

Prabuddha Bharata

OR AWAKENED INDIA

* * * *

NOVEMBER, 1929

“A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion’s courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden, will govern the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up, the gospel of equality. Men, men—these are wanted: everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men sincere to the backbone are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionised. When you have men, who are ready to sacrifice their everything for the country, and sincere to the backbone, when such men arise, India will become great in every respect.”—Swami Vivekananda.

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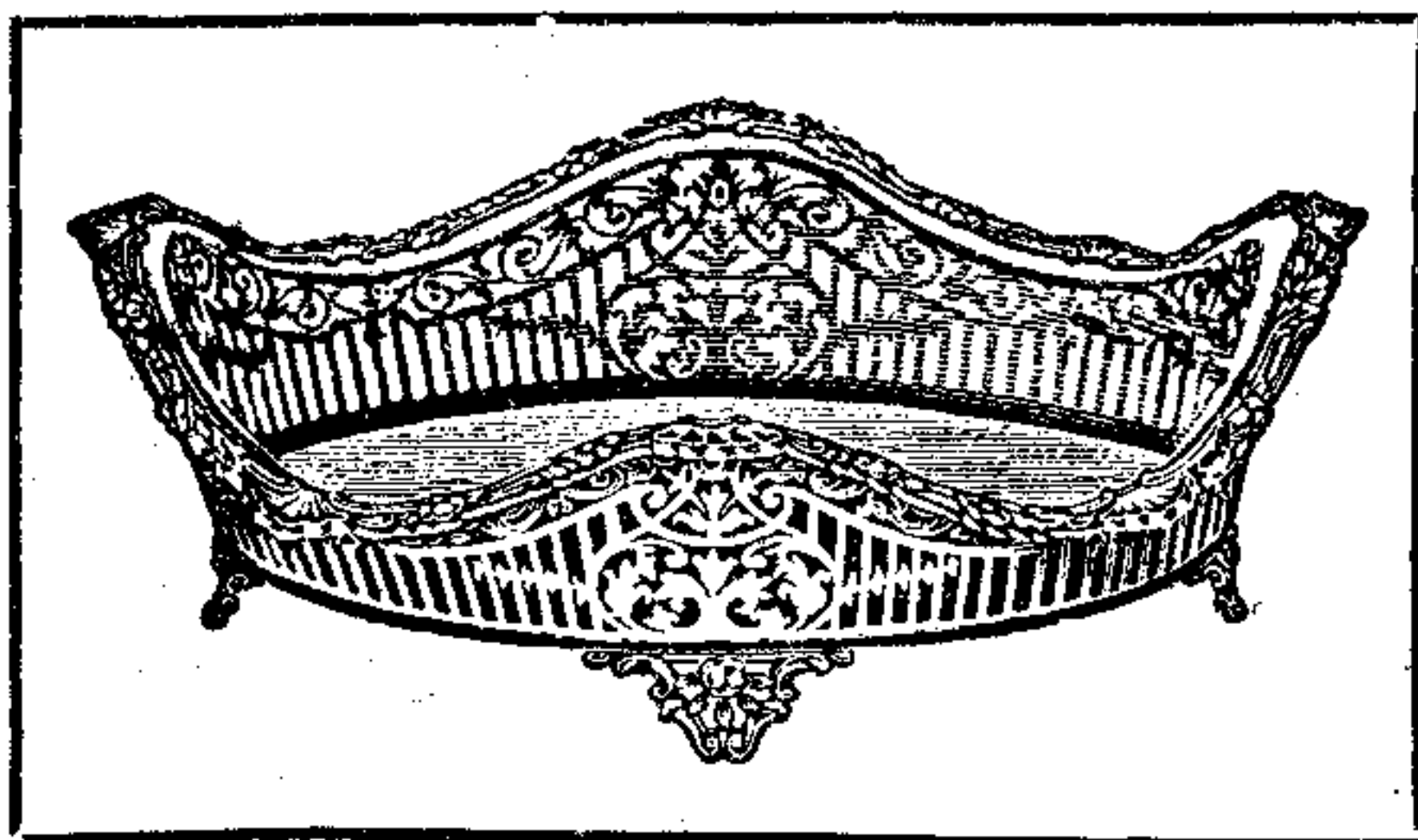
PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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NOVEMBER, 1929

Volume XXXIV



Number 11

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XX

(To an English Disciple)

SAN FRANCISCO,
26th May, 1900.

