

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य वराग्निबोधत

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT
KANKHAL.*

(Continued from p. 103).

A few days later when the Swami was able to walk about a little, he came to my room. Seeing Sri Ramakrishna's photo on my table, he said, "He stands alone, there is none like him. Keshab Chandra Sen one day took him to a photographer. He asked Sri Ramakrishna to stand quietly for a moment. He obeyed like a child, and the picture was taken."

The Swami asked me whether I received many letters. "Not many," I replied. Then he said, "Only as we give, do we receive. If we love others, others will love us."

* From the next issue we shall present our readers with a series of inspiring talks with Swami Turiyananda at Benares.—Ed., P.B.

In the afternoon I went to his room and found Swami Premananda there. He was eating fried grains. "Wait, Swami," I said, "I will bring you a little salt." When I came back, Swami Turiyananda, quoting from the Bible, said, 'Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' How powerful are the words of Jesus ! 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' He was the true Sannyasin."

"Living in India," I said, "gives one a better understanding of the Bible. The Biblical stories are enacted here everyday. I can picture Jesus' life much better since I have seen how the Sannyasins live. To be here is a wonderful experience."

"Yes," the Swami replied, "and you see it with the eyes of a monk."

Then I spoke about Lady Minto's visit to the Belur Math. She had asked the monks there what Sri Rama-krishna taught. One had answered, 'He taught from the Hindu scriptures.' When the Swami heard this, he said, "His words were scripture. He taught more even than the scriptures. But he himself used to say that everything he taught could be found in our scriptures."

"Did not his teachings differ somewhat from Sankaracharya's Maya theory?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "Sankara taught only one phase, how to get freedom, Nirvana. Our Master first made free and then taught how one should live in the world. His touch would make one free. But those who follow his instructions, also get free. His words had such Sakti (power). Be free first. Do away with

name and form and the entire universe. Then see Mother in all. Then be Her playfellow. We don't care for Nirvana; we want to serve the Lord. We have touched the grand-dame and cannot be made thief again." (Sri Ramakrishna used to say: As in the play of hide-and-seek the person touching the grand-dame is free to go wherever he chooses without being pursued and made a thief of, so also in this world's playground there is no fear for him who has touched the feet of the Almighty. He attains freedom from all worldly cares and anxieties, and nothing can ever bind him again.) "When life becomes painful we go to Her, and remembering Her, get peace. Sri Ramakrishna taught from simple things in everyday life. Therefore we are constantly reminded of him. He taught us to see Mother in everything—in trees, in flowers, in insects, in human beings. Alive or dead, we are always in Mother. First realise this, and then remember it constantly. Then the world cannot taint us. How difficult life is without Her. But with Her it becomes easy. Then we are fearless."

The doctor now entered the room. After examining the Swami, he said, "He will be all right soon, if he is careful. He is still very weak. It will take a little time."

When the doctor had left I asked the Swami whether his mind had not become weak when his body was so weak. "No," he replied, "for the mind has something to rest on." "On Mother," I said. "Exactly," he replied. "Ordinary people identify themselves with the mind. I have seen my mind as something separate from me. How then can I identify myself

with the mind again? I realised my critical condition, but I had no fear.”

Later in the day I read to him from the notes taken during his Gita classes in the Shanti Ashrama (California). He enjoyed the reading. Then he told me his experiences during his pilgrimage to Kedar Nath. He and two other Swamis had gone for days without food; then they were caught in a snow-storm and were ready to give up their lives in meditation. But they found a miserable hut where they spent the night. The following day they reached a village and got food.

When I came to his room again, he began at once, “What we know we must bring into practice, at least once. But Sri Ramakrishna practised everything three times. Through practice new knowledge comes. Do something, practise! Bondage and freedom are both in the mind. Atman is beyond mind.”

“Can one who has realised do wrong acts?” I asked.

“Some say, ‘yes,’ ” he replied, “ ‘through their past Karma.’ But for them it is not sin. They are unattached. No new Karma is created in their case. They can do or abstain from doing, as they please, at their will. They are the masters of their mind. Try to live with those who have mastered the mind. If you cannot live with them, think of them. Mind controls mind. The mind can be concentrated in many ways, through meditation, singing, reading, etc. Always watch your mind. Be the master of senses and mind.

‘May we hear with our ears what is right and good;

‘May we see with our eyes what is holy and beautiful;

‘May we keep our body and mind under control.’

Om tat sat.”

In the course of our conversation, Latu Maharaj (Swami Adbhutananda) was brought up. One amongst us said, "He had no education." "But he is a wonderfully spiritual man," I said, "and he knows the Shastras (scriptures)." "He not only knows the Shastras," the Swami interposed, "but he is the Shastras personified. He lived with our Lord."

Towards evening a party of pilgrims came to see the Swami. One of the men remarked that meditation is dangerous without a Guru. The Swami did not agree with him. "Pranayama (breathing exercise) is dangerous," he said, "without proper instruction, but not meditation. In the sixth chapter of the Gita you will find instructions for meditation."

Another pilgrim wanted to know something about the Swami's experiences in the West. The Swami smiled and said, "The West is materialistic, the land of enjoyment. But there are many good things. The food is superior. Everything is done in a scientific way, even cooking. And sanitation is much better. They are strong and healthy people. The women have much more freedom, and they are all educated. There is more privacy in the West, and their dress is fit for action. Here everything is for inaction. We are not so energetic. Everyone in the West speaks in a subdued voice, and the servants receive much better treatment than with us. Even the humblest servant is treated with respect. Work is no disgrace. A man is a man, no matter what his occupation is. But he must obey the laws of society. There are no outcasts and no *don't-touchism*. Think of how we treat our low-caste people!"

A young man among the pilgrims, unsettled as to

what he should do, asked the Swami's advice. "Think of God, and He will help you," was the reply. A Brahmachari entered the room with the Swami's dinner. The pilgrims bowed down and left. "Man shall not live by bread alone," the Swami quoted, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Then he said, "The little book you gave me on Socrates is very nice. It is not so spiritual, but perhaps it was the best teaching for the time. It is man-making. Socrates taught and lived what he taught. He was a great man. And that man the world killed!"

Speaking about a person who had received ill-treatment from others, the Swami said, "He had no ill feeling. That is wonderful, the true Christian spirit. That is Mother's grace. She has him by the hand. Always remember that whatever befalls us is Mother's doing for our good. Mother will keep him always, I am sure. Of course, at times he felt it, but that he realised as a weakness. Why should we feel miserable at bad treatment? But everyone is weak at times; and then we suffer. If Mother is near, what otherwise would be suffering is no longer suffering. We should not judge harshly those who try to harm us. Never lose faith in Mother. Faith keeps us. Everyone feels depressed at times, but all do not show it."

Later he said, "When I get a letter from you, I get a picture of your mental state, and I answer as by inspiration, without much thought."

The following day I found Swami Premananda, Swami Kalyanananda and others in his room. The talk was on Swamiji's work in the West. "Swamiji was fearless," the Swami said. "He always taught the

highest without compromise. Always giving, giving, asking nothing in return. Others give a drop, and want a bucketful in return.”

Swami Premananda remarked, “We have seen two men, our Master and Swamiji. No other man can be compared with them.” Swami Turiyananda agreed and said, “When I saw Sri Ramakrishna for the first time he was much emaciated, but his face was shining. He came to Calcutta in a carriage. When he left the carriage he walked like one intoxicated. He was in Samadhi. I thought, ‘Is this Suka Deva come again?’ Once when he came out of Samadhi, he asked, ‘Who am I? Where am I?’ Then he asked for something to eat. But before he ate it, he was again in Samadhi.”

Swami Premananda and Turiyananda now sang together in Bengali some of the songs Sri Ramakrishna used to sing. One of the songs was about the black bee tasting the honey of the blue lotus, forgetting all other flowers. So the mind should rest at the blue feet of Kali, forgetting all the world. Swami Premananda imitated the way in which Sri Ramakrishna sang and also his gestures. “Sri Ramakrishna sang very beautifully,” he said, “and he could not bear it when others sang out of tune.”

In the afternoon the Swami read from “The Master as I Saw Him.” When I entered the room he laid aside the book and said, “Realisation is to see Mother in all—to treat and love all alike. That is the blessed life, to see the Shining One behind the external.”

The following morning the Swami was not feeling well. He had a slight fever and tooth-ache. He said, “Mother is kind to send pain. It is for our good. Only

we are so self-loving, we do not realise it. We must depend on Her alone, and nothing else." "But," I asked, "must we depend on Her for our external wants?" "Certainly," he replied, "for everything. Our body, mind and soul are given to Mother. Whom else then should we depend on? Let Her give, or let Her take, it is all the same. Why should we care? When once given how can we demand again? Blessed is he who can realise this."

