

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत मायत



प्राप्य वरान्निबीधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.*

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE

(Concluded from the last issue)

About a month after, S. came from Benares to Koalpara on a visit to the Holy Mother. He and Manindra went in the morning to see her at the Jagadamba Ashrama. The conversation by and by turned on Benares.

S. observed: "The old women who go to Benares to die, suffer terribly. Many of them perhaps no longer receive their monthly money allowance from home. And they have to live in damp ground floor rooms."

Mother.— Yes, I also noted their misery while I lived there. I found them sometimes eating the rice of their begging simply soaking it in water, without cooking it.

S.— By coming to Benares, the old ladies become rather long-lived.

Mother.—That is because they are purged of their sin by seeing and touching Viswanath. In Brindaban also they attain longevity by sprinkling holy water on their person and taking the sacramental food.

S. spoke to the Mother of the sufferings of the country. He said: "I am told nearly sixty lacs of people have died in India of influenza. The price of rice and other food articles have gone very high ;—there is no end to people's sufferings".

Mother.— Yes, my child, people have nothing to eat. And the misery of those who have families is greater still. The suffering has just begun ; it won't be alleviated till there are rains and a good harvest.

S.— The sufferings of the country are increasing daily. There is so much suffering everywhere ;—is it due to people's karma ?

Mother.— Can all people have such karma? It is due to the change in the 'atmosphere'.

S.— So much suffering, so much warfare,—is it because we are on the transition to a new Age?

Mother.— (*smiling*) How can I say? How can I know what the Lord has willed? The sins of kings,—their envy, jealousy, wickedness, destruction of holy men,— all these ruin kingdoms. The misdeeds of kings cause suffering to their people . . . . Victoria was indeed a noble queen. During her reign, people lived happily and comfortably. Now even a child of five years understands what is sorrow. By the bye, Sarat has arranged to distribute rice here. How much of it has been given away?

Manindra.— I do not know the exact amount. But I am told about thirty-four Rupees worth of rice is distributed every week.

Mother.— What is the rate per head?

Manindra.— A quarter seer of rice.

Mother.— How much does a recipient get?

Manindra.— Six, seven or eight seers, according to the number of his or her family members.

Mother.— How many people in all received rice?

Manindra.— I do not know exactly. But most of them are Muhammadan women.

Mother.— Yes, the Mussalmans are poorer here . . . . At what other places is Sarat giving away rice?

Manindra.— At Bankura, Indapur and Manbhum. He is working wherever there is famine.

Mother.— Are the boys going there?

S.— Yes, from the Math.

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One afternoon, a month after the previous occasion, Manindra and Prabodh Babu went to visit the Mother. They wanted to send their daughters to the Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta. When they asked for Mother's opinion, she readily approved of their idea and told them to refer to Swami Saradananda.

Prabodh.— Yes, Mother, I have already written to him.

A lady disciple who was present there, remarked :  
"Would they be able to live there? They are so young!"



Mother.— Certainly they would. Girls from East Bengal, scarcely seven years old, live there. They show great reluctance to go home even when their parents come to take them.

Prabodh.— I went to see the village this morning. People's misery is great. They have scarcely any cloth to wear,—they could not come out before us. And their roofs are bare of thatch.

Mother.— Were they given rice?

Prabodh.— Yes, they have been given last Sunday.

Mother.— Are they given clothes?

Prabodh.— Yes, the deserving cases receive clothes . . . .  
Mother, I am told you once had a dream in which you saw a woman standing with a pitcher and a broomstick in her hands—

Mother.— Yes, I saw a woman standing with a pitcher and a broomstick in her hands. I asked her: "Who are you?" She said: "I will sweep everything." I asked again: "What will happen next?" She replied: "I shall then sprinkle nectar all over from the pitcher." Perchance that is what is happening now. . . . .

Next day when they again went to the Mother, Prabodh Babu asked her: "Mother, should one forcibly renounce the world?"

Mother at once replied with a smile: "People do so."

Prabodh.— If people renounce the world on their own initiative before receiving the gracious assent of the Divine Mother, I fear they have trouble.

Mother.— They return home.

Manindra.— Did the Master give Sannyasa\* to the elders of the Ramakrishna Order?

Mother.— I am not sure if he gave. No, he did not; probably Swamiji† gave.

Manindra.— Swamiji also had to suffer much. He however 'crossed over', — his body did not give way.

Mother.— No, he also had physical suffering. He had diabetes, and his body would burn the whole day. But he still worked on till he was at death's door.

Prabodh.— I have heard that at Darjeeling he clasped Hari Maharaj by the neck and said to him weeping, "Brother, I am dying working alone, while you are keeping aloof busy only with your *tapasya*."

Mother.— Yes, my child, he gave his life-blood at the service of others. He did all these (Maths, etc.) after his return from the West; — that is how the boys have now got a shelter. There are now four boys working in the West.

\* i.e. *formal* Sannyasa.

† Swami Vivekananda.



Prabodh.— Yes, Mother,— Swami Abhedananda, Swami Prakashananda, Swami Paramananda and Swami Bodhananda.

Mother.— What is Kali's name?

Manindra.— Swami Abhedananda.

Mother.— Basanta\* writes to me and sends money. He delivers lectures there . . . . Yogen† practised hard tapasya. He kept some dried and powdered *chapatis*‡ with him and lived upon them. This resulted in serious stomach troubles and eventually in his death. . . . There is no happiness in the world ;—it is only momentary. The world is a poison tree and it poisons man. But those who have already entered the world, what can they do? They have no help, even though they may feel its true nature.

Manindra and Prabodh Babu made their obeisance to the Mother and returned.

They went again to the Mother in the evening. Prabodh Babu said to her: “Mother, I have received Sarat Maharaj's reply. Shall I read it out to you?”

Mother.— Yes, do.

Prabodh Babu read the letter which contained among other things the passage: “Even though you have my approval, the Lord's will is against placing Vina (Prabodh Babu's daughter) here (in the Nivedita School).”

Mother.— Why has he written like this? He has sent a final negative answer. Probably Sudhira\* did not agree. Sudhira once said to me: “Mother, I cannot do any more,— I am suffering terribly.” She works very hard indeed for the girls. When she cannot meet the expenses of the School, she engages herself as a teacher of music to rich households and earns thereby some forty or fifty rupees a month. She has taught everything to the School girls,—sewing, tailoring, etc. She made a profit of Rs. 300 the other year from the tailoring department. She spent this in taking the girls on excursion to different places during the Puja holidays. She is Devavrata's† sister. He taught her self-reliance and courage by going with her to Ry. stations and then hiding himself and making her buy tickets and board train, etc., alone.

Two girls from Madras, about twenty-two years old, are living in the Nivedita School. They are not married. How

\* Swami Paramananda.

† Swami Yogananda, one of the most prominent disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

‡ A kind of bread.

\* She was at that time in charge of the Nivedita School.

† His monastic name was Swami Prajnananda. He was Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* and President of the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama from 1914 to 1918.



beautifully they are learning different works! Look on the other hand at our wretched part of the country,—they are anxious to marry away a girl even before she is scarcely eight years old. Oh, if Radhu had not been married, would she have suffered so much!

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## " BECAUSE STRAIGHT IS THE GATE AND NARROW IS THE WAY "

BY THE EDITOR

In our September article we pointed out that the marriage vow may in future signify also other life-ideals for women than *Sati-dharma*. This statement has been viewed with suspicion by some of our friends. Do we underrate the value of chastity in married life or in any life for the matter of that? Do we not believe that married life to be worth anything must be sanctified by the whole-hearted love and devotion of the wife? We confess we were not prepared for these misgivings. For, we clearly mentioned that whatever the change in the marriage ideal, the new would never be less honourable than the old. We said that life for Indian men and women must always be an uphill journey. But perhaps we must clear our position further and point out what value really attaches to chastity.

The fears of our friends are the consequence of a panicky atmosphere. In Bengal, and partly also in other provinces, the idea is being sedulously spread mainly by some irresponsible writers that the Hindu marriage ideal is unnecessarily and unnaturally too strict. They have not yet gone so far as to decry chastity. But they suggest that a woman may have other men friends than her husband and *vice versa*, and that whereas the body should remain faithful to the marriage vow, the heart may seek a wider range of satisfaction. That is to say, the Western glamour is catching our people also. Nothing can be more pernicious than this. When we spoke of rival ideals to *Sati-dharma*, we did not mean this kind of degeneracy. Chastity there *must* be in all cases, not merely formal but also in the spirit. Without the spirit, the form amounts to nothing and is *mithyâchâra*.

Apart from domestic and blood relations, there can be these several relations between men and women: It may be one of ignoring the sexual difference, looking upon one another as either mind or spirit,—a relation which is possible only between highly intellectual and spiritual people. Or it may be one of recognising the fact of sex, in which case a woman may be looked upon either as *ramani* or as mother or sister.



*Ramani* is a Sanskrit word and means *delighter*. In the West the undomestic relations between men and women seem mainly grounded on the conception of woman as *ramani*. She is the pure feminine,—the counterpart of the masculine. Her femininity is not considered in the West as a thing to be guarded against; it is on the other hand man's inspirer and delighter. It acts subtly as an atmosphere of inspiration and joy and energises and fulfils the masculine mind.\* The Hindu however does not believe in the soundness and ultimate wholesomeness of this relation between men and women and advocates a mutual attitude which is free from the possibility of any emotional crisis, that is to say, the filial attitude. It is true that in the West a woman has the right to inspire and delight other men than her husband, and a man also expects this from other women than his wife. In fact, a husband would be called a tyrant if he wants to monopolise his wife in this respect. Not so in India. Here such a prospect is considered scandalous. Here the husband and wife are for themselves alone. We have no society queens. Is it a loss or a gain?

The Hindu mind looks deeper into things and discovers that what is generally called the *hladini sakti* of woman is nothing but the sexual influence in a fine and diffuse form and that its actions on the masculine mind, though apparently inspiring, are fundamentally sexual (we use the word also in its finer sense). Therefore to those who believe that the fulfilment of life and Self-realisation consists in transcending the sexual impulse, not only is the promiscuous mixing of men and women an injurious thing but even married life is not sufficiently pure and desirable and needs to be sublimated into a sexless companionship. To them woman must reveal herself as sexless or in such a form as is not tainted by the consciousness of lust, that is to say, as mother. The Hindu ideal of life emphasises the elimination of sex-consciousness as a necessary preliminary to spiritual attainments. The Hindu's keen analytical mind is never satisfied with the superficial view of things. It refuses to affix the stamp of finality on what is called the normal life. 'Normal' is nothing but a passing state. That alone is truly normal which is permanent. Is our present aspect of life permanent? If not, it requires to be changed, moulded and disciplined. The apparently

\* Rabindranath Tagore has named this *hladini sakti*, the delighting power, and he holds that its restrictions within domestic limits has cramped the growth of man. He goes so far as to hold that this inspiration of woman is necessary even in spiritual *sadhana* and observes that the service of Sujata to Buddha is for this reason significant and that Jesus' nature sought for its perfection the devotion of Mary and Martha (*Prabasi*, Aug.-Sept.). Strange! But perhaps it is useless to expect one who has not renounced the world to correctly understand the psychology of a God-intoxicated monk.



energising and charming influence of woman is true of that life only which is called normal and which is mainly physical, partly intellectual and very little spiritual. The very consciousness of the feminine as the source of inspiration and delight is based on the consciousness of the difference of her sex, and her influence is therefore directly or indirectly a stimulant to man's sex-consciousness. Sex-attractions go to the root of creation and are the very texture of cosmic illusion. Why do we suffer? Why are we ignorant? Why powerless? The seers answer, it is because we have forgotten our true nature which is spiritual and identified ourselves with body and mind. What is that which has so deluded us? It is Maya and it has two forms,—*Kama* and *Kanchana*, lust and gold, of which *Kama* is essential. This *Kama* is at the root of creation, sex-difference and sex-consciousness. It is not so superficial as it may seem. It spreads its roots into the deeper strata of the mind. And our delight and eagerness for the company of the opposite sex are the promptings of that fundamental *hrid-roga*, 'disease' of the heart'. *This analysis is not fanciful, it is sternly real. Psycho-analysis has proved it partly. But the complete proof comes to all those who sincerely try to perceive the Real and the Spiritual.* That is why all over the world all deeply spiritual natures have tended towards monasticism which is sternly opposed to all kinds of sex-indulgence, gross or subtle. The Hindu mind bases its social codes on this truth. It taboos the free association of sexes\* and refuses to allow any opportunity to man to indulge in the elemental delight of the company of any other woman than his wife. It discourages inter-sexual *friendship* for its own sake, for it finds that this so-called friendship, when the motive of the association of men and women is not intellectual or spiritual, is nothing but the primeval sex-attraction in disguise—ugly sore dressed in satin—and that *such association only strengthens the fetters of ignorance and infatuation, which to break is the sole purpose of every man's life.* And here lies the true significance of chastity. It is not merely physical abstention. It is mainly and essentially mental. It is the refusal to hug the delusion that lies in the heart of sexual joy in all its forms and setting one's face towards the Truth, the One, the opposite

\* By this we do not of course advocate the *pardah*. We are only pointing to the attitude that the sexes should assume towards each other. Men and women will come into more and more intimate contact in all fields of life with the passing of days. But it is essential that the traditional Hindu attitude of looking on all women as fragments of Divine Motherhood should not be lost sight of. This attitude may not always be held *explicitly*. But the relation must in any case be such as is least associated with sex-idea,—it certainly cannot be one of gallantry. The main point must never be forgotten,—the idea of chastity, in word, thought and deed, conscious and sub-conscious.



of Many which is creation and which perpetuates itself through procreation.

