

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upanishad, 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.

4th January, 1921.

In connection with a noted person the Swami observed: "What will mere words do if there is no character behind them? That is the great stumbling-block for all. Sri Ramakrishna would say, 'Almost all have been caught in the snare of sex-attraction. Only a few have been saved from it by the Divine Mother.' It is a most dreadful attachment. People are all right so long as they have not come under its influence. A man under its spell can stoop to anything."

He quoted a Hindi couplet describing the baneful influences of money, sex-attraction and the palate, and added: "'Lust and gold,' and 'the palate and sex-impulse' are short expressions for the same thing. If one gives up these enjoyments, one verily renounces the world. One who can do this sets at naught the whole world indeed."

6th January.

“The world,” said the Swami, “is a dreadful place. Only falsehood reigns here. For a Sadhu truth is everything. If he gives up truth, he can no more prosper. Little untruths are also untruths.”

8th January.

Referring to somebody's deficient regard for truth the Swami said: “Truth is God. Falsehood is Maya. One gets everything by holding on to truth. Sri Ramakrishna taunted Pandit Shivanath Sastri with the words. ‘You are all so sane people, but how can you speak an untruth? You call me insane, but never does an untruth escape my lips!’ Wishing to keep the incident of the Kalighat priest's kicking him a secret, he asked Hriday Mukherji to elicit from him a promise not to mention it to anybody. Hriday at first objected. But Sri Ramakrishna made him elicit the promise from him three times, and remarked, ‘Now it will never escape my lips.’ For the good of the priest he thus put himself under a vow to observe silence on the matter.

“He once made an engagement with Sj. Jadu Mallik to meet him in his garden at noon. But he forgot about it, being engrossed in conversation with a number of visitors. At 11 P.M., when he was about to retire for the night, he suddenly remembered it. Immediately he had a lantern lighted, and accompanied by Rakhal Maharaj, went to the garden. Finding the gate closed, he put one foot in and shouted, ‘Here I have come.’

“He observed the same steadfastness to truth with regard to food also. He had given up all, but could not give up truth.

“It is a tremendous ordeal to abide by truth. A good deal of sacrifice is needed. To keep something secret, saying, ‘I won't tell it,’—is also a kind of untruth. To be absolutely frank and open in one's dealings is real truthfulness.”

This last remark the Swami made to a celebrated Bengali novelist who had said he was greatly devoted to

truth. The Swami cautioned him to reflect a little before he made that statement.

The Swami continued: "How dreadful is this realm of Maya! What stormy billows on it! One can watch it calmly if only one succeeds in removing oneself from it. Non-attachment. Otherwise there is a great danger. But it is a tremendously difficult task to remove oneself from it."

To-day the Durga-Saptasati will be read to him. He recited a verse or two of it, with the remark that the descriptions of battles, etc., have to be read quickly, and hymns, etc., slowly. He recited, with great sweetness, the stanza beginning with, 'O Durga, thou removest the fears of all creatures who remember Thee,' etc., and remarked, "How beautiful!"

Then he said: "Only during the last Puja did I miss reciting the Saptasati. I had an ulcer in my hand, and recitation is forbidden on an occasion like this. For a moment I thought that as this was a question, not of formal work, but of one's natural devotion, I might as well go through it. But physical weakness prevented it. Before this I do not remember to have ever missed the recitation during the Navaratri days. It is all His will!"

He had the Patanjali Yoga-Sutras brought, and read out the commentary on the aphorism: 'Works are neither black nor white for the Yogis; for others they are threefold—black, white and mixed.' (IV. 7)—The gist of the explanation is that no blame attaches to the aspirant because he is selfless.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

One of the most hopeful signs which give strength and enthusiasm to a social worker is the universal interest that is being evinced in the question of village reconstruction. It is not that we are any way nearer now to a satisfactory solution of the problem than before. Responsible politicians and leaders have only begun to talk about the need for the organisation of the village. Nevertheless, their time and energy is still devoted to politics, the most exciting and spectacular of all games in which the poor and illiterate masses of the villages are entirely ignored, except during the election campaigns. What little change has been effected in our habitual indifference towards our humble village brethren has not so far taken any permanent and well-organised shape, and unless the best minds of the country set themselves to this task in order to devise ways and means of rural reconstruction, the new-born enthusiasm may flicker away. The importance and urgency of this task can be easily realised if it is remembered that, in the peculiar circumstances in which India is placed, all hopes of establishing a national and popular government should remain a vain dream until the former is freed from the numerous shackles that are so heavily pulling her down. Three-fourths of her population depend upon agriculture, and as much as 95% of the people live in the villages. It is plain as daylight that the salvation of the country is inseparably bound up with the efficiency and welfare of the villages.

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It might be taken for granted that there is a perfect unanimity among all sections of people about the need for reorganising the rapidly decaying village institutions. Apart from the activities of the Christian and other missionary bodies which are more or less confined to cities and towns, attempts that have so far been made in

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this direction are initiated under the auspices of one or two progressive political parties. Naturally enough, owing to the peculiarly unfortunate and unnatural political conditions in which our country is placed, the movements initiated by one party, however unobjectionable they might be, fail to secure the support and sympathy of the rival parties. If one studies the somewhat chequered career of the Khaddar Movement, our meaning would become clear. In the beginning of the Movement, Khaddar was considered to be a symbol of non-co-operation, and as such the loyalists and others scrupulously kept themselves away from it. And even at the present day purely economic aspects of the question do not receive adequate consideration for the simple reason that the Movement is carried on by the Congress. In the light of this experience, we are led to believe that if the problem of rural reconstruction is to be undertaken in a calm and dispassionate spirit, it should be organised not only on purely non-party lines, but should also be rigorously kept outside the range of politics. Not that we believe that politics, social economics and similar other concerns of the nation are so many water-tight compartments, but if this question is turned into a plank in the programme of the political parties, the co-operation and good-will that are essential for the success of any scheme of village reform would be found wanting.

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The existence of differences among the various political parties of our country is not the only difficulty that has to be overcome. The unfortunate communal and caste misunderstandings and quarrels only help to make the situation more delicate. Moreover, the work of the regeneration of villages has to be carried on in so many different directions that unless the state with its immense resources comes to help in a whole-hearted way, it is not possible to make substantial progress as rapidly as we would wish. As this possibility is so very remote, we must content ourselves with what little can be done



by self-help. With regard to such matters as the spread of primary education, the improvement of sanitation and the development of agriculture and cottage and home industries, the scope of popular action independent of government aid is very limited. While it is the duty of the politicians to devise the best means of pressing these upon the attention of the government and induce them to move in the matter in right earnest, we shall simply attempt to indicate a few of the many directions in which social workers can help to arrest the decay of our villages.



We are not of those who always dwell upon the glories of the past and pine for what is not to come. Nevertheless, we consider it necessary to make a passing reference to some of the most essential features of our ancient culture mainly with a view to place before one's mind the spirit and genius of the ancient village communities. By doing so, we shall be able to lay the foundation of reconstruction on a secure and permanent footing, and the subsequent evolution would proceed on a perfectly natural line. From the very beginning of civilisation, India has been predominantly rural, and even at the present day it has very few cities, while the number of villages is as high as seven hundred thousands. Every student of Indian history is familiar with the researches of Sir Henry Maine who has proved that the Indian village life had so much vitality and so much character that it has persisted, through thousands of years. Sir Henry describes those villages as 'little republics, and these satisfied all the requirements of a civilised society, such as their own system of education, Panchayets or arbitration boards, rural sanitation and so on. The social and economic scheme of the village life was built upon mutual love and co-operation, and the communal spirit developed to such a remarkable extent that competition, rivalry and selfishness which characterise the modern society were altogether unknown. Very often individual interests were readily and unquestionably sacrificed to the

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interests of the community at large. The evils of private property were least prominent, and many things contributing to common welfare such as pathways, tanks and water-sources, pasture-lands etc., were held in common. In a word, the people were most happy and had few wants, which were supplied by their own exertions.

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Partly by natural causes and partly by wilful and violent methods, the ancient fabric has been destroyed. The part played by the old East Indian Company in running the native arts and crafts need not be dwelt upon here. If to-day one finds that abject poverty, idleness and disease have made the villages their permanent home, it is due mostly to the destruction of the indigenous village economic life. In the wake of the political subjection of the country to a predominantly commercial nation, India began to be flooded with all sorts of cheap machine-made goods from various foreign countries. Cities, towns and industrial centres grew up, attracting large numbers of people from the rural areas and thus dealt a serious blow to the already disorganised communal life of the villages. The centralised form of government acting like a soulless machine through a hierarchy of permanent officials killed what little initiative and responsibility the villages enjoyed. Everyone who is familiar with the present life of the villages will bear testimony to the fact that the very people who a few generations ago managed every detail of administration in their areas absolutely by themselves are now reduced to such utter helplessness that they seek the aid of government officials for everything from domestic quarrels to the repair of village roads.

