

# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।  
Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## RAJA YOGA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

### FIRST LESSON

Each individuality must be cultivated. All will meet at the centre.

“Imagination is the door to inspiration and the basis of all thought.”

The explanation of nature is in us ; the stone falls outside, but gravitation is in us, not outside.

Those who stuff themselves, those who starve themselves, those who sleep too much, those who sleep too little, cannot become Yogis.

Ignorance, fickleness, jealousy, laziness and excessive attachment are the great enemies to success in Yoga practice. The three great requisites are :

*First.* Purity, physical and mental ; all uncleanness, all that would draw the mind down, must be abandoned.

*Second.* Patience. At first there will be wonderful manifestations, but they will all cease. This is the hardest period. But hold fast ; in the end the gain is sure if you have patience.

*Third.* Perseverence. Persevere through thick and thin, through health and sickness ; never miss a day in practice.

The best time for practice is the junction of day and night, the calmest time in the tides of our bodies, the zero point between two states. If this cannot be done, practice upon rising from and going to bed. Exquisite personal cleanliness—daily bath—is necessary.

After bathing, sit down and hold the seat firm, that is, imagine that you sit as firm as a rock, that nothing can move you. Hold the head and shoulders and the hips in a straight line, keeping the spinal column free ; all action is along it and it must not be impaired.

Begin with your toes and hold each part of your body perfect, picture it so in your mind, touching each part if you prefer to do so. Pass upward bit by bit until you reach the head, holding each perfect, lacking nothing. Then hold the whole perfect, an instrument given to you by God, to enable you to attain Truth, the vessel in which you are to cross the ocean and reach the shores of eternal truth. When this has been done, take a long breath through both nostrils, throw it out again and then hold it out as long as you comfortably can. Take four such breaths, then breathe naturally and pray for illumination.

“I meditate on the glory of that Being who created this universe ; may he illuminate my mind.” Sit and meditate on this ten or fifteen minutes.

Tell your manifestations to no one but your Guru.

Talk as little as possible.

Keep your thoughts on virtue ; what we think we tend to become.

Holy meditation helps to burn out all mental impurities. All who are not Yogis are slaves ; bond after bond must be broken to make us free.

All can find the reality beyond. If God is true, we must feel him as a fact, and if there is a soul, we ought to be able to see it and feel it.

The only way to find if there is a soul is to be something which is not the body.

The Yogis class our organs under two chief heads—organs of sense and organs of motion, or of knowledge and action.

The internal organ or mind has four stages. *First*—Manas, the cogitating or thinking faculty, which is usually almost entirely wasted, because it is uncontrolled ; properly governed, it is a wonderful power. *Second*—Buddhi, the will (sometimes called the intellect). *Third*—Ahamkara, the self-

conscious egoism (from *Aham*). *Fourth*—Chitta, the substance in which all the faculties act, the floor of the mind as it were, or the sea in which the various faculties are waves.

Yoga is the science by which we stop Chitta from assuming or becoming transformed into several faculties. As the reflection of the moon on the sea or the waves is broken or blurred by the waves, so is the reflection of the Atman, the true self, broken by the mental waves. Only when the sea is stilled to mirror-like calmness, can the reflection of the moon be seen, and only when the "mind stuff," the Chitta, is controlled to absolute calmness, is the Self to be recognized.

"Mind stuff" is not the body, though it is matter in a finer form, and it is not eternally bound by the body. This is proved as we get occasionally loosened from it. We can learn to do this at will by controlling the senses.

When we can do that fully, we shall control the universe, because our world is only what the senses bring us. Freedom is the test of the higher being. Spiritual life begins when you have loosened yourself from the control of the senses.

He whose senses rule him is worldly—is a slave.

If we could entirely stop our mind stuff from breaking into waves, it would put an end to our bodies. For millions of years we have worked so hard to manufacture these bodies that in the struggle we have forgotten our real purpose in getting them, which was to become perfect. We have grown to think that body-making is the end of our efforts. This is Maya. We must break this delusion and return to our original aim and realize that we are not the body, but that *it* is our servant.

Learn to take the mind out and see that it is separate from the body. We endow the body with sensation and life and then think it is alive and real. We have worn it so long that we forget that it is not identical with us. Yoga is to help us put off our body when we please and see it as our servant, our instrument, NOT our ruler. Controlling the mental powers is the first great aim in Yoga practices. The second is concentrating them in full force upon any subject.

YOU CANNOT BE A YOGI IF YOU TALK MUCH.

#### SECOND LESSON

This Yoga is known as the eight-fold Yoga, because it is divided into eight principal parts. These are :

First—Yama. This is most important and has to govern the whole life ; it has five divisions :

1st. Not injuring any being by thought, word or deed.

2nd. Non-covetousness in thought, word or deed.

3rd. Perfect chastity in thought, word or deed.

4th. Perfect truthfulness in thought, word or deed.

5th. Perfect sinlessness in thought, word or deed. (Non-receiving of gifts.)

Second—Niyama. The bodily care, bathing daily, dietary, etc.

Third—Asana. Posture,—hips, shoulders and head must be held straight, leaving the spine free.

Fourth—Pranayama. Restraining the breath (in order to get control of the prana or vital force).

Fifth—Pratyahara. Turning the mind inward and restraining it from going outward, revolving the matter in the mind in order to understand it.

Sixth—Dharana. Concentration on one subject.

Seventh—Dhyana. Meditation.

Eighth—Samadhi. Illumination, the aim of all our efforts.

Yama and Niyama are for life-long practice ; as for the others, we do as the leech does, we do not leave one blade of grass without firmly grasping another. In other words, we have to thoroughly understand and practise one step before taking another.

The subject of this lesson is Pranayama, or controlling the Prana. In Raja Yoga breathing enters the psychic plane and brings us to the spiritual. It is the fly-wheel of the whole bodily system. It acts upon the lungs, the lungs on the heart, the heart upon the circulation, this in turn upon the brain and the brain upon the mind. The will can produce an outside sensation and the outside sensation can arouse the will. Our wills are weak ; we do not realize their power, we are so much bound up in matter. Most of our action is from outside in. Outside nature throws us off our balance and we cannot (as we ought) throw nature off her balance. This is all wrong ; the stronger power is really within.

The great saints and teachers were those who had conquered this world of thought within themselves and so spoke with power. The story of the minister confined in a high tower who was released through the efforts of his wife who brought him a beetle, honey, a silken thread, a cord and a rope, illustrates the way we gain control of our mind by using first the physical regulation of the breath as the silken thread. That enables us to lay hold of one power after another until the rope of concentration delivers us from the prison of the body

and we are free. Reaching freedom, we can discard the means used to bring us there.

Pranayama has three parts :

- 1st. Puraka—inhaling.
- 2nd. Kumbhaka—restraining.
- 3rd. Rechaka—exhaling.

There are two currents passing through the brain and circulating down the spine, crossing at the base and returning to the brain again. One of these currents called the "Sun" (pingala), starts from the right hemisphere of the brain, crosses at the base of the brain to the left side of the spine and re-crosses at the base of the spine like one-half of the figure eight.

The other current, the "Moon" (ida), reverses this action and completes this figure eight. Of course, the lower part is much longer than the upper. These currents flow day and night and make deposits of the great life forces at different points, commonly known as "plexuses," but we are rarely conscious of them. By concentration we can learn to feel them and trace them over all parts of the body. These "sun and moon" currents are intimately connected with breathing and by regulating this we get control of the body.

In the Katha Upanishad the body is described as the chariot, the mind as the reins, the will as the charioteer, the senses as the horses and the objects of the senses as their road. The self is the driver seated in the chariot. Unless the driver has understanding and can control his horses, he can never attain the goal, but the senses like vicious studs, will drag him where they please and may even destroy him. These two currents are the great "check rein" in the hands of the charioteer and he must get control of them and control them. We have to get the power to become moral ; until we do we cannot control our actions. Yoga alone enables us to carry into practice the teachings of morality. To become moral is the object of Yoga. All great teachers were Yogis and controlled every current. The Yogis arrest these currents at the base of the spine and force them through the spinal column. They then become the current of knowledge, which only exists in the Yogi.

Second Lesson in Breathing :—One method is not for all. This breathing must be done with rhythmic regularity, and the easiest way is by counting ; as that is purely mechanical, we repeat the sacred word "Om" a certain number of times instead.

This pranayama consists in closing the right nostril with

the thumb and then slowly inhaling through the left nostril, repeating the word "Om" four times.

Then firmly close both nostrils by placing forefinger on left one and drop the head on the chest and hold the breath in, mentally repeating the "Om" eight times.

Then lift the head erect and removing the thumb from the right nostril, exhale slowly through that, repeating the "Om" four times.

As you close the exhalation, draw in the abdomen forcibly to expel all the air from the lungs. Then slowly inhale through the right nostril, keeping the left one closed, repeating "Om" four times. Next close the right nostril with thumb, drop the head, hold the breath while repeating "Om" eight times. Then lift the head erect, uncloze the left nostril and slowly exhale, repeating "Om" four times, drawing in the abdomen as before. Repeat this whole operation twice at each sitting, that is, making four paranayamas, two for each nostril. Before taking your seat it is well to begin with prayer.

This needs to be practised a week, then gradually increase the number of breathings, keeping the same ratio, that is, if you make six pranayamas, repeat the "Om" six times at inhalation and exhalation and twelve during kumbhaka. These exercises will make us more spiritual, more pure, more holy. Do not be led aside into any byways or seek after power. Love is the only power that stays by us and increases. He who seeks to come to God through the Raja Yoga must be strong mentally, physically, morally and spiritually. Take every step in the light.

Of hundreds of thousands only one soul will say, "I will go beyond and I will penetrate to God." Few can face the truth, but to accomplish anything, we must be willing to die for Truth.

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## THE LURE OF THE UNIVERSAL VISION

BY THE EDITOR

It has been remarked that *Prabuddha Bharata* has been devoting of late too much attention to things secular. *Prabuddha Bharata* is dedicated to the task of awakening the spiritual instincts of men, inasmuch as spirituality alone can fulfil men's highest ends. We plead guilty to the charge that our articles have not been all purely spiritual. But in doing so, we want to add a few words in explanation.

There cannot be the least doubt that the fulfilment of man lies in realising himself as pure spirit, as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss absolute. It is an ineffable experience, transcending all relative consciousness. And oh the ecstasy of it! Whoever has seen even the shadow of it, has reached even its outermost fringe, finds himself engulfed by the tumultuous waves of ecstasy. This ecstasy is the end and aim of life. This is the goal towards which all efforts should be directed. Help given in attaining this goal is the most precious help that one can render to another. And we always wish we could render that help in abundance. Not that *Prabuddha Bharata* is lacking in this kind of stimulus. Surely we are not unmindful of this supreme duty. If we have been devoting our attention to other things also, we have good reasons for it.

The age we are living in is extremely critical and complex. Never in the past has the world been so beset with problems as in the present time. The whole humanity has come perilously together. And this sudden contact of widely various peoples has let loose powers which are difficult of understanding, much less of control. It is sometimes thought that contact of different peoples is of necessity a good thing. That is not so. Not all may come together. Just as free mixing of individuals is not often good, so also is not the free mixing of races and nations.

