

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राच्य वराहविशेषतः ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 14.

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

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

10th March, 1921 (continued)

The Swami said :

“Sri Ramakrishna used to say that one is fitted for Sannyasa by having become a king in a previous birth. Then only is one imbued with true dispassion from the very beginning of life. One has not otherwise all his desires satisfied. Is Sannyasa a mere form? Our idea was that a Sannyasin is very rare. For no ordinary man is he whom Maya has released from her bondage. When I saw three thousand monks at Hrishikesh, then did I truly feel the difference between a true and a merely formal monk. A mere ochre garb does not constitute Sannyasa.

“They want early Sannyasa in order to evade working. Our Master did not emphasise Sannyasa so much as realising God. But it is true he was emphatic that knowledge of God is not possible without renunciation. ‘You must procure fire from outside in order to light your own’ — this is what he said.”

Some one here put in : “But Swamiji strongly emphasised the necessity of Sannyasa.”

To which the Swami replied: "Yes, he did. But he also initiated the institution of service. You must take him in toto. But that you do not do. Some there are who refuse to work. They want, to use the Master's words, to have the 'butter' put into their mouth, they will not churn it out themselves. Everything must be given them ready-made! That is why initiation into Sannyasa does not conduce to progress. * *

"Unless we dedicate ourselves to the service of others, we can do little good to them. Infinite sympathy and patience are needed. A bad health is a great impediment, it often causes mental irritation.

"Was not Swamiji *sattvika*, of a calm and dispassionate mind? Who was ever so *sattvika* as he? My impression of him is not derived from hearsay, but from constant companionship and ocular evidence. I have seen him sitting at meditation at nine in the evening, quite insensible to the bitter stings of swarms of mosquitos, and rising from it at five in the morning to take an early bath. It seemed as if Shiva himself was meditating, so deeply absorbed and unconscious of the external he would be! Self-control and balance,—these are characteristics of *sattva guna*. Swamiji saw that India cannot redeem herself unless she passes previously through *rajas* or activity. That is why he preached the doctrine of selfless work which is *rajas* or activity inspired and controlled by *sattva* or mental poise and dispassion.

"How hard a teacher has to labour to be able to help the pupil ever so little! He must bring himself down to the level of the pupil and take him up by the hand step by step.

"Swamiji once severely castigated one at Meerut, who could not help but yet criticised. When we came upon him at Bombay about to embark for Chicago, he said: 'I find my power of sympathy has grown considerably, I feel keenly for others.' It was there that on seeing placards in which a certain disciple's lecture on his master whom he looked upon as a Divine Incarnation was announced with the disciple's name printed in big letters and his master's in small, Swamiji asked: 'What do you think of this kind of preaching?' I found nothing special about it. Swamiji replied: 'Do you believe this kind of preaching is any good? Do you note the difference in the letters? One must preach by one's life and character so that others may know therefrom that one's teacher must have

been a Divine Incarnation to be able to build up such a life and character.' And in fact Swamiji preached exactly in this way. He never preached Sri Ramakrishna as an Avatara. The one lecture he delivered on him was at New York on the eve of his departure for England. While I lived with him in America, I had occasions to attend some of his lectures. I enquired of some of the audience how they found the lectures. They praised them very highly. When I mentioned this to Swamiji, he said: 'Do I merely *lecture*? I give them something solid,—I do it consciously and they also feel it.' Indeed mere lectures can accomplish nothing.

"The slightest thought of self tarnishes a good work and makes it inane. It does not confer Immortality. Even the possession of the entire earth does not satisfy. Man seeks to conquer celestial regions by performing sacrifices. But then Indra obstructs him for fear of losing his dominion. The Paramahansas, the sages, however, acquire Divine powers even in this life. The Lord's associates at Vaikuntha have all the same appearance as the Lord, only they do not wear the Divine jewel *Kaustubha*."

Here someone enquired whether what the Swami just then said was only an allegory or a literal truth. The Swami replied: "Why not a literal truth? It is quite possible that the higher thought world also has its formal counterpart. As you think so you become. The Master said: 'A piece of lead thrown into a pool of mercury becomes mercury. Even so by thinking of the Lord, one becomes like Him.' Thought condenses into form.

"There is no change in the Atman. It is eternally the same. All changes are in the Prakriti. It eventually becomes purer and purer. You may purify Prakriti even in this life.

"India has made vast progress in psychology, for that has been her special study. The West has done wonders in the study of the material world, and is creating new varieties of animals and plants. What miracles have not Burbank done! . . . They would analyse the soil of a land, find out what crops can best grow there and produce accordingly. But knowing that consciousness can never be derived from matter, the Hindus considered the material world as less important and devoted their best attention to the inner world and eventually discovered the secrets of the Atman.

“The two are existing side by side,—heaven and hell, God and the world. Withdraw the mind from the one and it goes to the other. Draw it away from the world, it goes at once to God and *vice versa*. For, there is only one substance after all. That does not mean that there is no distinction between *dharma* and *adharma*, virtue and vice. The Master said that whatever takes us towards God is *dharma* and whatever takes us away from Him is *adharma*.”

THE WAY OUT

BY THE EDITOR

The world is an eternal mixture of good and evil as they are the obverse and reverse of the same thing. Evil is a chronic disease of the world. But what is alarming is that it has become acute in these days. Individualism has been running rampant during the last few decades to such an extent that it is beyond control now. It is vitiating family life, society, nations and races.

The family has been in all countries and ages the natural sphere for achieving the moral development of man. The love of the family prestige and respect for the ancestors have always been strong influences in regulating virtue and moral life and making social life healthy. The happiness of a family depends on the mutual adjustment of its members, which is in itself a training in self-sacrifice. In these days of political and industrial upheavals and colonisation, and the economic independence of women, family life has become extremely difficult on account of their destructive influences. Further, the conversion of the marriage vow to a mere contract to all intents and purposes, and its possible annulment have also a disintegrating influence on the family life ; and we have consequently a loss of family virtues and their ennobling influence on men.

In society, money-earning is occupying a most important place in man's life. The greatest interest of the age seems to be in the accumulation of wealth. It leaves us no time for refinement and culture. All the functions of life seem to be subordinated to this one concern and we have become so accustomed to it that we do not see its abnormality. But it has

begun to undermine the social basis. We have been neglecting the very object for which it is worth while acquiring wealth, namely, the spread of culture and happiness among men.

It is sometimes supported by a philosophy. It is said that every man in pursuing his personal interest furthers the good of all, for the progress of the collective whole is the sum-total of the progress of the individuals. "It is therefore the duty of everyone to be reckless in pursuit of his own interest and virtue must have a separate field for its working apart from business." The social result of such a philosophy has been to create a break between material prosperity and morality in the life of man. He has two contradictory ideals set before him. What is condemnable in private is honourable in business. What is condemned in the individual is justified in the nation and even applauded.

So long as a man is individualistic in outlook, he will take advantage over others and make them work for himself. He will take advantage of the laws of the land, and his competitors will find themselves helpless before him. He amasses immense wealth which creates a wide gulf between him and others, and this gives him further power to trample on all laws and morality, and even to force the Government to carry out his wishes. The labourers are completely at his mercy. This is more or less the present condition of the world. The capitalists have another great advantage in the increase of population which has made living dear and forces the labourer to take up work on insufficient wages. We have thus ever increasing wealth on the one hand and progressive enslavement on the other. This has degraded the rich who care for nothing except their money and their enjoyment.

This has produced a spirit of revenge in the labourers and they are trying to repay them in the same coin. They have organised themselves into trade unions and guilds etc. Their method of coercion is "strike", but this is not always successful. For the Government often backs the capitalists in the name of public interest and breaks and crushes it. Thus the poor are scarcely able to make any headway against the enormous influence exercised by the rich. This often fills them with hatred; and being full of vigour and revenge, they may eventually upset the whole social order and civilisation together with whatever is good, bad or indifferent in it.

The beneficence of present-day industrialism has been naturally challenged in the name of justice and morality. And as a result we have socialism, etc., whose aim is a morally perfect state in which government and law shall be unnecessary and also personal struggle for existence. It is considered that all attention to the production of wealth with no attention to its equal distribution is the cause of all trouble, and socialism etc. consequently uphold the demand of the masses for a larger share in the management and use of the commonwealth and its funds. In short, they want to raise man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. Even the most unselfish among the capitalists see in the plan of the socialists an attack on property and a control on acquisition, which they consider detrimental to society, interested as they are in its present conditions. Socialists are therefore looked upon as driving business to bankruptcy, and creating class-consciousness and social warfare. The doctrine of evolution is also put forward by them as necessitating competition for a healthy growth of life ; for progress has been, according to them, "connected with the natural law which renders selection necessary, keeping up stress and competition by compelling every type to tend to overrun the conditions of existence for the time being." Socialism however is gaining ground and is destined to be successful. But a socialism of the mob would be more dangerous to civilisation. The only way out seems to lie in the bridging of the gulf that has been created between the higher classes and the common people.

In the collective life, individualism has revived the old tribal insolence under a new garb called nationalism which has once more given prominence to the idea of "might is right". Patriotism may be commendable, but nationalism or the right of every nation to manage its own affairs regardless of any other and without moral considerations, cannot be tolerated. Still worse is the other doctrine that to every nation its own life and power to work its will (be it moral or immoral) are more important than abstract ideas of truth and justice. So long as such ideas prevail, nations cannot but come into clash with one another and peace can only be a dream.

Individualism is working havoc also as racial hatred, the whites hating the coloured races. The disappearance of coloured races wherever the whites have occupied their lands, is ex-

plained by the theory of evolution ; for in the struggle for existence natives must go or work as labourers to the whites who are superior to them ! They think that no amount of humanitarianism can arrest the cause of nature's inexorable laws.

Civilisation declines when individualism replaces communalism in the life of a people, when it creates distinctions in the society, which go on widening till at last points of common feeling and sympathy disappear. It shuts itself from the outside world, being guided by the same spirit of individualism, instead of that broad principle of communalism to which it owes its progress and achievements. Individualism has been developed to the extreme in the modern age, and civilisation is in danger of destruction ; and unless unifying ideals prevail, a set-back to human progress is inevitable.

Progress of civilisation and social well-being lie in the subordination of the selfish to the unselfish, of the material to the spiritual. Competition and struggle do not ultimately work for progress. The laws of evolution—struggle for existence and survival of the fittest—do not seem applicable to the affairs of men. There the motive force is more self-sacrifice than self-aggrandisement. Struggle with man is within himself, in controlling and subduing the lower mind, and thus manifesting the Atman through education and culture. The evil that is in us cannot be got rid of by killing others but by spiritual upliftment. Unless the inherent selfishness of man is restricted by *dharma* or righteousness, desires controlled by conscience, the production and distribution of wealth equitably done, social stability is unthinkable. Without righteousness or *dharma* the so-called progress would only work the ruin of society. The life of a nation must be governed by a high moral ideal to which all the national powers must be subordinated. The higher the ideal, the more cultured the society. It is idle to say that it is not practicable. Every nation must have a complete theory of life, and all its activities must be regulated in relation to that theory. In fixing its ideal a nation cannot safely ignore the ideal of renunciation ; for without it life is incomplete. This non-recognition of the ideal of renunciation is the greatest defect of the modern world. Without renunciation which alone brings it home to us that true happiness lies in virtue and self-restraint

rather than in enjoyment, there is little hope of our redemption. The ideal of *brahmacharya*, of the celibate life, must be placed before the world. The proper control of the senses alone can put an end to all individual and national struggle.

A due proportion between the population and the resources of a country should be maintained in order to avoid the necessity of plundering and occupying the lands of other peoples. The present earth-grabbing tendencies can be cured only by religion, by a life of self-control. In order that the population may not go beyond the resources, the ancient seers of India held before the people a high ideal of married life and of celibacy in earlier and later life. Thus did they try to avoid over-population and all its ugly consequences.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna, an ideal for the age in more respects than one, upholds the ancient ideal of a perfect married life. A monk of monks and perfect in renunciation and self-control, he was yet married. That was evidently to demonstrate before people the highest ideal of married life, to show that instead of satisfying one's senses, a pure and high purpose should be fulfilled in married life. He lived with his wife, gave her secular and religious training and had the highest respect for her ; but he had no carnal relations with her. He showed what the highest ideal of a wedded life should be. By trying to follow him men and women will be blessed and prove a blessing to society, struggle and competition will be reduced by preventing over-population, and talented children will be born endowed with great qualities and the false glamour of romance, obscuring the solitary grandeur and freedom of the soul as the ultimate aim in the name of an all-absorbing companionship, will be utterly destroyed.

