

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य बरान्निबोधत

Katna उप. i. iii. 4.

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goals reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

29th December, 1920.

Last night from 1 o'clock till the morning the Swami suffered from a very acute nerve pain in one of the big toes. Referring to that he said, "Such pain is extremely unbearable. It may even cause death."

Luckily, by the massaging of mustard oil the pain was almost gone by the morning.

31st December.

It was the birthday of the Holy Mother, and many devotees were assembled in the Swami's room. Referring to the recent pain he had in his toe he remarked: There is no knowing why such a thing happens or why it increases or decreases. People hazard some patchwork of an explanation for them. But everything depends on the will of the Divine Mother. This I have realised that behind everything in the universe

there is a great Power at work. And She is all good. Even the worst suffering a man undergoes is due to Her will. And it is ultimately for his good, for such suffering removes countless past impressions from his mind.

Man has to his credit the actions of many previous births, which must work themselves out. Nothing particularly wrong has been committed in this life. But there are the accumulated sins of many past lives. These sufferings are due to them.

One amongst the audience remarked that it might also be a case of vicarious punishment. To this the Swami replied, "Yes, some people argue that way also. Formerly I would not much believe in theories that one suffered for the sins of another. Now I fully believe in them. One can easily increase or decrease the happiness or misery of another. And it is in proportion to the capacity of the person doing it." Somebody referred to such instances in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother. Whereupon the Swami said, "Yes. These have but strengthened my belief."

After going through the Press tribute on Mahatma Gandhi's settlement with the Bengal delegates at the Nagpur congress he observed, "Ah, I am reminded of the words of Swami Vivekananda: We agree to differ."

1st January, 1921.

The resolutions and speeches of the recent Nagpur session of the Congress were read out to him. Hearing how Mahatma Gandhi had carried the whole Congress with him he said: Such a thing is bound to happen when the inspiration comes from on High. The Lord is working through Gandhi. Who can withstand the force of his words? These wonderful things are happening through the power of Divine will.

Referring to the harmony of all religions as preached by Sri Ramakrishna, one of the monks incidentally remarked, "Ours will be the state religion in time." "Yes," said the Swami, "if you prove yourselves worthy of the task. You are the representatives of that religion—the custodians of its future. Our part is played."

The conversation turning on the Ali Brothers, the Swami said, "Mr. Saukat Ali is fully imbued with the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. India has become his religion. But the younger brother has leanings towards the Moslem community."

Somebody at this stage said, "If you live for some time longer, you are sure to see wonderful progress within the country."

Swami—"One is tempted to see such a happy state of things, for our heart is upon that. This is indeed the mission of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, who sacrificed themselves for it. I am glad to hear to-day's news."

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

"All roads lead to Rome" is a truth which has far wider application than is usually supposed. It is particularly true of the various religions of the world although the followers of some religions would not be willing to subscribe to it. So far as the Hindus are concerned there is nothing strange and startling in this view. Throughout the entire field of their holy scripture, one can come across with numerous passages such as, "That which exists is One, sages call It variously." Not only the sages, philosophers, and pundits who have ready access to the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Gita do put their faith in such a universal and catholic view, the so-called uneducated and illiterate masses as well are equally familiar with such conceptions. Even legends and folk-tales—the mirror which truthfully reflects the mind of the people—abound in instructive stories establishing the identity of the Gods of the varying sects and religions. Even the most illiterate peasant never commits the folly of assuming that faiths other than his own are false and do not therefore deserve any respect. In various parts of India

instances of Hindus worshipping in the Christian churches and the Muslim mosques are common at the present day.

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In the other great religions, as Christianity and Islam, too, there is nothing that is narrow or objectionable in their fundamental teachings. Any one studying impartially the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, would feel the striking similarity and even identity in essentials with the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita. We have no hesitation in believing that Jesus was to all intents and purposes a true Vedantin. The lives of numerous Christian saints and mystics too prominently bring out the fact that a truly religious man cannot go against the basic principles of any religion. If we turn to Islam, what do we find but the conception of a great All-merciful Supreme Ruler and all-embracing brotherhood of humanity? Also it is well-known that an important phase in the development of Islamic faith, namely, Sufism, is hardly distinguishable from the Vedanta.

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In spite of this essential and fundamental unity of these great religions, in the past as well as in the present, the adherents of the various religions have been constantly quarrelling and at war with one another. One of the most perplexing, but withal true, phenomena in the world, is that while religion on the one hand has brought to humanity more blessings, more peace and love than any other force, on the other hand it has brought fierce hatred and bitter enmity between man and man and on several occasions has deluged the world with human blood. Nevertheless we cannot help looking up to religion as one of the most vitalising and ennobling of all forces that work for progress and salvation of the human race. This faith does not blind us to the fact that there are serious difficulties on the way to be overcome before the life-giving power of religion can come into full play. The first and most obvious of these is the claim of all the religions that

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each has got the whole truth and none else ; that God has revealed Himself truly only to their prophets ; that their own scriptures are the only inspired ones. The claim of each of these religions as the only possible universal religion has been not a little responsible for the division of humanity into conflicting and irreconcilable groups, and has brought the world to the present chaotic condition. These considerations do not make us lose heart, and our firm faith is that a universal religion alone can bring about universal brotherhood. We shall not here enter into the intricate and comprehensive question of the ways and means of realising a truly helpful, universal religion, but confine our attention to what should be the proper attitude towards preaching, conversion, Suddhi, and sangathan and similar questions that have come into special prominence in recent times.

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Even when one is not prepared to concede the superiority of any particular religion over all the rest, nor that any particular creed alone has the monopoly of the whole truth, one cannot question even for a moment the perfect legitimacy of the claim of each religion to publish, preach and propagate its peculiar faith. No responsible follower of any religion could conscientiously lend his approval to any form of abuse or vilification of the rival faiths, but in actual practice, consciously or unconsciously, openly or covertly in a more or less degree, the ordinary run of preachers in trying to prove the superiority and all-satisfying nature of their respective religions rarely escape the temptation to deprecate their rival faiths. The evil does not stop here. The followers of Christianity and Islam have a wide-spread organisation for carrying on propaganda with a view to increase the nominal adherents of their respective faiths. Instances are not wanting where *all possible means* are employed to win new adherents. The use of social and political influence and other forms of material temptation in effecting baptism ought to be deemed more reprehensible than the

employment in war of poisonous gas or bombing the whole population from aeroplanes. Not only all the lives and examples of the prophets of religion shine before the world as an emphatic protest against the mixing up of every form of base material considerations for changing one's native faith, but their noble and enlightened representatives also have repudiated the adoption of means and methods savouring of dishonesty and secrecy.

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It is well-known that many cultured Indians feel the greatest respect for the personality of Jesus Christ and regard with utmost sympathy and approval the numerous philanthropic, educational, and other beneficent activities of the Christian missionaries in this country. Yet most of these are honestly and sincerely convinced that the method of proselytism employed by the Christian missions is opposed to the spirit and teaching of Christ and results in more harm than good. No Christian missionary would, we are sure, question the transparent sincerity of Mahatma Gandhi, and yet these are his views regarding the proselytising activity of all missionary religions: "Proselytising has done some good, but it has perhaps been out-weighed by the evil it has left behind. Whether you profess one religion or another is of no consequence whatsoever. What God will say, and wants us to say, is not what we profess with our lips but what we believe in our hearts; and there is no shadow of doubt that there are thousands and thousands of men and women in the world who do not know the Bible or the name of Jesus or of His amazing sacrifice, but who are far more God-fearing than many a Christian who knows the Bible, offers his prayers regularly and believes sincerely that he follows all the Ten Commandments. Religion is made of sterner stuff, and it is impossible for us frail, weak human beings to understand what people mean when they say that they would be better if they professed something else from what they did."

The contribution of Islam to the thought and culture of humanity is very great and valuable. At a time when the majority of people were disputing and fighting about unintelligible creeds and ceremonies, Islamic Faith was a veritable God-sent boon. It brought a remarkable simplicity of faith and simplicity of living in its message of, "One God, One Brotherhood, One Faith." In the light of this most beautiful and true philosophy which clearly repudiates all barriers of formal creeds, we are unable to accept as true of the highest traditions of Islamic faith, the division of humanity into Muslims and non-Muslims. Still less could any justification be found for the belief current amongst most Muslims, that *only Muslims* are of one brotherhood and that it is their sacred duty to convert the unbelievers by the force of the sword. It will be instructive to consider a little more closely the assertions of Islam, "Allahu Akbar," God is greater and of the Universal Kingdom or Brotherhood. God is greater than anything that man can imagine ; He is the One God of all mankind, of all creation, and His Standard, His Judgment, and His Mercy, are alike for all, Muslims, Hindus, Christians. The Holy Quran distinctly teaches us that it is false religion to put a limit to His Power and Mercy, and assert that only those who believe in this or that formula of faith can get salvation &c.; such lies are the invention of self-seeking priests to perpetuate their hold through fear and superstition on ordinary people's minds. The Holy Quran says:—"Verily those who believe and those who follow the Jew's religious rule and Christians and Sabeans—whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and *does good works*—surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief."

