

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य वराद्धिबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.*

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

*3rd January, 1921.*

In the afternoon, in the course of a walk, the Swami said :

“It won't do to be exacting. One must forgive. L— came away from the Math without permission. whereupon — expressed his disapproval by saying that he would have expelled him if he could. I said to him, ‘Didn't your brother go away against Swamiji's wishes, during his illness? And what did Swamiji do with him?’ Of course — could not give any reply. There cannot be any growth without freedom.

“One must behave in such a way that others may not have any occasion to pick a quarrel. Bad people always try to take an advantage.”

Referring to the training of the Math he said, “Swami Brahmanandaji's idea is to let things take their own

course. This method is not without its advantage in certain cases.

“Many of his disciples cannot freely mix with him, and they write to me. I have answered many such letters. I refer them back to the Swami, but they write that they do not get answers to all their points.

“G—— is senior to S——, and so there is friction when he has to work under S——. I sometimes show a little more love for him, as, for instance, by supporting him against S——. I have warned the latter that he should never by word or action give vent to a spirit of bossing. But he cannot observe this always.

“—— is a good-hearted young man, but lacks common-sense a bit. S—— went away somewhere, having been scolded last night. He gave a little hint to —— about his intentions at the time, and —— ought to have informed me of it then and there. I sent him to call S—— back. He saw him on the bank of the Ganges, but did not speak to him. He reported to me, ‘D—— said he was with S——, so that I might come back.’ Well, I sent him on that special errand, and yet he returned without exchanging a word! One must exercise one’s brains.

“At first he had a little trouble with S—— on the score of his seniority. But when he saw that S—— knew better how to serve me, he surrendered himself *wholly* to him. It is a very laudable spirit, no doubt, but one must use one’s discretion also.”

The Swami passed on to a different topic with the remark, “The great power of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji is at the back, so the work of the Mission is going on smoothly, and new recruits are coming.

“Nowadays I advise all to stick to their posts. One must stay somewhere. So it is best to continue in a place where added experience will give greater facilities for work.

Many people ask me questions on Swami Saradananda’s *Lila-prasanga* (Dissertation on the Life of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali). I tell them, ‘When the author



himself is there, why not ask him?' Then they say, 'What is *your* opinion on the matter?' "

*4th January (Morning).*

The Swami was reading the *Vichitra Jagat* (The Wonderful World) by the late Principal Ramendra Sundar Trivedi. Eulogising the author he remarked in this connection :

"One can explain a thing if only one has a clear grasp of it, which is the outcome of concentration. Better still is meditation. At Srinagar I used to meditate on the Upanishads. It was a charming occupation. In this way eight Upanishads (the first eight) stuck to my memory. What is meditation but great absorption in a subject? By concentrating on a subject, its inner secrets come out of themselves.

"First you have to prepare the mind. After that, any subject to which you may apply it will stand explained. The method of controlling the mind is by seriously watching it for some length of time. It can be done both by love and by discipline, according to circumstances. The mind should be under your control—it must not be allowed to ride on you, for then the tables will be turned.

"Whatever one has the least attachment to, gives the mind a loop-hole to direct you as it pleases. You become a slave to it, which is not the case if you are unattached. Lust, attachment, and the like are one and the same thing, varying only in intensity. 'Therefore first control the senses, O Arjuna, and conquer lust which destroys one's knowledge and realisation' (Gita). One must turn the mind away before it gets attached to any object. Otherwise it is an impossible task."

The Swami praised a member of the Order, and referred to his versatile gifts. One of the audience said, "Please bless him that Sri Maharaj (Swami Brahma-nandaji) may be favourably disposed towards him." Thereupon the Swami replied, "Maharaj is no more displeased with him. I pleaded for him in a letter in which I wrote, 'Even the anger of a Hindu'

tantamount to a benediction.\* He replied favourably and asked me to bless him. He has changed much—is almost a new man, with a good deal of humility. Formerly he would have frictions with Swami ——. One day I called him aside and said, 'Don't do like this. Look upon them all as you do upon Maharaj. Or you will come to grief.' He understood. His behaviour towards me has always been good.

"Yesterday I had an animated discussion with — on Non-co-operation. He said that Mr. Gandhi in the new resolution (at Nagpur) had to compromise, and so forth. I asked him to show how it could be considered as a going back upon the Calcutta resolution, and what was wrong in it. He could not furnish any grounds. He was bent on arguing, so won't listen to reason."

*(To be continued.)*

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### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Regarding some of the schemes of social reform which are considered essential for the advancement of our country, even those who are not in any sense orthodox find them unacceptable as being unsuited to the genius of our people. In this category should be included the abolition of caste system and the doing away with of the joint family. In the institution of caste many anomalies have crept in, and that the theories by which it is usually defended do not square with the practices is admitted by all. Most of these hold that the system should be mended but not destroyed. As to the joint family it would appear there is a growing section of people who regard it as a stumbling-block in the way of national progress. It will be idle to deny that in recent times economic and industrial conditions have come into being which greatly tend to disintegrate the joint family.

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\* A quotation from Sanskrit.



There is a school of thought which would not be satisfied with mere alterations in the institution of joint family to render it adaptable to modern conditions. These are opposed to mere reform, which in their opinion is only an attempt to embellish the exterior of our social body. They demand a thorough-going revolution, to do away with everything that smells of the past, in short, to begin on a clean slate altogether. They are out for the creation of a new India, a new culture and a new social mind. The reasons upon which such ultra-radical views are sought to be justified may be briefly stated as follows: It is urged that the joint family is the greatest impediment to the growth of healthy national consciousness in India on the ground that it stifles the freedom of the individual. The exercise of too much authority on the part of the father or the head of the family is an indefensible form of benevolent despotism which, whether in the case of the family or of the state, does not allow the individual to grow to his full height. The evil does not end here; invariably the interests of the individual count for nothing and are always sacrificed for those of the group. Another objection is that by demanding exclusive loyalty of its members, the joint family stands as a rival to the state and prevents the people from an active identification with the interests of the state.



In the April number of the Viswa-bharati Quarterly, Prof. K. M. Panikkar observes about the joint family, 'Whatever the benefits it might have brought, it has been without doubt the most powerful force against the development of a strong social feeling in India. The writer further believes that 'it has been the root cause of our physical degeneration, of the darkness in which our masses are buried, of the enthronement of authority in every detail of our life, and of the desperate fatalism that has become almost a national philosophy for us.' Some of the objections that are usually advanced against

the joint family system have already been mentioned. This institution is condemned also on the ground that it narrows down the circle of social interest by its tendency to form sub-castes by marriages, alliances and relationships and that it renders impossible a real home where alone the women can grow in perfect freedom and realise their numerous responsibilities. The absence of freedom of choice in marriage resulting in social degeneration, the abnormal rate of infant mortality, the insanitary crowd-life which the joint family necessitates and above all the ingrained feeling that authority, whether it be in state, religion, or social custom, is in itself sacred,—are some of the more serious objections which the same writer adduces for the abolition of the joint family altogether.



In a general way, these and similar criticisms of social institutions of this country might be met by exposing the fallacy of the critics in that they apply ideals and standards of the West as if these were absolutely desirable in themselves. Culture and civilisation may be of quite different types proceeding along divergent lines of evolution. It is a well-known fact that in Indian society, until recent times, the caste system and autonomous village institutions were working in full vigour. Consequently political life of the people found expression in forms peculiar to itself and different from those of the West. In recent times, owing to numerous causes these institutions have undergone disintegration. If this fact is ignored, it would be difficult to get at the real explanation of the apathy or the absence of the political consciousness of the people, judged by Western standard. That the village republics of India exhibited a remarkable degree of political wisdom and organisation, is a historical fact. It is needless to prove how the charge of the political apathy of the people has no legs to stand upon.



Before proceeding to examine the various criticisms that are levelled against the joint family, it is useful to remember that it is passing through a period of transition and has lost a good deal of its former influence. The joint family known to historians was of a patriarchal type and had ecclesiastical sanction behind it, and such a type in its pure form is rarely to be met with anywhere at the present day. There are no doubt joint families in name, but according to the laws administered by British Indian courts there are few or no limits to the rights of a coparcenary to the property of a joint family. Consequently the joint family is liable to be broken up at any moment at the will and pleasure of its individual members.