SWAMI ATULANANDA.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of Dakshineswar, was the latest manifestation of a tremendous spiritual power destined to bring about a fresh adjustment in the world's thought-currents and thus do an incalculable amount of good to humanity. He was one of those outstanding personalities who themselves realise the Truth, the summum bonum of life, and leave behind as a heritage the potent seeds of their Sadhana from which the posterity reap a rich harvest and are immensely profited. He was one of those God-men, who themselves get the highest Illumination and become also the medium through whom millions and millions of thirsty souls get peace in life. It is of such world-moving figures that the scripture speaks of as : "तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षां जनानहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ।"— "Having themselves crossed the mighty ocean of birth and death, they save others also out of their infinite disinterested love." They are the saviours of mankind and are the salt of the earth. They come at different periods of the world's history and direct the course of individual

and collective life towards a supreme ideal. They are born with a Divine mission which is to establish peace and order by enforcing the supremacy of the moral and spiritual laws whenever there is chaos and confusion in any part of the world owing to the decadence of the higher ideals of life.

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In the beginning of the nineteenth century after the military occupation of the land by the British, a danger of a graver nature became imminent and threatened the very existence of India. On account of various reasons the country presented a scene of infernal confusion which was about to break piecemeal the entire social fabric. The true ideals and rules of conduct were flouted, and blind usages and superstitions of all sorts passed current. The spirit of religion which was to evolve the latent possibilities of the soul and conduce to individual and communal welfare by bringing into play the supreme virtues of purity, renunciation, love and service, was neglected, and the observance of meaningless rituals and ceremonials masqueraded as spiritual excellence. Society became a medley, as it were, of sects, discordant and quarrelling with one another, and abounded in customs having no moral or religious sanction. Naturally it proved to be the butt of contempt and criticism for foreigners. The educated section of the country trained in English educational institutions and dazzled by the superficial glamour of foreign secularism began to question their own past—their scripture, tradition and civilisation. A cultural conquest which is worse and more demoralising than a military conquest, became almost inevitable. But by the inscrutable will of Providence it was not to be. India though

conquered physically is destined to conquer her conquerors, nay, the whole world, by her innate spiritual greatness, even as Greece conquered her conqueror Rome. The dormant spiritual consciousness of the Hindu race gradually woke up, gathered strength and tried to assert itself as it had done many times before in the past.



The waters of a streamlet falling in a cataract have a greater force and velocity. In the ocean the wave that rises after a hollow swells higher. After a devastating hurricane nature puts forth an appearance of greater calmness. In the same way, after every spell of decline, the human society recovers itself from the evils and rises more glorious and powerful, and we see a renaissance in all the walks of its life. History bears ample testimony to the fact. Hence it is natural that the Hindu society after this period of decadence should rise invincible. We believe, and we think we are right in believing, that with the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, a marvellous combination of the highest ideals and loftiest principles made real in life, a new era of awakening and progress has commenced in our land. By his realisation of the Eternal Verity in all its phases and shades from different standpoints, he has called into being a wave of spiritual power, immense in its depth and sweep, that is silently, but surely and steadily, working for the regeneration of India, and through India the whole world. Even as 'the gentle dew that falls on the ground unknown and unheard and yet brings into bloom a mass of beautiful, sweet-smelling roses,' the influence of the life and teachings of this God-man has

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already made itself felt. Those who have eyes must see the signs of the time and acknowledge the fact.



Sri Ramakrishna stood as a remarkable witness to the truth, reality and glory of the Hindu religion. His was a life into which were crowded the entire spiritual consciousness and realisation of the Hindu race from the Vedic down to the modern times. His was a life that may be likened to a powerful search-light, under the illumination of which one can read and understand clearly the true significance and inner spirit of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Tantras and other Hindu scriptures. In one word, he was the personification of the Sanatana Dharma. His incarnation was in fulfilment of the promise made by the Lord in the Gita: "Whenever there is decline of Dharma and rise of Adharma, then I body Myself forth." Verily Sri Ramakrishna was born to demonstrate what the true religion of the Hindus is, to prove that there is a fundamental unity and harmony amidst all its many apparently conflicting sects and divisions, and above all to rejuvenate the ancient civilisation by rehabilitating the spiritual ideal. He may be called the meeting place of the real India that is past and of the real India that is to be. With him as the source will issue forth a flood of light that will illumine India and the whole world. The field is just being prepared for the working of the spiritual energy embodied in that saintly life, and we who believe it and recognise the signs of the time, wait silently for the consummation of the Lila that has already begun.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna was so deep and profound that we cannot say that he was this and not that.

He may be called a living museum of spiritual ecstasies of various grades ranging from the highest indescribable state of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in which the individual becomes one with the Universal, to an ordinary trance of spiritual joy. The natural trend of his soul being to be merged in the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, he had to use sheer force, so that he might remain in the normal plane of consciousness and deal with the people of this world. In him we find a shining example of the culmination and harmony of the four paths, *viz.*, Jnana, Bhakti, Nishkama-Karma and Yoga. Again, he was one who could demonstrate clearly and tangibly that spirituality can be imparted and infused to the initiate; not only that, but he had the power to make the sinner a saint. Time and space were playthings to him. A touch, a glance or a mere wish, was sometimes enough in his case to make years and even lives of spiritual effort and struggle crowd themselves into a moment and raise a man from the ordinary plane to a lofty altitude of spiritual bliss. He was indeed a dynamo of spiritual energy ready to burst sometimes and carry everything before it. Hence it is nothing strange that the frailties, narrow-mindedness or bigotry of ordinary people should have been altogether absent in his character.



Sri Ramakrishna knew not what egoism was, for he had identified his self with the Self of the universe. He was totally free from the passion of lust, for he had wholly controlled his flesh and learnt to look upon all women as veritable manifestations of the Divine Mother. There was not a trace of greed in him, for he had attained

that compared with which worldly gain and prosperity are trifles. He would not utter a word of condemnation against any sect or creed, for he had known by personal experience that the different religions are but the different paths leading to the same Goal, *viz.* God. As regards his religious views, he was, truly speaking, neither a Hindu, nor a Mohammedan, nor a Christian. He was neither a dualist, nor a qualified monist, nor a pure monist, in the strict sense of the term. Yet he was all these in one and more. His religion meant a living faith, an acceptance and tolerance of all creeds, of all 'isms' and systems of thought, and not an artificial eclecticism. His was a life that was unique in its realisation, blessedness, purity, renunciation and selfless love. It was one long stillness of meditation, ecstasy, compassion, and benediction, resting like a brooding presence over humanity to rescue it from the trials and tribulations of life.



Like professional teachers he was neither versed in the sacred lore, for, as the reader is perhaps aware, his education did not go beyond the knowledge of the alphabet, nor did he go about preaching and making converts. He simply lived the life of the Spirit, a life of silent consecration, in the temple-garden of Dakshineswar where he passed the major part of his eventful life. His sole concern was his God, the Soul of his soul, whom he termed the Divine Mother, and everything that he wanted came to be fulfilled. Teachers who were past-masters in the different creeds and systems of thought, came to him and became instruments in helping him forward and were themselves helped by his magnetic in-

fluence. Subsequently when he was established in the exalted state of Divine bliss and beatitude and felt that he should give himself away to humanity, scores of thirsty souls, men and women of different stations, flocked around him, drank freely of the words of wisdom flowing from his lips and were blessed. Even Westernised, half-sceptical, well-read intellectualists who had 'listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Müller and a whole host European scholars and divines' would come and sit spell-bound before that God-intoxicated man and return spiritually benefited. Along with these people came also, and was blessed that gifted young man, afterwards famous as Swami Vivekananda, who was to become the prime medium for consolidating his mission, carrying his message to the four corners of the globe, and that band of chosen disciples who were also to be the instruments in the working out of his cause. So great was his attraction and influence that even in his life-time, Dakshineswar used to be crowded like a place of pilgrimage by earnest seekers after truth from different parts of the country. Now that his spirit has been released from its mortal tenement, Sri Ramakrishna is more free to do his work of redemption in a wider scale. He has already captured thousands of hearts and is being literally worshipped as an incarnation of the Most High in hundreds of homes, in India and abroad.

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To put in a nut-shell, Sri Ramakrishna who was nothing but the Time-spirit in flesh and blood, stood for three things. They are : First, religion is the greatest desideratum of life, and it is realisation of the Ultimate

Reality; secondly, all the religions are true, for they represent only the different paths leading to the same goal; lastly, religion is incompatible with worldliness and enjoyment. These three principles in the main furnish the practice, the theory and the pre-requisites of his whole gospel and are the panacea, when carried out in actual life, of the evils of this materialistic age. At this hour when lust and Mammon are the guiding forces determining individual and collective aspirations, when people all over the world have gone mad over the maximum of physical pleasure neglecting the culture of the soul, and when the nobler virtues of selfless love and service are about to be sacrificed at the altar of selfishness, greed and hatred—Sri Ramakrishna represents a saving power that is badly needed for a new adjustment. With his wonderful transcendental realisation and absolute chastity and holiness, he is a proof of the fact that the modern science with its vaunted achievement is groping in the dark and that everything short of God is vanity and vexation of spirit. With his teaching of the unity and harmony of religions, he is an object lesson to the warring sects, creeds and denominations. Sri Ramakrishna was the founder of no sect, for in him we find an ideal embodying some universal principles that may be claimed and followed by every sect of every creed. And if we make a sect out of him, we simply gratify a narrow sectarianism of our own. He was, so to say, an incarnation of truth that knows no limit of time and space, clime and age. May his life and teachings be a source of unfailing inspiration to us and lead us from darkness to Light!