And again:—

"And they say: None enters Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian ; . . . Bring your proof (of that which you assert) if you are truthful.

"Nay, but whosoever turns his face towards God, *while doing good* (to men), surely his reward is with his

Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief.”

In their dealing with non-Muslim communities, notably in cases of conversions, the guiding motive seems to be ‘all is fair in love and war’ To Take up an aggressive attitude towards other communities, is according to their own Holy Prophet’s words to cease to be a true Muslim, for it is said, “He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression. If the Muslims are to make their daily conduct and life square with the highest traditions of their Holy Prophet, they must accept Allah’s Universal Kingship and the fact of universal brotherhood without any limitation or reservation.

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Such considerations as have been advanced above bring out one fact prominently before us. That none of the great religions is fundamentally antagonistic to the others. The more one tries to realise in life the best teachings of one’s own religion, the less does one care for such matters as outward name and form, symbols and ceremonies, yet all the world over, people attach more importance to these non-essentials. This is the root of all trouble and quarrel over religions. In India at the present day perhaps owing to the obsession of communal feelings in political and other public questions, we meet with a rivalry or a state of war among different religions as to the number of professed adherents each can boast of. Regarding the ways and means that are employed in the conversions which are usually reported in the newspapers, the less said the better. To us it appears that in most cases the performance is a denial of God and perversion of the highest ideals of all true religions. The Suddhi, the Sangathan, the Tanzim, and Tablig, and similar movements have no doubt their proper and legitimate place and purpose. Each community, in so far as it does not interfere with the national progress and aspirations, nor with the legitimate rights and privileges of other communities, should be allowed to organise itself



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for advancing the interests of the individual members as well as the community as a whole. But under the peculiar conditions in which our country finds itself to-day, the emphasising, in season and out, of communal claims and interests works as a serious impediment in the way of India fulfilling her mission in the world.

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The Suddhi, the Sangathan, the Tanzim, and Tablig movements which have in recent times come into prominence would appear to be more mixed up with social and political considerations than with motives purely religious. In spite of the fact that some of the originators and supporters of these movements invariably assert that the motives behind these are exclusively religious, we cannot help the observation that in the minds of the ordinary people at least communal considerations provide the zest and sustaining power. The history of the relations of the various communities in recent years bears ample evidence to this view. Our policy precludes the taking of sides in current controversial questions. On principle we hold that it is the duty of the state to hold the scales even in all communal matters. Recently we have come across an instance in which consciously or unconsciously the government appears to have ignored the wisdom of such a policy. In the Punjab Administration Report for the year 1923-24 the Suddhi movement is defined as one to convert Mohamedans to Hinduism, (i.e., make them Suddha or "pure") and that 'a Sangathan is a committee formed for this object and to take other action against Mohamedans.' That these definitions are far from the truth, is not the only objection. Under the peculiar circumstances in which public life in the Punjab is vitiated by communal squabbles, riots &c., such partial and prejudiced views can only have the effect of inflaming the masses of Mohamedans against the Hindus. The Suddhi movement has undoubtedly proselytising as its aim, but it seeks more to reclaim those who abandoned the folds of Hinduism to join other religions and are

anxious to revert to their original faith. So far as we are aware many converts to Christianity have undergone Suddhi and have re-entered Hinduism. The conversion of people born and brought up in other religions has been very rare. In the light of these facts to characterise Suddhi as if its whole aim was to make inroads into Mohamedanism is nothing short of a huge blunder likely to produce unfortunate consequences. The definition of Sangathan also is not a whit more correct or happy. The word Sangathan means consolidating and aims at the union of diverse creeds and classes which go under the name of Hinduism. It further aims to purge Hindu Society of its innumerable caste disabilities, inequalities, and other evils. It is purely a movement to promote internal peace, good-will, and co-operation among the different sects and classes that make up the Hindus.

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The proselytising activities of the Hindu and Muslim communities in India have in recent times not only led to disturbances and riots in many places, but also acted as a serious menace to national unity. This tendency is now in its full swing and shows no signs of abatement in the near future. Under the circumstances some responsible leaders feel the necessity for a law for the control and registration of conversions so that the tension between the two communities might be lessened. The Kotah state has taken the cue and enacted a law which prohibits the conversion from one religion to another of males under 18 and of females under 20, and requires all converts to declare before a magistrate that the change of faith is due to conviction and not to temptation or intimidation. It also provides that orphans should be brought up by their co-religionists or handed over to the state orphanage. The experiment is no doubt worth watching. Although we cannot approve on principle of any state interference in purely religious matters, such remedies might be sought as a temporary expedient.

Approaching this matter from a purely religious point of view we do not see much necessity for a formal conversion. If the missionary of any religion could by his example and character make others turn away from all forms of evil and untruth and ennoble their character, what need is there to make them accept his own religion in name and form as well? The history of the world proves that holiness, love, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possession of any particular creed or faith and that men of the most exalted characters have been born in every religion. If a man lives up to the highest ideals of any religion it does not matter whether he nominally belongs to religion or none at all. But if on the other hand he merely professes with his lips and mechanically observes the formulæ and ceremonies but does not imbibe the spirit, the best religion does him no good. We do not wish the Christian to become a Hindu or Muslim and *vice versa*, but only that each should live up to the highest ideals of his own faith, and at the same time while preserving his individuality and growing according to his own law of growth, try to assimilate the spirit of other religions as well.

THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY

It is a problem whether man finds greater pleasure in framing laws or in breaking them. The impetuosity of his nature makes him restive at the least show of any bondage, and he grows violent to cut through it, irrespective of all consequences. He can never tolerate any rule and is always on the look-out either to go beyond or escape it. This principle holds good in the physical, moral or spiritual world equally. When a man fails to grow too big or too strong for any laws, and withal the desire to be so is present in him, he will seek to avert their clutches by taking even to foul means and when that is also impossible, he will unwittingly shoulder the conse-

quences of breaking the laws. A robber knows full well what the punishment for his crime will be, but the greed for money is too strong for him and he is determined on plundering.

Nature is a relentless task-mistress. We can neither deceive her, nor break her laws with impunity. So the history of man since the days of Adam has been the history of countless breaches of laws and the sufferings brought on by them. As soon as we violate any physical law or a rule of hygiene, we get disease as a warning. Still can we avoid doing that? This is as true in the moral or spiritual world as in the physical world. Nature's laws are uniform throughout.

The spendthrift who does not prepare his budget at the outset, whose debit is constantly in excess of his credit, will soon come to a stage when he will not have the courage to look into the accounts. He will take shelter in a blissful ignorance of the true state of things, which he will never like to disturb. Exactly that is the world's position to-day. By constantly transgressing the laws of our higher nature, we have come to such a state when we dare not look facts in the face, to see whether we have degraded or improved, and to what extent. On the contrary, we seek to find rest in the very speed of our downfall.

The most unwelcome question which is pressing the world to-day for an answer is, whether its condition is in any way better than what it was some thousands of years back—whether man is any better than what he was in his savage state. Up will rise the modernist at this, the very idea of comparison being preposterous in his opinion. Is the theory of evolution then a myth? Has the struggle of man for these long years to improve his lot been altogether in vain? Why, many are dreaming the approach of the millennium, when the earth will be another Paradise and man will enjoy here, in this very life, perfect bliss and happiness!

Truly, as a result of human endeavour since the very dawn of existence, art, literature, science and philosophy have been developed and cultivated to an amazing degree.

Forced by human intelligence nature is daily giving out her secrets to minister to the comforts of man, and the impossible of yesterday is becoming the possible of to-day. Yet it is doubtful whether man is a better being now than what he was before. What a huge contrast between a man of the palæolithic age—not knowing how to pasture, cultivate or manufacture ; depending for food on raw fruits, fish and meat ; using stones and sticks as substitute for instruments ; and in a state of constant and keen struggle to protect himself against the ravages of nature—and the man of to-day enjoying the heavenly luxuries of life, daily harnessing the forces of nature to his comfort, pleasure and fancy ! But with all his fancied progress and boast of civilisation can he say that the savage in him is not hidden under the cover of refinement ? True, the so-called culture has sharpened his sensibilities and made him more polished in his habits and manners, but under the skin-deep cover of the modern man, there lurk the same old savage instincts, throttling the higher traits of his nature. Who will deny the truth of this, if he but thinks of the terrible bloodshed that has deluged the earth from time to time in the name of civilisation and progress ? If in the savage state man at times identified himself with the brute, now that is being done on a wider and more organised scale : the whole human race is now in a state of constant warfare ; and the sad spectacle of might being right is witnessed everywhere.