In the extreme type of the renunciation of money found in Sri Ramakrishna who could not even bear the touch of a coin or a metal pot, we find the potent antidote to the modern greed of gold. To his strong attachment for truth which was so great that never an untruth dropped from his mouth even in fun, the modern world of hypocrisy, dishonesty and diplomacy stands in deep contrast. It is only the truthfulness, sincerity of purpose and child-like faith as found in Sri Ramakrishna that can give peace to the world.

The greatest ideal however that he holds to the modern world is that of inclusive toleration. He is the greatest harmoniser of human civilisations and institutions. He has found something of value in the conflicting views of life and religion and has pointed out to us that all religions and systems of thought are good so long as they by their special forms are capable of giving men a lift to the higher states of self-realisation, and that as such they are complementary to each other and none is superior to the others. This message comes from the depths of his own spiritual realisations. He had realised that Oneness everywhere which is the goal of Advaita Vedanta. This highest truth of Vedanta is infinitely catholic, for it says, "Do not disturb the faith of any, even of those who through ignorance are attached to lower forms of worship; help every one till you include all humanity." It teaches a God which is the sum-total of all religious ideals; and therefore it alone can be the universal religion and put an end to all fanaticism and narrow-mindedness. It recognises that growth is gradual and so it harmonises and regards all the preceding systems as steps to the highest. Moreover it has this merit that it is the most rational of all religious theories and the world needs such a religion at present. It teaches the divinity of man, that man is potentially divine and that the difference between man and man is one of degree and not of kind. This revolutionises our outlook upon man. It gives hope even to the worst criminal.

The spirit of service which Sri Ramakrishna has brought into the world through his life and teachings is unique. Two things have to be combined to usher in a new era,—a world-kindling spiritual enthusiasm and a social upheaval in the form of a passionate desire to sacrifice one's all in the service of the masses. These will sweep away the barriers that now divide mankind and set up a perfection in human fellowship. These are exactly what we have in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. All men—good and bad, the greatest and the least—are one in the Atman. For the same divinity is in all in spite of external differences. To serve the Lord as manifested in his children is the greatest privilege we can have. No more privileges, but equal chances for all. Variety there shall be, for sameness is impossible in the phenomenal world. But because of that the more favourably placed should not tyrannise over others.

So in the life of Sri Ramakrishna we have a message for the modern world of strife and competition. It is a message of harmony which while recognising differences among men and nations as regards their natural aptitudes, creeds and faiths, renders possible for mankind in various grades of development to live in peace and amity by organising themselves into an interdependent universal family, each nation contributing its quota to the progress of man and civilisation. Human perfection can be reached only through the evolution of the varied qualities of the different races and nations. Each man or nation can manifest only a particular aspect of the infinite glory of the Atman. So destruction of weaker peoples through exploitation or fanaticism means a great loss to human progress. It is an ideal of service, faith in man, universal harmony, and love and tender concern for the frailties of man due to incomplete growth that Sri Ramakrishna holds up to the world. Will it accept the ideal and refresh its weary soul?

RUDRADHYAYA

BY SWAMI KAMALESWARANANDA

The Rudrâdhyâya, or the chapter about the God Rudra, is the sixteenth chapter in the White Yajur Veda. In this chapter the three main subjects dealt with in the Vedas, namely, Work, Worship and Knowledge, are so clearly and harmoniously treated that the student, who is anxious to learn the fundamental principles of Vedic teaching, cannot do better than give his attention to it. From the study of this chapter he will also realise how firmly based in the Vedic Scriptures is that synthesis of Devotion and Knowledge which is characteristic of the teaching of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Like the rest of the Yajur Veda the chapter is in "unfettered words," i.e. prose, but it contains also many verses from the Rig Veda in various kinds of Vedic versification. The whole chapter recurs with variations in the Krishna Yajur Veda.

The promotion of Vedic studies was one of the objects most dear to the heart of Swami Vivekananda. When he was living at the Belur Math after his return from the West, he took pains

to collect copies of the Sañhitas and Brahmanas for the Math library and arranged for their systematic study under competent teachers. Into this, as into all his undertakings, he poured all the energies of his soul. On being asked by Swami Premananda (of holy memory) about the value of the Vedas, he spoke for about two hours, declaring that through the study of the Vedas we could reach our goal of a true and universal religion. He often insisted that the Holy Vedas should be adopted as "our only Scripture," and the rules he framed for the Ramakrishna Math are based on the same principle. But Swamiji was carried away by the hand of an inscrutable providence and it is left for us to realise his dream of a revival of Vedic learning.

The chapter under consideration deals with Rudra and Rudra means Giver of Knowledge.

The knowledge he gives is that of God as the All-pervading Spirit. We read in the Sruti— **सत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।**

The ordinary man, distracted by the things of this world, fails to realise God's indwelling presence in every object of the universe. Only the happy few, and they, only after hard spiritual struggles, succeed in so tranquillising the waves of the mind that they attain a glimpse of the Life Eternal, and so find satisfaction and peace. God is seen by them to be the Great and Eternal Good, the Hope and Light of the World, the Source of all Energy, the First and Last Reality, the Beginning and End of all that is, was or shall be. Those who have so seen God will proclaim their discovery to the world.

All this, they will say, is the Lord.

All this is the Great.

All this is the Soul.

All this is the Universal Spirit.

All this is Brahman.

Whatever is, is He.

He is all that is.

Devotion to this Indwelling God is the keynote of the Rudradhyaya. Every line from the 17th mantra to the 47th repeats the refrain—**Namah, namah**: Bow to Him, bow to Him—as though the writer could not insist too often on the necessity of humility before God. The same teaching is found in the Atharva Veda, II. I. 6.

I bow to Thee in the morning,
I bow to Thee at night,
I bow to Thee by day.

Again in the Rig Veda we read

The best is bowing.....It holds together the Earth
...and the Sky.....

By it our sins are destroyed.

Again in Bhagavad Gita 9. 34 Krishna instructs Arjuna in similar terms—

Me should you worship,
Me should you salute,
And Me shall you have.

Such adoration is the highest form of worship. It is the basis of all true self-surrender and consequently the only pathway into the presence of God.

From a literary point of view the chapter has much to commend it. The language is often strikingly beautiful. The sage seems to stand on the shore of a boundless ocean, absorbed in prayer.

To Thee, O Lord, I bow

who art beyond the seas,
who art on this side of the sea,
who art in the sailing vessels,
who art in the depths of the sea,
who art on the borders of the coast-lands,
who art in the foaming waves,
who art in the sands of the shore,
who art in the waters at the river's mouth,
who art in the little pebbles,
who art in the calm expanse.

O Deity of matted locks, I bow to Thee

who art in the barren soil where there is not
a blade of grass.

And yet again I bow to Thee

who art in the flowing watercourses.

From a philosophical stand-point the chapter is equally acceptable to the Theist (Dvaitavadin or Bhakta) and the Monist (Advaitavadin or Jnanin). The Theist recognises the distinction between the worshipper and the object of worship. He sees in God his Ideal, the embodiment of all that is good, and he hails this God, not only as the Lord of his own heart, but

also as the Indwelling Spirit of the whole universe. He traces the touch of this Spirit in the whole order of nature. With such a philosophical background to his religion he finds the devotional spirit of the Rudradhyaya entirely to his taste.

The Monist in the same way finds here nothing with which to quarrel. He holds that nothing exists apart from Brahman. All the apparent objects of the phenomenal world are only superimposed on Brahman by Ignorance. The only real existence is the Eternal "Chit" (Pure Consciousness) which is also Being (Sat) and Bliss (Ananda). This ultimate Reality is never differentiated nor transformed into anything other than itself. The Sruti may indeed (out of deference to the weakness of human intelligence) speak of it as so differentiated with a view to arousing the soul from the stupor of Ignorance, but in fact "Sat-Chit-Ananda" remains one, free, unattached and all-inclusive. Accordingly the Rudradhyaya does not hesitate to include in its address of adoration even that which is evil.

Salutation to Cheats and Impostors.

Salutation to the Chiefs of Thieves and Robbers.

Nothing must be excluded from God.

O Benevolent One, I bow to Thee,
 Thou art the Carpenter and the Chariot-builder,
 Thou art the Hunter and the Fowler
 and the Chaser of animals with dogs.

So the great Swami Vivekananda used to speak of God not only as the great and powerful, but also as the weak and despised. "The poor Narayana," he used to say, "the illiterate Narayana, the Chandâla Narayana."

The great Sri Ramakrishna has left us a most valuable illustration of this important doctrine. He lived almost perpetually immersed in Universal Consciousness, and even on the rare occasions when he returned to ordinary levels, he never forgot that the objects of the phenomenal world are only manifestations of the One Universal Substance (Chit). He is reported to have said, "Do you know what I see around me? All these things are the same Rama with masks on." These simple words contain a profound philosophical truth. A mask may be horrible, calculated to strike terror into the hearts of children, or it may be ridiculous and throw them into fits of laughter.

Yet the wearer of the mask is neither horrible nor ridiculous. So the one unconditioned, undifferentiated Chit appears through the mask of Maya as all the various objects of the visible world, and gives to one man joy and to another sorrow.

It is important to notice that our chapter is full of that spirit of Bhakti (or loving devotion) which is characteristic of theistic religions. It has been affirmed that Bhakti is not found in the Vedas but only appears in the Mahabharata and the Gita and the Puranas. It is true that the word Bhakti occurs only in the Svetasvatara Upanishad in the phrase यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः, but the idea is one of the common-places of Vedic literature. In the chapter we are studying it is particularly prominent.

One feature of Bhakti religion is its faith in a Personal God. In this chapter Rudra is unmistakably personal. He has two arms, an image, a visible appearance. We find the poet singing—

“Your body is of scarlet colour
And your throat is blue.”
and again

“Place your trident and other weapons on a high tree,
Come to us in your tiger skin bearing only your bow.”
(Mantras 47 and 51)

Another feature of religion of this type is prayer and again the Rudradhyaya is rich in such gems as this—

O Fulfiller of all wishes,
Shower your blessings on our children
and our descendants.

O Rudra,
Save these men and beasts from all diseases,
and dispel their fear.

O Rudra,
Blessed be our children and our relatives,
Blessed be our cattle and domestic animals,
Let our neighbours flourish and our dwelling villages
be secure.

One more prayer, which we offer as our heart's greeting to the great Lord of all, may fitly conclude this paper.

I bow to Him,
from whom flows the highest good and emancipation.

I bow to Him,
 who confers on us earthly prosperity,
 who holds in his hands things good both for this world
 and the next,
 who is the personification of the Good
 who into that same Good converts his worshippers.

THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

BY P. M. BHAMBHANI

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The advance in knowledge made by mankind by now has resulted in a universal acceptance of the principle that humanity is the same everywhere. By their needs and aspirations, by the means and activities which they employ in satisfying them, by the equivalent proverbs, maxims and adages which are in vogue among the peoples of various climes, by their beliefs and superstitions, by the common principles which form the basis of their various customs and manners and modes of worship and above all by the fact that men of different communities and nationalities speaking different languages understand each other through the medium of language, —by these and many other facts this truth is amply illustrated.

Now all these things bear relation to life and its manifestations. True that some of these can be called its accidents ; but inasmuch as they are universal and have existed ever since man was born they may be called its necessary adjuncts and can only provisionally be regarded as accidents until further knowledge confirms them as essential. To all ends and purposes, therefore, we may regard them as essential to life and maintain without much reservation that life and its laws are essentially the same for all mankind.