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Perhaps the most serious defect of the joint family system is the narrowing of the field of individual responsibilities, initiative and enterprise. When the patriarch is not only in theory the absolute monarch, but in actual practice also has the power and the means to enforce his will as law upon the members of the family, idleness, economic stagnation, and similar evils are unavoidable. But at the present day neither law nor public opinion is in favour of any such primitive ideal of one man's rule, however beneficent that might be. Beyond these disadvantages the joint family system could not be held responsible for the want of political consciousness of the people. On the other hand, the tradition of the joint family naturally inculcates on the individuals a sense of mutual forbearance, a spirit of self-sacrifice and readiness to serve others, habits of co-operation etc., which far from being an obstacle to social progress are the very foundations upon which alone any stable corporate life could be built. It is argued that loyalty to the family has been a serious rival to the loyalty of the state. We are not aware of any valid reasons for such a view. The absence of interest in politics (in the Western sense of the term) of the masses of India must

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be traced to other reasons than joint family, as has been indicated above. We might go further and challenge the validity of judging every society and civilisation by the sole standard of politics. The history of India bears ample testimony to the fact that the soul of her culture is in religion. In this respect even the most ordinary and illiterate peasant compares very favourably with the well-educated of the West. Also every religious upheaval in India has been invariably followed by remarkable achievements in all branches of thought and activity.

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The modern individualists charge the joint family with having a deadening influence upon the position of women. We are certainly for giving full rights and opportunities of growth to every one, woman as well as man. Here again, judged by the standard of the West, women of India do not enjoy certain forms of freedom. Unless one has learnt to appreciate the high and noble ideals at the back of our social organisation and the place accorded to the women, merely superficial observation will only give a false idea as to the position of women. In a word, the ideal of womanhood in the West is the wife, while in India motherhood is the end in view. This disparity in ideals leads to a world of difference in actual practice. For instance, while marriage is a sacrament to the Hindu, it is a mere contract to the Westerner. In spite of the absence of free choice, courtship and other romantic elements leading to marriage, domestic harmony and conjugal happiness have been and are even to-day much more common in India than elsewhere.

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In modern times, the struggle for existence is growing keener and keener. The ever increasing cost of living, the cut-throat competition that rules the commercial world and the precarious conditions of industrial life—



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all these necessitate joint action even to ensure an ordinary measure of success. In agricultural industries, the advantages of joint ownership and joint activity are obvious. It is well-known that Indian agriculturists are unable to adopt the latest scientific and improved methods of cultivation on account of the fact that owing to the disruption of the joint family system the holdings have become too small for the purpose. The joint family provided in the past a most natural and compact field for mutual co-operation and joint enterprise both in business and agriculture. This need is present in a more accentuated form to-day. So the wise method should be not to destroy the joint family which has stood the onslaught of centuries, but to make only those changes which will make it more efficient under modern conditions. Even in towns where the tendencies that militate against the joint family are at the maximum, business firms that were originally run on joint family lines controlled entirely by the family head, sometimes continue to be undivided, although the family ties of the members have broken and they live separately. Common messing and monthly division of expenditure, while the individual earnings are kept apart, also illustrate the same tendency.



We have attempted to show that neither the interests of the individual for free growth nor the rights and liberties of woman, nor even the economic interests of the members must necessarily be sacrificed in a joint family. Whatever disadvantages there might yet be found in the institution, it seems to us that the advantages are greater. Most of the critics of our social institutions seem to be obsessed with politics. For our own part, we believe the spiritual interest of the personality to be of the utmost importance, and consequently political interests, social welfare, economic efficiency etc., are but means to this supreme goal. Thousands of years ago, leaders of Indian thought with a clear vision of the deeper

realities of life devised a scheme of life in which every faculty of man had its proper place and function. The four 'Purusharthas'—धर्म (duty), अर्थ (wealth), काम (enjoyment) and मोक्ष (freedom) indicate the scale of values which they attached to respective interests of life. Unless one learns to be familiar with their point of view, one cannot understand the deeper foundations upon which our society is built and the line of evolution which it has been following for thousands of years. Consistent with this backbone of our race, we welcome any reform that will bring more efficiency to our institutions.

## PESTALOZZI AND INDIAN EDUCATION.

17, Bose Para Lane,  
Baghbazar, Calcutta.  
*July 28, 1903.*

DEAR SWAMI AKHANDANANDA,

Your long letter, enquiring about the Kindergarten system of education, has not been forgotten by me, but I have been very busy and yet was anxious to send you a reply that could be translated into Bengali, and published, both in English, and in that language. So I have had to wait, in order to find time. To-day, I hope I have it.

You say, a general order has gone out that all primary schools are to use Kindergarten methods in teaching, and that the teachers are much alarmed and disturbed at this. I should be glad, if it could be arranged, to give some detailed help. I could perhaps take a group of teachers and give several lessons and lectures a day, for one week. But I would like to be assured of a group of teachers large enough and industrious enough, to be worth such an effort. I could not afford time or strength to do it for one or two only.



Also, you have not sent me a copy of the Education Department's instruction on the subject. So that I write to you, rather in the dark, and in only general terms.

But I have no doubt that Indian intelligence will very quickly prove itself equal to the new task offered to it, and—instead of finding the Government order an insuperable difficulty placed in the way of education and making it expensive and incomplete,—will be able to turn it into a positive boon, deepening and intensifying its own power greatly. Yet, if this is to be, it can only be through a general understanding of the *principles* underlying the Kindergarten system of training. So I shall try to make these principles clear.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there lived in Switzerland a man of the Sannyasin spirit and an immense love of the people, called *Pestalozzi*. This man's love led him to feel that education is the only service man can offer to man. (I used to believe that he was right here, but under the influence of India, I have come to think that we can also serve by making free. This bestowal of freedom is perhaps another name of Love. So there are two deeds.)

Pestalozzi, then, tried to give education. But he was always stopping, and asking questions of himself. In this way, he tried to discover the *law*, the psychology of education. And in the course of a long life he discovered that most people are unable to think clearly because they have no clear *knowledge*. Now, what is *knowledge*? It is something that is the result of experience. Without experience, there can be no knowledge. (Even the doctrine of Reincarnation does not upset the statement: it only modifies it, by saying, 'All experience does not begin here.' But I want you to realise very strongly that we are talking now of that knowledge which is to be acquired by this brain with which you are now dealing. In the soul behind this brain, in the mind which uses it, there may be memories lying ready to be re-awakened, but our problem is to make this brain a strong and complete tool for this mind.

If such be our purpose, then, as regards this brain, the following statements and arguments are true.) No knowledge without experience,—then how to acquire experience? Pestalozzi answered: Through our senses—by sensation.

He came indeed to the conclusion that in the act of realising any piece of knowledge there are three processes, (1) sensation, (2) thought-germination, (3) expression. The second process means that the experience must be in the mind and take root there as a thought. You will be able to express all this in Indian terms—Manas, Buddhi, soul, reaction etc. But sensation is first. Thus, I say  $2+2=4$ . I *know* this. I say also—“He whose mind is fixed on sameness etc.” Do I *know* this? Or is it only that I have a belief in it? Alas, you know you would not like to risk your life on mere knowledge of the great text. But you would, quite cheerfully, on my clearness about  $2+2=4$ . Why have I *knowledge* in the one case, and not in the other? What is the difference? Is it not in experience, in sensation? All my life I have seen two things added to two things, making four things. I have seen it with my eyes, felt it with my hands, realised it in carrying burdens, counted it in listening to music, perceived it through smell and taste, and so on. Pestalozzi concluded that *we must base all education on concrete sensation*. But how was this to be done?

So for the Guru. In his old age, when he was broken and infirm, and the world laughed at, and despised him, Pestalozzi found his disciple, Friedrich Fröbel.

Fröbel caught the great idea. He saw that our whole life is an education in one sense, and that if we wanted to understand the law of mind when knowledge-gathering, in order to carry out an artificial scheme of training, for special or social purposes, we must watch a baby, in the process of adding faculty to faculty. He saw that knowledge has only justified itself when it has become *faculty*, a power within the mind. He saw that



*the development of the child*, not the teaching of letters or numbers, was the true end of the true teacher. He wrote a great book, called "The Education of Man," and he began to watch the play of children.

What did he find? You can see the same in any village-street in India. Children play with mud, with cow-dung, with bricks, or stones, or straw, or anything that one can touch, and move, and form, and repeat one's act with, over and over again. He saw that each such play was a development of faculty—a self-education of the child. He analysed the ends and methods of the play. The result was his Kindergarten, the Children's garden, where the teacher is gardener, and every child a plant.

Children love a ball, because it moves more like an animal than any other toy. They love colour too. So at a very early age, Fröbel gave them six bright balls of different colours. Years hence, the child will like a kite, because it is so like a bird. But Fröbel did not like to bring his suggestion so far as this. And I am glad of this. For though his discovery was great, it is well to leave teachers free to make their own experiments, and a great completeness is a great bondage.

From gift I, then, the child learns to practise movements in play—a mouse—a beetle—a toy—the ball is everything by turns. *The teacher encourages the child to imagine.*

All the children act together—order, discipline, amidst all the fun. It is play, but it is also co-operation. One by one they choose their favourite colours—name them, recognise them.

Every act, every colour, brings a word. And since everything is learnt by contrast, we have to master each new idea as a pair of opposites—two words at a time. Thus—up : down ; east : west ; in : out ; here : there, etc. One great difference between the educated class and the uneducated is this, that the uneducated have so little language. A child well-taught from the beginning is put in the way to add constantly to his own language.