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND WORLD-PEACE.

Sri Ramakrishna was born in the beginning of the year 1836 and left the scene of his earthly career in the middle of the year 1886. As, when the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so during the very life-time of this extraordinary man many thirsty souls flocked to him to drink the nectar flowing from his lips. Not only such celebrated men as the late Keshab Chandra Sen, Vijoy Krishna Goswami, Pratap Chandra Majumdar, Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani and the like, but scores of men and women in various stations of life also went to him; sat at his feet and felt blessed by the mere sight of him. Within a decade or two of his passing away, his message and teachings were carried to all the world by his immediate disciples, the foremost of whom was Swami Vivekananda. To-day, we find hundreds of educated young men of respectable families renouncing the pleasures and enjoyments of the world, cheerfully undergoing difficulties of various kinds and ready even to lay down their lives for the sake of the ideals which Sri Ramakrishna stood for. In his name have sprung up institutions whose end and aim is to render all possible service to mankind without any distinction of caste, creed or colour. Not only this, but thousands and thousands are worshipping him in their hearts as one of the greatest of Divine Incarnations.

What is the secret of this unique phenomenon? The power and influence which Sri Ramakrishna exercised over his contemporaries and those who came in personal contact with him may be accounted for, only if we look at the wonderful life of spiritual illumination he lived and the catholic religious views he had. In the words of the late P. C. Majumdar—"His religion is his only recommendation. And what is this religion? It is orthodox Hinduism, but, Hinduism of a strange type. Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the worshipper of no particular



Hindu god. He is not a Shaiva, he is not a Shakta, he is not a Vaishnava, he is not not a Vedantist. Yet he is *all these*. \* \* \* His religion, unlike the religion of ordinary Hindu Sadhus, does not mean too much dogma, or controversial proficiency, or the outward worship with flowers and sandal-wood, incense and offering. His religion means ecstasy, his worship means transcendental insight, his whole nature burns day and night with the permanent fire and fever of a strange faith and feeling. \* \* \* Nor is his reverence confined within Hinduism. For long days he subjected himself to various disciplines to realise the Mahomedan idea of an all-powerful Allah. He let his beard grow, he fed himself on Moslem diet, he continually repeated sentences from the Koran. His reverence for Christ is deep and genuine. He bows his head at the name of Jesus, honours the doctrine of his Sonship, and we believe he once or twice attended Christian places of worship. These ideas at all events show the catholic religious culture of this great Hindu saint."

With reference to Sri Ramakrishna's relation to Christianity, it may be pointed out that at the end of his Sadhana period, *i.e.* about 1874, he used to hear the Bible read to him and thus came to know about Christ and his religion. One day, in the garden-house of one of his devotees, he chanced to look at the picture of the Madonna with the Divine Child which engrossed his attention very much, and while reflecting on it a deep regard for Christ and the Christian church filled his heart, and he felt as if the picture had become living and effulgent. It is said, for three days thoughts of Jesus held complete sway over his mind, and he forgot all about the Divine Mother, and that on the fourth day he had a vision of Christ who embraced him and merged in his person.\* We also heard that he used to offer his sincere devotion and worship to Lord Buddha of whom he once remarked

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\* For a fuller account of this and other fascinating aspects of his Sadhana the readers might, with advantage, refer to the pages of the recently published 'Life of Sri Ramakrishna by the Adwaita Ashrama Mayavati, Himalayas.

“There is not the least doubt about Lord Buddha’s being an Incarnation. There is no difference between his doctrines and those of the Vedic Jnana Kanda.” For all august personages, such as the founders of the Jaina religion and the ten Sikh Gurus he entertained a great regard. Along with the many pictures in his room, there was a small statue of Tirthankara Mahavira before which incense used to be burnt every morning and evening. He also shared the belief of the Sikhs that the Gurus were all incarnations of the saintly king Janaka.

It is obvious that Sri Ramakrishna had attained to such an exalted state of spiritual development that every form of worship prescribed by the different religions appeared to him to be a living principle of personal faith. We shall not pause here to enter into the details of the most wonderful disciplines and exercises through which he reached this unique ‘devotional eclecticism.’ Nor shall we dwell upon the volumes of strange and wonderful wisdom that continuously poured from his lips, shedding a ‘flood of marvellous light upon the obscurest passages of the Puranic Shastras and bringing out the fundamental principles of the popular Hindu faith with a philosophical clearness which strangely contrasted with his simple and illiterate life. We shall content ourselves with merely quoting the words of one witness who is by no means partial—“A living evidence of the depth and sweetness of Hindu religion is this good and holy man. He has wholly controlled his flesh. It is full of soul, full of the reality of religion, full of joy, full of blessed purity. \* \* He has no other thought, no other occupation, no other relation, no other friend in his humble life than his God. That God is more than sufficient for him. His spotless holiness, his deep unspeakable blessedness, his unstudied, endless wisdom, his child-like peacefulness and affection towards all men, his consuming, all-absorbing love for God are his only reward!”

There remains now for us to consider the one great peculiarity of his life which distinguishes him from all other world-teachers, and that is his message of peace and

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harmony to the warring and bleeding world, through the realisation of the truth and unity of all religions. The advent of world-teachers is no mere chance occurrence, but comes about at very critical periods for fulfilling a definite purpose. One has only to study the lives of Sri Krishna, Buddha and Christ to be convinced of this truth. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say—"An Avatara is like a Viceroy to the Mighty Ruler of the universe. As when there is any disturbance in some far—off province, the King sends the Viceroy to quell it, so whenever there is any waning of religion in any part of the world God sends His Avatara to guard virtue and foster its growth." It would appear that in the present case the disturbance is not confined to any particular province but has affected His entire kingdom. Perhaps this statement requires further elucidation, and we shall try to explain what we mean.

In the past, there have been very critical and dangerous situations in the history of the world, more or less restricted in intensity and scope, when the moral and spiritual laws of life were neglected and even forgotten, and the resuscitation of Dharma has been effected by Saviours embodying in their lives the principles of adjustment suited to the occasion. But in the present instance the danger is on a colossal scale, threatening to engulf the whole of humanity. For, now material ideas have reached the very acme of glory and power; and man, owing to his increased dependence upon physical environments and ever-expanding opportunities for sense-enjoyment, is reduced to a mere money-making machine and his Divine nature is likely to be forgotten. The rapid progress and the wonderful achievements of science have, as it were, let loose the baser passions, viz. lust, anger, avarice, infatuation, pride and envy of man. As a result we have now the familiar class-wars, caste-wars, race-wars and other forms of conflict, which, if not checked promptly and effectively, will simply end in the destruction of the human race.

Again, for the first time, all the important parts of

the world have now been brought into touch and made into an organic whole. Common interests due to trade and commerce by land and sea, the improvement in the railways, telegraphs, wireless and radio, and the world-wide postal system, finance, newspapers and other creations of modern science have made the whole world so interdependent that no one part can be injured without all others suffering at the same time, nor can one part better its fortune without promoting the prosperity of other parts as well. As Swami Vivekananda pointed out on several occasions—"Whenever there has been a great conquering race, bringing the nations of the world together, making roads and transit possible, immediately India arose and gave her quota of spiritual power to the sum-total of the progress of the world.* * * Now the same opportunity has again come. * * * The world to-day has been linked in such a fashion as has never been done, and immediately, consciously or unconsciously, India rises up and pours forth her gifts of spirituality, and they will rush through these roads till they have reached the very ends of the world."

This puts in a nutshell the real clue to the significance of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. As has been pointed out in connection with his wonderful realisations, Sri Ramakrishna is the first instance in the recorded history of the world to have proved by actual experience the unity, harmony and truth of all the religions. This is his special message to the world, and through the realisation of this truth in the various departments of life alone can a permanent world-peace be made possible. In recent times, a few high-souled and liberal-minded thinkers in different parts of the world have been urging the need of giving up all hatred, war, conquest and exploitation, and appealing for international tribunals of arbitration, reduction of armaments etc. with a view to inaugurate a federation of humanity or world-brotherhood. In the writings of these persons one meets with arguments based upon industrial, political, social and such other prudential considerations or advantages, as well as on ethical and

spiritual grounds. It must be admitted that if the powerful and prosperous nations of the world were in a mood to act upon any one of these motives, the wished-for end could be easily achieved. But in their intoxication of power and material glory, such appeals fail to make any impression upon them. To many it would appear that neither would the harmony and unity of all religions, however firmly established and demonstrated beyond all possible doubt, succeed in destroying their self-complacent security and gain a more favourable hearing.