But religion is a need of life and cannot but be the same for all men whatever may be the human needs which it may satisfy. As it would be curious and even absurd if there were anything like a Hindu Chemistry, a Mahomedan Physics, a Christian Biology or a Zoroastrian Geology, so it appears curious that there should be different kinds of religion and that each man should be called upon to seek satisfaction of his religious needs of salvation in his own religion *i.e.* the religion in which he is born. Religious needs being the same for all men, the religion to satisfy these needs must also be the same. True that there may be different modes or forms of worship or ways of satisfying the religious needs ; but this could not change the essential character of religion and make religion different for different people, as the different modes of preparation of food could not make the laws of hunger and its satisfaction different for different people, or as the different ways of curing disease, which based on different theories are characterised as different sciences of medicine, could not make the laws of health and of curing disease different for different people. And

if this be so, as sciences never quarrel among themselves, so must the religions never quarrel; religion must not be a field for vain bickerings, jealousies and heart-burnings and the most inhuman persecutions as it has been up to this time. And as different theories in Science or Philosophy in persuance of the fact that truth is one after all, admit, by means of the process of rejections and selections, of being reconciled and ultimately running into one body of truth, so also do the various beliefs and different modes or forms of worship in religion admit of being reconciled and of ultimately running into one body of religious truth, and assuming the name "The One, True, Universal Religion for All Mankind."

All the various modes of worship go by the name "Religion", even the most atheistical ones. But an identity of name must imply an identity of meaning. What could therefore be the meaning of the common name "Religion"? Martineau would consider the belief in a supernatural being called God as a part of the connotation of religion. To him such a belief is essential to its conception. But this view seems to be erroneous. The definition of religion must be such as to embrace all the particular religions of the world in the past, present and future. Any definition which fails to fit in with a religion of the future must be modified, unless a system of belief going by the name is not a religion at all. We must therefore find the differentia of "Religion", or an attribute or a set of attributes which essentially characterise, and are common to, all the religions and base our definition on them so that even a new religion springing up in the future may be included in it. In short the definition must be an ideal one.

Now if we examine the various beliefs, superstitions, religious ceremonies, the modes of worship and the various ways in which the religious beliefs influence the social customs of different peoples, *the raisen d'être* of the phenomenon called religion will be apparent. Why is it that any religion exists at all? I have said above that religion would be nothing if it had no relation to life, if it were not based on life and its needs. An analysis of human needs must therefore bring out very clearly what we want. These may be divided into

- (1) Physical needs;
- (2) Intellectual needs;
- (3) Emotional needs;
- (4) Moral needs;
- (5) Æsthetic needs;
- (6) The need for the continuity of life beyond the grave.

Having these needs man knows that they cannot be easily satisfied, that there are various forces which govern their satisfaction positively and negatively, and that in their negative exercise they form hindrances instead of helps to their satisfaction. Man finds that in the performance of their latter function they are more formidable. The natural forces administering disease and producing phenomena like the earthquake and the volcanic eruption and creating animals dangerous to life like the wolf, the tiger, the snake etc., appear to him greatly terrifying. Again the social forces appear to him even more active in this respect. He finds that interests clash, one man's needs in their search after satisfaction cross

another man's needs, that this leads to crime and even to war and bloodshed, that men in power try to trample over the rights of the weaker ones and to secure their gains whenever they think they can do so with impunity. Man is found perpetually at war with his fellow-man, and warring individuals, societies and nations are in sight. Both of these aspects—positive and negative—evoke in him a double desire: a desire to subjugate the natural forces and a desire to organise the social forces and to persuade them to do no wrong. The two desires create a need for harmony between man and man, and man and nature and hence give rise to a need for knowledge. The mind in its search after knowledge finds all men possessing the same nature and the same needs and wonders why at all should one man try to satisfy his needs by defeating the same of another. Man is a reason-seeking animal. He possesses reason and wants therefore to find a reason for all phenomena which happen before his eye or otherwise within his knowledge. He traces the above conflict to a want of realisation of the fact that all men are essentially one and that they should for this reason learn to observe the principle of 'LIVE AND LET LIVE'. A thirst for harmony between all men and other members of creation begins and the birth of religion takes place. I should therefore define religion as the method of seeking and finding harmony between all creation.

Nor is this principle of harmony far to seek. It can be seen from the affinity which exists between the various departments of nature, from the fact of the relation of dependence between the body and the mind, from the fact that each department of nature depends upon the others for its existence. It can be seen, that is to say, from the very nature of the universe wherein it lies, finding its fullest development and realisation in men. The cravings of the flesh make it a bit dormant or he would find his kith and kin in the growing trees and distant stars, in animals, in men and in whatever other objects of creation there may be. The universe is one organised and harmonious whole, and could not stand in its integrity were it not for the fact that it is so characterised.

This principle of harmony is a principle of fellowship between all members of creation and especially between all men irrespective of their caste, creed or nationality. It is not only a logical principle which can merely be thought but the highest ethical principle which can be realised in action. It is the greatest spiritualising agency for the realisation of the moral law. It is a principle which inspires us with awe, with reverence, with obedience, with homage—and satisfies all the cravings and emotions which characterise religion. God then could be none other than this principle of harmony, this unity between the members of creation and foremost of all between all men. If this be the meaning of "God", assuredly all religions have God in them, as all without exception have in them this oneness of aim to achieve the kind of harmony spoken of above. In this sense even the most atheistic of religions become theistical and Martineau's definition of religion instead of being erroneous becomes true. All other conceptions of God have failed as mankind have failed to achieve the desired unity and harmony through these conceptions and through modes of worship based on them. As a result also of such a

failure some religions have given up altogether the search after God as futile and have been driven to the denial of his existence and to a construction of systems which they call religious, but for which they dispense with the need of the avowal or hypothesis of a supernatural being. From the stand-point of these religions, therefore, the definition of religion based upon a belief in the supernatural, would be too narrow, and would declare our proposal of a universal religion as a Godless one; but the new conception of God changes the whole situation and the view-point; and surcharges all religions with a newer and fresher theism practicable and realisable if only men's minds were made up.

The universal religion points out an objectively existing principle of harmony between all men and other members of creation and enjoins on each man separately a sincere and devoted search after it (the principle of harmony). It aims at the fostering of the understanding and knowledge of the nature of this harmony and at its realisation which on account of their ignorance mankind have greatly missed. It judges most of the variations among men as accidental. It points out that caste, creed, class, money, power, position or station in life, place and time of birth are mere accidents and while they may help as means to the realisation of the essential, they are not in themselves the essential. The feeling of pride or pomp amounting to the hatred of others and disregard of their rights is out of place, and not only betrays a sad ignorance of the essential and the universal or the God present in us all, but keeps us miles apart from the ideal of harmony or oneness which is the root and basis of all particular religions. Buddhism tried to bring out this universal in the form of its injunctions but neglected or rejected God instead of pointing out that the principle of harmony which was the object of its search was itself the God of which man was in search ever since he was born. There is a religious society in India which also does the same thing. It points out the ideal and marks it out as the highest object worthy of our attainment, but does not point out that the basis of this ideal lies in the actual or objective presence of the universal and the essential or the principle of harmony in all members of creation. Comte preached his religion of humanity but failed to point out the presence of this universal and absolute in the midst of its vast multiplicity or variation or the presence of this all-pervading principle of unity in the midst of the immense plurality. But whether separate religions speak of this universality or not, they all participate in the possession of this common aim and ideal, namely, the realisation of this harmony among all members of its creation. The existence of the principle of harmony and the aim to realise it in the shape of the universal harmony gives a common basis to all particular religions; and eliminating the different crudities, narrownesses, fibs and fictions into which most of them have been involved but which are purely accidental to them and are no part of their essence, bids fair to bring them into a harmonious unity of the One, True and Universal Religion as an object of acceptance by all men irrespective of place or community to which they belong.

Nor does this solution base our new religion on fear. Some forms of religion are based on fear, say for example, the religion prevailing

among the snake-worshipping people. But this new religion is actuated by the desire for the satisfaction of human needs and is supported on the omnipresent or the all-pervading principle of harmony. It is new not in the possession of this aim but only in the discovery of the common basis of religions. The principle of harmony which is present in all members of creation will be a guiding light or pilot towards the working out of the consummation or realisation of this ideal.

If it be said that a principle could not be worshipped, the answer is that it is principle alone that can be worshipped. A principle alone can be absolute and free from any charge of relativity and that we worship persons only when they are supposed to be embodiments of principles. A religion of principles alone, says Vivekananda, could be acceptable by all men. We want a God who is a God of principles. An embodied God is divested of its body as soon as men's minds develop a capacity to concentrate themselves on principles. The worship of principles is the only true worship, the only unchanging and impartial worship—worship that has no undue leaning on any side. While an embodied God may be prayed to by persons or parties of conflicting interests, to a God of principles such a prayer could not be sent at all. For then the contradiction is soon found out and killed; reconciliation takes place and friendship and harmony are the result.

The universal religion fights shy of all prejudices. It discards all slavery of thought and champions the cause of freedom in this respect. It is humane and just and is no respecter of private idiosyncrasies. It gives no commands. Persuasion, brotherhood and love are its creed. Nor could prejudice and partiality be the ingredients of the particular religious systems. They would be intrinsically inconsistent if they included these in themselves. Such disagreeable elements in a religion could be only a personal equation of the founders themselves and no part of the system they preached. Moreover prejudice or permission to persecute or make a religious war implies self-contradiction on the part of the leaders. Under the shade of the universal religion, truth is not jeopardised, nor is goodness compromised. Under its influence the evil of caste must go; the arrogance of class can exist no more; the institution of war must close; the varieties of station in life must be regarded as due to the necessary vocational differences and so occupying each its place in the economy of nature; the avenue to perpetual peace and progress opens out; and we usher in the era of peace and good-will unto all mankind.*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY NAGENDRANATH GUPTA

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since Swami Vivekananda went to his rest, and every year that passes is bringing fresh recognition of his greatness and widening the circle of appreciation. But the generation that knew him in life and heard his voice is also passing with the years. Such of his contemporaries as are left owe it to his memory and to their countrymen to place on record their impressions of one who, by universal assent, was one of the greatest Indians as well as one of the world's great men. There is no need to repeat the story of his life, for that has been well and fully done by his disciples in the four volumes compiled by them, but one who knew him as I did may endeavour to strike a personal and reminiscent note, and to recall, so far as memory may serve, some small details of large significance, and the traits of character and the bearing that distinguished him from the people around him. I knew him when he was an unknown and ordinary lad for I was at college with him and I knew him when he returned from America in the full blaze of fame and glory. He stayed with me for several days and told me without reserve everything that had happened in the years that we had lost sight of each other. Finally, I met him at the monastery at Belur near Calcutta shortly before his death. In whatever relates to him I shall speak of what I heard from himself and not from others.

The conditions in India were very peculiar when Swami Vivekananda first attracted public attention. The imposition of a foreign domination and the grafting of a foreign culture had produced a pernicious effect on Indian life and Indian thought. The ancient ideals were either forgotten or obscured by the meretricious glamour of western materialism. There was an air of unreality about most of the progressive movements in India. In every field of activity a sort of smug unctuousness had replaced the single-minded earnestness and devotion of the ancient times. The old moorings of steadfast purpose had been slipped and everything was adrift and at the mercy of every wind and wave from outside India. The ancient Aryan had realized that there could be no achievement without sacrifice and self-surrender. The modern Indian in his new environment fancied that surrender was not necessary for attainment. Following the example of the West the Indian reformer did his work while living in comfort and ease. The method followed was that of the dilettante, touching the surface of great problems, but seldom attempting to probe deeper. Men with an eloquent tongue and the gift of persuasive speech stirred the emotions and feelings of their hearers, but the effect was more or less fleeting,

because of the lack of strength in the appeals. The conditions in India might be described as a flux if there were any assurance of a return of the tide. Perhaps there was no conscious self-deception but people were deceived and mistook the sham for the reality. The placid self-complacency noticeable everywhere was an unmistakable sign of growing weakness and inability to resist the inroads of habits of thought and ideals of life destructive of everything that is enduring, everything that is real in the long established order of things in India.

In the midst of these depressing surroundings was the quiet and scarcely noticed emergence of Ramkrishna Paramhansa after a period of preparation and meditation unknown to the people about him. He was practically an unlettered man like some of the great prophets of old, and by occupation he was the priest of a temple, a vocation for which he became unfit later on. Ignorant people thought his mind was giving way, but in reality it was a struggle of the spirit seeking true knowledge and finding its expression. And when this was attained he no longer avoided men, and drew round him a small band of earnest young men who sought for guidance from him and endeavoured to follow his teachings. Many of his sayings have been collected and published, but these give only a faint indication of his individuality. It may be said with absolute truth that he was one of the elect who appear at long intervals in the world for some great purpose. It has been my privilege to hear him speak and I felt then as I feel now that it is only rarely that men have the great good fortune of listening to such a man. The Paramhansa's language was Bengali of a homely kind; he was not supple of speech as he spoke with a slight though delightful stammer, but his words held men enthralled by the wealth of spiritual experience, the inexhaustible store of simile and metaphor, the unequalled powers of observation, the bright and subtle humour, the wonderful catholicity of sympathy and the ceaseless flow of wisdom.