Presently, you will be giving *free* balls, cricket balls, tennis balls, footballs, or rag balls etc. and encouraging free play with them. The ball has become an element in the child's life now. He must be inspired to do everything he can, with it, on his own account, and in school.

Gifts 2 to 7. Gifts of architecture and design, form and number.

Gift 3. The favourite eight cubes. They must first be used in play—building house, well, compound, factory, chimney etc. All this is mere play. You may use them in telling stories. The Battle of Kurukshetra—opposing armies—this brick is the chariot of Arjuna—one there Bhima's, and so on.

When this gift is well loved, you may take it as a number-lesson. Or use it always in arithmetic, in history, in everything, but keep one half hour for its special joy. In arithmetic, count the cubes. Lay in a line—a square—oblong—octagon—and so on and so forth. Ask for pattern, stars, palm-trees etc. Then, the whole is a sweetmeat. Cut in two. How many in each half? Or in quarters—how many? Or give equal parts to one boy. How many cubes? To two boys—how many? Then what part of eight is four? And so on.

After weeks spent on gift 3, other weeks should be given to gift 4, next referring to its predecessor. Again, they may be used together. Or you may, if you prefer, go on to 5 and 6, using them in the same way, and introducing the child to true fraction, and returning to mix the gifts, afterwards. Again, a similar process might be gone through by using paper money, pieces cut and coloured, however roughly, to represent rupees, annas, pice, and the children may be taught to count it. *One ought to be able to do compound addition and subtraction before simple, because the concrete is really easier than the abstract!* You see, the fact is that you ought to try never to teach a subject, without making it first the subject of concrete physical sensation, and if you will try to do this, with any success, you may, before you die, invent a whole new Kindergarten of your own. A good



mathematics master, who will try to bring arithmetic notation down to the concrete, will find nothing really invented by Fröbel for the purpose. Yet the thing is easily done and never forgotten by the child so trained. He might use seeds or beads or pebbles for the purpose: 10 small = 1 large, 10 large = 1 largest, thus 1 largest = 100 small, and so on.

Presently, but not at once, the time comes to teach the child to express on paper what he knows so well. But if you are still following the mind of the child, and trying to develop that, and if the previous stages have been well done, you do not know how easy this will be. "2+2=4". It is nothing to him who knows it with eyes and hands and ears and tongue and everything! Even "4<sup>2</sup>=16" is nothing to a very small person trained to think completely.

Fröbel's gift 7 is simply a box of tiles, which is chiefly delightful for making patterns, and thus unconsciously teaching oneself design.

We come now to the use of *materials* by Fröbel. He gave children clay and straw and beads and paper and fibres, and various things, and encouraged them to *make* what they could.

One great doctrine taught by Pestalozzi had been that the *child in its development follows the race*. So according to this doctrine, the school-room is a primitive society. The child provided with clay is the early potter, or smith, or baker; with paper or fibre he may be a weaver, and so on.

Again, if we watch the play of young animals, we find that they are teaching themselves to fly or swim or run, to hunt, to build their own homes, to fight, etc. All these things, children should learn in *games*, or in mere chaotic play, invented by themselves. Every self-activity of a child should be studied, encouraged, understood, and left free by the sympathetic teacher.

These are a few hints, dear Swami, as to the principles on which the Kindergarten system is based. But I do not think the Education Department very wise in

giving an order so general, without a better understanding on its own part of the common Indian life, and the point in which the educational need is really met already. For instance, *clay* is a material which is cheap in India, and in which every Indian child is likely to do well, and the Education Department would have done better, if it had contented itself with issuing a circular on the use of this one material in schools. Every illiterate builder can model. All ladies used to make beautiful clay plates. I have seen lovely forms and designs.

Drawing is so easily and commonly learnt in making the *Alpana*, and decorating them with rice-flour patterns. I have seen most beautiful paper-cutting from the Sylhet valleys, which was quite as good as any European lace. And if the Department had understood enough to adopt these simple Indian industries, and adapt them, also, to the necessities of the schoolroom, it would have shown itself possessed of a deeper knowledge of education than I am at present prepared to attribute to it.

The right course is not to introduce a foreign process, but to take home-art, and develop it along its own lines, carrying it to greater ends, by growth from within.

For instance, no Indian school can possibly be supplied with gifts 1 to 7. They are far too expensive. But we can take the rag balls of the bazaar, and teach babies to play with them, and we can pick up eight seeds by way of experimenting gift 3 or 4, and count and divide, and tell tales, and even build a little. We can learn form and fraction, by making cubes and bricks and pyramids of clay, and so forth.

India cannot swallow the Kindergarten as practised in Germany. But she can learn to *understand* that, and then make one of her own, different in details, but concordant in intention, and to ask her to do anything else is only to make ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of educators, both in Germany itself and the world over.

I am sending to England for books and specimens for you. Meanwhile, I feel much tempted to write a book on the thing as it really might be done in India.



The religious education of Hinduism is a complete development not only of the religious, but also of the domestic and social mind. But the Department does not understand this. The image is a means of basing the idea of divine mercy on concrete sensation. The girls' *Vratas*, the cow-puja, and fifty other things, are a complete inclusion of this theory in Hinduism itself, and the right way would be to start from them, and so further if possible. Meanwhile, the beginning of education may be in the concrete, but its end lies in the trained attention, and power of concentrating the mind—and that India understands, as Europe never can.

Ever faithfully yours,

Nivedita, of Rk.-V.

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—SOME IMPRESSIONS.\*

BY A DEVOTEE.

The nature of the subject is such that everything that can be said will, after being said, leave the impression that most things that had to be said, were left unsaid. And then, in the intense life which Swami Vivekananda lived, every detail is so interrelated with every other detail that it can never be said after the most profound discourse that even one detail has been adequately treated in all its aspects. All that is attempted in this lecture, therefore, is only to say a few words on some of the outstanding incidents of the Swami's career, on some of his great qualities and on a few of the results of his life's work.

Even before the Swami became the spiritual son of his great Guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, his career, as a brilliant and accomplished young man, had stood out in its full effulgence before everybody who came to

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\* The substance of a lecture delivered on the birthday celebration.

know him. The range of his studies, the loftiness of his character, his intense desire to get to the root of things, specially of matters religious—all these impressed his relatives, friends and acquaintances that he was destined to be a very great man, though they knew not how exactly the greatness that they devoutly and surely anticipated would be achieved. His filial love to his mother was most exemplary. One can imagine what an anguish of heart must have come upon the noble lady when her son, to whom, she with others who knew the tradition of the family surely trusted, would appertain the glory of the rehabilitating the family fortunes, had decided to become a Sannyasin. Yes, her heart was rent, but she with a seer's prescience consented to her sacrifice with the result that through her son India looked up and was blessed. A few parallels of such supreme renunciation naturally occur to the mind. When Sri Rama, for instance, decided to go into the forest in pursuance of his duty by the orders of his father, Kausalya Devi, though her heart was full of grief, blessed him in those never to be forgotten lines of the Ayodhyakanda of the Ramayana. When Sri Sankara, again, wanted to become a Sannyasin, his mother, weeping and crushed with grief at the coming change, blessed her son to go forth and save the world.

The spiritual unrest that was agitating the mind and whole being of the ardent youth knew no quietude till Sri Ramakrishna took him under the fold of his spiritual protection and fashioned out of him the Swami Vivekananda who was destined to carry the great Master's message not only throughout the length and breadth of India but beyond the seas. The great Master Sri Ramakrishna Deva is best described in the words of his most distinguished and peerless disciple—"The time was ripe for one to be born who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya—one who would see in every sect the same Spirit working, the same God—one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for



the outcast, for the down-trodden, for every one in this world, inside India or outside India—and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside of India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence. Such a man was born, and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years.” The Guru or the spiritual preceptor has always been held in the highest esteem by us. Do we not believe that the spiritual birth is better and of far higher value than actual birth? For in the latter the mere body is born, whereas in the former the man is made. When Swami Vivekananda thus spoke of his Guru, he meant every word of it, we may be sure. As to the influence on himself, he says in his lecture on *‘The sages of India’*—“Let me say now, that if I have told you one word of truth, it was his and his alone, and if I have told you many things which were not true, which were not correct, which were not beneficial to the human race, they were all mine, and on me is the responsibility”. As is said by one of his contemporaries—“Swami Vivekananda’s success was due to his unbounded faith in the words of his spiritual Master, who is now regarded, honoured, revered, respected and worshipped in India and other countries as the Incarnation of Divinity. The great Master, foreseeing the future grandeur and greatness of the soul of Swami Vivekananda, inspired him several times in the presence of his other disciples by saying, ‘Thou hast a great work to perform. Thy mission in life is to spread the truth of the Universal Religion.’ ”

The Parivrajaka experience of Swami Vivekananda is most unique and was a fitting precursor to the period when he gave his message to the world. His purpose was to be lost to all that he held near and dear and wander staff and begging bowl in hand as a free Sannyasin, having only his soul for companionship. As his disciples, both Eastern and Western, say in their great work of love, *‘The Life of the Swamiji’*—“The days

of the Leader as the wandering monk are the most interesting of all. They are full of spiritual romance. As the Parivrajaka, the Leader would force asceticism upon himself, many times concealing his great learning and his knowledge of the English language, in order to appear as an ordinary Sadhu." But he could not conceal his radiance under the bushel, and everywhere he was most eagerly sought after. In the words of Kalidasa, "A gem is never secret ; it is always seen." The itineracy included distant places in the Himalayas, in Rajputana, in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, in our own beloved Mysore and as far south as Cape Comorin. In fact, he, so to say, boxed the compass of India's places of sanctity, renown and learning as did Sankara in centuries past. He underwent the most thrilling experiences—sometimes trying and dangerous too. He was equally at home with the prince and the peasant, with the wealthy man and the beggar. He thus went on, perfecting his spiritual experience and finally coming to a definite resolution regarding the work that lay before him.