It will be clear from the above that we can never advocate anything which affects the ideal of chastity in the slightest measure. Our national ideal is chastity. The choice is not arbitrary but is inspired by the knowledge that through chastity alone man can ever reach the Truth. No man or nation that seeks to find the Eternal can minimise its importance. The Hindu national and individual ideal is the experience of the Real. Therefore the Hindu hugs the ideal of chastity to his bosom as a most precious heritage. The West as a whole and *generally* speaking also individually, does not aim so high. It aims at worldly and intellectual achievements. The Western civilisation is at best intellectual and not pre-eminently spiritual like the Indian. It is no wonder therefore that it does not attach much importance to chastity. When we seek *bhoga*, enjoyment, chastity is of little consequence. But for *tyaga*, renunciation (and therefore the acquisition of the spiritual), it is indispensable. Were we therefore to imitate the West in this respect, we would not only lose our ideal but also be debilitated and reduced to spineless existence.

It has been said that without the sunshine of feminine charms the powers of man cannot fully blossom, that there is in every man's heart a secret desire for the taste of joy and love, which thirsts for satisfaction, and that without such satisfaction life becomes dry and imperfect and powers are dwarfed. As to the necessity of feminine influence for life's fruition, it may be partly true. But if looking on a woman as a physical and mental being and a thing of enjoyment (however refined) be beneficial, will not a spiritual and worshipful attitude towards her be a thousand times more beneficial? To look upon woman as mother is a million times more honourable to her and helpful to ourselves than a behaviour that has at least an indirect reference to her physical and youthful charms. The heart no doubt longs for the sweets of love. But it is absurd to maintain that it must always be satisfied. We hold that these innate longings are capable of being idealised and spiritualised; and then only do they contribute to the success of life. It may be that those in whom the carnal passions are too strong will have to satisfy their yearnings for love and joy through sexual experience. But those in whom the

\* Swami Vivekananda observes in one of his letters: "Without the grace of Sakti (Woman) nothing is to be accomplished. What do I find in America and Europe?—the worship of Sakti. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with purity, in a Sattvika spirit, looking upon Her as Mother!"



higher consciousness is even partly awakened can spiritualise those feelings and realise thereby a superior life and joy. Hinduism concedes that the undeveloped should marry. But marriage is not an end in itself. It is after all a compromise, a concession to weakness and is redeemed only by being sublimated to spiritual companionship. Romance is secondary to this ideal of marriage and the predominant tendency is the spiritualisation of emotions and impulses.

Certain curious ideas about married life are being held forth. It is said, for example, that the romance of love is the basis of wedded life. But alas, realities are too strong for it. Post-marital realities destroy the dream of romance in most cases, married life proves miserable and there is no end to devising means for evading this disastrous consequence. Married life, according to this view, is an all-engrossing passion in which two minds are ever seeking to absorb themselves in each other. We must confess that if such a view be true, married life must be the most miserable thing conceivable. Love there should be, but a life-long romance! In this world of ugly happenings, such an ideal is scarcely realisable. If therefore any man or woman seeks to realise it, bitter disappointment must be the consequence. And in fact such it has been. In the West where this romantic view of marriage is prevalent, cases of disappointment are numerous. And we in India also seem to have caught its infection. Our novelists and story-writers are indefatigable in depicting the beauty of this romance and of course the Hindu ideal of marriage comes in for severe castigation. If a life-long romance of love were realisable, it would no doubt have been very poetic. But as has been rightly remarked, such a romance is sure to make the couple inapt for all the large and fruitful ends of social life. The Hindu therefore accords romance a subordinate place in the married life. The wife is the *Saha-dharmini*, a partner in the practice of *dharma*. The unifying bond between the husband and the wife is mainly their common allegiance to the spiritual ideal. The Hindu household is a temple in which every act is sacramental. The husband and the wife are its twin worshippers. Love there will be and the desire for romance, for the average nature craves for them. But this craving is not allowed to overwhelm the higher conscience; and if it is not satisfied, life does not become unbearable and prove a failure. The current of spiritual purposiveness that flows in and through the daily life of the household and the unalienable faith in the Spiritual and the Transcendental as life's ultimate goal more than compensate for the loss of romance. The Hindu woman, therefore, and also Hindu society, does not glorify her *hladini sakti*. She is averse to manifesting it and is eager to occupy that position in others' eye, which



is least associated with that sakti and its essential, sex-consciousness, namely, the position of motherhood. To her husband alone she manifests her hladini sakti, but to all others she is mother. Woman's social recognition is through her motherhood. Her wedded life is considered to have been crowned with success only when she has been blessed with a child. The underlying idea is obvious,—the elimination of sex elements as much as possible. This view of married life spares one many bitter agonies and disappointments and helps the fulfilment of life's true purpose. 7

The significance of Hindu wifedom often proves a puzzle to many. The glorification of Sati-dharma apparently indicates that the position of the wife is in itself well-recognised and honourable. Yet every wife considers her position truly honourable only when she has become a mother. From yet another standpoint, that marriage is looked upon as the highest in which the husband and wife do not know each other physically and live a life of unbroken continence. Marriage from that point of view is a concession to human weakness which fears to stand alone and seeks the companionship and service of another, and thus falls short of the ultimate ideal—Sannyasa. These three aspects of a wife's position may seem unrelated and mutually contradictory. For it may be quite plausibly argued that if we look upon marriage as a necessary evil, woman's position either as mother or wife has a stigma attached to it. And again if motherhood is the higher ideal, surely the honour of wifedom suffers. This apparent puzzle is easily solved if we remember the idea underlying all these three view-points,—the idea of chastity. Yes, wifedom is glorious if it is instinct with the noble ideal of Sati-dharma or a similar spiritual ideal, for it then becomes a means to higher realisations. Such spiritual idealism presupposes a high degree of sex-control and is therefore much better than vagrancy and debasing sentimentalism. But a woman should emancipate herself from even the restricted sexuality which wifedom implies by bearing one or two children,—motherhood implies sublimation of love-emotions and greatly helps the elimination of sexuality from life—and refusing thereafter to have any carnal relations with her husband. Motherhood therefore indicates a greater realisation of chastity. But it is of course best to maintain absolute continence even though married. Even that however falls short of the highest ideal, for even in it sex-consciousness is not totally absent. The very highest is therefore the monastic ideal. 'That is why Swami Vivekananda observed in course of a discourse on Indian Women in America: "We are a monastic race. The whole social organization has that one idea before it. Marriage is thought of as something impure, something lower."



That life is the highest which implies the greatest amount of chastity.

We admit that without spiritual idealism, Hindu married life would be extremely dull and fatuous. This idealism saves and glorifies. So long as we can maintain it even to a certain degree, we need not lower the ideal. Life will be quite real and cheerful. Having lost it, we shall be nowhere. This is the redeeming factor of all associational life. The motive must always be spiritual. We do affirm that even in the West, married life, to be more successful and beneficial, must be redeemed by an infusion of the spiritual motive into it. Eager avidity for romance only embitters life and leads to destruction. In fact all inter-relations of sexes must be informed with the spirit of chastity. It is not by lowering the ideal that we can save and fulfil ourselves, but by lifting *ourselves* to the ideal.

The modern age fondly believes that it can solve its problems without troubling men to reform themselves, but simply by a reformation of their environments. This entails a tremendous waste of power and brings about little result. The way to solution is quite contrary. It is men's unruly passions and blinded vision that create problems; and passions must be curbed and vision clarified. The marriage and sex problem has become very keen in the West and is agitating all thinking minds. But how has the West set about solving it? Not by asking men to learn self-discipline but by dragging down ideals and pandering to the cravings of the flesh. We may give here a sample.

Ben. B. Lindsey has been Judge of the Juvenile Court of Denver in America for more than a quarter of a century. This Court "is known throughout the civilised world." "Now, this is what has blown up Judge Lindsey and his Juvenile Court in Denver. After years of experience of adolescent misbehaviour he has come to the conclusion that in our modern community marriage is delayed too late, and that a long and lengthening gap has been opened between the days when school and college are left behind and the days when it seems safe and reasonable to settle down and found a family.

"There is a growing proportion of fretting and impatient young people in the community, and out of their undisciplined eagerness springs a tangle of furtive promiscuity, prostitution, disease, crime and general unhappiness. Young men cannot apply themselves to sound work because of nature's strong preoccupation, and the life of possibly even a majority of young women is a life of tormented uncertainty. Judge Lindsey, with the weight of a new immense experience upon him, and with the assertions of the advocates of birth control before him, has suggested a more orderly accommodation of social life to the new conditions.



“He has proposed a type of preliminary marriage, which he calls Companionate Marriage. This is to be a marriage undertaken by two people for “mutual comfort,” as the Prayer-book has it, with a full knowledge of birth control, and with the deliberate intention of not having children. So long as there are no children and with due deliberation, this companionate marriage may be dissolved again by mutual consent. On the other hand, at any time the couple may turn their marriage into the permanent “family marriage” form.

“That is his proposal, and the State of Colorado has full power to make the experiment of such an institution. He wants such laws to be made. He believes that in most cases such marriages would develop naturally into permanent unions, and that their establishment would clear the social atmosphere of a vast distressful system of illicit relationships, irrevocable blunders, abortions, desertions, crimes, furtive experimenting, and all those dangers to honour, health, and happiness that go with furtiveness in these matters. He believes it would mean a great simplification and purification of social life and the release of much vexed and miserable energy.” (Mr. H. G. Wells in *The Sunday Express*, London.)

One may be interested to know what were the experiences that drove Judge Lindsey to propose such a novel experiment. Sometime ago he published in collaboration with another, a book named *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, in which he recounts his experiences with perfect candour and gives facts and figures of sexual delinquency of the modern American youth, which are certainly appalling. We refrain from detailing them. Mr. Wells, in discussing Judge Lindsey’s proposal, partly confirms it. He also believes that greater freedom in sexual matters will be more wholesome to individuals and society.

Now this is the answer of the West to the sex question. What is *our* answer? Chastity. The West, we know, would laugh at it. But that is because it does not know the true significance of chastity. India is the only land where it has been truly appreciated and understood. The West will first of all say that it is not practicable by the generality of men and women; and if practised by them, it will cause diseases and nervous disorder. Suppression of sexual desire is dangerous, it holds. Freud’s psychoanalysis is also against it and catalogues a long list of dangerous consequences. Our people also seem affected by the Western opinion, and chastity and celibacy have begun to be looked upon by some pedantic fools as abnormal and impracticable.—This in India, the home *par excellence* of monasticism, *Brahmacharya* and spiritual wisdom, as if the practice and example of many millenniums is not a bold and effective



enough answer to this foolish doubt and timidity! *India emphatically declares that chastity is not only practicable to a greater or less degree by the average man, but that it is the only sure means of attaining to true manhood and achieving higher destinies.* There is no danger in it. For chastity is not really the *suppression* of sex impulse but its *elimination*. The practice of chastity must not be considered as a mere physical abstention but as a mental discipline essentially. Without mental control, chastity will be of no avail and may prove even harmful. Mental discipline implies a spiritual outlook upon life and a spiritual atmosphere in the society. India fortunately supplies them abundantly. Mental discipline also must begin with the growth of knowledge, from early boyhood. Hence the institution of Brahmacharya. It is not at all a sound idea that a frank dissemination of sexual knowledge among youths is beneficial. Quite the contrary. It is growth towards the super-sexual life and the realised charm of pure spiritual life that will redeem young minds and lead them up to sturdy and noble manhood. This is the only effective and healthy check to the ebullition of sexual emotions that overwhelm youths on adolescence and a most reliable guide to sane thought and behaviour. This is *our* answer to the youths of the West,—Brahmacharya—continence and chastity, mental and physical. Youths trained in Brahmacharya, on entering matrimonial life, will be noble citizens, endowed with healthy body and mind and a healthy outlook of life. Such householders lived in millions in India in better days and live even now in less numbers. And such again are our dream. The Brahmacharya institution for boys and girls, to be real and effective, must have as its support and background the chaste life of householders. Without chaste men and women in large numbers in society, boys and girls cannot grow into true Brahmacharins. It is futile to expect to grow the delicate flower of Brahmacharya in the noxious atmosphere of general sex-indulgence. Even the householder's life must assume the monastic aspect to a certain extent. Sex-consciousness must be eradicated as much as possible. And that is what our ancients did.