The episode of Alexander and the Thracian Chief is now daily repeated in the pages of history. What is considered abominable in individual life is lauded to the sky when done on a large scale by a whole nation. What a great havoc has been done to the world in the name of country, of nationality and of patriotism ! A good man leading an ideal life when left alone, is induced to commit the worst form of savagery under the intoxication of patriotism. We are so apt to forget that society lives for man and not man for society. It is society which should pay homage to man and not *vice versa*. Society should be regulated in a way conducive to the growth of man,

and not conversely. But every day we live a life of contradictions. The very society or state which punishes an individual for a particular crime, encourages, nay, compels him to do that, when its own self-interest is at stake. Since a man is a part of society, it is but natural that the vices of society should be reflected in his individual life. If treachery goes by the name of wisdom when done for a political purpose if millions of lives count as a trifle when the greed of a nation is rampant, why should not a man be induced to follow the same course in his individual life? When a nation wants to serve a particular purpose fair or foul, it is openly ready to drop at any moment all pretensions to moral culture, and we find in consequence "the modern version of the naked war-dance of the savage." The relationship between nations to-day is established not upon the comradeship of human hearts, but upon the treacherously shifting base of mutual distrust and suspicion. The history of the world in any particular age is the history of the fight of one nation against another for its own aggrandisement. We find a repetition of the same 'struggle for existence' in man's private life also. And what does this 'struggle for existence' mean after all? It means that a man may pounce upon his fellow-being at any time with impunity, if only he can evade the eye of law. So we find under the ægis of modern civilisation we have been converted into "political units" or "commercial beings," but the human heart in us is languishing—"the man" in us is pining.

The feeble protest that came from time to time against this in the name of religion proved futile. So religion has now to bow to the caprice of nations, and to many it has simply been a convenient tool for the furtherance of their selfish ends. The Bible is said to be in many cases 'the precursor of the merchant and the gunboat': it simply paves the way for commercial and political exploitation. The teachings of Christ are repeated in the sanctuary, but hardly followed in the life abroad. Under the laws of the present day world, God has been ousted by Mammon, and "prophets have become an anachronism." When

necessary, religion itself is exploited for political purposes. An eminent writer grieves over the fact that in the last war, "in the name of the King of Peace, people were called upon to take up arms. The church invoked His name to support in turn the cause of each contending country and from the pulpit men were exhorted to kill one another." And even priests were forced to fight.

But truth is a highly corrosive substance, which will make its way even through walls of adamant. It will prevail in the end. There is a moral law in the universe which we can never safely defy. If you touch the fire, you are sure to burn your fingers. Setting aside all considerations about future life, in this very life we cannot pull on long by stifling our higher nature. By persisting in this way either we bring misery on ourselves, or, if we be too thick-skinned to feel it, we bring misery on society. So we find that the abject greed and war-intoxication of nations have brought the world to a state where it is well-nigh impossible to establish peace again. The best brains in all countries are at a loss to find out a solution as to how order can be evolved out of the present chaotic state of the world. Laws are being framed which, if followed, may hold in check the rapacity of the nations, but when the bond between nations is so unstable, the laws may be thrown to the winds at any time, and the furies of war let loose. We forget that nations like individuals cannot be made better by the government of rules, unless there is a permanent change in their habitual outlook of life. Rules are the creation of human beings, and unless they are met half-way by the willing acceptance of those for whom they are made, what usefulness will they serve? So our hope in the League of Nations or any other organisation of the type rests on very flimsy foundations. Rightly did the "poet of the defeated nation" warn a rising nation, puffed up with rapid success in life—"We have seen that with its vaunted love of humanity, it (the modern civilisation) has proved the greatest menace to man, far worse than the sudden outbursts of nomadic barbarism

from which men suffered in the early ages of history. We have seen that, in spite of its boasted love of freedom, it has produced worse forms of slavery than ever were current in earlier societies—slavery whose chains are unbreakable, either because they are unseen, or because they assume the names and appearance of freedom. We have seen under the spell of its gigantic sordidness, man losing faith in all the heroic ideals of life, which made him great. Therefore you cannot with a light heart accept the modern civilisation with all its tendencies, methods and structures.”

Now what should we do as a remedy? Should we discard the civilisation altogether and go back to nature, as the saying goes? That is as impossible as to wish that a river should go back to its course, because it brings muddy water. Youth strays far away from the innocence of childhood, but it will ever remain a fond dream for a youth to go back to the days of childhood to regain that lost innocence. Youth has got its own advantages, as childhood has. One cannot be a substitute for the other. However rosy may be the vision of the idyllic life of the primitive man to us living at a distant time, we cannot go back to that stage any more, and who knows if we shall see the thing in the same light, should we get that condition at all? Though the modern civilisation has miserably failed to develop the human elements in our life, it is not altogether without advantages in its own way. Let us avail ourselves of these and rebuild the fabric of human life on them—much stronger, much surer and much more comprehensive. That is what good sense dictates. “There can be no doubt whatsoever,” writes a great German thinker, “that man as the Lord of Nature is a greater being than man as Nature’s subject. And then culture in the . . . sense of ‘life-form as immediate expression of a spirit which has become impossible to-day will become possible once again, and in a more all-embracing and more encompassing sense than ever before. Then spirit will have become to express itself through the medium of technically conquered nature, as originally as it did in the days of old Greek or Chinese culture.”

The whole problem lies there. Nowadays we are so busy with externals that our spirit cannot find expression—that the Divinity in us cannot manifest itself. We have forgotten the saying of Christ, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" We are out to conquer the whole world, the whole of external nature, but we take no notice of the fact that, all the same, we are losing our soul. If we can remedy that, modern civilisation will not be a set-back to the growth of our life, but will stand to our advantage. The great Swami Vivekananda used to say, "The progress and civilisation of the human race simply mean controlling the nature—internal and external." The criterion of a civilisation according to him is how far it helps to awaken the Divine in us by controlling the inner nature. As we are too busy to control the external nature, and ignore the inner one altogether, the world stands in chaos. For the external world is but the gross manifestation of the internal world. The man who has got control over the internal forces will get the whole of nature under his control.

At the dawn of civilisation, the Indo-Aryan tribes coming to a place, where life was comparatively easy, the struggle for existence less keen, where climate, environment and everything tended to the development of a contemplative mood, searched out the laws and workings of mind and inward life, and solved the problems of human life in a way that all weary souls might find rest under it. They were not wholly filled with other-worldliness, as the moderners are afraid. They too developed art, science, philosophy, literature and many other branches of learning to a degree which is the despair of the modern age. But all their activities centred round one point—namely, the solution of the riddle of human life. Though there were wars and feuds even in that age, at any time there could be found men who stood face to face with Truth, towering above all earthliness, and offering the balm of peace, when warring nations were lacerated and weary of life. The Western nations from the very beginning had to live a life of constant fight with external

nature, and so they have developed a civilisation which has made her a willing slave to them. But as matter is not everything, they have come to a stage which threatens the existence of the whole world. The real remedy, therefore, lies in the combination of these two forms of civilisation. Posterity will gratefully cherish the memory of those who are trying to bring about this union of the East and the West.

But unfortunately, to-day, the West is too proud of its triumph to bow low to learn anything from others ; and the East lies trampled and humiliated, dazzled by the power of others' wealth, and forgetful of its own strength. But light will come from the East, as it has always done in the past. The poet saw with his unerring vision :

The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the light
of thy dawn of peace, my Motherland.

"It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to ashes
the vast flesh,—the self-love of the Nation—dead
under its own excess.

"Thy morning waits behind the patient dark of the East,
"Meek and silent.

"Keep watch, India.

"Bring your offerings of worship for that sacred sunrise.

"Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in your voice
and sing.

"Come, Peace, thou daughter of God's own great
suffering."

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA.

MEENNATH AND GORAKNATH.

OR

DEVOTION OF A DISCIPLE TOWARD HIS GURU.

The gods, or devas, as painted in Hindu mythology are often a curious nixture of human and divine. And this will not appear strange if only we remember that these gods are men who have earned their respective exalted positions by meritorious deeds performed on earth. After enjoying the amount of reward they are entitled to they are born on earth again.

Some gods can roam from sphere to sphere, in heaven and on earth, and can assume different forms ; others possess superhuman powers, and can pronounce on man the most terrible curses, and bestow on him the most coveted boons. Some are of a jealous disposition and fear that a great Yogi, or very holy person, may come and usurp their enviable position in heaven.

So of Siva—not the Great God, Mahadeva, but the god of mythology—we are told that he with his consort Parvati resided in a beautiful forest-retreat at Kailash, a sacred mountain in the higher and more remote regions of the Himalayas. There amidst lovely scenery, surrounded by flowering shrubs under magnificent deodar trees, with only the wild animals as their companions, they passed their days in great happiness.

Siva was all-powerful and all-knowing, and it was even he who had created our mortal world. Parvati, his worthy spouse, rich in learning and wisdom found her greatest pleasure in waiting on her lord, and seated at his feet to listen to his divine instructions,—such instructions as only Siva could impart. She never tired attending his discourses on higher truths.