About the time his Parivrajaka wanderings were coming to a close, he felt himself impelled to go to the West. As he said—"It is for the people of India that I am going to the West—for the people and the poor." The World's Fair at Chicago was to come off soon, and something seemed to tell him that an international assembly of preachers and divines of different faiths like the Parliament of Religions would be a great opportunity for bringing Hinduism to the hearing of the Western world. In his epoch-making address before that assembly he revealed "a wonderful perception of the unity of the Indian religious ideals, a unity that had not yet been self-consciously expressed in the communal consciousness of Hinduism—the development of which in this respect he preached later as a crying need if India should arise." The principal contribution to Hinduism that the Swami's address embodied was first the philosophical and religious synthesis of the faith of his forefathers, second, the idea of the mother church embrac-



ing all the forms of religious experience from the lowest to the highest, and third, though not the last, the immovable position that he accorded to Hinduism by his scholarly and spiritual interpretation of its tenets, winning for it prestige among the enlightened thinkers and the theologians of the West, and raising it in the estimation of the whole Western world. To impress the entire American nation with a new thought was no easy task. And to do so by a few years of work was all the more wonderful. Not content with the success of his work in America, the Swami as early as August, 1894 meditated a trip to England. He desired that the whole Western world should hear of the message of Asia and the glory of the Indian Dharma. While there, he preached and taught the universal theme of the Vedanta and the four Margas or paths of the highest spiritual realisation. In reply to an interviewer, the Swami said that he had come to organise no sect, but to give the general outlines of the synthetic principles of the Vedanta and to let each apply them in his own case. He said—"I am the exponent of no occult societies, nor do I believe that good can come of such bodies. Truth stands on its own authority and truth can bear the light of day." He said, "Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship or psychical control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these, and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details." To his own country, which was the subject of his inmost thoughts and of his loving solicitude even when he was in far off lands, he gave the best of his life's work. With the great sympathy he enlisted in the two great countries of the West, England and America, he came back to India and in course of time founded the noble band of the brothers of the Ramakrishna Mission, those high-souled and pure-minded men who are present wherever the service of their fellowmen needs them, who seek no recognition,

but are anxious for opportunities to serve. So long as he lived, even when his physical body needed rest, he would always personally teach and instruct whomsoever he came into contact with, Gurubhais or strangers, old or young, laymen or Pandits. In fact, one marvels at his conversations, of which, happily for the world, a great portion has been recorded by his loving brothers and disciples which are veritable flashes from the beacon fire and which constitute, in some respects, the best part of his work.

One great quality of his and the one which he insisted on all people to have was the love of truth. For himself, he said on one occasion—"Do you think an honest Sannyasin will be afraid of speaking the truth, whatever it may cost him, even if it cost him his life?" He would never surrender his independence of thought, and he said he would not call any man a Hindu who did any such thing. His ideal was evidently Sri Rama of whom it was said by Sita, "He will not give wrongly, he will not take wrongly, and he will not say an untruth even for his life's sake, for his prowess is centred on Truth."

His love for all was characteristic of whatever he did. It was, in fact, the very breath of his life. He said once—"Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another man or any caste. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the universe." Again, "Denunciation is not at all the way to do good. All of us have to be taught that we Hindus, dualists, qualified monists or monists or any other sects, such as Saivas, Vaishnavas, Pasupatas—all these various denominations have certain common ideas behind them, and that the time has come when for the well-being of our race we must give up all our little quarrels and differences. Be sure these quarrels are entirely wrong." In fact, it would be no exaggeration at all to say that you may open any page of any work of his at random, and there you are sure to find this



spirit of love to all pervading the sentences that form his matchless and inimitable diction. And his love was not confined to those of the Hindu religion or to the Indian race. He addressed his great message at Chicago to his "Sisters and Brothers of America." He wound up his address at the final session of the Parliament of Religions by declaring—"The Christian is not to become a Hindu or Buddhist, nor a Hindu or Buddhist a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to the law of growth." As one of his American pupils said—"Vivekananda came to us with a wonderful message—'I do not want to convert you to a new belief,' he said, 'I want you to keep your own belief; I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist, the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian, the Unitarian a better Unitarian. I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul.'"

The Swami was a born leader of men. He showed signs of this even in the early days of trial and tribulation, his College days and Parivrajaka life. Among the followers who worked hardest for him was Mr. J. J. Goodwin, the stenographer who hailed from England, who served throughout his own life and of whom the Swami often said, "What would I do without him? If I have a mission, he is indeed a part of it." Of that illustrious English disciple, the sister Nivedita, who for fifteen years till her passing devoted herself untiringly to the cause of India and to the spread of the Swami's ideas, religious, educational and social, for the regeneration of his Motherland, the greatest glory is that she has given to the world that great biography of the Swamiji, "The Master as I saw him," which may be placed among the choicest religious classics and among the best biographies of the English language. Her "Web of Indian Life" is another great work describing our valued institutions with an insight and love which would do credit to our greatest and most far-seeing patriots. Among his Gurubhais he was ever the worshipped and adored one.

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One is thrilled with joy to recount the incident how the Swami explained to Prof. Wright of the Harvard University the difficulties that stood in the way of his representing Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, because he had no credentials, and how the Professor, with whom he had only for the last few hours been discussing all manner of subjects, spoke out, "To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun its right to shine," and took it on himself to see that the Swami was admitted as a delegate representing Hinduism.

His great contribution to the religious thought of the world was the presentation of the Hindu religion and its ideals in its proper light. He emphatically denied at the very outset that there was polytheism, or idolatry in India. He explained the psychological necessity of lower forms of religious ideas and worship, of prayers as aids to the purification of mind and of image-worship as a help to spiritual concentration. "The Hindus," he pointed out, "have associated the ideas of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence and such other ideas with different images and forms." It was not the idol which was really worshipped, but the representation of Divinity in the devotee's inner spiritual life, of which the image was but the means of objectification. He maintained that with the Hindus, moreover, religion is not centred in doctrinal assent or dissent, but in realisation, and that, in this light, forms and symbols and ceremonies are only the supports, the helps of spiritual childhood, which the Hindu gradually transcends as he progresses towards spiritual manhood; and also that these helps are not necessary for everyone or compulsory in Hinduism. He saw "unity in variety" in religion and said, "Contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures."

He thought of India as the heart of Aryan life with Hinduism as the very core of its being. He said, India shall rise through the restoration of that highest spiritual consciousness which has made India at all times the



cradle of religion. "Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world," he asked, "each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulder. Carry the light and the life of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the Divinity that is hidden within every soul."

The Swami said in a lecture—"My idea is, first of all, to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books, and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and in forests—to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only out of the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit works. In one word, I want to make them popular. . . . The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours, and this difficulty cannot be removed until, if it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life and yet every new book is new to me." In what ample and overflowing measure he fulfilled his purpose is known to all who have read his writings or the records of his conversations. He took the common language English and made it the vehicle of his thoughts in the purest, clearest and most convincing style.

His attitude to the various problems of the day, the education of women, the uplifting of the low, etc., was wonderfully practical and constructive. He was for giving them the best education, so that they might solve their own problems. His firm belief was that love in its broadest sense would cure all evils and solve all troubles and difficulties.

The above are but a few of the impressions of the great personality whose birthday we celebrate to-day. His teachings are great and enduring for all time, and yet in looking at his life we may say of him, using his own words, that he stands before us, startling, gigantic, impressive, a world-moving person of more magnitude even than his teachings.

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## THE ART OF CONCENTRATION.\*

BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

The spiritual life of a man or a woman depends upon the subjugation of the senses, the control of passions and the manifestation of the Divine powers latent in every individual soul. There are different methods to realise this end ; and these methods are known as *Yogas*. The method of concentration, or meditation, is known by the name of Raja Yoga or the royal road to realisation. This is known as the king of all methods, because without the power of concentration nothing is achieved.