Among the young lads and men attracted by the magnetic personality of the Paramhansa was Narendra Nath Datta, afterwards known as Swami Vivekananda. There was nothing to distinguish him from the other young men who used to visit Ramkrishna Paramhansa. He was an average student with no promise of brilliance, because he was not destined to win any prize of the learned or unlearned professions, but the Master early picked him out from the rest and predicted a great future for him. "He is a thousand-petalled lotus," said the Paramhansa, meaning that the lad was one of those who come fully equipped into the world for a great purpose and to be a leader of men. The reference was to the spiritual sphere since the Paramhansa took no account of worldly success. Ramkrishna Paramhansa could not only read faces with unerring accuracy but he had also extraordinary psychic power, which was demonstrated in the case of Vivekananda himself. That young man was not very regular in his visits to the Paramhansa. On one occasion he was absent for

several weeks. The Paramhansa made repeated enquiries about him and ultimately charged one of Vivekananda's friends to bring him. It may be mentioned that the Paramhansa lived in the temple of Dakshineswar, some miles to the north of Calcutta. The Paramhansa added that when Narendra came he wished to see him alone. Accordingly, there was no one else in the room when Narendra came to see the Paramhansa. As soon as the boy entered the room the Paramhansa left his seat and saying, "Why have you been staying away when I wanted to see you?" approached the lad and tapped him lightly on the chest with a finger. On the instant—these are Vivekananda's own words—the lad saw a flash of dazzling light and felt himself swept off his feet, and he cried out in alarm, "What are you doing to me? I have parents." The Paramhansa patted him on the back and soothed him, saying "There, there, that will do."

Shortly after this incident Vivekananda became an accepted disciple of Ramkrishna Paramhansa. The number of these disciples was very small and the Paramhansa was very careful in choosing them. Every one of these disciples was subjected to a constant and unrelaxing discipline more than Spartan in its severity. There was no spoon-feeding and coddling. The Paramhansa's prediction about Vivekananda was not communicated to any publicity bureau, and he and his fellow-disciples were always under the vigilant eyes of the Master. Vows, *vratas* of great hardship, were imposed upon the disciples and the discipline was maintained unbroken even after the passing of the Paramhansa. Vivekananda went to Benares, and it was there that he acquired the correct enunciation and the sonorous chanting of the hymns and the mantras which he recited very impressively at times in a deep musical voice. I have heard him singing in a fine tenor voice at the request of friends and as an orator there were both power and music in his voice.

Ramkrishna Paramhansa frequently passed into a trance or *Samadhi*. The exciting cause was invariably some spiritual experience or some new spiritual perception. On one occasion—it was in 1881—I formed one of a party that had gone with Keshub Chunder Sen by river to see the Paramhansa. He was brought on board our steamer, which belonged to Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup of Kuch Behar, Keshub's son-in-law. The Paramhansa as is well known was a worshipper of the goddess Kali, but he was also an adept in the contemplation of Brahman, the formless, *Nirakara*, and had some previous conversation with Keshub on this subject. He was sitting close to Keshub facing him, and the conversation was practically a monologue, for either Keshub or some one else would put a brief question and, in answer, the Paramhansa with his marvellous gift of speech and illustration would hold his hearers entranced. All of us there hung breathless upon his words. And gradually the conversation came round to *Nirakara* (formless) Brahman, when the Paramhansa, after repeating the word *Nirakara* two or three times to himself, passed into a state of *Samadhi*. Except the rigidity of the body there was no quivering

of the muscles or nerves, no abrupt or convulsive movement of any kind. The fingers of the two hands as they lay in his lap were slightly curled. But a most wonderful change had come over the face. The lips were slightly parted as if in a smile, with the gleam of the white teeth in between. The eyes were half closed with the balls and pupils partly visible, and over the whole countenance was an ineffable expression of the holiest and most ecstatic beatitude. We watched him in respectful silence for some minutes after which Trailokya Nath Sanyal, known as the singing apostle in Keshub Chunder Sen's sect, sang a hymn to the accompaniment of music, and the Paramhansa slowly opened his eyes, looked inquiringly around him for a few seconds and then resumed the conversation. No reference was made either by him or any one else to his trance.

On another occasion the Paramhansa wanted to see the Zoological Gardens of Calcutta. His eagerness was like a child's and would not brook any delay. There were times when his ways were strongly reminiscent of the saying in the Srimad Bhagavatam that the *mukta*, the emancipated and the wise, is to be known by his childlike playfulness. A cab was sent for and the Paramhansa accompanied by some disciples was driven the long distance from Dakshineswar to Alipur. When he entered the gardens the people with him began showing him the various animals and aquatic collections but he would not even look at them. "Take me to see the lion," he insisted. Standing in front of the lion's cage he mused, "This is the Mother's mount"—the goddess Kali in the form of Durga or Parvati is represented as riding a lion—and straightway passed into *Samadhi*. He would have fallen but for the supporting arms around him. On regaining consciousness he was invited to stroll round the gardens and see the rest of the collection. "I have seen the king of the animals. What else is there to see?" replied the Paramhansa. And he went back to the waiting carriage and drove home. There seems to be an obvious incongruity between the predisposing causes of *Samadhi* on these two occasions. On the first, it was the contemplation of the *Nirakara* Brahman, a high and abstruse spiritual concept ; on the second, it was merely the sight of a caged lion. But in both instances the process of the concentration of the mind and the spirit is the same. In one, it is the intense realisation of the supreme Brahman without form ; in the other, it is a realization in the spirit of a visual symbolism inseparably associated with the goddess Kali. In both cases a single spiritual thought occupies the mind to the exclusion of everything else, obliterates the sense of the objective world and leads to *Samadhi*. No photograph taken of the Paramhansa in *Samadhi* ever succeeded in reproducing the inward glow, the expression of divine ecstasy, Brahmananda, stamped on the countenance.

As a young enthusiast passing through a probation of discipline Vivekananda desired that he should have the experience of continuous

Samadhi. The Paramhansa explained to him that this was unlikely as he had to do important work in the cause of religion. But Vivekananda would not be dissuaded and once while sitting in meditation he fell into *Samadhi*. The Paramhansa, when apprised of it said, "Let him enjoy it for a time." Vivekananda realized afterwards that the Master was right, and the time came when in fulfilment of the prophecy of the Master he held aloft the torch of Truth in distant lands and proclaimed that the light of knowledge comes from the East.

Under the vow of poverty and mendicancy Vivekananda travelled widely in northern and southern India for eight years, and his experiences, as may be imagined, were varied. He spent a great deal of his time in the Madras Presidency and he had first-hand knowledge of the evil influence of professional *sadhus*. He knew intimately the village life of the Telugu and Tamil-speaking peoples and he found his earliest admirers in the Madras Presidency. He was in Behar when there was great excitement in that Province on account of the marking of mango trees with lumps of mud mixed with vermilion and seed grain. In a number of districts in Behar numerous mango topes were discovered marked in this fashion. The trustees of an empire as the Government in this country somewhat theatrically call themselves may have a lofty function but they have an uneasy conscience, and the official mind was filled with forebodings of some impending grave peril. The wonderful secret police got busy at once, and it was shrewdly surmised that the marks on the mango trees bore a family resemblance to the mysterious *chapatis* which were circulated immediately before the outbreak of the Mutiny. The villagers, frightened out of their wits by the sudden incursion of armed and unarmed, but not the less terrible on that account, authority in their midst denied all knowledge of the authorship of these sinister marks. Suspicion next rested upon the itinerant *Sadhus* wandering all over the country and they were arrested wholesale for some time though they had to be let off for want of evidence, and the recent facilities of Regulations and Ordinances did not then exist. It was found out afterwards that the marking of mango trees was merely by way of an agricultural mascot for a good mango or general crops. Vivekananda had to get up early in the morning and to trudge along the grand trunk road or some village path until some one offered him some food, or the heat of the sun compelled him to rest under a roadside tree. One morning as he was tramping along as usual he heard a shout behind him calling upon him to halt. He turned round and saw a mounted police officer, bearded and in full panoply, swinging a switch and followed by some policemen. As he came up he inquired in the well known gentle voice affected by Indian policemen who Vivekananda was. "As you see, Khan Saheb," replied Vivekananda, "I am a *Sadhu*." "All *Sadhus* are budmashes," sententiously growled the Sub-Inspector of Police. As policemen in India are known never to tell an untruth such an obvious fact could not be disputed. "You come

along with me and I shall see that you are put in jail," boomed the police officer. "For how long?" softly asked Vivekananda. "Oh, it may be for a fortnight, or even a month." Vivekananda went nearer him and in an ingratiating and appealing voice said, "Khan Saheb, only for a month? Can you not put me away for six months, or at least three or four months?" The police officer stared and his face fell. "Why do you wish to stay in jail longer than a month?" he asked suspiciously. Vivekananda replied in a confidential tone, "Life in the jail is much better than this. The work there is not hard compared with this wearisome tramp from morning till night. My daily food is uncertain and I have often to starve. In the jail I shall have two square meals a day. I shall look upon you as my benefactor if you lock me up for several months." As he listened a look of disappointment and disgust appeared on the Khan Saheb's face and he abruptly ordered Vivekananda to go away.

The second encounter with the police took place in Calcutta itself. Vivekananda with some of his fellow-disciples was living in a suburb of Calcutta quietly pursuing his studies and rendering such small social service as came his way. One day he met a police officer who was a friend of Vivekananda's family. He was a Superintendent of Police in the Criminal Investigation Department, and had received a title and decoration for his services. He greeted Vivekananda cordially and invited him to dinner for the same evening. There were some other visitors when Vivekananda arrived. At length they left but there were no signs of dinner. Instead, the host spoke about other matters until suddenly lowering his voice and assuming a menacing look he said, "Come, now, you had better make a clean breast of it and tell me the truth. You know you cannot fool me with your stories for I know your game. You and your gang pretend to be religious men, but I have positive information that you are conspiring against the Government." "What do you mean?" asked Vivekananda, amazed and indignant, "What conspiracies are you speaking of, and what have we to do with them?" "That is what I want to know," coolly replied the police officer. "I am convinced it is some nefarious plot and you are the ring-leader. Out with the whole truth and then I shall arrange that you are made an approver." "If you know everything, why don't you come and arrest us and search our house?" said Vivekananda, and rising he quietly closed the door. Now, Vivekananda was an athletic young man of a powerful build while the police officer was a puny, wizened creature. Turning round upon him Vivekananda said, "You have called me to your house on a false pretext and have made a false accusation against me and my companions. That is your profession. I, on the other hand, have been taught not to resent an insult. If I had been a criminal and a conspirator there would be nothing to prevent me from wringing your neck before you could call out for help. As it is I leave you in peace." And Vivekananda opened the

door and went out, leaving the redoubtable police officer speechless with ill-concealed fright. Neither Vivekananda nor his companions were ever again molested by this man.

(To be continued)

THE ESSENCE OF VEDANTA

[VEDANTASARA]

एतेषां नित्यादीनां बुद्धिशुद्धिः परं प्रयोजनम्, उपासनानां तु चित्तैकाग्र्यम्, “तमेतमात्मानं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणां विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन” इत्यादिश्रुतेः (बृ: उ: ४।४।२२), “तपसा कल्मषं हन्ति” इत्यादि स्मृतेश्च (मनु १२।१०४)। १३

13. Of these, *Nitya* and other¹ works serve the necessary² purpose of purifying the *Buddhi*³; but⁴ the *Upâsanâ* chiefly aims at the concentration⁵ of the *Chitta*, as in such Shruti passages, “Brahmanas seek to know this Self by the study of the Vedas, by sacrifice⁶” (Brih. Upa. 4. 4. 22) etc.; as well as⁷ in such Smriti passages, “They destroy sins by practising austerities” (Manu 12. 104).