Once when Siva after long hours of deep meditation at last opened his lotus eyes, Parvati approaching in great

humility with folded palms, begged him to impart to her that knowledge which frees the soul from all bondage.

Siva, delighted at this request, smilingly said, "That which you have asked for is Sacred Wisdom ; it is called Vedanta, the supreme knowledge. It is a great secret unknown even to the other gods. It must by no means be divulged to any human being, for, surely, if any one hears it he will proclaim it broadcast ; all mankind will then strive for liberation ; the balance of society will be disturbed, and the world will come to an end. Let us therefore in our subtle bodies go to a place where no one can see or hear us. Here, in our retreat we are not safe, for wandering ascetics may be about and they might overhear us."

So Siva, and Parvati went in search of a suitable place. They came to the middle of a broad river. "Here we are safe," Siva said, and seated in the Akasha he began his divine instructions.

But it so happened that at that very spot a great Yogi, Meennath by name, was practising austerities hidden under the water. Through long, persevering practice of Pranayama and concentration of mind he had attained mastery over the elements, and it was his ambition to become as powerful as the devas. Now, from beneath the water he heard everything Siva said, and he realised that to become a mighty god was after all not the highest attainment ; that the knowledge of Brahman alone could secure liberation and eternal bliss. He came to the surface, saluted Siva and Parvati and entered into the forest.

Siva seeing Meennath became greatly alarmed. "The secret is out !" he exclaimed. "My creation will come to an end ! This Yogi will undo all my work by teaching man the path to freedom !" But Parvati knew better. "My lord," she said, "fear not. I am a woman, I know the hearts of men and all their weaknesses. Leave everything to me."

Meennath had entered the forest and in a secluded spot gathering branches and leaves constructed for him-

self a little hut under the spreading branches of a fatherly, old mango tree. There, on the bank of a meandering stream he began to practise higher forms of meditation, and with his mind steadily fixed on the Supreme made great spiritual progress. Men and women from adjacent villages passing through the woods would bring him little offerings of food, and converse with him. They called him saintly Meennath.

In course of time two sweet-tempered youths became his disciples. They tended the sacred fire and gathered fruits and eatable plants which they cooked for their Guru and themselves. Meennath instructed them in the practices of Vedanta. Thus they also grew in wisdom and sanctity.

Parvati, unobserved, watched the little group. Then she realised that the time had come to put a stop to their spiritual progress. Assuming the form of a beautiful woman she approached the hermitage and begged to be allowed to serve the Yogis. Meennath offered some objections but at last consented thinking her to be a pious woman desirous of adopting a holy life.

All went well for some time. Then one of the disciples charmed by the beauty and sweet disposition of the woman fell in love with her. Leaving his Guru and fellow-disciple he fled with her from the hermitage, and married her.

Parvati was well satisfied. But how to get hold of the other Yogis? To accomplish this, after some time when the incident had almost been forgotten, she came to the hermitage again, but this time in the form of a charming queen, highly cultured and well read in sacred lore. With great humility bending her head to touch the feet of the holy men she implored to be taught the truths of Vedanta. Meennath spoke to her a few words of edification, and the queen departed leaving behind a little milk and sweetmeats and luscious fruits as an offering to the hermits. This she repeated day after day always asking for new instructions, sometimes dropping a

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remark showing her exceptional intelligence and appreciation of the noble Truth.

Meennath gradually began to look forward with pleasure to these daily visits, for never before had he met with such a charming personality and keen intellect. The conversations became more and more intimate. In the queen Meennath recognised a kindred spirit who understood and appreciated him. In fact he became infatuated with her. Gradually his mind became clouded with the desire to be with her always ; he lost his keen power of discrimination and self-control, and one night while his disciple, Goraknath, was asleep he stole away from the hermitage, and went to the hut nearby where the queen was putting up. The queen feigned great surprise at this nightly visit. But soon they came to an understanding. They decided together to go to the queen's palace.

This, however, was not an easy matter, for no man had ever been allowed to enter the queen's capital. But disguised as a woman Meennath safely reached the palace where he was kept in hiding by the queen. Only the queen's first maid was taken into the secret.

Goraknath in the morning not finding his master, at once understood what had happened. And he was confirmed in his belief when coming to the queen's hut he found it vacated. For many days with anxious heart he had suspected the queen's real motive and had watched the growing intimacy between Meennath and his seducer. Now his fears had come true. His beloved master had fled away inveigled by the charms of a wily woman. Meennath, his spiritual preceptor, his guide, his friend, more dear to him than a father—had stealthily fled away !

With a sad heart, rebuking himself for not having warned his master, Goraknath tried to follow his accustomed routine of devotions. But the thought that his Guru had been thus entrapped and led into the path of unrighteousness left him no peace. My Guru is my God, he thought, through his instructions my spiritual eye has been opened and my mind cleared of the illusion of

ignorance ; he, verily, is my soul, my Lord, my all in all. I cannot forsake him. Even though he has strayed from the path he is my beloved preceptor. I must find him. Surely, his love for me will bring him back if only I can speak to him. So he decided to go in search of his master and resolved not to return to his peaceful retreat without him.

After a long and tedious search of many days he discovered the whereabouts of Meennath and the queen. But being a man he was not allowed to enter the capital.

What could be done? Enter he must! Then, for the first time he made use of his yogi-powers. He knew that by doing so he was in danger of putting a stop to his spiritual progress, for so the scriptures taught. But for his Guru he was ready to sacrifice everything, his body and his soul. So concentrating all his energy he changed himself into a woman. It was now easy to enter the city.

Goraknath had an extraordinarily beautiful voice. This soon became the talk of the town, and the queen hearing about it sent order to the stranger woman to sing before her at the palace. Goraknath obeyed, and the queen and Meennath, who was concealed where he could hear the songs, were delighted with the performance. This led to a daily engagement.

Meennath from his hiding-place was greatly astonished to hear a voice so similar to the voice of Goraknath, his disciple. Furthermore, the songs were the same Goraknath used to sing in the hermitage after his evening devotions when darkness enveloped the forest and all other sounds were hushed in silence. These were the songs that used to stir his very being, songs burning with renunciation and love for God. It was strange, indeed! His curiosity aroused, one day when the queen was absent, stepping from his place of concealment he asked the sweet singer where she had learned these songs.

Goraknath at the sight of his fallen Guru, overcome by emotions, tears bursting from his eyes, clasped his master's feet. With difficulty, his voice choked, he stammered. "My master, my Lord, at last I have found

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you. Why did you leave me? Was it to teach me a lesson? How happily we used to live together in the solitude of our little retreat hid in the forest. On the bank of the holy river you used to teach me the path of Truth. There you allowed me to serve you. Have you forgotten those days? Oh, how powerful is Maya!"

Meennath was puzzled. What did it mean? Who was this strange woman? Was it possible that his beloved disciple was at his feet, his disciple whom he had forsaken? He stared in bewilderment. Am I dreaming? he thought. His head began to reel, he sank to the ground and everything began to vanish.

When he came to his senses again he saw Goraknath bending over him, fanning his perplexed brain. He rubbed his eyes. Then, everything became clear. In a flash he realised how low he had fallen. "My son!" he cried. "My son! Is it you? Oh, save me! You, indeed, are my Guru. I am your disciple! Unworthy though I am, you have not forsaken me! Rescue me from the chains of Maya!"

Tenderly, Goraknath helped his master to his feet. The two embraced and in that embrace swore eternal faithfulness.

Then, together, they made their escape, and returning to the solitude of their peaceful hermitage, gave their hearts entirely to God. Day and night they spent in worship and meditation. Goraknath again served his master in humility of spirit. And Meennath poured on him his love and blessings. Both became illumined sages. Many disciples gradually gathered around them. And thus originated the Order of Nath Sadhus who to this day, remembering this story, consider devotion to the Guru as one of their main spiritual practices.

On the likeness of the Guru we meditate.

At the feet of the Guru we bow down.

The Guru's words are Truth revealed.

To the Guru we offer worship.

SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT.