What would our countrymen have, Judge Lindsey's companionate marriage or Brahmacharya? If Brahmacharya, then they must ruthlessly break the dream of easy life, and forego the charms of platonic love which is being paraded in our provincial literatures as a delectable prospect. We must set our face against any scheme that looks upon woman as anything else than mother or spirit and revels in the twilight of refined sexuality. There is no half-way house. Either strict sexual morality or sexual license. Any lowering of the ideal of chastity will gradually lead to those problems with which the



West is now faced. Does India want that? If not, then India must discountenance all sex-experiments.

The supreme necessity of chastity becomes at once apparent when we seriously take to spiritual life. It is foolish to hope to indulge the cravings of the flesh and at the same time enjoy the bliss of the spirit. They are as opposed to each other as darkness and light. Continuous Brahmacharya is absolutely necessary before any substantial spiritual progress is possible. One reason is quite obvious. The tremendous strain that is caused by meditation on God and other spiritual exercises cannot be borne by a cerebro-nervous system which is impaired by sexual thought and indulgence. The brain and nerves of one who is not continent, however healthy and strong one may look outwardly, are incapable of sustaining deep spiritual fervour. He may progress to a certain extent, but beyond that he will find himself helpless.

But this physiological reason is only secondary. The primary reason is psychological. Spiritual realisation in its highest aspects is the realisation of oneself as pure spirit beyond body and mind. It is, in the subjective aspect, the transcendence of body and mind-consciousness, and in the objective aspect, the perception of God face to face and of the universe as God himself. These are two aspects of the same realisation. As our mental discipline progresses, our perception of our own self on the one hand and of the world on the other undergo simultaneous changes. We begin to feel ourselves more and more as spirit and the world also more and more Divine. Along with the progress of the mind, another change also occurs,—the change in our activity and physical functions. We may therefore look upon spiritual progress as a fourfold change—change in the mind, in bodily functions, in self-consciousness and in the objective realities. Spiritual progress, again, from our present 'normal' state upto the realisation of the Absolute may be conveniently divided into three stages.

Now if we observe the fourfold changes that come about in those stages, the absolute necessity of chastity in spiritual life will become at once apparent.

In the *first* or normal stage, our mind is full of desires of the flesh. We crave the joys of the body. We eagerly seek earthly riches and power. The mind is the playground of various carnal passions, worldly ambitions, avarice, jealousy, hatred, egotism, desire for name and fame, etc. Of physical functions, sexual gratification seems the most delectable. The mind dwells in the pelvic region. The pelvic nerve and plexus and also the hypogastric and solar plexuses are then most active and sensitive and hold the mind entangled in their meshes, refusing it any higher conscious experience. We feel ourselves



mainly as body and mind and very little as spirit. And the world outside seems to be an aggregate of unrelated and discrete material and biological phenomena,—the vast higher realities are to us unknown and non-existent. When through self-control we reach the *next* stage, the mind has become purified of many passions ; it is now free of ambition, jealousy, desire for earthly power and enjoyment of the body. We have visions of supernatural light. The mind avoids worldly concerns and finds delight in the contemplation of spiritual realities. Bodily functions also are purified. We are averse to sexual indulgence. Desire for delectable food diminishes and for other physical comforts and luxuries. We prefer mental activity to physical activity. The mind has shifted its centre of gravity from the lower pelvic regions to the region of the heart. It has freed itself from the meshes of the lower plexuses, especially of the pelvic nerve and plexus, and has its citadel now in the cardiac plexus. The sensations of the lower nerves do not easily drag it down. We feel ourselves as something finer than body and mind. We catch a glimpse of our spiritual self. The bodily life, the so-called normal life, does not seem as real as before and its appetites become much weaker. The objective world also has undergone a change. Objects are no longer unrelated, separate entities. They seem all grounded on a unity which interpenetrates them and is their very essence. And on some rare occasions, the consciousness of this unity becomes so clear and profound that phenomena seem like so many moulds containing and formulating a vast, infinite reality much more intimate and intense than our normal consciousness of reality : the whole world seems a collection of forms and insignificant, while behind them looms a spiritual reality profound and infinite, and the mind tends of itself towards that reality. But sexual consciousness is not yet gone. In fact it has become much more subtle and powerful and has to be strenuously fought against. It reveals itself in fine and insidious forms and we come to know in what unthought-of, subtle ways it spreads its snare on the human mind. The physical part is the least of it. The desire for anything feminine is found to have its root in the sexual instinct. But the mind is now in closer grip with it and can fight it to better effect. There are occasional sexual lapses, and those are hours of bitter agony to the soul. Any such lapse in either mental or physical form clouds the limpid vision of the Spiritual on which the mind now dwells avidly ; the nerves seem disturbed and it takes sometime before the unclouded vision is regained. And thus the soul comes to dread the very shadow of anything sexual. *The further we go from sexual consciousness, the nearer we approach spirituality.* Then by and by we travel towards the *third and last* stage, the end of our journey. As we approach it, the mind becomes purer and



purser and is cleared of all worldly taints. The sexual impulse, even in its subtle forms, is now destroyed. Even sex-consciousness departs. We feel ourselves more and more as spirit and sometimes entirely transcend the sense of mind and body. Our external efforts are all gone. Physical functions are limited to mere preservation of the body. Sexual action is absolutely out of question. Even the shadow of sexual thought is agonising. The mind becomes very fine, without a ripple of thought and dwells in uninterrupted rapture on the effulgent vision of the Divine. The soul is full of bliss, peace and love. The world of forms seem a distant speck on the rim of the mind's horizon, and only God abides within and without ourselves. Thus gradually we transcend all limitations of thought and reality and become one with the Absolute. Here the journey ends.

If such is the fact of man's spiritual development, what is the place of sex-life in it? Does it require to be told that without its control and elimination no progress is possible beyond the first stage? What to speak of sex-action, even sex-thought is impossible if we would dwell undisturbed on the second stage. A fool indeed, a miserable fool is he who dreams of attaining Self-realisation and yet holds on to sex-life. Sex-life is, as we have seen, the concomitant of worldly life and physical consciousness. These are aspects of the same state of being. The mind that is addicted to sexual thought and practice is tightly held down to the pelvic region. Such a mind can *never* have the vision of the higher realities. Any exercise, either by thought or action, of the pelvic nerves means the loss and vanishing of the higher vision. We *must* give up sexual life, if we are to realise the spirit. *There is no other way.*

It is human nature to seek easy paths of progress and compromise ideals. This age is specially unfortunate in its lack of faith in spiritual ideals. It does not value chastity because it does not sincerely seek spiritual life and reality. It is satisfied with the normal, that is to say, predominantly animal, life veneered over with a thin intellectualism. But such degradation of life's ideals has brought down its own nemesis. The tangle of sex-life and its necessary effect on domestic and social life have assumed formidable proportions. Facile paths of escape are being sought. But we do not see any redemption for the West unless it accepts the ideal of chastity, which however it will not do until it has remodelled itself on a spiritual plan. Meanwhile we marvel at the serpentine ingenuity with which some Indian pedants are trying to reconcile spiritual idealism with a refined enjoyment of the flesh.\*

\* ERRATA: October P.B.—page 436, line 2, for 63 read *about 61*; page 440, line 17, for *promient* read *prominent*; page 443, line 13, for *questional* read *questioned*; page 444, line 8, for *it* read *them*; and page 448, line 43, for *severely* read *surely*.



# THE SONG OF THE OTHER CHILDREN

BY NINA MACDONALD

O Ramakrishna . . . Master . . .  
We, Thy children of the West, salute Thee!  
On this, Thy natal day, with reverent hearts we come, to  
lay at Thy dear feet the offerings of our love.

\*

Thy natal day . . . .  
What far-flung visions from the deeps of time those simple  
words evoke.  
Precious the thoughts that come on silent wing,  
Bearing a throng of re-born memories.

Methinks I see Thy tender, loving mother  
Brooding again o'er Thee, a tiny babe,  
Soft, helpless, dimpled, sweet—  
Yet in Thy deep dark eyes what arcane secrets of the universe!

Ah blessed mother!  
What rapturous privilege was thine—  
To cradle in thy loving arms,  
To comfort, nurture, shelter  
Secure from every harm  
The infant body of Thy Lord!

On wings of love the pictures come. I see  
A little lad, with lovelit eyes and merry laughter,  
Who leads his comrades in their gladsome play;  
Singing, dancing through the fields all the livelong golden  
days; . . . .  
Or, quite alone, watching, with rapt, entranced vision,  
Shifting shadow, drifting cloud and soaring bird.

Boy tender, compassionate, loving,  
Thoughtful, wise and true . . . .

Near indeed to God were the children—  
The children who played with Thee.

\*

Still drifting, the visions, summoned by love's power;  
Blest memories of long-past yesterlives.  
Sometimes they shine out clear as mountain peaks against  
the rising sun;  
Anon misty and indistinct as broken cobwebs fluttering  
in the breeze.



Surely, O Master, we have known Thee long,  
 Else why do we envision thus the past ;  
 Why doth our inmost being joyous thrill  
 In blissful rapture to Thy sacred name ?

\*

When Thou, as Rama, walked upon this earth  
 Mayhap as grass beneath Thy lotus feet  
 Or wayside flow'rets by Thy garment brushed  
 Our life did quicken to Thy holy touch—  
 That touch, though light as wing of butterfly,  
 Forming a tie of love forevermore.

When Thou as Krishna came, Thy love divine  
 Drew us to Thee, though naught we knew of why  
 Save that it heartened us and cheered us on ;  
 Gave strength to meet the duties of the day.  
 We were but soul-babes, so we did not know  
 Our joy was caused by spark divine in us  
 Responding to the Flame Divine in Thee.

\*

Clearer the vision grows. The clouds dissolve  
 As mists before the morning sun dispelled.

In gardens by the Ganges' holy stream  
 The God-Man stands revealed.  
 Rent are the veils of maya ; broken the bonds of karma  
 self-imposed.

Lo ! Thou hast shown that all paths lead to the Father ;  
 That the earnest seeker will attain to realization, to conscious  
 at-one-ment with God.  
 "As surety sure" hast Thou shown us that the only essential  
 is one-pointed devotion in the search for Truth.  
 Naught else matters—nor race, nor clime, nor caste, nor creed,  
 nor prince, nor peasant, nor poverty, nor riches, nor  
 ignorance, nor learning.  
 All these are but outer. Devotion is inner—of the heart.  
 Whatsoever the path, the soul who follows it in spirit and in  
 Truth will surely attain to God-Consciousness.

Breaker of barriers art Thou, showing forth these truths, that  
 all who have eyes to see may see, all who have ears to  
 hear may hear.

\*

O Ramakrishna, we are among those of whom Thou didst say :  
 "Other children have I whose faces I have not seen,



“Whose speech I do not know.

“Far away in other lands do they dwell ;

“But they also are mine and, in the fulness of time they will come to me.”

\*

O Master, long have we waited in this far-off land  
On the western rim of the Western World  
By the shores of the Western Sea.  
Yea, long have we waited, dear Master.

Waiting, waiting, waiting—hungering and thirsting for Thee,  
though in this present life we knew not of Thee as Thou  
didst come again to the children of men.

But, at last, by devious ways and over weary paths, our  
wandering feet brought us to one of Thy devoted children  
who have come in Thy name to bring to the Western World  
Thy message of Love and Liberation, of Soul-Freedom and  
God-Consciousness.

We have been shown that the Pearl of Great Price which we  
seek is within ourselves, because we are one with Thee  
and Thou art one with the Father.

The veil which separates us from Thee is a veil of illusion only.  
By Thy life here among men didst Thou show how to pierce  
this veil and to become consciously one with God, the  
Father-Mother of all the myriads of manifested Universes.

\*

And so, O Ramakrishna, Master,

We, thine other children, thy children of the West, beside thy  
children of the East, salute Thee!

On this, Thy natal<sup>d</sup> day, with thankful and reverent hearts we  
come to lay at Thy dear feet the offerings of our love.

\*

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TACOMA,

State of Washington, U. S. A.

March 5th, 1927.

The Ninety-first Anniversary of the Master's Birthday.

