounds. Hinduism proclaims as the ultimate truth that Atman is everything and everything is Atman. The Upanishads which are looked upon as the final authority by a Hindu, ring with the same note. The teachings of the Gita are also not less clear on this point, as is evidenced by the following verse :—

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

—“The knowers of the Self look with an equal eye on a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a Pariah.” Lest this should be regarded merely as an overdrawn description of the great souls who have attained illumination and not a general rule

of conduct to be followed by the ordinary run of mankind, we shall turn to that portion of the teachings of the Gita which the Lord declares as the science par excellence, the king among the sciences. This kingly knowledge forms the ninth chapter, and let us turn our attention thereto with reference to the problem before us. It has been spoken there that the Lord is the same to all beings, and that none is a special object of love or hatred to Him.

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What is noteworthy here is that the Lord expressly says that in His estimation all are equal and no one is superior or inferior, the invidious distinction of the high and the low, the touchable and the untouchable, that obtains in society, being a human creation. The Lord is not satisfied with this emphatic declaration of the equality of all. In order to remove any possible doubt that might linger in the minds of men, He further takes the most crucial instance of a wicked person and say :— “Even if a bad character worships Me, he should be regarded as good, for very soon he becomes righteous. Those born of sin, the Sudras and others, may attain, if they so desire, to the Supreme Goal.” We have been at pains to make our position clear by a detailed reference to the Gita, solely because that book is accepted by almost all the sections of the Hindus as authoritative.

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We are aware that notwithstanding such decisive and unmistakable injunctions of the Gita and such other scriptures, the sin of untouchability has been and is being practised, and not only that, but is also being defended by some Hindus, even at the



present day. As we know from history this was not the case till a few centuries before the advent of the British. We have sufficient reasons to believe that the caste system, originally devised for the efficiency and solidarity of society and based on the principle of amicable division and distribution of work, came subsequently to be rigid and petrified, and this at a recent period of Indian history. Whatever be the causes, inherent or adventitious, that led to the dislocation and deterioration of the caste system, the advanced and enlightened section of the Hindus are now agreed that the curse of untouchability, among all other evils, ought to be removed by all means immediately.

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But with regard to the methods to be adopted for remedying this evil, we differ from those who advocate a policy that is inimical to natural reform brought about by a thorough programme of constructive work. It may be that owing to the temporary moral pressure of the suffering of a few self-sacrificing men, the authorities may be forced in some cases to throw open the temples and roads to the depressed classes for which they are fighting here and there. But we are afraid that it will not solve the problem, so long as there is no change of heart and attitude of the orthodox section. Let there be an amicable settlement based on mutual understanding and goodwill. The higher classes who have deprived the lower classes of their legitimate social rights, should first of all be roused to a sense of justice and love towards their fellowmen. Side by side, the depressed classes should be helped substantially, so that they may learn to stand on their own legs and recover

their lost self-consciousness and self-respect by an improvement effected in their habits, morals and economic status.

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Swami Vivekananda, whose heart always bled for the unfortunate and the fallen, again and again pleaded the cause of the depressed classes. In recognition of their more pressing and just claims for increased facilities and scope for self-development, he says :—“If the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, spend no more money on the Brahmin’s education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed. If the Brahmin is born clever, he can educate himself without help. If the others are not born clever, let them have all the teaching and the teachers they want. This is justice and reason as I understand it. Our poor people, these down-trodden masses of India, therefore, require to hear and know what they really are. Aye, let every man, woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good.”

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We must try to realise in practice ourselves the Vedantic ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature and preach it to all. Then, as the Swamiji used to say, even a despised Pariah will have the courage to tell his high caste brother, “I am as good a man as you; I am a Pariah, you are a philosopher; I have the same God in me, as you have in you.” Side by side with the



preaching of the Vedanta, we shall have to improve the economic condition of the suppressed classes. For, in modern times poverty is the greatest curse and crime, and all prestige and culture go with wealth. Do we not find the majority of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, in and round the Himalayas, sunk in deep ignorance, working as coolies and leading their wretched life from day to day, even as the depressed classes do in the plains? The work of service and reform is bound to be a long, thankless and tedious task, entailing much sacrifice on those who will take it up. But as the national well-being and prosperity demand it, we must take it up at once and without further delay.

## HOW CAN WE INCREASE OUR LOVE AND DEVOTION TO GOD?

*(Class-Talk at Oakland, California, U. S. A.)*

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA.

It is a common experience with those who wish to live a religious life, that though the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. We want to be more spiritual, we want to be better, we want to improve, but we do not know just how to go about it; and what we want to do we often fail to carry into practice. We want to love God, we want to be devotional, but we find ourselves deficient. And so the question is often asked: "How can we cultivate love and devotion to God?"

Perhaps one time or another every one of us has asked this question, if not to others, at least to our-

selves. We all know that we cannot progress in spirituality without devotion. Without love and devotion to God, how can we approach Him, how can we come closer to Him? And without coming closer to Him and without becoming more intimate with Him, how can we expect to advance spiritually?

To become spiritual means to realise more about Truth; and God is the only Truth there is. God is the everlasting, unchangeable Truth. So this Truth, this absolute, eternal Truth, we must come to know and love.

Truth means, 'That which is.' That which is and remains and always has been, is Truth. And that Truth is God. God alone is eternal. Therefore do the Hindu scriptures say that God alone is true, all else is false. That means, God alone is eternal, without beginning and without end. All else is subject to change and decay.

Now Bhakti means love and devotion to God. And we all know that what we love, is constantly in our memory. So it is said that Bhakti means constant remembrance of God. What we love we desire. And what we desire we think of. So Bhakti means always thinking of God. But that thinking must be accompanied with a strong desire to know, to attain to Him. It must be an eager and continuous remembrance. And such constant remembrance, such constant and loving thought of God, when it becomes intense, is called meditation.

Meditation has been compared to an unbroken stream of oil poured from one vessel into another. To meditate on God means to think of Him constantly without a break, just as oil flows without a break when poured from one vessel into another. The more we love God, the more we will think of Him, the more we will meditate on Him.



Now our question, 'How can we increase our love for God?'—is a very important question, a question that we cannot afford to ignore if we want to advance towards Truth and Freedom.

Sometimes we get impatient, we find that we do not progress, that our practices bring little results, or even, that we cannot practise at all. The mind is restless and thinks of all kinds of nonsense when we want to think of God. So we give up all attempts and go on as ordinary worldly people do, just passing through life from one day to another, without any struggle on our part to become better, to advance on our path of evolution. This no doubt is a sad condition, a condition from which we must try to shake ourselves free. Otherwise our love and devotion, instead of increasing, will diminish and die out altogether. That is why it is good and helpful to ask the question : "How can we increase our love for God?"

The Upanishads declare : "This Atman, or God, is not to be attained through various sciences, nor by intellectual discussions, nor by study of the Vedas. Whomsoever does the Atman choose, by him the Atman is attained, unto him the Atman reveals Himself."

And whom does God choose to reveal Himself to? He chooses His Bhaktas, His devotees, those who love Him and worship Him. If we go towards God one step, God comes ten steps in our direction. If we love Him, He loves us ten times more. Sri Ramakrishna says : "Love and devotion towards God is the one thing necessary. Have love, and the rest will come of itself." So we see how important it is that we cultivate that love and devotion. Sri Krishna also observes that even a little effort in that direction brings great results. So, if we make an attempt

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 on our part, God will not forsake us. His helping hand is always stretched out towards those who seek him. And the more we struggle, the sooner we shall attain Him. The greater the effort, the greater the result.