First of all, when two or more peoples come together, they necessarily react on each other. We say *each other*, but as a matter of fact, it is the stronger or strongest of them that exerts the most powerful influence over the others, and these latter have to submit timidly to that influence without much power to resist. The result is scarcely beneficial to either party. The conquering party becomes insolvent and the defeated lose their individuality and become eventually little more than names. Human history is dark with many instances of such destruction. If a growing civilisation wants to preserve and defend itself, it must learn how to isolate itself from the destructive influence of overbearing civilisations, and must not come out of this self-imposed isolation until it has been strong enough to withstand and judge such influence.

Not all cultures and civilisations have the same motive and end of growth. Each has its individual ideal. It is natural therefore that the greatest attention is paid by a people to its central interest. The main theme of the nation's thought absorbs its best powers, and other aspects of life are comparatively neglected. Then again, there are ups and downs in a nation's life as in the life of an individual. There are periods

of comparative decay and stagnation, of weakness and barrenness. These are the periods of great catastrophes to nations. During those times, the nation must raise protective walls around it and save itself till it is reinvigorated and fit to face the world-forces squarely. Of course, such an ideal arrangement, practically speaking, is scarcely possible. So it happens that there are foreign aggressions, political and cultural. The result, when the invaded nation succeeds in surviving the attack, is that a comparison is set up between the parties. The aggressive party cares little, at least in the beginning, to profit by the new acquaintance. But the defeated one sets itself assiduously to imitating the victor. It discovers many real and imaginary virtues in its master, and considers itself as devoid of essential qualities. It takes for granted that the prominent qualities of the victorious nation are *the* qualities to be assiduously cultivated. It loses faith in its own ideal and in the central theme of its life. It so happens that the invading nation has cultivated certain aspects of life which the conquered nation has considered secondary. There is naturally a suicidal over-appreciation of those aspects by the defeated nation. Such a state of things is scarcely beneficial.

Of course, these disastrous consequences can be avoided if the conquering nation be generous. Collective generosity however is a rare thing. No nation, unless it has intrinsic spiritual virtues, can be generous to other nations by mere choice. It must be habitually and naturally charitable. Charity is the outcome of a spiritual outlook on life. Only a spiritual nation can be charitable to other nations. Those who are engaged in material aggrandisement, or are at best intellectual, cannot be kind to other peoples. History is strewn with broken dreams because of aggressive materialism or intellectualism. How many are the cultures and civilisations that are essentially spiritual? Few, very few indeed. Therefore whenever different races and cultures have come together, there have inevitably been clash and conflict and scarcely amity.

Now it so happens that in India at present, and to certain extents all over the world, men's problems are mostly problems of readjustment due to racial and cultural conflict on account of sudden mingling of widely different peoples of the world. We in India are finding things very difficult for us. Everywhere, in every department of life, there is only doubt and uncertainty and conflict of ideals. These doubts and conflicts must be resolved if we are to live again with vigour and purpose. We cannot shut our eyes to them and content ourselves with



following our individual spiritual pursuits. They are forcing themselves on our consciousness, draining us of all vitalities.

The most obvious conflict is of course political and economical. Who does not feel that unless we are politically and economically improved, we shall be reduced to the last straits within a short time? The world-forces are acting in such a way that unless we are up and doing, we shall be soon nowhere. And yet political and economic improvements cannot be made by pious wishes. In India so many different interests require to be reconciled! Our classes and masses both require to look at things from a different angle of vision. Old medieval ideas of politics will scarcely do in the present age. There can be no doubt that in these departments we have to sit at the feet of the West. Yet mere blind imitation will scarcely avail. Western statecraft will have to be modified in the light of the Indian genius. Such a consummation is not a question of mere choice, but of absolute necessity. So deep thought, clear understanding and constructive work are urgently needed.

Take the question of Indian economics. We certainly had our own system. But in the mean time the modern Western system has imposed itself on us. It may be full of faults. Maybe it is antagonistic to the Indian genius. But the fact remains that it is a stern reality in our socio-economic life. We cannot ignore it. What are we to do with it then? We cannot reject or fight it out. We have to *assimilate* it. Our institutions have to be modified in accordance with the new system. But this modification is not an easy task. Here again earnest thinking and action are urgently needed.

Then there is the question of education. Education, we need not mention, is the very basis of national development. But what kind of education shall it be? No one has yet been able to give us very clear ideas. Each is trying in his own way. Some are trying to go back to the old orthodox ideals. Others are frankly ultra-modern. Others again are seeking to combine the two extremes in varying degrees. But the combinations do not seem to meet the need in proper measures. Here again is a problem of the most intricate nature, demanding the closest attention of the best minds of the country.

What about social readjustment? What shall be the ideal? And what the methods? Social reformers have yet to find out right answers.

Then there is the paramount question of cultural readjustment. The Western culture is pressing heavily on us. How much of it is good, and how much evil? Can all its evils be avoided? If so, how? Or are we to submit helplessly to its

onslaughts? We do not believe that we can escape its influence. There are elements in the Western culture which are lacking in our own, and which we must assimilate if we are to rise up again as a powerful nation. And there are tendencies in it, which though apparently evil, must yet be accommodated. We cannot, for instance, avoid following the West in exploiting material resources and powers of nature, though we are sure the Western overemphasis on matter is ultimately an evil. Western powers of organisation again are too marvelous not to be imitated. We also must learn the secret of organisation, if we are to survive as a people.

There is also the question of religion. Religion as it is understood and practised by us at present, must undergo radical changes. May be, for individual purposes, our present theory and practice of religion are enough. Not so from the national view-point. For, if religion is to serve as the basis and primal motive of our collective life, it must harmonise itself with the other aspects of life. It cannot survive if it promulgates contrary ideas or practices. There must be no internal conflict in the national scheme of life.

All these must be given the closest attention. And herein comes the need of devoting the resources of *Prabuddha Bharata* to so-called secular problems as much as to spiritual problems proper. For we hold that unless and until these are solved properly, even individual spiritual realisation will become more and more difficult. Man cannot make his spiritual life an unconnected, isolated thing, apart from other concerns of his life. Unless he can so realise his material and mental life that they would not clash against his spiritual ideals, he will find his spiritual ideals growing more and more unreal and less and less capable of drawing the homage of his soul. We must therefore give as much attention to the consideration of our material and intellectual problems as to the spiritual ones.

It may be said that it is enough if one attains spirituality ; —one need not trouble oneself with the collective problems ; if one somehow becomes spiritual, one's subtle influence will create an atmosphere of peace and harmony, and that is what after all matters. We regret we cannot subscribe to this belief. We admit that if we could have such spiritual persons *in abundance*, we might do without caring much for other things. But the main question is: can spiritual persons be produced under any conditions? Have not the nation's material and mental conditions an essential connection with its spiritual growth? If there is, does it not follow that though there may be born a few spiritual persons now and then, the general

spiritual level will become daily lower and lower unless we improve the material and mental setting of spiritual life?

We have therefore given our devoted attention to the consideration of national problems in their various aspects, and we have tried to present the solutions in the best way possible, showing eventually that our national interests do not require us to deviate from our ancient spiritual ideals, and that our religion, in its true and fundamental form, is really the greatest solvent of our national doubts. We hope we have succeeded, at least partly, in showing the direction towards which our collective aspirations should be made to rise. And we hope we have thereby helped the intrinsic spirituality of our readers, at least indirectly, if not directly. We have tried to make the spiritual paths of our readers easier, and still easier for the posterity.

The more important fact however is that this age is seeking to conceive religion from a new angle of vision. This age requires a religion which will subsume all the best aspirations of mankind. Our old spiritual ideals were sufficient for the past times in which they were evolved. Those ideals were more or less individualistic. This age wants to practise spirituality also in its collective aspect, as it is manifesting itself in the diversified forms of human achievements. This is the age of harmony. We must each become an embodiment of not merely one ideal of man, but of all ideals. We must become each an epitome of humanity. This will not only make man more perfect, but will also succeed in spiritualising what has been considered secular so long. This is the goal towards which humanity is moving.

Now, if this new universal ideal of spirituality is to be made a reality, we need to take up all aspects of life and hold them up to the transforming light of the Divine: we must make of them a garland of which the thread will be Divinity. Nothing should be rejected. There is nothing of man which is not Divine. His history, politics, industry, economics, art, science, philosophy, society, education, his life and his death, all are parts of a Divine drama, manifestations of the inner Immortal Being. This new vision we want to hold before our readers. And we are seeking to infect them with the necessary enthusiasm to change their old outlook and aspire after the vision of the *Virat*, the Universal. This is the new spiritual ideal which was emphasised by the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Verily he was the incarnation of *Man*. In him the very heart of humanity throbbed. His heart beat in unison with the heart of mankind. And nothing was insignificant or

unspiritual to him. He spoke of the history of men with the same devotion and enthusiasm as he did of God and his doings. The two were not separate to him. Aye, this is the new ideal that we must place before us, and *Seva*, service, shall be the method of its realisation. Our God is the God that has become men and our worship is the service of men.

The West is, by its marvellous discoveries and inventions, realising the external unity of men. But alas, its methods of unifying humanity are as much destructive as constructive. It is seeking to create external unity, but external unity avails little if there is not the inner, spiritual, unity. We do not see any other nation than India, which can make this gift of spiritual unity to mankind. This is the great mission of India. But if India is to discharge its duty properly, India must not only aspire after individual all-forgetting, transcendental, spiritual ecstasy, but must also realise that which is immanent in men. The combination of the Transcendental and Immanent is what is wanted.

This is a welcome sign among our young people that the woes and sufferings of India have touched their heart deeply. This feeling is the raw material out of which the Transcendental-Immanent Vision is to be built up. The young minds are seeking for light. They want to understand their country and its problems. They want a synthetic ideal. We must feed these minds. If *Prabuddha Bharata* by devoting itself to so-called secular problems succeeds even partially in helping these struggling souls, it will consider its labours sufficiently repaid.

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## OBEDIENCE AND DISCIPLINE

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

### I

The power of obedience is what we, as a people, require. It is a mistake to imagine that obedience is a form of servility. True obedience is one of the noblest expressions of freedom. If the problem ended with the act of submitting the will to a higher authority, India would have enough, if not too much, of obedience. But in fact this is only the initial step. The whole question of how and when lies beyond this. The authority being chosen, obedience is free. Most of us exercise this privilege when we select our work in life. With the task, we accept its conditions. Eminence is only attainable at the price of steadiness and reliability in keeping them.

But before freedom comes training. The child must be disciplined that man may be free. Discipline means, before all things, the mastery of how to obey. Obedience, to be of any value at all, must be immediate, instinctive, precise. It must not depend upon a knowledge of reasons,—for in that case, it ceases to be obedience altogether,—but must be loyal, not to the man of approved judgment, not to the brain of greatest genius, but simply and solely to the man in charge, the constituted authority, the man at the helm, in that particular enterprise in which we have enlisted.

The supreme type of obedience is found in the ship. A moment of peril arises. Instinctively every member of the crew springs to his place. Each man, we may suppose, is a trained seaman, but are his eyes fixed on the ocean, on the enemy, on the conditions of the moment? By no means. Such a state of affairs would spell ruin and defect. Every man's eyes and ears are on the captain. He alone surveys the scene. He alone can estimate the chances of success. He alone is responsible for the action of all. We may choose our authority freely. But once chosen, we must obey blindly. Even the crew of Christopher Columbus, threatening rebellion from hour to hour, did not attempt disorderly disobedience. As long as they had not deposed their captain they obeyed him. Even in a mutiny the new authorities are constituted before the old are disposed of.