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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN MYSTICISM UP TO THE AGE OF JNANESVARA

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(Concluded from the last issue)

## THE TRUE NATURE OF THE RELATION OF THE GOPIS TO KRISHNA

There has been no greater misunderstanding than that about the spiritual nature of Krishna, and his relation to the Gopis. It has been supposed that the Gopis were filled with sexual passion for Krishna ; that he primarily satisfied only the sexual instincts of these Gopis ; that this satisfaction was later given a spiritual turn ; and that therefore the true nature of Krishna's spirituality and his relation to the Gopis is at bottom sexual. There can be no greater absurdity, or no greater calumny, than is implied in such a view. That eroticism has got anything to do with spiritualism we utterly deny. It is impossible to see in the sexual relation of man to woman, or of woman to man, any iota of the true nature of spiritual life. When Catherine of Sienna and mystics of her type wanted to marry God, when Mirabai and Kanhopatra in later times wedded themselves to God, when Andal the female Tamil mystic tried to espouse God, it has been supposed, the erotic instinct implied in such attempts was a partial manifestation of their spiritual love to God. This is an entire calumny on, and a shame to, the true nature of spiritual life. Spirituality is gained not by making common cause with sexuality, but by rising superior to it. That Krishna ever had any sexual relation with the Gopis is hard to imagine. It is a lie invented by later mythologists, who did not understand the true nature of spiritual life. Hence Parikshit's query, as well as Suka's justification, about the true nature of Krishna are alike illustrations of the *ignoratio elenchi*. Parikshit truly objects to the holiness of Krishna, if his sexuality were to be a fact ; but the answers which Suka gives or is made to give, fall entirely wide of the mark. To Parikshit's question why Krishna committed adultery, Suka gives futile answers. He tells us, in the first place, that all the great gods have committed adultery, thus trying to exonerate Krishna from the supposed sin. Secondly, he tells us that fire burns all impurities, and that Krishna's true nature burnt away all sins if he had committed any. Thirdly, he tells us that God must be regarded as being beyond both sin and merit, and that therefore the motive of Krishna was beyond the suspicion of being either meritorious or sinful. Fourthly, he tries to tell us that the conduct of great men need not tally with their words, and thus Krishna's superior teaching was



left unaffected by his practice. Fifthly, he tells us that the actions of a man are all of them results of his *Karman*, and that probably the sexual dalliances of Krishna were the result of his previous *Karman*. Sixthly, he tries to exculpate Krishna by saying that by his divine nature he was immanent both in the Gopis as well as their husbands, and that therefore there was no taint of adultery in his actions. His seventh argument is still more interesting. He tells us that Krishna by his *Maya* produced doubles of these Gopis before their husbands, and that therefore there was no objection to his enjoying the original Gopis!—an argument which is foolish on its face, telling us as it does, that God tries to exonerate Himself from His sins by a magical sleight-of-hand. All these arguments are either childish or irrelevant. The only argument of any value that has been advanced to describe the real nature of the relation of the Gopis to Krishna is the psychological argument that that relation was only an allegorical representation of the relation of the senses to the Self, thus making it evident that any cult of devotion that may be raised upon the sexual nature of the relation of Krishna to the Gopis may be raised only on stubble. Finally, we may advance also a mystical explanation of the way in which the Gopis may be supposed to have enjoyed Krishna. May it not be possible, that, in their mystical realisation, each of the Gopis had the vision of the Godhead before her, and that God so divided Himself before all of them, that He seemed to be enjoyed by each and all at the same time? It is granted to women as to men to have a mystical enjoyment of God, and it is as meaningless to speak of God as the bridegroom of a female devotee, as to speak of Him as the bride of a male devotee. There are no sexual relations possible with God, and Eroticism has no place in Mysticism.

#### THE SANDILYA SUTRA AND THE NARADA SUTRA

The Sandilya and the Narada Bhakti Sutras are, as we have observed, like the Bhagavata, fundamental works of Bhagavata mysticism. It is not very easy to determine the exact dates of composition of these Sutras. The Sandilya Bhakti Sutra seems to be older on account of its archaic tone, and is evidently modelled after the pattern of the great philosophical Sutras. If any internal evidence is of any avail, we may say that even that points to the anteriority of the Sandilya Sutra. The Narada Bhakti Sutra quotes Sandilya, but the Sandilya does not quote Narada. In point of content, however, the Narada Bhakti Sutra surpasses not merely the Sandilya Sutra by its easy eloquence and fervid devotion; but it may even be regarded as one of the best specimens of Bhakti literature that have ever been written. The Sandilya Sutra is more



philosophic than the Narada Sutra. It goes into the question of the nature of Brahman and Jiva, their inter-relation, the question of Creation, and so on. The Narada Bhakti Sutra takes a leap immediately into the doctrine of devotion, analyses its various aspects, and sets a ban against mere philosophical constructions. Both the Sandilya and the Narada quote the Bhagavadgita freely, and in that respect supply us with the connecting link between the Bhagavadgita on the one hand and the later Bhakti literature on the other. So far as the teaching of devotion is concerned, we cannot say that there is much distinction between the Sandilya Bhakti Sutra and the Narada Bhakti Sutra. The two are on a par, so far as that doctrine is inculcated. Over and above the general contents of the doctrine of devotion as inculcated in the Narada, the Sandilya, however, teaches that Bhakti may be of two kinds—primary and secondary. Secondary Bhakti concerns itself with Ritualism, with Kirtana, with Dhyana, with Puja, and even with Namasmarana. Primary Bhakti, on the other hand, means the upspringing of the pure fount of love in man to God. When we once taste this, nothing else matters; but if we have only secondary devotion, we cannot be supposed to have known the nature of Supreme Devotion.

#### THE TEACHINGS OF THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRA

The Narada Bhakti Sutra begins by defining what Bhakti is. (1) It places on record various definitions of Bhakti advanced by its predecessors, and then gives us what its own definition of Bhakti is. According to Parasara, we are told, Bhakti consists in the worship of God. According to Garga, it consists of the narration of God's exploits. According to Sandilya, so Narada tells us, Bhakti means meditation on the Self. While Narada himself holds that Bhakti is the highest love for God, a whole-hearted attachment to God and indifference to other things, a surrender of all actions to God, and agony in His forgetfulness. As a matter of fact, however, love's nature, says Narada, is indescribable. As a dumb man who eats sugar cannot tell us of its sweetness, so a man who enjoys the highest fruits of Bhakti cannot describe in words their real nature. (2) Then Narada goes on to discuss the relation of Bhakti to other Ways to God. Between Jnana and Bhakti three sorts of opinions are possible. In the first place, it may be maintained that Bhakti is a means to Jnana, as the Advaitists maintain. Others may maintain that Jnana and Bhakti are independent and equally useful ways to reach God. And thirdly, it may be maintained that Jnana is a means to Bhakti, an opinion which Narada himself endorses. To him Bhakti is not merely the end of all Jnana, but the end of all Karman, and the end of all Yoga. In fact, Bhakti



should be regarded as an end in itself. It concerns itself with a personal God who likes the humble and hates the boastful. There are no distinctions of caste or learning, or family, or wealth, or action, possible in Bhakti. (3) Then Narada goes on to discuss the means to the attainment of Bhakti. What, according to Narada, are the moral requirements of a man who wishes to be a Bhakta? He should, in the first place, leave all enjoyments, leave all contact with objects of sense, incessantly meditate on God without wasting a single minute, and always hear of God's qualities. He should give himself up to the study of the Bhakti-sastras and should not waste words in vain. He should pray for the grace of the Saints and the grace of God; and God will appear and bestow upon him spiritual experience in course of time, which Narada thinks, can be attained only by God's grace. He should spend his life in serving the good. He should live in solitude, should care not for his livelihood, should not hear of women, should not think about wealth, should not associate with thieves. Hypocrisy and arrogance, he should shun as foul dirt. He should cultivate the virtues of non-injury, truth, purity, compassion, and belief in God. He should deliberately set himself to transform his natural emotions, and make them divine. Passion and anger and egoism, he should transform and utilise in the service of God. In fact, a divine transformation of all the natural emotions must take place in him. He should not give himself up to argumentation; for there is no end to argumentation. It is manifold and cannot be bridled. The devotee should be careless of the censure of others, and should have no anxiety whatsoever while he meditates. (4) Then Narada goes on to tell us the various kinds of Bhakti. Firstly, he divides Bhakti into Sattvika, Rajasa and Tamasa. He draws upon the three categories of the Bhaktas as given in the Bhagavadgita, namely the Arta, the Jijnasu, and the Artharthin; and tells us that the Arta possesses the Sattvika Bhakti, the Jijnasu the Rajasa Bhakti, and the Artharthin the Tamasa Bhakti, and tells us that the first is superior to the second, and the second superior to the third. One does not know why the Bhakti of the Arta should be regarded as superior to the Bhakti of the Jijnasu. Why should we not regard the Bhakti of the Jijnasu as Sattvika, and the Bhakti of the Arta as Rajasa? Narada has no answer to give. There is yet again another classification of the kinds of Bhakti which Narada makes. He says, it is of eleven kinds. It consists of singing the qualities of God, a desire to see His form, worshipping the image of God, meditation on Him, the services of God, friendship with God, affection towards God, love to God as to a husband, surrender of one's own self to God, at-one-ment with God, and the agony of separation from God. (5) As regards the criterion of Bhakti,



Narada teaches that it is "Svayampramana" ; the criterion of Bhakti is in itself. Complete peace and complete happiness are its characteristics. "Anubhava" which is the practical index of Bhakti should increase from moment to moment. It ought to be permanent. It ought to be subtle. While, the psycho-physical characteristics of Bhakti are, that it should make the throat choked with love, should make the hair stand on end, should compel divine tears from meditating eyes. When, therefore, complete happiness and peace are enjoyed, when "Anubhava" is attained, when all the psycho-physical effects are experienced, then alone is true Bhakti generated. They are the criteria of Bhakti. (6) Finally, Narada tells us what the effects of Bhakti are. It is Bhakti alone which leads to true immortality. It is Bhakti which endows us with complete satisfaction. Bhakti drives away all desires from us. A Bhakta uplifts not merely himself, but others also. He ceases to grieve ; he ceases to hate ; he feels no enjoyment in other things ; he feels no enthusiasm for other things ; he becomes intoxicated with love ; he remains silent.

THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON HINDI,  
BENGALI AND GUJERATI MYSTICISM

We have hitherto considered two movements, one the Occult, the other the Mystic, which ran side by side with each other from the early centuries of the Christian era to almost the end of the first Millennium. *Pari Passu* with these, there was yet a third movement, a movement which we may call the Philosophic movement. There are four great representatives of this movement, namely, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha. Shankaracharya's system is supposed to be antagonistic to the Bhakti movement, and, to that extent, unmystical. But it must be remembered that Sankara did not neglect Bhakti, but absorbed it into his absolutistic schemes. If Sankara's movement is not mystical in its aim, we do not understand what it is. Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha, who founded three great schools of philosophic thought, wielded a great influence even up to the end of the fifteenth century, and may all be said to have gone against the Maya doctrine of Sankara. They made Bhakti the essential element in the Vedantic scheme, and although Vallabha preached a philosophical monism, Ramanuja and Madhva could not understand how theism and pantheism could be reconciled in mysticism. It is just this reconciling tendency of mysticism which has been lost sight of by all dogmatic theorists about theism and pantheism. From the schools of Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha, sprang forth great Bhakti movements from the thirteenth century onwards in the various parts of India. It is interesting to note how Ramanuja's influence dwindled in



his birth-land to reappear with greater force in Upper India. Ramananda, who was a philosophical descendant of Ramanuja, quarrelled with his spiritual teacher, and came and settled at Benares. From him three great mystical schools started up: the first, the school of Tulsidas; the second, the school of Kabir; and the third, the school of Nabhaji. Kabir was also influenced by Sufism. Tulsidas was too much obsessed by the mythological story of Rama. Nabhaji made it his business to chronicle the doings of the great Saints in the Hindi language. From the school of Madhva, arose the great Bengali Saint Chaitanya, who was also influenced by his predecessor Saints in Bengal, Chandidasa and Vidyapati. Vallabha exercised a great influence in Gujerat, and Mirabai and Narasi Mehata sprang up under the influence of his teachings. We thus see how from the Philosophical Schools, there arose a Democratical Mysticism which laid stress upon the vernaculars as the media of mystical teaching, as opposed to the classical mysticism of ancient times which had Sanskrit as its language of communication. It was also a democratisation not merely in the language but also in the spirit of teaching, and we see how mysticism became the property of all. It is thus evident how the mystical literature in Hindi, Bengali and Gujerati was influenced by the three great schools of Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha respectively.

#### CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE ON THE BHAKTI DOCTRINE?

We must pause here for a while to consider the question of Christian influence on the development of the Bhakti doctrine in India. Opinions have greatly differed on this subject. According to one opinion, the Indian doctrine of Bhakti is entirely foreign in its origin; the Indians, according to this opinion, are incapable of Bhakti, and what devotion they came to possess was from the start due to the influence from other lands. A second theory would hold that even though the doctrine of Bhakti in its origin may not be supposed to be un-Indian, its later development was influenced among other things by the worship of the Child-God and the Sucking-Mother, and thus, it must be supposed to have been mainly influenced by Christianity; Ramanuja and Madhva, according to this theory, are supposed to have been influenced by Christian doctrine and practice, especially because in their native places, it is presumed, there was a great deal of Christian influence. According to a third view, the Indian doctrine of Bhakti is entirely Indian, and it does not allow that either Ramanuja or Madhva were influenced by Christian doctrine, far less that the Bhakti doctrine was Christian in its origin; but this view would not deny the possibility, as in the twentieth century to-day, of both Hinduism and Christianity influencing



each other under certain conditions, both in doctrine and practice. It would suppose that their identical teaching on such important subjects as the value of the Spiritual Teacher, the Significance of God's Name, the conflict of Faith and Works or of Predestination and Grace, are due entirely to their development from within and to no influence from without. It does not allow that because Siladitya, the king of Kanauj, received a party of Syrian Christians in 639 A.D., or even because Akbar received Jesuit missions during his reign, that Christianity influenced the course of thought either of Kabir or of Tulsidas. This would be quite as impossible as to suppose that Jnanesvara himself was influenced by Christianity, simply on the ground, as has been occasionally asserted, that the expression "Vaikunthiche Raniva" occurs in his writings, or that Tukaram was likewise influenced by Christianity by his insistence on the power of sin in man. The feeling of devotion is present in a more or less pronounced fashion throughout all the stages of the progress of humanity from its cradle onwards, and it shall so exist as long as humanity lasts. On this view, we can argue for the early upspringing of the devotional sentiment in all races from within themselves, even though some influence of a kind may not be denied when religious communities mingle together, especially when they have a long contact with each other, a sympathetic imagination, and a genuine desire to learn and to assimilate.

#### TAMIL MYSTICISM

That the Christian influence has nothing to do with Tamil Mysticism from its origin, one has merely to open his eyes to discern. Both the Tamil Saivites and Vaishnavites who lived centuries before the age of Ramanuja, show an utterly innate tendency to Devotion, uninfluenced by any foreign thought or practice. The Tamil Saivites seem to have been established in the country in the 6th century A.D., and through a long line of mystics illustrate the inward impulse which rises from man to God. The great lights of Tamil Saivite literature are Tirujnanasambandhar, who flourished in the seventh century A.D., Appar who flourished in the same century, Tirumular who flourished in the eighth century, and finally Manikkavachagar, the man of golden utterances, who flourished in the ninth, and who, in fact may be said to top the list of the Saivite mystics. In him we see the upspringing of a natural devotion to God, which through a consciousness of his faults, rises by gradations to the apprehension of the Godhead. In his great poem, he makes us aware, as Dr. Carpenter puts it, of his first joy and exaltation, his subsequent waverings, his later despondencies, his consciousness of faults, his intensive shame, and his final recovery and triumph. The Tamil



Vaishnavites, who are headed and heralded by the great Alvars, open yet another line of mystical thought, namely of mysticism through devotion to Vishnu. If we set aside the impossible chronologies which are generally assigned to these Alvars, we cannot doubt that they also seem equally established in their country along with the Tamil Saivites in the sixth century. Nammalvar, whose date varies from the eighth to the tenth century in the estimate of critics, has produced works which are revered like the Vedas in the whole Tamil-speaking country. His disciple was Nathamuni, who lived about 1000 A.D., and who was the collector of the famous four thousand hymns of the Alvars. The grand-son of Nathamuni was the famous Yamunacharya who lived about 1050 A.D., and whose lineal philosophical descendant was the great Ramanuja, who lived from 1050 to 1135. Here we have in a brief outline the two great lines of Saivite and Vaishnavite mystics in the Tamil country down to the age of Ramanuja. Ramanuja took up his cue from the Vaishnavite philosophy, and built a system which was intended to cut at the root of both the monistic as well as the dualistic schemes of thought. The predecessors of Ramanuja, however, were given to devotion more than to philosophy, and they showed the pure love of the aspirant for God-realisation, uncontaminated by philosophical thought.

#### CANARESE MYSTICISM

Our praise of these saints, however, cannot be entirely unmitigated, for we know how the Radha-Krishna cult had influenced the songs even of these great Vaishnavite saints. The conception of the relation between the bride and bridegroom as the type of the relation between the Saint and God runs through a great deal of this literature, and to that extent vitiates it. Not so the bold and sturdy Vira-Saiva mysticism, which makes an alliance with Advaitic Monism on the one hand, and Moralistic Purism on the other, and which, even though a large part of it is given to an imaginary discussion of the nature of the various Lingas, which are, so to say, merely symbolical illustrations of certain psychological conceptions, is yet a philosophy which is well worth a careful study. Basava was only a great reformer who lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and who was the devotee of the image of Sangamesvara at the place where the Malaprabha and the Krishna meet. He was preceded by a great number of Siddhas, who are as old as the Tamil Alvars on the one hand, and the Hindi Nathas on the other. Nijagunasivayogi who was more of a philosopher than a mystic, Akhandesvara who was more of a moralist than a mystic, and Sarpabhusana who was more of a mystic than either a philosopher or a moralist, are all of them great names in the development of Lingayat thought.



Kanakadas, who stands apart somewhat, having sprung from a low order of the Hindus, and Purandaradas who was a full-fledged Vaishnavite Hindu, must be regarded as supplying us with the development of Vaishnavism in the Karnataka, which went *pari passu* with the development of Virasaiva mysticism.

#### MARATHA MYSTICISM

Our immediate concern in this volume, however, is the consideration of the teachings of the great Maratha saints from the age of Jnanadeva downwards to the age of Ramadasa, beginning in fact from the thirteenth century and ending with the seventeenth,—leaving the consideration of the development of Indian thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the last volume of this History. For fear of increasing the bulk of our present volume to an inordinate extent, we must restrict our attention only to a section of the great mystical community in India, namely, the community of the Maratha Saints. The beginning of the mystical line was effectively made in Maharashtra by Jnanadeva, whose father is supposed to have been a disciple of Sripada Ramananda of Benares, or yet again of Ramananda himself. In that case, it would be very interesting to see how not merely the two streams of Kabir and Tulsidas issued from the fountain-head of Ramananda, but even how Maratha mysticism in a way could be traced to the same fountain. But in any case, it is certain that Nivrittinatha and Jnanadeva came from the spiritual line of the great Gaininatha, as is more than once authentically evidenced by the writings of both Nivritti and Jnanadeva themselves. That Nivrittinatha was instructed by Gaininatha in spiritual knowledge, that Gaininatha derived his spiritual knowledge from Goraksha, and Goraksha from Matsyendra, it is needless to reiterate. The Sampradaya was a Sampradaya of Nathas. When and how Matsyendranatha and Gorakshanatha actually lived and flourished, it is impossible to determine. But it remains clear that they cannot be unhistorical names. Behind Matsyendranatha we have mythology, but after Matsyendra, we have history; and it is evident that Jnanesvara belonged to that great line of the Nathas, who like the Alvars in the Tamil country and the Siddhas in the Lingayat community, successfully laid the foundation of mysticism in Maharashtra through their great representative, Jnanesvara. It is not without reason that many a later mystic acknowledges that the foundation of that mystical edifice was laid by Jnanesvara, above which Namadeva and other saints later erected the divine sanctuary, of which Tuka became the pinnacle. And while a continuous tradition goes on from Jnanesvara to Namadeva and from Namadeva to Ekanatha and from Ekanatha to Tukaram, Ramadasa like Heraclitus stands



apart in his great spiritual isolation. His is a new Sampradaya altogether: it is not the Sampradaya of the Varkaris. It is for that reason that the Varkaris have looked askance at the great spiritual work of Ramadasa. But we who stand for no Sampradaya whatsoever, and who, like bees, want to collect spiritual honey wherever it is found, recognise, from the mystical point of view, no distinction of any kind between the Sampradaya of the Varkaris or the Sampradaya of the Dharkaris, the Sampradaya of the Cymbal, or the Sampradaya of the Sword. A little after Jnanesvara, but contemporaneously with him, Namadeva, after being tested and found wanting by the potter Gora, entered the spiritual line at the instruction of Visoba Khechar, who was a disciple of Sopana, who was himself the disciple of Nivriddhi. Ekanatha was indeed initiated by Janardan Swami, who as rumour would have it, was initiated by the saint Dattatreya himself. But it is to be remembered that Ekanatha, who was the great grandson of Bhanudasa, was a great Varkari of Pandhari, and moreover Ekanatha himself tells us that he derived his spiritual illumination from the line of Jnanesvara. When all these things are taken into account, we cannot say that Ekanatha stands apart from the great spiritual line of Jnanesvara. Tukaram, who is perhaps the most well-known among the Maratha Saints, derives his spiritual lineage from a Chaitanya line. What connection this line had with the Chaitanya school in Bengal has not yet been discovered. But it is at any rate clear that Tukaram developed the Varkari Sampradaya through a repeated study of the works of Jnanesvara, Namadeva, and Ekanatha. Ramadasa probably did not come into contact with any of these people for his initiation, and though, as a tradition would have it, while he was yet a boy, he and his brother were taken to Ekanatha who foresaw in them great spiritual giants, he might yet on the whole be said to have struck off a new path altogether. If we re-classify these great mystics of Maharashtra according to the different types of mysticism illustrated in them, they fall into the following different groups. Jnanesvara is the type of an intellectual mystic; Namadeva heralds the democratic age; Ekanatha synthesises the claims of worldly and spiritual life; Tukaram's mysticism is most personal; while Ramadasa is the type of an active saint. A man may become a saint, and yet, as Monsieur Joly has pointed out, he may retain his original nature. The different types of mystics that we find among the Maratha saints are not a little due to original temperamental differences. Between themselves, these great mystics of Maharashtra have produced a literature, which shall continue to be the wonder of all humanity which cares at all for any expression of mystical thought in any country without distinction of race or caste or creed.

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## MOMENTS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA IN AMERICA

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

(Concluded from the last issue)

I remember quite well an incident in the Ashrama when we were all seated at the dining table. The meal was long over, but no one got up, no one stirred for fear of interrupting the flow of the Swami's words. From his lips came the most sacred, the most sublime truths we had ever listened to.

The Swami spoke of his Master. He told us how, when he saw the Master for the first time, he was reminded of Sukadeva. The Master stepped out from a carriage supported by Hriday, for he was in Samadhi, and staggered like one intoxicated. His face was shining with a divine light, and expressed the great bliss he was enjoying. Then he entered the home of a devotee, and when seated began to sing in a sweet voice and with intense feeling the glory of the Mother Kali.

And later, at Dakshineswar, the Master had taught the Swami to surrender himself to God, rather than count on his own strength. The Swami told us of the Master's great love, and of his childlike simplicity.

"And once," he said in a hushed voice, "our Lord told us that he had other disciples, who spoke a different language, who had different customs, somewhere, far away in the West. 'These also will worship me,' the Master had said, 'these also are Mother's children.' *You* are these disciples," the Swami said, very solemnly, "Mother has revealed it to me."

There was dead silence. We could hardly believe it; we were stirred to the depths of our hearts.

At last one of the students broke the silence. "Swami," she confessed timidly, "I can't believe that I am worthy of such a blessing."

The Swami was visibly moved. First he did not reply. Then with marked excitement he questioned, "Who is worthy? Does God weigh our worthiness? 'The first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first.' I tell you, good or bad, you *are* Mother's child." This student, shortly after, passed away, uttering with her last breath the name of Sri Ramakrishna.

There were at the Ashrama a number of students who had been religious teachers themselves. They taught that diseases could be cured by mental suggestion. They were good people, who lived a pure life. But they had limited ideas, difficult to uproot. The main trouble with them was, the Swami noticed, that they were self-righteous, and hard to teach. They did not



understand the need of renunciation. They believed in health and prosperity, and a good, clean, moral life.

"You are always speaking of being good," the Swami said to them. "That is your highest ideal. We, in India, want Mukti, liberation. You believe in sin, so you want to conquer sin by being good. We believe ignorance to be the great evil, so we want to conquer ignorance with Jnanam, wisdom. And Jnanam is Mukti. 'Know the Truth,' Jesus said, 'and the Truth will make you free.' "

One afternoon in the Shanti Ashrama all the students went with the Swami for a walk. We came to a high hill which we ascended. There seated on the ground under the pine trees the Swami said in the course of conversation, "Mother is very proud and very pure. She wears a heavy veil that none may lift except Her children. When *they* look behind the veil she is happy and smiles."

"What is Mother, and where is She?" a young student asked.

"She is everything and everywhere," the Swami replied. "She permeates nature. She *is* nature. But talk won't do. You must lift the veil."

"How, Swami?"

"Through meditation," the Swami replied.

Then with great emphasis he repeated, "Meditate, meditate, meditate! What are you doing? You are frittering away your life. Think deeply, pray to Mother, go beneath the semblance of things, see the One Reality in all. 'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings. \* \* Verily, this divine *Maya* of Mine is difficult to cross over; those who devote themselves to Me alone, cross over this illusion.' You are a young man; *now* is the time. Don't let this opportunity slip by. Realization is for the young, the strong, the energetic. Have one aim in life, namely, to know Mother. Renounce, renounce, give up the world. There is no liberation without renunciation."

Once, in New York, I could not see the Swami for several days. I had been busy in many ways, till, at last, one afternoon I had leisure, and went to visit him at the Vedanta headquarters.

"Where have you been so long?" he greeted me. "Come, what's the good sitting in the house? Let us go for a walk. I have had no one to walk with all these days."