It is as clear as broad daylight that people, generally speaking, do not care about religion nowadays. They run after worldly enjoyments and are satisfied with the evanescent objects of phenomena. God and spirituality have been banished to the scrap-heap. They are meaningless to the generality of mankind. This ephemeral world of two day's duration has cut a permanent niche in our mind. But thanks to the innate divinity of human nature—which, though tarnished now and then by the accumulation of ignorance, cannot altogether be lost—we at times feel a sort of introspective mood and realise the benign and serene influence of the Spirit. Though its influence is momentary, yet it leaves an indelible impress upon our mind which only awaits more favourable circumstances to develop our potential divinity. This spiritual unfoldment of the soul is also attended with various interesting phenomena which help or retard our progress in a varying degree. It has been often found that the beginners in religious life are often puzzled with the problem of finding a short cut to God-realisation. They become impatient for the result, though this eagerness itself, if sincerely continued, ultimately helps them to realise Truth. But in not a few cases this eagerness to find out the easiest path of realisation makes their confusion worse confounded. Some think that God can be easily realised by some practices of Raja-yoga, such as Asana, Pranayama etc. Thus we find the aspirants often asking a religious teacher about the process of Hatha-yoga. These aspirants often think that these processes are indispensable. The reason of such mistaken belief is, perhaps, that the practices of Hatha-yoga yield some immediate results which are known as *siddhis* or psychic powers. They consider them as great achievements and thus often create a deadlock in the path of spiritual progress by refusing to proceed further. Again

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the practices of Hatha-yoga are extremely difficult in this age. The slightest departure from the prescribed rules often bring about derangement of brain or some physical malady. Besides, a Hatha-yogi must live constantly with his Guru who must be an adept in this science. And the result which is achieved after an up-hill effort can be got by some other easier and simpler means.

Another class of spiritual aspirants wants to reach God through the complex maze of the scriptures. To them tall talks, hair-splitting arguments, ratiocinations of logic etc., are indications of spiritual progress. They pore over books day and night or indulge in vain discussion till their brain becomes dizzy and after all these intellectual gymnastics they seldom enjoy the serenity of mind which one experiences from the realisation of Truth.

There are infinite paths leading to God. They are meant for diverse temperaments. There is no harm in choosing a particular path if that helps the inflorescence of a particular soul. But the one great factor for spiritual progress is unflinching sincerity of mind. Mind should try to think constantly about God like an uninterrupted flow of oil when poured from one can to another. Though it may have to suffer from occasional defeats or disappointments, it must not give way under any circumstances. Without patience and perseverance, realisation of God is but a dream. Zeal and earnestness are the essential requisites. The aspirant should be able to cry as is found in the Bible—'The zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.' This intense thirst after God enables the devotee to find out the right path even in the midst of groping darkness; tenacity and constant practice make it possible for him to scale even the mountain-high difficulties.

Really there is no short-cut for God-realisation. The mind must be anyhow disentangled from the snares of the world, in which it has been enmeshed. So renunciation is the whole thing of religion. It is the first step of spiritual life as well as the consummation. The world and God can never be reconciled. One must give up

the one for the sake of the other. The real psychology of the aspirants who want to find out the easiest way to Truth through Hatha-yoga is that they want to enjoy the world and God together. Nothing can be more absurd than this. One whose mind is firmly set on God never casts a lingering look upon the things of the world, however tempting they may look. The stifling of desires for worldly enjoyments is the beginning of religion. Occasional successes and defeats mark the flow and ebb-tides of sadhana life. The goal is reached when the renunciation is complete. Truth flashes, the moment the mind is free from all desires. One who has totally given up all desires—not only of this world but of those to come—has achieved his end and become Jivanmukta—the Liberated Soul. Renunciation denotes the mile-stones of spiritual progress. One need not run helter-skelter in search of God. The key to God-realisation is in our own hand. The more we can advance along the path of renunciation, the nearer are we to God. On our mind depends the whole thing. The more we can free it from the meshes of the world, the more do we go towards our Ideal. The practices of yoga, the study of scriptures, worship, pilgrimage, holy companionship, etc., are effective means for the realisation of God only so far as they enable the Sadhaka to check his desires for earthly objects. योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः—The aim of yoga is the stifling of the outgoing propensities of mind. This is also the *rationale* of renunciation. To practise yogic disciplines without curbing the desires for worldly objects is as impossible as the task of rolling a stone along a steep path to a high mountain peak. The essence of the Vedanta also can be summed up shortly as—ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या—The Brahman alone is real and the world is unreal. The scriptures constantly din into our ear the unreality of the world. How can the scriptures stand us in good stead if after going through them we still hug to our bosom the desire for enjoyment

There is no doubt that there exists an easy way to God-realisation if we only care to find it. As a matter of

fact, the realisation of God is the easiest and the most natural thing of our life if we only will it. For He alone is our nearest Friend, dearest Relative, unfailing Guide, the surest Light, nay,—our very Self, and our very Existence. We cannot exist without Him. We live, move and have our being in Him. So nothing can be more natural for us than the realisation of God. Though it may seem an apparent contradiction, He can be realised in the easiest possible way if we be sincere. It is said if we extend one hand towards Him, He holds forth both His hands to help us.—If we advance one step to Him, He comes a thousand steps towards us. Who can say that he has failed to realise God after seeking Him in a sincere and earnest spirit? As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, people shed jugfuls of tears for their children, money and relations, but who really wants to realise God? There is the real difficulty.

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA.

## THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Close observation reveals to us that nature involves the dualism of contradictory forces such as good and evil, light and shade and so on. These phenomena agitated the minds of ancient Aryans and are still a puzzle to many a thinker of the present age. The desire for the solution of the mystery of good and evil is manifest in the philosophical investigation of different countries. All philosophy ancient and modern has attempted to give a solution of this enigma of good and evil.

Scriptures of different religions also advance different explanations for that and though they sometimes can hardly stand the test of reason, many people are satisfied with them. In the Zoroastrian scriptures two distinct beings—one the author of all that is good and the other, of all that is evil are conceived—they are called as Ahura Mazda and Ahriman respectively. In many other scriptures such crude explanations are to be found, which,

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though satisfying the minds of devotees, far from solving the problem at issue, puts fresh difficulty on the way.

There are some who hold that there is nothing as evil. Everything that we find in the universe is for good. They maintain that good is a positive reality and evil is nothing but the absence or negation of good. This is indeed a case of robust optimism and marks one extreme. The opposite theory is that of dark pessimism: According to this, evil is a positive reality and good is nothing but the absence of evil. This school of philosophy tells us that life means woes and misery, that the purpose of creation is the suffering of created beings. Neither of these explanations is adequate. They can never satisfy the head and heart; for they represent only but half-truths.

The theory that the world is created by an extra-Cosmic Being cannot also save us from the difficulty. For in that case, of necessity we are to conceive of a being who is the author of evil and over whom God has no control, though all-powerful.

That nature is a manifestation of One All-pervading Reality was realised first by the thinkers of the Vedantic school of philosophy in India. They for the first time gave a perfect and rational explanation, when they declared that good and evil exist only in our mind, acting under different conditions; and that there is a state beyond mind, the goal of our life, where the contradictory forces of good and evil cannot reach.

A little reflection shows that good and evil are but two relative terms. The existence of one depends entirely on the existence of the other; one is meaningless without the other. If there be no possibility of anything as evil, we can hardly cognise anything which may be called good.

Furthermore we find that the difference between good and evil is not of kind but of degree. The point will be clearer, if we take into consideration another pair of contradictory things, *viz.*, light and darkness. Darkness does not in the least mean a total negation of light.

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Difference between light and darkness is not of kind, but of degree. The main characteristic of light consists in revealing to our sight the objects of nature that surround us. Had darkness been a total negation of light, nature would appear to us as a vast blank sheet in the dark. But experience tells us a different tale. Even in the deep darkness of night, when all heavenly bodies are invisible and all sources of light are stopped, we cannot say everything is lost to our view—trees, buildings and houses and other comparatively big things we see, though not very distinctly. This testifies to the fact that light is not wholly absent from what we designate as darkness. Another instance of this phenomenon is what we experience when passing through big railway tunnels. The rays of the sun cannot penetrate there, but still things do not escape our view altogether. The fact is darkness in such cases represents such a low degree of light that we overlook it and consider it to be a total negation of light.

We may cite here an interesting fact of modern science in support of our assertion. The famous Weber-Fechner law states that the vibrations of ether must strike against our retina with a certain degree of force before they can produce a sensation of light. When that force falls below a certain point, there is no sensation. This phenomenon clearly shows that darkness and light are conditioned by the behaviour of the same cause, *viz.*, vibrations of ether, only differing in intensity in the two cases.

Similar is the case with good and evil. There is nothing known as absolute good or as absolute evil. They are interdependent and everything in the world involves good and evil. If a thing represents a greater amount of good and a very small amount of evil, we neglect the latter and call it good and *vice versa*.

Again we find that one and the same thing appears as good and evil under different circumstances. Fire, for instance, appears very beneficial to us, when it cooks our food or warms our body when required; but the same thing

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proves just the opposite, when it burns our houses or destroys the life of a man. Thus though it appears in different phases, as mentioned above, the essential nature of fire is always the same : it remains ever unchanged.