[1 *Other works*—The *Naimittika* and *Prâyashchitta* works are included. Comp. Smriti, नित्यनैमित्तिकैरेव कुर्वाणो दुरितक्षयम्—“Destroying sins by the performance of the *Nitya* and the *Naimittika* works.” Comp. Gita 18. 45, “स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः” The Apastamba Dharmashastra says, “Men of several castes and orders, each devoted to his respective duties, reap the fruits of their actions after death—and then by the residual Karma attain to births in superior countries, castes and families, possessed of comparatively superior Dharma, span of life, learning, conduct, wealth, happiness and intelligence.”

² *Necessary*—The word *param* in the text does not mean “principal,” otherwise the Shruti passage that follows would be meaningless. The purification of intellect is only the secondary means, the chief one being the eagerness for knowledge. The *Nitya* and other works are generally performed with three aims in view, viz., (1) the acquisition of wealth or knowledge (not the highest), (2) the purification of heart, (3) surrendering the result to the Lord. In any case the purification of heart is an inevitable effect. The following beautiful passage from the *Naishkarmya-Siddhi* (1. 52) shows how the performance of the *Nitya* Karma leads by successive stages to the attainment of the

highest knowledge : नित्यकर्मानुष्ठानात् धर्मोत्पत्तिः, धर्मोत्पत्तेः पापहानिः, ततः चित्तशुद्धिः, ततः संसारयाथात्म्यावबोधः, ततः वैराग्यं, ततः मुमुक्षुत्वम्, ततः तदुपायपर्येषणं, ततः सर्वकर्मसंन्यासः, ततः योगाभ्यासः, ततः चित्तस्य प्रत्यक्प्रवणता, ततः तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यार्थपरिज्ञानं, ततः अविद्योच्छेदः, ततः स्वात्मनि अवस्थानम् ।”

3 *Buddhi*—The determinative faculty. In order to perceive an object, the first thing that is required is the outward instrument of the senses; then there is the organ which is really in the brain; and the third is the mind which joins the two. The impression thus gained of an object is presented to the *Buddhi* which reacts. Along with this reaction flashes *Ahamkâra* or the idea of egoism. The organs (*Indriyas*) together with the mind (*Manas*), the *Buddhi* and the *Ahamkâra* form the group called *Antahkarana* (the internal instrument). They are but the various processes in the mind-stuff called *Chitta*. From the infinite store-house of force in nature the *Chitta* absorbs some and sends out as thought. The outward objects always try to cause distraction of the *Chitta* whose natural inclination is to go back to its pure state. Hence the essence of Yoga is to restrain *Chitta* from its outward tendency and concentrate it on the real nature of the Self. Comp. the first aphorism of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*, “Yoga is restraining the *Chitta* from taking various forms (*Vritti*).”

4 *But*—The word distinguishes the *Upâsanâ* from works. The *Chitta* can practise full concentration upon the object of knowledge as enjoined by the *Shastras* or understand their subtle meaning only when the *Buddhi* is purified of the effects of its accumulated sins by the performance of the *Nitya* and other works.

5 *Concentration etc.*—See note on *Buddhi*.

6 *Sacrifice*—The concluding portion of the passage is “by gifts, by penance, by fasting, and he who knows It becomes *Muni*.”

7 *As well as*—The word *cha* in the text implies that the knowledge of Brahman is attained only when the *Chitta* is purified of its sins. This is supported by the *Smriti* passage in the text.]

नित्यनैमित्तिकयोः उपासनानां च अवान्तरफलं पितृलोक-
सत्यलोकप्राप्तिः, “कर्मणा पितृलोकः विद्यया देवलोकः” (बृः उः
१।५।१६) इत्यादिश्रुतेः । १४

14. The other¹ results² of the *Nitya*³ and the *Naimittika* Karma and of the *Upâsanâ* are the attainment of the *Pitriloka*⁴ and the *Satvaloka*; as in Sruti passages such as, “By⁵ sacrifice the world of the Fathers, by knowledge (*Upâsanâ*) the world of the Devas (are gained).” (*Briha. Upa.* 1. 5. 16).

[1 *Other*—The direct result is meant. Purification of the *Buddhi* etc. as given in the preceding text is only an indirect but inevitable effect.

2 *Results*—The performance of the *Nitya* and the *Naimittika* works leads to the attainment of the *Pitriloka* whereas *Upāsana* helps the aspirant to attain the *Satyaloka*.

3 *Nitya etc.*—The *Prayashchitta* rites or the penances have been excluded as they do not produce any result after death. But in cases of the *Nitya* and the *Naimittika* works additional results, besides going to the higher worlds, have been mentioned in the scriptures.

4 *Pitriloka*—According to the Hindu Puranas the *Brahmānda* or the universe is divided into fourteen planes, viz., *Satya*, *Tapa*, *Maha*, *Jana*, *Svah*, *Bhuvah* *Bhuh*, *Atala*, *Vitala*, *Sutala*, *Talātala*, *Mahātala*, *Rasātala* and *Pâtāla*. The *Satya loka*, the highest plane, is divided into three sub-planes viz., *Brahmaloka*, *Vishnuloka* and *Shivaloka*. The soul never comes back from the *Satyaloka*. But it returns to this earth from the *Pitriloka* which belongs to the *Bhuvan-loka*. The planes from the *Satyaloka* to the *Svar-loka* are known as the *Devaloka* or the region of the Gods.

5 *By etc.*—As to how the performance of works such as the *Nitya* and the *Naimittika* leads to the attainment of the *Pitriloka* which is said to be realised by the obsequial oblations (*Shrâddha*) only, see the *Vidvanmanoranjini Commentary*.]

**साधनानि—नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकेहामुत्रफलभोगविरागशमादिषट्क-
सम्पत्तिमुमुक्षुत्वानि । १५**

15. The means for the attainment of Knowledge :—discrimination of things, real and unreal ; renunciation of the enjoyment of the fruits of actions in this world or hereafter ; six treasures, such as, self-control etc. ; and the desire for freedom.

**नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः तावत् ब्रह्म एव नित्यं वस्तु, ततः अन्यत्
अखिलं अनित्यम्' इति विवेचनम् । १६**

16. Discrimination of things, real and unreal :—this consists of the discrimination that 'Brahman alone is the real¹ substance while all things other than It are unreal.'²

[Discrimination has been pointed out as the first *Sadhana* as without it renunciation is impossible.

1 *Real*—Unlimited by time. The knowledge of Brahman as the only Reality is possible only for him who has got a general comprehension of the import of the scriptures and who is an adept in the science of inference. There are innumerable *Shruti* passages which point out that Brahman alone is real. From inference also we can arrive at this conclusion. For whatever is divisible cannot be real. Again *Akāsha* and other material objects which have a beginning, cannot be real. Hence Brahman alone, which has no beginning or which cannot be said to have parts, is real.

2 *Unreal*—What is opposed to real.]

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda

The following short note received from a student of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, U. S. A., may be found interesting by our readers :

"It was my good fortune to be in Los Angeles at a time when Swami Vivekananda was giving lectures there. Although the subjects on which he spoke were new to me at that time, I was fascinated by them; and when I returned to Oakland and Swami came later and lectured in San Francisco, Oakland and Alameda, I was irresistibly attracted and was almost invariably one of his listeners.

"On one occasion it was announced that on a certain afternoon the Swami would give a lecture to advanced students at his place of residence. As I was very desirous of attending, I applied to Swami's secretary for permission to do so, at the same time telling her that I was not an advanced student. In answer I was given to understand that such being the case I would better not try to attend. Not satisfied, however, I applied to the Swami himself for permission to attend. He said most heartily, 'Come, and welcome, welcome, welcome!'

"The Swami's lecture was an intellectual and spiritual feast,—we seemed to be transported to higher regions of thought and feeling.

"A part of the afternoon was given to answering questions, some of which were somewhat trivial, but the Swami always answered with un-failing courtesy.

"The subject of diet was being discussed when a student asked, 'Swami, what about eating onions?' 'Well,' answered Swami, 'onions are not the best diet for a spiritual student, but how fond I was of them when I was a boy! I used to eat them and then walk up and down in the open air to get them from my breath.'

"The last half-hour of the afternoon was devoted to meditation and the Swami became completely lost to the external world. His presence seemed to radiate a divine influence which permeated our very being. We went home, our feet scarcely touching the ground. It seemed as if the Swami had given us to drink of the Divine Nectar."

Here indeed lay the real greatness of Swamiji.

Two more items may be added from another letter. An English lady who took Swamiji in 1900 to see Napoleon's tomb in Paris, says, "I see him now leaning over and looking down upon Napoleon's tomb and saying, 'A great man, a great force! Siva! Siva!' And at St. Peter's in Rome, he said, 'This is splendid!' And when I said, amazed, 'You, Swamiji, like all this ceremony?' he replied, 'If you love a personal God, then given Him all your best incense, flowers, jewels and silk. There is nothing good enough.' A great wonder it was, knowing Swamiji."

Tolstoy and India

Students of Tolstoy have often noted that his philosophy inclines more towards the Oriental than the Occidental. That has been one of the main reasons of his great popularity among the Oriental readers. But it was not generally known that the Oriental flavour of his serious writings was due mainly to his profound studies of the Oriental philosophies and religions. M. Paul Birukoff, a "leading Russian biographer of Leo Tolstoy and the constant companion of the Russian sage during the last few years of his life," observes in course of the Foreword of his latest work, *Tolstoy und der Orient* (an English Translation of the Foreword is published in the February issue of the *Modern Review* to which we are indebted for the extracts) :

"The thought of making the wisdom of the Orient accessible to the Russian people never left him. He projects a short compendium of the most important religions and points out their essential unity. This work too he cannot finish and finally contents himself with "The Thoughts of the Sages," in which first appear the Gospel, beside the ideas of Socrates, Buddha, Krishna, Leo Tse, Pascal and others.

"At that time, *i.e.*, at the end of the former and the beginning of the present century, Tolstoy comes to be regarded as an international genius in the whole world, in all its five parts, and his personality becomes the centre of all the exertions connected with him.

"He receives the works of authors and thinkers from all sides of the earth and exchanges letters with them. Always, however, his attention is riveted on the East and the Orient receives his sympathy above all.

"He reads the works of Swami Vivekananda about the philosophy of Yoga which appealed to him extraordinarily. He reads Baba Bharati's book about Krishna, the works of Shri Shankara Acharya about the philosophy of Vedanta and others.

"Finally he comes into immediate epistolatory communications with the Japanese, Chinese, Indians, Brahmans, Mohammedans, with revolutionists and with those who condemn force of every kind. India, ancient and modern, attracts him above all. He earnestly asks these Orientals to keep before their eyes the value of their precious ancient wisdom and warns them against the dangers of the West."

The Greater India Society

On the 10th October, 1926, in a meeting at Calcutta where assembled many of the most learned gentlemen of Calcutta under the presidency of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, was inaugurated the "Greater India Society," an event which we hailed with great delight. We have since received the papers of the Society together with its first bulletin from its Honorary Secretary, Dr. Kalidas Nag.

We have always held that unless the Indian mind was brought back to the consciousness of its past achievements, its present struggles for emancipation will be often mere gropings in the dark, and that a historical consciousness was an indispensable condition of true nationalism. It

is a sad fact however that we are amazingly ignorant of the achievements of our fathers. We scarcely know that we are the descendants of those giants of men whose cultural and spiritual dominion extended from one end of Asia to the other, if not farther.

The Society pertinently points to this sad oblivion by the motto it has chosen for itself, *âtmanam bidhi*, Know Thyself. The Society has taken upon itself the noble task of bringing us back to self-consciousness. It proposes to organise the study of Indian culture in Greater India, to arrange for the publication of the results of the researches into the history of India's spiritual and cultural relations with the outside world, to popularise the knowledge of Greater India, etc., etc. Its interest is not limited to India's past only, but extends also to its present, for it proposes to study the conditions of Indian settlers in foreign lands and aid them in bettering their conditions. It also aims at organising Hindu Cultural Missions to Greater India and other lands.

We look upon the establishment of this Society as one of the happiest events of the recent days. To know oneself is to be strong. The proverb 'Knowledge is Power' is never truer than in our case. To become conscious of a glorious heritage is to be filled with large hopes and indomitable power. We cannot therefore too highly estimate the value of such a venture as the foundation of this Society from the national point of view.