All blessings on you. Don't despond in the least. *Sri wah Guru ! Sri wah Guru !* You come of the blood of a Kshatriya. Our yellow garb is the robe of death on the field of battle. Death for the cause is our goal, not success. *Sri wah Guru!!! . . .*

Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate. But I am the Master. I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish ! All this is nonsense and fear. I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror. I am the fearless secondless One. I am the Ruler of destiny, the Wiper-out of fact. *Sri wah Guru !* Steady, child ! don't be bought by gold or anything else, and we win !

XXI

PARIS,
17th August, 1900.

If things go ill or well,—
If joy redounding shows her face,
Or seas of sorrow swell,—
'Tis but a dream, a play,
A play where each has part,
Each one to weep or laugh as may ;
Each one his robe to don ;
Its scenes, alternative shine and rain,

Thou dream, Oh blessed dream!
 Spread near and far thy veil of haze,
 Tone down the lines so sharp,
 Make smooth what roughness seems.
 No magic but in thee!
 Thy touch makes deserts bloom to life,
 Harsh thunder blessed song,
 Fell death the sweet release.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON HIMSELF

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

It was about 8 o'clock at night on Sunday, the 9th August, 1885. M., Rakhal, Mahimacharan and a few other devotees were sitting on the floor of Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar. The Master came down from his bedstead to Mahimacharan and said to him:

"I have long thought of telling you one thing, but I have not been able yet. I want to tell you to-day. It is about my spiritual condition. You say that whoever will practise *Sādhanā* will realise it. That is not so. There is some speciality about it."

This declaration of the Master filled the devotees with great wonder. They listened with bated breath. The Master continued:

"She, Mother, has *spoken* to me. I have not merely seen Her,—She has also talked with me. I was at the *Val-talā*.^{*} She came out of the Ganges to me. Oh, how She laughed! She played with my fingers and cracked them in fun. And then She spoke—She talked with me!

"I cried for three days at a time.—And She revealed to me all the contents of the *Vedas*, *Purānas* and *Tantras*.

"One day She showed me the secret of the fascination of *Māyā*. A small light appeared in my room. Then it began to grow larger and larger. At last it engulfed the whole world.

^{*}A place in the Dakshineswar Temple.

"I was also shown the vision of a large tank covered with sedges. Wind blew and removed some of the plants and water reappeared. But very soon the removed plants came back dancing and recovered the exposed water. It was indicated that the water was the *Satchidānanda*, the sedges the *Māyā* which obstructed His vision. Even if there are momentary glimpses, *Māyā* covers Him again.

"I am shown what kinds of devotees would visit me even before they come here. I was shown the *Sankirtan* procession of Chaitanyadeva winding between the *Vat-talā* and *Vakul-talā*. In it I saw Balaram and also him (M.).

"I had a vision of Keshab Sen even before I met him. I saw in a state of *Samādhi*, the vision of Keshab and his followers. A crowd of people sat before me filling the room. Keshab was looking like a peacock spreading its tail. This spread tail was his followers. A red gem glittered on his head, which was a sign of *rajas*. Keshab was saying to his followers: 'Listen to what he is saying.' I said to Mother: 'Mother, they are votaries of English ideas. Why should I talk to them?' Mother explained to me that such things would happen in this *Kali-yuga*. And they took the name of Hari and Kali from here. That is why Mother took away Vijoy from Keshab's church. But She did not go to the Adi (Brahmo) Samaj.

“(Pointing to himself) There is something in this. Many days ago, a boy, named Gopal Sen, used to visit me. He who is in this, placed His foot on his chest. Gopal went into ecstasy and said: ‘It will be long before you can come. I cannot live anymore among the worldly-minded.’ He bade me adieu and went home. Afterwards I learnt that he had given up his body.

“I had all wonderful visions. I saw the Undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in which there was a partition. On one side were Kedar, Chuni and other devotees who believed in God with forms. On the other side was an effulgent light as brightly red as brick-dust. Within this light sat Narendra immersed in *Samādhi*. Seeing him thus absorbed, I called him by name. He slightly opened his eyes and I came to know that he had been born in this form in a *Kāyastha* family of Simla (Calcutta). Then I prayed to Mother, saying: ‘Mother, bind him with *Mâyā*, or he will give up his body in *Samādhi*.’ Kedar who believes in the form of God peeped over at Narendra, then started up and fled away.