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It will be seen from the foregoing reasons that the problem of the reconstruction of our villages is beset with difficulties, and even if we succeed in overcoming these, for obvious reasons, it is impossible to expect the exact past restored. All that we can hope for is to remove the

serious disadvantages that clog the life of the villages by reforms and agencies calculated to bring out local talent, initiative and co-operation. First in importance in this direction come measures that would mitigate the poverty of the people. This poverty again has a negative aspect, namely the indebtedness of the peasantry. Some success has, of course, been achieved in this line by the spread of co-operative credit societies. But it must be said that except in urban areas these have not touched the poor landless labourers. The sooner the poor people are brought within the reach of the co-operative societies, the smoother will be the paths of the social workers in the villages. Even the provision of cheap and easy credit will not by itself raise the economic status of the poor villagers. Unless the peasants freed from their heavy burden of debts are taught and provided with suitable means of increasing their income as well as employing their leisure hours in profitable occupation, there is every likelihood of their reverting to their original indebtedness. In this connection, the disinterested efforts made by the leaders to universalise hand-spinning and hand-weaving deserve the whole-hearted support of our countrymen, irrespective of politics, race and creed. Although cloth, coming next in importance to food, occupies a supreme position in the scale of national industries and specially in rural economics, we believe a systematic effort should be made to develop *all forms* of home and cottage industries.

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The towns, on account of numerous opportunities for enjoyment of all kinds and the possibilities for the free play of individual ambition and talent, draw the bold and the adventurous from the villages. Consequently, superstitions, orthodoxy, conservatism, reactionism, ignorance, prejudice and faction find a convenient shelter in rural areas. Unscrupulous men, too, are not wanting to take advantages of the weaknesses of the villagers. It has already been indicated that villages are the real backbone

of our national life, and so long as progress in education, social reform and political consciousness is more or less confined to cities and towns, it will be impossible for India to fulfil her mission in life. The remedy can be found only in men of culture and character, settling in villages with a disinterested motive to serve. The lines along which these people will have to work their way will differ with the varying circumstances, and it will by no means be a difficult matter for the worker on the spot to decide for himself in what way his energies should be most advantageously applied. We have already indicated the need for effecting improvements in the deplorable economic condition of the peasants by devising ways and means for lightening the burden of their debts and providing supplementary sources of earning. The co-operative movement and home industries would naturally occur to one's mind in this connection. These by themselves are not sufficient. Bound down by the conventions of caste and orthodoxy the villager, poor though he is, is notorious for his extravagance on occasions like marriage, funerals, special festivals etc., even to the extent of running into debts. The spread of a knowledge of the essentials of religion and spiritual life and the example of practical social reform by men of culture and high social status can alone reduce the mischief of such evils. Next to this extravagance, comes the proneness of the villager for litigation. With the disappearance of the old ties of communal life and the patriarchal influence of the wise elders, this tendency of litigation has become so wide-spread that it will tax to the utmost the best energies of the social workers to check it. Panchayets and arbitration boards are the most natural agencies to think of, but the success of these again depend upon securing men of incorruptible character and unselfishness—men who would always work as the servants of the people.

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It may strike the readers as very strange that we have not insisted upon the need for the spread of education in

the villages. It is not that we are not alive to the fact that education alone is the most powerful lever to raise the status of any people. The village reformer, to the extent he is able to instil the spirit of thrift, co-operation, arbitration and economic self-help, will be spreading a form of man-making education in the sphere of his work. Besides the organisation of primary day-schools for boys and girls, wherever circumstances permit, the opening of night schools for wage-earners teaching by magic lanterns and other forms of visual instruction, the starting of circulating libraries and similar methods will have to be undertaken.

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The difficulties which a village reformer has to overcome are for obvious reasons many and formidable, especially in initial stages. We cannot think of any better and surer road to success than to walk along the lines which Mahatma Gandhi indicated in the course of an address delivered at the Y. M. C. A., Calcutta. He rightly pointed out—"If the young men went to the village with character they would find out for themselves the possibilities. Let them go to the villages with character which must be expressed not through speeches but through loving acts, and it would be found the villagers would instinctively understand them and respond to their call" He appealed to the social workers and said—"Go to them in a spirit of love and not as dictators, and you will find that the villagers will nobly respond to your call."

THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

BY SWAMI ADWAITANANDA.

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The soul of the Indian nation is awake. We find that a giant power is slowly but surely preparing to face a new world, a strange and foreign environment. We see on every side an earnest endeavour to fray all bonds. The whole movement is as yet in the stage of transition, but there can be no gainsaying the fact that this renaissance will ultimately tear asunder all bonds and will find expression in a richly varied spiritual, ethical, intellectual, emotional, vital and material efflorescence.

In order to have a clear perspective of the trend of this ascending movement, it is necessary that we should have a lucid conception of the past of India with its cultural peculiarities. We must also be conversant with the causes of her decline, the immediate effect of the onslaught of an alien civilisation and the different stages of the upward curve which has quite recently begun.

Western writers who have studied the Indian civilisation in a perfunctory way generally uphold the view that the Indian mind is abstract, other-worldly, overpowered by the sense of the Infinite, unfit to face and master the life-movement, and unpractical. This is a one-sided view. Spirituality is undoubtedly the master-key of Indian mentality. The sense of the Infinite is native to it. The Indian mind intuitively realised that the material cannot be grasped until it stands in right relation to the spiritual. She further saw that sensational experiences and human reason were insufficient instruments for probing the innermost secrets of this vast and complex phenomenon. The invisible always surrounds the visible, the supra-sensible the sensible. She found out that man has the power to transcend all material limitations, to come face to face with Truth and to acquire mastery over the whole of

nature. She carefully thought out the ways and means, and with unparalleled courage and calm audacity she underwent mental and physical Tapasya to realise the goal. Long periods of such rigorous discipline, shining examples of God-intoxicated men and age-long traditions have given to the Indian mind its peculiar religious and metaphysical bent.

However, this was not her whole mentality. When we read the ancient literature of India, we find that her activities have been many-sided. She has created varied systems of philosophy, cosmogony and subjective sciences. She had different kinds of religious orders embodying different ideals, varied systems of Yoga, physical sciences, worldly trades, industries, and fine arts. She had systems of politics, republics, empires, kingdoms. She had, further, the spirit of expansion. Her religions spread over Japan and China and westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria. The traces of her culture are found in Mesopotamia. Her vast literature embraces the whole of life-religion, philosophy, Yoga, logic, rhetoric, grammar, poetry, drama, fiction, politics, sociology, medicine, astronomy, painting, sculpture, architecture, dancing, in short, all the arts and sciences which could be useful to the mind or the body of humanity. An innate and dominant spirituality, an unexampled vital creativeness, a keen, powerful and penetrating intellect, and an indomitable will which defied even death were the characteristics of ancient India. The age of the spirit—the Vedas and the Upanishads, was followed by centuries of heroic action and social construction. And this great classical age was marked by an insatiable thirst for detailed refinement in science, art and scholarship. The spiritual background was always there, because the thoughtful Indian mind never lost sight of the goal. The post-classical period saw completion of the cycle. Even the sensuous, emotional and æsthetic tendencies of man were brought into the service of the spiritual. This is the inner meaning and sense of the Pauranic and Tantric systems and the religion of Bhakti.

The law of cycles which is operative everywhere in this world of name and form overtook the Indian nation at this stage. There was a cessation of free and unhampered intellectual activity, a slumber of the scientific mind, a weakening of will and a stoppage of intuitive creation. There was a fading of the joy of creation along with a spirit of passivity, a keen desire to escape from the ills of life instead of a manly endeavour to master them, a blind attachment to the external forms of things, an unpardonable obedience to the dictates of authority and an utter lack of the spirit of individualism and intrepid thinking. The essential spirit of Indian culture, however, remained. Even in the period of her decline she produced personalities of remarkable mental and physical vigour, but when compared with the past the decadence was marked. It was this state of helplessness which gave the European adventurer his chance

The impact of this alien pressure brought forth, as was inevitable, a reaction. At the outset it was imitative. But it revived the dormant Indian mind, critical and creative. It created an earnest desire for emancipation and self-expression. This new impulse necessitated the turning of a new eye upon its past culture, a thorough sifting of the essentials and the non-essentials, an intellectual effort to re-apply old principles to new environments and the cultivation of the strength of mind to master and assimilate them. This commingling of the two rivers of thought, Eastern and Western, and the physical subjection of her peoples which was sapping her vitality and leading to her economic ruin, have been instrumental in bringing about a movement of rebirth. The Indian mind has now before it the supreme task of recovering her old spiritual experiences, of expressing them in new and varied forms of philosophy, art, science and literature, and of applying them with unflinching intrepidity to the problems of her external life—political, social and economic. This is the special mission which India has to fulfil. She of all countries has been charged with the solution of this complicated problem, because she has the

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master-key in her hands, and inspite of ups and downs never lost sight of Truth. This loyalty to Truth has made her a chosen nation in the eyes of the gods. She is to set an example to the whole world and to demonstrate the possibility of harmonising a bewildering variety on the basis of an underlying unity. This is the significance of the Indian national movement.