In any case, no better basis of unity and peace among mankind can be thought of than the bond of religion. For, it alone touches the deepest depths of the human personality. Even ethical or moral codes based on personal authority have lost their binding force to the modern mind, and now everyone demands more than a human sanction—demands a sanction that is grounded in some eternal principles of truth. Where else can this sanction be found except in the only Infinite Reality which exists in you, in me and in all, in the Self—in the Soul of our souls? You and I are not only brothers, but also one. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna in his manifold realisations stands as a shining witness to this eternal truth. His life is a living example of renunciation and universal love and toleration which have also been the one theme of India's message to the world. To the eye of faith, the spiritual message, as embodied in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, has already commenced to bear fruit. The thoughts of such spiritual giants are powerful forces which vibrate through space, penetrating the most adamant walls of opposition and gather volume and strength with time, and will persist till they have eventually converted and transformed the whole human race.

“BHARGAVA.”

THE LATEST APOSTLES OF ABHAYAM OR FEARLESSNESS.

BY SURENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY, M.A.

Coming down to the latest and perhaps the greatest spiritual movement fathered by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the veritable embodiment, as it were, of the best and the highest in the Sanatana Dharma, and expounded by his worthy disciple, the mighty Swami Vivekananda—a movement which when properly understood is expected to lave the world in a glorious splendour and bathe it in a flood of magnificent spirituality—a movement which is expected to shower blessings of peace on earth by introducing a formative synthesis in which co-exist the possibilities of simultaneous development to the highest degree of the two ostensibly contradictory tendencies in human nature, *viz.*, love of criticism and love of pacifism—a movement, again, which truly recognises the force of sincerity in religious faith and admits the possibility of attaining God by sincerely following the particular forms of worship to which men in different climes are born, and at the same time justifies the existence of **जटिला** and **कुटिला** (warring elements in religion) for making God's **लीला** (pleasure of creation) **पुष्ट** (fuller).

What do we find at the bottom of this movement? We find that the truth which is a heritage of the Sanatana Dharma, the truth which the Upanishads, the Geeta, Puranas, Tantras and Samhitas have been loudly proclaiming from time immemorial—a truth the non-recognition and non-observance of which has hurled down India to the lowest depths of abasement, spiritual, mental and physical, from the magnificent height where it had once its seat—we find that this truth once more personifies itself in the body of Sri Ramakrishna whom the Divine Mother, out of Her infinite mercy for the children of India, appears to have sent down in the guise of a poor, child-like and unlettered Brahmin, serving as an ignoble priest

in the temple founded by a Kaivarta, to prove, as it were, to mathematical demonstration, how spiritual courage rises, by its intrinsic force, triumphant over the tremendous odds which an apparently vindictive world of Maya may set against it with a view to crush its aspirations. The Brahmin realised in life himself and was never tired of preaching the immortal truth uttered in the Ashtâvakra Samhita :

मुक्तप्रभिमानी मुक्तो हि बद्धो बन्धाभिमान्यपि ।

किंवदन्तीति सत्येयं या मतिः सा गतिर्भवेत् ॥

—“He is free who thinks himself to be free. He is bound who thinks himself bound. True is the saying that one becomes what one thinks.”

Along with many things which the Brahmōs borrowed from the Christians, they brought in the doctrine of sin and repentance—a doctrine which is in vogue among the Vaishnavas of Bengal. Not being a historian, it is difficult for the writer to say whether the doctrine of sin is an indigenous growth in Hinduism, or a foreign scion engrafted on the native stock of the Hindu religion. Whatever it may be, the doctrine of sin and repentance which appears to have been denounced by that profound philosopher Spinoza, is very much apt to be misapplied, misunderstood, and carried to excess, and instead of furthering the ends for which it was intended, it is liable to produce an effect exactly opposite of the desired end and so injuriously affect the spiritual constitution of the so-called sinner as ultimately to wreck it altogether and render it unfit for any progress. How this pernicious doctrine which does not seem to be germane to the tenets of healthy Hinduism as embodied in the Upanishads, Geeta and Samhitas, crept into it and struck roots there, it is difficult to trace. But its effect on the people seems to be disastrous. It enervates the physical and moral constitution of the mass and gives rise to a set of effeminate puling croakers, continuously harping on their sins. The more you ponder over sins, the more depressed

you grow. It is really a doctrine of fear, indicative of want of faith in the loving nature of God.

Against this demoralising and disheartening doctrine which is fatal to spiritual growth, Sri Ramakrishna opposed the message of Abhayam in his inimitable style. It is difficult to resist the temptation to quote his catching words for which the whole world is irrepayably indebted to the greatest biographer of India, the celebrated M., who keeping himself entirely in the background wrested from unhappy oblivion the immortal sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and brought back to life, as it were, the veritable picture of the world-teacher speaking to his audience, untarnished, as far as possible, by the personal idiosyncrasies of the author.

Says Sri Ramakrishna to the Brahma Bhaktas—
 “Bondage is in mind, freedom is also in mind. I am free. Whether I live in the world or in the forest, what can be my bondage? I am the child of God, the son of the King of kings. Who can bind me? If a snake bites you, you will be free from venom if you say with emphasis that there is no venom. So if one repeats, ‘I am not bound, I am free,’ with resolute determination, one becomes so, one actually becomes free.

“Some one gave me a book of the Christians..... It is full of *sins* and *sins*. (To Keshab Ch. Sen). Your Brahma Samaj also talks of *sin* only. The man who says always, ‘I am bound, I am bound,’ comes to be bound. He who says day and night, ‘I am a sinner, I am a sinner,’ becomes a sinner.

“One ought to have this faith in God—‘What! I have uttered His name, shall sin still possess me? What can be my sin? What can be my bondage?’

“By uttering God’s name one’s body and mind become purified.

“Why talk of sin and hell only? Say once for all, ‘I shall not repeat the wrong which I have committed,’ and have faith in His name.” Enthused with the love of God, Paramahansa Deva sang.—

“If I die, O Mother, saying ‘Durga, Durga’, I shall see, O Shankari, how you can do without saving this humble child in the last days.”

Are there words in the whole range of religious literature which more emphatically, more eloquently and more explicitly voice the fundamental necessity of Abhayam in the evolution of religious life? The capacity of these ringing words to rouse the dormant energies of a prostrated soul, to rally the wavering, enthuse the low-spirited, strengthen the weak, make the strong stronger and the bold bolder still, is unbounded. Who is there in the world who can say with his hands on his bosom that he never felt a spiritual depression, never fell into the inextricable slough of despond and never entered the cave of despair? Who is there in the world who, in moments of such utter depression when the harpies of disbelief, distrust and spiritual imbecility mercilessly chained the soul, did not feel the need of words such as these to heal up the wounds of scepticism? Sri Ramakrishna’s words voice the dictates of Everlasting Yea which say that you are Spirit—अमृतस्य पुत्राः (children of Immortality), inhabitants of the Heavenly Mansion, as against the pernicious utterances of Everlasting Nay, which incessantly whisper into your ears—“You are weak, vermins, nothing but clay, fortuitous concourses of atoms, mere baubles made to grimace for a while, refined animals, the summum bonum of whose life is sense-pleasure and acquisition of temporal power.”

Paramahansa Deva was the sweet warbler whose dulcet carols preluded the melodious bursts of freedom that fill our specious lives. Swami Vivekananda whose heart bled for his country, was the fittest and most capacious vase to receive the Paramahansa’s teaching regarding the freedom of the soul—the necessity of fearlessness in religious life. Swamiji’s hauteur seems to repel many. But this is akin to what is called ‘Miltonic egotism’ which is the offspring of a massiveness of intellect and consciousness of outstanding superiority to the ordinary multitude whose sole function is eating,

sleeping, fear and enjoyment. Pride is an aristocratic virtue which ill-befits to be herded with the base-born qualities of a civil society parading a cringing and hypocritical humility invariably attended with insincere parting of lips and showing of the gums of the teeth—a humility which covers a multitude of hideous sins. It is thousand times better to have the fearless pride of a Vivekananda which rouses than the meek humility of the poltroons which depresses. Admire from the distance what you cannot comprehend, but do not debase yourself by cavilling at the greatness of the great. He is the man to whom the saying of the bard can be truly applied—

“Pride in his heart and defiance in his eyes,
I see the herd of humankind pass by.”

यो यच्छुद्धः स एव सः—“A man is what he thinks.”

Vivekananda's demeanour was the direct outcome—the reflex of what the man was within. His imperious soul stamped its expression on his countenance and carriage. A king of men was he, and he necessarily moved like a king among them. It was no fault of his that Great God gave him neither the stoop of humility, nor the vulgar and democratic arrogance of a mountebank. A lion can only roar and not squeak, and a nightingale can only sing and not hoot. This man appears to have been commissioned by God to carry the message of aggressive Hinduism to the four corners of the earth, to show to the world the grandeur of the broad-based synthesis of religion impersonated in the child-man Sri Ramakrishna, and above all to awaken race-consciousness among the Hindus and show them that they are not lambs and sheep as they have been hypnotised into thinking themselves to be, but veritable lions fit to roam the earth no sooner than they shake off the spell of hypnotism.