We see further, that one and the same thing appears good and evil to different persons at one and the same time. The economic exploitation of India, for instance, by foreign powers is a stumbling block in the way of our national advancement, but to them it is a fruitful source of wealth and money. We recall with horror the incidents of the last war, which devastated many countries of Europe and made such a great havoc of men and money. But can we say the great war has been altogether without any lesson to the world? Has it not proved beyond doubt the hollowness of the vaunted civilisation of Europe? And the best thinkers of the world, as a result, are busy finding out a solution as to how civilisation can be saved and permanent peace may be brought on earth. We find therefore that we cannot possibly draw a definite line of demarcation between good and evil. Only according to the preponderance of the one or the other, we call a thing as good or evil. And in the last analysis, it is found that there is nothing as good or evil in the world if not in our own mind. It is our own mind that creates the phantoms of good and evil. Now how does the mind act? It is our Ego or the spirit of selfishness that moves the mind from behind. We look upon a thing as good or evil, when considered from the standpoint of selfish purpose. So to save ourselves from the eternal conflict of good and evil, we have to come out of the narrow circle of 'I' and 'mine'—we have to kill our 'Ego'. Unless the least touch of egoism is removed from our life, we cannot hope to go beyond the duality of good and evil. When that is complete, we get to a state beyond the reach of all earthly joys or sorrows, wherefrom we look upon everything with perfect equanimity and the problem of good and evil ceases to have any meaning for us.

## CO-OPERATION AND SOCIAL REFORM.

The advantages of a Co-operative Society, as a means of improving the economic condition of any class of people are too well-known to need any detailed reference. The wonderful transformation which the movement has effected in Denmark, Ireland, Switzerland—not to speak of various other countries of Europe and America, opens a vista of immense possibilities of material and moral progress of a country. So far as the European tradition is concerned, the assumption at the back of Co-operative Movement is, whatever be the form of co-operation followed by any society, its direct and primary concern is material gain of some kind or other. When people are poor and indebted not only are they backward in education, but their standard of morals also is usually found to be low. When Co-operative Societies are started among such people to provide cheap credit and facilities for bettering their economic condition, we might hope for a corresponding improvement on the moral side as well. Except in this indirect way, the principle of Co-operative Movement in the West so far has not been applied for purposes and ends which are directly and avowedly moral.

In Japan and India there seems to be a tendency to extend the range of objects for which the Co-operative Movement is usually applied. The Young Men's Associations which are said to be found in Japanese villages are a good instance in point. Owing, perhaps, to the rigidity of the Co-operative Act in Japan these Associations are not registered under it. Nevertheless the spirit behind them is unmistakably co-operative. These Young Men's Association "aim at such 'spiritual ends' as encouraging the members to rise early in the morning, inciting them to perform acts of benevolence towards the old or weak, and organizing them to carry out a work of public utility without direct profit to themselves." As the Co-operative Societies Act of Japan limits the nature and purposes of



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a society registered under it to the promotion of the economic interests of its members in accordance with co-operative principles, societies on the model of the Young Men's Association could not be brought under its scope. In our country the Act is much more elastic and admits of more varied and general interests of the community to be brought under it. The application of Co-operative Societies for extra-economic purposes finds a striking illustration in the Anti-malarial Society of Bengal in which the members seek to improve their own health and the condition of their neighbourhood by the observance of sanitary rules and the carrying out of sanitary works. The extension of the principle of co-operation to directly moral purposes and ends is said to be more common in the Punjab. Mr. Strickland, the enthusiastic Registrar of that province, points out that a few years ago a number of arbitrary societies were formed and registered under the Act. The members of these societies bound themselves to refer all disputes arising between them to arbitrators selected from a panel and to pay a penalty assessed by the committee of the society, in the event of their failure to observe this rule. We are told that these societies were to a large extent successful in their purpose but had to be closed on legal grounds, and that amended model bye-laws free from original defects have been approved and the revival of the arbitration societies may be expected in the near future. The application of the Co-operative Societies in the sphere of education is to be found in almost all provinces. In the Punjab the number of co-operative adult schools is said to be about hundred and that of compulsory education societies more than fifty.

The most typical and interesting form of moral co-operation is the Better Living Society, which might be composed of either the residents of a single village including all castes or of a single caste over a group of villages. The object of such societies would be to fix some agreed standards of ceremonial expenditure to be observed and some improved social customs to be

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followed. A limited penalty for a transgression of the rules might also be provided for. One or two such societies have been organised in the Punjab. This principle of an obligation of a moral or social character on the part of the members is by no means new in the Punjab ; for we are told numerous credit societies especially among small agriculturists have some sumptuary rules (as those referred to above) among their bye-laws, and substantial penalties have also been imposed under them.

Although the application of Co-operative Movement for sanitary, educational or moral improvement of a people would be beneficial, great care and caution should be exercised in the formation of moral societies along the lines of the Better Living Societies sketched above. Everyone is familiar with the numerous social disabilities and abuses which sap the vitality of the people. The curious fact is that while the evil is recognised on all hands, even those who suffer most under it lag behind when the time for action comes. The organisation of a healthy public opinion on such matters is the first step towards any effective reform. In this connection the experiment of organising Better Living Societies is pre-eminently worthy of the attention of all social reformers. The provinces which suffer most from the evils of Dowry system should find such an experiment sound and practical.

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 371.)

स्वप्नोपमममुं लोकमसन्तं श्रवणप्रियम् ॥

आशिषो हृदि सङ्कल्प्य त्यजन्त्यर्थान् यथा वणिक् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Imagining in their heart a future world<sup>1</sup> which is dream-like, unreal and agreeable to the ear only, they spend their money (in sacrifices) like<sup>2</sup> a trader.

[1 *World*—as a place of intense enjoyment. See verse 33.

2 *Like &c.*—as a trader stakes his capital on a perilous venture and loses it.]

रजः सत्त्वतमोनिष्ठा रजःसत्त्वतमोजुषः ॥

उपासत इन्द्रमुख्यान्देवादीन् न यथैव माम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Attached to Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, they worship not Me,<sup>1</sup> but the gods, etc., who have Indra for their chief and are concerned with Rajas, Sattva and Tamas,—and even that not<sup>2</sup> in the right way.

[1 *Me*—who am beyond the three Gunas.

2 *Not &c.*—The right way of worshipping the gods would be to think of them as manifestations of the Lord.]

इष्ट्वेह देवता यज्ञैर्गत्वा रंस्यामहे दिवि ॥

तस्यान्त इह भूयास्म महाशाला महाकुलाः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. (They think :) Worshipping the gods here through sacrifices we shall go to heaven and enjoy there, at the end of which<sup>1</sup> we shall (again) be born here in noble families with large mansions.

[1 *Which*—period of enjoyment.]

एवं पुष्पितया वाचा व्याक्षिप्तमनसां नृणाम् ॥

मानिनाञ्चातिलुब्धानां मद्दार्तापि न रोचते ॥ ३४ ॥

34. These men, who with their minds thus upset by the flowery statements in the scriptures, are vain and exceedingly greedy, never like<sup>1</sup> even a reference to Me.

[1 *Never like &c.*—and therefore are degraded.]

वेदा ब्रह्मात्मविषयास्त्रिकाण्डविषया इमे ॥

परोक्षवादा ऋषयः परोक्षं मम च प्रियम् ॥ ३५ ॥

35. The Vedas comprising three sections<sup>1</sup> (really) deal with the identity of Jiva and Brahman. But the Mantras are indirect in their import, and this indirectness I like.<sup>2</sup>

[1 *Three sections*—dealing respectively with ceremonials, the Brahman and the gods.

2 *I like*—because thus only pure souls who understand the true import give up ceremonials. If, instead, these had been openly denounced, all people who should rather pass through these lower stages would have been misled into renouncing work prematurely.]

शब्दब्रह्म सुदुर्बोधं प्राणेन्द्रियमनोमयम् ॥

अनन्तपारं गभीरं दुर्विगाह्यं समुद्रवत् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. The manifestation<sup>1</sup> of Brahman as the Word, which is conditioned<sup>2</sup> by the Prânas, the mind and the organs, is most subtle,<sup>3</sup> limitless, profound and unfathomable like the ocean.

[The elaborate theory of the origin of speech is introduced in Slokas 36—43 to indicate the abstruseness of the Vedas. No wonder, therefore, that even sages like Jaimini have got so confounded as to build their ritualistic philosophy out of the Vedas.

1 *Manifestation &c.*—The word Sabda-Brahma means the Vedas also as the most authoritative body of words.

2 *Conditioned &c.*—Speech has a subtle and a gross form. The former again is subdivided into three stages of varying fineness, known as Parâ, Pasyanti and Madhyamâ. The first two are those manifested in the Prânas and the mind respectively, and the third is that stage which is about to issue through the vocal organs as articulate speech, which is the gross form of speech known as Vaikhari.

3 *Subtle*—both as to nature, as described in the previous note, and as to import.]

मयोपबृंहितं भूना ब्रह्मण्यन्तशक्तिना ॥

भूतेषु घोषरूपेण विसृष्टेषुर्षेण लक्ष्यते ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Strengthened by Me, the Infinite Brahman, of limitless powers, it is noticed<sup>1</sup> as the *subtle* Om in beings, like the slender fibres in a lotus stalk.

[1 *Noticed*—by the penetrative insight of the Yogis only.]