A trained and disciplined crew in the hour of crisis becomes one man, and that man the captain, the leader, the chief. He may not be the ablest man on board by any means. But as long as he is in command, the ability of his subordinates must be expressed in carrying out his will. And this even if his will lead to catastrophe. The man under orders has one duty, and one duty alone to carry out his orders. The fact that those commands may be foolish and headstrong, that they may carry him and his into the depths of the ocean, or lead them to the mouth of the roaring cannon, is none of his business. He is there to obey, and if need be to obey blindly. When the charge is sounded at Balaclava, when the admiral signals to bring the vessel too near its companion-ship, then is the moment to remember the words of the Gita: "Better for a man is his own duty, however badly done, than the duty of another, though that be easy."

This duty of obedience can only be rightly balanced by the responsibility of the leader and commander. On him rests the overwhelming burden of wisdom and discretion, of the maintenance of his own authority and also of its rightful use.

The subordinate who feels it in him to outshine his own officer, may very possibly be right in his estimate of their relative ability, but for the present, and until he himself has reached the sovereign position, the responsibility of judging, directing and determining is not on him.

Let him think and contrast methods as he will, but let him in the meantime keep silence and obey. Criticism of the superior officer is disloyalty. Disobedience is mere chaos. The man who would gather power of government must act, and think in silence as he acts.

On this twofold discipline,—the discipline of obedience and of responsibility—rests the power of humanity to fuse, to act in unison. This power, to be complete and perfect, must never be at the bidding of the emotions, nor even at that of the judgment. We must obey the superior because he is the superior, not because we approve of him or admire him, still less because we love him. Our power to obey must be entirely at the disposal of our will. We must obey because we are determined to obey. No shilly-shallying, no reasoning-out of premises. No re-trying of the case. Once we have accepted him, the chief is no longer on his trial before us. What is on trial is our own power. In the moment of acceptance or rejection of a given authority, in that instant of discrimination, lies the whole freedom or bondage of man.

Prompt, perfect, precise obedience. How is the child to be trained to this? Strange as it may sound, by a twofold experience. There must be a part of his life in which a responsiveness to command which is military in its instantaneousness is required of him. But this must not be the whole. If this were to cover the whole of his life, he would grow up weak, servile, and incapable of sound judgment. The other half of the child's life must consist of perfect freedom, freedom and self-government. This he finds in the absence of his masters, amongst his comrades and in the playing-field. In these intervals of spontaneity and self-direction, he has the opportunity of realising and practising the virtues learnt under the restraints of discipline. If all were control, the character would be ruined in one way: if all were indulgence, it would be warped in another. A slave and vagabond, the creature of rules that he dare not break and the spoilt darling, none of these is a MAN, and men are what we must make of our children. Amongst nations there is no other test of efficiency. That people which has the greatest power of sustained and concerted action is the strongest; that which has least, the weakest. But

the nature of the discipline that is to produce such power, is the concern of parents and schoolmasters, for the faculty has to be built up during the earliest years of childhood.

## II

To the great, strength is first necessary, and next, discipline. It is the discipline we have had that determines our power of endurance. Power of endurance is always the result of discipline. By great impulses alone little is achieved. They sometimes bring about ill instead of good.

The youth of European nations is full of iron discipline, and to this they owe their success in combination. The schools attended by the English boys of the upper classes have been called by a thinker "one long reign of terror." From the moment a boy enters till the day when he leaves, he is the centre of a conspiracy of his peers to punish the slightest outburst of egotism or other offensive trait. This accounts, perhaps, for the mechanical head clerk type of distinction which so often seems to be the Englishman's main idea of greatness. It is quite clear that any individuality which survives five or six years of such treatment must either be lofty and persistent or a mere justification of mediocrity. Yet individuality of a noble kind does emerge sometimes, and it is easy to see how beneficial, on the whole, must be the effect of such a training on the average. Above all things, it breeds *the power to act in concert*, the power to distinguish between one's own whims and the main issues at stake, the power to suppress self in the interest of the community. In England, at any rate, it is this trait which distinguishes the ruling classes from the ruled, and it is their want of it that makes what we may call the *sudra* causes so contemptible in the eyes of aristocracies.

The Irish, compared with the English, are an undisciplined race. Historically, Ireland escaped both the Roman Occupation and the Protestant Reformation, and in these she lost two great chances of schooling. The fruit of her want of discipline is seen in her constant failures at united action, in her tendency to split every main party into half a dozen sections, in turbulent characters and aggressive bearing. Yet it is this very race, under changed conditions of discipline, that provides generals and commanders-in-chief for the armies of England.

European races concentrate their education on the man himself. They are not trying to bolster up this society or that institution. The European man is essentially an adventurer, and the world is his field. His career is in himself. He inherits

nothing but his personality. He accepts no master but him whom he has himself elected. Having elected, however, he follows through thick and thin. It is this that makes him so strong when he sets up 'pack-law' as the supreme sovereign. In the fulness of his freedom he chooses to be ruled. No other rule has such power as one thus created.

In Asia the undivided family is the source of all discipline and the goal of all effort. Instead of the hardened muscle produced by the constant friction of public opinion, we have here the warm heart and delicate emotions that go with ties of blood. No wonder Asia has produced saviours! The individualism of Europe has no means of sounding the heights and depths of love. But instead of true discipline, the family can offer only a pattern, a mould, into which the individual has to fit. Let certain forms of respect, certain habits of religion be duly fulfilled, and the family has no more test to offer. It may be that one, with the capacity of a hero, rises within its bounds. Instead of jealous rivals, he is surrounded by applauding kinsmen. Instead of a task constantly growing in difficulty, he meets with praise too easily. The great fault of the family, as civic unit, is that *it forgives too much and trains too little*.

A discipline that remains the same age after age comes to be an added fetter, instead of an occasion for the birth of a faculty. All education ought to end in freedom. The new task develops the new powers. Europe itself shows signs of becoming socially stereotyped, even as she once imagined Asia to be. Only by the action and reaction of these two upon each other, can the future mobility of the human intellect be secured. This action and reaction constitutes what the Swami Vivekananda called "the realisation and exchange of the highest ideals of both East and West." The histories of nations prove their significance by the men they produce. But in the end we have to remember that humanity is one, that the whole spiritual heritage of the ages is for each one of us.

Again to quote the Swami Vivekananda, "The ultimate unit must be psychological. The ideal Hindu may be same man born in the far West or North. The typical occidental character may appear suddenly in some child of Hindu or Mahomedan parents. Mind is One, and man is mind ; he is not body."

All that humanity has achieved, then, in any of her branches we may make our own. What the genius of another race has led it to create can be ours. What the genius of our race has led us to create can be made theirs. The true possessions of



mankind are universal. We whose strength is in feeling may proceed to assimilate severe new disciplines. They whose uniformity tends to become a danger may educate themselves on our family-ideals. Thus proceeds the great exchange, and man climbs painfully that mountain whose head is in the clouds.

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## THE WORK OF SWAMI TRIGUNATITA IN THE WEST

[Personal Reminiscences]

By HIS WESTERN DISCIPLES

THE TEMPLE MONASTERY

In the beginning, Swami's idea of persuading Swami Brahmananda to assume leadership of the movement in America seemed a possibility, but as the quarters being built for his use neared completion, Maharaj sent final word that he could not leave the work in India.

Swami accepted his decision as the will of the Divine Mother, and after a short time, on the urge of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson and others he took up his own residence in the flat which he had prepared with so much thought and care for Swami Brahmananda. He had not lived there two months when he was inspired with the thought that the third flat would be just the place for a monastery. There were a number of young men attending the lectures and meetings of the Society, one of whom had been living for six months in a downstairs room, and these Swami invited one by one to come and live in the monastery. Of those who were asked none refused, until ten were finally installed as inmates in the rooms of the monastery and in the tower rooms on the roof. This number was added to occasionally but the newcomers were not always permanent and the number remained at an average of ten. The young men were all engaged in various occupations and continued to earn their own living, contributing their share of the expense of the Monastery upkeep, according to their ability, until such time as they might either desire or were ready in Swami's judgment to take the vows of Brahmacharya.

A set of rules had been drawn up by Swami and each new member voluntarily subscribed to these rules. The day began at 4 a.m. with one hour's meditation class in the living room. At 5 o'clock was the morning bath, followed by the daily tasks of cleaning, sweeping, watering the plants, and all the routine

connected with the quarters. Each one did his own washing, kept his own room in order and in addition did a part of the general work. Swami instructed them that all work connected with the Temple was holy and that by doing such work in the true spirit, their minds would be purified and meditation advanced. Under the inspiration of Swami's presence and instructions everyone did his share gladly and the monastery inside and out was a model of cleanliness.

There were two main meals daily and Swami named them "Morning and Evening Service". The meals were opened with a chant and closed with a few minutes of silent meditation. Each student read in turn from one of the sacred Scriptures of the world, followed by questions, with answers by Swami, so that every meal became indeed a sacrament where the students ate the Bread of Life and drank the life-giving Waters of Immortality. At these meals the students heard many incidents of the Master's life and learned much about his methods of training his disciples. Swami constantly impressed upon the young men that eating was a sacred function and that all food should be eaten in the spirit of worship. That by so eating we feed every part of our being, physical, mental and spiritual. Meat, fish and flesh of every description were among the prohibited articles of diet, but curries and soups, with vegetables in abundance and variety, prepared in Hindu and Western style, gave a sufficiency of nourishing food.

Swami was fond of forceful maxims, and when some one at the table recited that great watchword of the American Republic, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty", he made him repeat it, saying that the Holy Mother always exclaimed over such sayings, because they were the words of great men in every country and usually had a deep spiritual significance, leaving their impression on the character of the nation.

The Society possessed a rubber type outfit for printing notices of lectures which were tacked on the signboard outside every week for the following Sunday, and Swami asked one of the students, a printer, to print by hand this watchword and other mottoes and hang them in every room of the monastery. Among others of his favorite mottoes were: "Live like a hermit but work like a horse"; "Do it now"; "Watch and pray", to which he added one of his favorites, which he quoted constantly, especially to the disciple who may have been wavering: "Do or die, but you will not die".

Swami was a bountiful provider and always kept a full supply of food on hand. He was very solicitous for the health

of every member of the monastery and always urged every one to eat heartily and also provided the means for sufficient indoor and outdoor exercise. Swami thoroughly believed in singing as a spiritual exercise. In the early morning he often took the young men up on the roof of the monastery to sing devotional hymns and chants. A half mile distant was the bay of San Francisco, and sometimes Swami took them thither for the morning singing and meditation. At that early hour none were astir except the fishermen in their power boats, going to their fishing grounds and an occasional ship, putting out to sea. Usually the air was calm and still, and, as the voices rolled out over the waters of the wide bay, it must have been a source of wonder to the listening sailors and fishermen. A quartet of the young men also sang and furnished the music at the Sunday evening service.