This young Sannyasin roved through the forests of India, travelled in Europe and America, mixed with the high and the low, with the rich and the poor; his restless mind swept across the deepest problems of life; fits of despair and desire to merge in Samadhi crossed and re-crossed his mind; but the thought of India and her destiny

appears never to have deserted him. How to bring life into the atrophied limbs of prostrate, befooled and humiliated India, which in the name of religion sanctioned the elevation of hunch-backed servility to the status of a lofty virtue, was, it seems, the constant companion of his thoughts. Swamiji is reported to have said that he would like to be born again and again to raise India from her degraded state. Before the salvation of India he would throw his personal salvation to the winds. He would even believe that it was impossible for him to be saved until the last man was saved.

What was the diagnosis of this Sannyasin of the deep seated malady of India, which he compared to a putrid, festering sore, and what was its cure he discovered in the course of his solitary and public peregrinations through the world? He found that India lacked in virility—her one desideratum was want of manhood—her crying need was courage and self-trust. “Be proud that you are an Indian,” the Swamiji thundered. “Be men. Be heroes. Be Gods and help others to become Gods,” are the mottoes in which may be crystallised the sum and substance of the Swamiji’s life-long teaching. **नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः**—“This Atman cannot be realised by the weak,” roared he again and again. “Establish house to house worship of Mahavira,” fulminated Vivekananda.

In the course of a conversation in the Belur Math, the late lamented Swami Prajnananda pointed out to the writer the points of close resemblance between the episodes in the life of Swami Vivekananda and Mahavira. Like his protagonist, Swamiji excelled in his love of his Master. Like him he crossed the seas, alone and helpless, to conquer the Europeans and wrest back from them the Seeta of self-confidence which was abducted from India by the Ravana of material civilisation in an unguarded moment when the manhood of India deserted Seeta of self-trust in quest of the golden deer of sensual pleasures which Ravana sent in advance to delude Rama with. Just as Mahavira’s source of strength and inspira-

tion was the love of Ramachandra, so Swamiji relied upon his Lord.

The writer had also the good fortune of being present on a rare occasion when Swami Turiyananda (Hari Maharaj) in an exalted moment, when his spirit was fused, as it were, by the galvanic touch of the sweet remembrance of the undefinable beauty of the incident, was telling before a small audience in the Belur Math a soul-thrilling incident which was quite characteristic. On being reminded of his want of resources before the commencement of his memorable journey to the West, Swamiji replied by singing—"I rely upon Rama only." The manner in which this line was uttered was so touching, so simple and so grand that it transcended the power of Hari Maharaj to convey an adequate picture of it in words, and in despair he feelingly remarked to the effect that the scene filled his bosom, but he had no power to unbosom it.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.*

(BY K. N. DAVE, SUB-JUDGE, NAGPUR, C. P.)

Gentlemen, it is easy, as the Master has said, to utter *sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni* (the different notes of the gamut), but it is not so easy to sing, and I sincerely wish the privilege of discoursing upon "Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva and Universal Brotherhood" were conferred upon a far worthier person than my humble self. A gentleman with the fire of faith and devotion burning bright in his soul would have been the fittest person to do justice to such a theme.

Infant Gadadhar, as the Paramahansa was named when he saw the light of this world, was born of a respectable and orthodox Brahmin family of Kamarpukur in the Hooghly District in the year 1836. His parents

* Notes of a lecture delivered in Nagpur.

Khudiram Chattopadhyaya and Srimati Chandramani Devi were high-souled persons, known for their piety, kindness and devotion to God. There is a saying in Hindi that a promising sapling has smooth, shining leaves, and the child Gadadhar as he grew up developed a peculiar charm and fascination. Even strangers felt irresistibly drawn to him as if he were their own kith and kin. He had a most precocious genius for learning, and though quite unlettered, he would frequently re-enact a religious drama in the open fields or under the trees, with the help of his playmates after coaching each one in his appropriate part. Before he was six or seven years of age, he had gathered most of our Puranic lore and mythology, and even assimilated the abstruse doctrines of the Vedanta philosophy from Puranic recitations and Kirtans. His vivid consciousness of the Sublime and the Beautiful and his deep sympathy with Nature will be apparent from an incident which happened very early to him. While still a boy of eleven or twelve, he was one morning roaming in the fields. The wide expanse of the horizon with the sun in its morning glory, the soft, cool breeze playing upon the bushes and a flight of snow-white cranes on the wing curving their way high up against the deep blue sky so filled the lad with wonder and admiration that in his first experience of a close communion with Nature he fell into an ecstatic swoon.

After he had been invested with the sacred thread, he was taken to the school. But he soon left it in disgust when he found that with all their book-learning and tall talk about high and noble principles, people still strove after power and pelf. He knew that he had come upon a different mission, and the inner urge of his soul was towards learning something else. He yearned to solve the mystery of the world, and this he thought—and no one can say that he thought incorrectly—could not be achieved by the education imparted at the school. He left school, and soon afterwards found himself worshipping the Mother Kali as a priest in the temple at Dakshineshwar, a place near Calcutta.

This proved to be the turning point in his life, for it was here that his orientation towards a pure and saintly life was fixed for ever. It was here that he developed an all-absorbing love for his God the Mother and received his initiation into the inner truths of the Hindu philosophy and religion—chiefly Vedanta and Tantrikism. His progress was simply wonderful. Such was his genius and so strong was his desire to learn that he became an adept in the Yogic practices and mysteries within a few days,—a course which common devotees take years and years to go through. During all this time he continued to make steady progress in spiritual life, culminating in Samadhi. He so disciplined himself that he eventually acquired a complete control over himself and came to regard with absolute indifference all that common people live and die for. The method by which he arrived at this state of perfect freedom is a long story by itself, and I would not detain you with it here. All I would say is that thus disciplined he was all humility and always called himself a servant of the people.

Without the least idea of becoming a Guru except that of realising the great Truth for himself and of helping mankind, he soon found himself surrounded by men and women of all classes, eager to drink at the fountain of spiritual knowledge, and he was but too willing to help and instruct everyone. During his own life-time he changed the course of the life of many an aspirant, and blessed and ennobled them all. To mention only one or two great names: Keshav Chandra Sen sat for years at the feet of the Master and assimilated much of his philosophy of the "New Dispensation" from him; the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda was his principal disciple, and well has the Swami repaid his spiritual debt by holding aloft the banner of Hinduism throughout the world and particularly at the World's Parliament of Religions held in the year 1894 at Chicago in America. Such was the per-fervid spirituality of the Paramahansa and his ideal of service, that in spite of illness he would go on pouring forth his soul in song or rhapsody for the

uplift of the people, and this did not stop even when a very serious form of throat trouble overtook him. The great soul departed from this life in 1886. This, gentlemen, is, in briefest outline, the life-story of Sri Ramakrishna and will, I trust, help you in grasping the spirit of his teaching.

Intellectualists and sceptics to whom Western science was all in all, attempted to explain the apparently strange behaviour of the Paramahansa and particularly his Samadhi as a pathological condition. I am not competent to pronounce an authoritative opinion on the question. But, as it seems to me, these critics forget that, with all its achievements, Western science is still in its infancy, and a proper study of the physiology of the human brain and the psychology of the subconscious has barely begun. Advanced scientists have now given up their orthodox attitude of "thus far and no further," and, with the culmination of physical evolution in the human body, they have come to believe in the continuity of the evolutionary process in the psychic and intellectual powers of man. Who can say that what we call genius in all its forms is but an example of the normal variations in Nature by which she makes for progress and finally decides upon the line of further advance? In her attempts she occasionally creates a Kaiser or a Bismark or men of a different cast who, instead of helping the onward march of humanity, merely retard it if they can. But there can be no doubt that the human race is still struggling along, groping, as it were, in the dark to find a way out towards Light, and the present chaotic condition of the world is a proof of the fact that the race has not yet taken to a definite line of progress which would, in the end, contribute to the maximum of happiness to one and all. To return to the Samadhi of the Paramahansa, it is probably a state of beatitude—of intense enjoyment of the soul when it is overwhelmed with a consciousness of the Infinite, and such a condition, I think, cannot be characterised as a pathological condition.