It is asserted that nations and systems of culture fulfil special functions as organs of humanity, as individuals fulfil special uses in the community. In that case within the bounds of India is the focal or polar points of the race. The great task of reconciling the opposites would devolve upon her. It seems to have been decreed by Providence that Aryans, Dravidians, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis should meet in this sacred land and learn their mutual significance and responsibilities. India is to find herself to be not merely a congeries of warring fragments, a battle-ground of rival political factions held in a mechanical combination by the pressure of a benevolent foreign element, but a single immense organism filled into the tide of one strong pulsating life from one end to the other.

It is extremely difficult to foresee the nature of the shape the new creative impulse will assume, but we can safely assert that the spiritual motive in India will be the governing strain. It is indeed significant that almost all great movements of life in this country have drawn their inspiration from religion and spirituality. The onslaught of the Western intellectual and rationalistic culture resulted in the creation of new religions. The Brahma Samaj in Bengal, started with an attempt to restate the Vedanta and though protestant, followed the curve of the national mind. The Arya Samaj in the Punjab based itself on a fresh interpretation of the Vedas and made a fresh attempt to apply the old Vedantic principles to the changed conditions of modern life. The movement associated with the great names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda took up all the scattered threads of the past and combined them in a harmonious whole. It reaffirmed the old



monasticism, but by a process of judicious assimilation it gave it an aggressive and a social turn. The rest of India have felt the influence of these movements, and all religious sects and disciplines are becoming strongly revived, active and dynamic. Islam is also showing signs of reawakening, and endeavours are being made to vitalise the old Islamic ideals. These signs clearly indicate that there is a tendency towards the return of the spirit upon life, everywhere. The writings of Sir John Woodroffe who has evinced such a keen interest in Indian religious and philosophical literature have brought to light the hidden gems in Tantric literature and have been instrumental in dissipating many false notions. They have clearly shown that Ancient India did not reject life but embraced it with a mastering fold. The erudite writings of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh on philosophical and psychological subjects have opened up a new path and upon past foundations have reared up a superb superstructure. His writings clearly indicate that the Indian mind is capable of sublime creative activity once it has been placed in a free atmosphere.

In subjective sciences and in poetry, literature and art also there have been definite beginnings. India is now producing works of art with a distinct message. They display clearly the national individuality and the distinctive national bent. But in the external life of the nation no such originality is as yet visible. There is an attempt to imitate the West blindly in matters political, and although here and there we find some illuminating idea it cannot be said that the national mind has assumed a coherent form in respect of it. Partly this is due to the hampering political conditions. The Indian mind, probably, is engaged in finding out ways and means of removing the existing disabilities first. When the time of political reconstruction comes it will apply itself to the task with absolute freedom from the notions borrowed from the West and will evolve a polity suitable to her national genius and environments. Of course, the cry is persistent that existing forms and methods of administra-

tion are entirely unsuitable to Indian conditions. They require a thorough overhauling, and this is the root cause of the intense struggle that is being waged on the plane political. Indian society is in a still more confused stage. Old forms and institutions are crumbling under the irresistible pressure of new environments, but owing to an inertia of thought and lack of strength of will no clear methods of social advance and social adjustment are laid out.

*(To be continued.)*

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## INDIAN WOMANHOOD IN THE ACCOUNTS OF GREEK WRITERS.\*

BY HARIPADA GHOSAL, Vidyabenode, M.A., M.R.A.S.

Those of the Western scholars who make capital of Hellenic influence on India should remember that though architecture, sculpture, painting and coinage had felt the influence of Greek culture, it may be said that foreigners had very little opportunity to study the social condition of an ancient and highly civilised people like the Indians scattered over this continent. Alexander's campaign overwhelmed India like a storm, but like a storm it passed away after only a transient stay. Macedonian authority was swept away as early as 322 B.C., and Indian princes asserted their independence and exterminated the last vestiges of a foreign domination.

The accounts of Greek travellers and writers about the social condition of the Indian people are not trustworthy, as they knew India only imperfectly, and their information is scrappy and defective. Failing to have a first-hand knowledge, many of these men depended upon hearsay and depicted India and the customs prevailing at that time, as suited their purpose. Negligible though they appear, they shed faint rays on the otherwise obscure nature of those times and are of some value in tracing the

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\* The picture of Indian womanhood depicted in the article is more than we know.—*Editor, P.B.*



gradual progress of the thoughts and ideas of the Indian people. But we should be wary and cautious in gleaning facts which are sometimes so absurd, alien and repugnant to the Indian temperament that we should reject them as worthless stuff. We endorse the views of Dr. G. N. Banerjee: "Neither did the Assyrians, Arabs, nor Phoenecians reach the true centres of Hindu civilisation. They merely touched the fringe of Indian culture by frequenting those sea-board towns, where the mixed population was more occupied with commerce than with intellectual pursuits. The conquerors, previous to Alexander the great, did no more than reach the gates of India and reconnoitre its approaches, while Alexander himself failed to penetrate beyond its vestibule." (*Hellenism in Ancient India: Intro. p. 2.*)

This also may be said to be true of many of the Greek writers who marked certain customs and usages in some tribes and semi-barbarous people and supposed them to be of the Hindu people. The only thing which is reliable and hence can be depended upon is the writing of Megasthenes who lived in the court of Chandragupta between 302 and 288 B.C., but his original book is lost. Subsequent writers quoted from it so often that we can get a glimpse into the subject-matter and the manner of his writing. Before him Strabbo, Pliny and Arian wrote about India, but they derived their materials from the accounts of writers who accompanied Alexander during his Indian expedition. However trustworthy may be these writers about the civil and military administration of Chandragupta's court, yet with the single exception of perhaps Megasthenes, we cannot accept their conclusions as reliable with regard to the social customs and usages of the Indian population. Again, Megasthenes himself admits that he had no personal and first-hand knowledge of the people of the lower Gangetic plain, and that he had taken down their accounts from hearsay and rumour which have very little historical value as such.

We know the exalted position women held in the Buddhist India as well as their important relationship in

social and civic affairs. Megasthenes notes that women played an important part in royal hunting. Armed guards, mostly women, were purchased from foreign countries, and they "formed an indispensable element in the courts of the ancient Indian monarchs." But it is not clear if the services of Indian women were requisitioned for the purpose. This is perhaps an imitation by Chandragupta of a foreign custom, as we do not come across such instances of royal protection by amazonian body-guards in more ancient writings. That this practice was prevalent in Chandragupta's time is corroborated by the drama *Mudrarakshas Act. III*. Strabbo mentions that girls were bought from their parents, and that maidens of prepossessing and handsome appearance were regularly imported at Broach for the royal harem in the 1st century A.D.

Chanakya lays down that "on getting up from bed, the king should be received by troops of women armed with bows," in his *Arthashastra, Bk. I. Chap. XXI*. Professor R. Shyam Shastri's translation of Chanakya's *Arthashastra* is a momentous publication, throwing a flood of light on the polity and state of society in the Maurya period. Chanakya advises to entrust women with the important function of espionage. Clever and poor Brahmin widows called Parivrajikas, honoured in the king's harem, should "frequent the residences of the king's prime ministers," and women with shaven head and those of the Sudra caste should be employed as wandering spies. Thus mendicant women and prostitutes were to be deputed to espy the private character of state officials and to convey important information on which the king would take steps, to the institute of espionage. As the government placed a great reliance on espionage for its very existence, the services of women, especially of courtesans in this sphere of public service, were indeed very useful.

The position of a woman in any society is to be determined by the freedom she enjoys, her share in property, the treatment she receives from the custodians of her



personal safety, the nature of her duties as regards inter-relation of the sexes and as mistress of the household. The *Arthashastra* says that of the eight forms of marriage any kind was approvable if that pleased the contracting parties, and the first four forms were valid if approved by the father. The father-in-law could select a man to remarry his widow daughter-in-law, but a widow selecting her own partner forfeited whatever was given to her by her father-in-law and husband. A woman could not make a free use of her *stridhan* if she had a son. Neither the enmity of the wife to her husband, nor that of the husband to his wife, was sufficient for the dissolution of marriage, but a divorce could be obtained for their mutual enmity. Still "marriages contracted in accordance with the customs of the first four kinds of marriage cannot be dissolved." (*Artha.*, Bk. III. Chap. III.) Remarriage of a woman was allowed if her husband had long gone abroad, or had become an ascetic, or was dead within a year, if she had no issue, and after one year, if she had an issue. The man to be selected should be her husband's brother next in age to him, and in the absence of such a person, she might marry one who belonged to the same *gotra* as her husband's.