Swami was a consistent example of regularity and punctuality. Always to bed later than the others, he was yet the first to rise. Needless to say, his life was under continuous scrutiny by some of the young men for purity of mind and any motives of worldliness. There were those who never questioned, but there were some doubters, or unwilling believers, and these were eventually satisfied, for all that they found in his character was the one consuming purpose to give his life for the salvation of others and that all of his undertakings were only means to that end. In common with the often expressed dictum of his great brother, Swami Vivekananda, he held to the belief that character, true manly or womanly character, is absolutely essential as a foundation for the spiritual life. As a disciplinarian of the highest order, he was well qualified for the building of such character. Through all the life of a disciple he never lost sight of this point and never hesitated to apply the necessary instruction or discipline for the benefit of the disciple once he was convinced of its necessity.

Consequences never deterred him. To the genuine disciple he would say : "I don't mind if I break every bone in your body, so that I can drag you up to the shores of the Ocean of Immortality and throw you in ; then my work will be finished."

It cannot be said too often that when Swami became convinced that it was right to do a thing, he acted immediately, regardless of consequences, for by nature he was absolutely fearless.

Sometimes young men disciples, or would-be disciples, came to Swami expressing their desire to live the ascetic life under discipline. Some had read the lives of saints and in their

minds' eye was the picture of a monk's cell, with an artistic ray of light streaming through a small window, associated perhaps with the idea of a diet of bread and water. To such Swami suggested they first spend a few months in the Temple monastery as a preparation for the solitary life. To this they eagerly assented. They were then assigned sleeping quarters, usually in the same room with others and subjected to the limitations of privacy which such close contact brought. This was the first step in discipline, as nearly all were accustomed to sleeping in a room alone.

Then to their surprise, they sat down at least twice daily to wholesome and substantial meals. Nothing seemed to accord with their idea of asceticism. What they were really going through, however, was the necessary preparatory discipline of association. After two or three months they discovered that some of the hardest discipline lay in the conquest of the ego under the constant friction of this daily association. Some would make complaints of others to Swami. He would reply: "Did you not ask for discipline?" "Yes", they would answer, "but not that kind", and then would leave the monastery. Those who endured and made the best of everything and thus remained faithful were then ready for direct instruction from Swami. Those who conquered themselves and learned the true spirit of service to others look back on the years of their monastery life as among their most delightful memories.

The life of Swami was one long sacrifice and those who were privileged to be in his presence found their doubts and troubles melt away like snow before the sun. He veritably emanated holiness, for he ever lived in the consciousness of the Divine Mother. His life was also an example of self-discipline. As stated, he was always the first to rise and every moment from rising to retiring was full of ceaseless activity. He ever maintained his Sannyasin life and notwithstanding his various ailments, insisted on sleeping on the floor of his office, a light mattress being the only concession he would make to the entreaties of those concerned for his health and comfort.

In the ante-room next to the monastery kitchen there were several strings stretched across one end from wall to wall and dangling from these were a number of life-like spiders of different sizes and kinds. The young men at first thought they were there simply as a decoration, but one or two thought differently and, after various conjectures, approached Swami for the reason of their presence there. It seemed that from childhood Swami had an unaccountable feeling toward spiders.

Once while swimming in the Ganges, he came suddenly into a swarm of water spiders, millions of them. He received such a shock from the encounter that he could hardly reach the shore. It was to overcome this feeling, or rather to make sure that it no longer existed, that he hung up the artificial spiders where they could be seen by him a number of times a day.

In addition to his unceasing daily labors, Swami cooked all the meals for the monastery so that the young men might eat of food prepared by holy hands and blessed by a holy mind ; to the end that they might be purified through eating this holy food. Thus every act of their lives became an act of worship to help them along the path to blessedness.

In the month of March, 1906, the hearts of the members and friends of the Vedanta Society were gladdened by the news that another Swami was coming from India to act as assistant to Swami Trigunatita and on Thursday, August 2nd of the same year, Swami Prakashananda arrived and took up his residence in a room next to Swami's office on the ground floor.

After the monastery opened he came to eat with the young men at the morning and evening meals and it was not long before Swami turned over to him the conduct of the meals and the cooking itself, though Swami Trigunatita retained the actual control, and always cooked a special dinner on Sundays. The young men came to deeply love Swami Prakashananda for his unfailing cheerfulness under all circumstances and for his spotless purity of mind. They found him to be a true representative of the Divine Mother, his gentle, loving disposition winning every heart. He entered into all their trials and problems and was one of them. Regardless of self, wholly devoted to the service of all, he assisted in the work of the Temple, giving one or more of the three lectures on Sundays and humbly doing all duties no matter how tedious or lowly.

From the year 1913, one by one, by death and other reasons, the monastery membership began to diminish until only a few remained and the monastery finally was closed with the death of Swami Trigunatita.

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# SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION—II

By SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

## TASK BEFORE THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Individual salvation and uplift of humanity are the twin objects set before the Ramkrishna Order of monks. “Be gods and make gods” is our motto. Service of suffering humanity is looked upon not only as a form of spiritual discipline but also as a definite end in itself. The Order seeks to represent Sree Ramkrishna who lived solely for the uplift of humanity.

The Ramkrishna Mission has been organised with the avowed object of humanitarian service. It aims at giving a lift to human thoughts and aspirations by preaching spiritual ideas and ideals in the light of the lives and teachings of Sree Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and by putting them into practice through service of suffering humanity.

In India how can these ideas and ideals reach the hearts of the people who are every day dying by thousands for want of food, and medicine, sanitation and education? Says Mr. J. N. Gupta, M.A., I.C.S., in his presidential address before the Divisional Conference, (Presidency Division, Bengal) :—

“As regards the condition of the vast majority of our brothers and sisters is it necessary for me to weary you with details? I am sure you are all more or less familiar with that dismal and depressing picture. We all know that our physique is extremely poor, the ordinary span of our lives regrettably short, mortality amongst children is heavier than that in most countries, that we are prey to decimating epidemics and diseases which not only kill but enervate the race, that the majority of our people have extremely small material resources and hardly sufficient nutrition to withstand the ravages of disease, their poverty being due principally to the primitive and unprogressive condition of the staple industry of agriculture, and land having to bear an increasing burden from day to day on account of thoughtless multiplication of the people and the decay and disappearance of most of the rural industries; and lastly, that the vast majority of people are without any education, without any elementary knowledge of hygiene and health and without any higher standards of life—their entire resources and energies being consumed in meeting the clamant needs of the day. Of the total population of 47 millions of people of this province (Bengal) the above picture should apply roughly at least to 42 millions.”

This is the condition of one of the advanced provinces of our motherland where we have to preach spiritual ideas and ideals. Our people cannot be in a mood to listen seriously to

our sermons until and unless we come down with intense feeling for their suffering and do all we can to help them out of ignorance and superstition to raise and educate them, to better their material and economic condition and to make them fit partners in any worthy scheme of national regeneration. Obviously this is a Herculean task and the Ramkrishna Mission certainly with its present strength cannot presume to cope with it. Still it does not behove the Ramkrishna Mission, which stands for the ideals of renunciation and service, to remain indifferent to the vital needs of the people, simply because the task is immense. To remain blind to the abnormal condition of our masses is simply inhuman. "Him I call a Mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *duratman*", was the utterance of the illustrious founder of this organisation. This organisation must serve with its heart's blood the poor, the ignorant, the down-trodden, the disease-ridden inhabitants of this country, and try to practicalise the lofty ideas and ideals preached by Swami Vivekananda. We have to concentrate our strength and resources in order to give a lift to the people. Our efforts and achievements may be hopelessly inadequate for the immense needs of the people, but honest and sincere efforts proceeding from intense feeling will not go in vain. This will undoubtedly set the wheel rolling in the right direction ; this will spread the ideals of service and renunciation among the classes, quicken their hearts, fire their imagination and move them to serve the masses.

If the five millions of this province, who are privileged to possess the material equipment of the twentieth century can be really stirred, if they can be made conscious of their immediate duty of raising the 42 millions to a decent standard of existence, the task in spite of its immensity will be accomplished in no time. The same thing holds good for each and every province of India. Such an attitude of the classes for serving the masses is absolutely essential before even the Government may dream of realising any scheme of uplifting our masses. In awakening this consciousness the Ramkrishna Mission has already contributed a good deal by serving the people stricken with disease or smitten with poverty by temporary or permanent relief operations. It may very well be said that we have already met with considerable success in transmitting the spirit of service to our people for relieving the distressed during floods, famine, and epidemics. So far as remedial measures are concerned the Mission is still doing its best to hold aloft its ideal of service and inspiring others to follow, and the time has surely come when

the Mission should seriously contribute its best towards preventive measures as well.

Education is undoubtedly one of the most effective and far-reaching preventive measures. A healthy man-making education adjusted, graded and distributed among all classes of people according to various needs and capacity, can go a long way towards safe-guarding them against poverty, disease, premature mortality, tyranny of landlords, caste-lords, money-lenders as well as sectarian and communal troubles of all sorts. Education is just the thing that is absolutely necessary to help this sleeping leviathan to stand on its feet. Education alone can shape the units properly and weld them together into a strong, virile and self-sufficient nation that will be able to fulfil the mission of this land by disseminating her glorious culture among the nations of the world. Sister Nivedita indulged in no hyperbole when she said that "all things are possible to the educated and nothing whatever to the uneducated man".

The world is not in a mood to listen to the gospel of Love and Truth from an imbecile nation. The nation must be rejuvenated, it must demonstrate that its culture, far from being the cause of enervation, is something that infuses a higher order of strength and dexterity combining Brahma-tejah with Kshatra-virya ; it must demonstrate by its actual achievements, and not merely by arguments and quotations from ancient history or Puranas, that on the bed-rock of its spiritual culture may be erected a civilisation no less worthy and efficient in any sphere of life, social, economic or political, than any extant civilisation on earth. This has to be demonstrated, before India will be in a position to command the reverent attention of the world to listen to the glories of her culture. Modern world seriously believes that our Vedantic culture makes men "other-worldly," that it has made our people hopelessly incompetent for the tasks of this life. This notion has to be corrected by practical demonstration. For this, the nation has to stand on its feet, healthy, strong and efficient with tremendous faith in itself and its glorious culture. And this may be effected only after the people are properly served with food—physical, intellectual and spiritual.

Indeed, serving India means literally to educate her people properly ; for of all her problems there is none so grave that cannot be solved by the magic word "Education."

It is, therefore, meet that this Brotherhood and this Mission should rise to the occasion and do all in their power to give a lead to the country in the light of the teachings of our revered



leader. Let us not err for a moment that his message differed a whit from that of his Master. He showed the path which will lead the world to fulfil the wish of his Divine Master.

And we all know the injunction he left for us in the Math rules that this Math should be developed into a full-fledged University for spiritual as well as secular education of the youths of this country. We also know how in one of the Madras lectures he gave the idea of starting teacher-training institutions for turning out teachers for the masses.

Let us, therefore, muster strong, concentrate all our available energy and resources to do something solid and substantial towards the permanent improvement of the conditions of our people by disseminating proper education and by inspiring and guiding others to do the same. Let us not forget what Sister Nivedita said :—

“We all know that the future of India depends for us on education. . . . . We know also that this education to be of any avail must extend through all degrees from its lowest and humblest applications upto the highest and most disinterested grades. We must have technical education and we must have also higher research. . . . . We must have education of women, as well as education of men. We must have secular education as well as religious. And almost more important than any of these we must have education of the people and for this, we must depend upon ourselves.”