Gentlemen, I shall not take up your time by a digression upon the time-worn question whether a hero or man of genius is a creature of his environment or whether he creates his own atmosphere. I believe, it will not be disputed that every great soul has a mission to perform. This, at any rate, is the Hindu belief in its religious outlook on the coming of saints and Avataras. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had no doubt such a mission. He came at a time when educated Bengal drawn by the external glamour of Western civilisation was drifting away from its national moorings. It was he who gave a check to the disruptive tendencies of internal decay and of foreign influences which had begun to eat into the vitals of the nation. His great disciple Swami Vivekananda carried on the same work in a more systematic way. The result was a great revival of national culture and thought in the country. The demonstration of the essential unity of all the great religions of the world by personal spiritual experience was another item of the Paramahansa's mission. Not being satisfied with the theoretical identity of religious truths in the various creeds of the world, he practised for a time the doctrines of each great religion and cult and experienced inwardly the essential unity of purpose common to them all. It is this inwardness of his spiritual experiences which lends a peculiar authority to his teachings. He says—"The light of the gas illumines different localities with different intensities, but the life of the light, viz., the gas, comes from a common reservoir. So the religious teachers of all climes and ages are but as many lamp-posts emitting the light of the Lord Almighty." What a homely illustration, gentlemen, and yet how true! Again—"A truly religious man should think that other religions also are paths leading to Truth. We should always maintain an attitude of respect towards other religions."

At the present moment we particularly need a teaching like this which, if followed, would do away with all the bitter controversies of present day India and cement all the communities in bonds of love everlasting. Hindus

and Brahmos were once preaching in Calcutta their respective religions with great earnestness and zeal. Seeing this, a disciple asked the Paramahansa his opinion about both the parties, and he said—"I see my Mother Divine is getting Her work done through both." Nothing could be more beautiful and sublime than this simple saying of the saint—"I see my Mother Divine is getting Her work done through both." What volumes of meaning does it not contain? It at once furnishes us with a true bond of religious union in the world. If only we grasped the truth of these simple words, it would immediately open out quite a new experience to every one and make us feel, not as followers of conflicting faiths, but as brothers bound upon a common journey and intent upon a common goal—each taking the road he likes best.

Let us see what the Paramahansa has to say of religious rites—"Is it proper to wear the sacred thread? The Paramahansa replies: 'When the knowledge of the Self is obtained, all fetters fall off of themselves. Then there is no distinction of a Brahmin or non-Brahmin, of high or low. In that event the thread as the sign of distinction falls away of itself.' " The moral of the above saying is obvious. Rituals and formalities have only a relative value and ought not to be made much of. The need for them naturally disappears as soon as one realises the Self, which is nothing but an "attainment of a just sense of one's position" in the universe and the realisation that must come with it, *viz.*, there is, truly speaking, no such thing as Brahmin and non-Brahmin, high or low.

Before leaving this aspect of the teaching of the Master, I shall cite a couple of his sayings bearing upon the causes of the ever-recurring dissensions amongst us. He says—"God is in all men, but all men are not in God. That is why they suffer." Says he again—"He alone is the true 'man' who is illumined with the Spiritual Light". This last has reference to one's consciousness of the essential unity of the Creator and the created. But it is only men with this consciousness who

may be said to be in God, for God is certainly in all men. When he assigns ungodliness as the root-cause of our suffering, I understand him to say that with the recognition of the truth that God is in all men, we would cease to quarrel and misunderstand one another, and live in love and amity for ever.

It may be asked, how to arrive at this state of feeling? And the Paramahansa shows the way—"He who has faith has all. He who is wanting in faith is wanting in all." This he illustrates with the everyday experience of what we now understand by the high-sounding name of hypnotism and autosuggestion. The following is by way of an explanation of the above saying—"An Indian faith-healer orders his patient to repeat with conviction that he is not ill—he is not ill. And lo! the patient is cured". We have got to believe with all the fervour of religious faith that all the different communities inhabiting the country are of the same kith and kin, that we are actually living our daily lives in mutual love and respect; and there is not the least doubt that we shall not be long in realising the goal. This also follows directly from his idea of God as the Universal Father or Mother.

A disciple asks, "Why does a Bhakta find such pleasure in addressing the Deity as Mother?" "Because the child is more free with the mother," is the reply. Everyone of us can say from personal experience that not only is a mother's love for her child more transcendental and disinterested than that of the father, but a child also has a far greater expectation of the fulfilment of his heart's desire from a mother than from a father. He can ask for it more insistently of a mother. What mother will not starve herself to feed her child? It is this nearness of the mutual relationship that led the Paramahansa to worship the Spirit in the form of Kali the Mother. It is a bond of the purest and closest affinity and establishes a most perfect and selfless union between the Bhakta and the Object of his adoration. Being the offspring of a common Mother, we have got the best of reasons to avoid all differences and live together

like brothers in our common Indian home or even in the world at large. No better bond of union and mutual trust can be imagined than this—the ideal of a Universal Mother. Humanity is not merely a great brotherhood, but it is a brotherhood, the individual members of which are perfectly equal. Worldly people with a narrow vision of 'mine and thine' see nothing but petty differences of rank and position, but those endowed with an enlarged vision make no such differences and must regard all as equal.

It may be said that in this work-a-day world of ours it is not possible to reconcile these high ideals with one's duty to family and children. We are not left in doubt on the point, however. A homely illustration again brings the truth home to us—"A wet-nurse brings up the child of her master, loving the baby as if it were her own, but knows well that she has no claim upon it. So think ye that you are trustees and guardians of your family and children whose real father is the Lord in Heaven". Says the Paramahansa again—"A boat may stay in water but not water in the boat. So a man may live in the world but the world must not live in him." What a convincing yet simple commentary on the great principle of Nishkama Karma as preached by the Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita! Man is likened to a boat and the world to water. If you want to cross the ocean of life and help others to cross it, let not your soul be filled with the petty temptations and jealousies of the world but steer clear of them.

India, gentlemen, is the land of saints and Avataras and the Indian people a congeries of different races and creeds. But is it so by mere chance? Why of all places on the face of the earth, should India alone be the apparent battle-field for the conflict of different races, religions and cultures? The Dravidians with their hoary civilisation were the first to step in and assimilate with the indigenous population, possessing a palæolithic culture and animistic worship. Next came the Aryans with a higher civilisation and nature-worship which in course of time evolved into Brahmanism, Jainism, Buddhism and

ultimately Hinduism. After a long respite dashed in the virile Mahommedans bringing with them democratic ideals and a clear-cut conception of the unity of the God-head. The latest immigrants are the followers of Zoroaster and Christ. All the great religions have been born in the East. And it seems as if Providence means to work out the salvation of humanity also in the East by realising first the ideal of the brotherhood of nations and then the ideal of the brotherhood of man. Each one of the seven great communities in this country—Hindus, Mussalmans, Jains, Buddhists, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs are like the seven notes of the gamut. Each must progress along its own line, not in bigotry but in mutual helpfulness, and then like the seven perfect notes of music they must all blend together in one divine symphony of universal brotherhood and lead humanity to the goal.

So far we have all been developing—each community with its own culture—on analytical lines. It seems we must for a time travel along our different roads but synthetically, so as to arrive at a type of unique national culture. The first essential condition of universal brotherhood is the formation of individual character, so that each individual member of society must spontaneously promote the welfare of the community as part and parcel of his own happiness. It is for this reason that each individual community in India must attain perfection within itself. Then will the process of synthesis begin, blending the various cultural groups into one common brotherhood, where there will be no conflict of interests, but all will be comrades in the service of humanity. This is a vision of the future—an ideal to be striven for, with all our might and faith.

Universal brotherhood of man has been the dream of all great idealists, and ideals—even those that seem to be impossible of attainment—have a value of their own. The great saints of India, from the seers of the Vedic age to Mahavira, Buddha, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Tukaram and Sri Ramakrishna—have all borne the torch of Light and shown the way towards

the Ideal. We have seen what a valuable contribution Sri Ramakrishna has made to it. Let us all acknowledge our unbounded gratitude to him and try to follow the way of Light and hasten the day of realisation.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

CHAPTER XV.

उद्धव उवाच ॥

विधिश्च प्रतिषेधश्च निगमो हीश्वरस्य ते ॥

अवेक्षतेऽरविन्दाक्ष गुणं दोषं च कर्मणाम् ॥ १ ॥

वर्णाश्रमविकल्पं च प्रतिलोमानुलोमजम् ॥

द्रव्यदेशवयःकालान्स्वर्गं नरकमेव च ॥ २ ॥

Uddhava Said :

1—2. O lotus-eyed Lord, injunctions and prohibitions constitute Thy commandment, the Vedas, which adjudge the merits¹ and defects of work, of the various castes and orders of life, of the issues of Anuloma² and Pratiloma marriages, of substance, place, age and time and of heaven and hell.

[The first five verses attempt a *prima facie* refutation of what has been said in the last verse of the preceding chapter, *viz.*, that one should make no distinction between the merits and defects of work.

¹ *Merits &c.*—Certain kinds of work are higher and are to be preferred to other kinds which are lower. Similarly with the other terms that follow. The phrase 'merits and defects' is to be repeated with each.

² *Anuloma &c.*—An Anuloma marriage is one in which the husband belongs to a higher caste and the wife to a lower caste. *Pratiloma* is the reverse of it.]