“That is why I think that the Mother Herself has been born and is playing within this (his body) as a devotee. When I first reached this state, my body became effulgent. My chest assumed a red hue. I then prayed to Mother, ‘Mother, do not manifest Thyself outside, repair within.’ That is why I have got such a poor body now. Otherwise people would not have given me peace. There would have been crowds of people about me if I had that effulgent body. There is no outward manifestation now. Worthless people go away. Only those who are pure devotees will remain. Why have I this illness? It also has the same significance.

“I had a desire to be the prince of devotees and I prayed to the Mother accordingly. Again, the desire arose in my mind that those who had called sincerely on the Lord, must come here,—they must. You see that is what

is happening,—those very people are coming.

“My father knew who is in me. He had a dream at Gaya in which Raghuvir appeared and said: ‘I shall be your son.’

“Even He is dwelling within me. Renunciation of *Kāmini* and *Kānchana*!—Is that possible for me? I have not experienced sexual intercourse even in dream!

“The naked one (Tota Puri) instructed me in the *Vedānta*. In three days I realised *Samādhi*. When he saw my *Samādhi*, he exclaimed: ‘Oh, what is this!’ Later on he came to know who was in me and asked me to let him go. On hearing him I went into ecstasy and said: ‘No, you cannot go on any account, until I have fully realised the *Vedānta*.’ After that, day and night I lived with him and discussed *Vedānta*. The Brâhmani said: ‘*Bâbâ*, do not discuss *Vedānta*, this will impair your devotion.’

“I said to Mother: ‘Mother, how will this body be maintained, and how can I live with *Sādhus* and devotees? Provide me a rich man.’ That is why Sejo Babu (Mathuranath) served me for fourteen years.

“He who is within this, informs me beforehand to what spiritual planes the coming devotees belong. When I see the vision of Gouranga before me, I know that a devotee of Gouranga is coming. If a *Shākta* is to come, I have the vision of *Shakti*—Kali.

“At the time of the evening service in the Temple, I used to go to the roof of the *Kuthi* and cry: ‘Oh, where are you? Come, come!’ See they are all coming by and by.

“He Himself is dwelling within this; and is communing with the devotees.

“And the devotees themselves!—What wonderful states are theirs! Naren junior has his breath stopped automatically.* He also goes into *Samādhi* in which he remains sometimes

* This indicates a high state of spiritual concentration.

for two and half hours ; and sometimes even more. How wonderful !

“I have performed all kinds of *Sâdhanâ*,—*Jnâna Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, and also *Hatha Yoga* for increasing the span of life. There is someone within this. Or how am I able to live with devotees after having realised the highest *Samâdhi*? Koer Sing said: ‘I have not seen another man return from *Samâdhi*. You are Nanak himself !’

“All around me are worldly people

and *Kâmini-kâncana*, and yet I have such spiritual conditions and there are continued *Samâdhi* and ecstasy! That is why Pratap (Mazumdar), seeing my *Samâdhi* on the steamer when Cook Saheb came, said: ‘Oh, he appears like one possessed!’ ”

Did Mahimacharan understand the Master? After hearing him to the end, he said: “Sir, all these have been due to your previous *Karma*.” He meant that Sri Ramakrishna was a *Sâdhu* and a devotee, but nothing more.

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE

BY THE EDITOR

I

No legal measure of late years has been of such tremendous significance to the Hindu society as the passing of the Sarda Child Marriage Bill in the last session of the Indian Legislative Assembly. It is not the enforced raising of the marriage age that we consider so significant. Late marriage has already become a fact in many sections of the society, and is bound to be such all over India sooner or later. We have, therefore, no sympathy for those who are crying themselves hoarse against the law as being a blow at the chastity of the Hindu nation. Nothing of the kind. A little insight into the logic of events would have convinced them that things were changing rapidly and late marriage was bound to become common in no distant date, law or no law. The marriage customs of a race or a nation are not isolated facts. They are inter-related with many other facts. The socio-economic conditions are dependent on one another. The nature of marriage depends much on the structure of the family and the basic tendencies of the society.