We must not become impatient if we do not succeed at once. Once a young student went to a teacher to learn about Brahman. But he was impatient. He did not want to undergo the necessary discipline; he wanted to attain God at once. His teacher tried to help him and teach him. But the boy did not care for all that. "Sir," he said, "as one may say, this is a cow or a horse, even thus show me the Brahman." And what did the teacher reply? "My son," he said, "you cannot see with ordinary eyes Him who is the consciousness within you,—the power behind the eyes. You cannot see the true seer of sight, nor hear the hearer of hearing. He is your self who is within all. Try to know Him, for all else is of evil."

The teacher cannot show us God unless we make a great effort to see Him. He cannot prove to us even that there is God unless our mind is prepared to understand his words. To know something about God we have to cultivate love and devotion towards Him. And we have to do this with all our heart and soul.

This is a mistake that many make,—they think that they want God, and that they pray to Him sincerely. But when their prayer is not answered at once, they say: "Oh, well, I knew it was no use praying." Prayer in such a spirit will never be answered. We must pray to God with childlike trust and faith. And we must learn how to pray. You know, some children have a peculiar way of asking for a thing. Their request is almost a demand. And naturally, no one feels inclined to comply with their



request. What would have been granted had they asked in a gentle, loving manner, is denied them because they ask in an irritated, commanding voice. Such children do not know how to ask, and consequently they do not receive.

It is very much the same in our relationship with God. "Oh, well, I know I will not get it, but I will pray anyhow." That is not the right state of mind to approach God in. God is Love, and He is attracted by love. Like attracts like. The lover of God knows how to ask, and his prayers are answered; just as a loving, gentle child gets almost anything it asks from friends or parents.

Again some aspirants go to a teacher, but in their heart of hearts they think: "Oh, we don't think he knows so much, but let us go to him anyhow and let us see what he has to say." You may rest assured that such persons will come back disappointed. That is not the way to seek God or to go to a teacher for enlightenment. Truth is found by those who are pure and simple of heart. To such Truth reveals itself.

There is a very nice custom observed in India. When people want to ask a favour of God, they first do some good act. They help and feed poor people, or they dig a well for general use in the village, or they make a new road for public convenience. That means, they make some sacrifice to express the sincerity of their prayer. If they want a favour from God, they are also willing to do a favour to their fellow-beings. Or they perform some penance.

And when they go to a teacher, they do not go in a hurry with their hearts filled with pride; no, they prepare themselves to approach the teacher in the right frame of

mind. Perhaps they fast and pray that the Guru's words may enlighten them. And then they offer him a little present, humbly sit at his feet, and wait till they are invited to speak. They wait and watch and try to catch the words that may be of benefit to them. And these words they gather up in their hearts, and they carry these home as a great treasure. They meditate on the teacher's words, and they do as the teacher tells them to do.

This is called Guru-Bhakti, or devotion towards the teacher. This is not encouraging priestcraft as some may think; it means simply trust in the teacher. And when there is this simple trustful relationship between student and teacher, the teacher's words will have great effect and the student will be greatly helped.

You have all heard of the great Vedantist, Sankaracharya. He certainly was not a superstitious man. He had a gigantic intellect, and he was a great reformer. He preached the highest monism. And even he advocated and practised himself this Guru-Bhakti. And we find this taught in all the Hindu scriptures. In the Swetaswatara Upanishad it is said: "Whoso has the highest love for God and for the Guru as for God, to that great-souled one the truth here taught shines in full."

But, of course, we need not accept every one who sets himself up as a teacher, as our Guru. Gurus, real spiritual preceptors, are very rare. And so are real disciples. Both have to be of wonderful capability, the scripture says, the one to give, the other to receive. It is not easy to be a true disciple, just as it is not easy to be a true teacher. This is a very important point in the Vedantic teachings and in the teachings of every great religion.



“Give me an humble and contrite heart,” was Father John’s constant prayer. “An humble and contrite heart, Oh Lord, Thou despisest not.” Humility, lowliness, meekness,—these are the qualities that draw the soul towards God and fill it with love and devotion. When the heart is pure there will be simplicity and trust and hope and cheerfulness. And these are the qualities that increase our love and devotion to God.

Don’t we see it always that God reveals Himself to the simple and pure in heart? The purer the heart, the nearer is God. And the nearer God is, the purer and simpler is the heart. See how sweet and simple are the saints. Read their lives and see how childlike they are. They trust in God as a child in its mother. Sri Rama-krishna used to tell his disciples: “If you want to be Bhaktas, you must become like little children. You need not study or practise austerities. Only become like children before the Divine Mother. Look up to God as a child looks up to its mother, and resign yourself to Him as a baby is resigned when resting in its mother’s arms. Then your love and devotion to God will increase very much.”

Don’t worry or be over-anxious. The child does not worry over this or that. It has full trust in its mother and fully believes that its mother will look after it and take care of it. So the devotee knows that the Lord looks after His own creation and that whatever happens, happens by His will. Only he wants to be always close to God, his Beloved.

Don’t we see every day of our lives that worrying does not bring us any further? Things happen as they are ordained. God’s will comes to pass, whether we

like it or not. And He knows what is best for every one of us. So we can put our trust and reliance on Him. We do not always know what is good for us; we grope in the dark; but God knows. So let us be content with what He does and ordains for us.

Some people profess to love God. But their love lasts only so long as all goes well with them. When obstacles come in their way or things do not turn out as they like, they lose faith and begin to blame God. That is not Bhakti. The true devotee loves God under all conditions. The saints have prayed even for misfortune because they find that under adverse conditions their hearts go out towards God more earnestly.

I once read a story of a minister to the Sultan of Turkey. This man was in great favour with the Sultan, and he became very rich. But once he committed an act of indiscretion, and the Sultan drove him from the court and confiscated all his property. The once rich man became a beggar. But his spirit was not daunted, and though he had committed a mistake he was a true devotee. He bought some fruits with the money that was left him, and this he began to sell to passers-by in the street. One day when he was seated in one of the streets of Constantinople, an old friend of his, passing by that way, saw him and feeling very sorry, began to sympathise with him. But the poor man said: "My friend, why do you sympathise with me that way? For twenty years the good Lord has kept me in wealth and power, and now He has put me in poverty and disgrace. Should I not be thankful that He kept me in affluence for so many years?"

You see, this man was a true devotee. His love



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 for God was the same under all conditions. He did not love God when all went well, and then curse Him when things went wrong. His love for God was constant and was beyond the touch of worldly conditions.

What a happy state it must be not to be moved by worldly conditions! Let us be happy and contented, no matter what comes to us, knowing that God loves us and will give us only what is best for us. Suffering also has its use, though we may not always understand it. And so have pain and adverse circumstances their use. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam the Lord says: "None are so unfortunate as those who crave earthly blessings from Me. Slowly do I steal away and cause to vanish the wealth and material prosperity of those whom I favour." The Bhaktas know that the Lord is the wealth of those who possess nothing, of those who have renounced all desire of possession.