The great poet-philosopher Emerson has rightly said, "The one prudence in life is concentration, the one evil is dissipation. Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade—in short, in the management of all human affairs." No logic or philosophy is needed to prove the truth of this statement. Wherever there is success or achievement in any field of knowledge or culture, there is applied this power of concentration. The more this power is developed, the more marvellous are the results. All the discoveries in the realm of nature, inventions of machines and of other things which we see to-day, in short, all the amazing achievements of modern culture and civilisation are nothing but the results of application of the power of concentrated attention. If a born genius suddenly loses the power of concentration, he will act like an idiot ; and if the idiot develops this power of concentration, he will be a genius. In a word, concentration is the source of all knowledge and all power.

Each individual possesses the power of concentration and applies it in his or her own way consciously or unconsciously. A child expresses this power by fixing

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\* A lecture delivered at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U.S.A.



its gaze upon shining objects or upon the loving face of its mother. The spontaneous attention expressed in children or in animals and uncultured persons is at first directed towards objects that are most necessary for the sustenance of the physical life, or that are pleasing to the senses. But as the individuals grow in the scale of evolution, their attention is not only fixed upon objects pleasing to the senses, but is directed towards objects that are attractive to the intellect and the higher nature. Here begins voluntary attention, and this leads to intellectual culture. When the attention is directed towards the observance of moral laws and right actions that are beneficial not only to ourselves but to humanity, that leads to moral culture. And again when this attention is directed towards the Universal Spirit, or God, it gives us the highest wisdom and leads to the attainment of the summum bonum of life.

The sages of India discovered by analysis, observation and experiment that the powers of the mind are infinite. As there is the vast sheet of water behind the little bubbles, ripples and waves on an ocean, so there is the Infinite power, the power of Divinity Itself, as the background of every individual soul. We have only to discover and apply it. There is no difference between an ordinary man and the man of genius or the greatest sage, in *kind*, but only in the *degree* of manifestation of this power. And the art of concentration teaches us how to manifest that Divine power.

The powers of the mind are scattered like the rays of an electric light. The electric light can give light within a limited space, but it can be made to illumine distant objects if we know how to gather the different rays and focus them into one beam, as is done with the search-light. Similar is the mind of a Yogi. He gathers together the different rays and concentrates on the Invisible and the Unknowable, and there shines the highest wisdom and infinite bliss for him.

This higher form of concentration has been defined by Patanjali, the father of Indian Yoga philosophy, as

चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः—the control of the modifications of the mind-stuff.

This requires a little explanation. And if we can understand the real significance of this aphorism of Patanjali, we shall also know the process of concentration.

Let us first try to understand what is meant by *chitta*, or the mind-stuff. You all know that for every perception we first need the instruments. The eyes are the instruments of vision. Behind the instruments are the organs. These organs are the nerve centres in the brain. Then again, there is the mind back of these organs. The mind must be attached to the organs before any perception is possible. Suppose you are listening to my lecture attentively. There is the sound of a bell, and then you do not hear the speaker. The other sound has struck the ear, has been carried to the brain, and you could not hear me, because your mind was not attached to the organ. Back of the mind, again, there is the discriminative faculty—the intellect which reacts, and with this reaction arises the idea of egoism. Then this whole process of action and reaction is carried to the Purusha, the Light of lights, the Intelligent Self, and then alone we perceive. Thus in every perception we go through the whole of this process. First there are the instruments, then the organs, then the mind, back of that is the intellect and *ahamkara* or egoism, and back of all these is the resplendent Intelligent Self of man. The organs (*indriyas*), together with the mind (*manas*), the determinative faculty (*buddhi*) and egoism (*ahamkara*), form the group called the *antahkarana* (the internal instrument). They are but various processes in the mind-stuff, called *chitta*.

Next, what is meant by *vritti*, or the modifications of the mind-stuff?

The waves of thought in the *chitta* are called *vrittis*, or modifications of the mind-stuff.

How are these *vrittis*, or waves of thought, produced?—By the contact of the mind-stuff with the



external universe,—by its contact with matter. “Matter is the permanent possibility of sensations,”—says John Stuart Mill. The external universe, matter, gives the suggestion. All we know is the mental reaction to the outer suggestion. The objective universe is the occasion of the reaction of the mind. Take an oyster, for example. You all know how pearls are formed. A foreign substance gets inside the shell and causes an irritation, and the oyster throws a sort of enamel around it, and this makes the pearl. The inner world of sense experience is our own enamel, so to say, and the outside universe is the irritating intruder serving as the nucleus.

Thus you understand what is meant by *chitta*. It is the mind-stuff, and *vrittis* are the waves and ripples rising in it when external causes impinge on it.

Now let us consider why we have to control the modifications of the mind-stuff. We cannot see the bottom of a lake when there are ripples and waves on its surface. But if these can be made to subside, we can see what lies at the bottom of the lake. The mind-stuff can be compared to a lake, and the Self, whose nature is said to be *Satchidananda*, lies at the bottom of the lake of the mind-stuff. The nature of the Self is hidden from our sight because there are the modifications, the thought-waves, on the surface of the lake. Again, the mind has three states, one of which is called *tamas*—the dull or the idiotic state of the mind. The lake, or the *chitta*, is said to be muddy in this state. No knowledge or understanding is possible in this state of the mind. *Rajas* is the active state of the mind, one full of desires and impulses. The waves of the lake are too high, as it were. *Sattva* is the calm or the serene state of the mind. All the waves have subsided, so to speak, and at the bottom of the clear water shines the True Self. This is not an inactive or dull state of the mind, as people often misunderstand it to be, but it is the perfection of the highest activity, the manifestation of the greatest strength. If you let the horses take the

bit, you are carried away. But it requires greater strength and the manifestation of higher activity to check the horses from running away. The calm man is the one who has control over the mind-waves. Activity is the manifestation of inferior strength, calmness of the superior.

If we can remain in that state for some time, the highest wisdom, the highest knowledge, will be revealed unto us. This state of concentration has been described by Patanjali as तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम्—“At that time the seer rests in his own unmodified state.” In short, we become ourselves. The mine of bliss, the mine of knowledge, is discovered within.

But nothing can be achieved in a day. We have to constantly practise with great perseverance before we can hope to attain to that state of realisation. अभ्यास-वैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः—“Their control is by practice and non-attachment,” says Patanjali. In the first place, we must have non-attachment. Unless we have *vairagya*, non-attachment for the things of the world, for the pleasures of the senses, our mind cannot be concentrated on the Divine Being. They dissipate our energy, take away our vitality, make us restless and subject to misery. And it is only when we become non-attached that we can perseveringly practise concentration.

This *practice* has been defined as “holding the mind to certain points.” If we can hold our mind to a certain point, to a certain idea to the exclusion of other thoughts, our mind’s vagaries cease, and there arises calmness and serenity.

Various methods and practices are known to the Yogis of India. It is not possible to mention them in a lecture like this. But I will mention one practice which, if you try regularly, will help you a great deal in progressing towards the highest goal of realisation. Try to hold your mind to the centre of your heart. It will be of help to use a little imagination. Imagine there is a lotus in the centre of the heart. And in the centre of



the lotus there is the effulgent light. Concentrate on that light.

Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master, used to say, "Be like the pearl-oyster." There is an Indian fable to the effect that when the *Svati* star arises in the sky, if a drop of rain falls inside the oyster, that drop turns into a pearl. The oysters know this and come out and remain afloat to let a drop of rain fall on them when the *Svati* star rises in the sky. As soon as one drop falls, it goes to the bottom of the lake and remains there shut up until the pearl is formed. So be like that pearl-oyster in the fable. Hear about the Ideal. Take up the Ideal and shut up your mind to other disturbing thoughts. Be mad for that Ideal. Think about it, dream about it; and out of that thought on the Ideal will be formed the pearl of the manifestation of the Divine Bliss.

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## MYSTERY OF MOTHER'S PLAY.\*

BY SWAMI TRIGUNATITA.

There is no better way to Truth than to invoke the help of Mother Nature and to pray to Her for guiding our life. Why should we seek Her help? Because if we are seekers of Truth, our search must be based on observation; and as we see Nature within and without—all being Nature's play, we must have to ask Her to show us the way to life.

What life is really blessed? Is this life we live satisfactory? Certainly not. For here we live in eternal ignorance; we are always in the dark; everything seems wonderful and mysterious. We want to solve the mystery, but cannot. We must know what is the purpose of life and try to fulfil that and not give our life to eating

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\* Notes from a discourse given by the Swami in America. Swami Trigunatita was one of those pioneer members of the Ramakrishna Mission who went to preach Vedanta abroad. He passed away in America in 1915.

and drinking like animals without having any reasoning faculty. There must be a certain purpose behind our life.

When we are awakened to the consciousness that Truth and Bliss are clouded by ignorance, we want to break the mystery and see Truth.