We had occasion to show last year how early marriage was a necessary

concomitant of the joint-family system. A joint family has a certain outlook of its own ; it has a fund of traditions which it guards and hands down from generation to generation carefully. Those who would serve and guide such a family should know how to suppress themselves and minister unto the various tastes of the individual members and must be extremely unselfish. They belong not to their husbands and children alone, but to the entire family. It is well-known how much of the family peace depends on the women. They can easily make a heaven or hell of the family. They, therefore, require a thorough training. They require to imbue their minds with the family ideas and ideals. They must love the different family members with a genuine and earnest love. Such training and love, it has been generally found, are incompatible with grown-up brides. They come with set minds and tastes. They lack mobility. And they are more or less self-conscious. They cannot lose themselves in their husbands' family as a younger bride would. It, therefore, became the custom to marry girls young and bring them up in the family of their parents-in-law, so that they could easily become one of them. Of course such

early marriage would have been disastrous if there had been untimely consummation of marriage. The family was careful enough to see that it did not happen. Therefore, early marriage was the best custom so long as the joint-family system prevailed.

But things have changed. The joint families are rapidly disintegrating. The main reason is economic. A joint family presupposes the living together of all or at least most of the members in the same homestead. Formerly, the economic activities of rural populations were confined within their own localities. Few used to go out in search of service. It was, therefore, possible for them to live together. But now most of our industries are gone. Agriculture alone cannot afford to employ all. Many have gone out in search of employment. And since they have to live most of their time abroad, they take their wives and children with them and reserve their income to themselves. That is but natural. The fact is, the old economic system is rapidly disintegrating and is being replaced by another system which is scarcely favourable to the joint-family traditions.

Added to this economic reason, are several other important facts. First of all, the new system of education. This education has bred a new mentality in us. Whether it is right or wrong, is beside the point in this connection. The mischief is already done. And we can now only reap the harvest. This new outlook is against the old family traditions. Secondly, we must remember that the coming together of several different cultures cannot but produce far-reaching effect on one another. Our women, who have been circumscribed in their freedom, for whatever social, cultural or spiritual reasons it does not matter, cannot learn of the freedom of their sisters in other lands without desiring to enjoy the same to some extent. Wherever there is a possibility of a comparative study there is a chance of change. A change in the states of Indian women was thus inevitable.

Thirdly, the far-reaching change in the outlook of life. Our society has so long imposed on all its members a communistic outlook. Individualism in social and domestic life has scarcely been encouraged. The economic changes mainly and the influence of Western culture to some extent have, however, made us more and more individualistic in outlook. Whoever has closely studied the implications of the Western economic system knows that family life itself, what to speak of a joint family, is almost against the grains of that system. Though in India that extreme result has not yet been produced, yet the growth of individualistic outlook in us cannot easily be denied. Individualism is bound to produce a change in the relationships between the family members, especially the husband and wife. The wife must claim greater freedom. Intellectual education must become an important equipment of the feminine mind. And such an education must result in late marriage. Fourthly, the present is an age of world-wide organisation. The collective life has now become the concern of every individual man and woman. That has added to the duties of our women. They have not only to look after the family concerns, but also to attend to their duties to the community and the nation. Such addition to duties means a mental preparation for them, which is scarcely compatible with early marriage.

It is impossible to ignore all these facts. We are thus not at all concerned at the passing of this legislation in so far as it relates to the raising of the marriageable age. And we do not think that those gentlemen who are now so up against it, would continue their opposition if they closely study the situation. One important fact is always ignored in judging reform measures. People seem to think that whether a certain reform is to be introduced or not, is entirely within their choice, and that they can always introduce a reform which is theoretically the

best. This is an error of the first magnitude. It is not true that what is theoretically the best is always desired by the evolving history of the nation. Changing circumstances create new situations. The history of man is not always a change towards better conditions. Sometimes the situation requires the sacrifice of better things in favour of worse. The ways of life are mysterious. It does not proceed in a straight line. There are ups and downs. Besides it is easy to see that the changing circumstances are not in our hands. So varied and different are the forces that bring about those changes that it is impossible for any man or men to check or destroy them. Suppose that a nation has evolved a high-grade and refined civilization. Its institutions are perfect. Its socio-economic life has been pitched to the high key of its ideals. And its domestic life is very refined and well-developed. Then suddenly an inferior race invades the land, defeats the people and becomes its political master. This change in the political situation produces many far-reaching changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people. Two alternatives are now before it: it can stick to its own ideas and perfected institutions; or it may change them in order to adapt itself to the changed situation. In the first case the new problems are neglected; there is no attempt at their solution; realities are ignored in favour of ideals, for though we may overlook the changed circumstances, they will nevertheless not cease from reacting on us. The result will be that we shall lose national vitality. Being estranged from realities, having lost touch with the actualities of life, we shall slowly debilitate ourselves and eventually die of inanition. The ideals themselves will become vague and verbal and not powerful and real. After all, ideal or no ideal, a man or a nation lives only in close association with and correspondence to the realities. Mere ideas or ideals are nothing if there is not an intense