Thus sufficient freedom was vouchsafed to women in those days, though it had to be restricted in later times. Divorce and remarriage of widows which obtain in Western countries, but which is regarded as the most abominable and heinous of social crimes by modern Hindus as subversive of all laws of morality and canons of chastity, were not unknown in India. There was no hard and fast rule with regard to a Brahmin's marriage with the other three castes. Both forms of marriage such as *anuloma* and *pratiloma* were widely practised, though in later times they were abolished, and only marriages of men and women of equal castes came to be regarded as the legitimate forms of matrimonial union. Absolute authority of the father in the selection of the bridegroom for his daughter, or of the bride for his son, came into practice in the process of time ; and the free-

dom of boys and girls in the selection of their mates was checked later on. Judging from these facts we may conclude that a woman had a large amount of freedom which was curtailed by and by to make her subservient to the will of the sterner sex and absolutely helpless and dependent on her earthly lord.

Now let us see how far the information supplied by the *Arthashastra* tallies with the accounts of Megasthenes, and of the Greek and Roman writers on India. We may accept those of their opinions and conclusions which were corroborated by an authentic work like the *Arthashastra* and reject those which are absurd, which never were, nor are ever consistent with the culture of a highly civilised society. The notes of those writers will be useful so far as they throw an additional light on obscure points of social customs in that remote age.

Strabbo (14 or 24 A.D.) says that boys and girls selected their mates and women died on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Men took their wives for begetting children, and polygamy was in vogue among the less learned and wise. Aristobolus confirms the above statements and mentions some strange and unnatural customs. Those who, on account of their poverty, could not give their daughters in marriage, took them in their youth to the bazaar and attracted customers by the sound of conches and trumpets. A customer being available, the girl, veiled from head to foot, was shown her face, and the customer agreeing contracted the marriage. This is more than we know. Arian in his *Indica* states that girls coming to age were publicly taken to the market, and they selected their husbands who proved strong in hand to hand fight. This custom might have been prevalent among some warrior tribes, but neither contemporary literature, nor tradition can supply any proof of its existence. Diodorus Siculus says that for matrimonial relationship contracting parties had not to depend on their father's will, but were bound in wedlock of their own accord. Immature youngmen afterwards discovered their mistake after a few years of marriage and repented



for their action. Women also sometimes did not like their husbands and used to get rid of them by administering poison. This bad practice was prevalent for a long time. Then it was ruled that unless women were pregnant, they had to follow their husbands in death. Otherwise they would have to live as widows and were looked down as impious if they failed. Such a state of affairs existed in the period of transition when the selection of mates as a consequence of blind amatory effusion of juvenile people continued, and rigid paternal authority which asserted itself naturally in the determination and choice of brides and bridegrooms, had not yet clearly, come into existence, as the evil effects of free selection had begun to manifest their disastrous results on society.

Here is a distinct stage in the evolution of the woman's position in Hindu society. The unrestrained freedom of a woman was checked. Immolation on the funeral pyre—an ancient custom which had become obsolete owing to a widow's free-will to remarry the man of her liking after the decease of her husband and which had degenerated into forced burning in later times—was hedged in with sanctity and came to be regarded as the sole criterion of a married woman's attachment and devotion to her husband. Womanly chastity and purity of character and true greatness consisted in curbing immoderate passions and inordinate desires for free intercourse ; and law-givers who sought the welfare of society insisted, with all the force they could command and by an appeal to religion, on young women to subscribe themselves to the superior wisdom of their parents in all matters relating to their future domestic happiness and conjugal felicity. The same distrust of women which we see even in the Vedic Rishis and wise men in different periods of Indian history, showed itself again, and henceforth anecdotes and stories of ideal womanhood were devised and interpolated into sacred writings to make women docile and amenable to religious doctrines.

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## GOD'S HAND.

It is not given to all of us to recognise Truth wherever and whenever we meet it. We may believe in our own scriptures, in our own religion. But how often prejudiced are we when we discuss with men of a different faith who present to us their own belief and scripture as the revealed word of God! Almost identical incidents when recorded in our own books we accept as true, but when we read them in foreign scriptures or accounts we slight them as myths. It is the glory of Hinduism that, at least theoretically, it makes no such distinction, for it is the teaching of Vedanta that God reveals Himself through all the ages to true devotees regardless of nationality, colour or creed.

Open any scripture, and what do you find? From cover to cover the scriptures bear witness to a living God, guiding, protecting and watching over His children. He stretches forth His hand to succour in time of need, to rescue from danger and to nourish those who trust in Him. He often overrules in human affairs and works wonders in heaven and on earth. The worldling sees only good fortune, a happy chance; but the children of God recognise a brooding Presence, a loving Protector, the Hand of God.

And is it not true that, almost unconsciously, too often we believe that intervening on the part of God was divinely natural in the past, but that now these special interpositions of God's providence are hardly to be expected?

We cannot know God's plans. These plans are not revealed to man, least of all to the prying, inquisitive mind. But that He whose hand protected in the past is with us to-day, we find verified in the lives of godly men in all lands. A few simple stories from the annals of Christian saints perhaps will bring this fact home to us, and may help to strengthen and revivify our faith. The



stories are culled and adapted from "The Hand that Intervenes," by W. A. Spicer.

## I

## THE STRANGER.

John Jones, a Methodist preacher, was travelling on horseback through a desolate part of Wales when looking to the right he observed a rough-looking man, armed with a reaping knife, following him on the other side of a hedge that lined the roadside. The man was hurrying along evidently trying to reach before him a gate where it was necessary for the horseman to dismount.

The preacher had a bag of money which he had collected to build a new church. Fearing that not only the money but also his life was in danger, he stopped his horse, and bowing his head he prayed to God for protection. After a moment of silent prayer the horse became restive to go on. Jones looked up, and then to his surprise he saw a man on a white horse alongside of him. This sudden appearance of a fellow-traveller at the moment of danger was most welcome.

Jones told the stranger about the dangerous position in which he had been placed, and how relieved he felt by his unexpected appearance. The stranger made no reply, only gazed intently in the direction of the gate. The preacher followed his gaze, and doing so saw the reaper emerge from behind a bush, and run at full speed across a field to their left. He had evidently seen that there were two men now and had given up his intended attempt to rob the preacher.

All cause of danger being now removed, Jones tried to enter into conversation with his companion, but without the slightest success. Not a word did he get in reply. He continued talking, however, as they rode toward the gate failing to see any reason for, and indeed feeling a little hurt at this strange silence.

Having watched the reaper disappear over the brow of a neighbouring hill, Jones turned to his companion

again, and said, "Can it for a moment be doubted that my prayer was heard, and that you were sent for my deliverance by the Lord?" Then the horseman uttered the single word, 'Amen' (It is truly so). Not another word did he speak, though the preacher continued endeavouring to get from him replies to his questions.

They were now approaching the gate. Jones hurried on his horse for the purpose of opening it. And having done so, he waited for the stranger to pass through. But he came not. Jones turned his head to look for him. He was gone, vanished as unexpectedly and mysteriously as he had appeared.

The preacher was dumbfounded. He looked back in the direction from which they had just been riding, but his companion was not to be seen. He could not have gone through the gate, nor have made his horse leap the high hedges which on both sides shut in the road. Where was he? Could it be possible that there had been no man or horse at all, that it was a vision born of imagination? Jones tried hard to convince himself that this was the case, but in vain; for unless some one had been with him, why had the reaper hurried away? "No," Jones thought, "this horseman was no creature of my imagination. But who could he have been?"

He asked himself this question again and again, and then a feeling of profound awe stole over him. He remembered the singular manner in which the stranger had first appeared. He recollected his silence, and then again that single word to which he had given utterance which had been elicited from him by mentioning the name of the Lord. What could he then believe? But one thing, and that was that his prayer had been heard, and that help had indeed been sent as a response to his prayer.

Full of this thought the preacher threw himself on his knees at the side of the road, praising God who had so signally preserved him from danger.

He then mounted his horse and continued on his journey.



## II

## NON-RESISTANCE.

In the early days of Methodism, in the eighteenth century, John Wesley, the leader of the movement, had many experiences of deliverance by the manifest interposition of God. The message of reform was so unpopular as to arouse the bitterest opposition of the mob who often tried to take his life. Wesley after many unmistakable proofs had the conviction that the hand of God is on every person and thing, ruling events as it seems good to Him. He practised non-resistance and was absolutely fearless trusting altogether that nothing could happen without the will of the Lord.

At Wednesbury, in England, a mob gathered outside his house, shouting, "Bring out the preacher!" The leader of the rabble was asked to come inside the house. Wesley spoke to him a few words when suddenly the man became as docile as a lamb. This man went out and brought in two others who were mad with rage. They also in a few minutes were entirely changed. Then Wesley addressed the mob. They listened and shortly dispersed as if they had forgotten the object that had brought them there.

On another occasion Wesley was pulled and dragged about for hours by a lot of ruffians. He did not resist but kept on praying aloud. At last the leader of these men turned and said, "Sir, I will protect you. Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head." He took Wesley by the hand and led him away carrying him through a river on his shoulders to escape his wild companions.

One day while preaching in an open square, one man to stop him began bawling at Wesley's ear. Others threw stones. But the stones instead of hitting Wesley struck the bawling man, and he ran away. Another tried to push the preacher off, when a stone struck him on the forehead, and he fell down unconscious. A third man got close to Wesley, and when he tried to pull the

preacher down was hit by a sharp stone, disabling him. All this time with stones flying about him, Wesley preached on unscathed.