But we find it is so very difficult to realise Truth. We try our best, still we fail to tear the veil of this world, to see Truth. The world's attractions are so great that very easily we forget our purpose in life. One moment we get the intention to know Truth, but the next moment we forget it.

The law that we forget the purpose of our life seems so invincible. It is described as the action of Maya—the action of Nature on man's life. It is Maya that has brought man to this world and set his senses at work. It is the Mother's touch that moves them ; otherwise they have no independent power of action.

Mother has given us a great thing as conscience, but She drops in a veil of mystery, which makes us forget our resolute and cherished purpose to know Truth.

Sages tell us that we can realise Truth in this very life. Though the world cannot give us permanent satisfaction, still here in this world by our acts and experiences we can go towards the goal of our life.

It is Mother that is the living principle in our life. Call Her as He, She or It, whatever you will ; it is Mother that guides our life. We are under Her care. She is the support of our life, hidden and secret. We talk of Her, but we do not know Her. She is in our every act—behind our every heart-beat. But why can't we know Her?

This life is not ours. There is no such thing as "we" or "ours." We falsely connect them with our life. "Our life"—"we"—no, everything is Mother! The living, working and guiding principle is Mother. There is no doubt about this. But still we cannot see Her. We get glimpses, but cannot see Her. Every being, every object and every action belongs to Mother ; still we are in ignorance.



When Mother has brought us here and is the support of our life, when She gives us occasional glimpses, may be one day she will favour us with a full Vision of Herself. She alone can give that. So only by ardent prayer we can get that. Our life is meant for that—for getting that Realisation. How can we pray so earnestly that She can no longer keep Herself away? We see Her actions and movements, but not Her. She is ever missing. To see Her would be to have great joy—to have divine ecstasy.

If we have genuine desire to realise Truth in this very life, every action of ours must correspond to that. We blame Mother, but we do not see the mystery of Mother's play. She has given us this body, will and power of choice. We must make a proper use of them, before we can expect to have Her. But, as a matter of fact, we misuse or abuse Her gifts, every moment of our life.

It is forgetfulness that keeps us back and is at the root of all evils. We cannot take advantage of the Mother's gifts, because we find it so hard to stick to our purpose and resolution. If we could only remember always what the duty of our life is, we could easily turn everyone of our actions to Mother's service and direct every bit of our energy to find Her. But that we cannot. We try a few days, then comes lethargy and we forget everything. The harder we try, the greater seem to be the attractions of the world to drag us down. So our determination slackens and we think all struggle is useless. Such thoughts rise so strongly in us and are so detrimental to the growth of our life! If we can only disentangle ourselves from the attachment to the world and the influence of our environments, we can devote our energies better to the service of the Mother. But there comes the false sense of duty and our mind grows weak. Various desires come and make us weaker. But we should struggle on and on to the last breath of our life and not give up the search. To do or die should be our motto. Mind grows weaker every day and the world becomes more and more unfavourable, but we should not mind

these. We must persevere till the very end. It is not a false, hopeless case we are engaged in. Mother is behind our every action, we are only to know this—we are to feel Her blessed touch. Mother is not unknowable—we must not think so. Has She not given us so many things? Will She not give us more, if we seek? Is it not She who has created in us the desire to know Her? Then we should sharpen and intensify that desire. We must not seek anything except Her.

But our life does not correspond to our purpose, and we blame Her. Our taste has been perverted by our parents, friends, guardians and teachers. We have been taught to love the world more than the Mother and we go far away from Her. But we can turn back. So many lives have been wasted, and it will take a long time to unlearn the superstition we have been taught and to renovate this life. But we can shorten that time by our intensity—intensity to know Truth and Mother. Everything will be to our advantage, if we only know how to avail ourselves of that. But we do not know what to do—what step to take. This is due to bad training and education we have received. We have to change the whole system. We must stand aloof, though the whole world tries to drag us to its old grooves. We must keep to our resolution and not play the coward.

The very same act can give us freedom or be the cause of our bondage. As soon as we turn our attention to the pleasures of the senses, our body, this lump of flesh, Mother is gone. Though She is behind everything, She is thus lost to our view. We thus lose Mother by our negligence. So let us forget everything else ; let all our thoughts go to Mother! Let all our time and energy be devoted to Her ; and we shall in no time get Her and know the mystery of Mother's play.

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## THE DILEMMA OF EGOISM.

Nothing puts a greater obstacle in the path of a religious aspirant and nothing is so difficult to give up as the spirit of egoism. Individualism has no place in the religious life—it must be engulfed in the personality of one's Guru, or break itself before the will of God. This state should not, however, be identified with passivity, as it generally means, indicating the want of a virile life within. If it be at all a passivity, it is highly to be coveted and very hard to obtain. It is a state of conscious self-surrender with a fully awakened mind to the will of the Guru or God, so that one may be shaped not in the way one chooses, but in the way desirable. But the spirit, here, is very likely to be mistaken. It is for this reason that Sri Krishna, while closing his teachings in the Song Celestial, suddenly says to his beloved friend, Arjuna—"I shall tell you a secret of all secrets—an invaluable thing, because I love you most dearly. Giving up all other paths, just take shelter in Me and Me alone; I shall save you from all sins—don't get afraid." Lest it should be misunderstood, the Lord immediately warns, "This is a saying which should never be told to one who is without due religious practices or devotion, and who has not served his Guru properly or who hates Me."

We find the same thing echoed in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, when he says in his inimitable language and novel method that when the "I-ness" or ego-consciousness will die, all troubles will be over and Truth will reveal itself. The great Sankaracharya in his famous work, "Vivekachudamani," devotes as many as thirteen verses to show the origin, growth and evils of ego-consciousness—how it hides our real nature by a shadow of darkness like a piece of cloud covering the blazing sun and becomes the root cause of the round of births and deaths and all the miseries that accrue in consequence. He says that chief of the obstacles in

the way of our self-realisation is the "ego." As long as this persists, there is not the least shadow of hope for our redemption. As the moon spreads forth its effulgence, when the eclipse is over, so the Truth that we are Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute will manifest with all its glory, when this ego dies. Further he says that it revives, though hundred times cut asunder, like the demons Jason had to fight with. If the least particle of it comes in contact with the mind-stuff it raises a veritable tempest within us like clouds overcasting the sky, when accompanied by strong winds. And so he cautions us that we can never too much safeguard ourselves against this eternal foe of all human beings.

If we look to Vedanta, we find a rational explanation for this. According to Vedanta, the whole universe is one Existence, and in that Ocean of Existence, we are like bubbles or waves. As the waves can never be distinguished from the waters of the ocean except through name and form, so we are not separate from that Infinite Existence, which in the language of Vedanta is called Brahman. Now, in our daily life, we always erroneously see the waves as distinguished from the ocean and feel miserable over what happens with the waves. When a wave breaks, it is not, in fact, destroyed—for the waters are there all the same; but when we identify ourselves with a wave, we are in constant terror, lest it should be destroyed. This process is going on through eternity, and under this magic influence of Maya, we laugh and dance, weep and cry, but very few of us find out the right track to analyse what constitutes the waves. Constantly we are trying to put a limitation on the ocean by a boundary line and our whole being is bent upon protecting it. But that is a thing absolutely impossible. How nicely has Swami Vivekananda put it—man is "an infinite dreamer seeing finite dreams!" "Life," according to him, "is the struggle of the Infinity to manifest itself through the finite." But when a man at last finds out that that is absurd, he recedes and then religion begins. Says the Upanishad—"As one fire takes



different forms according to the substances burnt, as air seems to have a variety of shapes according to the different objects it enters into, so one Soul residing within the whole universe, looks different according to the different objects, and it exists outside of them too. Now what is the cause of this differentiation? It is due to our ego. Worked by the ego, we are always trying to see ourselves separate from all others and the whole universe. There is no essential difference between a man and a man, for both are dwelt in by the same Self,—everyone admits this—but in the world, every two persons will always pull each other to be furthest off, by their different tendencies and inclinations. The world is thus full of an infinite number of hyperbolas which will never meet. But we forget that in God's kingdom, against all geometrical truths, all these hyperbolas have met at the Centre in Him, which we do not know. The search after religion means the search after this central point and naturally presupposes the destruction of our "ego." This is the reason why to a religious aspirant the "ego" is such a great dread. What unifies is religion, what separates is irreligion. Because "ego" separates, it must be rooted out, by all means.

From this, when we go to practice, we are faced with tremendous difficulties and highly conflicting ideas. If the ego be the cause of so much evil and at the same time the reason of self-assertion, whence shall come the stimulus to stifle this very ego. If the will of God rules the universe, where is the necessity for any effort?—then why should idleness be a crime and not raised to the pedestal of highest virtues—who will be responsible for our errors and mistakes—are we simply puppets in the hands of circumstances, with no strength to raise a feeble protest even? But, the history of mankind gives a verdict against this. All progress is the result of tremendous self-exertion. Nothing can be got without giving a price for it. Even the saints and sages had to pass through the fire of so many difficulties, before they realised their ideal. In practical life also we find the same thing.