(To be continued)

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## WHAT AILS THE INDIAN PRESS

BY DR. SUDHINDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.

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I take my hat off to the Indian press. It has its faults ; but considering the tremendous difficulty it has to work under, I believe that on the whole it is clean, strong, and powerful. It has a great future before it.

When I speak of the Indian press, I do not naturally include the Anglo-Indian sheets, not even the self-appointed “friends of India”. Their greatest joy, as far as I can make out, is in the campaign of vilification and misrepresentation against India. I wish there were some ways of separating them from association with a country which seems to worry them too much. The reason I leave the Anglo-Indian press out of con-

sideration for the present is that it is pro-foreign and anti-Indian. It has no roots in Indian soil.

I am, however, greatly interested in the press of the Indian India. It is, as I said before, admirable. This does not, however, imply that it has no weak spots. It has. And what I intend to do here is not to sing a hymn of praise, but rather to tackle with uncompromising directness the harder and more ungracious task : note some of the common failings of the Indian press and see if they are absolutely unavoidable.

To begin with, there is much room for improvement in the general make-up of the Indian journals. They are badly printed and poorly inked. The carelessness in the matter of spelling is terrifying. Indian papers, I am aware, are not money-makers. They are among the most valient wolf-fighters of the world. They deserve hero-medals for keeping the wolf from the door as long as they do ; but what earthly use is there in printing papers from broken-down types and in faded ink which can hardly be read? I marvel at the Job-like patience of the long-suffering newspaper reading public which puts up with it.

Every country should develop its journalism on its own lines, work out its methods and techniques which are distinctly its own. In India the curse of the worst English journalism has fastened itself upon some of the best of Indian editors. Instead of trying to do something original, something unique, they seem to be constantly breaking their necks trying to ape London papers. Is there no way to down the ape? Why should we be content with fourth-rate imitation London sheets instead of first-rate Indian journals?

Let me cite an instance, out of many, which will illustrate this matter of blind imitation. It happens that a good many editors in London write a column-long editorial without breaking it into paragraphs. Now editors in India have taken to the same thing, apparently because it is done in London. They do not seem to realise that it is extremely difficult for a reader to wade through a column or two without a single break anywhere. It may be necessary, from the editor's point of view, to write lengthy editorials of the kind in order to impress the reader with his supposed erudition ; but is the paper produced for the good of the editor or the reader? After all, if one is to copy a foreign paper, why pick up the wrong one? The trouble is that many of our editors either do not know, or even care to know, that they are off the track. They are happy to wallow along the same old rut with the same old fossil idea. No originality, no initiative.

The Indian publishers, almost without exception, are free from intellectual and moral cowardice. They frequently "put on their courage like armour", and fight for the affirmation of life in India. I applaud their might and militancy. But the journalistic millenium is not yet, not by a long chalk. One of my complaints is that the whole tribe of Indian editors has exaggerated notions of its editorial wares. They appear to think that all that is necessary to make a newspaper is to hatch up a bunch of editorials. There is an astonishing dearth of news—local, provincial and international, especially local. The paucity of news articles can never be quite made up by any number of editorial opinions. Our newspapers should have more human interest articles, and more local color. The most severe indictment I can bring against the Indian newspaper is this: It is more of an opinion-paper than a newspaper. The scarcity of light, bright, and timely news articles is a major sin of Indian daily journalism.

I get papers, by every mail, from different parts of India. They are singularly lacking in individuality. Except for their editorialized opinions, they are almost all alike. They have scarcely any distinctive personality.

Just this morning I was going through a pile of Indian news-papers assiduously. They looked like standardized productions, such as Ford cars or Beecham's pills. They might have been published from one part of the country as another. I found in these papers the same sort of make-up, the same official ukases, the same canned Associated Press stuff, the same assortment of stereotyped political editorials only with different labels. They lacked, one and all, individuality, variety, local flavor. To me, as a practising newspaper man, the dreary sameness of Indian journalism throughout the vast sub-continent is appalling.

My idea of a newspaper is that it should reflect life in all its varied interests, tastes, and points of view. It is the duty of the news-gatherers to tell their readers not only what has happened, but also what is likely to happen, what is threatened, what is merely said. A good live newspaper, instead of being choked with editorials, should always come out "first with the news". It should print all the news it can dig up, all the news that is fit to print. It must present a vivid survey of actual life, without philosophical obfuscation. In other words, a newspaper should be more a mirror of life and less a pulpit for editorial preachments.

Publishers of Indian journals frequently profess, most

volubly, idealism. Some of them even pretend with grave faces not to be interested in money-making, their sole aim being the spiritual uplift of the people. The same gentlemen also go on publishing in their papers—week after week, month after month—acres and acres of gorgeous whisky and brandy advertisements. It is a strange phenomenon. I cannot for the life of me see that there is anything very idealistic in liquor advertisements. Indeed they seem to me, a man of academic vintage, more spiritous than spiritual, more alcoholic than idealistic.

The sober truth is that a great many of the Indian publishers will not hesitate to sacrifice an idealistic or an aesthetic principle if it will fetch them an extra rupee. I am using hard language, I know ; but I am merely saying right out what all sensible readers of the Indian press must be thinking audibly. Who, for instance, does not know the names of two or three of even the most prominent Indian magazines which continually affront their readers with ugly and dubious advertisements on their front page, on the very cover page itself? These shoddy, disgusting ads are so offensive that they give me a pain every time I look at them. And the same ad-grabbing editors deliver to their publications articles about the Beautiful! Americans are alleged to be most materialistic ; but there is not one first-class American magazine which defaces its front cover with advertisements. At any rate, it is not a convincing exhibit to prove that the Indian publications which flirt with questionable commercialism are altogether models of good taste or of aestheticism. If they are, I owe them an apology.

Journalism, as a learned profession, is still in its early adolescence in India. It has not yet received the same amount of serious consideration it deserves. What it needs now is full-time trained men who will devote their entire creative urge specifically to the newspaper profession. It is big enough to require every ounce of their energy, and absorb every minute of their life.

Unfortunately a large proportion of Indian journalists are using newspapers as a stepping-stone to some other profession. They act as if they are ashamed of their calling, and have no faith in it. That is precisely not the way to build up the profession of journalism. A newspaper man should put his professional duty first, last, and all the time before everything else ; he cannot permit himself to be seduced into any other business which would interfere in the slightest with his duty to newspaper-making. Quite frequently, I have noticed, an Indian publisher has one

eye cocked on political jobs, and another on the editorial chair. He is a drone of the profession. He forgets that "no man can serve two masters"—to pilfer a Biblical phrase. It is not a trifling matter I am discussing. To say that it is a serious situation is certainly not to overstate it. But I have said enough!

The criticisms I have dared to offer doubtless make unpleasant reading, and I shouldn't wonder if some one feels hurt. But as I intimated at the beginning, I am not without hopes for the Indian press. I esteem it and I love it, even though it is not quite near to my heart's desire. Backward as our newspaper is in some respects, it is ours. Greater progress, however, will come when we frankly recognize its merits and its defects, and then earnestly strive for a better and higher ideal in journalism.

"Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;  
dare, never grudge the throe."

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## STRUGGLE FOR EXPANSION

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The old dilemma whether the tree precedes the seed or the seed the tree, runs through all our forms of knowledge. Whether intelligence is first in the order of being, or matter ; whether the ideal is first or the external manifestation ; whether freedom is our true nature or bondage of law ; whether thought creates matter or matter thought ; whether the incessant change in nature precedes the idea of rest or the idea of rest precedes the idea of change ; all these are questions of the same insoluble nature. Like the rise and fall of a series of waves, they follow one another in an invariable succession and men take this side or that according to their tastes or education or peculiarity of temperaments.

For instance, if it be said that seeing the adjustment of nature of different parts, it is clear that it is the effect of intelligent work ; on the other hand it may be argued that intelligence itself being created by matter and force in the course of evolution could not have been before this world. If it be said that the production of every form must be preceded by an ideal in the mind, it can be urged with equal force, that the ideal was itself created by various external experiences. On the one hand the appeal is to our ever present idea of freedom ; on the other, to the fact that nothing in the universe being causeless, everything both mental and physical is rigidly

bound by the law of causation. If it be affirmed that, seeing the changes of the body induced by volition, it is evident that thought is the creator of this body, it is equally clear that as change in the body induces a change in the thought, the body must have produced the mind. If it be argued that the universal change must be the outcome of a preceding rest, equally logical argument can be adduced to show that the idea of unchangeability is only an illusory relative notion, brought about by the comparative differences in motion.

Thus in the ultimate analysis all knowledge resolves itself into this vicious circle, the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for their basis upon the self-same vicious circles. It is clear, therefore, that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called *Maya*. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.

Acting on the external world *Maya* manifests itself as the two powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its manifestations are desire and non-desire (*pravritti* and *nivritti*). The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is trying to go beyond control. Again each particle is checked by another force, the centripetal, and drawn towards the centre, so in the thought-world the controlling power is checking all these outgoing desires.

Desires of materialization, that is, the being dragged down more and more to the plane of mechanical action belong to the animal man. It is only when the desire to prevent all such bondage to the senses arises that religion dawns in the heart of man. Thus we see that the whole scope of religion is to prevent man from falling into bondage of the senses and to help him to assert his freedom. The first effort of this power of *Nivritti* towards that end, is called morality. The scope of all morality is to prevent this degradation and break this bondage. All morality can be divided into the positive and the negative

elements ; it says either, "Do this" or "Do not do this." When it says, "Do not," it is evident that it is a check to a certain desire which would make a man a slave. When it says "Do," its scope is to show the way to freedom and to the breaking down of a certain degradation which has already seized the human heart.

Now this morality is only possible if there be a liberty to be attained by man. Apart from the question of the chances of attaining perfect liberty, it is clear that the whole universe is a case of struggle to expand, or in other words, to attain liberty. This infinite space is not sufficient for even one atom. The struggle for expansion must go on eternally until perfect liberty is attained. It cannot be said that this struggle to gain freedom is to avoid pain or to attain pleasure. The lowest grade of beings, who can have no such feeling, also are struggling for expansion and according to many, man himself is the expansion of these very beings.\*

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## LETTERS OF ROMAIN ROLLAND

[Translated from the original French]

[The next letter was received by me a fortnight later before I had replied to his first.—*Swami Ashokananda.*]

13th July 1927.

DEAR SIR,

Allow me to ask you some informations which will be necessary for me for the study on the life of the Swami Vivekananda. What *actually* is the influence of the Ramakrishna Mission in the world? Can you give me a rough idea of its monasteries and of the Sevashramas and the schools and hospitals and other dependent works in India? How many foreign missions have you and in what principal countries? How many reviews and papers and how many members are there in each particular branch? It will be very important for the European public to have an outline table of the activities of the Mission and its progress already made since the death of Swami Vivekananda.

In excusing me for troubling you, I pray you to believe, dear sir, of my devoted sympathy.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

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\* Written by the Swami in answer to questions put by a Western disciple. Hitherto unpublished in *Prabuddha Bharata* and not included in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

[I could not answer to the above letter till by the second week of September. The reply which I then sent was a long one and contained among other things the following passage in answer to his first question ("What actually is the influence of the Ramakrishna Mission?") : "Your question implies that you want a clear estimate. My answer to your fifth question has shown how difficult it is to give such a clear answer. The difficulty is enhanced by the facts that we do not represent any *special* set of doctrines and that our views are not at all sectarian but are the endorsement of all the truths of all creeds. When a religious body professes novel views, it can easily estimate its influence which it finds well demarcated from that of other sets of views. Our case is different. We stand for Hinduism in all its aspects (which is the synthesis of all religions),—for Vedanta which is the foundation of all Hindu doctrines. Vedantic ideas have surely spread over the world in greater or less degree and are still spreading. But it is really difficult, if not impossible, to say how much of this propagation is due to Swami Vivekananda and his Mission. There can be no doubt, however, that it is at least partly due to our Mission. The different sources from which Vedantic ideas emanated and spread over the Western world and countries outside India are: (1) Western Sanskritists, (2) Our Mission (from Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda onwards), (3) Later teachers and literature (including Tagore and Theosophy), . . . (4) Independent growth of Vedantic ideas owing to historical changes. What are the Vedantic ideas? They are mainly two: (1) The inner Divinity of man: Man is potentially Divine and possesses infinite goodness and power and therefore the treatment of man by society, state or religion should be based on the recognition of his inner potential Divinity and omnipotence; (2) Life's ultimate value is spiritual, and all human concerns to be truly fruitful must be controlled and guided in reference to this ultimate ideal. These are the two principal characteristics of the Vedantic teaching. It cannot be said that the West openly professes them. But I am inclined to think that these ideas, especially, the first one, are always in its subconscious mind. How did it get these ideas? I do not think that, Christianity\* or the Greco-Roman culture are specially favourable to them. I think, in the first stage, the industrial, social and cultural changes, especially the progress of science, drove the West to those ideas, and was helped therein by Indian culture as disseminated by Western Orientalists. Many Western authors of the 18th and the 19th centuries show traces of Vedantic influence on their thought. In the later stages, I am sure Swami Vivekananda and his monks and their literature had something to do."]

4th Oct. 1927.

Dear Swami Ashokananda,

I cannot thank you sufficiently for your excellent letters and above all for the trouble you have taken in that of Septem-

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\* As regards the first idea—the Divinity of man.



ber 11th by replying so fully to my demands. Nothing could have better filled up the gaps in my knowledge and enlightened me on the actual position of the Ramakrishna Mission in face of the social problems which present themselves in India as in the world of to-day. I shall make use of these valuable reports in the final chapters of my projected work.

For the work is not yet written nor has even the preparatory outline been commenced. For a little over a year I have been collecting the essential materials ; and (according to my usual custom for each of my works), I allow the fire to be covered by the cinders until all may be inflamed. It would not be difficult to make up quickly a collection of impressions on so great a subject ; it is necessary to allow oneself to think over them in silence ; I hope that, during this coming winter, I shall be able to devote myself entirely to this work. . . . .

My sister and I are extremely grateful to you for sending the numbers of "Prabuddha Bharata" Review, which we read with a keen interest, and for the "General Report" of the Mission. We have almost all the important books on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda. Here are those which we still need :

1. Jnana-Yoga
2. Bhakti-Yoga
3. My Master
4. Memoirs of European Travel

If it would be possible for you to send them to us, we should be deeply grateful.

Your letter of September 11 has made me still more feel the greatness of your Mission and the fruitful wisdom of its calm and silent work. I shall inspire myself with these thoughts. On one point only I would present to you some observations : It is incontestable that a relationship reveals itself between the Vedantic ideas and many of the ideas and tendencies which are appearing now in the West. But I do not think that this is an effect (at any rate for the greatest number of them) of the modern diffusion of Vedantic ideas. In reality, this relationship rests on the identical foundation of human nature, and above all on the great Indo-European family. Whatever may be the agreements which unite the languages (and in consequence, the thoughts) called Aryan, of Asia and of Europe, these agreements are surely traced back to far distant times. Pascal has said these beautiful words in his *Pensées* (it is God who is looked upon to speak to man who is in despair

at not having found him): "Thou wouldst not seek for me if thou hadst not found me."

When I happen to read in any of your sacred texts of India or in your philosophers and poets, one of these revelations, which goes to my heart, I do not discover it as a new thought, I recognise it as one of my own hidden thoughts. It was written in me from all eternity.

It would be lessening the Divine, the Eternal, to imagine that there is a handful of grains in the hands of certain chosen men of a chosen race. The Eternal has sown himself with full hands over the whole field of humanity. The earth is not everywhere so fertile that the seeds may germinate. In some places it grows and produces fruit, in other places it sleeps. But the seed is everywhere. And turn by turn, that which is sleeping, awakes; and that which was awake, goes to sleep. The Spirit is always in movement from people to people, and from man to man. And no people and no man holds it. But it is the fire of the eternal life in each one,—the same Fire. And we live to feed it.

The two Vedantic principles which you have expressed to me, have been familiar to me from my childhood, . . . without my having been able to have the slightest knowledge of India and its thought. Whence did they come to me? They are diffused throughout the world far more than you imagine, as well in a certain Christian mysticism (Eastern in origin) as in a part of Hellenic culture (which she [Greece] also possessed through her great thinkers, from Pythagoras to Plotinus, in passing through Plato, and which plunged its roots in the world of Asia and Egypt as in Europe). And for us, men of the 19th century, we have had this magnificent fountain of idealistic pantheism: music—the powerful German music, and above all the heroic religious music of Beethoven. It was to us a metaphysic and a religion without words,—a Yoga-revealer. If you knew it well, you would see that the West has also in it its sublime discipline of being concentrated and absorbed in the Eternal. And the aspect of this German crowd of people swallowed up in the wonderful harmonies of a cantata or a mass of J. S. Bach is equal in its silent intensity and its burning ecstasy to the most devoted religious adorations of India. Add to this, that in the domain of pure thought the strong current which comes from Spinoza, the Dutch Jew of the 17th century, and which has its full action a century later in Goethe, whose

substance we have not yet exhausted, and in the great German idealism of the beginning of the 19th century.

The Divinity of man and the Spirituality of life are two acts of faith for many of the highest spirits of the West and all time. One can even say that the first of these two principles was the "Creed" of certain of the thinkers who made the French Revolution. And although that has, by the misfortune of every precipitated action, set human masses in motion—masses obscure and violent, darkened in blood and in money, the Creed has remained intact with some choice people. I received it, as a child, from the hands of my forefathers. I pass it on in my turn.

The Best Europe, profound and reflective, is the sister of the Best Asia. The same blood of God flows in both. But Asia does not see all the silent struggles that her sister is making. . . .

Believe me,  
Dear Swami Ashokananda,  
Your devoted brother,

ROMAIN ROLLAND..

## THE RELIGION OF VEDANTA

BY SRIDHAR MAZUMDAR

The whole world is now seething with sectarian wranglings and religious disputes. These conflicts will surely vanish if we only turn to the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of the world. If we cast our eyes downwards from the mountain peak, inequalities of the planes will at once disappear. The system of religion, preached in the Upanishads known as Vedanta, is a very catholic one ; it has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever ; it rather embraces in its fold all the religions of the world, and its echo still vibrates from the lips of Sri Krishna in the Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter IV, Verse II, where He says, "It is My Path, O son of Pritha, that men tread everywhere."

Vedanta preaches that the whole universe, with all its animate and inanimate contents, emanates from, lives and moves in, and ultimately dissolves in Brahman, the Universal Soul (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. III, 14, 1 and Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhriguvalli, I, 1,) ; that though the universe is a transformation of the energy of Brahman, Brahman is not

exhausted in the universe ; the whole creation covers only a fraction of It ; but by far the largest portion remains unmanifested, which is Its transcendent aspect (Chhandogya, Chap. III, 12, 6) ; that emancipation lies in having a thorough knowledge, and realization of the true nature of Brahman, attainable by Love :—“By Love he knows Me intimately and thoroughly, who am I and what am I” (Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. XVIII, 55).

A question may now arise as to what is the real nature of Brahman. It is extremely difficult for the finite individual soul to get at once a clear conception of the Infinite Universal Soul ; and more so to express it in adequate language. Different commentators of the Brahma Sutra give apparently different versions of the nature of Brahman ; but they all base their conclusions on the authority of Sruti which is the outcome of direct intuition of the Seers of old, called Rishis. To doubt any of these versions is to doubt Sruti itself ; which is regarded as sacrilege by the wise. We must reverentially bow to them all and maintain that all these different Srutis about the nature of Brahman are perfectly true as they are all equally weighty. The illustrious Sankara, in his theory of absolute monism (Adwaita pure and simple), has taken Brahman in Its transcendent aspect, which is unquestionably true if we leave out of account the universe which is only an insignificant factor in comparison with the unmanifested portion of Brahman ; the devotional Ramanuja, in his theory of differentiated monism (Visishtadwaita), has treated Brahman in Its immanent aspect, which is also very true in respect of the phenomenal world with which we are primarily concerned ; the strongly pious Madhva, in his theory of dualism (Dwaita), has taken Brahman in the light of the creator and all the manifested things as created beings, which is also relatively true. As all these views are true in respect of the particular aspect of Brahman dealt with by them, each in his own way, the real nature of Brahman is an adjustment of all these views, as taken by Acharya Nimbarka without entering into any quarrel with any other commentator, in his theory of monism standing side by side with dualism (Dwaitâdwaita).

Having Infinite Brahman as the ultimate goal, none can cherish any perverse idea against any religion whatsoever ; as every religion of the world preaches the worship of Brahman either personal or absolute, differing only in nomenclature but remaining everywhere the same in substance.

It is not possible for every individual to realise at once

the Infinite Universal Soul ; Vedanta, therefore, prescribes stages, beginning from dualism, to be pursued step by step and ending in all-embracing monism. Even in dualism Vedanta does not oppose when different processes are taken up for the cultivation of devotion and the worship of God in the light of the father, the mother, or the most intimate friend to suit one's own nature and capacity, as in every process the ultimate aim is the realisation of Brahman.

Every religion of the world may find support in one or the other of the passages of Vedanta which is at the same time so cosmopolitan in principle that even the worst criminal, it holds, will not be lost for ever, but will some day find repose in the All-absorbing Brahman after purification by several births, proving thereby, the gospel truth that "I and my Father are one."

In the religion of Vedanta "Place is found," to speak in the language of the Rev. J. Tyssul Davis (Minister of the Theistic Church, London), "for the Transcendent Deity of Hebraism, and the Immanent Deity of Pantheistic Hellenism, and reconciliation of the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer with the personal God of the Christians."

It is indeed very strange that in a matter like spiritual culture where people should stand linked hand in hand, there should be so much bickering and bad blood disturbing the peace of the world, sometimes to such an extent as to culminate in blood-shed. But now an opportune moment appears to have come, as great men of the world are trying to put together their mighty intellects to find out the way to the world's lasting peace, of which the most powerful opponent is people's aversion to people ; this aversion can only be subdued by love as was found in the life of every prophet of the world.

People's innate tendency is to love others, which remains inoperative under the influence of several external and internal adverse circumstances ; these adverse circumstances may be surmounted if one only remains true to one's own altruistic instincts, as the fundamental principle in each and every religion is to love and to live for others. Aversion towards any religion in this world may be overcome if one only feels that one is but a link in the chain, and that every religion is a component part, of the universal religion of Vedanta. One breathing the bliss of the unlimited Brahman will refuse to be confined within the limited horizon of communal spirit.

An echo of Vedantism is heard also in the Sufism of the Mahomedans. In reality there is no material antagonism

between religions of the different communities except in the twisted brain of interested persons or impostors. It only behoves us to preach to the world and to make every individual feel that there is no conflict in the ultimate end and aim of life, that the aim of every religion is to realise the Supreme Spirit and that minor differences in the intermediate processes are negligible factors, tolerable and even permissible in view of the common goal.

The revered Sri Ramakrishna has shown by his personal example that there is no real conflict in religious ideals. At different periods of his life he followed, in his divine meditation, different paths prescribed in the different creeds of differently named religions without any bias or aversion to any faith of the world ; he was convinced in the very core of his heart that every religion leads to the same goal, namely, the realisation of the Supreme Being. So at the end, during the latter part of his life, he remained mostly absorbed in the Supreme Soul without recourse to any dogma or creed of any nomenclature ; and this we call the Religion of Vedanta.

With this lamp of Vedanta as our guide, I am sure, there will be no more quarrel with any member of any professed religion on earth. If we can only strain our soul to such a lofty pitch, all the differences on the way will disappear ; aversion will give place to affection, enmity to amity and selfishness to selflessness. With an Universal Fatherhood an universal brotherhood will be restored turning this earth into heaven purged from all dissensions and differences.

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

BY D. S. SARMA

*Presidency College, Madras*

(Continued from the last issue)

### II

In the second act we find Ramakrishna in secure possession of light. His *jnana cakshus* no longer winks, but is wide open. No violent exercises are required any longer to keep its gaze steady. Consciousness has been lifted once for all from a self-centered world to a God-centered world. The self is made aware of its high destiny. Or, to use a figure which is extensively employed in Western mystical literature, the

soul has put on the ornaments of chastity, humility, renunciation, and *yoga*. She wears them with ease and comfort. Now comes the period of her betrothal. The veil is removed from her face. She sees her Lord with her own eyes. She begins to verify the accounts given of the bridegroom by her spiritual parents. She finds that in every particular his loveliness surpasses her wildest dreams of expectation. But there is a new and strange experience of which she has not heard. For as she looks at him, her own form slowly undergoes a change. She feels she is being transformed into his likeness. Her ornaments of chastity and purity, her renunciation and *yoga* so highly prized in the world of men, melt and dissolve. They vanish, transmuted into something which no tongue of man can tell.

Ramakrishna says, "It is not the *jiva* that realizes Brahman. It is Brahman that realizes Brahman." Man as man cannot know God. To say that the soul meets God face to face is only a misleading metaphor. What we can see face to face is only a creature, not the creator. The creator is not an object. He is the eternal subject. As long as we look upon God as an object we only know *about* him. But to *know* him we must partake of his nature. How else can the knower be known? *Vijnataram are kena vijaniyat?* In mystic consciousness knowing and being are one. The more you become like God, the more you know him. *Jnana* is not *vijnana*. It is not a mere intellectual comprehension of truth. The author of *Theologia Germanica*, a famous mystical book of devotion of the fourteenth century, says, "In what measure we put off the creature, in the same measure are we able to put on the creator, neither more nor less. . . . If the creator shall enter in, the creature must depart; of this be assured." To the same effects are the words of Ruysbroek, a Flemish mystic: "In order that the creature may conceive and comprehend God it must be drawn up into God from above; it is only *by God* that it can comprehend God."

The mystic not only sees God, but also begins to partake of his nature. The danger, however, is that he may choose to live apart from the world and live in lonely contemplation of the spiritual kingdom he has discovered. He has already cut himself off from the world in his *sadhana* period. He has lived, in the words of Brother Lawrence, as if there were none in the world except himself and God. But after the end of *sadhana* it is only mystics of a feeble nature that are preoccupied with transcendental joys and continue to neglect the

world. This rather selfish attitude is rightly condemned as spiritual gluttony. The greater mystics come back into the world knowing, as *Theologia Germanica* puts it, that this world is the outer court of eternity. "Try to know the *nitya* through *leela*," says Ramakrishna. "It is through the *leela* that you must feel your way to the *nitya*. It is again from the *nitya* that you must feel your way back to the *leela*." He teaches this both by precept and by example. Accordingly, we find the saint in the second stage of his career coming back into the world and meeting other aspirants and checking his experience with theirs. In his pilgrimage to Benares and Brindavan, when he interviews men like Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshub Chandar Sen, his mind is broadened and slowly his own mission becomes clear to him. He was destined, as we now see, to become the starting-point of the great Hindu renaissance which has yet to fulfil the hopes it once raised. He was to be the first prophet through whose mouth the motherland, rising after a long sleep, would reaffirm her faith in her own ideals of renunciation and toleration. But what struck him at the time in his contact with the educated classes was their rank materialism, on the one hand, and their playing with religion, on the other, without any religious experience. No man had greater contempt than Ramakrishna for those who begin to preach religion from mere book knowledge. You may as well begin to describe Benares having seen only a map of it, says he. One can imagine the pain of a specialist when a charlatan is haranguing a crowd on his subject. It is torture to a true mystic to listen to the facile eloquence of a voluptuary whose mysticism is only a cloak for his desire. Every one of Ramakrishna's sayings on this point is a slap in the face of some of us who indulge in delivering lectures on religion in our leisure moments. We may hold distinguished audiences spellbound ; we may do ample justice to our subject ; but we stir no hearts and make no conversions. The word "ineffectual" is writ large on our tombs. It is far otherwise with those who have seen truth. They speak little. But every word they utter is a winged shaft which goes straight to the heart of the listener.

Ramakrishna therefore began to feel that his duty henceforth was to rouse the religious feeling of the worldly minded and reaffirm the ancient truths of Hinduism by an appeal to his own experience. Childlike and humble as he was, he perceived that the divine Spirit was to speak through him to his generation, as it once spoke in his own province through



Chaitanya. It is significant that during this period of his life one day he went and suddenly occupied the sacred seat set apart for Chaitanya by his devotees in their celebrations. But as yet the exact form which his work had to take did not suggest itself to him. Meanwhile he tried every means in his power to perfect his religious experience. With the spirit of a scientist he passed through Muhammedan and Christian disciplines and satisfied himself in a short time that they led to the same goal. He further realized that the various Hindu schools of thought based on the Sruti were not contradictory but only indicated the several stages in the growth of the soul. In all these matters Ramakrishna was not content with a passive faith. His faith was always dynamic. Its activity began with an experiment and ended with an experience.

The gathering of the disciples round Ramakrishna marks the end of the second act of his life-drama. We have seen how in this period he came back into the world, looked around him, and compared his experience with that of other men. As he did this, gradually his mission became clear to him. Years afterward when he lay dying in Cassipore Garden he said, "Had this body been allowed to last a little longer, many more people would have become spiritually awakened." So to awaken people from their spiritual slumber and to tell them of the wonders of the kingdom of God which he had seen with his own eyes and to which all the scriptures of the world bear witness was to be his mission. He could carry out that mission only by gathering around him a faithful band of followers. When once the idea dawned on his mind he grasped it with his usual intensity. "There was no limit to the yearning I had then," says he in his reminiscences. "During the daytime I somehow managed to control it, . . . . but when the day came to a close, I could no longer curb my feelings. The thought oppressed me that another day had gone and they had not come. When during the evening service the temple premises rang with the sound of bells and conch-shells I would climb to the roof of the building in the garden and, writhing in anguish of heart, cry at the top of my voice 'Come, my boys! O, where are you?'" With that cry ends his illuminative period, which we have called the second act.

### III

It is often said by Western critics that oriental mystics press on the upward way to lose themselves on the heights, that they do not come back with glad tidings for humanity,

and that therefore their lives are lost to us. This statement may be true of the lesser mystics, but not of the great mystics of the East. The Buddha, after his enlightenment, went to Benares and set the wheel of law in motion. The author of the Bhagavad Gita taught that spiritual union or *yoga* was intended for no other purpose than that of co-operation with Isvara in carrying out his will in the world. All the Bodhisattvas of our Mahayana Buddhism after their illumination became the saviors of their race. Even Sankara, who is supposed to have taught a philosophy of quietism, did not hide his light under a bushel. He travelled all over the country teaching the true doctrine and stamping out heresy. Why, the whole history of India before her downfall may be described as an unsuccessful attempt on the part of her spiritual leaders to construct a grand socio-political edifice on the basic teachings of the Upanisadic mystics. No true Indian mystic ever failed to lead a creative life after his illumination. In fact, his life of activity is closely bound up with that other life in which he is in union with God. The so-called "unitive" stage of the mystic's career has thus two aspects—that of eternal rest and that of incessant activity. For God is both *nirguna* and *saguna*. He dwells both in eternity and in time. Accordingly, the *yogi* who has attained union with him is both a contemplative and a man of action. He is a crusader as well as a psalmist. His outer career is one of lifelong fight against ignorance and evil with the cleanest weapons of his age. But his inner spirit dwells serene on the heights of eternity. The two aspects of truth which we arbitrarily classify as dynamic and static find their reconciliation in his nature as in God's. In partaking of the nature of God the *yogi* becomes like him—an active-passive entity, Isvara and Brahman in one. Incessant work and eternal rest are mysteriously reconciled in one and the same person. That is the ideal which the Bhagavad-Gita sets before us: "He who sees rest in activity and activity in rest—he is wise among men, he is a *yogi* and he is a thorough man of action."

While admitting the necessity of creative activity, we in the East have to protest against the doctrine that a life of practical work is to be rigorously exacted of every *yogi*. Religion is not mere philanthropy, any more than it is mere righteousness. Fussy social service is not the only way to serve God. Even the Gita, which lays so much stress on the life of action, tells us, "Far inferior is mere action to the discipline of the mind." In other words *bhakti* first and philanthropy after-

ward. It is better that we pay some attention to our private characters before we think of public service. Nothing roused the wrath of Ramakrishna so much as the talk of social service before the cultivation of a true religious spirit. The conversation between him and Kristo Das Pal is worth quoting in this connection :

Mr. Pal happened to observe, "Sir, this cant of renunciation has almost ruined the country. For this reason the Indians are a subject nation to-day. Doing good to others, bringing education to the door of the ignorant, and above all improving the material condition of the country—these should be our duty now. The cry of religion and renunciation would only weaken us. You should advise the young men of Bengal to resort to such acts only as will uplift the country."

"You appear to be a man of poor understanding," replied Ramakrishna in an animated voice. "By reading two pages of English you think you have known everything in the world. You seem to think you are omniscient. How dare you talk of helping the world? The Lord will look to it. You haven't got the power in you to do this. I know what you mean by helping others. To feed a number of persons, to treat them when they are sick, to construct a road or excavate a well—isn't that all? These are good deeds, no doubt. But how trifling in comparison with the vastness of the universe! How far can a man advance in that line? How many people can you save from the jaws of famine? . . . . Well, God alone can look after the world. Let man first realize him. Let him get his authority and be endowed with his power ; then and then alone he can think of doing good to others."