From the scholastic stand-point also, we are sure, it has a great usefulness and a bright future. Many of those who are associated with the Society are well-known for their profound scholarship and enjoy international reputation. If they take to their work with earnestness as we hope they will do, the achievements of the Society are bound to be very fruitful in the advancement of historical knowledge and the Society may one day become a great centre of the study of Indology.

We request our readers to render help to the Society by becoming its members and otherwise. Communications may be made with the Hon. Secretary at 91, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta.

A useful Bengali Magazine

We would like to draw the attention of our Bengali readers to the excellent and useful articles that are generally published in the pages of a little Bengali monthly, *Swâsthya-Samâchâr*, edited by Kartik Chandra Basu, M.B. It is as its name implies devoted to matters of health, considerations of sanitation, prevention of diseases and other allied topics. The articles are very popularly written and sometimes illustrated. We are sure the village population especially will be much benefited by their perusal. The price yearly is quite cheap, Rs. 2/- inclusive of postage. The paper can be had of the Editor at 45 Amherst Street, Calcutta.

THE IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION

BY KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

Principal, Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal

(Continued from page 81)

The restless activity of the Western world that disturbs the repose of the soul must not be mistaken for the *Karma-Yoga* of India. The true *Karma-Yogin*, in the words of Emerson, "must keep his head in solitude and hand in society." Such is the character of the activity of the Ramkrishna Mission. The monks of this Mission live in silence and solitude at regular intervals—for the life of the spirit requires it—and it is the spirit of silence that they bring to bear upon their work. A man cannot always work nor can he always meditate, worship and study. Bhagawan Ramkrishna has given us a clear warning against monotony in life. That is why the motto of the Mission is the harmony of the four classical paths of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga.

The aim of the Mission is high ; its skill in work is matchless. Still a great deal more has to be done. A perfect network has got to be spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. The name of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda must resound everywhere in the land. A complete reawakening of Hinduism must be brought about at any cost. The ideals of the Mission must be clearly distinguished from those of the Hindu Mahasabha which seems to be chiefly political in its outlook. What useful purpose will be served by the Mahasabha to the cause of the Hindus' religion is a matter not very clear to me. That the Hindus as a community should organise themselves for the purpose of defence goes without saying. But unless the true principles of Hinduism are inculcated upon the Hindus and made a living force no Mahasabha and no Sangathan will be able to lift them out of the slough. Until India is firmly set on her feet and made to rear her head the Ramkrishna Mission cannot think of rest.

What is wanted now is more men and more money—but men above all. Men coming forward, money will not be

wanting. That is why Swami Vivekananda has said: "Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life I did not know where the next meal would come from ; but money and everything else I want must come, because they are my slaves and not I theirs ; money and everything else must come. Must—that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question." How forcible the words! What is wanted now is an abundant supply of strong and intelligent youths who will take up the work of the Mission with perfect alacrity, in whose ears will constantly sound the voice of the prophet of the age and who will be the devoted practisers of the great mantram (message), *'atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha* (for one's own liberation and also for the good of the world). The great Swami wanted only one thousand such youths about thirty years ago. That number has not yet joined his rank because in his work there is no momentary excitement but sober and deliberate consecration of life. That verily the call of the Swami is the call of the Motherland, that the Swami's call is verily the call of India's God is a truth to be fully realised by the young men of India. The area of work is daily extending. It will soon have to be extended further afield. It is not only in India but in countries outside—in fact, in all the continents that the message of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda is to be boldly preached. One thousand workers are no longer sufficient for all the purposes of the Mission. Five thousand workers seem to be necessary at present. Is it too much for the Mission to expect five thousand strong and intelligent youths of character out of the three hundred millions of people inhabiting India? There is no fear whatever that population will decrease. Number is not everything. The most important factor is quality. What good can the country expect from men no better than crawling worms breeding fast and doing nothing?

It is five thousand competent workers that seem to be the present need of the Mission. But how is it that they are not forthcoming in spite of the clarion-call of Vivekananda still ringing through the air? Obstacles then there undoubtedly are. It is the duty of all, householders and Sannyasins alike, to remove these obstacles to the best of their power. It is the special duty of those who are teachers and journalists by profession, for the influence they exercise on the thoughts of youth is very potent indeed. THE OBSTACLES I REFER

TO APPEAR TO ME TO BE SIX IN NUMBER. The *first obstacle* is the absence from the mind of our youths of any clear conception of the ethical ideal or the meaning of human life. Their environment is calculated to blunt their moral sense. That anything has to be done beyond passing the examinations, marrying and earning one's livelihood as a Government servant, pleader or doctor is a matter of which very few are conscious at all. The supreme need of *Brahmacharya* without which there is no difference between man and beast is felt by very few of our youths. The *second obstacle* is the want of seriousness, the spirit of irreverence or levity (*a-sraddha*), the tendency to make light of everything however grave—a habit for which Carlyle's term is 'persiflage,' a habit which he rightly considers to be the bane of society. The *third obstacle* is the unrestricted publication of pornographic literature in the blessed name of Art. The *fourth obstacle* is brutal lethargy, idle talk and foolish and demoralising games and amusements. The *fifth obstacle* is the pernicious teaching of modern Europe that asceticism is anti-social, that it is an imperfect, perverse and erroneous ideal of life. Here the fault lies not less with our older men posing as teachers. When we hear from a lofty platform the deliberate opinion that the synthesis of *vidya* (spiritual wisdom) and *avidya* (nescience) constitutes the philosophy of our people and when even the Upanishads are quoted in support of this philosophy then I have no alternative but to quote these very Upanishads and say in reply: "Existing deep in the layers of Nescience, yet flattering themselves as so many sages, those wiseacres move constantly round the circle of birth and death like the blind led by the blind." Besides the five obstacles just touched on there is another one—not least because mentioned last. It is *Æsthetic Sentimentality masquerading as mysticism and spirituality* whose claims are iterated and re-iterated by a section of the press and the "cultured crowd" with a persistence worthy of a better cause. Its subtle poison is undermining the character of our youth and its "respectability" has assumed such abnormal proportions that to utter a protest against it is the height of temerity.

The obstacles mentioned above are the unmistakable signs of a grave social distemper. It is the bounden duty of all, householders and Sannyasins alike, to declare war *à outrance*

against the moral canker that is eating into the vitals of the nation. It is the duty *par excellence* of those who are teachers and journalists by profession. The Mission will never get workers as long as this duty is not properly discharged. *The taste of the nation must be radically changed.* Pornographic literature and effeminate literature must be banished altogether and the literature of strength and healthy literature must be triumphantly restored. It must be brought home to the Hindu that if he wants to have a "place in the sun" HE MUST BE RE-HINDUISED, that is, his religion must be a thing of life and not of use and wont, he must give up his faint-heartedness and be a hero in the strife. He must combine in himself the spiritual fire of the Brahmin with the force and chivalry of the Kshatriya. In order that he may be all this he cannot do better than go deep into the wonderful life, *sadhana* (practice) and realisation of Ramkrishna, the fulfilment of Hinduism, and in order that he may understand Ramkrishna he cannot do better than read the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda, the accredited agent of Ramkrishna, "read those speeches and writings by day, meditate on them by night, peruse them again and again, study them, imprint them on his mind and impress them on his heart." Ramkrishna can be understood through Vivekananda alone. Any attempt to understand Ramkrishna, without reference to Vivekananda, his *alter ego*, is bound to fail as we know from our experience. The understanding of Ramkrishna is only another name for the re-awakening of Hinduism, the palingenesis of Hindustan. For the meaning of this re-awakening and for the place of Ramkrishna in this movement of regeneration let me conclude by quoting the solemn words of Vivekananda himself as they stand translated into English :

"Strong in the strength of this new spiritual renaissance, men after re-organising these scattered and disconnected spiritual ideals will be able to comprehend and practise them in their own lives and also to recover from oblivion those that are lost. And as the sure pledge of this glorious future, the all-merciful Lord has manifested, in the present age, an incarnation which in point of completeness in revelation, its synthetic harmonising of all ideals and its promoting every sphere of spiritual culture, surpasses the manifestations of all past ages.

“So at the very dawn of this momentous epoch, the reconciliation of all aspects and ideals of religious thought and worship is being proclaimed ; this boundless, all-embracing Idea lying so long concealed in the Religion Eternal and its scriptures and now re-discovered . . . is being declared to humanity in a trumpet voice.

“This new dispensation of the age (*yuga-dharma*) is the source of great good to the whole world, specially to India ; and the inspirer of this dispensation, Sri Bhagavan Ramkrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in religion. O man, have faith in this, and lay it to heart.

“The dead never return ; the past night does not re-appear ; a spent-up tidal wave does not rise anew ; neither does man inhabit the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, O man, we invite you to the worship of the living present ; from the regretful brooding over by-gones, we invite you to the activities of the present ; from the waste of energy in retracing lost and demolished pathways, we call you back to broad new-laid highways lying very near. He that is wise, let him understand.

“Of that power which at the very first impulse has roused distant echoes from all the four quarters of the globe, conceive in your mind the manifestation in its fulness ; and discarding all idle misgivings, weaknesses and the jealousies characteristic of enslaved peoples, come and help in the turning of this mighty wheel of new dispensation (*yuga-chakra*) !”

(Concluded)

THE EAST JUDGES THE WEST

We quote below a portion of a recent letter of a London correspondent to the *Hindu*, Madras, which throws a strong light on the silent change of outlook going on among the Christian missionaries. The change is certainly welcome. But we think it must be more thorough and fundamental to meet fully the needs of mankind. Christians must learn to conceive the Christ as an *aspect* of the impersonal Divine Ideal. For the world does not want at present persons so much as principles. And if it is to be given persons at all, then not merely Christ,

but also Krishna, Buddha, Rama, and other prophets and Incarnations.

The correspondent writes :

I have on more than one occasion remarked that in progressive Christian circles in this country, there is a growing appreciation of the Indian point of view in matters of religion, combined with an intensely sympathetic attitude towards your ideals and aspirations. I heard a sermon last Sunday morning at Wimbledon Church (Christ Church, Congregational), which I wish could be broadcast amongst all Europeans who have any connection with the East. The preacher was the Rev. S. J. Hooper, whose enlightened discourses on various aspects of the Christian faith have attracted to his ministry an increasing congregation of thoughtful people. Your readers will be interested, I am sure, in the following summary of what he said on this occasion, even though all his remarks may not command approval.

The subject was tersely announced : "East judges West," the sermon being based upon the familiar words of Jesus, "Ye are the light of the world." Mr. Hooper said that if they were to succeed in propagating their faith, what Christians must take to the East especially was not Western civilisation or even Western forms of ritual and organisation, but rather the person of Jesus Christ. The very fact of our religion being Western (although Eastern in origin) was one of the gravest objections to it in India. It was only when they saw that Christ was not inseparable from Western civilisation that the people of India were prepared to listen to him. The centering of everything upon the person of Jesus had cleared the issue for some of the modern missionaries in India and given new life to their work.

But that same process, said the preacher, had come back upon them with a terrific judgment. "India to-day is doing nothing less than judging Christians in the white light of the spirit of Jesus. They have caught the meaning of what it is to be a Christian, and in the light of that they are judging us." Mr. Hooper proceeded to refer to Dr. Stanley Jones' book, "The Christ of the Indian Road," which has made a profound impression upon religious people over here. In that book, said he, there was a good deal that would explain the slow progress of Christianity across the seas. In South Africa, for instance,

there is a Christian church which displays a notice: "Asiatics and Hottentots not allowed." Mahatma Gandhi was denied admission to that church because he was an Asiatic—"and so was Jesus!" cried the preacher. Indians felt pained and scornful, he said, as they had good reason to be, when they heard of that incident. It might be asked, "Are not low-caste Hindus forbidden to enter their own temples?" That might be so, but the point he made was that, while judging themselves by their own religion, the Indians judged us in the light of the spirit of Jesus, and they were quite right in doing so. "We are bound to be judged by the religion we profess and by the Christ we say we follow."