Death can never be averted, as everybody knows. But can it be postponed? That is a great problem. When we administer a medicine, we are not sure, whether the doctor cures the patient or God does it. These problems are eternally troubling human minds, and no satisfactory solution is yet in sight.

The whole thing arises, perhaps, from the fact that we want to avoid struggle in life, which is impossible. When there is fair weather, we raise ourselves to the seat of God and deny Him altogether, and when there comes a change in our fortune, we in vain look for some invisible Power to come to our help and be responsible for our deeds. We refuse to be consistent throughout. We forget that the spirit of resignation and self-surrender demands a much greater amount of effort and will-power than the effervescent enthusiasm and feverish excitement which we call as free will. Ravana could rout even gods in the battlefield, but it was possible only for Sita to walk through the fire in the name of God and Truth. For us it will ever remain a problem, if that was true. True resignation can never be had without a tremendous amount of effort and heart-breaking struggle. Through rules, we go beyond rules; from crushing discipline, we get real freedom; passing through the stormy days of struggle and exertion, we get to a state when the breeze of Divine Grace will propel us safe ashore. Otherwise we can hardly form any idea as to what is meant by depending on God's will. When true dependence comes, they say, you will never make a false step: that is the test of it.

This problem of self-exertion and self-surrender has been very nicely and clearly solved by Sri Ramakrishna in the parable of the salt doll. A salt doll went to sound the depth of the ocean, and lo! in the middle, it found itself melted away. In the same way, when we exert with all our might to stifle the ego, during the process we ourselves lose our identity—"we" being merged in the Divine. Then our will is not at variance with the Divine will and self-surrender is not a task and brings in



no dread. Thus every time we make an effort for a good cause with the best of motives and having no selfish idea behind, we give one stroke at the root of the ego. For every good deed lifts us a step high towards God and every noble thought is but the reflection of God. Then who is responsible for the opposite and its consequences? None. It is the magic of Maya—it is the play of the Mother.

नादत्ते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥

—“God accepts neither merit nor demerit from anybody. Wisdom is clouded by ignorance and that deludes all beings.”

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.  
CHAPTER XVII.

उद्धव उवाच ।

कति तत्त्वानि विश्वेश संख्यातानृषिभिः प्रभो ॥

नवैकादशपञ्चत्रीण्यात्थ त्वमिह शुश्रुम ॥ १ ॥

Uddhava said

1. How many<sup>1</sup> are the categories enumerated by the sages, O Lord of the Universe? O Lord, regarding this I hear that Thou speakest of twenty-eight, divided into nine, eleven, five and three.

[1 *How many &c.*—He means, which enumeration is correct?]

केचित्षड्विंशतिं प्राहुरपरे पञ्चविंशतिम् ॥

सप्तैके नव षट् केचिच्चत्वार्येकादशापरे ॥

केचित्सप्तदश प्राहुः षोडशैके त्रयोदश ॥ २ ॥

2. Some<sup>1</sup> speak of twenty-six, and others twenty-five; some speak of seven, some nine, or six, or four,

and others eleven; some speak of seventeen, or sixteen, and some, again, thirteen.

[1 *Some &c.*—These will be touched on later.]

एतावत्त्वं हि संख्यानामृषयो यद्विवक्षया ॥

गायन्ति पृथगायुष्मन्निदं नो वक्तुमर्हसि ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thou shouldst tell me, O Immortal One, the purpose which the sages have in view in thus differently enumerating them.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

युक्तं च सन्ति सर्वत्र भाषन्ते ब्राह्मणा यथा ॥

मायां मदीयामुदगृह्य वदतां किं नु दुर्घटम् ॥ ४ ॥

The Lord said :

4. Howsoever the sages may speak, it is quite in order, for all the categories are included<sup>1</sup> in every enumeration. And what is impossible<sup>2</sup> for those who speak accepting My wonder-working Maya?

[1 *Included*—tacitly or otherwise. The construction is highly elliptical.

2 *Impossible &c.*—When plurality itself is an illusion, one may easily indulge in any sort of speculation over it.]

नैतदेवं यथात्थ त्वं यद्दहं वच्मि तत्तथा ॥

एषं विषदतां हेतुं शक्तयो मे दुरत्ययाः ॥ ५ ॥

5. "It is not as you put it, but it is as I put it,"—this sort of fighting over the issue is due to My powers, Sattva,<sup>1</sup> Rajas and Tamas, which are so difficult to get rid of.

[1 *Sattva &c.*—transformed as particular mental states.]

यासां व्यतीकरादासीद्विकल्पो वदतां पदम् ॥

प्राप्ते शमदमेऽप्येति वादस्तमनु शाम्यति ॥ ६ ॥

6. It is the disturbance among these<sup>1</sup> that caused<sup>2</sup> the doubt which is the ground of contention among the disputants. This doubt vanishes when one attains calm-



ness of mind and self-control, and after that dispute, too, is at an end.

[1 *These*—held in equilibrium in the Prakriti.

2 *Caused &c.*—evolved the entire universe of mind and matter, including, of course, doubt.]

परस्परानुप्रवेशात्तत्त्वानां पुरुषर्षभ ॥

पौर्वापर्यप्रसंख्यानं यथा वक्तुर्विवक्षितम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. O best of men, it is owing to their mutual interpenetration<sup>1</sup> that the categories are enumerated in a relation of cause and effect, according to the view of the particular exponent.

[1 *Interpenetration*—to be explained in the next verse.]

एकस्मिन्नपि दृश्यन्ते प्रविष्टानीतराणि च ॥

पूर्वस्मिन्वा परस्मिन्वा तत्त्वे तत्त्वानि सर्वशः ॥ ८ ॥

8. In the same category, be it cause or effect, all the other categories are seen to be included.<sup>1</sup>

[1 *Included*—The effects (the jar, etc.) are inherent in a subtle form in the cause (the clay), which, again, runs through the effects.]

पौर्वापर्यमतोऽभीषां प्रसंख्यानमभीप्सताम् ॥

यथा विविक्तं यद्वक्तुं गृहीमो युक्तिसंभवात् ॥ ९ ॥

9. Therefore we accept as true the causal order and enumeration of the categories upheld by the different exponents, just as<sup>1</sup> their mouth utters them,—for there is reason behind them all.

[1 *Just as &c.*—The construction is again elliptical.]

अनाद्यविद्यायुक्तस्य पुरुषस्यात्मवेदनम् ॥

स्वतो न संभवादन्यस्तत्त्वज्ञो ज्ञानदो भवेत् ॥ १० ॥

10. Some<sup>1</sup> hold: Since a man, under the grip of beginningless nescience, cannot realise his Self unaided, the Omniscient Giver of knowledge must be a different Being from him.

[Verses 10 and 11 show how, apart from the categories among which a causal relation subsists, and which, therefore, can be

grouped variously, the question of identity or difference between God and the soul leads to two schools.

<sup>1</sup> Some—the upholders of twenty-six categories.]

पुरुषेश्वरयोरत्र न वैलक्षण्यमप्यपि ॥

तदन्यकल्पनापार्था ज्ञानं च प्रकृतेर्गुणः ॥ ११ ॥

11. On this point others<sup>1</sup> hold: There is not<sup>2</sup> the least difference between the soul and God. Therefore it is futile to make a distinction between them. And knowledge<sup>3</sup> is but an attribute<sup>4</sup> of the Prakriti.

[<sup>1</sup> Others—those who are for twenty-five categories.

<sup>2</sup> Not &c.—Since both are Knowledge Absolute.

<sup>3</sup> Knowledge &c.—It cannot form a separate category to vitiate both the above enumerations.

<sup>4</sup> Attribute &c.—being the function of Sattva.]

प्रकृतिर्गुणसाम्यं वै प्रकृतेर्नात्मनो गुणाः ॥

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति स्थित्युत्पत्त्यन्तहेतवः ॥ १२ ॥

12. The Prakriti is but the equilibrium of the Gunas, which are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These, leading respectively to the maintenance, origin and destruction of the world, belong to the Prakriti, and not to the Atman.

सत्त्वं ज्ञानं रजः कर्म तमोऽज्ञानमिहोच्यते ॥

गुणव्यतिकरः कालः स्वभावः सूत्रमेव च ॥ १३ ॥

13. Now, knowledge<sup>1</sup> is said to be the outcome of Sattva, activity, of Rajas, and ignorance, of Tamas. Time<sup>2</sup> is no other than God who causes the disturbance among the Gunas, and tendency is identical with the Cosmic Prana.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Knowledge &c.—So all these must, according to this school, come under the Prakriti.

<sup>2</sup> Time &c.—So neither it nor 'tendency' (the resultant impressions of work) can form separate categories.

<sup>3</sup> Cosmic Prana—the same as Cosmic Intelligence or Mahat.]