It was in 1879 that the first disciples came to him. And from that date to the last day of his life, in 1886—that is, for seven years—Ramakrishna talked incessantly and poured out the treasures of his heart. All that we know of the gospel of Ramakrishna is from these wonderful informal talks. It is well known that his favourite disciple was Narendra, who, under the name of Swami Vivekananda, afterward became the St. Paul of the Ramakrishna movement. He has recorded for us what happened at an interview which he had with his master before he was converted. We are told that Ramakrishna suddenly approached Narendra and touched him. The effect had better be described in Vivekananda's own words. "The touch at once gave rise to a novel experience within me. With my eyes open I saw that the walls and everything in the room whirled rapidly and vanished into nought, and the whole universe,

together with my individuality, was about to merge in an all-encompassing mysterious void. . . . I was terribly frightened and thought that I was facing death. Unable to control myself, I cried out, "What is this you are doing to me? I have my parents at home." He laughed at this, and, passing his hand over my chest, said, "All right! Let it rest now. Everything will come in time." I was myself again and found everything within and without the room as it had been before." This incident shows the magnetic influence which Ramakrishna exerted on those who appeared to him as the chosen vessels. It is also very pleasing to note the tender love and the parental affection which the saint had for his spiritual children. "He alone knew how to love another," says Vivekananda of his master; "worldly people only make a show of it for selfish ends."

It is remarkable that Ramakrishna laid upon his disciples no such terrible *sadhanas* as he had laid upon himself. In fact, when one of them, in the fervor of his devotion, wanted to be initiated into *sannyasa*, straightway the saint replied with a charming humanity, "What will you gain by renouncing the world? Family life is like a fort. It is easier to fight the enemy from within the fort than from without. You will be in a position to renounce the world when you can bestow three-fourths of your mind on God, but not before." To another he said, "What is the necessity of giving up the world altogether? It is enough to give up the attachment to it." At the same time Ramakrishna, like a true Hindu, passionately believed that *sannyasa* and all that it means constitute the goal of life. Whatever our individual frailties may be, we belong to a race that loves asceticism. We worship the *kashaya*, the saffron robe. It is to us what the laurel was to the Greeks. For we have all been brought up in the shadow of the great renunciation of our beloved prince, Siddhartha. "One *must* renounce," whispered Ramakrishna in the ear of Narendra during his last illness. "When you see everything saturated with God, can you see anything else—the family, or the like?" "When palm trees go up," he said on another occasion, "the leaves drop off by themselves. Caste observances also go like that. But don't tear them off as these fools do" (meaning the violent reformers).

In the teachings of Ramakrishna during what I have called his creative period there was nothing original or new. For Ramakrishna came neither to destroy nor to fulfil. He bore testimony of the eternal truth of the *Sruti*. He is a branch of

that true vine. He does not speak as one of the scribes, but with authority. Accordingly the formulas of the older mystics glow on his lips with life and truth. It is marvelous how the theological discussions of generations are often summed up by him in a single parable or image which looks like the final word on the subject. Take, for instance, the problem of evil. Is evil real or unreal? What is its relation to God? Why is it unsubdued by the omnipotent? We have endless discussions on these questions. Ramakrishna in simple language says, "Evil exists in God as poison in a serpent. What is poison to us is no poison to the serpent, but a natural secretion. The serpent does not die of its own poison. On the other hand, the secretion is a condition of its health. So evil is evil from the point of view of man. What *we* regard as evil is nothing of the kind from the point of view of God. In other words, from the absolute standpoint there is *no* evil." His view has naturally been assailed by others, and we have an acrimonious controversy on the eternity and the authority of the Veda. Let us hear Ramakrishna on the question. He says: "When a thorn gets into the flesh, one takes it out with another thorn and then casts both away. So relative knowledge alone can remove the relative ignorance which blinds the eye of the self. But the man who attains the highest *jnana* does away with both knowledge and ignorance in the end. Hence both are *avidya*." Again, "Scriptures only point the way to God. Once you have known the way, what is the use of Scriptures? The next step is to work your way to the goal." Ramakrishna was once asked, "When shall I be free?" His pithy answer was, "When 'I' shall cease to be." There in a nutshell we have the teachings not only of the Vedanta, but also of all the great mystics of the world. One more instance: "Are not rites and ceremonies the mere husks of religion?" "Yes," says Ramakrishna, "but without the husks the paddy does not grow in the soil. You can't sow rice."

What is most valuable to us in the Ramakrishna literature is, however, not so much the teachings as the experience of the saint and mystic. All great religions are founded on the spiritual experience of mystics. Christianity is the systematized experience of Jesus, St. John, and St. Paul. Islam is based on the experience of Muhammed. Buddhism is based on the experience of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Our own religion is founded on the experience of the Vedic *rishis*. The Sruti is the testimony of those who have experienced in their hearts the eternal and living truth. It does not rest on any external

authority. It does not depend for its existence on the historicity of any man. Hinduism has no human founder. It is not afraid of the so-called "higher criticism" of its scriptures. It does not fight shy of the advances in science. For its own conclusions are as scientific and as much open to experiment and verification as those of science. We have, no doubt, our creeds and dogmas. But they are like the formulas of science, useful for the layman and the beginner. Our priests teach us these on external authority, for in matters of institutional religion authority is the principle of continuity. But for those who are in earnest about religion there is the internal authority, namely, the experience of our saints and mystics, which is the ultimate ground of belief. We have only to make that experience our own by going through the disciplines they prescribe, and we shall see for ourselves the validity of the spiritual laws revealed in our scriptures. In the roll of illustrious witnesses who have repeatedly borne testimony to the living truth of the Veda from age to age, among the many names of *rishis* and *sannyasins*, of *avatars* and *acharyas* who have guided the footsteps of Indian humanity in the ways of the Lord, the latest name is that of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.\*

(Concluded)

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## REVIEW

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY by Sister Devamata. 344 pp. 10 illustrations. Price Rs. 4-8-0. Published by Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, U. S. A.

"Days in an Indian Monastery," a new book which has just come from the press, promises to be one of keen interest to all classes of readers. Its author, Sister Devamata, lived in India among the Hindus as one of them and shared freely in both their outer and inner life. For more than a quarter of a century she has been in unbroken touch with India and some of India's greatest spiritual teachers. The teaching of one of these weaves itself in and out through the pages of the book. As she repeats this teaching it has the vibrant, living tone of its original utterance.

The book breathes the very spirit of India. The author, in her descriptions conveys the atmosphere and colouring of an India never seen by the usual traveller—an India which she loved and made her own.

She gives a remarkably vivid pen-picture of both the ancient Indo-Aryan civilization and the India of more recent times. But whether

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\* From *The Journal of Religion*, Chicago.

she writes of the ancient Vedic period, describes the customs of the present time or recounts the more common incidents of every-day life she weaves around the telling a wonderful and elusive charm.

In the chapter on "Spiritual Practice and Religious Observances" she reveals how fundamental is spiritual aspiration in all ages and among all peoples, varying as its expression may be.

With a particularly tender touch she draws aside the curtain to show us the shy and retiring Indian woman in her home life.

A light touch of gentle humour gives warmth and brightness to many of the pages and we can readily see how through that quality she formed an added bond of closeness with the people of whom she writes.

A high note is struck in each chapter. It sounds in such passages as these :

"Between the wall and the Temple runs a garden where gardenians and other flowering shrubs lift their blossoms as petalled censers from which stream forth unseen clouds of sweet perfume."

And again :

"One by one they slipped away from the haunted house and the tangled garden to taste the freedom of the open road or the quiet solitudes of the high hills."

The chapter entitled "The Presence in the Temple on the Ganges" closes with these words :

"A parting visit to the Head Monastery carried us to the opposite bank and as the boat pushed out into midstream again the voices of the monks in the chapel reached out across the water sounding above the surging of the river and the splashing of the oars. They were singing in rhythmic Sanskrit the evening hymn. The boat moved swiftly with the current, and as we swept on, these closing words of each verse followed us with yearning reiteration :

'Without Thee, O Lord, we are helpless,

Therefore, O Thou Friend of the helpless, we take shelter in Thee.

It was a call to the Presence in the Temple."

Through Sister Devamata's revelation we can see most clearly the byways of the India of sacred history and with her we can "hear again the flute of Sri Krishna or the later call of Chaitanya to sing and dance in praise of Hari the Lord." She also gives many pictures of modern India.

She says :

"India is not peculiar in having the caste system. It exists in every race and nation. What differentiates her is that caste with her has been made hereditary. Whenever this occurs, crystallization takes place, social rigidity follows and values are distorted. An artificial measure of things is set up and social relationships become forced unnatural. This is true whether the unit of division is money, rank, power or learning."

Sister Devamata has had wide experience of European life and draws many interesting and illuminating parallels between the social usages and customs of Europe and Asia.

The author's style which is fluent and graphic possesses a fine

literary quality. Her careful observation, wide experience and keen insight lend the present volume a flavor that is rarely found. The book is a recital rich in feeling and noble thought—an enthralling narrative.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### R. K. Mission Ashrama, Sarisha

The Ashrama, of which the report for the years 1925 and 1926 are lying before us, is situated in a village, and it has addressed itself primarily to the village reconstruction work. There is an upper primary school for boys and also a girls' school,—for education must claim our first attention. Weaving is taught in the primary school and a troop of Boy Scouts has been formed out of the village boys. There are of course, religious instruction and medical help from the Ashrama. These various philanthropic works were done during the years: relief to the poor, the needy and to poor students, distribution of clothes and blankets, *mela* relief works and small-pox relief at Kamarpole. There is also a free library for the benefit of the village in the Ashrama. Village reconstruction is a very important work and we hope the Ashrama will go ahead with its noble task.

### R. K. Mission in Ceylon

The first general report of R. K. Mission's work in Ceylon is an interesting document. There are two monks at present working there, Swamis Vipulananda and Avinashananda. The Swamis' work have already exerted an appreciable influence on Ceylon. Swami Vipulananda, in addition to preaching the Message of the Order there, is devoting his special attention to educational works. Altogether 9 schools, Tamil, English-Tamil and High, are being conducted, in which, as the report shows, as many as 1,444 boys and girls were taught in March, 1927. There are three Ashramas of the Order in Ceylon, at Trincomali, Batticaloa and Jaffna. There is also a Students' Home at the last place. The work has begun very well indeed. We wish it greater and greater success every year.

### Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur

The report for the year 1926 shows a membership of 564. The various works of the Society, religious, educational, etc. were continued with vigour. A weekly Gita class was held throughout the year, so also the ladies' weekly sitting. The Society conducted three free schools teaching 96 students, and 9 boys resided in the Society's Students' Home which is also an Orphanage. The number of resident workers in the Workers' Home was 16. Various philanthropic works were done during the year, nursing the sick, cremating the dead, help to the poor and the needy and especially the small-pox relief, during which the Society's workers nursed 325 patients of whom 270 were cured. Total income and expenditure during the year were Rs. 5,264-12 and Rs. 2,918-2-6 respectively. We wish the Society greater prosperity and usefulness.