In Ireland a mayor sent agents to disturb his meetings. They threw at the preacher whatever came to hand, but nothing hit him. He walked quietly forward, looking the mob in the face, and the rioters opened right and left to let him pass. When he reached a friend's house, a ruffian stood in the door to prevent his entrance. One of the mob aimed a blow at Wesley, but instead of hitting him he knocked the ruffian down flat. Then Wesley stepped inside the house. Through all this tumult Wesley felt no fear and no resentment. His mind was firmly fixed on God.

One day Wesley went to visit the bedside of a sick man. Scarcely had he entered the house and sat down when a multitude of shouting people gathered outside. It was a terrible noise and confusion. The mob roared, "Bring out the Methodist! Where is the Methodist?" Then they forced open the outer door and filled the passage. Some of the ruffians being angry at the slowness of the rest, pushed them aside, and setting their shoulders to the inner door, cried out, "Stop, lads, stop!" The hinges broke, and the door fell back into the room.

Wesley stepped forward into the midst of the crowd and said, "Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me?" The ruffians were dumbfounded and let him pass. And the captain of the mob following Wesley swore that no man should touch him.

About this incident Wesley wrote in his journal: "I never saw before \* \* \* the hand of God so clearly shown as here. \* \* \* Although the hands of hundreds of people were lifted up to strike or throw, yet they were one and all stopped in the midway; so that not a man touched me with his fingers; neither was anything thrown from first to last. \* \* \* Who can deny that God heareth prayer, or that He has all power in heaven and earth?"



# THE FOREIGN PROPAGANDA FOR INDIA.\*

BY DR. BHUPENDRA NATH DUTT, M.A., PH.D.

The problem of "Propaganda for India in Foreign Lands" is agitating the minds of our politicians to-day, and there are two kinds of opinion on the matter. The one section does not believe in foreign propaganda ; it wants to cut off India from the rest of the world ; it anathematises everything that bears the brand "foreign." Indeed, this section is trying to build a Chinese Wall around India ; it is trying to prevent the world-currents from flowing into our land. On the other hand, the other section believes in foreign propaganda, but they have launched out nothing as yet. Personally, I am a believer of propaganda for India in foreign lands, and the exiles and emigrants living in foreign lands have done their quota of the work unaided. But in our practical experiences we have found out that without help and backing from the mother country India cannot be represented properly abroad.

The work "Foreign Propaganda abroad" needs a little elucidation. By "Foreign Propaganda for India" I don't mean only political propaganda for India in England. I mean also representation of Indian activities in all their aspects, namely, political, religious, cultural, scientific, economical etc. in different lands. During my sojourn in Europe and America I have found out that in some countries like America there is an open hostility against India, and in other countries complete ignorance in matters Indian, which have given rise to prejudices.

In this matter of terrible prejudices against India, there are two agencies which are accountable for this sad state of things :—firstly, the imperialism of the dominant nations, and secondly, the Christian missionary propaganda.

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\* Notes of a short lecture delivered in Calcutta.

Unfortunately the Christian missionaries in their zeal for propaganda become the protagonists of their national chauvinism. Of course, in our present condition we cannot combat the first, but we can dispel to a certain extent the prejudices that exist against India in various ways. And it is the duty of educated India to take up this task. We must show the civilised world that we live, think and have our beings just as they do, that we have the same kind of human aspirations, problems and determination to solve them, and that we are determined to take our share in solving the common problems of mankind.

In this matter, I am at variance with that tendency which wants to isolate India from outside in the name of nationalism. We cannot remain isolated. Indeed history says that India was never cut off from the rest of the world. Migrations have taken place in India from the outside and gone out of this land. The historians say that Plato was influenced by the Indian thought. The American Prof. Ross says that within the last 50 years the Indian philosophy has tremendously influenced the Occidental thought. If that be the case in the past, there is no reason why India should not again give her best to outside.

In this matter, the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order and their disciples have done and are still doing their utmost in giving the best of Indian thought according to their lights, ideals and world-views. They are doing their quota in dispelling the prejudices against the Indians. Many ladies and gentlemen in America have told me that before Swami Vivekananda went there, they were fed up with the stories of mothers throwing their babies into the Ganges to be devoured by crocodiles, and mark it well that in the pictures depicting this story the babies were painted white and the mothers black! I will give you another illustration. I was in Providence in 1913 when once I read in the papers that the Secretary of the Ramabai Association asked the American public to supply the Association with funds for continuing their



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work in India as the Hindus there burn their widows and throw their babies into the Ganges! Reading this I made an appointment with the lady in order to disabuse her mind regarding India. I visited her. She breathed fire and brimstone for three hours against me, and finally said: "What would have been your fate if the missionaries had not gone there!"

Perhaps historically that was partially true that the missionaries started first the modern educational system in India, but I am not sure whether such kind of fanatical propaganda helps India. Therefore the work of the Swamis in this direction has been invaluable. In religious conferences and in various kinds of societies they have spoken for India.

In the same way some of the Mahomedan sects are sending their representatives in foreign lands, and they are doing the thing in the right direction. Every sect or people should do its level best to dispel the misconceptions that exist about them, and give others the best that they have to give. There should be contact between the East and the West in every kind of activity of life. In this matter, we should follow the Japanese method, who show themselves up in every kind of international congress and conference.

It is for the public to take up the cause. If we want to go abreast with the rest of mankind, if we want to be a living nation, we must come in cultural and other kinds of contact with all the countries of the world. We cannot afford to keep ourselves aloof. The only way is to allow the world-currents to come in our midst and not to build a Chinese Wall around us and say that we are the most spiritual people. We should give our best to humanity and take the best others have to give us, and then there will be mutual amity, peace and good-will in the world.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 475.)

सर्गादौ प्रकृतिर्ह्यस्य कार्यकारणरूपिणी ॥

सत्त्वादिभिर्गुणैर्धत्ते पुरुषोऽव्यक्त ईक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

17. In the projection,¹ etc., of this universe, the Prakriti, transformed into causes and effects,² assumes, through the Gunas such as the Sattva, etc., the conditions for such modification. But the Purusha, unmodified,³ merely looks on.

[1 *Projection &c.*—i.e. projection, continuity and dissolution.

2 *Causes and effects*: The causes are—Mahat, Egoism and the five subtle elements. The effects are—the five gross elements, the ten organs and the Manas or mind.

3 *Unmodified &c.*—Hence it is distinct from the Prakriti.]

व्यक्तादयो विकुर्वाणा धातवः पुरुषेक्षया ॥

लब्धवीर्याः सृजन्त्यण्डं संहताः प्रकृतेर्बलात् ॥ १८ ॥

18. The component elements such as the Mahat, etc., while transforming, are charged with power under the glance of the Purusha, and, supported by the Prakriti, combine¹ and form the universe.

[1 *Combine &c.*—Hence the universe can be grouped under those several categories.]

सप्तैव धातव इति तत्रार्थाः पञ्च खादयः ॥

ज्ञानमात्मोभयाधारस्ततो देहेन्द्रियासवः ॥ १९ ॥

19. The view that the components are only seven in number, comprises the five elements such as ether,¹ etc., together with the Jiva and the Supreme Self, which is the substratum of both subject and object. From these seven proceed² the body, the organs and the Pranas.

[1 *Ether &c.*—The five gross elements. The causes from Prakriti down to the subtle elements inhere in these.

2 *Proceed &c.*—Hence the remaining sixteen categories are accounted for.]

षडित्यत्रापि भूतानि पञ्च षष्ठः परः पुमान् ॥

तैर्युक्त आत्मसम्भूतैः सृष्टेदं समुपाविशत् ॥ २० ॥

20. The view that there are six categories, comprises the five elements and the Supreme Self,¹ which makes up the sixth. This Supreme Self, being provided with the five elements, which have emanated out of Itself, has made all this² and entered into it.

[1 *The Supreme Self*—which includes the Jiva of the previous enumeration.

2 *All this*—the body and everything else.]

चत्वार्येवेति तत्रापि तेज आपोऽन्नमात्मनः ॥

जातानि तैरिदं जातं जन्मावयविनः खलु ॥ २१ ॥

21. In the view limiting the categories to four only, fire, water and earth, together with the Atman from which they have sprung, are meant. It is from these¹ that the origin of all effects has taken place.

[1 *From these &c.*—So they are all included in these four.]

संख्याने सप्तदशके भूतमात्रेन्द्रियानि च ॥

पञ्च पञ्चैकमनसा आत्मा सप्तदशः स्मृतः ॥ २२ ॥

22. In the enumeration of seventeen categories the gross elements, the subtle elements and the organs—five of each—together with the mind and the Atman constitute the seventeen.

तद्वत्षोडशसंख्याने आत्मैव मन उच्यते ॥

भूतेन्द्रियाणि पञ्चैव मन आत्मा त्रयोदश ॥ २३ ॥

23. Similarly, in the enumeration of sixteen categories the Atman¹ itself is taken as the mind. The five elements, the five organs, the mind and the twofold² Atman—these make up the thirteen categories.