गुणदोषभिदा दृष्टिमन्तरेण वचस्तव ॥

निःश्रेयसं कथं नृणां निषेधविधिलक्षणम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. How can Thy utterances¹ consisting of injunctions and prohibitions conduce to the liberation of men

without² observing the distinction between merits and defects?

[1 *Utterances*—the Vedas.

2 *Without &c.*—For it is by shunning the lower and adhering to the higher courses of action that progress is possible.]

पितृदेवमनुष्याणां वेदश्चक्षुस्तवेश्वर ॥

श्रेयस्त्वनुपलब्धेऽर्थे साध्यसाधनयोरपि ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Lord, the Vedas uttered by Thee are the highest source of illumination for the manes, the gods and men, regarding things unseen¹ as well as means² and ends.

[1 *Unseen*—Such as liberation, and heaven, &c.

2 *Means &c.*—which is which.]

गुणदोषभिदादृष्टिर्निगमात्ते न हि स्वतः ॥

निगमेनापवादश्च भिदाया इति ह भ्रमः ॥ ५ ॥

5. The distinction between merits and defects is to be observed through Thy commandment, the Vedas, and not according to the promptings of nature. Here is again Thy commandment¹ which refutes the idea of distinction. This is exceedingly puzzling.²

[1 *Commandment*—uttered at the end of the preceding chapter.

2 *Puzzling*—so kindly enlighten me on the point.]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

योगास्त्रयो मया प्रोक्ता नृणां श्रेयोविधित्सया ॥

ज्ञानं कर्म च भक्तिश्च नोपायोऽन्योऽस्ति कुत्रचित् ॥ ६ ॥

The Lord said :

6. With a view to effect the liberation of men I have inculcated¹ three Yogas or methods, viz., those of Knowledge, Work and Devotion. There is no other² means anywhere.

[He first deals with the three Yogas in order to show that the apparent contradiction is to be solved by a reference to the qualification of the aspirant. During the period of striving there is all that distinction, but after realisation there is none.]

¹ *Inculcated*—in the sections dealing with Brahman, ritual and the gods respectively.

² *No other &c.*—Such as work done with a selfish motive.]

निर्विण्णानां ज्ञानयोगो न्यासिनामिह कर्मसु ॥

तेष्वनिर्विण्णचित्तानां कर्मयोगस्तु कामिनाम् ॥ ७ ॥

यद्दृच्छ्या मत्कथादौ जातश्रद्धस्तु यः पुमान् ॥

न निर्विण्णो नातिसक्तो भक्तियोगोऽस्य सिद्धिदः ॥ ८ ॥

7—8. Of these the path of Knowledge is for those who have got disgusted with work¹ and have renounced it ; for those who have not been disgusted with it and desire its fruits, there is the path of Work ; but, for the man who somehow² has got a veneration for tales about Me and such other things, and who is neither disgusted with nor grossly attached to work, the path of Devotion³ is successful.

[¹ *Work*—Knowing it is fraught with evil.

² *Somehow*—by a rare stroke of good fortune.

³ *Devotion*—So this is intermediate between the other two.]

तावत्कर्माणि कुर्वीत न निर्विद्येत यावता ॥

मत्कथाश्रवणादौ वा श्रद्धा यावन्न जायते ॥ ९ ॥

9. One should perform work¹ until one has got disgusted² with it, or until one has developed a veneration³ for listening to tales about Me and that kind of thing.

[Verses 9—17 treat of Karma-Yoga as being the first step.

¹ *Work*—obligatory and occasional.

² *Disgusted &c.*—Then he is qualified for Jnana-Yoga.

³ *Veneration &c.*—Then he can take up Bhakti-Yoga.]

स्वधर्मस्थो यजन्यज्ञैरनाशीः काम उद्धव ॥

न याति स्वर्गनरकौ यद्यन्यन्न समाचरेत् ॥ १० ॥

10. O Uddhava, a man discharging his own duties and performing sacrifices without any desire for results, goes neither to heaven¹ nor to hell,² unless he practises evil.

[Verses 10 and 11 show how the Karma-Yogin can rise to the level of a Jnana-Yogin or Bhakti-Yogin.

¹ *Heaven*—because he does not want it.

² *Hell*—because he has been doing his duties and avoiding evil.]

अस्मिँल्लोके वर्तमानः स्वधर्मस्थोऽनघः शुचिः ॥

ज्ञानं विशुद्धमाप्नोति मद्भक्तिं वा यद्वृच्छया ॥ ११ ॥

11. Such a man, becoming sinless and pure, attains to pure knowledge, or perchance devotion to Me,—remaining in this very world.

स्वर्गिणोऽप्येतमिच्छन्ति लोकं निरयिणस्तथा ॥

साधकं ज्ञानभक्तिभ्यामुभयं तदसाधकम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. Even the dwellers of heaven as well as of hell desire this world, which is conducive to knowledge, and devotion. But the other two² do not serve this purpose.

[The human body is praised in verses 12—17.

¹ *Knowledge &c.*—The fifth case in the text stands for the sixth case.

² *Other two*—Heaven and hell. The former having too much of pleasure and the latter too much of pain, seldom incline the mind to higher things.]

(To be continued.)

THE NINETIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

BELUR.

The ninetieth birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great eclat and due solemnity at the Belur Math—the head-quarters of the Ramakrishna Order. The Tithi which fell on Tuesday, the 24th February, 1925. was observed with special worship and other ceremonies, lasting almost throughout the day and night. Hundreds of devotees attended the celebration and partook of Prasad. Towards the end of night a Homa was performed, and three young men were given the vows of Brahmacharya, and three Brahmacharins were initiated into Sannyas by the venerable President of the Order.

The public celebration took place on Sunday, the 1st March and was a grand success. The whole Math

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wore a gala appearance. Special steamer services were arranged for the convenience of visitors. As the day advanced, there was an immense gathering of men and women of different stations of life, crowding the Math premises almost to suffocation. It was indeed a sight to see.

A life-size oil-painting of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a pandal, specially decorated, and hundreds of devotees gathered there to offer worship. The well-known Kali-Kirtan party of Andul and the famous concert party of Prof. Dakshinaranjan Sen, among others, entertained the assembled people with their performances. Over 12,000 people, were fed, batch after batch. The distribution of Prasad was a special feature of the day. In the evening there was a beautiful display of fire-works, kindly presented by their manufacturer, which was enjoyed by all.

DACCA.

The birthday was celebrated with conspicuous success at the Ramakrishna Math, Dacca, on Sunday, the 1st March.

In a pandal specially erected for the occasion, a big portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was placed, and the figure had a halo of different colours depicting the symbols of the principal religions of the world. There were other portraits also.

From early morning till 4 p.m., Arati, Bhajan, Kirtan, etc., continued one after the other. The whole Math compound was packed with visitors who were served with Prasad. The interest of the ceremony was enhanced this year by the presence of Swamis Nirmalananda and Subodhananda, two senior Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order.

The most interesting function of the day was the miniature parliament of religions, which began its proceedings in the afternoon. It was a representative gathering, consisting of people of various shades of opinion, of light and leading. The speakers on different religions

sat round the Presidential chair, and the work of the meeting began with a religious song. After the reading out of the report of the Ramakrishna Mission at Dacca, Dr. Hartog, the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University, delivered his interesting speech on Judaism which he himself professes. Among others, he pointed out that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are in the main analogous to the religion of the Jews, specially their tolerance. Then Sj. Haridas Bhattacharya, Reader of Philosophy, Dacca University, spoke on Vedantism, specially dealing among others with its Universality and synthetic unity. He concluded his lecture by making a feeling reference to the many works of service done by the Mission which are entirely in keeping with the spirit of Vedanta. Sj. Radha Govinda Basak, Professor of Sanskrit, Dacca University, stood up next and read a learned paper on Buddhism, followed by Sj. Radha Benode Goswami Bhagabratna of Santipur who spoke on Vaishnavism, pointing out its spirit of toleration and harmony and other striking features. Then Rev. Nagendranath Roy of the Baptist Mission delivered a lecture on Christianity. At the very outset he paid a glowing tribute to the sacred memory of Sri Ramakrishna who, he said, preached love and service to humanity as Christianity does. In conclusion, he made a fervent appeal to the audience to do away with all differences, religious or otherwise, so that there might be peace in the world. Next stood up Mohammed Sahidullah, Professor of Bengali, Dacca University and he spoke on Islam dwelling at length on the life and teachings of the Prophet. In the end, the President Dr. Romesh Chandra Majumdar of the Dacca University, in a neat little speech pointed out the utility of such a representative assembly. It was, he said, the most fitting manner of celebrating the birthday of one like Sri Ramakrishna who was a living embodiment of religious toleration and harmony. After the Presidential speech, the great meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the assembled gentlemen and ladies and the chairman.

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PATNA.