Mr. Hooper quoted a Hindu as saying: "If you call one of us a Christian man, he is complimented, but if you call him a Christian he is insulted." That was penetrating. That Hindu saw a vast difference between a nominal Christian and a Christ-like man. There was another Hindu—a teacher—who declared: "I want to become a Christian, but I do so in spite of the lives of Europeans. I have seen here. They seem to have two loathings: one is religion and the other is water." In the latter connexion the preacher repeated Stanley Jones' story of the two Europeans who fought a duel and killed each other. The Hindus, out of the kindness of their hearts, buried them, and wishing to make an offering to the spirits of the dead, they came to the conclusion, after thinking it over, that these men would love in death what they had loved in life, so they placed as a memorial on the tomb a cigar box and a whisky bottle!

Mr. Hooper's congregation was next reminded that the East does not judge the West merely by the Westerners who go East. The Press, aided by the telegraph and the wireless, had made the world very small. We knew of happenings in India within a few hours of their occurrence; and the same was true in India of events in Western countries. With what result? He gave the answer by quoting the following conversation which took place at a conference in India between some American missionaries and a group of earnest Nationalists:—

Missionary: "My brothers, I have been talking to you about Christ. I want you to tell me frankly why you do not accept him. Do not spare me—I am not the issue—tell me frankly."

A Hindu: "You ask us to be Christians: may we ask how Christian is your own civilisation? Don't you have corruption at your own central Government in Washington?" (This was just after the oil scandal revelations.)

Another: "Don't you lynch Negroes in America?"

A third: "You have had Christianity in the West all these centuries, and though Jesus is the Prince of Peace, you have not yet learned the way out of war. Don't you know any more about Christianity than that?"

The Hindus knew, Mr. Hooper went on, that the Founder of Christianity was colour-blind where men were concerned. He looked upon men apart from race, birth and colour. In him there was neither Greek nor Barbarian, Jew nor Gentile, but one race—and all brothers. And it was in the light of this conception that the East would judge the West. The Indians had a story concerning the origin of White man: "God asked the man who is now white what he had done with his brother, and *he turned white with fear!*"

Could they wonder that the brother of Rabindranath Tagore had said: "Jesus is ideal and wonderful, but you Christians—you are not like him."

The East, said the preacher, judges the West and calls us back to our Lord and Master. We ought to welcome the judgment. Only as we are saved ourselves can we save the races of the world. Only as we are really like Jesus, can we be what he wants to call us, "the light of the world." Dr. Stanley Jones asked Mahatma Gandhi what could be done to naturalise Christianity in India. "I would suggest first," was the reply, "that all your Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ." The great Indian saint was right. That is the first thing needful. We have never taken Jesus seriously enough. As one has said: "Our Churches are made up of people who would be equally shocked to see Christianity doubted or put into practice." From every side the call was coming to the West—"Be Christian, but Christian in a bigger, broader way than you have ever been." Yes, said Mr. Hooper in conclusion, we must be Christ-like. In no other way can we become the Light of the World!

HINDU MONKS

BY A WESTERN WANDERER

It was a glorious November morning and the beautiful island of Ceylon was flooded with golden sunshine when our steamer on her way to Calcutta anchored at Colombo to take in cargo. "We will be here two days," the jovial captain said, "make the best of your time." Heeding his wise counsel I went ashore, hired a rikshaw, and went sight-seeing.

In the neat little vehicle, drawn by a fleet-footed Singhalese, I rolled swiftly over red avenues beneath glossy surrya trees, past luxuriant oriental gardens and orange groves, till we came to the Pettah or native quarters of the town. Here my man slackened his pace and led me into a narrow street lined on both sides with little open shops displaying an endless variety of luscious fruits and curious eastern merchandise. Slowly we made our way through swarms of vociferous, sharp-featured natives scantily dressed in gay-coloured loin-cloths.

Among this mass of dusky humanity jostling each other or bickering and bargaining I spied a splendidly built youth of dignified bearing. His classic features were shaded by a red turban and his lithe body covered with a loose salmon-coloured robe. His quaint dress and calm behavior in the midst of all the hubbub attracted my attention, and curiosity made me follow him afoot. He was a Sadhu, or Hindu monk, begging his food. At each shop he halted and held out a bowl of cocoanut-shell to receive his *bhiksha*, or alms. At one stall he received a handful of rice, at another a little pulse, and at a fruitstand a boy, after saluting him with bowed head and folded hands, presented him with a banana. A group of laughing children obstructed his way, and one after the other knelt on the ground and with their foreheads touched his bare feet. He bent down, laid his hand on each little head, smiled at the merry group and went on his way.

At a corner of the street he came upon an old fellow who with a heavy cane belabored his bullocks straining at a heavy load. In a flush of anger, his eyes flashing, the young man raised his arm to strike the fellow. But he bethought himself and with the words "Have mercy brother, have mercy!" turned away.

Then I lost sight of him. But toward evening I saw him again at a Buddhist monastery where he stood among a group of yellow-garbed, shaven-headed monks worshipping with incense and flowers the image of the Buddha. After the ceremony he told me that he had come from India to study with the Buddhists the teachings of the Compassionate One, for India has gone back to her Vedas and Ceylon is now the stronghold of Buddhism.

In India the number of Sadhus belonging to different orders is calculated to be over five millions. They come from all ranks of life

and live on the charity of the people. Dressed in orange-colored tunics and turbans, with shaven faces, they look clean and picturesque. But when they almost denude themselves, as some orders do, wearing only red cloths the rest of their brown bodies besmeared with white ashes, their long sun-bleached hair hanging over their shoulders in matted locks or coiled on top of their heads, they present a weird and bizarre appearance. And it is not to be wondered at that the most ignorant and superstitious among the Hindus have a good deal of awe mixed with their reverence for these strange men. They ascribe to them supernatural powers and believe that the Sadhu can curse as well as bless. "And their curses," they tell you, "are sure to come true."

Sadhus can be found all over India. They climb the snow-capped Himalayas, cross the burning deserts and wander in the sunny plains of Hindustan. There is not a hamlet where they are not known. I have met them everywhere during my travels in India.

At Puri, a place of pilgrimage on the beautiful Bay of Bengal, I have seen them in the dim light of gathering dusk among vast crowds of excited, shouting pilgrims forcing their way into the ancient temple of Jagannath, almost struggling in their mad anxiety to be among the first to worship the crude images of Krishna, his sister Subhadra and his brother Balaram which are periodically renewed and enshrined there. And I have wondered at their enthusiasm during the Car-Festival in June, when, under a blazing sun, they scrambled with hosts of pilgrims for a hold on the cable attached to the cumbersome car of Jagannath by which the idols from the temple are taken to the pavillion where they are installed during the next week. They strained and jerked and hauled at the rope moving the clumsy car a few feet each time, till the distance of about a mile had been covered. At each new effort I could hear their voices ring out above the din of the crowd as they shouted, "Jay Jagannathji ki jay!" "Victory to the Lord of the world!"

At Benares, most holy of holy cities, on cool evenings after sweltering days, I have sat and conversed with them at the magnificent bathing-ghats, with the Ganges flowing at our feet, carrying on her bosom masses of flowers, wreaths and little bamboo boats—symbols of life—offered her by thousands of devotees from all over India. There I have disputed with them the sacredness of their holy river, but finally, for good luck, added my little craft to theirs, pushing it off upon the stream loaded with marigolds, sweets and a tiny light. And—to complete the act—sent with it a prayer that "Mother Ganga" might accept my humble offering.

Near Allahabad, in Northern India, I have bathed with them, when the heavens were most auspicious, a little apart from the dense crowd of pilgrims, but still within thrice holy *Prayag* where the white Ganges and black Jumna mingle their sacred waters. There I have watched them as they stood waist-deep in the icy water with uplifted hands invoking the sun with the Vedic prayer: "O Sun, controller of all, collect thy golden rays and gather up thy burning effulgence that I may behold thy spiritual form." And at the monastery across the river I have visited their underground caves where they sat for hours, like living bronze statues, in solemn meditation.

At Brindaban, city of a thousand temples, mecca of Hindu devotees, I have mingled with them as they worshipped and prostrated before the images of Radha and Krishna, incarnations of Divine Love, offering at their feet fragrant, yellow blossoms of the *Kadamba* tree, for the god and goddess love these flowers. Here, following an ancient rule laid down by their scriptures, they lived on *Madhukari*, which means, *like the bee*. As bees gather honey from different flowers so the Sadhus begged their food from door to door.

And at Uttara Kasi, a little village tucked away in the Himalayas, not far from the source of the Ganges, where hundreds of Sadhus live during the summer months to escape the heat of the plains, I have visited their quiet *Ashramas*, or hermitages, and in the shade of their neat bamboo huts, seated on the soft grass, sometimes sharing their simple meals, have discussed with them the subtleties of their abstruse philosophies.

I well remember my first meeting with wandering monks in India. While travelling in the Himalayas, in Kumaon, where the forests were ablaze with scarlet rhododendron blossoms and glittering, snowy peaks engirdled the sun-steeped valleys, I came one evening to a pine-wooded knoll sheltered by massive gray mountains. Here I pitched my tent. The night was bitterly cold, and my sleep was disturbed by the deep-toned grunting of a prowling tiger. My coolies became panicky and built a fire to keep the brute at a safe distance. Shortly after dawn I arose. I donned sweater and greatcoat to protect myself against the penetrating chill of the upper region, and then to my tent came two Sadhus, fine, bold, upstanding fellows. They were naked except for a muslin loin-cloth which certainly afforded little protection against the chill air that made my teeth to chatter, swathed as I was in garments to suit the climate. They greeted me with the customary Sanskrit salutation, "*Namo Narayanaya*" (Salutation to the Lord within thee). Then, in Hindi, they told me that they had lost their way.

Glad of this opportunity to talk with these strange men I invited them inside my tent. They entered leaving their staves and grass sandals outside, and squatted on a little carpet that covered the bare ground of my tent. They told me that they had spent the night in the open half a mile from my camp.

"Did you hear the tiger?" I asked.

"Yes," one of the monks replied in an off-hand way, "and we saw one last evening."

"And had you no fear?"

"Wild animals do not molest us for we never have done harm to any creature," was the unexpected reply.

Then I expressed my astonishment to see them so scantily dressed in this cold region, to which the elder of the monks replied, "We are accustomed to all climates, and through Yoga practice are able to still the demands of the body."

"But," I interposed, "there are physical laws to which the body is subject."

“True,” was the quick response, “we do not claim supernatural powers. By observing certain practices we regulate the functions of the bodily organs. Thus we overcome the effects of heat and cold and keep the body strong and healthy.”

My curiosity aroused, I requested the younger man to show me some of these practices. This he consented to do. He twisted and bent his body in a way reminding me of the old-time contortionists of the circus and vaudeville stage. Nerves were pressed and muscles contracted to affect different organs and to regulate the circulation of the blood. The performance over, the men rose, and with a salutation left my tent. With the grace and light, elastic step of panthers they followed the winding path among the pines, and soon disappeared from my sight.

In Northern India I visited a monastery close to the Himalayas, in a sheltered valley at the foot of towering mountains. I had sent word to the *Mahant*, or abbot, expressing my desire to visit him, and had received a courteous and inviting reply. On the appointed day, a bright September morning, I set out on foot. The road led through a forest where long-tailed, gray monkeys jumped across my path, and green parrots flew among the pines and deodars shrieking as they pursued one another.

When I approached the grounds of the monastery the abbot, a rotund little man with kindly face, dressed in a flame-colored tunic, a little red cap on his gray head and country-made slippers on his otherwise bare feet, was busy in his garden tending the flowers. He looked up, and seeing me put aside his watering-can and slowly came to meet me.

“Come and see my flowers. I am very proud of my garden!” he began with a smile in his genial brown eyes.

“With pleasure!” I responded in Hindi, the language in which he spoke.

We entered the cool, shady grounds and strolling leisurely among the flowers and bushes talked as if we were old friends with a common love for growing things. A sharp-featured monk in an orange robe was digging around a rose-bush, and another, also in orange garb, was drawing water from a well. We nodded as we passed.

“There are six Sadhus here at present,” the abbot said as he stooped to pick a beautiful crimson rose which he offered me. “Our number is constantly changing for Sadhus live a wandering life. ‘As flowing water does not become stagnant, so the wandering monk does not become corrupted,’ is the common saying among us. There are few who live permanently in monasteries.”

We came to an alluring bower covered with honeysuckle. Here a middle-aged monk seated cross-legged on a flat stone was chanting sacred texts from a Sanskrit scripture.

“This is Swami Atmananda,” the abbot said. “He makes it a rule never to stay in a place more than one night. He came yesterday and will leave us to-day.”