life and reality behind. In the second case we are in close touch with the realities. That makes us vital and saves us from death. But realities do not always submit to our dictation; in fact it is only under their dictation that we can live. Therefore, the new problems may not always be solved by the theoretically highest ideas or ideals; grosser ideas and ideals may become necessary to meet the new situation. That is to say, there is no knowing what the altered circumstances will require of us. We only know that life consists in adopting oneself to changing circumstances and that if we are to live we must change ourselves accordingly. This imperative necessity must never be forgotten. Our reformers, and more specially the orthodox section, must not, therefore, think that what they consider ideally the best is also *really* the best. A strong sense of reality should always be our guide in judging the movements of the collective life. And if we adopt such a guide, we shall find that late marriage is a destined fact, whether it is ideally the best or not. We must remember that we can no longer check the changing process among our women. The changes towards greater freedom and individualism of our women are bound to become more and more pronounced with the passing of time. Can those who oppose late marriage propound a measure by which these changes can be better accommodated? So far as we know, no such measure has as yet been proposed. The only attempt that is being made is to deny those changes, as if it lies in their hands to either accept or reject them.

Does this mean that national ideals should always be sacrificed to the changing circumstances? Are we to drift always? Nothing of the kind. No doubt we adapt ourselves to circumstances. But we must also at the same time find out means by which the new realities may be made to serve the national ideals. We must so interpret them as to reveal ideal contents in

them. It is the glory of man to discover new values in realities. He is not bound to accept the face values. But not all men and nations interpret the realities in the same way. Evaluation is different with different peoples. A nation, therefore, should not only welcome the new realities but also accept them in its own way. No doubt the necessary interpretation is no easy task. Wrong interpretation may clog the flow of life. It may cramp the sense of reality. Or it may lower or injure the ideal. Profound insight is, therefore, necessary in order to find the correct interpretation. One who can do so becomes the leader of the age. When a nation has found such an interpretative genius in any critical period of its history, it may be said to have received a new charter of life from the hands of Providence.

It is, however, conceivable that the conflict between the altered realities and the national ideals may sometimes become irreducible. If and when this happens, national degradation is inevitable. It may be, after some time, a fresh change will make conditions more favourable to our ideals, and then we may take advantage of it and rise up again. But in the present case, can we say such an ultimate conflict has risen between our ideals and realities? The orthodox opponents to the Sarda Child Marriage Act have expressed the fear that late marriage will impair the chastity of the nation. If that be so, we must admit that it is a fundamental conflict, for chastity is indeed one of the bases of the Hindu race. But is the fear real? In our opinion, it is not so. It is our considered opinion that the chastity of our race is not dependent on either early marriage or other external safe-guards. External safe-guards are not unnecessary. But unless there is a deep-seated instinct for chastity in the hearts of men and women, no safe-guards would be of any avail. In fact, we must remember the sociological fact that external observances are often the outer expression of an inner feeling

and not a check to it. They do not indicate the antithesis of the inner and outer, but their identity. In these our degraded days, we have forgotten ourselves. We are ridden with fear. We are superficial. Every race has its instinctive attitude towards chastity. This attitude creates opportunities. The Hindu race has an instinctive and intense liking for chastity. Even if our women are married late or remain celibate, they will remain chaste. Let us, therefore, give up unnecessary fear. The Hindu race will not yet die. It has got much to do in the world. We may boldly face the new conditions ; we shall surely triumph.

II

We, therefore, do not consider the new law significant in this respect. The significance, in our opinion, lies in the fact that it is practically for the first time that a great social change is being imposed on the Hindu society by not merely the Hindus but also the non-Hindus. That is to say, the internal affairs of the Hindu society has become a concern of all India, and not of the Hindus alone. Hindu social autonomy has been thus in a real sense broken. We know that these remarks are applicable to the other societies also, for the law applies to the whole of British India. But here we are concerned with the Hindus alone ; and perhaps this significance of the law is more prominent in relation to the Hindus than any other Indian community. Is this interference with our social autonomy to our good? How far should it be allowed? How to obviate the evils that may result from it? What attitude can we, in consonance with the realities, take? These are some of the questions that have been raised in our mind by the passing of this law ; and we think Hindu society requires to answer them urgently and thoroughly.