[1 *Atman &c.*—as cogitating.

2 *Twofold &c.*—as Jiva and Paramatman.]

एकादशत्व आत्मासौ महाभूतेन्द्रियाणि च ॥

अष्टौ प्रकृतयश्चैव पुरुषश्च नवेत्यथ ॥ २४ ॥

24. In the enumeration of eleven categories this Atman, the five elements and the five organs are taken into consideration. While the eight causes¹ and the Purusha make up the nine categories.

[1 *Eight causes*—i.e. Prakriti, Mahat, Egoism, and the five subtle elements.]

इति नानाप्रसंख्यानं तत्त्वानामृषिभिः कृतम् ॥

सर्वं न्याय्यं युक्तिमत्त्वाद्विदुषां किमशोभनम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. Thus the sages have made various enumerations of the categories. All of these, being reasonable, are apposite. What indeed is inappropriate for the learned?

उद्धव उवाच ॥

प्रकृतिः पूरुषश्चोभौ यद्यप्यात्मविलक्षणौ ॥

अन्योन्यापास्त्रयात्कृष्ण दृश्यते न भिदा तयोः ॥

प्रकृतौ लक्ष्यते ह्यात्मा प्रकृतिश्च तथात्मनि ॥ २६ ॥

Uddhava said :

26. O Krishna, though the Prakriti and the Purusha are mutually distinct¹ by their very nature, yet their distinction is not perceived as they are never found apart. The Atman, verily, is seen in the Prakriti,² and likewise the Prakriti in the Atman.

[1 *Distinct*—one being sentient and the other insentient.

2 *Prakriti*—i.e. its effect, the body. They are mixed up and perceived as the "I."]

एवं मे पुण्डरीकाक्ष महान्तं संशयं हृदि ॥

छेत्तुमर्हसि सर्वज्ञ वचोभिर्नयनैपुणैः ॥ २७ ॥

27. O Lotus-eyed, Omniscient Lord, Thou shouldst dispel this great doubt in my heart with words skilled in reasoning.

त्वत्तो ज्ञानं हि जीवानां प्रमोषस्तेऽत्र शक्तिः ॥

त्वमेव ह्यात्ममायाया गतिं वेत्थ न चापरः ॥ २८ ॥

28. It is from Thee that people get illumination, and from Thy Power¹ it is that they are robbed of it. Thou

alone knowest the course of Thy inscrutable Power, and none else.

[1 Power—Maya.]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

प्रकृतिः पुरुषश्चेति विकल्पः पुरुषर्षभ ॥

एष वैकारिकः सर्गो गुणव्यतिकरात्मकः ॥ २६ ॥

The Lord said :

29. O best of men, the Prakriti and the Purusha are entirely distinct¹ entities. This projected universe is subject to modifications, for it has sprung from a disturbance among the Gunas.

[1 Distinct—This distinction is brought out first by describing the ever-changing nature of the Prakriti in this and the next two verses.]

ममाङ्ग माया गुणमयनेकधा विकल्पबुद्धीश्च गुणैर्विधत्ते ॥

वैकारिकस्त्रिविधोऽध्यात्ममेकमथाधिदैवमधिभूतमन्यत् ॥ ३० ॥

30. My friend, My inscrutable Power, consisting of the Gunas, creates through these Gunas innumerable modifications and ideas relating thereto. Even though subject to all sorts of modifications, yet the universe is, broadly speaking, threefold¹—one pertaining to the body, another to the gods, and a third to the creatures.

[1 Threefold—This will be expanded in the next verse.]

दृग्ग्रूपमाकं वपुरत्र रन्ध्रे परस्परं सिध्यति यः स्वतः स्वे ॥

आत्मा यदेषामपरो य आद्यः स्वयानुभूत्याखिलसिद्धासिद्धः ॥

एवं त्वगादि श्रवणादि चक्षुर्जिह्वादि नासादि च चित्तयुक्तम् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. The eye,¹ the form, and the solar rays penetrating the eye-ball—these depend² upon one another for their manifestation; but the sun which is in the sky exists independently.³ Because the Atman⁴ is the primeval cause of these,⁵ it is distinct from them. By Its self-effulgence It is the Illuminer of all those that help to manifest one another. Similarly⁶ with reference to the skin, the ear, the eye, the tongue, the nose, and the mind, etc.

[1 *The Eye &c.*—exemplifying respectively the three aspects spoken of in verse 30.

2 *Depend &c.*—We see the form and infer the other two factors in its perception.

3 *Independently*—It does not require any support and is not affected by the defects of the latter.

4 *Atman &c.*—This distinctive character of the Purusha is being pointed out: It is the only unchanging Self-effulgent Principle.

5 *These*—three divisions of the universe.

6 *Similarly &c.*—Each of these has its triangular relation with two other things. For example, the skin has got touch and air; the ear, sound and the quarters; the tongue, taste and Varuna; the nose, smell and the Aswins; Chitta, object of recognition and Vâsudeva; Manas, object of cogitation and the moon; Buddhi, object of determination and Brahmâ; and Egoism, object of identification and Rudra.]

(To be continued.)

THE SUMMER YOGA CLASS AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA.

Nestled among the beautiful hills of sunny California, adorned with the wealth of myriad wild flowers, there is a quiet holy spot where Nature has implanted a bit of her soul in each tree, rock and flower. Even the zephyrs that blow there whisper in soft cadence the eternal Om, and birds sing as if to burst their feathered throats in the joy of this hushed spot.

Is it any wonder then that those favoured mortals who have been privileged to visit and dwell for a time in this garden of Mother, cannot find words to describe all that they find welling in their heart for expression?

In June 1925, Swami Prakashananda called a large class of students to this beautiful retreat for a month of study, aspiration and enlightenment. How blessed was this group! Mother spoke through all Her aspects in the heart of each one there.

Now She chided or dragged from its dark retreat some forgotten vice and cast it before our eyes, so that we might "see ourselves as others see us." Then She

gave us love and sympathy, or forced pride, jealousy or rebellion out of some forgotten corner to smother it the next moment with courage and loyalty. The most subtle sin She dragged mercilessly before our eyes that we might in shame discard our pride and egotism and humbly and charitably grow in love and reverence. But always the Christ Child dwelt there, the living embodiment and example of selfless love and compassion, that in its purity can in one moment kill that which enslaves, and in the next inspire the noblest patience and courage, both with equal loving kindness.

There is no sword so sharp as the sword of love to cut the festering sin from an enslaved character and no balm so soothing as a glimpse of that Divine Love-light even as it cuts from your heart forever some secretly cherished sin. Agony becomes as joy and joy as agony, and all is swallowed in aspiration to reach the highest purity.

The Ashrama is ideally located for a Peace Retreat, set as it is in the hills. It is surrounded with them like an enormous basin. Off the highways, distant from the trains, it is completely away from all the distractions and turmoil and noise of the world. The holy peace of the Ashrama sinks in deep silence, and in a few days the mind becomes calm and ceases to feel hurried and rushed. Thus it can more clearly reflect the Spirit within, and meditations in such peace and tranquillity bring Divine Mother very close.

In the centre of the Ashrama grounds is what is called the Meditation Cabin, in which is an inspiring picture of Sri Ramakrishna, also one of the Holy Mother, and many smaller pictures of the Swamis. And although all the Ashrama is blessed and filled with high spiritual forces, yet this Cabin seems to be an especial focus for them. It was indeed an inspiration to enter this Sanctuary and meditate.

The month was a busy one. Every evening at five-thirty the blowing of the horn would awaken the whole Ashrama to prepare the students for morning meditation.

At six o'clock it was an inspiring sight to see the students march in procession with the chanting of Hari Om towards the meditation platform arranged under the shady spreading oak, and then to sit in squatting Yoga-posture to perform the morning meditation.

After half an hour of silent contemplation, the Swami read to us from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna as yet not translated into English.

By listening to these wonderful conversations and teachings of Bhavagan Sri Ramakrishna recorded by "M" in these rare books, we at times would be transported into the banks of the Ganges and stand in the living presence of the Master, as it were.

At noon we again congregated for meditation in the same manner, and the Swami read to us the instructions of Kapila to his mother Devahuti, from the Shrimat Bhagavatam. Until we heard the Swami, we had never known that this ancient book contained such rare gems of spiritual wisdom leading us almost to the threshold of Divine Illumination.

Again when the surrounding hills of the coast-ranges reflected the glow of the setting sun and the gradual approach of the evening dusk would transform nature into the misty grey, we would sit in rapt meditation, and the Swami would slowly awaken us from its charms by his mellifluous Sanskrit chants, which we so love to hear again and again.

The two meals cooked and supervised by the ladies were served in the big dining room at eight-thirty a.m., and four-thirty p.m. The Swami called these meals "offerings", and each one of us had to learn the Sanskrit chant for offering, "Brahmarpanam" etc., and repeated in unison before each meal. At the end of each meal the Swami would give us choicest utterances of our revered Swami Vivekananda from different volumes of his Complete Works.