"That suits me, Swami," I responded. "Put on your heavy coat and boots. It is cold."

It was winter, and the streets were covered with fresh snow. When we came to a wooded place, the Swami was as happy as a child. "What a wonderful sight," he exclaimed,



pointing to the trees, each branch covered with a layer of pure, white snow, glittering in the sunlight. "I love your winters, the air is so exhilarating."

When we came to a large pond, we found boys and girls skating on the ice. Their cheeks were flushed with exercise, and they were calling and shouting, and pursuing each other in great fun.

"That's why you people are so healthy and strong," the Swami called out. "Look at the girls skating with the boys. What freedom! Wish it were so in my country. So innocent and pure! It is a sight for the gods to behold. Come, let's go on the ice. Can you skate?"

"Yes," I said, "I love skating. Every one in Holland skates."

The ice was slippery, and the Swami had difficulty in keeping his balance. But he enjoyed it immensely.

On our way home he talked about India, her poverty, and the restricted life of her women. "When shall we also be wealthy and free?" he sighed. Then he became cheerful again, and he told me about the customs in India, the different people he had met during his life of wandering, their ways of living, speech and dress; about the pilgrimages and temples, and the Sadhus meditating on the banks of the Ganges.

It was most interesting to me. It all sounded like a story of another world. At last, I remarked, "India is a holy land, indeed. The people there must be better than our people in the West."

At this the Swami smiled, and said, "Human nature is the same everywhere. But with us everything, except the zenana, is open and exposed. We cannot even keep our natures secret. But you know very nicely how to do that. You all wear masks. When you have pain, you smile; when you are poor you buy a few cheap tinsels to appear rich; when you are in misery, you say, 'Everything is fine;' when you are not feeling well, you say, 'Never felt better.' We don't do that." Then he laughed heartily.

"You know what is the reason?"

"It is because we don't want sympathy," I said loftily.

"That's pride," the Swami flashed at me. "You like to give sympathy, but not to receive it. You like to be helpful to others, but you don't allow others to be helpful to you. Life should be a matter of give and take. Be ready to give, and equally ready to receive, but without attachment in either case. Then there will be no pride, no self-sufficiency. We cannot stand alone in this world, we are all interdependent."

"Of course," I interposed, "I was speaking of sympathy that is futile. Real, helpful sympathy we all crave. But there



has been in the past too much of sentimental, meaningless sympathy that does no good, but degenerates.”

“Yes, yes,” the Swami admitted eagerly in a changed mood. “The new psychology of the West has brought a reaction. You are now beginning to understand the power of thought which our Rishis taught ages ago. Thinking about our misfortunes only increases the gloom. Your attitude is to scorn failure, and push onward to success. That is laudable. I like your cheerful, hopeful outlook on life. You use failure as a stepping-stone to success. Down to-day, up to-morrow.”

Then placing his hand on my shoulder, he said, “That is manliness, that is strength. We need that in our country.”

After a short silence the Swami resumed, “But what I had in mind is this, we live outdoors. Those things which you hide so carefully between four walls and a roof, we couldn’t hide if we wanted to. The majority of our people are poor, and live in huts. So they are out in the open most of the time. You cannot hide much when you live many together in a poor hut. And our better homes, on account of the hot climate, are open too. There is no waiting outside the house till some one answers the bell, unlocks the door, and admits you. We bathe, cook and eat our meals, sleep, pray and work, all in the open. Even our shops are open. And we go almost naked.

“You, on the other hand, live in a cold climate, in a wealthy country. So first you hide your body with clothing; your clothed body you hide between four walls; within these four walls each one has his private room where no one ventures without knocking and getting permission to enter; finally your house is hidden in a garden, and the garden hidden by a wall.

“Privacy is your ideal. We have no privacy, all this reflects in your nature. That is the last thing to hide, and you do it.” Then we both laughed and talked about other things.

But before we reached home the Swami warned me, “Don’t think that all Hindus are saints. Neither are we quite as bad as some of your missionaries tell you. It is simply a matter of nature adjusting itself to conditions. Some of our manners seem barbarous to you, and some of your manners are obnoxious to us. We are always hasty in our judgment of other nations. If we would patiently try to understand the reason for certain customs we would be more charitable in our judgments. Well, well, perhaps some day you will come to India. Then you will see everything.”

“Yes, Swami,” I said, “I *must* come to India, for Swamiji has said that India is the Karma Bhumi, the land where every soul must come for final liberation.”

The Swami smiled, and as we entered the house, said, “We



will see, we will see. Mother knows." When seated in his room, in a thoughtful mood, he softly chanted:

"God's plans, as lilies pure and white, unfold.

We must not tear the close shut leaves apart.

Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

And now we see how time has revealed and is revealing the calyxes of gold. As the glow of the descending sun lights up the mountain peaks long after the sun itself has set behind the hills, so the works of pure and holy men shed light upon the world long after they themselves have passed away. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

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## DARWIN'S THEORY OF MAN'S DESCENT AS IT STANDS TO-DAY

(The Presidential Address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Leeds, England, August, 1927)

BY PROF. SIR ARTHUR KEITH, M.D., D. Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.

In tracing the course of events which led up to our present conception of Man's origin, no place could serve as a historical starting-point so well as Leeds. In this city was fired the first verbal shot of that long and bitter strife which ended in the overthrow of those who defended the Biblical account of Man's creation and in a victory for Darwin. On September 24, 1858—sixty-nine years ago—the British Association assembled in this city just as we do to-night; Sir Richard Owen, the first anatomist of his age, stood where I now stand. He had prepared a long address, four times the length of the one I propose to read, and surveyed, as he was well qualified to do, the whole realm of Science; but only those parts which concern Man's origin require our attention now. He cited evidence which suggested a much earlier date for the appearance of man on earth than was sanctioned by Biblical records, but poured scorn on the idea that man was merely a transmuted ape. He declared to the assembled Association that the differences between man and ape were so great that it was necessary, in his opinion, to assign mankind to an altogether separate Order in the Animal Kingdom. As this statement fell from the President's lips there was at least one man in the audience whose spirit of opposition was roused—Thomas Henry Huxley—Owen's young and rising antagonist.

I have picked out Huxley from the audience because it is necessary for the development of my theme, that we should give him our attention for a moment. We know what Huxley's feelings were towards Owen at the date of the Leeds Meeting.



Six months before, he had told his sister that 'an internecine feud rages between Owen and myself,' and on the eve of his departure for Leeds he wrote to Hooker: 'The interesting question arises: shall I have a row with the great O. there?' I am glad to say the Leeds Meeting passed off amicably, but it settled in Huxley's mind what the 'row' was to be about when it came. It was to concern Man's rightful position in the scale of living things.

Two years later, in 1860, when this Association met in Oxford, Owen gave Huxley the opportunity he desired. In the course of a discussion Owen repeated the statement made at Leeds as to Man's separate position, claiming that the human brain had certain structural features never seen in the brain of anthropoid apes. Huxley's reply was a brief and emphatic denial with a promise to produce evidence in due course—which was faithfully kept. This opening passage at arms between our protagonists was followed two days later by that spectacular fight—the most memorable in the history of our Association—in which the Bishop of Oxford, the representative of Owen and of Orthodoxy, left his scalp in Huxley's hands. To make his victory decisive and abiding, Huxley published, early in 1863, 'The Evidences of Man's Place in Nature,' a book which has a very direct bearing on the subject of my discourse. It settled for all time that Man's rightful position is among the Primates, and that as we anatomists weigh evidence, his nearest living kin are the anthropoid apes.

My aim is to make clear to you the foundations on which rest our present-day conception of Man's origin. The address delivered by my predecessor from this chair at the Leeds Meeting of 1858 has given me the opportunity of placing Huxley's fundamental conception of Man's nature in a historical setting. I must now turn to another issue which Sir Richard Owen merely touched upon but which is of supreme interest to us now. He spent the summer in London, just as I have done, writing his address for Leeds and keeping an eye on what was happening at scientific meetings. In his case something really interesting happened. Sir Charles Lyell and Sir Joseph Hooker left with the Linnean Society what appeared to be an ordinary roll of manuscript, but what in reality was a parcel charged with high explosives, prepared by two very innocent-looking men—Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin. As a matter of honesty it must be admitted that these two men were well aware of the deadly nature of its contents, and knew that if an explosion occurred, Man himself, the crown of creation, could not escape its destructive effects. Owen examined the contents of the parcel and came to the conclusion that they were not dangerous; at least, he manifested no sign of alarm in his Presidential Address. He dismissed both Wallace and Darwin,



particularly Darwin, in the briefest of paragraphs, at the same time citing passages from his own work to prove that the conception of Natural Selection as an evolutionary force was one which he had already recognised.

As I address these words to you I cannot help marvelling over the difference between our outlook to-day and that of the audience which Sir Richard Owen had to face in this city sixty-nine years ago. The vast assemblage which confronted him was convinced, almost without a dissentient, that Man had appeared on earth by a special act of creation ; whereas the audience which I have now the honour of addressing, and that larger congregation which the wonders of wireless bring within the reach of my voice, if not convinced Darwinists are yet prepared to believe, when full proofs are forthcoming, that Man began his career as a humble primate animal, and has reached his present state by the action and reaction of biological forces which have been and are ever at work within his body and brain.

This transformation of outlook on Man's origin is one of the marvels of the nineteenth century, and to see how it was effected we must turn our attention for a little while to the village of Down in the Kentish uplands and note what Charles Darwin was doing on the very day that Sir Richard Owen was delivering his address here in Leeds. He sat in his study struggling with the first chapter of a new book ; but no one foresaw, Owen least of all, that the publication of the completed book, *The Origin of Species*, fifteen months later (1859), was to effect a sweeping revolution in our way of looking at living things and to initiate a new period in human thought—the Darwinian Period—in which we still are. Without knowing it, Darwin was a consummate general. He did not launch his first campaign until he had spent twenty-two years in stocking his arsenal with ample stores of tested and assorted fact. Having won territory with *The Origin of Species*, he immediately set to work to consolidate his gains by the publication in 1868 of another book, *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*—a great and valuable treasury of biological observation. Having thus established an advanced base, he moved forwards on his final objective—the problem of Human Beginnings—by the publication of *The Descent of Man* (1871), and that citadel capitulated to him. To make victory doubly certain he issued in the following year—1872—*The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Many a soldier of truth had attempted this citadel before Darwin's day, but they failed because they had neither his generalship nor his artillery.

Will Darwin's victory endure for all time? Before attempting to answer this question, let us look at what kind of book *The Descent of Man* is. It is a book of history—the history of Man, written in a new way—the way discovered by Charles



Darwin. Permit me to illustrate the Darwinian way of writing history. If a history of the modern bicycle had to be written in the orthodox way, then we should search dated records until every stage was found which linked the two-wheeled hobby-horse, bestrode by tall-hatted fashionable men at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to the modern 'jeopardy' which now flashes past us in country lanes. But suppose there were no dated records—only a jumble of antiquated machines stored in the cellar of a museum. We should, in this case, have to adopt Darwin's way of writing history. By an exact and systematic comparison of one machine with another we could infer the relationship of one to another and tell the order of their appearance, but as to the date at which each type appeared and the length of time it remained in fashion, we could say very little. It was by adopting this circumstantial method that Darwin succeeded in writing the history of Man. He gathered historical documents from the body and behaviour of Man and compared them with observations made on the body and behaviour of every animal which showed the least resemblance to Man. He studied all that was known in his day of Man's embryological history and noted resemblances and differences in the corresponding histories of other animals. He took into consideration the manner in which the living tissues of Man react to disease, to drugs, and to environment; he had to account for the existence of diverse races of mankind. By a logical analysis of his facts Darwin reconstructed and wrote a history of Man.

Fifty-six years have come and gone since that history was written; an enormous body of new evidence has poured in upon us. We are now able to fill in many pages which Darwin had perforce to leave blank, and we have found it necessary to alter details in his narrative, but the fundamentals of Darwin's outline of Man's History remain unshaken. Nay, so strong has his position become that I am convinced that it never can be shaken.

Why do I say so confidently that Darwin's position has become impregnable? It is because of what has happened since his death in 1882. Since then we have succeeded in tracing Man by means of his fossil remains and by his stone implements backwards in time to the very beginning of that period of the earth's history to which the name Pleistocene is given. We thus reach a point in history which is distant from us at least 200,000 years, perhaps three times that amount. Nay, we have gone farther, and traced him into the older and longer period which preceded the Pleistocene—the Pliocene. It was in strata laid down by a stream in Java during the latter part of the Pliocene period that Dr. Eugene Dubois found, ten years after Darwin's death, the fossil remains of that remarkable representative of primitive humanity to which he gave the name *Pithecanthropus*, or Ape-man; from Pliocene deposits of East



Anglia Mr. Reid Moir has recovered rude stone implements. If Darwin was right, then as we trace Man backwards in the scale of time he should become more bestial in form—nearer to the ape. That is what we have found. But if we regard *Pithecanthropus* with his small and simple yet human brain as a fair representative of the men of the Pliocene period, then evolution must have proceeded at an unexpectedly rapid rate to culminate to-day in the higher races of Mankind.