The birthday was celebrated with becoming grandeur under the auspices of the Bengali community of Gardani-bag, Patna. In the evening of 7th March a procession attended with music was taken round the principal streets of the locality. In the morning of the 8th Swami Jnaneswarananda at the head of his youthful choir rendered a charming course of devotional songs. At noon 500 children were fed as well as 500 Poor Narayanas. At 5 p.m. a public meeting was held in the Gait Public Library Hall, with Babu Rajendra Prasad in the chair. Swamis Avyaktananda and Nikhilananda delivered powerful speeches in Bengali and English respectively. Pandit Balgopal Malaviya and a Bengali gentleman were also among the speakers. The President's Hindi address was a highly impressive one. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair by Babu Mathuranath Sinha, Vakil. After this there was a Kirtan.

BENARES.

The celebration came off successfully at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares. The usual ceremonies of the Tithi Puja were gone through on 24th February. On the 1st March, 250 Sadhus were entertained. In the afternoon a largely attended meeting was held, presided over by Principal Sanjiv Rao of the Queen's College, who made a short but impressive opening speech. Prof. Jnanchand and Swami Nikhilananda spoke in English on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Avyaktananda spoke in Bengali and Swami Kevalananda in Hindi. After the lectures a series of beautiful devotional songs were sung, under the lead of Swami Jnaneswarananda of Patna, which thrilled the audience.

KANKHAL.

The birthday was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar. The Tithi Puja was performed with appropriate ceremonies. The public celebration came off on 1st March. A big portrait

of Sri Ramakrishna was tastefully decorated. After the Ramanam Kirtan at 12 in the noon a meeting was held and speeches were delivered. Swami Adwaitananda spoke in Hindi about the universality and tolerance of Sri Ramakrishna's message. After him a few other Swamis also spoke about the different aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. The meeting over, more than two hundred Sadhus of Kankhal and Hardwar were fed. In the evening there were special Arati and Bhajan.

CUDDAPAH.

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah (S. India), the birthday was celebrated on the 15th March. In the morning there were Bhajans in the Samaj premises, and Pujas were offered at the local temples. In the noon about 700 poor Narayanas were fed. In the evening a public meeting was held under the presidency of Mr. N. Kuppu Swamiah Garu, B.A., of Telugu literary fame. The President of the Samaj briefly described the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciple Swami Vivekananda. Rai Saheb G. Sankar Rao Garu delivered an interesting lecture on "Saints and their Usefulness." With a short speech from the chair the meeting came to a close at 8-30 p.m.

NEWS AND NOTES.

IS ASTROLOGY SCIENTIFIC?

The attempts to pierce into the mystery of the future or to read into the book of fate has always claimed many votaries in all parts of the world. In India, even at the present day, belief in foretelling of all kinds, astrology in special, is very wide-spread. Consequently a large number of people, with little or no qualifications, are able to carry on a flourishing trade. Instances in which the predictions of these persons are hopelessly inaccurate, are by no means uncommon. It is very natural that the astrologer should take shelter behind the probable error in the recording of the actual time of birth etc. In most

cases, this explanation is quite sufficient to give complete satisfaction to the deluded public, and even when the falsified predictions could not be accounted for in this way, the disappointed rarely, if ever, doubt the competency of the science of astrology itself. It is always maintained that if one is fully versed in the science and if the time of birth etc., also could be accurately ascertained, it is possible to predict the entire future course of the life of a person.

In a recent issue of the Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society of Bangalore, the Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai has contributed an interesting paper in the course of which he examines how long astrology has been in this country, with what credentials it came, and what credentials, if any, it has since acquired in the course of its development on the Indian soil. In his opinion, neither in the Vedas nor in the Brahmanas, neither in the Upanishads nor in Panini, is there any reference to planetary astrology. Between the 5th century B. C. and the 5th century A. D., he holds, there is little or no evidence for astrology, and that much of the astrology that we have now is Ptolemaic, brought to India through the writings of Paulus Alexandrinus and Firmicus Maternus in the third or fourth century A. D. His view on horoscope is that it is a mere record of time, that you cannot say anything regarding the life by merely looking at a horoscope, and that astrology cannot any longer be ranked as a science but must be consigned to the limbo of obsolete beliefs.

We have not studied the subject to say whether it has any scientific basis or not, but we are afraid the arguments of the learned writer advanced in this paper might appear not quite conclusive. We have been told of cases where the exact date and hour of a man's death have been foretold years before and the prediction coming true. Also we are not sure whether the law of probability alone could sufficiently explain all such cases. Nevertheless, we can readily agree with the writer in his view regarding the many false pretensions of the astrol-

ogers as a class, and the questionable methods and tricks which quite a majority of them resort to. In some instances, as is pointed out by the writer, the predictions, no doubt, do some harm, nor could the weakening of the will resulting from too much reliance upon astrological foretellings, Kavachas, Shantis for favours from planets etc., rather than upon one's own honest and manly endeavour, be too strongly condemned. One has only to turn to the pages of modern newspapers and periodicals which are so full of advertisements on these and other allied matters to be convinced how wide-spread is this evil. We hope this subject will receive the attention of all competent critics, and the question as to how far astrology has a scientific basis, if any, will be settled once for all.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS.

It will be no exaggeration to say that till the beginning of this century, most of the educational ideals and methods have rarely treated the child as an end in itself. In other words, educational systems were shaped and developed more in the interests of the State, Church, the nation and the parents, but never has it been suspected that the child has a soul of its own with distinct ends and interests. With the discovery of the child-psychology and the increasing knowledge resulting from the researches into this hitherto unknown region, many new educational experiments have been undertaken in some of the most progressive countries of the West. Everyone is already familiar with the achievements of Dr. Montessori which have more or less revolutionised the science of pedagogy.

Emma Goldman describes, in an article in the *Modern Review*, some of the recent educational experiments in Germany. The outside world, especially during the time of the last Great War, was made familiar with the fact that the 'Prussian militarism' was but a reflection of the educational system then prevalent in the country. It must be gratifying to learn that a healthy change in

the spirit of education has already begun. According to this writer, there are two distinct tendencies, the Decisive School Reform movement and the Experimental School movement. The former aims at enlarging the scope of education by various reforms along modern lines, while remaining within the folds of the old system. Although the reformers of this class are severely handicapped by the incubus of school authorities, we are told their efforts are slowly producing a young generation which will ill-fit into the 'straight-jacket of Prussianism.' The experimental schools, on the other hand, have created a new field, free from the obstacles and traditions of the past regime. We learn that almost every large city in Germany now has such new schools. The guiding principle of these schools is the recognition of the inner life of the child and the development of its latent powers. In the words of an organ of the new school—"Not the traditional methods or dead routine within the class-room will prepare the child for its place and work in society, but life itself,—life, with its varied and pulsating events and interests." The rôle of the teacher is to be the friend, counsellor and comrade instead of the dreaded judge and jailer. Not only a good deal of freedom and initiative is allowed to the children while in the class-room, they are also taken on long trips through the country, through forests, fields and across mountains and valleys. The effects of this outdoor life are described thus—"It develops healthy bodies, liveness of movement and independence. It cultivates the power of orientation and absorption, and increases the eagerness of the children to learn more of the rudiments of knowledge picked up during the tramp. Back in the school, they begin feverishly to classify, elaborate, to deepen the information thus gained."

It is claimed for this experiment that mutual helpfulness and a spirit of co-operation in the daily life and work of the school is fostered, beginning with the lowest grade. Another interesting feature is the close co-operation of the parents in their work—thus making the school

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a true and vital community centre. By the abolition of the old-fashioned discipline maintained by the drill-sergeant methods, and relying upon the good nature and the sense of responsibility of the boys and girls, self-discipline is the result, and coercion and punishment are no longer needed. It is a significant sign of the times that even in Germany such radical changes in educational methods are undertaken, and as the writer expresses, it is surely worth knowing and watching the attempt to turn the 'former barrack, torture-chamber and grinding mill, the cradle of bureaucracy and militarism,' into a play-house and work-shop for the free development of a new generation.

Whatever element of truth there might be in the expression 'the unchanging East' so far as other departments of life are concerned, it will be difficult to deny its applicability in the realm of education in India. In our schools, not only the school-work has no serious contact with life, but even the so-called play of the children is so dull and stereotyped. The teachers rarely get an opportunity to learn and understand the psychology of the child and its reactions, and their entire responsibility ends with stuffing the child with 'educational twaddle' according to a standard prescribed by the authorities. The want of freedom, both to teachers and pupils, cannot but end in moral degradation. The following observations of Mr. Bertrand Russell deserve the careful consideration of all interested in the cause of education—" Regimentation is the source of the evil. Education authorities do not look on children, as religion is supposed to do, as human beings with souls to be saved. They look upon them as material for grandiose social schemes, future 'hands' in factories, or 'bayonets' in war, or what not. No man is fit to educate unless he feels each pupil an end in himself, with his own rights and his own personality, not merely a piece in a jig-jog puzzle or a soldier in a regiment or a citizen in a State. Reverence for human personality is the beginning of wisdom in every social question, but above all in education.

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