The culmination of the month was the Dhuni Night. We all looked forward to it and tried as earnestly as possible to prepare ourselves for it. We tried to learn


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 what seeds of egoism, pettiness, jealousy, etc., were still in us, taking root and growing. And truly it did seem like a rooting-out, a cleansing and a purification when we cast these seeds into the Sacred flames. It was in very truth the beginning of a new life.

The Dhuni Fire was lighted on one of the Ashrama hills, a hill rendered especially sacred because of the many Dhuni Fires and services held there. All through the night until dawn there was chanting, singing, meditation, reading, the ceremony of the burning of our faults, etc. And at dawn as we watched for the rising of the sun, suddenly the crescent of the new moon appeared from behind the hills, sharp and thin like a scimitar. This new moon seemed another symbol of the cutting of the knots of our hearts and of the beginning of a purer, ever more purposeful life.

During the month besides the regular meditations and classes, each student was asked to observe a day of silence with the repetition of the Divine name.

On the last Sunday of the month the neighbours were invited and treated to a sumptuous feast of Indian rice, curry and other delicacies cooked by the Swami himself.

The students as well as the children of neighbours gave recitations and sang songs, all enjoying immensely such a social gathering to which they look forward with great joy and interest.

No one can comprehend what a boon this Ashrama has been to us, living in the midst of constant rush and frenzied activities of the city life. It is no wonder that our hearts rise in reverential gratitude to Sri Ramakrishna and his greatest apostle Swami Vivekananda and other blessed Swamis who made the existence of such an Ashrama possible for us in this Western world.

We feel a deep debt of obligation to India and especially to the Ramakrishna Mission for sending to us such worthy souls to help us and guide us in our paths towards the attainment of Divine Wisdom.

The month at the Shanti Ashrama was surely of

tremendous import in the life of each one of us. No one could be there and fail to feel, in some degree, the subtle forces of the place. It was as if we were in the very arms of the Divine Mother and could feel the throb and beat of Her heart. It did affect all of us differently, perhaps, yet such forces must inevitably leave a permanent impress on our lives and characters. To be sure such forces might stir up all the sediment which, all unrecognised possibly, was down at the bottom of our hearts, but could anything be more vitally important to us? In the wonderful peace and quiet of the Ashrama, there would be time and opportunity to throw out the sediment as it rose to the surface of our mind, and we could return to our tasks and duties in the world with purer hearts and a clearer knowledge of ourselves—with hearts strengthened and refreshed through our closer communion with Divine Mother.

Western Disciples  
at the feet of  
Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

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### REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

LIFE OF H. H. MAHARAJA TUKOJI RAO HOLKAR II.—By M. W. Burway. Published by the author from the Holkar State Printing Press, Indore. Pp. 642 & xcvii. Price, Rs. 15.

This big volume with 59 illustrations delineates the life and career of a native ruler who is said to have fought hard for the dignity and prestige of his State till the last moment of his earthly existence. No pains have been spared to collect materials and make the work authentic and complete. The book may be appreciated by those who love and admire the Maharaja as well as by the native princes of India.



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SADGURU-RAHASYA (HINDI).—By Kumar Kosalendrapratap Sahi, Rai Bahadur. Published by the Hindi Mandir, Allahabad. Pp. 219. Price, Rs. 2-8.

The book under review is a devotional treatise dealing with Bhakti—love of God, as the easiest and surest means for the realisation of the *summum bonum* of life. The author has left no stone unturned to make the book attractive by quoting at random from Hindi, Sanskrit and English writers and inserting illustrations in places. The get up and printing have also been superb. In the chapter '*Science and Bhakti*' the symbolic representation of the world of Maya having a human skeleton surrounded by some samples of the modern scientific invention is interesting though funny. The long list of errata at the beginning goes to the discredit of the publisher, and we hope that this defect will be remedied in the next edition.

HINDU-MUSLIM PRASNA (HINDI).—By Lala Lajpat Rai. Published by Ambica Prasad Bajpeyi from the Indian National Press, 159B, Mechua Bazar Street, Calcutta. Pp. 89 . Price, As. 8.

A collection of articles that originally appeared in various newspapers and periodicals, dealing with the Hindu-Muslim problem. In this transitional period of Indian history when we are struggling for national self-determination, there is no problem so important as that of the Hindu-Muslim unity. But unfortunately as current events go to show, the unity between the Hindus and the Mahomedans is becoming an impossible thing. Communal quarrels and religious fanaticism reign supreme throughout the land, specially between these two communities. In the book before us we find the views and practical suggestions on the problem of a consummate thinker and veteran leader like Lalaji, which deserve the serious consideration of our countrymen.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS.—By S. M. Michael. Published by the Modern Literature Company, Hogarth

Press, Post Box No. 344, Mount Road, Madras.
Pp. 63. Price, Re. 1-4.

These gems of English verse are from the pen of one who though not widely known seems to be a budding poet. He has a fine imagination, a keen susceptibility to beauty and a wide sympathy combined with a good grasp of English diction and versification. As we read the poems, we felt their naturalness and spontaneity. Prof. P. Seshadri, M.A. of the Benares Hindu University speaks highly of the writer in an appreciative foreword with which the book opens. We wish we could quote extensively from the book, but want of space will not permit us to do that. The following lines from '*Europe—An Elegy*' will serve as samples :

“Peerless thou stood but yesterday in pride
That stood as high as Heav'n, like Glory's bride
And smiled in scorn of all the universe.—
But now thy soaring pride has proved thy curse.
Too high thou held thy crowned and laurelled head :
Too proud before thy God then grew thy tread.
Thy glory vanished now, thy splendours fled,
Thy loveliness all gone, thou all but dead,
O hapless Europe, now I see thee bleed,
Unhappy mother, by thy very breed.”

REPORTS AND APPEALS.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA
MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES, FOR 1924.

The work of the institution shows a steady increase in its usefulness. In the year under review 1,302 persons were admitted into the Indoor Hospital—a figure which surpasses all previous records. From the Outdoor Dispensary 14,784 patients were treated. Besides these, the Home has extended its work in other useful ways. It

gives free board and lodge to a number of invalids, male and female ; it admits boys and girls who are given proper training under qualified workers, and there is a weaving department which turns out young men fit to earn an independent livelihood. Besides, poor but respectable families are helped with weekly and monthly doles of rice, money, clothing etc., sometimes in their own houses, and occasional help is given to deserving people in the form of free meals, passage money etc. In the year under review the total income, including the last year's balance, is Rs. 84,948, and the expenditure is Rs. 58,857-5-10. The Home appeals for funds for the endowment of more beds for patients, for a building for accommodating workers and a permanent shed for the home-industry department. The public will, we hope, extend help to this useful institution.

THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, MUTHIGUNJ, ALLAHABAD, FOR 1924.

Situated at a provincial capital and a very important place of Hindu pilgrimage, the Ashrama is fulfilling a crying need. During the year under review 16,749 sick persons were treated irrespective of caste and creed. But as the Ashrama is greatly handicapped for want of funds, it finds it difficult to cope with the ever increasing amount of disease and suffering amongst the people. The Ashrama is in great need of an Indoor Hospital of at least six beds, for which a plot of land has already been purchased. The building will cost about Rs. 10,000 approximately. We trust the generous public will render all possible help to this useful institution.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CHARITABLE DISPENSARY AT BELUR, HOWRAH, FOR 1924.

The dispensary has been a great boon to the poor population of many miles round, as the locality is greatly infested with malaria. The dispensary administers not only free medicine, but diet and pecuniary help also

are given, if necessary. In the year under review 9,979 patients were treated, of whom 3,997 were new cases. This year Kala-azar patients were treated with injections, and 33 such cases were taken up. Any contribution in the shape of money, medicine or the like should be sent to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur (Howrah).

REPORT OF THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY FOR 1924.

In the year under review the Society arranged 37 lectures on philosophy and religion by eminent scholars, Pundits and Sannyasins, held 12 monthly conversazioni, in different parts of the city and conducted weekly religious classes in the Society-room. It also celebrated the birthday anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda and Bhagavan Buddha Deva. The Society helped 26 poor students in the year, and from the Charitable Dispensary altogether 400 patients were treated. The Society conducts also a Library and Free Reading Room, which seems to have been fairly utilised by the public. The total receipts of the Society amounted to Rs. 5,196-13-0, including the balance of the previous year. The amount spent was Rs. 2,891-5-6, leaving a balance of Rs. 2,305-7-6, of which Rs. 1,493-14-0 belongs to the Building Fund. The Society is trying to raise funds for the erection of a building which may serve as a sacred memorial to the illustrious Swami Vivekananda in his birthplace in Calcutta and also supply a house of its own to facilitate its work. It is estimated that about Rs. 50,000 will be required for the purpose, and any contribution towards that will be thankfully received by the Secretary of the Society at 78-1, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE CONQUERORS CONQUERED.