The evidence of Man's evolution from an ape-like being, obtained from a study of fossil remains, is definite and irrefutable, but the process has been infinitely more complex than was suspected in Darwin's time. Our older and discarded conception of Man's transformation was depicted in that well-known diagram which showed a single file of skeletons, the gibbon at one end and Man at the other. In our original simplicity we expected, as we traced Man backwards in time, that we should encounter a graded series of fossil forms—a series which would carry him in a straight line towards an anthropoid ancestor. We should never have made this initial mistake if we had remembered that the guide to the world of the past is the world of the present. In our time Man is represented not by one but by many and diverse races—black, brown, yellow, and white; some of these are rapidly expanding, others are as rapidly disappearing. Our searches have shown that in remote times the world was peopled, sparsely it is true, with races showing even a greater diversity than those of to-day, and that already the same process of replacement was at work. To unravel Man's pedigree, we have to thread our way, not along the links of a chain, but through the meshes of a complicated network.

(To be continued)

## THE ESSENCE OF VEDANTA

[VEDANTASARA ]

ईश्वरस्येयं समष्टिरखिलकारणत्वात् कारणशरीरम् आनन्दप्रचुरत्वात्  
कोशवदाच्छादकत्वात् च आनन्दमयकोशः सर्वोपरमत्वात् सुषुप्तिः अतएव  
स्थूलसूक्ष्मप्रपञ्चलयस्थानम् इति च उच्यते । ३६

39. This aggregate of ignorance associated with Iswara is known as the causal body on account of its being the cause of all, and as the *Anandamayakosha* (the blissful<sup>1</sup> sheath) on account of its being full<sup>2</sup> of bliss and being<sup>3</sup> a cover like a sheath; it is further known as the dreamless sleep<sup>4</sup> (*Susupti*) as it is the resting place of all<sup>5</sup> and, for this reason, it is



designated as the place of ultimate repose of the gross<sup>6</sup> and subtle phenomena.

[ This text describes the various designations of ignorance as the preceding text narrated those of Iswara.

1 *Blissful sheath*—Ignorance covers the soul as it were like the skin covering the body.

2 *Full of bliss*—This is the characteristic of Atman when it is associated with ignorance.

3 *Being etc.*—This is the characteristic of ignorance.

4 *Dreamless sleep*—In this state there is no cognition of gross and subtle objects.

5 *All*—Such as *Akâsha* (sky) etc. At the time of dissolution they find their ultimate resting place in the causal ignorance.

6 *Gross*—The five elements are of two kinds, gross and subtle. The gross state is said to be formed by taking half of a subtle element and adding  $\frac{1}{8}$ th to it of each of the remaining four; e.g., gross *Akasha* =  $\frac{1}{2}$  subtle *Akasha*, +  $\frac{1}{8}$ th subtle *Vayu*, +  $\frac{1}{8}$ th subtle *Tejas*, +  $\frac{1}{8}$ th subtle *Ap*, +  $\frac{1}{8}$ th subtle *Bhumi*. Then, again, the ether, air, light, water and earth of modern science do not answer to the fine elements of the Hindu Philosophy. *Akasha* is just the sound-producing agency. From *Akasha* rises *Vayu*, having the properties of sound and touch. From *Vayu* springs *Tejas*, possessing the property of visibility as well as those of its predecessors. From *Tejas* rises *Ap*, combining with the above properties its distinctive feature, flavour. *Bhumi* comes from *Ap*, bringing the additional property of smell to its inheritance.]

यथा वनस्य व्यष्ट्रभिप्रायेण वृक्षा इत्यनेकत्वव्यपदेशो यथा वा जलाशयस्य व्यष्ट्रभिप्रायेण जलानीति तथाज्ञानस्य व्यष्ट्रभिप्रायेण तदनेकत्वव्यपदेश “इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते” (ऋग्वेद ६ । ४७ । १८) इत्यादि श्रुतेः । ४०

40. As the forest from<sup>1</sup> the standpoint of the units that compose it signifies trees and hence is designated as many and as a reservoir from the same standpoint denotes a multiplicity of water, so also ignorance when denoting separate units is termed as many ; as in such<sup>2</sup> Sruti passages, “Indra<sup>3</sup> through Maya<sup>4</sup> assumes many forms” (Rig Veda, 6-47-18) etc.

[1 *From etc.*—Relating to the diverse forms of ignorance as manifested through various created beings.

2 *Such etc.*—Comp. “य एको जालवान् ईशते” (श्वेतः उपः ३-१)—“The snarer who rules alone by his powers.”

3 *Indra*—The Supreme Lord.

4 *Maya*—Projecting power.]



### अत्र व्यस्तसमस्तव्यापित्वेन व्यष्टिसमष्टिताव्यपदेशः । ४१

41. Ignorance has been designated collective and discrete on account of its pervading the aggregate<sup>1</sup> and the units.<sup>3</sup>

[1 *Aggregate*—Such as a lump of clay.

2 *Units*—Such as pots made of that clay.]

### इयं व्यष्टिनिकृष्टोपाधितया मलिनसत्त्वप्रधाना । ४२

42. This unit of ignorance on account of its being the associate of inferior<sup>1</sup> (created being) has the preponderance of impure<sup>2</sup> substance.

[1 *Inferior*—In contradistinction to Iswara, Jiva has more of ignorance.

2 *Impure*—The quality of *Sattva* is eclipsed by *Rajas* and *Tamas*.]

### एतदुपहितं चैतन्यमल्पज्ञत्वानीश्वरत्वादिगुणकं प्राज्ञ इत्युच्यते एकाज्ञानावभासकत्वात् । ४३

43. Consciousness, associated with this, has limited knowledge and is devoid of the power of lordship ; it is called *Prâjna*<sup>1</sup> on account of its being the illuminator of partial<sup>2</sup> ignorance.

[1 *Prâjna*—It stands for Jiva or Brahman associated with partial ignorance. The *Mândukya Upanishad* describes the three states of *Jiva*, viz., *Viswa* or the waking state, *Taijasha* or the dream state and *Prâjna* or the state of dreamless sleep. In the last state the Jiva remains, though temporarily, in a state of unity with Brahman. Beyond these three states is the transcendental state of *Turiya*, when Jiva, free from all ignorance, realises its permanent unity with Brahman.

2 *Partial ignorance*—As opposed to the aggregate ignorance which is associated with Iswara.]

### अस्य प्राज्ञत्वमरूपष्टोपाधितयानतिप्रकाशकत्वात् । ४४

44. The reason for its<sup>1</sup> being called *Prâjna* is its indistinct<sup>2</sup> power of illumination on account of the association with impure<sup>3</sup> *Upâdhi*.

[1 *Its*—of the Jiva or the created being.

2 *Indistinct etc.*—Even in the state of dreamless sleep when the Jiva realises its temporary unity with Brahman, it is not free from past tendencies which remain for the time being in a latent state. Therefore on waking from a dreamless sleep he at once remembers all about his past and establishes his relations with the world accordingly.

3 *Impure*—As has been said before, there is, in the composition of the Jiva, a preponderance of the inferior qualities of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.]



अस्यापीयमहङ्कारादिकारणत्वात्कारणशरीरमानन्दप्रचुरत्वात्कोश-  
वदाच्छादकत्वाच्चानन्दमयकोशः सर्वोपरमत्वात्सुषुप्तिरतएव स्थूलसूक्ष्म-  
शरीरप्रपञ्चलयस्थानमिति चोच्यते । ४५

45. This unit (Vyasti) of ignorance, associated with it,<sup>1</sup> is as<sup>2</sup> well known as the causal body on account of its being the cause<sup>3</sup> of egoism etc., and as the blissful sheath as it is full of bliss<sup>4</sup> and as it serves the purpose of covering like a sheath ; it is further known as dreamless sleep as it is the resting place of all and for this reason it is also designated as the place of ultimate repose of the gross<sup>5</sup> and subtle phenomena.

[1 *It*—The Jiva.

2 *As well*—As is the case with Iswara.

3 *Cause etc.*—In the dreamless sleep, the Jiva retains the *Samskara* of egoism (I-consciousness) etc.

4 *Full etc.*—Though the mind is dissociated from the sense-organs and objects, yet it enjoys, in dreamless sleep, great happiness.

5 *Gross etc.*—In the waking state the Jiva is cognisant of the gross objects. In the dream state the gross composition is dissolved into subtle composition and he recognises only the subtle objects. In dreamless sleep the gross as well as the subtle objects are absorbed into the ultimate cause. Therefore the state of dreamless sleep has been described as the state of ultimate absorption or dissolution.]

## NOTICES OF BOOKS

THE MYSTERIOUS KUNDALINI—by *Vasant G. Rele*. Published by *D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 190, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay.* Pp. 112 and IV and VIII. Price Rs. 3/8.

“Under the auspices of the Bombay Medical Union, a few days back Deshbandhu.....showed certain phenomena, such as stopping of the radial and temporal pulse on both sides at will and stopping of the heart-beats, for a few seconds..... The gentleman performing these feats does it by Yogic science and Prânâyama.” Dr. Rele, the author, who saw the exhibition, felt drawn to a scientific study of the real source of this miraculous power, and the result is the book under review, which he read in a shorter form before the Bombay Medical Union in July, last year. The book is foreworded by Sir John Woodroffe and is illustrated by photographs and diagrams.

The author's conclusion is that “all physical practices of Kundali Yoga are..... for the development of control over the autonomic nervous system over which we have normally no control. The six chakras in the Yogic literature, which, when controlled, gave wonderful powers to a Yogi, are nothing but six important plexuses of the



sympathetic portion of the autonomic nervous system; and the Shakti (power) or Kundalini, which pierced these chakras, *i.e.* formed connections with them, according to my version of it, is the Vagus nerve in the body. Normally, the Kundalini is doing her usual work unconsciously and is said to be lying dormant amongst us, and to establish a conscious control over this Kundalini is an important step in the achievement of Yoga.”

We have carefully considered the author's thesis, but we regret we cannot accept it whole-sale. The author's identification of Kundalini with Vagus nerve is supported by a twofold argument. Physiologically, he finds certain peculiarities in that nerve which lead him to conclude that the powers of performing Yogic miracles are derived from it. Scripturally, he discovers a striking similarity between the Vagus nerve and the descriptions of Kundalini given in Tantrik books. We are no judge of the physiological basis of his argument;—its estimation must be left to expert physiologists. But of the other, namely, the scriptural basis, we may say that Dr. Rele has failed to appreciate a central fact regarding Kundalini, to which Sir John Woodroffe makes reference in his Foreword. He truly remarks: “As to this I would say that Kundalini Herself cannot be that and for this reason:—She is the Grand Potential. As such She cannot, in my view, be identified with any of the products which She becomes..... She is then not as such, in my view, a Nerve or any other physical substance or mental faculty but the ground substance of both which, on being roused, ascends and is merged in the higher Tattvas ending in Shiva-Shakti Tattvas when She is said to be merged in Paramashiva.” Yogis look upon the Kundalini as a spiritual principle, not as a nerve; and cases have been known in which the Kundalini has been realised actually in the traditional form of a serpent. The author concedes that the writers of the Tantrika treatises possessed expert knowledge of even the intricacies of the nervous system. They certainly knew the Vagus nerve. It is upto the author to enquire why yet they did not clearly mention the Kundilini to be that nerve but described it on the other hand as a spiritual principle.

We cannot speak of Yogic mysteries from our personal experience. But we are aware of the experiences of one in whose evidence we implicitly trust. We refer to Sri Ramakrishna. He testified to having seen the *chakras* or lotuses in superconscious vision. The one immediate conclusion that we arrive at from this is that the *chakras* cannot be material substances. For the description that he gave of the lotuses has no reference to the plexuses as they exist in our body. The writer's identification of the *chakras* with the plexuses therefore falls through.

That does not mean that the author's researches as embodied in the book have been in vain. Though he may have failed to maintain his principal thesis, he is undoubtedly on the track to important discoveries. We are confident that if he proceeds on from the orthodox



view-point, he will find his investigations easier and better crowned with success.

What is the correct view-point? The correct attitude will be to assume a parallelism between the psychic life and its physiological instrument, each reacting on the other. The Yogi's progress must *necessarily* be through mind and consciousness. But it is dependent to certain extent, in the primary stages at least, on the physiological instrument, esp., the nerves and the brain. Therefore strict continence has been urged on the Sadhaka and such practices as *âsana*, *mudrâ*, *prânâyama*, etc. have been recommended. Our present consciousness and ordinary perception are closely related to and dependent on our physical system, nerves, brain, etc. Any change in the latter tells also on our consciousness. Thus Patanjali admits that Samadhi may be attained by the use of medicine. From this it must not be understood that higher states of consciousness (high spiritual states) also can be reached through physical action. The Samadhi that is reached through the power of medicine is far from the real Samadhi which is the home of supreme illumination. Only a little knowledge and power can be gained by physical manipulation. The Sadhaka's main help must be mental discipline. It is true that mental evolution has its physical counterpart in that it will induce certain nervous and cerebral changes. That means that whereas the author's conclusion may have much truth in them, they represent only the physiological half. It is quite possible that when the Sadhaka has the realisation of the *chakras* and the *Kundalini* which are spiritual forms, there are simultaneous affection in the plexuses and the Vagus nerve. But that does not mean that the plexuses and the nerve are *identical* with the *chakras* and the *Kundalini*.