The monk took no notice of us. In a deep solemn voice he chanted :

“Our meditation is directed toward Thee who art the adorable self-effulgent Light of the universe.

Illumine our minds with Thy divine wisdom.”

We passed on, and following a winding avenue lined with marigolds and shaded by pomegranate and lime trees, came to the monastery embowered amidst rich foliage. It was a plain, white, stone building with a veranda facing the east. Here we rested on a rustic bench silently enjoying the charming view over undulating hills and remote blue mountain ranges.

"Let us step inside," the abbot proposed when we had rested.

Passing through a number of high-ceilinged, whitewashed rooms with cement floors on which mats were spread, each room containing one or two sleeping-cots, and a few pictures of Hindu saints hung on the walls, we came to the library, a large room with a square table in the center and books arranged on shelves against the walls. In a corner, on a little mat, sat an aristocratic-looking young monk engaged in the preparation of a *japamala*, or rosary. He had one hundred and eight beads, each a berry of the *rudraksha* tree, which he strung on a silken thread. Whenever a new bead was added he made a knot in the string and muttered a mantram which forms part of the daily prayers of millions of Hindus.

We left the monk with his occupation, and squatted on a palm-leaf mat close to the book-shelves. The abbot producing one scripture after the other read to me his favorite passages. He loved his books and handled them with care. With reverence he held each volume to his bowed forehead before replacing it.

"Will you prepare tea for us, Swamiji?" he asked the young monk who had risen from his seat.

"Certainly, Maharaj!" he replied bowing his head.

When he had left the room the abbot told me that this monk halted at the monastery to follow the time-honored rule of *Chaturmasya*, that is, of staying in one place during the four months of the rainy season. "It is difficult to travel during these months," he said, "and we do not like to step on the many insects that crawl over the road during this season."

The young monk acted as cook for the little group, in which he was assisted by a clear-eyed, clear-skinned boy, about fifteen years old, who now softly entered the room, barefoot and dressed in the white tunic of the neophyte. Noiselessly he placed before us two brass tumblers of tea and a copper platter with sweetmeats. Then he placed around my neck a garland of sweet-smelling white flowers. This little act of courtesy provoked from the abbot a smile of satisfaction. The boy bowed his head, and with his hands folded against his breast left the room.

After sipping the very sweet tea and tasting of the sweetmeats, I requested the abbot to tell me his own story. He hesitated a moment. Then, in a very earnest tone, he said, "My story is simple. Love of the religious life was inborn with me; I carried it over from a previous existence. As I grew up I became more and more disgusted with the vanity of a worldly life. I approached a *Guru* and was initiated. I took the vows of poverty and chastity, changed my worldly clothing for the orange robe, and wandered from one holy place to another accepting such food and shelter as chance did offer. Sometimes I met with great difficulties, but the good God always came to my rescue."

Then there was silence. An expression of peace and calm stole over the old man's face. When he spoke again, he quoted from a Buddhist scripture a quaint stanza addressed to Sadhus :

“Go and consider not thy path;
 Fear nothing, demand nothing.
 Like the rhinoceros, wander thou alone.
 Even as the lion, not trembling in danger;
 Even as the wind, free and never caught in a net;
 Even as the lotus-leaf, unstained by the water;
 Like the rhinoceros, wander thou alone.”

The good monk was silent. Not wishing to disturb his happy mood I wished him God's blessings, and rose.

“Go in peace, my son,” he said very softly, his hands raised in benediction. I bowed my head and turned away. At the garden-gate a long-forgotten sloka from an ancient scripture flashed through my mind : “O Sadhu ! May thy presence bring such peace and blessing that even the roadside dust is not disturbed by thy passing.” And I wondered whether that great peace descended on the flowers that seemed to thrive so well under the abbot's gentle touch.

The recollection of this pleasant visit was still fresh with me when I met a Sadhu of quite different type. The evening shadows were moving slowly across the dusty road along the edge of a jungle by which I approached a village in Central India. By the side of the road, near mud-built cottages, brown children were playing in the dust. The cows were home from their pastures and munched their scanty fare of coarse straw. In the village the evening-cooking fires were burning, and volumes of fragrant smoke came curling through the open doors of clay-built kitchens.

I pitched my tent in a palm-grove, and after the evening meal sauntered about the village on the outskirts of which I came upon a curious scene. In front of an isolated straw hut under the spreading branches of a fatherly old tree, sat a tall Sadhu, about thirty years old, scantily dressed in a pale-red clout. His bare upper body and long, matted hair, bleached by the sun, were besmeared with white ashes. He sat before a burning log, the *dhuni*, or sacred fire, which, according to the rule of his order, he lit wherever he spent the night. Around the fire sat a group of men with whom he was chatting.

Interested in the scene I joined the group. The monk had tramped through different parts of India, and was now relating his experiences gathered in distant lands. He held his audience spellbound with vivid descriptions of how people in other provinces dressed, talked and prepared their food. He was a jolly fellow, and with his stories provoked hearty laughter from his admiring audience. One of the men handed him a *chillum*, or pipe, of tobacco mixed with *ganja*, an intoxicating drug. He filled his lungs with the pungent smoke which he blew out in large, white volumes. Then, his hands and head keeping time, he sang in a high-pitched, singsong voice, in his native dialect :

“Call on the Lord,
 Call on the Lord, brother.

He is the Helmsman who steers us
Across this ocean of Life."

Two women draped from head to foot in white saris slowly approached the scene, and kneeling before the monk, their heads bowed to the ground, shyly placed before him an offering of milk and sweets. Then they rose, and like two mysterious phantoms retreated to a dark corner behind the men where they squatted on the ground. To give something to a "holy man" is considered a meritorious act ; and as the group grew larger the offerings increased.

The men now began to propose religious questions which the monk answered without the least hesitation. Sometimes the answers were abrupt, a single word, or a quotation from some Veda ; or it was a story or parable from Hindu scripture or epic.

"How can we know God?" a young peasant asked.

"By desiring to know Him," came like a flash. "Let me tell you a story. Once a young man came to a sage with the same question. The sage said, 'Come to-morrow morning, and I will settle your doubts.' The youth came, and they went together to a river to perform their morning ablutions. When they entered the river the sage taking hold of the young man pushed him under the water. The youth struggled to free himself. Then the sage pulled him out, and asked, 'What did you desire most when I held you in the stream?' 'A breath of air,' was the natural reply. 'Very true,' said the sage, 'when your desire to know God becomes as strong as was your desire for air when I held you under the water then you will know Him.' "

The moon now appeared from behind a magnificent mango tree bathing the tender jungle foliage in ethereal beauty. The monk rose, and taking the offerings which he had received distributed them among his seated audience, keeping for himself only a cup of milk. The food thus sanctified by the touch of a Sadhu is called *prasadam*, or consecrated food, and the common people receive it with great reverence.

When the offerings had been distributed everyone rose. I exchanged a few words of greeting with the monk, and walked back to my tent. A silvery gauze spread over the road, and enveloped the sleeping village. The bark of a jackal came from the jungle, and a night-bird answered with a shrill cry. Then there was silence, and I retired.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Late Swami Prakashananda

News has been received with painful surprise that Swami Prakashananda, Head of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, California passed away on the 13th February.

Swami Paramananda's Tour

On Monday, October 25th, after three months at the Ananda Ashrama, Swami Paramananda left for Boston, stopping a few hours at Chicago, where he was entertained by friends and where he delivered

an address before the Kenmore Club. On the third Sunday after reaching his Boston Centre, he went, on the invitation of the Rev. Albert P. Grier, Pastor of "The Church of the Truth," to New York City, leaving Boston after the morning Service and arriving in New York in time to conduct the Church's evening Service. The next day, Monday, the Swami conducted a noon meditation class for Dr. Grier, being introduced by the Rev. Elliot White, assistant Pastor of Grace Church, one of New York's oldest, largest and most beautiful churches. For two Sundays the Swami made this trip, meeting many old friends and making many new ones. In addition to other activities he was guest of honor and chief speaker at the bi-weekly luncheon, given at Ceylon Restaurant by the "Fellowship of Faith," and addressed a gathering at the home of a friend in Scarsdale, a suburb of New York. While in New York, the Swami met Swami Raghavananda of the New York Vedanta Society.

Swami Akhilananda taking charge of the Boston Centre

After Swami Paramananda's departure for the east, all Services and Classes at Ananda-Ashrama were conducted by his assistant, Swami Akhilananda. Those who have heard the Swami have appreciated his simple, direct manner of presenting the teaching and the earnestness and fervour of spirit he expresses through his words. The Swami continued to conduct all meetings until the end of November, when Swami Paramananda wired for him to join him in Boston in order to assist in the work there. The Tuesday following the Swami's arrival, he was informally introduced to the Boston members at the Class, and on the following Thursday was guest of honor at a large reception at the Centre where a formal introduction took place, Swami Paramananda urging everyone present to co-operate with the new Swami in all possible ways. In response Swami Akhilananda spoke eloquently on true brotherhood and was accorded a warm and hearty welcome. Music and refreshments rounded out a memorable evening, for Swami Akhilananda's coming marks the opening of a new phase in the Boston work. After seeing this well started, Swami Paramananda left for California, fulfilling en route, lecture engagements at Cincinnati, Louisville and Chicago, and reached California in time to celebrate Christmas at Ananda-Ashrama.

Christmas Celebration at Vedanta Centre, Boston

On Christmas Eve, a little Christ altar with its flowers and candles and picture of Virgin and Child sent its beams out through the front window of the Vedanta Centre of Boston to greet the devoted members who were picking their way through the rain to gather together and pay their homage of praise and prayer at the feet of the Divine Child. As the worshippers entered the garlanded chapel, their gaze became fixed upon the main altar beneath the symbol, "Om." It was laden with a lavish offering of pure white flowers and Christmas greens. At its foot, two tall candles and a circle of flickering white lights, and white roses, guarded the spot where the great triangle, formed of

three red vigil lights and symbolic of descending Deity, rested its point in a lotus cup.

With the ringing of chimes and the burning of incense, the Service began. Then came the singing of ancient Christmas carols of many lands, now by single voices and now by the entire assembly, alternating with the reading of Scripture and chanting of Sanskrit prayers by Swami Akhilananda, who has recently been put in charge of the Boston Centre and who for the first time was conducting Christmas Service in America. At one point in the Service, the singing ceased and the Swami gave a very intimate talk on the "Significance and Necessity of Incarnations." In the course of his address, he explained how the ideal of an impersonal God and abstract principles might satisfy the demands of the intellect, and yet leave most people helpless. "We do not know what to do with the wealth of our emotions," he said. "Most of us ordinary human beings understand Deity only when we see It embodied in a limited human life. We crave a personal God to whom we can surrender our life. By worshipping this personal God, we satisfy the tremendous need of the emotional side of our nature, and by serving Him we satisfy another side of our nature. To night we are celebrating the birth of such an Incarnation. Let us take this time for meditation and renewed consecration, that we may be filled with pure love and that our lives may shine forth with the glory of Him who is our Ideal."

R. K. Mission Sevashram, Kankhal

The report to hand of the Kankhal Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram for the year 1925 shows that it served during that year 602 patients in its indoor hospital and at its outdoor dispensary 45,626 patients of which 19,966 were new cases. It also conducted a night school for the depressed classes and maintained a library for the local Sadhus, Vidyarthi, etc. The Sevashram had its area extended by purchase of 4 *pucca* bighas of the adjoining land on which it proposes to erect Workers' Quarters, Rest House, Guest House, Night School Building, etc.

The financial condition however is not at all satisfactory. It must be conceded that the Sevashram is doing an important work in that locality. It therefore hopes that its following needs will be promptly met by the generous public. It needs Rs. 7,000 for the Workers' Quarters, Rs. 5,000 for the Night School Building, Rs. 8,000 for the Guest House, Rs. 5,000 for the Rest House, permanent endowment fund for 54 beds at Rs. 3,000 per bed, and several thousand rupees for the equipment of the wards. These are urgent requirements, and we hope the appeal of the Sevashram will not go in vain. Contributions may be sent to (1) Swami Kalyanananda, Hon. Secy., R. K. Mission Sevashram, Kankhal P.O., Saharanpur Dt., U. P.; or (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; or (3) The President, Ramkrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal.