

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

FIFTH LESSON

Pratyahara and Dharana: Krishna says, "All who seek me by whatever means will reach me." "All must reach me." Pratyahara is 'gathering toward,' an attempt to get hold of the mind and focus it on the desired object. The first step is to let the mind drift. Watch it, see what it thinks. When you look closely at a thought, it will stop. But do not try to stop the thoughts, be only the witness. The mind is not the soul or spirit. It is only matter in a finer form, and we own it and can learn to manipulate it through the nervous energies.

Body is the objective view of what we call mind. We, the Self, are beyond both body and mind; we are "Atman," the eternal, unchangeable witness. The body is crystallized thought.

When the breath flows through the left nostril, then it is the time for rest; when it flows through the right, then it is the time for work; and when it flows through both, then it is the time for meditation. When we are calm and breathe equally through both nostrils, we are in the right condition for quiet meditation. It is no use trying to concentrate at first. Control of thought will come of itself.

At first we close the nostrils with our fingers. After sufficient practice, however, we shall be able to close them by the power of will, through thought, alone.

Pranayama is now to be slightly changed. If the student has received a *Mantram*, he must use that instead of "Om" during inhalation and exhalation, and use the word "Hum" (pronounced *Hoom*) during the Kumbhaka. Throw the restrained breath forcibly down on the head of the Kundalini at each repetition of the word Hum and imagine that this awakens her.

Identify yourself only with God. Gradually, we shall begin to feel the coming of thoughts even before they have taken form, and we shall learn the way they begin and be aware of what we are going to think, just as on this plane we can look out and see a person coming. This stage is reached when we have learned to separate ourselves from our minds and see ourselves and thoughts as separate things. Do not let the thoughts grasp you ; stand aside and they will die away.

. . . . Follow these holy thoughts ; go with them and when they melt away you will find the feet of the Omnipotent God. This is the superconscious state ; when the idea melts, follow it and melt with it.

Halos are symbols of inner light and can be seen by the Yogi. Sometimes we may see a face as if surrounded by flames, and in them we may unerringly read a man's character. Sometimes our Ishtam may come to us as a vision ; and that symbol will be the one upon which we can rest easily and fully concentrate our minds.

We can imagine through all the senses, but we do so mostly through the eyes. Even imagination is half material. In other words, we cannot think without images. But as animals appear to think, yet have no words, it is probable that there is no inseparable connection between thought and image.

Try to keep the imagination in Yoga, being careful to keep it pure and holy. We all have our peculiarities in the way of imaginative power ; follow the way most natural to you ; it will be the easiest.

We are the results of all reincarnations of Karma. "One lamp lighted from another," says the Buddhist. Different lamps, but the same light.

Be cheerful, be brave, bathe daily, have patience, purity and perseverance, then you will become a Yogi in truth. Never try to hurry, and, if the higher powers come, remember that they are but side paths. Do not let them tempt you from the

main road. Put them aside and hold fast to your only true aim—God. Seek only the Eternal, finding which we are at rest for ever ; having the All, nothing is left to strive for and we are for ever in free and perfect existence. Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute.

WHITHER, INDIA ?

BY THE EDITOR

We do not know, but perhaps one of the ways of earning the esteem of a people is to oppress it, dominate and cow it to slavish submission. The mentality of a certain section of our people is otherwise difficult to explain. India is a strange country in many respects, but its strangest feature is perhaps a class of nationalists who affect *khaddar* dresses but think and act in Western ways. To these gentlemen, nothing Indian is good enough and everything Western is perfect. They have a singular contempt for the cherished ideals of the nation and would fain demolish them if they could. Yet their nationalism must be above suspicion, for some of them occupy foremost positions in the extreme nationalist organisations.

This is perhaps the worst effect of political subjection—the conquest of mind and undermining of national ideals. The West has accomplished this somewhat in India ; and this effect has become more pronounced since the world-war. When the war broke out, we exclaimed : “Behold the fall of material civilisation ! The Western civilisation has proved its hollowness,—it must change its outlook and seek for other foundations.” And we hoped in our inmost heart that now the Oriental spiritual ideals would prevail over the whole world. The war raged, it came to an end ; but the triumph of the Orient was nowhere. The belligerents put their houses in order. Some of the powers came much better off from the war, with inflated prosperity and extended dominions, more aggressive and insolent than ever before. And thus it is found that the Western civilisation is all right, for nothing succeeds like success. Nor is that all. Though during the war and immediately after it there was much searching of heart among some Western thinkers, the majority of the Western people were quite content with the existing state of things. Before the war the Western philosophy of life was not so shameless as it is

now. Before, the ideals of peace and spirituality were held in at least some esteem by them. After the war, that esteem seems to have almost entirely gone. Those which were considered as defects of their civilisation, worthy to be remedied, are now looked upon as inevitable and essential to life and existence itself and therefore not to be ashamed of or worried over. There are no better things. The ideals of spiritual perfections are but idle dreams of the effete,—they are never realisable, and aspirations after them but take away from the zest and vigour of life. There is no finality in life, no definite eternal end to be reached. Progress, infinite progress is the aim. Progress towards what? Towards nothing in particular evidently. But let there be enough of 'life,' of vital activity and enjoyment. Such indeed is the predominant Western outlook at the present time.

We do not forget the many fine people in the West, to know whom is a joy and benefit. We know there are better features in the West. Who can deny its tremendous social activity, its philanthropy, its scientific achievements, its untiring and dauntless conquest of the external nature, its intellectual idealism? We are not oblivious of all these. But we do think that with all these, the predominant note of the Western civilisation is what we have described in the preceding paragraph. The good features are struggling for predominance but not with appreciable success yet. Especially, the Western civilisation which dominate the world is nothing better than we have estimated, whatever it may be esoterically and at home. This civilisation is out for conquest with unparalleled wicked zeal. Miss Mayo's crusade against India is only the longest flame of that scorching aggression. The message of Miss Mayo and Co. is this: "Lo, your spirituality has availed little. You are physically, mentally and morally decrepit. Try after physical prosperity and material efficiency. Follow the West and for ever sit at its feet." They are conscious of their weakness. They know that if they were to launch a direct attack on our spirituality, they would be easily worsted in the battle, for they know little of spiritual secrets compared with India. They were also clever enough to know that if they were to accuse us of material inefficiency, much of the blame will recoil upon themselves, it being largely due to Western exploitation. They therefore took the middle and the safe course and assailed our sexual morality. This is the theme of all the Western calumniators of India at the present day,—the burden of their song of hate. They know that if they can prove us sexually

degenerate, they will thereby prove also our spiritual hollowness,—even they are not unconscious of the essential relationship between sexual morality and spirituality. We know the main contention of Miss Mayo ; we need not repeat it here. Another American Miss, Margaret Wilson, has lately come out with another attack on Indian morality in her *Daughters of India*, dilating on our sexual degeneracy. Here are some samples : “Women in that village,” observes Miss Wilson, “were not interested in the mention of possible exotic and alluring sins which charm Western *dilettanti*. There was nothing left exotic to them.” Again, in lamenting the early marriages of pupils at her girls’ school, she reflects “that her cooped-up, veiled, enervated little pupils were less ready physically for motherhood than the average tomboy of an English or American thirteen-year-old. Emotionally to be sure they were more ready, since the ultimate functioning of their bodies had been kept in their minds every minute of their life from infancy upwards.” Then there is our well-known ‘friend’, Edward Thompson, who has recently come out with another Indian book named *Suttee*, in which he dilates on “the sex-obsession of the Hindu civilisation.” All these from people who are themselves over-sexed, who consume sex-books and sex-novels by millions, in whose countries sex-topics form an usual social talk, not to mention the revelations of persons like Judge Lindsey ! The fact is, as we pointed out in our January article, the Western civilisation, itself brought down to a low level, is now seeking to convert the whole world to its view-point. And it is sad to note that this insidious aggression is already telling on the Indian mind. A Miss Mayo’s crusade would mean little if *we* remain unconquered. International opinion is a very volatile thing and scarcely disinterested. It will change the moment we assert ourselves, however differently from the West. Only let us be powerful, and power always has a knack of drawing the homage of men, black or white. But alas, the infatuation for the West is daily adding to our weakness.

If we closely study the mind of the West-infatuated Indians, we do not find in it much that is constructive. A sort of wild impatience of everything Indian is all that is prominent in them. Destroy everything Indian—that is apparently their slogan. One asked us to come out of our “Asiatic barbarism”. And combined with that is of course their impatience of the British domination of India, which is undoubtedly quite genuine and praiseworthy. And there is also another thing,—the idea of the imitation of the West. But this last item does not seem

to have been clearly thought about. Certain Western *isms* are quite in vogue at present, especially communism. But what is the worth of these commodities, what value and position they have in the Western life itself, how long they will endure and how far they can be adapted in India, to all these they do not seem to have given careful thought. If wild declamations could accomplish things, India would have become a part of the West by this time.

Not that they have not their arguments. Some of them say that the difference between the East and the West is fictitious, it exists nowhere except in the imagination of certain people. Others say that the East and the West are terms which have only geographical validity, and that the mind is not a geographical entity. This is a very generous sentiment indeed. But if it be so, why are they always dreaming of the West? Since there is no difference between the East and the West, no difference of outlook, why ask India to *imitate* the West and not simply to accelerate her progress till it is able to meet all situations squarely? No, this is not a distinction without difference. For even these ultra-moderns will admit that there is such a thing as national dignity and self-respect which is a most precious possession of a people and cannot survive too much proneness to foreign imitation. An individual or a nation which has to live by imitation is a fourth-rate being, feeble and despicable. We know we have to accept much from the West in things material. But that would not be dangerous, if we also can give the West something in return, if we also are unique in the possession of things which other nations lack and must have. The Indian Occidentalists do not believe in this uniqueness of India. They also seem to think that whatever is Western is universal in form and import. This is extremely unhistorical and unpsychological and stupid. If Westernism were a synonym of universalism, India might swallow without salt all the imports from the West. Fortunately it is not so.

But is it true that there is no difference of outlook between nations? Are they all moulded after the same pattern? Unity in variety is the plan of nature and national temperaments are no exception. Truth and Reality have diverse aspects and various approaches to them. They are finding variegated expressions in the different races of the world. Even if there were no variety at the origin, the histories of the different races have surely given special moulds to their souls and temperaments, and a century or two now cannot undo the effects of the

preceding millenniums. Whatever might be the reason of it, the difference does exist and necessitates faithful allegiance to and proper understanding of the past and the working of the present and the building up of the future in the light of its achievements. No, it is not true that there is no real difference between India and the West. There is a substantial difference and we must take note of it in all our plannings and preachings.

We find one peculiarity. The gentlemen who are generous enough to wipe out all differences between India and the West, are all of them quite innocent of the true nationalism of India. The one unique thing which is the central impulse of India's life-movement, is spirituality. These gentlemen however do not think much of it. They look about, see the fellow members of their hybrid society and declare that India's spirituality is a fiction. They do not take any practical interest in it. Perchance they study the Sanskrit literature and Hindu philosophical and religious books, and there it ends. They conveniently forget that spirituality cannot be acquired or even *understood* through book-learning. Spirituality requires life-long *practical* application, renunciation of worldly desires and purification of the heart. Can people who indulge in sense-pleasures, who are caught in the meshes of name and fame and whose heart ever gravitates towards the world, ever catch even a glimpse of spirituality? Let them practise and then look about and see if there is not much spirituality in India. But as we have stated, they do not care to practise spirituality. Therefore they neither understand it nor find it in India ; and their nationalism, devoid of its essence, is a feeble and deficient thing eagerly supplicating the help of the Western culture to fulfil and invigorate it.

There is another class of gentlemen, who believe that the only difference between India and the West is that India has stuck to medievalism whereas the West has progressed far towards what is called modernism and got rid of characteristic medieval ideas. Therefore what, according to them, India has to do is to go ahead and overtake the West,—therein lies its salvation. These gentlemen are some of them learned people. When we speak of India's spirituality and India's attempts at the spiritualisation of life and activity, they laugh derisively and tell us how medieval Europe tried all these and found them nonsensical. Surely they know their books. But do they not find any difference between the spiritual understanding of 'medieval' India and medieval Europe? Has not India's spiritual understanding been always infinitely more rational

than the West's and does not that make a tremendous difference? India's great secret is what is known as *Karma Yoga*. It is through *Karma Yoga*, combined with *Bhakti* and *Jnana Yoga* that India has always sought to transform for each individual his life and avocations. *Karma Yoga* is the very acme of philosophical and religious wisdom. It offers infinite scope and full freedom for various achievements, material and mental, and yet does not allow man to be faithless to his spiritual ideals and be entangled in the fatal meshes of phenomena. A more wonderful combination of the absolute freedom for development and spirituality the world has not yet conceived. This *Karma Yoga*, we assert, is a unique achievement of India. No other country has known or understood it to the extent that India has done. It is thus incorrect to say that medieval Europe has really tried the spiritual ideals for which India stands and found them ineffective. Medieval Europe's conception of religion and spirituality was not properly philosophical and scientific, but mainly theological. Had it been rational enough, it would not have succumbed to so-called modernism in the way it did. We must not be understood to mean that the spirituality of medieval Europe was hollow. We think medieval Europe had great achievements to its credit, the value of which has not yet been properly appreciated in the West. Medievalism has come to be synonymous with ignorance and superstition in the popular mind. That is probably because the West has always a tendency to run to extremes. A sane balanced attitude however has begun to grow and many are looking back to medieval ideas for light in the darkness of the present age. And that is what should be. For the salvation of the West lies in welcoming spiritual ideals back into its individual and collective life, not of course in stereotyped and theological but in sternly philosophical and scientific forms.

It is strange that one dangerous conclusion that directly follows from the idea that India is only another medieval Europe, does not occur to our gentlemen. It must be admitted that the Indian civilisation is more ancient than the Western. That means that India has been given more time to perfect its civilisation than the West. Yet the Western civilisation is according to them much ahead of the Indian. It follows therefore that Indians as a people are intrinsically inferior to the Westerners. Do our critics mean to stamp this brand of inferiority on the Indian nation? Do they really and seriously believe in this? Is this their message to the struggling nation? This inferiority-complex, this tendency to see nothing great in

one's own, is alas, one of the most sad and pernicious effects of Western domination.

It is the protagonists of this school that are crying themselves hoarse against the religious bent of the Indian mind. We have referred to them before, to their contempt for Indian greatness and fondness for Western *isms*. Lately, one of them, who occupies a responsible position in the largest political party in India, thus delivered himself in a Bombay meeting. The speaker did not believe in India having any special mission in the world. He added :

"Then there is a good deal of talk about difference between the East and the West. I confess I fail to see it. China and India differ in their habits, customs and outlook from each other as much as they differ from any Western countries. . . . There is difference between Europe and Asia to-day because Europe is industrialised and Asia is not. Europe of the middle ages was much the same as Asia of the middle ages.

"And I see no particular reason to pride ourselves on our peculiarities, angularities and insularities. I always feel irritated when anybody talks of our immortal past. I am not unconscious of the greatness of our past. But when I study our later history and survey our present condition, I see very little of the chosen people about us. Much is said about the superiority of our religion, art, music and philosophy. But what are they to-day? Your religion has become a thing of the kitchen, as to what you can eat and what you cannot eat, as to whom you can touch and whom you cannot touch, whom you could see and whom not.

"What is our music? Our national music is nothing more than an infernal din and painful noises, which are a nuisance on our roads. . . . What is our art? What is the thing which is beautiful in the homes of our countrymen? . . . What is India's national literature? . . . Indian civilisation to-day is stagnant."

The speaker does not stand alone in his opinions. He has his fellows who are all trying to overhaul Mother India. Noble task. And certainly courageous. One of the items of their programme is that India should be freed from the grip of religion. When they say that politics should be separated from religion, they are intelligible as meaning that politics should not be guided by religious opinions, by theology. In this sense, it is quite true that not only politics, but also economics, social customs and rules, etc. should be freed from their theological bias and made absolutely scientific. Long ago, speaking of the caste system, Swami Vivekananda stated that it has no relation with religion, that it was a purely socio-economic institution and that confusing it with religion is a mistake of which many social reformers from Buddha down to Ram Mohun Roy had been guilty. In fact when we look at our socio-economic and

political life from this point of view, we find them to have been scarcely embarrassed by religion proper. Our leaders also often make the mistake of thinking that because books regulating socio-economic life are written in Sanskrit and are ascribed to *rishis*, therefore they are religious. The real Hindu religious books are quite clear about the difference between the *Srutis* and especially, Vedanta, and the *Smritis*. And successive religious teachers have often pointed out that religion has nothing to do with formal obedience to the rules of the *Smritis*. No doubt this confusion exists to a certain extent in the popular mind also. But blind and almost religious faith in the established rules is a characteristic, not of the Indian masses only, but of the mass mind in every land. Cannot our leaders at least get rid of this confusion and cease to talk of the *Smritis* as religious books?

Anyhow, it is extremely desirable that politics, etc., should be separated from theology. But they must never be separated from real religion. Real religion must permeate every sphere of life as far as possible and practicable. Of course religion should be conceived in its most rational and universal form. The aim should not be an attack against religion, but the emancipation and proper development of the so-called secular aspects of life. In their enthusiasm for the separation of 'religion' and politics, they forget this true aim and inveigh against religion itself. Politics, etc., may be separated from so-called religion and yet religion may fulfil all these and occupy the highest place in the scheme of national life, if only we conceive religion in its true impersonal and universal form. Such a religion can never impede the progress of men, on the other hand, advances it. But it must never be understood that religion is to endure through sufferance. Even if religion were to impede the material progress of the country, we would insist on its occupying the paramount position in the national aspirations and activities ; for India must bear witness, as it has ever done in the past, to the fact that the spirit is the real man and its realisation the highest and only end of life.

Another eminent Indian lately expressed the view that religion was impeding the progress of India. It is reported that in an address to an Indian assembly, he "strongly appealed for moderation in religion. He expressed the opinion that the sooner India came into line with the West, the better it would be for all. He pointed to Turkey's abolition of the Khilafat and to Japan, Russia and Mexico, which had struggled against religion and advanced without any religious influence. He concluded

by saying that the condition of progress was to give less and less importance to religion and thereby remove the communal trouble and bring increasing prosperity and progress for India." Here also, it will be seen that the real contention should be against the theological bias in secular life. But the speaker's underlying desire is to dethrone religion from its true position. It is this unnecessary aggression, against which we strongly protest. The speaker wants India to fall into a line with the West. But with whom will the West fall into a line? Is it considered that the West has perfected itself? It is only to the slavish spirit of a section of Indians who cannot rise to the height of endeavour and idealism that their fathers required of them, that the West appears so,—to those who have forgotten the achievements of their forefathers, the glory of their motherland and the supreme value of their spiritual ideals. The West is drifting. It has yet to discover the true view of life. It also requires an ideal and that ideal it has not yet determined. The tremendous material achievements of the West have a stupefying effect on the minds of some Indians, of which the above exhortations are the result. India should be warned of these secret enemies.

No man can live without an ideal. Most men are satisfied with moderate ideals. But no civilised nation which has learnt to enquire after the First Cause, can live long without a spiritual ideal to strive after. This ideal pursues it relentlessly until it entirely surrenders itself to God. The West is pursued by the Hound of Heaven, and it can know no peace until it has surrendered. India surrendered itself immemorial ages ago to God. And to-day we are asked to give up the spiritual ideals and be content with mere prosperity! India is really in a crisis now. Our material poverty was itself a sufficient cause of doubt and vacillation. Then came Western aggression and contempt of our culture. And now our own people are against our ideals. It is now that we require tremendous faith and patience. But let India shed all doubt and fear. For the God of India shall see India triumph. That day of glory is not far off. We shall rise in all our glory. We shall again assert our ideals and deluge the world with our spiritual ideas. We shall triumph not only spiritually and culturally, but also materially, and that through the life-giving, strengthening power of religion. Let us hold fast to religion as our salvation and it will redeem us.

It is said sometimes that we must not talk of higher things till we have emancipated ourselves materially. Nothing can be

more fallacious. No nation on earth ever progressed in such leisurely and routine-work fashion. When a nation revives, it flourishes in all spheres of its life. It cannot stop the flow of vigour to certain spheres arbitrarily. If India gains strength, it will be strong in all aspects, material, mental and spiritual, nationally and internationally. All activities should be simultaneous ; but the greatest effort should be towards the acquisition of strength. And what can be a greater source of strength than religion, 'even a little of which banishes great fear'? It is religion which has been the greatest stimulant to progress in all the past ages of India and it will be always so. So we must emphasise religion above all in our present crisis. Secondly, even if we are to achieve material prosperity first, it is absolutely necessary that the nation should be united. The masses should be roused up and the greatest enthusiasm evoked in their heart. How can we do that? What will be the battle-cry that will bring the nation together? What is that *mantram* that will make the three hundred million hearts beat in unison? The Bolsheviki ideal? The lure of material prosperity? The hatred of Indian ideals? The hatred of the British? We do not hear our 'leaders' speak anything of this secret of unity. We shall tell them that secret. *It is religion.* Mahatma Gandhi stood for religion, therefore he was able to invoke that tremendous enthusiasm in the heart of the Indian people. Let us warn our 'leaders' that this is the only way to unite the people and make them strong, and any serious interference with true religion will neither help them nor the people. It is a vain hope to find any other basis of national unity than spirituality. The sooner we recognise this, the better for all.

We cannot repress our smile at the audacious ambition of certain people to banish religion from India. What do they think? Do they fancy that the Lord has left India to their mercy to do whatever they like with it? Do they hope that the Ganges should go back to its source and flow along a new channel? Even if that were possible, it would be impossible for this country to give up its characteristic course of religious life and take up for itself a new career of politics or something else. Let us recognise this central fact of Indian national life and not waste our energies and break our heads against adamant walls. History has chalked out the future for us ; we can but follow it faithfully. This is the path of least resistance for us. Religion is our vitality. The moment we shall succeed in destroying religion, that moment we shall die.

We want other kinds of leaders than these Occidentalists.

We want those who are imbued with the true spiritual idealism of India, who will strive for India's material prosperity, but not by trampling on its highest ideals, who will ever point towards the high goal towards which India must ever travel through sunshine and rain and unflinchingly, who will not be irritated to hear of India's high achievements and mission but will allow their light to ever illumine and purify their desires and aspirations, who will not in their ignorance rush into places where angels fear to tread, who will *practise* spirituality and will not merely profess it, who will not deny the eternal but will consider themselves its instrument, and who will represent in their thought and activity the highest synthesis of life and reality. Such alone can truly lead and not quarrellous demagogues. We say it deliberately that we expect them to come out of Bengal, the province where this synthetic ideal exists in its most articulate and comprehensive forms. Let them rise and not become pawns in the hands of factious political forces ; but let their vision transcend all narrow limits and India will follow them faithfully.

“The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it stands and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Beggars they may remain, poor and poverty-stricken, dirt and squalor may surround them perhaps throughout all time, but let them not give up their God, let them not forget that they are the children of the sages.”

“The Lord of Lords is not to be attained by much frothy speech. The Lord of Lords is not to be attained even by the powers of the intellect. He is not gained by much power of conquest. That man who knows the secret source of things and that everything else is evanescent, unto him He, the Lord, comes ; unto none else. India has learned her lesson through ages of experience. She has turned her face towards Him. She had made many mistakes ; loads and loads of rubbish are heaped upon the race. Never mind ; what of that ? What is the clearing of rubbish, the cleaning of cities, and all that ? Does that give life ? Those that have fine institutions, they die. And what of institutions, these tin-plate Western institutions, made in five days and broken on the sixth ? One of these little handful nations cannot keep alive for two centuries together. And our institutions have stood the test of ages. Says the Hindu : ‘Yes, we have buried all the old nations of the earth and stand here to bury all the new races also, because our ideal is not this world, but the other. Just as your ideal is, so shall

you be. If your ideal is mortal, if your ideal is of this earth, so shalt thou be. If your ideal is matter, matter shalt thou be. Behold! our ideal is the Spirit. That alone exists. Nothing else exists, and like Him, we live for ever.' ” (Swami Vivekananda)

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

FROM THE DIARY OF A LADY DISCIPLE

(Continued from the May issue)

It was in the month of *Aswin*, 1319. In the afternoon two ladies came to visit Mother. They were, as I learnt, disciples of Shivnarayan Paramahansa of Kalighat. One of them said to Mother: “I want to put a question to you.”

“Yes, do,” replied Mother.

“Is there any truth in image-worship? Our Guru says that image-worship is useless and that we should worship the sun and fire.”

“Since your Guru says so, you should not ask me further. You should have faith in your Guru.”

But the ladies insisted again and again. Mother said: “If your teacher had been omniscient,—just see the consequence of your insistence,—I have to speak out—he would not have said so. From times immemorial, men have been realising spiritual freedom through image-worship.—Is that all nothing? Our Master had not such narrow sectarian views. The Brahman is in everything. But you should know that the sages come into the world to show the way to mankind, and each of them speaks in his own way. There are many ways, therefore all their teachings are true. It is as if many birds of white, black, red, or various other hues are singing on the same tree;—though their songs have each a different note, they are all songs of birds; it is not that one of them alone is bird’s song and all others are nothing.”

The ladies argued with Mother for some time and then desisted, and at last departed, expressing the desire to visit here again.

Mother had returned from Benares. When I went on the 18th *Magh*, 1319, to see her, I found her engaged in worship. Soon, however, the worship was over; and by and by it became school time. Radhu was waiting prepared to go to the

Missionary School at Baghbazar, when Golap-ma came and said to Mother: "The girl is grown enough. Why should she now go to school?" On hearing her, Radhu began to cry.

Mother replied: "I do not think she is so grown up. A knowledge of reading and writing and handicrafts is certainly beneficial. She can do good to herself and her neighbours by this knowledge." Radhu accordingly went to school.

Presently A—'s mother came with a girl to have her initiated by the Mother. When initiation was over, she said to Mother: "She is no ordinary girl. After reading the books about the Master, she cut her hair, dressed herself as a man and went away to Vaidyanath to practise *tapasya*. She went and sat down in a forest. The Guru of her mother happened to pass by. When he saw her, he asked her her whereabouts, brought her to his place and sent word to her father."

Mother listened and then remarked on the girl's love of God. But other ladies present did not approve of this adventure of the girl.

A—'s mother said again: "She says to her husband, 'You are not my husband, the Lord of the Universe alone is my husband.'"

Later on, in course of conversation, Mother spoke highly of Gauri-ma and Durga Devi. She said: "Many take the name of the Lord after being slapped in the face by the world. But he alone is blessed, who can dedicate even in childhood his flower-like pure mind to the Lord. The girl (Durga Devi) is like an unsmelt flower. How finely Gauridasi has trained her up! The girl's brothers tried very hard to give her in marriage, and Gauridasi used to fly with her from place to place. At last she took her to Puri, made her exchange garlands* with Jagannatha and made her a nun. She is a fine, pure girl and is also well educated. I am told she will also appear in a Sanskrit Examination."

Mother dwelt also on the early life of Gauri-ma.—She had to suffer not a little in her life.

One night when I went to see Mother, she said in course of conversation: "Listen, mother! When the Lord first created men, he made them almost absolutely of *sattva guna*. They were thus born with spiritual illumination and could easily feel the transitoriness of the world. They went out with the name of the Lord to practise *tapasya* and soon lost themselves in the

* As a symbol of marriage with the Lord.

transcendental state. The Lord found that the *lilâ* of the world could not be carried on with such men." Mother continued by reciting a Bengali poem which described how God next created men by mixing a preponderance of *rajas* and *tamas* with *sattva*, and added: "In those days, the village opera parties used to deal with these subjects. We have heard these things many times ; but now they are scarce."

The conversation turned on Sister Lakshmi.* Mother asked me if I knew her.

"No, Mother, I do not," I replied.

"She lives at Dakshineswar ; go and visit her. Have you been to Dakshineswar?"

"Yes, Mother, many times. But I did not know that she lives there."

"Did you see the *nahavat* where I lived?"

"I saw it from the outside."

"Go inside once. My whole household was within that small room. I had not seen a water-pipe before. When I first came to Calcutta† and went into the bath room, I found the pipe hissing like a serpent. I was terribly frightened. I went to the women and said: 'A serpent has come into the pipe,— come and see, it is hissing.' They laughed out and said: 'Don't you fear, it is not a serpent. There is always this sound before the water comes.' I then began to laugh myself." With this Mother began to laugh, and how pure and unsophisticated her laugh was!

Mother said again: "Have you seen the Master's festival at Belur?"

"No, Mother," I answered, "I have never been to Belur. I am told the monks and devotees do not like that women go there and disturb its peace. That is partly why I did not visit Belur."

"Go there once. Go to see the festival of the Master."

(To be continued)

* She was a niece of Sri Ramakrishna.

† She came to her brother's house at Kansaripara.

WHAT IS TRUE SELF-SURRENDER

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA

When the superhuman *tapasya* of Sri Ramakrishna was over after twelve years, he received the command from the Divine Mother to remain in *Bhava-mukha* (on the threshold of relative consciousness). The Master obeyed. It is not easy to understand or explain what is meant by remaining in *Bhava-mukha*.

Many years ago, Swami Vivekananda once remarked to a friend that learned volumes could be written in explanation of a single teaching of the Master. This surprised the friend. He exclaimed: "Indeed! But we cannot discover such depths in his teachings. Will you explain one of his teachings in this manner?"

"Have you the brains to discover?" replied Swamiji. "Well, mention any of his teachings. I shall explain."

The friend rejoined: "Very well, explain to me the story of the elephant-Narayana and the *mâhout* Narayana with which the Master illustrated his teaching on seeing God in every being."

Swamiji at once plunged into a discussion of various Eastern and Western arguments on free-will or self-effort vs. predestination or Divine will. He showed how these arguments have come to no decision and how that story of the Master was a beautiful conclusion of the quarrel.—Swamiji's exposition lasted three days.

Indeed if we deeply study even the common daily behaviour and teachings of the Master, we are astonished to discover profound meaning in them. This is true of all Divine Incarnations. Except Sankara and a few others who had to controvert the mischievous arguments of their opponents in establishing religion on earth, all of them taught and explained in simple language, through touching anecdotes, similes and allegories. They did not care for learned expressions. But their simple words contained such significance and uplifting power as have remained unfathomed and unexhausted even after millenniums. Intimate knowledge reveals greater and greater meaning in them and one feels elevated higher and higher above the transient, evil world ;—a seeker of God finds no end of meaning in their simple sayings.

This is the rule, and Sri Ramakrishna's words and behaviour

were no exception. They are revealing new meanings with the passing of days. We shall here quote one instance.

After Girish Ch. Ghosh had visited the Master several times, he one day surrendered himself absolutely to him and said: "What shall I do henceforth?" The Master replied: "Go on with what you have been doing at present. Try to keep to both sides of life—God and the world. We shall see what is to be done, when one side crumbles down. But try to recollect and contemplate on the Lord every morning and evening."

On hearing this, Girish said to himself: "Such is the nature of my work that I have no fixed hours even for bath, food and sleep. I am sure I shall forget to contemplate on the Lord every morning and evening. And that will be very bad, for it is a great sin to transgress the commands of the Guru. How then can I accept this injunction? It is a sin not to act up to one's promise even to an ordinary man. How more sinful it would be not to be true to one whom I have accepted as my guide to the Eternal!" But though Girish thought this way, he found it hard to speak out. For, he was conscious that the Master had not asked him to do anything very difficult. Yet he could not forget the extremely restless condition of his mind and knew that even short spiritual practices were impossible for him. Besides, he had always found his nature against routine work and hard and fast rules. He therefore remained silent.

At this, the Master looked at Girish and having divined his mind, said: "Well, if you cannot do this, remember the Lord once before meals and sleep."

Girish still remained silent. He was not sure that he was capable of even this. There were no fixed times for his meals. And sometimes it had so happened in the pressure of worldly affairs that he had gone through his meals quite unconsciously. Who could say that there would not be any more occasion of such forgetfulness? Girish remained silent filled with fear and despair.

The Master looked at Girish and said smilingly: "You will plead that you cannot do even this? Very well, then give me the power of attorney."* The Master was now in an exalted semi-conscious state.

* The power of attorney is a formal instrument by which one person authorises another to do some act or acts for him. By this expression Sri Ramakrishna indicated that henceforth he (Sri R.) would do on behalf of Girish all that was necessary for the latter's spiritual improvement.

This indeed was after the heart of Girish. He felt a great peace within and the thought of the great compassion inspired him with a great love for the Master. He said to himself that it was very well he had not bound himself down to any rules, and it was enough if he firmly believed that the Master would redeem him by his Divine powers. The giving of this spiritual 'letter warrant' then meant only this to Girish that he would not have to strive or practise *sadhana* himself to be rid of his evil tendencies, and that the Master himself would accomplish this by his own power. He then did not feel that, though intolerant of the bondage of discipline and unwilling to submit to it, he had yet freely embraced the hundred-fold stronger bondage of love. He did not and could not realise that henceforth he had only to be patient and passive under all circumstances, whether fame came or infame, good or evil, joy or sorrow. Now he was conscious only of the infinite kindness of Sri Ramakrishna, and was immensely proud that the Master had granted him protection. "Whatever others may think of me," he thought within himself, "however they may hate me, he, Sri Ramakrishna, is always, under all circumstances, mine. What do I care for others?" He was not aware that such pride, rare and auspicious to man, was considered a *sadhana* in the *Bhakti-sastras*.* He constantly indulged in the happy thought that Sri Ramakrishna had taken all his responsibilities and this made him continually meditate on Sri Ramakrishna and gradually brought about fundamental changes in his thoughts and actions. It is true Girish was not conscious of this change, but he was quite happy at the thought that Sri Ramakrishna loved him and was his very own.

The Master always taught that no one's mental outlook should ever be injured, and he always acted up to this principle in his behaviour with his disciples. Having therefore created the attitude of self-surrender in Girish, the Master henceforth trained him accordingly. One day, hearing Girish say "I shall do this" in certain trifling connection, the Master exclaimed: "How is this? Why do you say, 'I shall do this'? Suppose you fail to do it? You should say, 'God willing, I shall do this.'" Girish understood. "Quite right," he said to himself; "since I have fully surrendered my responsibilities to the Lord and he also has accepted them, I can do a certain thing only if he thinks it should be done by me and is to my benefit and allows me to do it. How can I hope to do it with my own

* Nârada-Bhakti-Sutra.

power?" Thenceforward, Girish tried to give up speaking and thinking in this positive, egotistic way.

And thus days and years passed. In course of time Sri Ramakrishna passed away. Girish lost his wife and a son. But through all these his mind held to the thought that these sufferings were because the Master had thought them best for him ; the Master had taken his burden and it was for the Master to decide and do what were to his best interests,—Girish had no right to oppose or chafe at them. And thus he came to feel, with the passing of days, the true significance of self-surrender. Has he even now fully fathomed its meaning?* When Girish is questioned, he says: "Much yet remains to be known. Did I then perceive that self-surrender means so much? Now I find that ordinary sadhana has an end some time ; but this business of self-surrender has no end ;—one has to continually scrutinize if even his minutest thought and action were actuated by the power of the Lord or by his own wretched ego."

This reminds us that Jesus, Chaitanya and other great sages also thus granted their redeeming protection to some individuals. Ordinary teachers or saints have not the power to do this. They can at best teach a few *mantras* or practices by which they themselves have achieved spiritual progress. Or they may, by leading a pure life, attract others to the ideals of purity. But when men feel themselves helpless amidst the infinite bondages of the world and despair of carrying out the injunctions given for their salvation and cry out, "We cannot do these,—Oh, give us the power to do them!" then the ordinary guru is of no avail. It is beyond the power of one man to say to another man: "I take the responsibility of your sins,—I shall suffer for them on your behalf." Whenever there is decay of religion in the human heart, the Lord in his infinite mercy is born as a man and suffers for man's sins and releases him from the bondages of the world. He does not however allow him to go absolutely free: he makes him strive a little for his education ;—as Sri Ramakrishna said, 'through the grace of the Avataras, men fulfil ten lives' *Karma* in one life.' And this is true as much of races as of individuals. This indeed is described in the Gita as the gift of Divine vision to Arjuna, in the Puranas as Divine mercy, in the Vaishnava literature as the salvation of Jagai and Madhai or as the subjugation of the wicked, and in Christianity as the vicarious atonement of Jesus. Without the proof of Sri Ramakrishna's life, we could scarcely believe in its truth.

* This was written during the life-time of Sjt. Girish Ch. Ghosh.—Ed.

While staying at Shyampukur undergoing treatment for cancer, Sri Ramakrishna once saw his subtle body coming out of himself and roaming about the room. "Its back was full of ulcers," he said afterwards to us. "I was wondering why it was so when Mother showed me that the ulcers were caused by my taking upon myself the sins of others. People come with all their sins and touch me. Their plight excites my compassion and I cannot help taking those sins upon myself. This indeed is the origin of this cancer. I have never committed any sin myself,—why should I suffer on my own account?" This was a revelation to us. Can one really atone for another's sins and thus advance him in the path of spirituality? "Alas, alas," many of us then thought, "why did we touch him with our impurities and cause him this suffering?"

Another incident of Sri Ramakrishna's life occurs to us in this connection. On one occasion a man suffering from white leprosy approached the Master with the prayer that he should pass his hand over the diseased parts, by which he hoped he would be cured of his disease. The Master took pity on the man and said: "I do not know anything about this. But since you ask me, I shall pass my hand over them. The disease will be cured if Mother so wills." And he did so. But as a result he had such terrible pain throughout the day in his hand that he prayed to the Divine Mother that he would never again act in that way. The Master said afterwards: "The man was cured, but this (*i.e.*, his own) body underwent his suffering." Such incidents lead us to conclude that the secrets of scriptures, of the Vedas, Puranas, Bible, Koran, Tantras, etc., will be easily understood if we study them in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's life.

It may seem that self-surrender is an ordinary action and is easily done. Man is enslaved by his desires and seeks for advantage even in spiritual life. He wants to have worldly pleasure and Divine joy simultaneously. To him the pleasures of the world appear so sweet and delectable that the very thought of their renunciation fills him with a sense of dreadful emptiness.—What will he live for then? Therefore when he is told that the 'power of attorney' can be given also in spiritual life, he ecstatically thinks that he has at last found out the right thing. "Let me," so he thinks, "live my life with its iniquities and immoralities and enjoy the pleasures of the world, and let Sri Chaitanya, Jesus or Sri Ramakrishna look after my prospects in the other world." He does not feel that it is nothing but wicked self-deception. He wilfully blinds himself to his evil

doings lest their terrific faces should frighten him, and rushes headlong towards destruction. One day his eyes shall be uncovered and he will find himself tossed among tempestuous billows in a shoreless ocean, and he will feel that his 'power of attorney' has not been accepted by any one.

In fact, giving the 'power of attorney' is not a matter of mere wish. A certain state of mind resulting from hard struggle and perseverance is an essential condition. Only in that mental state can one truly give the power of attorney to the Lord who also then actually accepts it. One must feel the unreality of worldly joys and come to the end of one's powers after hard struggle. One must manifest the greatest activity and realise in one's inmost heart that human power is after all limited and impotent in the face of the Ultimate Power. One must struggle hard and practise strenuous sadhana to realise the Lord and be convinced at last that no amount of sadhana can be adequate to know the infinite Lord. When this helplessness will come, then the piteous cry will go forth from the heart for the help and protection of a Saviour, and then, and then alone will the Lord take his burden on himself. Otherwise, if a man finds the life of sadhana distasteful, leads an undisciplined life, and asserts, when protested against, that he has given the power of attorney to the Lord who is therefore responsible for his actions and must change his mind if he is to do better, he really deceives himself and others, he is not genuine.

Suppose a man has given the power of attorney to the Lord and has therefore no need of practising sadhana. But if it is genuine, he must think of the Lord every moment of his life and of how he has rescued him from the entanglements of the world. This constant thought will inevitably inspire him with a great love and devotion for the Lord. Out of his very gratitude and love he will take the name of God and meditate on him ; he will not require to be persuaded to do so. Therefore if one, after giving the power of attorney to God, finds oneself averse to the contemplation of him, one must infer that one's power of attorney has not been real and has not been accepted by God.*

* Adapted from the writer's Bengali work, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Lila Prasanga* (Discourses on the Life of Sri Ramakrishna). Future articles by this writer will also be adapted from the same source.

THE HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN INDIA *

BY PROF. JADUNATH SARKAR, M.A., C.I.E.

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From the legends of the Vaisali Council we see how the moral canker had begun to eat into the vitals of Buddhism. The founder of the faith had preached it over a small tract of land from the Nepal Terai to Gaya and from Allahabad to Patna. It had been honoured by kings and merchants, but along with Hinduism and not to the exclusion of the latter faith. It had, therefore, gained no preponderance, even in this narrow tract of land, either in the number of its followers or in the wealth of its Church.

But, in time the monasteries began to grow rapidly in accumulated wealth from gifts. Only three hundred years after Buddha's death, we find startling examples of the costly donations to his Church in the stories of Asoka's dotage.

Yuan Chwang narrates it thus :

“King Asoka having fallen sick, desired to offer all his possessions (to the Buddhist monks), so as to crown his religious merit. The Minister who was carrying on the government was unwilling to comply with his wish. Some time after this, as he was eating part of an *amalaka* fruit, he playfully put the half of it for an offering.

“Then the king commanded an attendant officer to come and addressed him thus : ‘Take this half fruit and offer it to the priests in the Kukkutaram monastery and speak thus to the venerable ones : All that I have is gone and lost, only this half fruit remains as my little possession.’ ”. (Beal, ii. 95. Watters, ii. 99). Here the king built a great stupa named the *Amalaka*. The story is also repeated by Aswaghosha.

ORIGIN OF SUB-SECTS

Wealth gave leisure to the Church, and the monkish brain devoted its well-endowed leisure to the weaving of minute subtleties of doctrine and the elaboration of ritual under which the founder's simple faith and code of practical ethics were completely buried. A very complex philosophy and cosmogony

* The third of a series of six lectures on “India through the Ages,” delivered under the auspices of the Madras University.

of their own was evolved by the Buddhist theologians in their monastic repose. They created a new and vast religious literature like the Vaishnav 'Goswamis' of Bengal in the 16th and 17th centuries. But, as no two philosophers are ever found to agree, these metaphysical subtleties led to quarrels and the Church broke up into a multitude of sub-sects, each under a leader and each proclaiming war against the other followers of the same faith. We learn that soon after Buddha's 'nirvan' and even before Asoka made it a world-religion, the followers of Buddhism had become divided into four great sects. Their internal dissensions went on increasing with the spread of the faith. Before the first century of the Christian era the number of recognised sub-divisions had increased to eighteen, besides probably many hundred smaller personal groups. As Yuan Chwang, in the 7th century, mournfully noted, "The different (Buddhistic) schools are constantly at variance, and their contending utterances rise like angry waves of the sea. . . . The different sects have their separate masters. . . . There are eighteen schools, each claiming pre-eminence." [Beal, i. 80.] For some time before this Chinese pilgrim's visit, the various schools had been grouped under two main divisions, the 'Mahayan' and 'Hinayan'; but it did not improve matters. These two sects hated each other more bitterly than either of them did the Hindus.

In Ceylon, the jealousy and antipathy between the rival monasteries, the Mahavihar and Abhayagiri, led to constant dissension and occasional persecution, such as the destruction of the Mahavihar in the reign of King Mahasena (C. 300 A.D.).

Thus, the unity of the Buddhist Church was broken, and at the same time moral decay resulted from the increased wealth, indolence and luxury of the monks. The lavish benefactions of Asoka and Kanishka and the position of supreme respect in the State given by them to the Buddhist monks, were, in reality, a curse rather than a blessing to the faith.

During the so-called Buddhist period, Hinduism was neither dead nor silent. It may have lost the royal patronage under certain kings, it may have produced no great scholar or saint for a generation or two. But only half a century after Asoka's death, when his dynasty was overthrown, Hinduism raised its head and soon recovered its ascendancy. This was effected not by its persecuting or penalising the Buddhists, but by producing greater scholars, better authors, nobler saints and finer artists, and above all by practising greater active piety or philanthropy,

—in respect of which Buddhism had lost the superiority it had held in its founder's lifetime or in Asoka's reign.

The intellectual decline of the Buddhist priests in Asoka's own capital is well illustrated by a story narrated by Yuan Chwang :

“At first there were about a hundred *Sangharamas* in this city ; the priests were grave and learned, and of high moral character. The scholars among the heretics (i.e. Hindus) were silent and dumb. But afterwards when that generation of priests had died out, their successors were not equal to those gone before. Then the teachers of the heretics, during the interval, gave themselves up to earnest study with a view to mastery. Whereupon they summoned their partisans to assemble together within the priests' precincts, and then they addressed them, saying with a loud voice : ‘Strike loudly the *ghanta* and summon all the learned men (i.e., Buddhist monks). If we are wrong, let them overthrow us.’

“They then addressed the king and asked him to decide between the weak and the strong. . . . And now the heretical masters were men of high talent and marked learning ; the (Buddhist) priests, although numerous, were weak in their verbal discussion. The heretics said, ‘We have got the victory. From this time forth let no *sangharama* dare to sound the *ghanta* to call together a congregation.’ The king confirmed this result of the discussion. . . . For twelve years the *ghanta* was not sounded.”* [Beal, ii. 96-97. Watters, ii. 100.]

HINDU REVIVAL

The wise leaders of the Hindu revival, while they beat the Buddhists by avoiding arid philosophical subtleties and the jarring of sect with sect, and by showing greater love and care for the suffering lower classes, also cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism, by stealing several of its practices which appeal to the human heart and imagination. Thus, image-worship and the car-procession were most probably borrowed by the Hindus from Buddhism. In the fourth century, Fa Hien noticed in the Buddhist monasteries of Khotan a car-procession exactly like our own. [Beal, i. xxvi.]

By the beginning of the seventh century A.D., this policy of new Hinduism had already so far crippled Buddhism that Yuan Chwang noticed Hindu temples outnumbering Buddhist

* And then came a Buddhist champion, but only from Southern India!

monasteries in an increasing proportion as he proceeded from the Panjab to Bengal, i.e. through the very province of Buddha's missionary labours.

What did the leaders of Indian Buddhism do in the face of this growing strength of their foes? They did not abate their internal quarrels one jot. They produced no outstanding scholar or saint for work in India. Even Harsha's reign was the last flicker of a dying lamp as regards the hopes of Buddhism.

The Pala kings of Bengal who rose to power a century after Harsha and held sway for three hundred years, were, no doubt, Buddhists; but they equally patronised Hindu scholars and holy men. Their ministers and courtiers included Hindus no less than Buddhists, and the Sanskrit books and exquisite statuary produced under them were on Hindu subjects as much as Buddhistic. Hindus and Buddhists alike studied the grammar of Panini and cultivated Sanskrit logic in this period, as the mediaeval Sanskrit literature recovered from Nepal and Tibet richly shows.

The Buddhists reaped the benefit of their great universities at Nalanda and Vikramsila. We know of no Hindu University in the North; but many rich Hindu householders and kings maintained Sanskrit pandits who fed and taught the personal groups of pupils in their homes as was the practice in India down to our own days.

THE MAHAYAN SCHOOL

The Mahayan school had during the first seven centuries of the Christian era produced a vast mass of literature, both religious and secular, but in Sanskrit. It is very little known in India, because the best workers on the subject have been Frenchmen and Germans.†

The Mahayan school is of very great interest as forming a bridge, or rather a halfway house, between the old Buddhism and modern Hinduism. The doctrine of the Mahayan was intensely human and practical. Its monks did not all bury themselves in the seclusion of their cells, each seeking to attain his personal salvation by becoming a passionless *arhat*.

They revived the active philanthropy which Buddha had preached in every Jataka parable. It was essentially a religion of the service of man, though it produced great scholars too. At the same time, it was a very popular religion, because it

† A useful summary in translation is available in Mr. G. K. Nariman's *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, (1920).

made an irresistible appeal to the emotions by its gorgeous ritual, its preaching the cult of bhakti, or devotion to a personal saviour (Bodhisattva), its programme of active humanitarianism, as distinct from lonely contemplation and self-mortification.

What was the essence of Mahayan Buddhism? In the curious evolution and transformation of his religion in the course of many centuries, Buddha the living preacher had long ago ceased to be regarded as a human being. He had become a god, or rather the king of the gods, too high above us to be approached by mortals directly. He was now a dread shadow or supreme name only, hidden within the halo of his power and sanctity, and not a deity to be visualised or addressed by mankind. Therefore, we sinners must send our petitions to him through his courtiers and constant servitors. These were Bodhisattvas or men who, by the practice of piety, self-control and sacrifice for the good of others, in successive births through millions of years, had been gradually rising higher and higher in the scale of being, and who would after millions of years more reach the finality of development as perfect Buddhas. In short, they were Buddhas in the making, and therefore could best act as intercessors between sinning men and the great Buddha. Hence, in Mahayan, the worship of Bodhisattvas practically superseded that of Buddha himself, and the votive statues of the former almost drove those of the latter out of the field, as archæological excavations in the chief Mahayan sites show.

Mahayan was an intensely living and active faith. It came forth into the world, visiting the homes of the people, instead of seeking cloistered seclusion, sanctimonious aloofness from others and intellectual pride, as was generally the case with Hinayan. Therefore, Hinayan was in comparison with it, unprogressive, coldly intellectual, inert and rather monotonous through lack of variety and influence over human conduct.

By this I do not mean to assert that Mahayan lacked ascetics and theological writers of its own. I mean, the meditative side of Mahayan was not everything ; the millions of laymen were reached by its practical side or philanthropy.

When the new Hinduism asserted itself after the re-organisation of the social grades in the 7th and 8th centuries of Christ, the monastic and contemplative elements of Mahayan Buddhism were borrowed by the Shaivas, and the devotional and humanitarian elements by the Vaishnavas. In consequence, Buddhism disappeared from India by being swallowed up and completely absorbed by the new Hinduism. There is hardly any difference

traceable between Shiva the Yogi of Hindu mythology and the Dhyani Buddha of later Mahayan. The car procession of the three idols,* the gorgeous worship in temples, the cult of bhakti or personal love for God as man, the active service of the poor (in whom Narayan incarnates Himself) and the preaching friars of the new and revived Vaishnavism of the 8th century were the weapons taken from the Buddhists which conquered the decaying Buddhism because of the superior energy and fervour of neo-Hinduism.

The decaying or abandoned monasteries of the Buddhists were taken possession of by the Shaiva monks and raised their heads again as Hindu maths, e.g., the Bodh Gaya temple itself, which Yuan Chwang had found overgrown with jungles and almost deserted in 634, was appropriated by Shaiva monks of the Giri section. The Vaishnav Vairagis replaced the philanthropic Mahayan Sramans. The neighbouring people hardly felt the change, it was so slight ; the thing was the same, only the name of the god was different and a new set of men, clad in the same long yellow robes, were performing the same worship.

And even the name of the god was not really changed in the transformed Hinduism of the time, because Buddha was finally given a place in the Hindu pantheon as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu.

The Shiva-linga at Sarnath, a short distance from the Asoka stupa, is known as Shiva Sangheshwar, *i.e.*, the 'Lord of the Sangha or the third member of the Buddhist Trinity.'†

THE TRANSITION TO HINDUISM

In the last stage of Mahayan the transition from Buddhism to Hinduism was rendered imperceptible by the agency of Tantrikism.

In going out of North India to convert millions of primitive Mongolians in Tibet, Central Asia and China, neither the pure ethics of Buddhism as taught by the founder nor the subtle philosophy woven by the rich and leisured monks in the Gangetic valley, was found to be of practical use. Success could be attained in mass conversions of such magnitude only by

* Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra. Compare Fa Hien's description, "They made a four-wheeled image-car, more than thirty cubits high. . . . The chief image stood in the middle of the car with two Bodhisattvas in attendance on it." (Legge's tr. p. 19.)

† Jaynarayan Ghoshal's *Kashi Parikrama* (written about 1792) speaks of Hindus worshipping the Sangheshwar linga after crossing the Varuna river. This name also occurs in the *Kashi Mahatmya*.

stooping down to the intellect and familiar practices of the converts.

Compare the policy of Robertode Nobili in Southern India.

The Buddhist preachers in these new lands made a compromise and adopted the animism or spirit-worship which was the prevailing religion of the Mongolians, and merely superimposed the Buddhist pantheon on it, *i.e.*, they gilded spirit-worship with a thin coating of Buddhistic doctrines and gave Buddhistic names to the locally adored spirits. This Tantrik worship gradually developed an iconography, a philosophy and a literature of its own in Tibet and East Bengal.

The gods and goodesses of Tantrik Buddhism became the deities of the Shaiva form of Hinduism. Thus the Buddhist Tara was identified as the Shakti or female energy of Shiva and adored as a Hindu goddess. The dreaded Kali and other mahavidyas are further examples of this borrowing of cults.

Tantrikism was the most widely prevalent and popular religion of North and East Bengal* from the 8th to the 12th century and even later. Whether this Tantrik population should be called Buddhist or Hindu was a quarrel over words only. The people did not feel any change, when they described themselves as Hindus instead of Buddhists, in an imaginary census return of the time.

In Central and Western Bengal Tantrikism was practised, but not as the predominant religion. Buddhism in other forms lingered there as late as the sixteenth century. The researches of Dr. Haraprasad Shastri have recovered this lost page of our religious history and established the facts on unassailable evidence.

With the moral decline of their monks and the failure of the Church in India to produce great scholars and saints, the latter-day Buddhist congregation in India were left as sheep without a shepherd. Their actual religion lost its populace, with traditions and practices and continued as a mere faith of the populace, with traditions and practices that were blindly followed, and this latest Buddhism in Bengal and Bihar took its place by the side of the worship of the village godlings under ignorant quacks as priests. The Buddhistic ritual probably continued to be followed, but in ignorance of the philosophy underlying it. Thus, Buddhism in its last stage in India ceased to be a living growing faith, because it could not have an ex-

* A Bengali priest of Kali was granted land and installed in his kingdom by a Raja of the Madras coast, as an inscription records.

panding and perpetually modernised literature and a fresh stream of teachers in every generation.

The upper classes of society, especially in the towns, went over to Hinduism very early, and the faith of Buddha lingered in the villages and out of the way places. (Compare the state of paganism in the Roman Empire after Constantine the Great.) A class of Brahmins in North Bihar are still called Babhan—which is the Prakrit form of Brahmana—and they are considered as socially lower than the other sections of the Brahmins, though there is not the least suggestion of their being a mixed caste or defiled by any social pollution of forbidden food. This strange fact can be best explained by the theory that they represent the descendants of those Buddhists who were very late in abjuring Buddhism for Hinduism and giving up Prakrit for Sanskrit, so that their brethren who had changed their faith some centuries earlier refused to admit them to social equality.

CONVERSION OF THE LATER INDIAN BUDDHISTS

The conversion of the later Indian Buddhists to Hinduism was effected by some giant intellects among the neo-Hindu scholars. Shankaracharya, (*circa* 800 A.D.), by his invincible logical power and scriptural knowledge, defeated all the Buddhist theologians that he met from Cape Comorin to the Ganges. Ramanuja (c. 1100) did the same in a more limited sphere. Four centuries later (1511 A.D.), Chaitanya in his pilgrimage through Southern India extinguished the last remnants of Buddhism there. As his biographer writes:—"At Vriddhachalam a very learned Buddhist professor held forth on the nine doctrines of his Church before the Master. . . . who argued with him in order to lower his pride. The very Buddhist philosophy of nine tenets, though rich in logical reasoning, was torn to pieces by the Master's argumentation. . . . The great philosophers were all vanquished; the audience tittered; the Buddhist felt shame and alarm. . . . The professor rose up and began to chant Hari! Hari! He did reverence to the Master, saluting him as Krishna." [Sarkar's tr. of Chaitanya-Charitamrita, p. 76.]

Unlike Shankara and Ramanuja, Chaitanya was intensely emotional and while on the one hand he defeated the Buddhist champions of his day in learned disputation, he, on the other hand, swept the masses into his fold by the striking appeal of his lovable personality, his saintly character, and his own example of bhakti. The priests of the older faith had been

already dethroned from the hearts of their congregation, which lay vacant and ready to receive a new true Master.

In Bengal, Buddhism continued in the form of Dharma worship. That this village god Dharma is only the second member of the Buddhist Trinity will become evident from the character of the *puja* and the attributes of the god Dharma as given in the surviving literature of this cult, namely the *Dharma Mangal*, the *Shunya Puran*, etc. The Dharma of this worship is not a Brahmanic god; his image is an earthen mound set up at the end of the village, and his priests belong to the lower castes. [H. P. Shastri's *Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal*, P. A. S. S., 1894, p. 135.] A significant light is thrown upon the subject by the tradition recorded in a mediaeval Bengali poem named *Niranjaner Ushma* (and also in *Kalima Jallal*) to the effect that Dharma, oppressed by the Hindus, took the guise of a bearded man with a cap, etc., i.e., of the Turks who invaded Upper India under the house of Ghor about 1200 A. D. There can, therefore, be no doubt of the Dharma-puja being a survival of Buddhism. Dr. H. P. Shastri has also adduced reasons for holding that the *Sahajiya* and *Nyada* sects of Bengal, who are commonly classed as Vaishnavs, are essentially later decadent Buddhists.*

The death-blow to Buddhism in the famous cities of North India and along the main highway of the Gangetic valley was given by the Muslim conquest of the 13th century. The monastery of Bihar, in the Patna district, was sacked and its monks slaughtered by these invaders under the mistake that they were soldiers, as will be seen from the following Persian narrative of a contemporary :

“Muhammad-i-Bakhtyar organized an attack upon the fortified city of Bihar. . . . They captured the fortress and acquired great booty. The greater number of the inhabitants of the place were Brahmins, and the whole of those Brahmins had their heads shaven [these were really shamanas] ; and they were all slain. . . . There were a great number of books there. . . . On becoming acquainted [with the contents of those books], it was found that the whole of the fortress and city was college, and in the Hindu tongue they call a college a *vihara*.” [*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, tr. by Raverty, p. 520.]

Before the ceaseless eastward tide of Muslim raiders, the surviving monks of North India fled to Nepal with their books,

* H. P. Shastri's *Discovery*, etc.; *Dharma Puja Bidhi*, *Bauddha Gan o Doha*; J. A. S. B. 1895, p. 55 and 65.

and there their sacred literature was collected in the 19th century by Brian Hodgson (the physician of the British residency) and sent to Paris, where they formed the source of new and most fruitful Buddhistic studies under Burnouf and his pupils.

But in obscure and out of the way places in Bengal, some families continued to follow Buddhism as late as 1436 A. D., in which year a manuscript of the *Bodhicharyavata*r was copied in the Bengali alphabet, in a village of the Burdwan district by a scribe named Amitava, who is described as *sad-bauddha-karana-kayastha-thakkura*. But by the end of the 16th century, the new energy breathed into Bengali Vaishnavism by Chaitanya and his apostles and into Assamese Vaishnavism by Shankaradeva and his school, swept over the whole country and completed the absorption of the last remnants of the Buddhists into the fold of Hinduism in the land of Buddha's birth.

INDIAN VILLAGE-FOLK

BY A WESTERN WANDERER

It was a brilliant autumn morning. The monsoon was over and the rain-washed jungle through which I passed was fragrant with fresh foliage. In the afternoon I came to a little village, on the outskirts of which a peasant was at work in his field. When I approached him he halted behind his wooden plow, greeted me, and invited me to squat with him. He handed me a *chillum* (pipe) of tobacco and we smoked and talked. He told me that he had a faithful wife, two sons of whom he was very proud, and two little daughters-in-law.

The eldest son had been abroad to fight for the British Raj. He had broken caste-rule by crossing the *Kalapani* (ocean); but he had feasted ten Brahmans to atone for his transgression. Now he was purified and the villagers were proud of their hero. Momentous questions which agitate the Western mind did not weigh with my peasant friend; his interests were confined to his immediate surroundings and his religion. He spoke of *Brahmamayi*, the great Mother of the Universe, who provides for all her children according to their needs. "All creation is one," he said, "the bullocks, their owner, the flowers of the field—all are kin, for one Mother-Soul breathes through them all."

The peasant invited me to his home." "Sir," he said, "you are a stranger, accept my hospitality, and grace my humble dwelling with your presence; the evening meal will be made ready."

I followed my friend to his home in the village. His wife was veiled, and Hindu decorum did not allow her to speak to a stranger; but she showed her welcome in other ways: she brought me a tumbler full of cool drinking water, and spread a palm-leaf mat on the earthen floor of a little outhouse, where my host bade me make myself at home. The room was clean, but dark, for there was only a small window and the door was low. There was not a piece of furniture in the room—no chair or table—for the Hindus sit on a mat or carpet on the floor. As it was not yet evening I went to inspect my surroundings.

Near my room was the peasant's dwelling house consisting of two large rooms and a veranda, built of bamboo and mud. The house was shaded by gigantic peepul trees; toward the right rose a cluster of delicate bamboo, and toward the left stood a few fruit trees—plum, lime and papaya. There were two separate clay huts, the one a kitchen, the other a store-room. In a grove of coconut palms two bullocks—those that had been working in the field—were tied to an earthen trough filled with newly cut corn-stalks.

At a little distance amid luxuriant verdure stood a neighbor's cottage. An old man seated on a log at the entrance of the home smoked his *hooka*, and watched a naked baby play at his feet. The baby was his grand-child, he told me, and would be three years old when the moon would be full in the month of Aswin.

I passed on and came to a well located in the center of the village, where stately maidens filled their shining copper water-vessels which they carried on their hips or balanced on their heads with marvelous dexterity. They laughed and talked; but when they saw me approach they were silent, and pulled their white saris over their classic features revealing only their laughing black eyes.

East from the well stood a magnificent *Vakula* tree shading like a huge umbrella a platform of solid masonry about three feet high, upon which the gentry of the village had gathered after the day's work. Seated on mats some were talking, others were amusing themselves at cards and chess. I halted a moment to exchange the greetings of the day, then walked back to my room, where my host's eldest son in the gentle, respectful way of the Orient invited me to supper. I sat on a little straw mat

spread on the earthen floor. The meal was simple enough—rice, vegetable curry, lentil soup and hot buffalo milk. The rice and curry were placed on a freshly washed banana leaf ; the milk was served in a brass tumbler and the soup in an earthen cup which was thrown away after being used. I ate with the fingers of the right hand—Hindu fashion—spoons and forks not being used by the Hindus. The left hand is considered ceremonially unclean and to use it in eating would constitute a grave breach of etiquette. It was not a little disconcerting to have the entire family look on wondering how a Westerner could eat with his fingers. A partly veiled woman held a jar of water which she poured over my hands when the meal was over. Then came one of the little daughters-in-law with a cone-shaped little packet—a betel leaf holding lime and spices folded and held together with a clove—which she insisted that I take to make my mouth sweet.

After the meal neighbors with their children curious to meet the stranger, gathered under the spreading branches of a mango tree, and whispered among themselves till I joined them. Then we squatted on the soft grass. The children sat very close by my side ; the men in a half circle before me and the woman a little farther back.

The headman of the village, a tall sharp-featured fellow with piercing black eyes, dressed in a long white loin-cloth, shawl and turban, went through the formalities of eastern politeness, and took the lead in the conversation. He was curious about many things concerning me.—Where had I come from? Why did I dress like a native? Was I a missionary? Did I belong to the police? I told him that I was neither a missionary nor a police-officer, that I had come from America to learn something about the customs and the religion of the Hindus. He seemed a trifle suspicious till I had gone through his cross-questioning to his entire satisfaction. Then he became communicative. I found him an interesting talker well acquainted with the ancient lore of the Aryans with its inexhaustible wealth of myths and legends. He was also somewhat of a philosopher. I was astonished to find this simple rustic a man of depth and culture.

“Where did you learn all this?” I asked.

“Well,” he said, “I know no more than the others do. Sometimes minstrels come to our village and they sing ballads from our epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Then there is the professional story-teller whom we engage at festivals, the

wandering monk and the travelling actor. From these we learn what little we know."

A little boy stood behind me. He was as naked as the good God had made him, but his proud mother had fastened a silver chain around his waist which blended beautifully with the child's velvety skin. He was a pretty child with sparkling brown eyes; the lids being painted with kohl accentuated their size and lustre. Another child, also naked, wonderfully beautiful with dark curly hair and golden-yellow skin wore anklets with tiny bells which tinkled when he moved.

Now and then a boy jumped up to attend to the needs of an elder, to fill the pipes or to bring drinking water. Everyone drank from the same *lota* (tumbler), but the lips did not touch the vessel. The head was thrown backward and the water was poured down the throat in a steady stream. This is not an easy feat for one not practiced, and I caused a good deal of merriment in my attempt to drink in this novel fashion. Should the lips touch the vessel it would become unclean and would have to be washed and polished with earth or ashes before anyone could use it again.

A bright boy, about twelve years old, dressed in a blue velvet jacket and a white loin-cloth told me that the children went to school when they did not have to work in the fields. They sit with their teacher on the ground under the shade of a tree, or when it rains, on the floor inside the building. The floor is used for writing surface, and the alphabet is taught by tracing the letters in yellow sand.

I asked one of the men, an intelligent looking chap, a Brahman as the sacred thread over his left shoulder indicated, how the children received moral training.

"They are taught at home," he said, "by parents or grandparents, through stories from the sacred books. Our scriptures teach that children should honor their parents and teachers by rising in their presence, by ministering to them, by obeying them, by supplying their wants and by attention to instruction. Special stress is laid on not injuring others in word, thought or deed."

The moon stood high when the party broke up. My host bade me peace, and I was left alone under a brilliant sky aglow with fiery twinkling stars. I retired left to my own thoughts and happy dreams.

At dawn I was awakened by the song of a minstrel who

went through the village. He stood at my door and sang in a clear voice :

“Awake, brother ! Awake !
 Cling no longer to the dream !
 Life is fleeting, and pleasures do not endure forever.
 Time speeds on. Renounce vain hopes and worship
 God.
 Awake, brother ! Rise and call on the Lord !
 Sing His sweet name ! All else is vanity.”

Later in the morning a begging friar in the loose salmon-colored garb of his Order came to my host's door and called for alms. “Narayana Hari !” “In the name of God !” This was his formula of begging. Then he sang a popular ditty of Sri Radha who loved the divine Krishna.

“Sisters, where is my Krishna ?
 Why did my Beloved forsake me ?
 The trees weep, and the flowers droop ;
 The birds are silent, and the cows withhold their milk.
 The Light of my heart has gone away.
 Sisters, make haste, and bring back my Krishna !”

The monk received alms—a handful of rice—and moved on blessing the giver.

I went for a walk and found the village fringed with jungle, vistas of deep green and patches of bright fragrant flowers. Orchids, like birds, clung to the branches of umbrageous mango trees, and shining gossamer covered the succulent leaves. In the jungle was a lotus pond bordered by palms and banana plants, where women of high-caste families had come for their daily ceremonial bath.

I came to the ghat where men were bathing. They polished their teeth with charcoal, and rubbed their bodies with mustard oil. Then they entered the water up to their necks with their loin-cloths on, dipped their heads several times, and with folded hands repeated their prayers.

I left the lotus pond, and walking back through the village, passed a neat little home covered with honeysuckle and shaded by *asvattha* trees, where a pious soul in the early morning had performed the simple ceremony of “Salutation of the Threshold”. A simple artistic design had been traced with rice-flour on the threshold of the home. Within the design had been placed jasmin blossoms and marigolds and no doubt a prayer had been whispered to the Deity to protect the home against evil influences.

I was invited, with a few neighbors, to take my midday meal with one of the wealthiest families in the village. It was a feast-day, for the host's youngest son was six months old, and the ceremony of *Annaprasana* (the feast of rice) would be celebrated. It was the first day that rice would be given to the infant. The goddess Shashti, Protectress of Children, would be worshipped, and kinsmen and friends would be entertained. The worship of Mother Shashti had just begun when I arrived. Before the goddess, who was represented by a red stone placed under a fig tree, a priest recited holy texts while the parents of the child placed flowers and sweetmeats on the stone, and prayed that the beneficent goddess might spare the child's life and protect it from harm. Then a little rice was put in the baby's mouth.

The food for the guests was not yet ready, and I grasped this opportunity to learn something about the customs of these simple folks. The host, a perfect gentleman of the merchant class, middle-aged, with clear-cut features, was all courtesy and quite ready to answer my questions. He told me that cooking was regarded as a religious ceremony, the food being offered to God before anyone is allowed to partake of it. The kitchen with its clay-built stove is a holy place where no one of lower caste is allowed to enter. The cook may not taste the food while cooking, for that would desecrate it and make it unfit as an offering.

The meal was now ready, and we were called to dinner. The men and children took their seats cross-legged on little mats spread in a row on the clean dining-floor. Being a foreigner, I was not allowed to sit in the same row with the others. That would have been against caste-rule. My mat was therefore spread at right angles to the others. A leaf of the banana plant was placed at each seat, and thereon were piled steaming hot rice, vegetables and a thick soup made of pulse. Other courses, curds and pudding were placed around the leaf in small metal and earthen cups. Then we began to eat. The food was well prepared, and most of the dishes though highly seasoned were very palatable.

The women of the family served the food and were busily engaged waiting on the men and children, while an animated conversation was carried on among the diners. I asked why the women did not eat with us. "They eat later," said my nearest neighbor. "This is an ancient custom which they hold dear. And the mother eats when everyone else has finished. She considers it her duty to look to the welfare of the other members

of the household before taking thought of herself." During the meal I saw her move from place to place full of tender solicitude for the need of one and another. "To serve, and look after the welfare of others," my neighbor said, "is considered a privilege among Hindu women."

I found Indian dining-floor manners very different from Western table manners. Seated on the floor, care must be taken to tuck away the feet, for to display the feet is considered offensive, especially so if done in the presence of an elder or superior. Shoes are never carried into the home, far less into the dining-room ; and one is supposed to have taken a bath and put on clean garments before sitting down to the morning meal.

Some of the men ate very neatly. With a certain dexterity they put the food into their mouths, the fingers hardly touching the lips. Coughing, sneezing and blowing of the nose should be avoided during the meal. But there is no objection to making sound in the process of eating, nor at opening the mouth during mastication, nor at talking with the mouth full.

When the meal was over we rose, left the room, washed our hands and mouths, and then took *pan* (betel) and smoked the hooka (hubble-bubble). When we went home we told our host that our stomachs were filled to capacity, and he was well pleased.

In the evening, when the low rays of the setting sun rested tenderly on the bushy tops of the trees, and the light mist on the rice fields was turned into a rosy gauze, I visited a little temple in the center of the village, not far from the well. The temple was a simple white structure, raised about three feet from the ground, and surrounded by a colonaded stone platform. At the entrance of the temple stood a small image of the Sacred Bull, Siva's faithful servant. Behind the temple was a grove of guava trees, and in front stood two fine *palasa* trees covered with gorgeous flowers. The temple was dedicated to the god Siva, Lord of Peace. Siva's image, the holy lingam, which is the symbol of life,—an upright oval black stone—stood in the center of the shrine.

I squatted on the stone platform at the entrance of the temple, and watched a priest arrange little oil lamps, and light the incense. A party of barefoot devotees came toward the temple, tall stalwart people, the men in white turbans and baggy trousers, the women in blue and red saris covering their entire bodies, the ends gracefully folded on their heads. They talked in loud voices, laughed and gesticulated till they reached the

platform. Then they became silent, mounted the platform, and entering the temple rang a brass bell which hung suspended from the center of the dome. With folded hands, holding a flower or two, they touched their bowed heads, placed the flowers upon the lingam, knelt down, touched the cement floor with their foreheads, and with a soft whisper, "Siva, Siva," turned away. One of the women placed a garland of tiny white flowers around the neck of the image of the Sacred Bull. As a further act of reverence they performed the ceremony of *pradakshina* (circumambulation). Seven times they walked around the temple, all the while repeating the sacred name of Siva.

A splendidly built Brahman youth entered the temple. "Hara! Hara! Mahadeva!" "Lord! Lord! Lord Supreme!" he shouted at the top of his voice as he rang the bell. From his shining lota he poured water over the lingam, touched the image with his hands, then his own forehead, and with a loud cry, "Siva! Siva! Vyom! Vyom!" "Lord! Lord! Thou art beyond space!" strode away.

The priest began the *Aratrica* (evening service). He beat a drum, blew a conch, and then with his left hand took a small bell which he kept ringing during the service. With his right hand he waved before the lingam a metallic candlestick holding several little lights, and chanted in Sanskrit the mantrams (sacred texts) dedicated to Siva. This concluded the ceremony. He extinguished the lights, all but one flickering smoky flame from a cotton wick dipped in oil. Then he took his seat on a mat on the floor, counted his beads, and became absorbed in his meditations.

I bowed my head before the Siva-image, and walked back through the narrow bazaar with its poorly lighted shops where were sold rice, spices, oil, vegetables and other necessities of Indian life. When I returned to my room great watching stars shone bright in a black velvet sky, and myriads of fireflies, like shining diamonds, danced among the shadows of the trees. My host was waiting for me for the evening meal was ready. After the meal we smoked and leisurely talked for an hour. Then I retired, for the following day at dawn I would be on my way to another village.

THE WORK OF SWAMI TRIGUNATITA IN THE WEST

[PERSONAL REMINISCENCES]

BY HIS WESTERN DISCIPLES

SHANTI ASHRAMA DAYS

In the fifth year, much to the regret of all, Gurudas retired from the Ashrama to carry out a long cherished purpose of a trip to India and one of the young men from the monastery was sent to serve in his place.

For years Swami had felt the need of new buildings at the Ashrama as the original structures were showing the ravages of time and were inadequate to house and care for the growing numbers of the annual classes, so he made comprehensive plans for every possible development of the Ashrama. The Divine Mother in full measure blessed his unselfish and untiring zeal with the necessary workers and the means to carry out his plans.

In the year 1909 it so happened that an experienced carpenter had just become a disciple of Swami Trigunatita and felt a desire to live at the Ashrama at the same time offering his services to Swami. Swami accepted them and the disciple left San Francisco accompanied by two other monastery members to start the work. The great plans which Swami had cherished so long for the development of the beloved Shanti Ashrama now began to take shape. Lumber and other necessary materials and supplies were shipped in advance to the town of Livermore, from which the Ashrama could now be reached from the west by a more accessible route, the old Ysabel road leading from San Jose *via* Mt. Hamilton being too rough for hauling. From Livermore the lumber and supplies had to be hauled 37 miles by wagon over mountain roads, fifteen miles of the distance through the beautiful Livermore canyon, the home and haunt in days gone by of Joaquin Murietta, one of the most famous bandits known to early California. For the last ten miles the road was very rough in places and great care had to be exercised to prevent the wagon overturning. The hauling required several trips, but notwithstanding tremendous difficulties, after strenuous efforts of both men and horses, the material all arrived at the Ashrama and the actual work of building began. Sections of

ground separated at some distance from the other had been allotted to each sex and when the class came the following year, 1910, they found for their convenience a number of new substantial cottages ready for occupancy in both the sections for men and women. On every hand was seen the fruits of the indefatigable mind of Swami.

A commodious building, comprising a large kitchen, dining room, two storerooms and cellar, replaced the old structure ; in addition new outhouses and a large barn were constructed in which to house the cows, two horses and colt, a buggy, the winter feed and the various field implements and vehicles.* New springs were opened, a new water tank and windmill were constructed and pipes were laid to the kitchens insuring constant running water at all times, and ending the former hardship of the long carry of water from the well. The next year, 1911, a two-room cottage with a study and sleeping quarters, for the resident Swami, was erected, midway on the road between the men's section and the entrance gate, and a three-room cottage was added in the men's section for the permanent quarters of the man in charge.

For protection during rainy weather, a shelter where the devotees might remove their shoes before entering the holy precincts, was added to the meditation cabin. On the top of the meditation cabin was a wooden flag bearing the inscription "Om Ramakrishna" carved in relief by the hands of Swami himself. The same inscription appeared on a flagpole on the Dhuni hill and on the entrance gate to the Ashrama.

The daily schedule for Ashrama Classes in the month of June, 1911, was as follows :—

First call by bugle	...	...	3-55 A.M.
Second bugle call—to rise	...	...	4-00 A.M.
First class at platform	...	...	4-30— 5-30 A.M.
Breakfast with Gita readings	...	...	7-30— 8-30 A.M.
Ladies' class	...	...	10-30—11-30 A.M.
Second platform class	...	...	12-00— 1-00 NOON
Sanskrit class	...	...	3-00— 4-00 P.M.
Supper Service	...	...	4-30— 5-30 P.M.
Third platform class	...	...	8-00— 9-00 P.M.
Lights out	...	...	10-00 P.M.

For some years the morning meditation class had been held at the hour of 6 A.M. in the meditation cabin, where all of the classes were held and which had been sanctified from its foundation by the holy ministrations of Swami Turiyananda. Midway between the meditation cabin and the boundary fence

* Today, twenty years later, a motor truck has replaced the horse and wagon.

was a large oak tree and, as this year the class met in the month of June, the suggestion was made that the daily meditations for the full class be held under the wide-spreading branches of that tree. Accordingly, Swami had a low platform made to accommodate 50 people, but he also changed the morning hour of meditation from 6 to 4-30 o'clock. This was a novel experience to those who were unaccustomed to rising earlier than 6 or 7 o'clock, but they cheerfully complied with the rule and at that early hour dimly outlined forms could be seen moving through the darkness from the separate quarters of the men and women toward the large oak tree, on which was drawn in white the mystic symbol, "OM." The men remained standing at a distance with their backs to the platform until the women had arrived and were seated. Men and women alike seated themselves in Oriental fashion on the platform facing Swami; the women in front and the men in back.

The platform ran north and south. Swami sat facing the north on a strong table elevated above the platform, with a small desk arrangement in front of him, on which was the book he was reading that morning, all lighted by a tall kerosene lamp shaded from the eyes of the students on the platform below. Swami opened the service as all other classes at the Ashrama with the chanting of the Gayatri, repeating this for some time to induce harmonious conditions; then came a half hour's meditation, followed by reading of the Scriptures with comment. As Swami sat on the raised seat, chanting, reading or absorbed in meditation, his presence emanated an atmosphere of calm and holiness which pervaded the hearts and minds of all bringing them under its benign influence. Sitting there, revealed by the dim light of the lamp, against the background of the deep shadows of the great oak, he made a picture never to be forgotten by those whom the Mother's grace had brought to this holy place and hour.

Shortly before sunrise Swami gave rhythmic breathing exercises to satisfy the desire of a number, but strongly cautioned against their use without his permission. As he gave the exercises Swami asked the students to observe that during meditation the breath regulated itself without any help whatever. If our minds were pure, this would be the natural state of breathing.

As the sun flashed his first beams of light into their watching vision, Swami chanted an invocation, after which he asked the class to again close their eyes in meditation and

endeavour to visualize the sun rising through the Sushumna canal, stopping at the different centres as far as the centre at the bridge of the nose. Then all arose, the men retiring to a distance again, while the women took the path to their quarters. When they had reached their section, the women stood and sang a very beautiful song, composed by Mrs. Petersen (Dhirananda), "O Divine Mother, we are Thy Children," after which the men sang a selected devotional song, and all separated to take up their various duties.

From this year on Swami did all the cooking, assisted by some of the men in the preparation of the vegetables and setting the table. The women washed the dishes and kept the dining room and kitchen in spotless cleanliness. Swami was an expert and versatile cook and a number of the students for the first time in their lives, enjoyed the experience of partaking of Indian dishes. While Swami did not cater to taste and the food as a whole was of a substantial and nourishing character, yet a variety of delicious curries, soups and chutneys found their way to the table, to the astonishment of those who had never heard of anything more from India than rice and cocoanuts.

The meals were now held in the main dining room and on a small raised platform built at one end of the room was placed a table for Swami's books and from which he conducted the spiritual services of the meals. The Swami ate his own meal at this table following which he commenced the reading of the Gita with comments. After each reading, as after some of the classes, opportunity was offered for questions and answers. This often proved to be as profitable individually as the reading itself.

His labors were incessant, often lasting far into the night. Sometimes the light in his window could be seen burning all night long. Swami was always the ideal Sannyasin ; despising ease and luxury for himself he set a constant example that inspired every disciple to follow to their utmost capacity.

Beginning with this year also, the women and men sat at different tables and this rule followed in everything.

It was pointed out to Swami that the Dhuni Giri was not the highest hill on the Ashrama ; one nearby was considerably higher. Swami thereupon set several of the men to clear a trail to the top and with appropriate ceremonies the new hill was duly dedicated on the first auspicious night. The name, Siddha Giri "Hill of Realization"—was given and thereafter all the Dhuni nights were held there.

As stated, Swami, in spite of rheumatism and other physical troubles, kept alive a spirit of fun and constant cheerfulness, in order to relax any tension which might result from the unaccustomed hours and mode of living. He also saw that all received sufficient exercise according to the individual need and capacity.

From the beginning the rule had been established by Swami that no form of flesh food should be indulged in at the Ashrama,—the diet was to be strictly vegetarian. To make this rule clear to all the students and for visitors to the Ashrama, he had a sign painted and placed on the entrance gate, stating that no form of flesh food was allowed on the Ashrama grounds, also that firearms and shooting were prohibited.

The prohibiting of shooting on the Ashrama grounds from very early days had made it a Mecca for many forms of bird life and small wild animals. Quail and rabbits were especially numerous and, not being molested, began to lose any fear of human beings. This became evident when attempts were made to start a garden, which in that region was always somewhat of a problem, owing to sudden frosts. It seemed as though the word had been passed along to all the rabbits and ground squirrels, which came with their families, regarding the garden as a dispensation of Providence for their especial benefit. The garden suffered heavily and was at times almost completely ruined, but the introduction of a dog and several cats on the Ashrama and the use of various other means finally gave them the hint that their presence was not desired and the garden has to-day become one of the institutions of the Ashrama, containing numbers of varieties of vegetables and fruits. In years when sufficient rain falls, hay is raised for winter feed.

Swami's frequently expressed instruction was that the spiritual life was a natural one and that it should be developed by authorized spiritual practices, suited to one's own nature. Questions arose from time to time regarding occult practices, but Swami, while giving an answer, said that such practices, aside from being unnecessary, were also harmful and should never be indulged in. The minds of all, however, seemed to be like an open book to Swami and individuals found that their inmost motives and actions had become known to him and more than one were checked in rash impulses and extremes of conduct. Others, during the time of meditation, received spiritual visions and felt themselves translated into a different world.

Those who were privileged to attend the Ashrama classes

regularly, found the same rule prevailing there as in all other concerns of life, that the benefit they received was in direct ratio to their interest and inward zeal. Very few could forget their unique experience there ; and they found the desire ever recurring in their minds to renew their visits and spiritual experience. As the years passed by, the wisdom and judgment of the Swami Vivekananda in accepting and dedicating the land to the purposes of an Ashrama became increasingly evident, and blessings will be multiplied to the donor as those who come through future years find peace in their souls and receive in that hallowed spot the bread of life from the hands of the spiritual sons of Sri Ramakrishna.

REVIEW

A SON OF MOTHER INDIA ANSWERS by *Dhan Gopal Mukerji*.
Published by E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, U. S. A.

When the controversy regarding *Mother India* seems to be waning in India, a really stimulating criticism of the book hails from America in Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *A Son of Mother India Answers*. In this small book Mukerji is eminently successful in what he sets out to do. Without dealing with Miss Mayo's individual contentions—that would have been to repeat her mistakes and weary the reader with polemics at fourth hand—he combats and thoroughly and effectively exposes the hollowness of her chief and preposterous generalisations; her minor accusations necessarily fall to the ground. Some things we hold essentially sacred and probably do not know the reasons why we do so; they are subconscious. We are at sea naturally when such things are tried to be assailed by the root; and this is exactly what Miss Mayo has tried to do. But our author in his turn has carried the warfare to the assailant's camp and comes out the winner in the most honourable sense.

It is really good that Mukerji has accepted this task. He is eminently fitted for this. He combines in himself the best traditions of Eastern and Western culture; one inborn and the other imbibed, but both are equally telling in him. Consequently when championing the cause of one, he does not play false to the other.

Still there is nothing strikingly new or original in his exposition, only his words breathe a spirit of sincerity with a total want of rancour or animosity towards the authoress or her country, and that is striking. The book is impressive in its manner as well as in its matter; its qualities are qualities of presentation. It is not ungenerous in its choice of ground—qualities which will increase his reputation as a master of dialectic.

We recommend the book to the people of our country and abroad. It is a model of what such answers should be.

There is a serious printing mistake in the second line of the foot-note on page 51. 1.83 years should be 18.3 years.

MISS MAYO'S MOTHER INDIA : A REJOINDER by K. Natarajan, with an introduction by Hon. G. A. Nateson. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Sunkurama Chetty Street, Madras. Price As. 12.

We carefully read the pamphlet when it first appeared serially in the pages of *The Indian Social Reformer*, Bombay. We have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the best answers given to *Mother India*. The writer has very carefully and conscientiously controverted Miss Mayo's grotesque (and as we believe) deliberate misstatements. We wish the author had written a more elaborate and complete reply and had it published in England and America where alone such a reply can produce the best results in favour of India. It is pleasant to note that Mr. Natarajan does not decry religion but considers it on the other hand as the most effective means of social regeneration.

SISTER INDIA. To be had of Chester Green, 88 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, U. S. A. Price 5 cents.

It is a pamphlet of 12 pages containing quotations from various sources refuting the gross misstatements of *Mother India*. The pamphlet is very nicely conceived and is bound to be effective if largely circulated.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot

The following report has been received by us for publication from Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar :

By the grace of God our Ashrama has completed one year of its life (March, 1927—February, 1928). On this anniversary day with mixed feelings of joy and gratitude, we convey our sincerest thanks to all those who have helped us with money and in various other ways, and hope that they will continue the same patronage, sympathy and support.

This Ashrama, a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, has tried in its humble way, to live and preach Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda by making renunciation and service its motto.

It will not be exaggerating if we say that within the short period of one year of its existence, the Ashrama has proved its usefulness by its silent activities. We shall try and give here a short account of the work done.

1. Discourses on Vedanta philosophy and religion were conducted regularly thrice a week in the Ashrama ; and the following books were studied in that connection :—Gita, Isha, Katha, Kena, Prashna and Mundaka Upanishads, as well as Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

2. A series of class talks were given to the upper standard students of the Saurashtra and the Alfred High Schools, explaining, through fables, stories and anecdotes, the fundamentals of the Hindu religion, especially the duties of student life.

3. In March, 1927, under the auspices of this Ashrama, Swami Madhavananda, the ex-President of the Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, who is now in charge of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A., delivered a lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Connaught Hall, and then again in May last the Ashrama availed of the presence here of Swami Sambuddhananda, a monk of Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, and organised a lecture on Practical Vedanta at the same place.

4. The Ashrama, as it stands for the unity and harmony of all religions, celebrated the birthdays of Buddha, Sri Krishna, Jesus Christ and other world-teachers, and thus tried to promote universal brotherhood and fellow-feeling amongst the people.

5. The Ashrama, according to its small means, helped some poor deserving students with money. One boy reading in the 4th standard of the Alfred High School got help of Rs. 6 a month since August last, and another boy reading in the 6th standard of the Saurashtra High School got help of Rs. 2 a month since February last.

Lastly, in co-operation with the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, this Ashrama conducted relief-work for over five months in Cambay, Baroda and British territories affected by the last disastrous flood. At a time when the roads were completely washed off and rendered all the more impassable on account of thorns and brambles, and the people were in the grip of an indescribable distress, prompt relief was brought to the doors of all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Centres after centres were opened reaching succour even to the remotest villages on either side of the Sabarmati, and the whole area relieved covered about 300 square miles. The work of relief consisted in feeding the unfed, clothing the naked, distributing seeds, grain, and medicine free, opening cheap grain-shops, and finally in building nearly 1000 decent huts for the homeless ones. The money spent for this relief-work came up to nearly Rs. 40,000, a detailed account of which is expected to be published shortly.

This is the long and short of the humble service rendered by the Ashrama. God willing and circumstances permitting we hope the Ashrama will be able to extend its scope of work in the near future and prove to be a source of great good to the people. We can picture in our mind's eye a time when the whole of Kathiawar will be honey-

combed with sister institutions with this Ashrama as the centre, ministering to the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of all—May God help us to see that day!

Bankura Famine Relief.

The Secy., R. K. Mission, sends out the following report and appeal :—

The public are already aware from press reports that several districts of Bengal are in the grip of a terrible famine. Harrowing tales of starvation, disease, suicide and sale of children are reaching our ears. The pathetic conditions of Bankura, Birbhum and Dinajpur can scarcely be exaggerated. We have started relief work in Bankura; but our funds are depleted and we have not till now received more than Rs. 5,000/- from the public. The rains are imminent and we must stock sufficient quantity of rice before rains set in. We also want cloths.

Our work is rapidly increasing. Last week we served 103 villages and 1114 persons by giving away 58 mds. 8 seers of rice. The work must increase still more. The help we have till now rendered is very small in proportion to the needs and sufferings of the people. Immediately we are going to open two more centres. We therefore earnestly appeal to the rich and the poor alike to help us to their utmost by sending cash and cloths to the following addresses: (1) *President, R. K. Mission, P.O. Belur-math, Howrah, Bengal*; (2) *Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta*; and (3) *Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta.*