The conquest of soul, though slow and imperceptible, has more far-reaching effects than a physical conquest that is quick and ostentatious. The former works slowly and silently, but is steady in its result. It touches the inner man and transforms the individual. But the latter proceeds with a proud display of brute force and captures the body, whereas the soul remains unaffected. Hence it will not be saying too much if we say that physical conquest is no conquest. Has it not been said of Greece that she conquered Rome, her conqueror, by her art, literature and philosophy?

In a beautiful article appearing in the 'Bombay Chronicle,' Mr. M. M. Gidwani while recounting the experiences of his recent tour in Europe speaks of the silent influence of Indian civilisation on England. He says—"The influence of India on England is subtle. It resembles those geological movements which go on every day, every minute, imperceptibly, but none the less surely beneath the earth's surface." Of course, England loudly proclaims her conquest by machine-guns, aeroplanes, wireless telegraphy and radio. But India is modest in her aspiration. She aims at silently conquering her conqueror by her unique achievements in the field of literature, art, philosophy and religion. The writer mentions how the work of Dr. Rabindranath and Swami Vivekananda are slowly working amongst the educated circles of England who hanker after truth irrespective of all considerations of colour, creed or nationality. Incidentally he narrates some touching incidents of his personal experience and proves this fact.

While at Stratford-on-Avon he had the occasion of being the guest of an English countess, Lady Sandwich. He had talked, he says, to famous people in England, given interviews and signed autographs, and he was then

thirsting for a quiet time when his hostess referred him to a room upstairs, called 'the Swami's Room.' "Presently I found myself in a Hindu temple!" says the writer feelingly." It was a carpeted room with idols, photos of Swami Vivekananda, flowers and Hindu religious books. This was the only place of its kind I had been to in Great Britain, and the few hours I passed there in silent thought were the happiest recollection of my tour in Europe. I guessed that my kind hostess must be a disciple of the great Swami, and when later I found her distributing flowers from 'the Swami's Room' to a group of English friends I had no doubt of it. I began to ask myself the question—'Who was ruling Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespear or Vivekananda?'"

A NEGLECTED POINT OF EDUCATION.

Self-confidence is the first condition of success in every sphere of life. In proportion to the confidence a man has in any undertaking, he comes out triumphant. To fear has rightly been termed as a great sin. For, fear is the cause of all weakness and failure in life. It very often falsely circumscribes the possibilities of our life and curbs our real strength. Only in a weak physique germs of disease can act, whereas a strong body easily withstands the influence of many dangerous bascilli. Our body if weak becomes susceptible to disease at first, before we actually fall ill. In the same way through fear and loss of self-confidence, one invites failures much before they actually come.

However much we may labour and persevere, we cannot be sure of achieving an end, unless we have the conviction of success. For, without that we shall always have some misgivings whether we are not fighting for a lost case or an impossible undertaking. An ideal which is too high is not worth aspiring after. A work which we think does not come within the bounds of possibility, is doomed to failure. When we set our hands to a thing, we have very often a mental picture of it as accomplished, and it is this picture which serves as a beacon

light and source of strength amidst all trials and difficulties. The dream of the discovery of a new land was so very real and vivid in the case of Columbus that he was not in the least daunted, though after a long, weary voyage in the unknown sea all his followers not only got disgusted with his mad project but actually stood against him. He was not even slightly discouraged, because the conviction of success was so strong in him that he could easily set aside the opinion of the whole world.

This law is so true in all fields of activity—material, moral and spiritual. The man who calls up courage and tries to be above all weakness, is safe from hundred attacks of Mara or Satan, who is ever on the alert to prey upon a soul. John Bunyan has rightly said that in the path of a religious aspirant, very often stands a grim-looking lion, which frightens away chicken-hearted persons, but is quite harmless to a dauntless spirit. It is a great truth, strongly preached by a sage that we become sinners as soon as we *think* ourselves to be such. It is an age of self-assertion. We are to assert our rights as children of Bliss and claim our Divine inheritance, before we can expect a real success in the spiritual world. It was this spirit which led Buddha to call up indomitable strength and energy when his body and mind and the forces of nature conspired together to desist him from his undertaking.

Now, this spirit of faith in oneself is what is greatly needed to be implanted in all young minds. If education is the *unfoldment* of perfection *already* in man, all that an educationist should do is to convince his students about the truth of that. He need not go to work out every detail for his pupils. He should simply see that the latter grow in confidence and imbibe positive ideas. A child which is always led by the hand is sure to be weak and crippled. Let him rather stumble and fall, and he will soon learn to walk unaided with his head erect. Now, if this spirit is rightly cultivated in educational sanctuaries, the teachers will be saved from much of their labours, and sighs of despair will blast a less number of lives.

THE BASIS OF INDIAN NATIONAL UNITY.

If India is to rise as one nation, her leaders should try to find out the common ground in which all her people may meet and fight with a common end in view. Otherwise disruptive forces may at any time be let loose and break the dream of a united India. Critics who view Indian aspirations with neglect and contempt are heard very often to say that it will ever be a foolish hope, for a population of more than 300 millions, speaking as many as 200 dialects and belonging to so many contending faiths, to unite together. Really, if some common meeting-points are not discovered, the hope of Indian national unity will ever remain illusive.

If we observe closely, we find that the factors which go to fuse together a number of people into one nation are geographical position, centralised government, common language and common religion and culture. Now, to have a united India, we must take advantage of the one or more of these factors.

The geographical position of India guarded by seas and walled by mountains is peculiarly suited to unite her people. But, it may be said, throughout the history of India, excepting for two or three times, we have not seen a united India, and that has been done under the aegis of centralised government. To keep a people united on the basis of one government cannot, however, be hoped to last for a long time. For, as soon as the central government becomes weak or breaks up, the centrifugal forces are invariably at work. At the present time, a common fate under a common government has, no doubt, gone a great way to create a common interest amongst the people of all the provinces, but we cannot say that disintegrating factors are wholly absent. For many incidents of contemporary history characterised by jealousy, heart-burning and rivalry may be cited, and they can be traced to a spirit of provincialism. This clearly shows that although the provinces on occasions meet in one platform, they are not altogether disinterested.


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A theory has recently been started to create a much surer bond of fellowship amongst the people of different denominations by bringing into existence a *lingua franca*. A common language and a common script may serve as a means of understanding one another better, but it is doubtful whether a created *lingua franca* can ever take the place of the mother tongue, so that it may give rise to an idea of essential unity.

The last thing that we may turn to is a common culture and a common religion. A critical student of Indian history will surely find that this is the one point, where we can meet together and be one with love and sympathy for one another. A man from the furthest corner of Assam will unhesitatingly embrace a Tamilian at Kanyakumari or Hardwar as brother, because both draw the sustenance of their inner life from the same source, viz., one culture. Again a Gujrati and a Bengalee, when abroad, cannot but feel proud, if they are to be proud of anything, when they remember that they have got one culture at their back. Now, along with others this common cultural basis will serve as a great cementing factor to keep together the disintegrating molecules of the Indian body politic, and we think this is the point where great stress should be given.

India, indeed, has been the chief seat or birthplace of as many as five religions out of the eight great religions of the world. But of all countries, India has shown the way how different faiths may have a common meeting ground and live together with mutual respect and tolerance. Of course, India has been from very ancient times the battlefield of many conflicting cultures, but by dint of her innate strength she has been able, in the long run, to assimilate them and evolve a unique culture. Though we find, at the present moment, many warring factors likely to disintegrate India, we cannot be altogether without any hope that they may be led to one direction, where all conflicts will cease and peace will arise for the good of India, and for the good of humanity.

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## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.

### PUDUR (VANIYAMBADI).

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great success at the Ramakrishna Math, Pudur, Vaniyambadi, on the 23rd of August, 1925. The morning programme consisted of Bhajan and music. After that a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna tastefully decorated with flowers was taken in a procession through some of the principal streets of the town. Special worship and Homā were performed in the Math chapel, and the feeding of about 1,500 Daridra Narayanas in the Math compounds was a special feature of the day's function. This was followed by a meeting in the afternoon held under the presidency of Mr. V. Shanmuga Mudaliar, a leading merchant of the place. The President delivered an interesting lecture dealing with the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna and of his disciple Swami Vivekananda. Mr. K. S. Lakshmanswami Iyengar read in English an instructive paper on 'Vivekananda, the Man and his Message.' With a vote of thanks to the Chair, Arati and distribution of Prasad, the meeting terminated.

### GAUHATI (ASSAM).

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Gauhati, on the 2nd of August last, with due pomp and solemnity. Among other features of the celebration, a meeting held at the local Town Hall with Mr. T. R. Phookan, the well-known popular leader of Assam, in the chair, deserves mention. Mr. I. K. Prasanta Murti spoke at length on 'Universal Religious Union,' showing the contribution of the great Swamiji in this direction. The Chairman called upon the youngmen of the country in the name of Swamiji to be up and doing 'with muscles of iron and nerves of steel' and take up the national cause of selfless service. The meeting dissolved with usual formalities.

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