Our love for God should always be increasing. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that our love for God should be as great as the love of a miser for his gold, the love of a mother for her child and the love of a lover for his beloved combined. That is true Bhakti. And that kind of Bhakti we should try to cultivate. A great devotee prayed to God: "Oh, Lord, keep in my heart that same intense love for Thee, that the worldly minded have for the fleeting objects of the senses. Let my meditation be always directed towards Thee."

See how much we still have to learn, how much we still have to change before we can be called Bhaktas. But, all that can be done in an instant. It need not be a long process. It can be done in a moment. It can

be done through one act of self-surrender. He who surrenders himself to God absolutely is a true devotee.

To do this, God must be to us a living reality. Our love for Him must become an active, living fact. We must meditate on Him in some form or other. Our love for Him cannot grow unless we single Him out as the only object worthy of our entire attachment. This is called Nishtha in Sanskrit. We must have Nishtha, the concentrated, single-minded devotion towards God.

We have to consider therefore : What is God? Vedanta says that God is Brahman,—Knowledge-Bliss-Existence Absolute. But this Brahman also has a personal aspect. And then He is called Ishvara, the Lord, the Creator and Preserver of the universe. The Lord, Ishvara, however, comes still closer to His creation by incarnating Himself from time to time as man amongst men. And then He is called an Avatara, or, a Son of God. So the Lord has appeared on earth many times, as Krishna, as Rama, as Buddha, as Jesus, etc. So when we worship one of these Avataras, it is the same as worshipping God. And so the Hindu saints worship Vishnu and Siva and others, and the Buddhists worship Lord Buddha, and the Christians worship Lord Jesus, and so on. But it is always the same God that is worshipped, the One Spirit that incarnates on earth at different times, under different names, to fulfil different missions, to help humanity and lead them on in the path of truth and righteousness.

We have all read and heard about these great Sons of God. And when we closely study their careers, we cannot help loving them. Who can remain indifferent, reading of the great renunciation of Buddha, or the wonderful love of Jesus? So we may, each one for himself, select one



of these manifestations and worship the God of our choice. And whomsoever of these Incarnations do we choose to worship, in Him we should focus our entire love and devotion. In Him we should trust, to Him we should surrender ourselves. He is our Lord and Saviour: we should meditate on His divine qualities and pray to Him.

The God of one's choice is called in Vedanta 'the chosen Ideal.' If Jesus appeals to us most, then, naturally, we shall worship Jesus. With another it may be Krishna, or Buddha, it matters not. But whomsoever we have chosen, to Him we should be true. Him we should try to love and adore and remember always. To Him we should offer our every action in life, Him we should serve as we think He is served best. And that is devotion towards God.

Our devotion may take many and different forms. First of all, there are our devotional practices—prayer, meditation, reading of scriptures, singing His praise, lovingly thinking of His divine attributes and sweet personality, uttering of His name, etc. And then we may do many things in the name of God, many little acts of kindness towards others. Or, perhaps, we have some moral defects of which we are conscious that they are displeasing to God. These we may try to correct in His name, to please Him. And then, we must do our duties, our daily duties, faithfully and cheerfully; for God has placed us here, and He has given us these duties to perform.

The Bhakta has to observe all these things. It is not always easy, but it brings great peace of mind if we can continue in these practices. The Bhaktas who live this kind of life, tell us that they would never want to go back to the ordinary life of the worldly man. They feel

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 happy in the knowledge that they are trying to serve God to the best of their ability. And the Lord also rewards them and fills their hearts with joy.

You know, God speaks to us always from within. In the most sinful man even, God's voice is not entirely silenced. We always have a conscience to tell us what is right and wrong. The saints have this conscience highly developed. They can hear the still, small voice from within, the voice of God. Sometimes that voice speaks so loud that people think it comes from outside, and they look about to see who is speaking. But there is no one in sight, and then they discover that the voice comes from within.

I know a saintly man who was guided by the divine voice all his life. He always obeyed the voice. It led him not only into a life of great renunciation, but also of great saintliness and blessedness. He once told me that nothing on earth would be able to take him away from a life of holiness; no wealth or power could induce him to forsake his God. He was so happy to have God with him always as a true and loving companion. He was never alone, for his divine friend, his God, was always with him, talking to him, teaching him, loving him. He was the most cheerful, the happiest man I have ever met. Of such a state one of the Upanishads says : "The happiness that belongs to a mind which by deep meditation has been washed clean from all impurities, and has entered within the Lord, cannot be described by words; it can be felt only."

It is our mind that binds us and puts us in all kinds of trouble and misery, because we are so attached to the world. But if we were attached to God, nothing would



be able to bind us; we would be free at once. So we must cultivate this love for God and give up our attachment for this world. And we must shun sin and evil company.

Sin cannot approach us if our mind is on God. There is a beautiful Sloka which says: "As birds and deer don't approach a burning forest, so sins never approach those who know Brahman."

The true Bhakta is free from sin. Sin comes to him who always thinks of himself. But the Bhakta has no time to think of himself; his mind is always on God, his Beloved. The more we forget ourselves, the less will be our sins. Hatred, jealousy, covetousness, all these evil propensities fly away from the Bhakta. He who loves God with a true and sincere heart, can feel no hatred towards any of His creatures. He who wants to possess only God, cannot be covetous, for he does not care for the things of this world. And he is free from lust. It is the body idea that brings so much misery in the world. It is the cause of all our selfishness. If we realised that we are Spirit—children of God, what then would we care for our bodies, or for all these worldly possessions? So the Bhakta says: "Lord, I have nothing, I want nothing. I place myself at Thy feet, do with me as Thou thinkest best." All care, all anxiety is gone. And this state of resignation brings that peace that passes all understanding. The soul is then free from all worldly attachment.

The aim of the Bhakta is very high. He does no longer want to spend his time in reasoning and arguing and philosophising about God. He wants to realise God, he wants to see Him, to talk to Him, to feel His presence.

And can we think of any greater joy and happiness

than to have God for our friend, to have Him as our dear companion?

Therefore let us strive with all our heart to cultivate love and devotion towards God, that in the end we may attain Him. And then peace and happiness will be ours for all eternity.

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## THE PRESENT MOVEMENTS AND THEIR POSSIBILITIES.

BY KHAGENDRA NATH SIKDAR, M.A.

The movements in India present a veritable riddle to most of the serious thinkers of the country; and their importance and possibilities can hardly be brought within the range of human comprehension unless their inner psychology is properly understood, and the mists that hang over them are dissipated by the keen rays of a searching analysis. India has ever been the centre of attraction for the different races of the world and the meeting-ground of manifold forces. The influx of these various currents of ideas into the vortex of Indian civilisation has always been the fruitful sources of the readjustment of her social conditions and the clarification of her political atmosphere; but the fundamental spiritual basis of Indian life has not undergone any alteration in spite of so many social and political transformations varying with the spirit of the different ages. It is an outstanding phenomenon that after a period of passivity and listlessness there comes in every age and every clime a wave of forces, which breaks down the encrustations of ages and opens anew all the silted channels of national life and, to crown all, resuscitates the dormant energies of humanity. An electric current seems to pass through and galvanise every limb and every part of the living organism, and there is, consequently, a spontaneous outburst of



activities in different spheres. Such is indeed the condition of India to-day. A spirit of rejuvenescence has again come upon her after a long period of morbidity and slumber. The political atmosphere of India is electric to-day, and the manifold movements that have been set on foot by the master-minds of the age have inspired gloomy forebodings in most minds. The social conditions which stand in need of a thorough revision and readjustment have also taken a new turn. Thus these movements sparkling with manifold possibilities testify unmistakably to a general ferment in the country.

But this ferment, it must be understood, is not merely an accident, but is the result of an age-long silent action of some dynamic forces which have been guiding and moulding the destinies of the country. Even if we ransack the history of Europe which is the matrix of material civilisation, it will be seen that just before the inauguration of the modern age in Europe various democratic movements of the sort now sweeping over India, were going on there in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The latter was practically an age of popular movements which facilitated the steady growth of the consciousness of individual and collective rights among the people. The forces that brought into being the social and political movements had been at work even in the middle ages but they found their fullest expression in the above two centuries as well as in the subsequent ages. The Renaissance and the Reformation were but the expressions of the spirit of restiveness engendered by an unnatural strangulation of legitimate human aspirations under the stifling influence of the mediæval "churchianity". The Renaissance opened up the eyes of the dumb millions to the actualities of the situation, and the Reformation coming in its wake clarified the social, political and religious atmosphere of Europe. The oppressive trammels of the mediæval system gradually crumbled to pieces as the lower classes forced their way upwards. Europe thus came to be divided vertically, instead of, as before, horizontally.

The present movements of India bear a good deal of resemblance to those of Europe. The Indian "Leviathan" has been roused to-day from its benumbing torpor by the sound of the alarm and at the sight of the impending socio-political catastrophe terribly hanging overhead like the sword of Damocles for its utter annihilation. There is a lively stir and commotion among the masses as a result of the accumulation of forces under the ægis of the by-gone prophets as well as of the modern great actors in the socio-political drama of Indian life. The past and the present developments of the country bear out the fact that our social and political resurrection is inextricably bound up with our spiritual resurgence. The rabid political enthusiasts might in their blinding self-conceit ignore the inner current of spirituality which has been regulating the different gamuts of Indian aspirations and pursuits. But this studied ignorance may with safety be treated with indifference in view of the fact that the leaders of the present movements are trying to be armed with "Renunciation and self-sacrifice"—the only invincible weapons in the hands of the mild Indians. Besides, it is a fact to-day that behind these kaleidoscopic changes and the rapid march of events in the cinematograph of Indian activities, there is that dynamic spiritual force which has ever been the formative factor in India's social, political and religious movements.

But leaving aside the inner psychology of these present movements, if we turn our eyes to the actual situation, we shall be startled to find that those who pose themselves as the custodians of the interests of humanity and are playing with the destinies of their dumb brethren, have failed to envisage the real needs of the hour. They have forgotten that the time for self-conceited isolation has gone by. Even the down-trodden millions will no longer pay an intellectual assent to whatever is done by the pampered wiseacres of the land. But on the contrary there is a growing consciousness among the masses of their legitimate rights and privileges which had



so long been denied to them. So obsessed are we with our own personalities and the fancied notion of our intellectual superiority that we have lost our capacity to understand where the real life of the country pulsates. Let us give up our vain search for it in the whiz and whir of towns where "wine and wassail waken strife", but stand shoulder to shoulder with the peasants and the rustics in their humble cottages, and we shall feel an unprecedented impact of enthusiasm beating in the noble breasts of the dumb millions. This enthusiasm which is now manifest amongst the masses must not be allowed to fizzle out, but rather the narrow bounds within which it remains cooped up, must be expanded so as to enable the people to have more light and life for their future emancipation. It is the duty of the leaders not only to promote and foster but also to guide and control the country's advance on proper paths, and to provide safeguards as far as it is in their power, so that the enthusiasm which a sudden awakening is apt to engender in the minds of men, may not impair or weaken the conservative forces without the constant silent action of which no nation can achieve true greatness and well-being—the forces of respect for order, reverence for law and good custom. No doubt the wheels of all such movements must glide along the path of national improvement; but they must not be allowed to run amuck and thus go to rack and ruin. It will remain as a standing blot on the pages of Indian history if even now the privileged few who talk so much of their spirituality, catholicity and broader intellectual outlook and sympathy, do not come down from their tower of callous isolation and extend to their fellow-brethren the rights and privileges so long monopolised by them. The fate of India is trembling in the balance to-day, and she stands in need of being divided vertically instead of, as before, horizontally. And it is a foregone conclusion that unless the doors of equality and fraternity are opened to the masses, unless there is a thorough readjustment of the social conditions at this psychological hour, the bright possibilities with which the

present movements are fraught, might in the near future be neutralised by the common ruin of the mighty "Samson" and the hard-hearted "Philistines."

## RELIGION—ITS NEED AND IMPLICATION.

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA.

The whole world seems to be rushing headlong into the vortex of destruction. As in individual life, so in the life of nations, we do not actually know what we are doing and what we should do. The ball has been set rolling. It is going down lower and lower, and in vain do we try to stop it. Some power has thrown an apple of discord into human society, and we are bitterly fighting with one another, though we hardly know what that fighting is for. Somehow or other peace has gone from the world. Long it will remain a cherished hope to get it back, however fondly we may be expecting the birth of a new saviour to do this. At present we are, as it were, in a melting pot, boiling day and night within and without. Though the less sensitive few amongst us have been trying to cover up the wretched state of things with polished ideas, it remains ever the same. It is strange that the distress of the world has not as yet been sufficient to call up another Buddha or Christ to give up the throne or to die on the cross for the redemption of humanity.

No wonder that at such a crisis we see numberless societies and associations starting up like mushrooms and professing that they have, after all, found out the panacea for the existing evils. But the pity is that each of them adds fresh difficulties and makes the situation worse. Fight between nation and nation, sectarian and religious quarrel, clash of individual interest and conflict of ideals—all these have combined and robbed our peace and rest. Can religion save us?—is a question that suggests itself when all other means have failed.

If we look into the history of the world and study carefully the critical periods it passed through, we see



that it was religion that, commanding all the forces of good, came to the rescue and restored the lost balance and order of society. But unfortunately for us religion has almost been ousted from the world now. Of late the land of the children of Christ saw a deluge of bloodshed and has not as yet been able to regain its normal state. The nation of Sri Ramachandra and Sri Krishna has become a sleeping leviathan, with no strength and vitality to adjust itself to the changed conditions of life. To whom will the people go for religion? Everywhere, whether in the East or in the West, the priests and clergymen, the supposed custodians of religion, have fallen from the higher ideals of life and lack real spirituality. They cannot therefore satisfy the cravings of earnest souls, even though they consider that they possess the key to heaven. Religion, which is truly speaking realisation and manifestation of the inborn Divinity of man, has become, in the hands of the so called spiritual ministers, a set of dogmas grounded in intellectual assent or dry routine work. Rites and ceremonials have taken the place of earnestness, sincerity and faith.

Naturally, the generality of people are frightened out of their wits at the name of religion. They avoid the precincts of religious life, because the intricacies that have been invented are too much for them. But if they are given to understand that religion in its essence is a very simple thing—it is being and becoming what men really are—they may give up this unnatural dread. The fundamental principles of religion, sifted from the useless stuff that has gathered round it from time to time, should be brought home and presented to them in popular forms.

Now the great question is: Can religion be given at all? Is the imparting of spirituality possible? Some are of opinion that it is not a thing that can be transmitted. Ideas of science, literature, history, art and philosophy can of course be given. But religion, being an entirely personal affair of the inmost recesses of our hearts, cannot be instilled from outside. It is too subtle and ethereal. There is no external access to the place where religion

grows. But we think this is more or less the case with all kinds of education, secular or spiritual. In the strict sense of the term, education is a growth from within. Outside help simply serves as a stimulus. What is not within cannot be supplied from without. The song that is not in the record cannot be drawn out by any gramophone in the world. You cannot hammer a dullard who has nothing of music and poetry in him into a violinist or a poet. Hence as in intellectual training so in spiritual education all that the teachers can do is to quicken the latent possibilities of the aspirants and help their inward growth.

Let us take concrete examples furnished by the lives of the prophets, saints and sages, and consider in their light the truth of what we have stated above. Chaitanya Deva transformed the life of Jagai and Madhai who were confirmed rogues and pests to the society of those times. Christ reclaimed Mary Magdalene and others who were fallen in public estimation, and led them Godward. Sri Ramakrishna accepted as a disciple Girish Chandra Ghose, the late actor-dramatist of Bengal, who was highly intemperate, and gave a good turn to his life. In this way many scoundrels have turned into saints through the benign influence of religious teachers. But we should bear in mind that in all these cases what the teachers did was simply to stimulate the natural growth of the hidden divine qualities of those persons by love, blessing and advice. So we cannot say that religion cannot be imparted. Let us rather confess that we do not know the method.

It is true that Buddha, the enlightened one, was not, strictly speaking, indebted to any one for the vision of the blessed state of Nirvana that he obtained and preached. We cannot say that Sankara would not have been the prophet and seer that he was but for extraneous aid. The world did not create such figures, rather they came to reform the world. The world did not show them the way; rather they illumined its benighted path and led mankind to its haven of peace and blessedness. Such teachers evinced from their very birth an inborn religious



tendency coupled with an intense hankering after God. They rushed, as it were, towards their cherished ideals, heedless of consequences, and the external forces only accelerated their speed.

But such personalities are few and far between. They come after long intervals. The majority of us are in the dark, groping helplessly one way or another. On the quicksand of life few of us have got any firm stand wherefrom we can look upon ourselves as safe and secure and call out to others on the way to being drowned to come by our side, and rescue them from an imminent danger. Then are we doomed? No. Considering that we are all sparks of the Divine Effulgence, that we are all children of the same Heavenly Father, we need not despair. Let us feel in our heart of hearts that the state we are in is only a passing phase which cannot last long. Let us be earnest and sincere. Help is bound to come as it came in the lives of those who struggled from a lower state and raised themselves to saintliness.

One word to the professional teachers of religion who go about preaching and helping others out of darkness. They should bear in mind that what is essential in spiritual ministration is life. Let the life of the teacher speak rather than his tongue. The silence that results from higher visions is more potent than volumes of empty lectures and discourses. The Shastras abound with theories and principles as well as rules and regulations for the guidance of man. But the aspirants lacking in discrimination and right understanding often get confounded in their mazes. Living examples of men who have themselves realised the Truth or tried sincerely to realise it, have always been more effective in all countries. Rightly does the Swami Vivekananda say:—"What the world wants to-day, is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God." Such a handful of men is quite sufficient to revolutionise the world. In the absence of such powerful agencies, evangelical activities, if undertaken at all, should be done in a spirit of service. The teachers who are familiar with

the scriptures should not walk with airs of superiority, but rather behave themselves as servants of society. Let them carry the higher principles of religion to the door of all in a spirit of humility and thus be helped themselves by helping others.

## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

### CHAPTER XII.

उद्धव उवाच ।

यस्त्वयाभिहितः पूर्वं धर्मस्त्वद्भक्तिलक्षणः ॥  
वर्णाश्रमाचारवतां सर्वेषां द्विपदामपि ॥ १ ॥  
यथानुष्ठीयमानेन त्वयि भक्तिर्नृणां भवेत् ॥  
स्वधर्मेणारविन्दाक्ष तत्तमाख्यातुमर्हसि ॥ २ ॥

Uddhava said :

1—2. Thou hast already<sup>1</sup> spoken of religion which makes for devotion to Thee, and is meant for all human beings with or without the observances of caste and order of life ; please tell me, O lotus-eyed One, how by practising that religion for himself a man may attain to devotion to Thee.

[1 *Already*—e.g. in Chapter V.]

पुरा किल महाबाहो धर्मं परमकं प्रभो ॥  
यत्तेन हंसरूपेण ब्रह्मणेऽभ्यास्य माधव ॥ ३ ॥  
स इदानीं सुमहता कालेनामित्रकर्षण ॥  
न प्रायो भविता मर्त्यलोके प्रागनुशासितः ॥ ४ ॥

3—4. The supreme and blissful religion which Thou



O mighty-armed Lord, O Madhava, didst once<sup>1</sup> expound—so it is said—to Brahmâ in Thy Swan-form, has now, O Queller of foes, almost ceased to be in the mortal world, owing to the great passage of time, even though it was once inculcated.

[1 *Once*—The reference is to Chapter VIII.]

वक्ता कर्त्ताविता नान्यो धर्मस्याच्युत ते भुवि ॥

सभायामपि वैरिञ्चरां यत्र मूर्तिधराः कलाः ॥ ५ ॥

5. O Achyuta, there is no other teacher, originator or defender of Religion on earth than Thee, no, not even in the court of Brahmâ, where the sciences<sup>1</sup> are present in visible forms.

[1 *Sciences*—The Vedas etc.]

कर्त्ताऽवित्रा प्रवक्ता च भवता मधुसूदन ॥

त्यक्त्वा महीतले देव विनष्टं कः प्रवक्ष्यति ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Madhusudana, when Thou, the Originator, Defender and Expounder of it wilt leave the earth, Religion too will die. Who, O Lord, will then explain it?

तत्त्वं नः सर्वधर्मज्ञ धर्मस्त्वद्भक्तिलक्षणः ॥

यथा यस्य विधीयेत तथा वर्णय मे प्रभो ॥ ७ ॥

7. Therefore, O Lord, who knowest all religions, please describe to me which of us is fit for that religion which makes for devotion to Thee, and how he is to practise it.

श्रीशुक उवाच ।

इत्थं स्वभृत्यमुख्येन पृष्टः स भगवान्हरिः ॥

प्रीतः क्षेमाय मर्त्यानां धर्मानाह सनातनान् ॥ ८ ॥

Suka said :

8. Thus asked by His own foremost servant, the Lord Hari was pleased and described the time-honoured religions for the good of men.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

धर्म्य एष तव प्रश्नो नैःश्रेयसकरो नृणाम् ॥

वर्णाश्रमाचारवतां तमुद्धव निबोध मे ॥ ९ ॥

The Lord said :

9. This question of thine, O Uddhava, is righteous, for it will promote the highest good of men who observe the duties of caste and order of life. Learn that religion of Me.

आदौ कृतयुगे वर्णो नृणां हंस इति स्मृतः ॥

कृतकृत्याः प्रजा जात्या तस्मात्कृतयुगं विदुः ॥ १० ॥

10. In the beginning, in the Krita or Satya Yuga, men had but one caste which was known as Hamsa. People attained the consummation of their desires from their very birth, and hence the age was called Krita ('achieved').

वेदः प्रणव एवाग्रे धर्मोऽहं वृषरूपधृक् ॥

उपासते तपोनिष्ठा हंसं मां मुक्तकिल्बिषाः ॥ ११ ॥

11. In that primæval age, Om was the Veda, and I was religion in the form of a bull.<sup>1</sup> The people of that age, who were pure and given to contemplation, used to reflect<sup>2</sup> on Me, the Pure One.

[1 *Bull*—The four legs of the bull signify that religion was then intact. In each succeeding Yuga it lost a quarter.

2 *Reflect*—There was no external worship.]

त्रेतामुखे महाभाग प्राणान्मे हृदयात्तयी ॥

विद्या प्रादुरभूत्तस्या अहमासं त्रिवृन्मुखः ॥ १२ ॥

12. At the beginning of the Treta<sup>1</sup> Yuga, O noble soul, the science of the Veda appeared from My<sup>2</sup> heart, through the agency of the Prana. Out of that I became the sacrifice with its threefold adjunct.<sup>3</sup>

[1 *Treta*—This comes immediately after the Satya Yuga.

2 *My*—refers to the Lord's Virat aspect.

3 *Threefold adjunct*—viz., the Hota, Adhvaryu and Udgata, who perform the different functions in connection with a Vedic sacrifice.]



विप्रक्षत्रियविट्शूद्रा मुखबाहूरूपादजाः ॥

वैराजात्पुरुषाज्जाता य आत्माचारलक्षणाः ॥ १३ ॥

13. From the Virat<sup>1</sup> sprang the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively. They were distinguished by their specialised duties.

[1 Virat—The Lord as possessed of a cosmic body.]

गृहाश्रमो जघनतो ब्रह्मचर्यं हृदो मम ॥

वक्षःस्थानाद्ब्रह्मवासो न्यासः शीर्षणि संस्थितः ॥ १४ ॥

14. The householder's life sprang from My thighs, the student life<sup>1</sup> from My heart,<sup>2</sup> the life of retirement into the woods from My chest, and monasticism was on My head.

[1 Student life—with chastity as its chief element.

2 Heart—a position below the chest.]

वर्णानामाश्रमाणां च जन्मभूम्यनुसारिणीः ॥

आसन्नप्रकृतयो नृणां नीचैर्नीचोत्तमोत्तमाः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The tendencies of the different castes and orders of life among men were according to the place<sup>1</sup> of their origin: Inferior positions produced inferior tendencies and superior positions superior ones.

[1 Place &c.—in the body of the Virat.]

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं संतोषः क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ॥

मद्भक्तिश्च दया सत्यं ब्रह्मप्रकृतयस्त्विमाः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Control of mind and the senses, contemplation, cleanliness, contentment, forbearance, straightforwardness, devotion to Me, compassion, and truthfulness—these are the tendencies of the Brahmana.

तेजो बलं धृतिः शौर्यं तितिक्षौदार्यमुद्यमः ॥

स्थैर्यं ब्रह्मण्यतैश्वर्यं क्षत्रप्रकृतयस्त्विमाः ॥ १७ ॥

17. An indomitable spirit, strength, patience, valour, fortitude, liberality, enterprise, steadiness, devotion to

Brahmanas, and lordship—these are the tendencies of a Kshatriya.

आस्तिक्यं दाननिष्ठा च अदम्भो ब्रह्मसेवनम् ॥

अतुष्टिरर्थोपचयैवैश्यप्रकृतयस्त्विमाः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Faith in God, charity, humility, service unto the Brahmanas, and an insatiety from the amassing of wealth—these are the tendencies of the Vaisya.

शुश्रूषणं द्विजगवां देवानां चाप्यमायया ॥

तत्र लब्धेन संतोषः शूद्रप्रकृतयस्त्विमाः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Attending on the Brahmanas, the cows<sup>1</sup> and the gods with sincerity, and being contented with what he gets therefrom—these are the tendencies of the Sudra.

[1 Cows—are held sacred because of their yielding milk out of which the *ghee* for making sacrifices is prepared.]

अशौचमनृतं स्तोत्रं नास्तिक्यं शुष्कविग्रहः ॥

कामः क्रोधश्च तर्षश्च स्वभावोऽन्त्या वसायिनाम् ॥ २० ॥

20. Uncleanliness, falsehood, theft, atheism, barren disputation, lust, anger, and greed—these are the tendencies of a fifth class beyond the pale of the other four.

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयमकामक्रोधलोभता ॥

भूतप्रियहितेहा च धर्मोऽयं सार्ववर्णिकः ॥ २१ ॥

21. Non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from theft, lust, anger and greed, and an effort to do what is agreeable and beneficial to all creatures—this is the common duty of all castes.

(To be continued)



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Nihal, the Musician and other Tales.—By Snehalata Sen. Published by S. Ganesan, Madras. Pp. 143. Price not mentioned.

There is something weird, mystic and supernatural in all the tales. It must be said that the lady writer has the gift of a story teller. The get-up of the book, with a suggestive cover design by the well-known artist Nanda Lal Bose, has become attractive.

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National Problems.—By Chandra Chakravarty. Published by Ram Chandra Chakravarty, M.A., 58, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pp. 155. Price Re. 1.

The author says something or other on all sorts of subjects, as for instance, Agriculture, Widow re-marriage, Birth-control, Newspaper, Malaria, Hookworm Disease, etc., etc. Incidentally he criticises some of the existing social and religious institutions. We shall give one specimen we came across by chance. "Ramkrishna Mission is predestined to die, for she is living on her capital and not on her accrued interest, preaching and practising continence and celibacy. Moreover the conception of God-intoxication, or God-absorption may be a seductive illusion, for soul as a separate existence from the somatic body or its survival after death is, according to modern thinkers, contrary to the biologic and psychologic principles." Comment is superfluous.

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Vichar (Bengali).—By Haridas De. Published by Santi Sadan, Allahabad. Pp. 64. Price Re. 1.

A collection of poems on some of the deepest problems of life. The long list of errata at the beginning shows how carelessly the book was hurried through the press.

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## REPORTS AND APPEALS.

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, for 1923.

The report is a good record of the work of the Home. Among other things we are glad to note the progress of the Residential High School, started in May, 1922 with a view to realise the Gurukula ideal. In addition to the intellectual and spiritual training, it has been arranged that the boys residing at the Home may learn to use their hands, legs and eyes by means of manual occupations. Besides, the internal management rests mostly with the inmates who thus learn self-reliance and self-help. The total strength of the boarders came up to 109 at the end of the year under review. It is noteworthy that the inmates get free board and lodge and are drawn from all classes of the Hindu community of South India. The building for the vocational training classes, begun in 1922, was completed during the year and now includes a carpentry shop, a weaving institute, a smithy and a show-room for drawings.

The total receipts during the year, excluding the endowments, were Rs. 67,589-5-5, and the expenses were Rs. 93,267-5-10, including Rs. 26,900-0-0 advanced for land etc. The balance at the end of the year was Rs. 42,037-3-0. As the Residential School classes are at present held in the living rooms, which causes a great inconvenience, it has become necessary to erect a separate block. We hope that the generous public will continue their hearty support and make the projected building an accomplished fact ere long.

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The Twenty-third Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, from January to December, 1923.

The work of the Home falls under three main heads. I. Indoor service :—(a) Indoor general hospital, (b) refuge for aged invalids, (c) Boys' Home, and (d) Girls' Home.



II. Outdoor service :—(a) Outdoor dispensary, (b) Outdoor relief to poor respectable families, and (c) special emergency relief. III. Spinning and weaving. In the indoor hospital for males, 1,126 patients, including 129 surgical cases, were admitted of whom 887 were discharged cured, 33 left treatment, 65 were still under treatment and 141 died. Out of the 89 beds for general patients and 14 beds for segregation cases, 72 per cent. remained occupied throughout the year. During the year a Male Invalid Block with 25 beds was opened. In the indoor hospital for females there are 113 beds out of which 96 per cent. remained occupied. In the outdoor dispensary 40,749 cases were treated of which 14,927 were new cases.

The Home depends upon public charity. In view of the large extent of work the authorities appeal for permanent funds to put its work on a stable basis.

#### The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban.

This Home of service extends medical and other necessary help to the poor people, specially the helpless pilgrims and Sadhus who visit this place of pilgrimage. During the quarter ending in March, 1924, its work was as follows :—(1) In the indoor dispensary altogether 40 cases were taken up, of which 26 were discharged cured, 1 left treatment, 1 was sent to the Government Hospital at Muttra, 6 died and 6 were still under treatment. (2) In the outdoor dispensary altogether 2,315 cases were treated, of which 639 were new cases. (3) Nine persons who were unwilling to come over to the Sevashrama were nursed and given medical relief at their own places. (4) Four Purdah ladies who had no means of subsistence were helped with a sum of Rs. 21 each per month.

In spite of the great demands upon the Sevashrama, it is a pity that it is labouring under financial difficulties. We hope that the generous public will come forward with substantial help, so that a permanent fund may be created for the efficient working of this philanthropic institution. Contributions may be sent to the Honorary Secretary,

Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, District Muttra, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Howrah.

The Ramakrishna Mission Industrial School, Belur, Howrah.

With the object of making our young men self-reliant, manly and resourceful, the authorities of the Mission opened an Industrial School now located at the Math, Belur. The boys who are admitted there are taught weaving and a little carpentry, beside, literary instruction of the usual type. Everything necessary for the comfort of the students, in addition to free board and lodge, is supplied. The expenses of the school and the boarding house are met by Mushti Bhiksha, subscriptions, donations and free gift of yarn and cotton.

The institution stands in urgent need of (1) a permanent house for the school classes and for the students to live in, (2) funds for more looms, tailoring machines and carpentry instruments, and (3) funds for the maintenance of the boarders. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE MASS EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN CHINA.

In countries where the percentage of illiteracy is very high, a scheme of popular education with lantern slides is very effective. Not only is the method attractive, but it also enables the teachers to handle larger numbers of students.

In the 'Young Men of India' for May, Mr. D. F. McClelland gives a short account of an interesting movement for popular education by the 'visual' method in China. The work was first begun by J. Yen, the Chinese Secretary of the Y. M. C. A., who, encouraged by the



success of the 'visual method,' hit upon a very efficient programme. It consisted—first, in the selection of 1,000 commonly used characters from among the thousands of the Chinese spoken language and the production of a simple, cheap literature, and secondly, in the organising of several cities for purposes of demonstration. The plan of instruction was such that the students could be taught to read and write the thousand selected characters within the shortest possible time. It was found that the course could be completed in ninety six lessons spread over a period of four months. It is interesting to note that the ages of the illiterates receiving education generally varied from ten to fifty.

The effectiveness of this scheme will be evident from the following description given by Dr. Robertson, of the China National Committee: "A very expert teacher is assigned a class of 250 in one room. Lights go out. The stereopticon flashes on the screen coloured pictures, written sentences and enormously magnified individual characters. The teacher directs and then each section often reviews under its own student leader; again, the group as a whole. A powerful sub-conscious action is induced by means of many contacts: eyes see the graphic material, ears hear the voice of the teacher, throats repeat, minds grasp meanings, the hand writes, and 250 other voices pound on the eardrums in unison." Dr. Robertson rightly adds, "The results are not amazing. Students eat and sleep Chinese characters. They come through rain, flood and mud, and will not be denied."

The whole thing reads like a romance, and perhaps it might prove the most simple and sure means of solving the problem of the education of the masses.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF NALANDA.

Nalanda was once a seat of great learning, and its name is familiar to every student of ancient Indian history. Unlike Taxila and Benares, which were the strongholds of Brahmanical culture, Nalanda was a centre of Buddhistic culture. In point of efficient teaching and magnificent

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 establishment the University of Nalanda was almost peerless among the contemporary institutions and might even compete with some of the modern residential Universities of the West. Historians testify to the fact that many students and scholars from different parts of India as well as from the distant countries of China and Tibet used to flock there to prosecute their studies.

In an article appearing in a recent issue of the *Calcutta Review*, Mr. J. N. Samaddar, B.A., an erudite research scholar and professor of the Patna College, brings to light many important and interesting facts about the University of Nalanda. Writing in that connection he rightly observes that the University "fulfilled the dictum of Carlyle that a true University is a collection of books, as well as that of Newman as it was a school of universal learning, implying the assemblage of strangers from all parts in one spot, the alma mater of a host of distinguished logicians, grammarians and philosophers."

Though the question of the exact time of the foundation of the University of Nalanda is debatable, historians are generally unanimous on the point of its site. They localise it somewhere close to Bargaon, at present "a desolate, dust-covered hamlet about eight miles from Rajgir" in Behar. Modern excavations have revealed many interesting traces of some of its huge buildings, walls, gates, towers etc., that speak of its old glory. Hiuen Tsiang, the celebrated Chinese traveller who visited India in the seventh century A.D. and studied there as a student for some years, has left behind a nice account of the University. "The richly adorned towers," says he, "and the fairylike turrets, like pointed hill tops are congregated together. \* \* \* All the outside courts, in which are the priests' chambers, are of four stages. The stages have dragon projections and coloured caves, the pear-red pillars, carved and ornamented, richly adorned balustrades and the roofs covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades, these things add to the beauty of the scene." But unfortunately, save and except the tanks all that now remains of its splendid



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halls, corridors, temples and gates, is simply a heap of mounds, yielding a rich harvest to the archæologists.

As regards the method of teaching followed at Nalanda, it was quite efficient, including both the tutorial and professorial methods that hold good in present day schools and colleges. It afforded ample opportunities for close and intimate contact of the teachers and the pupils, and thus created not only mutual love and confidence but also stimulated an all-round growth in the students. The curriculum of study had in it all the important subjects, religious and secular, which were current in those times. Thus it included, in addition to the Buddhistic scriptures and the Jataka stories, the Vedas, general literature, grammar, logic, metaphysics, medicine, magic and the like. Hence the students who studied there became proficient in the different branches of learning and commanded the respect and admiration of all at home and abroad. The services of some of the scholars and professors from Nalanda were requisitioned by foreign universities, and they added to the name of the mother university.

Of all things Nalanda could be proud of its excellently equipped library that contained a very large collection of general books as well as Hindu and Buddhistic scriptures, affording the students great scope for research. This library consisted of three grand buildings, called Ratnasagar, Ratnodadhi and Rantnaranjaka associated with the three jewels,—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Palæographic evidence goes to show that it was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt till at last it succumbed to the ravages of time.

#### WHAT BAHAIISM CAN OFFER.

The founder of this school of thought was a Persian saint of the nineteenth century, named Mirza Husein Ali, better known by his mystic title Baha Ulla. He came and preached his religion at a time when Persia was badly in need of reformation. The field of his noble work was prepared by the spiritual ministrations and martyrdom of Mirza Ali Mahommed who came before

him and predicted his appearance. After passing through the hard and austere life of a Darbesh, Baha Ulla became illumined and declared himself the Imam Mahdi, the Chosen One. By his saintly character and magnetic personality, he soon created an intensely spiritual atmosphere around him and set to work for the regeneration of his country. The small band of his followers became the nucleus of a religious movement that exists to-day and is doing its evangelical work in its own way.

In a recent issue of the Modern Review Mrs. Stannard gives a short account of the life of Baha Ulla and his religious doctrine. "When Baha Ulla appeared," quotes the writer from a work by the historian, Dr. Esslemont, "he declared that the promulgation of truth by such means (warlike resistance) must on no account be allowed even for purposes of self-defence. He abrogated the rule of the sword and annulled the ordinance of 'Holy War.' 'If ye be slain it is better for you than to slay.' It is through the firmness and assurance of the faithful that the cause of the Lord must be diffused.' This principle of non-resistance to violence propounded by Bahaism has a close resemblance to Mahatma Gandhi's creed of Ahimsa and Satyagraha that is now being resorted to for remedying social and political evils in India and elsewhere.

Baha Ulla had his own conception of the future peace of the world, which if worked out will solve many knotty racial and national problems. Peace and harmony can only be established, according to him, if the stronger nations agree to a universal disarmament and combine to protect the weaker nations. Unlike the usual practice he threw "the responsibility of defence not specially on the nation attacked but on all the others, individually and collectively. The principle underlying this idea is that mankind is one community and should be considered as that when any portion of its unitive life is threatened with hostile intention." The warring nations of the West will do well to take to heart this noble teaching of Bahaism



and come to a better and more sympathetic understanding amongst themselves.

Leaving aside the controversial question of the philosophical grounding of the Bahai movement, we must say that it is doing much good to humanity by trying to reconcile the divergent schools of thought. Already its influence is being felt distinctly among certain sections of Jews, Christians and Moslems.

#### THE LATE SIR ASHUTOSH MUKHERJEE.

It was with a heavy heart that we received the news of the passing away of Sir Ashutosh, one of the brightest jewels India has produced. The sad event took place on the 25th May last at Patna where he had been to conduct a legal case. His death was so sudden, so unexpected and so shocking that it came like a bolt from the blue. A wail has therefore gone forth from the hearts of thousands of his countrymen who are now keenly feeling his want.

His versatile genius combined all that was noble and great. A profound scholar, an astute lawyer, an efficient judge, a sincere patriot and a veteran educationist, Sir Ashutosh was really an object of pride and glory to the country. But it was specially in the field of education that his services were invaluable and unparalleled. The spread of higher education was ever the dearest concern of his life. The Calcutta University, of which he was the Vice Chancellor for several terms, was the centre of his untiring energy and whole-souled devotion, and she owes not a little to Sir Ashutosh for what she is now. The Post-Graduate Department, the initiation of the Research work by the students and the foundation of the University Law College and the Science College are the living testimonies of his labours of love to his alma mater.

Besides his many and various public activities that made him a notable figure in the country, Sir Ashutosh was superb as a private man. His magnetic personality, his independence of character, his large-heartedness, his

appreciation of talents and his simple, suave manners drew around him a big circle of staunch admirers. The student community of Bengal found in him an unfailing source of inspiration and strength, for he was their friend, philosopher and guide in their trials and difficulties.

Sir Ashutosh is no more. All that was earthly and mortal of him has been reduced to ashes. But his rare achievements and services remain and will ever be lovingly cherished as a rich legacy by generations yet to come.

### YOGIN MA.

We are extremely grieved to learn about the passing away of Jogin Ma—one of the foremost lady disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Jogin Ma or Jogin-Mother, as the Sister Nivedita calls her in "The Master as I saw Him," was one of the most fortunate and pious ladies who lived more or less continually in the household of the Holy Mother. She first came in personal contact with Sir Ramakrishna when he was living in the temple garden at Dakshineswar, and surrendered herself completely at his feet on the very first day of her meeting him. She received her initiation from the Master, and used to spend the greater part of the day in various religious practices. Referring to her Sri Ramakrishna once remarked—"This lady is a devotee of rare spiritual attainments. In the fulness of time people will wonder at her many realisations." This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. For after a short period of spiritual practice Jogin Ma used to fall into trances while meditating on God. And later, her saintly character, her unique devotion and remarkable strength of mind always drew the reverence and admiration of all who came in close touch with her.

Jogin Ma was suffering from various ailments for sometime past. But few expected that the end would come so soon. Three days before her passing away she said that she would not be able to talk any more and would like to observe silence, and fell into an apparently unconscious state. She left her mortal



body at 10-30 P.M. on the 4th June last. Jogin Ma has passed into life eternal. But her noble memory will ever continue to be a source of inspiration and strength to all the children of Sri Ramakrishna, lay as well as monastic.

THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT SAN FRANCISCO,  
U. S. A.

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with due solemnity and grandeur at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, on the 9th March, 1924. After a short meditation with prayer by Swami Prakashananda and a song by Mrs. Allan translated from Bengali, the Swami gave an interesting discourse on "Sri Ramakrishna's message to the world."

He said in part:—"Many a soul inebriated with the love of God has blessed this planet of ours, but the study of Sri Ramakrishna's life reveals that his was a unique life. Others came to lay stress on one side of spiritual unfoldment, while his message was so broad and universal that it was meant for the whole human race. We come across the message of harmony in the oldest of the Vedas—'Truth is one, sages call it variously.' But the ideal remained there in seed form, until Sri Krishna preached, 'Whosoever comes to Me, in whatever way, I reach him!' Sri Krishna made the seed grow, as it were, into a plant, and it was left for Sri Ramakrishna to develop it into a big tree, spreading its branches in all directions and giving shelter and help to votaries of all faiths and religions." The Swami concluded his lecture by mentioning one important feature of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings, which was the Motherhood of God, to be realised by looking upon all women as visible representations of the Divine Mother.

Next, Swami Prabhavananda spoke on "The keynote of Sri Ramakrishna's life." He said among other things: "Sri Ramakrishna is the fulfilment of the needs and demands of the present age, and the more the world

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knows about him, the better for the world. His was a life without the least idea of egotism. His whole life was a life of sacrifice for the good of humanity. He came to form no particular sect of his own. But his message was the message of universal religion—that religions are not contradictory, but they all lead to the same Goal.”

#### THE ANANDA-ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, U.S.A.

The members of the Ashrama, an extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, consecrated themselves on the 6th March last to a spirit of universal love and tolerance at a special service held in honour of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, who exemplified in his life the ideals of every great religion.

On the 12th March Swami Paramananda, the monk in charge of the Ashrama, who became the honoured guest of the La Crescenta Women's Club, delivered an address on "The Great Culture of India" and was highly appreciated by all.

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