गथोणंनाभिर्हृदयादूर्णामुद्गमते मुखात् ॥

आकाशाद्घोषवान् प्राणो मनसा स्पर्शरूपिणा ॥ ३८ ॥

छन्दोमयोऽमृतमयः सहस्रपदवीं प्रभुः ॥

ओङ्काराद्भ्रजितस्पर्शस्वरोष्मान्तस्थभूषिताम् ॥ ३९ ॥

विचित्रभाषाविततां छन्दोभिश्चतुरुत्तरैः ॥

अनन्तपारां बृहतीं सृजत्याक्षिपति स्वयम् ॥ ४० ॥

38—40. As the spider projects its web from its heart through its mouth, so the immortal Lord Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Prâna, whose form is the Vedas, projects out of<sup>1</sup> the subtle Om from the space of his heart, through his mind which scans the entire alphabet, the infinite mass of words known as the Vedas. These issue in a thousand channels, are enriched with the consonants (classified<sup>2</sup> into the Sparsha, the Antastha and the Ushma group) and the vowels—all fashioned<sup>3</sup> by the subtle Om. They are expressed in diverse forms of language, by means of metres with four additional letters in each succeeding variety. And Hiranyagarbha again winds<sup>4</sup> all up.

[1 *Out of &c.*—first as Parâ (which is the same as the subtle Om), then as Pasyanti, and so on.

2 *Classified &c.*—The twenty-five letters *ka* to *ma* comprise the Sparsha group, the next four the Antastha, and the last four the Ushma. The vowels are sixteen in number.

3 *Fashioned &c.*—in conjunction with the different parts of the vocal system.

4 *Winds &c.*—at the end of a cycle, as the spider also is believed to swallow its web.]

गायत्र्याणिगनुष्टुप् च बृहती पंक्तिरेव च ॥

त्रिष्टुब्जगत्यतिच्छन्दो ह्यत्यष्टयतिजगद्विराट् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. (These are some of the metres :) Gâyatri,<sup>1</sup> Ushnik, Anushtup, Brihati, Pankti, Trishtup, Jagati, Atijagati (which belongs to a class known as Atichchandas), Atyasti, and Ativirât.

[1 *Gâyatri*—has twenty-four letters. Each of the succeeding varieties has four additional letters, up to Atijagati, which thus has fifty-two letters. Then the order breaks.]

किं विद्यते किंमाचष्टे किमनूद्य विकल्पयेत् ॥

इत्यस्या हृदयं लोके नान्यो मद्भेद कश्चन ॥ ४२ ॥

42. What the Vedas enjoin,<sup>1</sup> what they express,<sup>2</sup> and what they tentatively state<sup>3</sup> merely to refute,—the secret of this none in the world knows except Myself.

[1 *Enjoin*—in the ritualistic section.

2 *Express*—through the Mantras of the section dealing with the gods.

3 *State &c.*—in the section treating of the highest knowledge.]

एतावान्सर्ववेदार्थः शब्द आस्थाय मां भिदाम् ॥

मायामात्रमनूद्यान्ते प्रतिषिध्य प्रसीदति ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Me<sup>1</sup> they enjoin, and Me<sup>2</sup> express, and what is stated therein only to be refuted is also I. This is the import of the entire Vedas. With Me as their substratum<sup>3</sup> the Vedas tentatively state duality as an illusion, and refuting it at the end, are satisfied.<sup>4</sup>

[1 *Me &c.*—as Yajna or sacrifice.

2 *And Me &c.*—as the Antaryâmin or Internal Ruler manifested through the gods.

3 *Substratum &c.*—Just as the sap that is in a tiny seedling runs through the whole developed tree, so the import of the Om (viz., the Supreme Lord) is also that of the entire Vedas.

4 *Are satisfied*—finish their task.]

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Reports for 1924 of some of the Educational Institutions started by the Ramakrishna Mission are given below.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS.

This Institution was started in the year 1905 with the object of providing a home to poor and deserving boys giving them free boarding and lodging, to educate them under the *Gurukul* system where the school and home are parts of one organic life. From a very small beginning after twenty years of hard struggle, the Home

has grown into a big institution of great usefulness. A Residential High School forms a part of the Home, for which a separate block of building was erected this year at a cost of nearly a lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees. Of the total number of 125 boarders at the end of the year, 89 were pupils of the Residential High School, 29 were college students and 7 were receiving special instruction in vocational courses.

To rouse a spirit of self-reliance and initiative amongst the boys, the internal management of the Home is entirely left with them under the supervision of teachers and the boys have to do everything, from the mess arrangements to the nursing of the sick and taking care of property—there being no servants excepting two cooks.

Vocational training class forms a part of the regular school curricula and every student has to learn at least one of the subjects taught—namely, Carpentry, Rattan work, Knitting, Tailoring, Weaving and Smithy, so that he may fall back upon an extra resource in case of difficulties in life.

Special attention is paid to the development of religious nature of the boys. There is arrangement for daily worship, individual and congregational in addition to the classes that are held for religious instruction.

The Institution is maintained mainly by subscriptions and donations from the public. The receipts of the year amounted to Rs. 30,103/2/6 and the expenditure for the maintenance of the boys and the establishment was Rs. 21,312/0/6. Rs. 19,154/8/0 was added to the Permanent Endowment Fund, raising the total to Rs. 87,556/1/3. On school account (including the building fund) a sum of Rs. 88,937/8/0 was received and Rs. 80,674/8/2 expended. The total balance at the end of the year was Rs. 74,116/12/0.

The Home is now in need of quarters for the members of the staff and a Permanent Endowment Fund of five or six lakhs to insure the work against future financial embarrassments.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, 7, HALDAR LANE,  
CALCUTTA.

This institution is run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashrama, co-ordinating the ancient ideals of education with the modern and provides free board, lodging, fees, books and other necessary things to poor and deserving youths going up for higher education. There is provision for a small number of paying students also who intend to receive this home training. It is under the charge of an able monk of the mission and licensed by the Calcutta University as a College Students' hostel. At the end of the year, there were fourteen students in the Home. of whom eight were free, two half-free and four paying. The total receipts during the year by way of subscriptions and donations amounted to Rs. 6276/3/3 and the total disbursement was Rs. 4,606/2/6 leaving a balance of Rs. 1,670/0/9 only. This shows a very poor financial condition of the Home and in consideration of its uniqueness and a career of great usefulness it deserves active sympathy and support from all who are interested in the educational welfare of the country.

The Home is at present situated in a rented house. Its immediate need is to have a permanent residence of its own where at least one hundred students may live at a time and get facilities for earning a portion of their living by farming and profitable home-industries. The Home appeals also for a fund to maintain at least ten more free boarders.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR.

One of the charges against our present system of education is that it is lop-sided and make the boys denationalised. With the sole object of remedying these defects the Vidyapith was started three years back. It makes a systematic effort for the physical, intellectual, moral, practical, æsthetic and religious training of boys simultaneously and it is interesting to go through the curriculum and the table of daily routine made for the



purpose. In addition to the secular education they receive, every attempt is made to make the boys active, self-reliant and grow with a great love for national ideals.

The Vidyapith is entirely in the charge of a monastic body—for of the ten teachers in the Vidyapith, eight are monks. So we shall watch with interest the progress made by the institution run wholly on a novel plan. Within a short time the Vidyapith has been a source of considerable attraction. In the year under review it had 46 students on the roll and many had to be refused for want of accommodation. Boys are admitted at the age of eight at the lowest and the curriculum is so framed that they may appear, if they like, at the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University at about the age of sixteen. Each boy has to pay a monthly fee of rupees eighteen, which covers expenses for everything including board, lodge, tuition, medical help etc. This together with monthly subscriptions and donations forms the principal source of income to the Vidyapith. During the year under review the total receipts in the general fund amounted to Rs. 8,758/8/4 of which Rs. 8,452/7/9 had to be spent. Besides this a sum of Rs. 6,796/0/0 was received in the year for building purposes. The Vidyapith is now accommodated in two rented houses and to have a building of its own it requires a sum of Rs. 15,000 in addition to what has been received. It is also in immediate need of a library, a small laboratory and other equipments, for which about Rs. 2500 will be required. We wish the institution success and hope it will receive due help and encouragement from the public.

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## NEWS AND NOTES.

### SIR SURENDRANATH BANERJEE.

The death of Sir Surendranath has removed one of those mighty personalities who are rightly recognised as the makers of modern India. At a time when people knew nothing of politics, Surendranath was one of those pioneer workers who awakened the national consciousness in the country. His lifelong service to the nation, extending for a period of half a century, his wonderful energy and ceaseless activity for the cause of his motherland will serve as an inspiring example, for a long time to come, to all those who will, in future, step into the field of his work. He served the country in more than one capacity. As a result of the influx of Western civilisation, when all educated persons looked to the West for inspiration and guidance and tended to be denationalised, Surendranath as an educationist and teacher of youths infused into the mind of his pupils a feeling of love for the country and a spirit of service to the nation; as a journalist he created amongst a wider circle of people an active interest in the burning problems of India, and as an orator he showed such a wonderful eminence that any country in the world might feel proud to own him as a son. There was a time when his thundering voice reverberated from one end of the country to the other and his was a name to conjure with. But politics is a field where one always stands on a slippery ground. And though lately Sir Surendranath had not so much hold over the country as in his heyday, his case was just like a proud father who, in old age failing to keep pace with time, never grudges to be eclipsed by his children. For, almost all without exception who have now risen to prominence as national workers, at least in Bengal, may be said to have once sat at the feet of Surendranath as humble students and disciples.

Up to the last day of his ripe old age he was

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vigorously working for the cause which he loved most. May he now have his well-earned rest at the feet of God. Our sincere condolence goes to the bereaved family.

HINDU MISSIONARIES TO GO ABROAD.

It was in the days of Emperor Asoka alone that 50,000 missionaries were sent all over the world to preach the religion of India outside her borders. Such organised attempts backed by the fiery zeal of the followers of the Lord to spread his message abroad were responsible for the fact that Indian thoughts did once influence the whole world civilisation. The religions of China, Japan and all Eastern Asia were influenced by Indian philosophy. Westward the influence of Indian civilisation was felt in the farthest corner of Central Asia and Bactria. Asoka's pillar and inscription could be found in Antioch in Palestine. There are good reasons to believe that even Christianity was greatly influenced by the religion of India. The Greeks who came in contact with the Hindus were greatly influenced by them, and according to some Plato's *Republic* bears distinct marks of the influence of Hindu political philosophy. It is said that the Imperial Library of Peking in China contains 70 thousand Indian books original and translated. A close student of history daily meets with startling facts and interesting revelations as to the influence of Indian culture far and wide.

Recently Mr. C. F. Andrews has brought out some articles tracing the Hindu-Buddhist civilisation in Java and Malay. In the June number of the 'Current Thought' he has made an attempt to show how Hindu civilisation was built and reached its zenith in the 12th century in the Khmer Empire whose centre was Cambodia. This Khmer Empire under the Hindu monarch Jayavarman VIII spread from the Bay of Bengal on one side to the Pacific Ocean on the other. "About eight hundred years ago," writes the author "this great Hindu civilisation was one of the chief world-factors in the Far East." Still now Cambodia bears monuments of ancient architecture and sculpture, which are awe-inspiring to the visitors. The city of

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 Angkor, the capital of the Khmer kingdom, contains the ruins of a vast temple, Angkor-Vat, which "may be named along with the pyramids as one of the wonders of the world."

But the noble race of Khmers is now in a dying condition. Their present state of degradation is simply pathetic and compels tears from the eyes of a visitor who knows their past glory. They have fallen away from their intellectual height and are, at present, a race of dull and lifeless people passing their days in meditation on the vanished glories. They show lack of energy and vitality in every sphere of activity, have lost all self-confidence and seem to be waiting only for the final extinction.

The author appeals in conclusion—"From India itself must go out to Cambodia and to Bali and to other centres, where Hinduism is not really dead, but only moribund, a new reviving message. It is, to me, a matter of intense and earnest longing, that some at least of the treasures of religious wisdom and devotion stored up in India should reach this Hindu race in its day of adversity and save it from extinction, just as a drowning man may be saved from utter death even at the last moment of exhaustion by a timely outstretched hand. . . . Knowing well how deep, in the heart, the tradition of the ancient faith of Hinduism is stored, I do not cease to hope that dying Cambodia may one day see a small band of religious enthusiasts from India, who may fan once more into a flame the still flickering light of Hindu culture in this far-off land."

There has come a time, when from many parts of the world great need and eagerness is evinced for the message of Hinduism. But Hinduism has never sought converts, just to swell the number of its adherents in the census. Whenever Hindus have gone out to preach they have done so more in a spirit of service than with the proud feeling of saving others. What is at present needed is that a large number of people, devotedly trying to realise the ideas of Hinduism in their own life, should make it again a real power and influence, so that hundreds of thirsty

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 souls from far and near may have real peace and joy taking shelter under its wings.

INDIA AND WORLD PROBLEMS.

If we analyse the thought-forces of the world, we find that an air of freedom pervades the whole atmosphere. No nation, to-day, wants to remain under the tutelage of another nation, however mighty or good, no citizen recognises the divine right of any person and as such can never trust himself to the care of any absolute monarch, and in family life under the pressure of the same influence we find that a child grows up with a strong individuality and a great faith in his own reason. Naturally this feeling of self-assertion and sense of freedom give rise to a great conflict of interest and state of unrest, when there is no cementing factor to unite all the contending forces. As a result of this, when the clash of arms rings loudest and the war fumes cover the whole atmosphere, sometimes religion comes with its present day feeble voice to cry halt and makes a desperate attempt to bring peace to the world. But the same spirit of struggle for supremacy runs even in the religious world. Each religion is trying to aggrandise itself at the cost of another and never is ashamed to assert its supremacy by crying down another. When such fight goes on between religion and religion, each professing to bring peace to the world and salvation in the next, we begin to lose faith in the words of any religion at all.

“Can the living religions of to-day give anything to satisfy the spiritual unrest of the world? This is the problem. Can Hinduism answer the needs of modern conditions?”—asks Prof. Taraknath Das in a paper presented before the World Brotherhood Conference in the Unity Church of Brooklyn, New York. His contention is “that with the spirit of Hinduism we do meet the challenge of the modern problems of spiritual life, if we seek to understand the spirit of Hinduism which is universal.” Prof. Das is perfectly right in this, for Hinduism—or to use a more accurate term, Vedanta—recognises that

all religions are true, makes room for all the prophets of all the religions, it has never suffered from the ignominy of any intolerance.' This catholicity is not however the result of having no individual background at all. It has got its own standpoints, which makes it so all-embracing. Vedanta recognises the truth in all religions, because it recognises the infinite possibilities of a man,—for he is Divine. All religions are so many attempts for the God in man to assert Himself. This feeling of the innate Divinity makes a man dauntless and enables him "to defy all forms of social, political and religious tyranny of the world and cling to the truth realised."

Thus the solution of the modern social and political unrest of the world will come from India, the birth-place of Vedanta. When each man will seek to find the God in himself and recognise the same possibility in his neighbour, no clash of interest can take place. He who sees God in everything and everything in God can never hate another.

MORALS OF OUR YOUTHS.

Many observers of present day social life in India have pointed out the gradual decline of the high standard of morality, which was once the boast of our people and the envy of foreigners. The decadence is so very striking that some have been led to compare the present state of things to what was in Rome, just before her fall. This picture is no doubt very gloomy, but more pitiable is the condition of thousands of young men, who, in spite of themselves, succumb to the debasing influence of the times and surroundings for want of a helping hand. They have to struggle with all the agonies of a drowning man, till they give way in despair as no safe shelter is found till the last moment. They find no word of hope or encouragement from any quarter—on the contrary, the atmosphere around is such as to drag them downwards.

We live in an age when religion, which alone can save us from all pitfalls, has been set at nought. And

with that has come the influx of the influence of Western civilisation, creating in us innumerable desires for luxuries and enjoyments. Art, literature, science, philosophy have all combined together to create and justify a sordid life of enjoyment for man. Daily from the press is brought forth an enormous amount of literature—some even from writers who cannot shake off their responsibility—which directly or indirectly panders to the lower cravings of human nature. City life supplies innumerable sources of enjoyment which have got a very undesirable influence on the mind of a youth. Then there are, sometimes, subtler influences, as for instance, when in the name of art and truth morality is sacrificed. It is no wonder, therefore, that the moral degradation of the society should increase by leaps and bounds.

Those who want to resist the influence, not knowing the right path, wander in vain in wilderness and make their whole life miserable. Mahatma Gandhi, after analysing the whole situation in an issue of *Young India*, with his characteristic sincerity and practical wisdom observes—“Such of them as are prey to the vice are not vicious by nature. They are helplessly and thoughtlessly drawn to it..... They must understand too that nothing but a rigorously disciplined life will save them and the country from utter ruin. Above all unless they visualise God and seek His aid in keeping them from temptation, no amount of dry discipline will do them much good. Truly has the seer said in the Gita that ‘desire persists though man may by fasting keep his body under restraint. Desire goes only when one has seen God face to face.’ Seeing God face to face is to feel that He is enthroned in our hearts even as a child feels a mother’s affection without needing any demonstration. Does a child reason out the existence of a mother’s love? Can he prove it to others? He triumphantly declares, ‘It is.’ So must it be with the existence of God. He defies reason. But He is experienced. Let us not reject the experience of Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Ramdas and a host of other spiritual teachers even as we do not reject that

of mundane teachers." But unfortunately it is hard for many of us to believe that the experiences of the former are far more real and have wider effect on life than those of the latter.

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Swami Madhavananda,
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Mayavati, Dt. Almora.