In this connection we may touch upon a popular error regarding Raja or Kundali Yoga. It is generally supposed that if the physical processes prescribed in those Yogas are carefully followed, progress in those Yogas is inevitable. Sir John Woodroffe in his review of Bishop Leadbeater's *The Chakras in Prabuddha Bharata* (August) has referred to it. He speaks of a distinction, on this assumption, between the Bhakti, Jnana and Karma Yogas (which are considered to be based on moral victory) and the psycho-physical Yogas. Our books do not seem to have made any such specific distinction. In fact Raja Yoga or Kundali Yoga is also as much grounded on mental and moral discipline as any other Yogas. It is true these Yogas begin with certain physical practices. But these do not dispense with the moral struggle. For as these processes have a direct effect on the brain and the nerves inducing certain changes in them, it is *absolutely necessary* that the mental counterpart of the brain and nerves also should undergo corresponding changes simultaneously. The nerves and the brain are as it were the junction of the mind and the body. Our modes and habits of thought are intimately related to them. Our body is directly moulded by our thought-life, our *samskaras* and desires. Especially so are the nerves and the brain. A permanent change in either the mind or the



cerebro-nervous system requires a corresponding permanent change in the other. If the brain and the nerves should remain healthy, physiological and psychological changes should be simultaneous. When a Sadhaka, therefore, without changing the mind, induces sudden changes on the nerves and the brain through breath-control and other physical processes, he creates a keen conflict between the body and the mind with very unhappy results. He often contracts serious diseases of the body and the mind. He often runs mad. We have ourselves known several unfortunate cases of serious heart-disease and lunacy as a result of indiscriminate Yogic practices. The Yoga books are therefore particular about certain preliminary moral conditions being fulfilled before the real Yogic practices may be safely begun. The fact is, *all paths to Truth presuppose a hankering for Truth and consequent abnegation of the false desires of the flesh. Kundali Yoga is not an exception.* And one who feels a genuine longing for the knowledge of Truth has his brains and the nervous system unconsciously purified and re-formed so as to safely bear the tremendous strains of continuous, subtle and high thoughts. One may for a time rise to psychic heights even without conscious moral efforts. But if those psychic gains have any *spiritual* value, they cannot last unless there is also moral purification. All higher psychic states are necessarily spiritual. Therefore psychic realisation of any spiritual value is impossible without preliminary moral purity. No, there is no royal road to spiritual experience.

Though we do not find it possible to accept Dr. Rele's conclusions, we sincerely admire his scientific spirit and enthusiasm. He has devoted patient and industrious hours to the study and we hope he will continue it with unabated vigour. We recommend the book to all who are interested in the problem. It will furnish much food for thought and also positive knowledge.

AITAREYA UPANISHAD by Swami Sharvananda. Published by the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 43. Price As. 6.

The series of Upanishads as translated and annotated by Swami Sharvananda does not require further introduction. He has already brought out seven Upanishads and this is the eighth, to be followed by more. Each contains Sanskrit text, paraphrase with word for word literal translation, English rendering and comments. The special characteristic is the Swami's illuminating comments on the texts: they are neither too learned nor too technical, but are designed to bring out the meaning in a form suited to the average understanding. We are not aware of another series on Upanishads which can be more helpful to English-knowing readers.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Swami Suddhananda, the new Secy. of the Order

Swami Suddhananda has been appointed Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He has been one of the Assistant Secretaries of the Math and Mission for many years and is one of the foremost disciples of Swami Vivekananda. He is held in great love and veneration by the entire Ramakrishna Order for his wonderful charm of character, deep spirituality, profound learning, and above all, for his extremely unsophisticated nature and democratic treatment. It is he who made the excellent Bengali translations of almost all the English works of Swami Vivekananda, and was for many years Editor of the Order's Bengali organ, *Udbodhan*. He was also partly responsible for the starting of the Order's Madras organ, *The Vedanta Kesari*. His discourses and original literary contributions are of a high order. His knowledge of the different centres of the Order and their working, and his intimacy with almost every member of the Order will stand him in good stead in his new capacity. We wish him long years of fruitful service to the Order and to the cause for which it exists.

### Swami Jnaneswarananda

Swami Jnaneswarananda, who was for some years in charge of the Patna Ramakrishna Ashram, started on the 30th September last for New York, where he will work at the Vedanta Centre. The Swami is a fine product of the Ramakrishna Order, and is sure to meet with great success in his new field of activity.

### Mrs. M. C. Funke

Mrs. Mary C. Funke, one of the intimate American disciples of Swami Vivekananda, laid aside her body on the 10th of August this year at 1-50 A.M. in her Detroit home. About her, Sister Christine writes to us :

She was one of the two whom Swami Vivekananda used to refer as "my disciples, who travelled hundreds of miles to find me and they came in the night and in the rain."

Of "M. C. F.," Swamiji said, "She gives me freedom." He was seldom more spontaneous than in her presence.

"She is naïve," he said on another occasion. This amused her, for she did not spare herself in her efforts to meet his moods. Perhaps more than any of us, she realised how much he needed rest and relaxation. The body and mind should not be kept at so great a tension all the time. While others were afraid of losing even a word, she thought of how she could amuse him. She told funny stories, often at her own expense, talked lightly and entertainingly. "She rests me," he said to one. To the same one she said, "I know he thinks I am a fool, but I don't care as long as it amuses him."



Was it because of her attitude of not wanting to gather anything from one who had so much to give that she, most of all, retained the impress of his personality undistorted?

Her sunny disposition, her optimism, her enthusiasm were refreshing. Nor was she less attractive in other ways, for she had beauty, grace and charm to an unusual degree. Even to the last day, in spite of her physical disability, the old charm was still there. Nothing rekindled the flame and brought the fire of enthusiasm to such a glow as conversation about Swamiji. He lived and one actually felt his presence! It is a blessed experience.

Who can doubt that when the time came for her to drop the body which had become such a burden, she found the darkness illumined and in that luminous atmosphere a radiant presence gave her that great gift—*Freedom?*

### Some Reports and Appeals

We had great pleasure in publishing last April an illustrated article on the *Benares R. K. Mission Sevashram*, depicting the impressions of a visitor. From this our readers must have felt that wonderful work is being done by the Sevashram in the service of the poor and the diseased. The Sevashram has sent out an appeal for funds for its recurring expenses and for building Workers' Quarters and an Invalid Home for women, among other things. The recurring expenditure may be safely met if donors will kindly endow beds which require only Rs. 3,000 each. The increasing utility of the Sevashram will be clear from the following figures: In the year 1926, 1,679 cases were treated in its Indoor Hospitals, Refuge Wards, etc., as against 1,456 cases in 1925. And through its outdoor service, relief was given to 22,325 cases as against 18,597 cases in 1925. All help may be sent to *Asst. Secy., R. K. Mission Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City.* . . We have published from time to time reports of the increasing activity of the *Bombay Sri Ramakrishna Ashram*. A General Report (from May 1923 to Dec. 1926) has recently reached us. An important step forward has lately been taken by the amalgamation of the Bombay Western India Vivekananda Society with the Ashram. The Ashram sends out an appeal for Rs. 6,500 for building a Charitable Dispensary and a Free School. Remittances may be sent to *Secy., R. K. Ashram, Khar, Bombay.* . . . The *R. K. Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, (E. I. Ry.,) Behar*, is one of the important educational centres of the Mission. The report for the year 1926 records considerable progress. The school was provided with a Home of its own. Two residential blocks with a separate kitchen were built and occupied. The number of inmates at the end of the year was 53 as against 46 in 1925. Every care was taken to impart an all-round education—physical intellectual, moral, religious—to the students. The Vidyapith needs Rs. 50,000 to erect more buildings and to equip the institution properly. It also requires a permanent fund. . . . The *Shyamala Tal Charitable Dispensary, (P.O. Deori, via Champawat, Dt. Almora, U. P.)* has been doing silent work



from 1914. The total number of patients treated up to the end of 1926, was 6,488 in the outdoor dispensary and 61 in the indoor hospital. The total receipts during the years were Rs. 658-10-0 and disbursements Rs. 664-15-6. Gifts of medicines were also received. An upper primary school for local hill boys is also being conducted in the same place. Public help in cash or kind will be very much appreciated. . . . *The R. K. Mission Sevasamiti, Habiganj, Sylhet, Assam*, in its report of the year 1926 records various interesting activities. It not only holds religious classes and meetings for the benefit of the townspeople and renders intellectual service by having a public library and reading room and granting help to deserving poor students, but it also maintains four night schools for the benefit of especially the cobbler classes in different parts of the sub-division. It also conducts a shoe factory for the benefit of a local cobbler village as well as for the boys' practical training. It renders unstinted service to the diseased and otherwise suffering people. The Sevasamiti appeals for funds for building a house of its own and also for the upkeep of its growing work. . . . *The R. K. Mission Sevashram, P.O., Baliati, Dacca, Bengal* is an important rural centre of work. In addition to religious classes and meetings, free library and reading room, a Vivekananda Society mainly for the all-round benefit of the local student community, and a free charitable dispensary and other relief works as occasions arise, the Sevashram has also two schools, one for boys and another for girls to its credit. It earnestly appeals for liberal help from the public for a better carrying out of its work and further developments. . . . *Babu Harendranath Chatterji, B.L., Secy., Ramakrishna Library, Puri, Orissa*, will thankfully receive any contribution towards the erection of a small building for housing a Library which is being conducted in that holy place for the last two years and evidently doing useful service to many visitors. . . . The activities of the *R. K. Mission, Dacca*, may be broadly classified under three heads: Missionary, Educational, and Charitable. Under the first head, the Centre during 1926 conducted weekly sittings and scriptural classes, held lectures and discourses and also anniversaries of Saints and Prophets. Its educational work consists of Sri Ramakrishna Free School, Library and Reading Room and Physical culture. Its charitable work has been various: indoor hospital work, relief through outdoor dispensary, cremation, relief of cholera, flood, small-pox, etc., etc. This is the most important centre of the Eastern Bengal and is doing valuable service indeed. . . . *The R. K. Mission Anath Ashram Baranagore, 24-Perganas, Bengal*, is an orphanage having 22 orphans under its care as the report for the year 1926 shows. It has from a very humble beginning risen to its present state through enormous hardships. The inmates are taught—in addition to theoretical knowledge—spinning, weaving, carpentry, cane work and tailoring. The Ashram appeals for funds for having a house of its own so that its activity may be widened. Besides fulfilling its ostensible purpose, it also renders medical and other helps to the neighbouring public, nurses the sick



and maintains an open library for all. . . . The *R. K. Ashram, Malda, Bengal*, in its first three years' report which ends with the December of 1926, presents a good catalogue of work done. Its activity has been all-round, physical, intellectual and spiritual. It has done various relief works in the town and villages, conducts three night schools, maintains a free library and dispensary and holds regular scriptural classes for the benefit of the attending devotees. We wish it every success and prosperity. . . . We have also received the reports of *The R. K. Mission Sevashram, Brindaban*, *The R. K. Mission Sevashram, Rangoon*, *The R. K. Students' Home, Bangalore City*, *The Vivekananda Society, Colombo*, and *The Vivekananda Society, Calcutta*.

### **Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief Work, Orissa and Guzerat.**

The Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on relief work at Hanspot in Dhamnagar Thana, South Balasore since September last and has also opened another centre at Dehurda in Bhograi Thana, North Balasore. The last weekly distribution consisted of 184 mds. of rice among sufferers belonging to 81 different villages. Total failure of crops has made the situation extremely grave and the relief work will have to be continued for several months. Sufficient funds are therefore necessary to cope with the situation. Our appeal has not yet met with any adequate response. We believe however that the case of the poor sufferers will not fail to receive proper attention from the sympathetic public.

The Mission from its Bombay branch centre at Khar despatched a relief-party to Cambay in July last immediately after the floods in Guzerat. It opened a centre at Tarapur and extended the relief operation as funds permitted. The Mission is at present working in 92 villages from four relief centres over an approximate area of 400 square miles. Besides rice distribution 3849 pieces of cloth have been distributed and food stuff sold at cheap rates. If sufficient funds be forthcoming, re-building of huts will be taken up.

Contribution however small will be thankfully received and acknowledged by

(1) President, Ramakrishna Mission,  
P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.  
or

(2) Manager, Udbodhan,  
1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar,  
Calcutta.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,  
Secy. R. K. Mission.