पुरुषः प्रकृतिर्व्यक्तमहंकारो नभोऽनिलः ॥

ज्योतिरापः क्षितिरिति तत्त्वान्युक्तानि मे नव ॥ १४ ॥

14. Purusha, Prakriti, Mahat, Egoism, ether, air,



fire, water and earth—these are the nine categories enumerated by Me.

[The Lord enumerates the three Gunas apart from the Prakriti, because they come and go. He now proceeds to enumerate in verses 14—16 the other twenty-five categories which are common to both the schools referred to in verses 10 and 11.]

श्रोत्रं त्वग्दर्शनं घ्राणो जिह्वेति ज्ञानशक्तयः ॥

वाक्पान्युपस्थपाय्वङ्घ्रिः कर्मान्यङ्गोभयं मनः ॥ १५ ॥

15. My friend, the ear, skin, eye, nose and palate are the five organs of knowledge; the tongue, hand, leg, etc., are the organs of action; and the mind is both.<sup>1</sup>

[1 Both—organ of knowledge and action. These are the eleven categories referred to in verse 1.]

शब्दः स्पर्शो रसो गन्धो रूपं चेत्यर्थजातयः ॥

गत्युक्तान्त्सर्गशिल्पानि कर्मायतनसिद्धयः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Sound, touch, taste, smell and colour are the five sense-objects. Motion, speech, excretion and manual art are but the effects<sup>1</sup> of the organs of action.

[1 Effects &c.—hence not to be enumerated separately.]

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

TORCH-BEARER.—By T. L. Vaswani. Published by the Arya Samaj, Karachi. Pp. 192. Price, Re. 1-8.

The book was written as a centenary offering to the sacred memory of the Swami Dayananda, the famous founder of the Arya Samaj. In it the author records some of his reflections on the life of Dayananda and the Aryan Ideal which he upheld. A burning spirit of renunciation, passionate love for truth, snow-white purity of life and deep veneration for the Aryan Ideal—these were the qualities in the personality of Swami Dayananda, which attracted the author to the saint, and in the book he exhorts all to try to incorporate those virtues in life.

Though we differ from some of the views held and preached by the Swami, his life is surely full of inspiration for all struggling for a higher ideal, and as such the present volume throwing sidelights on the life of the Swami will be welcomed by many.

YOGA-MIMANSA, Vol. I. No. 2.—By Srimat Kuvalayananda.

Published by Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla, Bombay.

This quarterly magazine is published to record the result of research done on a scientific basis in the realm of Yoga-philosophy. The experiences of a Yogic life have never been subjected to scientific experimentation, and for the first time an attempt has been made in that direction from the Ashrama founded by the Swami. In the volume before us are given various poses with copious illustrating pictures, which may cure many chronic diseases. This is properly the province of Hatha-Yoga—a science which has got a bad reputation as encouraging only mystery and miracle mongering. The author's scientific treatment of the subject will clear all prejudices from the public mind and enable people to test it for themselves. We wish success to this altogether new enterprise.

LOFTY THOUGHTS FOR LONELY MOMENTS.—Published by Messrs. A. B. Sons & Co., 2 & 3, Lall Bazar Street, Calcutta. Pp. 365. Price, Re. 1.

The booklet containing 365 beautiful quotations from various authors in English will serve as a stimulating reading in the lonely hours of life.

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION.—By Swami Abhedananda.

Published by the Behar Young Men's Institute.

The pamphlet contains a very learned and thoughtful speech delivered by the Swami at the 'Behar Young Men's Institute,' Patna, in which after comparing the past and present systems of education in India with those of the West he brings out what should be the aim and method of education.



## BENGALI.

**BHAGAVAT PRASANGA.**—By Basantakumar Chattopadhyay, M.A. To be had of the author, 152, Harish Mukherjee Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta. Pp. 227. Price, Re. 1-4.

The book contains eighteen articles originally contributed to various Bengali magazines. In these, the learned author has dealt with the abstruse points of Hindu religion and philosophy in such a fascinating way that even a layman likely to be frightened by the very name of metaphysics is sure to get much interest. The writer has a very clear grasp of what he has to say, and very often as he seems to be speaking from the heart the book has got an added charm. The subjects chosen are such as will prove of great interest to all—viz., “Theory of Creation”; “Life after Death”; “Theory of Incarnation”; “Paths of Knowledge,” etc. At a time when the country is flooded with novels—not unoften of an objectionable type, we heartily welcome this volume.

## NEWS AND NOTES.

## RELIGION IN TERROR.

When religion is not based on firm faith in God and a deep love of humanity, it runs the risk of life at every puff of wind. And contrary to all laws of the material world, in matters spiritual, when we are at a loss to know how to save ourselves, we become all the more eager to save others. This is the root cause of all bigotry and persecution that has appeared in the history of the world from time to time. When a man is intensely religious, he has no time to fight with others for creeds and dogmas. Religion is a matter between him and his Maker, and the more he goes towards God, the greater is the peace and lustre he spreads around. All people fly to him to get solace of life and to soothe their lacerated heart—

not that he has to seek converts. But otherwise is the case, when we trade in false religion. When a religion loses its real significance, it very often tries to live under the shadow or even protection of temporal power. So it is we find that the state sometimes serves as the handmaid of religion in the oppression of humanity. During the Inquisition period of European history as many as 3,400,000 persons were executed, according to one authority, because they did not or were supposed not to believe in all that has been said in the Bible. For a long time in Europe religion tried to stop all progress of science, lest it should make the people heretic. The latest instance of what extremes religious bigotry can go to even under the blaze of modern civilisation is supplied from Tennessee, an American state, where a schoolmaster has been prosecuted for teaching the doctrine of evolution to his pupils. The state fears, young boys will grow up with disrespect for the Bible, if this and some other doctrines of modern science which directly go against the teachings of the scripture are taught them. For, the Biblical story of the origin of man and the rising of the dead on the Judgment Day is denied by modern biology; physics finds out that the sun's rays reflected on clouds form a rainbow, whereas the Bible says that God made the rainbow and promised Noah that no flood should kill again all life; modern astronomy contradicts the teachings of the Bible that the earth was created four days before the sun, and modern philological research goes against the theory that various languages were created on earth from the time when God confounded man's speech in the tower of Babel.

Those who want to build their religious life on these exploded theories only, may do so by all means. But we believe, a man may grow in religion in spite of them. By sincerely following the teachings of Christ, a man may become a saint; whereas fighting for the authenticity of every statement in the Bible, a man may go daily further off from God. This is so true of every religion.



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**ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY.**

It would be deemed a truism to state that so long as the pursuit of wealth for its own sake looms large before the eyes of the people to the exclusion of all other considerations and duties of life, the hope for any permanent peace in the world is foredoomed to failure. So long as the mere possession of wealth entitles the possessor to comfort, esteem and honour, few care to stop to inquire the legitimacy or otherwise of the means employed in the acquisition.

Mr. Bertrand Russell in a reported interview has given expression to some rather unpleasant truths. We shall here leave out of consideration his observations with regard to the dealings of the white empires in their relations with coloured subjects; and they are well worth pondering over by statesmen entrusted with responsibility in the matter. He believes that the future peace of the world depends upon the solution of differences in civilisation and the elimination of exploitation for private profit.

He says—"If we would reduce our standard of luxury and simplify enormously the number of 'things' that clutter our existence and exhaust the world with useless activity, the white explorer would withdraw from much of the imperial territory, and the peoples with different civilisations would be left in comparative independence. (Personally I think, for example, it may be a great blessing to the human race, when the supply of oil is exhausted!)

"But this is Utopian. Our practical problem is, first, to eliminate exploitation of raw materials for private profit and, then, to work out the best possible plan of co-operation among different racial groups. The two phases of the problem may be attacked simultaneously, but we must always remember that political democracy is only one part of the whole, and far less important than economic democracy in its bearing on human happiness and even on justice. So long as the shareholders draw

the profits while others do the work, genuine democracy is impossible."

Mr. Russell believes that by the elimination of private profit and the international control of raw materials something like permanent peace can be hoped for the world.

The problem is as old as the ages. It is only by the removal of privilege of every kind that permanent peace can be secured. And we think that the teachings of the Vedanta contain the best solution for the problem. With remarkable insight into the future the Swami Vivekananda pointed out years ago—"This practical side of the Vedanta morality is necessary as much to-day as it ever was; more necessary, perhaps, than it ever was, for all this privilege-claiming has become tremendously intensified with the extension of knowledge. The idea of God and the devil, or Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, has a good deal of poetry in it. The difference between God and the devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and selfishness. The devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God, only he has no holiness—that makes him a devil. Apply the same idea to the modern world: excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes human beings devils. Tremendous power is being acquired by the manufacture of machines and other appliances, and privilege is claimed to-day as it never has been claimed in the history of the world. That is why the Vedanta wants to preach against it, to break down this tyrannising over the souls of men."

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