The Hindu society has always a suspicion of interference from outside.

It has always resisted social legislation. In the present case also, even those who are convinced of the necessity and desirability of late marriage, are many of them opposed to legislation. The opposition has expressed itself in the fear that the present law will make police and medical examination of girls inevitable in those cases where there may be any suspicion of the violation of the law. The Hindus cannot countenance that. It cannot be denied that the fear is not quite ungrounded. But it may be hoped that in course of time things may be so improved as to make police interference unnecessary. But behind this articulate fear, there is the deeper uneasiness to which we have referred above. And this uneasiness is not quite unjustified.

The domestic and social laws and customs are the immediate expression of the inner ideas and ideals of a people. It is through these that a people realises its ideals. Of course it is true that they are also products of evolving circumstances. But if they are, on the one hand, the results of circumstances, they are also, on the other hand, so moulded and refined as to become the vehicles of the national ideals. The institutions of every highly developed society fulfil these double conditions. Now if the ideals are subtle and fine, the national institutions also contain many far-reaching implications. It would be dangerous, in that case, to interfere with them carelessly and without proper understanding. The Hindu ideal is the highest conceivable. The Hindu domestic and social institutions are also attuned to that ideal. The experience of ages has made the Hindus change them to the best advantage. Every institution has, therefore, many subtle bearings. Any careless change may easily affect its spiritual implications, which would be disastrous. For this reason, not all and everyone were considered by the Hindus* as entitled to introduce changes in social laws and customs. Only *Rishis* could do so. Only they could promulgate new codes

of *Smritis*. It is true that in practice this has not always been true. The laws that now govern our society are not all sanctioned by the superconscious vision of the *Rishis*. But it should be noted that the commentators, according to whom the original *Smritis* are being now administered, do not claim any originality of their own; they claim to derive their prescriptions from the original books of the *Rishis* themselves. Whatever might be the truth, the understanding is that social and domestic practices should be in accordance with the spiritual ideals of the nation. It necessitates that our social law-givers should be men of spiritual vision. The present tendencies do not fulfil these conditions. If all the implications of a social reform be on the surface, even secular persons can undertake to introduce it. But when they are not so, secular persons are scarcely fitted to do so.

It will be said that in the past ages, Hindu kings have promulgated social laws and people have bowed down before them. True. But then, the kings were not the actual law-makers. They merely enforced what was determined by the sages and Brahmins. It is the latter that actually conceived all reforms, the kings merely carried them out in their dominions. Besides, the state was not in those times such as it is now. It is now almost all-powerful. It interferes in every department of life. And its outlook is essentially secular and political. Formerly the state allowed wide autonomies to people in regard to local self-government, economic organisation, social legislation, domestic customs and religious observances. People chose their own law-givers in their *Rishis* and saints. Life was much less complex than it is now. How far can we consider the Legislative Assembly a suitable substitute for our old authorities? We must carefully note the nature and capacity of the persons that sit in the Legislative Assembly. Almost all of them are elected or nominated more on account

of their political prominence than anything else. The ordinary leaders of people are not necessarily their cultural or spiritual leaders. It is mainly their worldly position that secure them their legislative position. Then again, they are elected to the Assembly on political tickets. The far-reaching social legislations are not generally made the planks of their election manifestos. Even if this is done, the mere majority of votes secured by anyone is no sure proof that he has spiritual or cultural wisdom. Thus from whatever view-point we look, we are not assured that the Legislative Assembly members are well-suited to enact any social legislation of far-reaching consequences. In no sense can they be called real leaders of the Hindu society. Besides, such is the constitution of the Legislative Assembly that any law may be passed, even if the majority of the Hindu members are not in favour of it, provided all others are. It is true such a situation has not arisen yet. But the present constitution cannot prevent the enactment of any such laws.

The fact is, our present constitution, as it is after the Western pattern, is ill-suited to our national conditions. This political constitution is suitable to only Western social conditions. It is an anomaly here in India. Firstly, no legislature can possibly represent all the interests of the different communities, political, economical, social, cultural or religious, at most only the political and economical interests can be represented. Secondly, the legislature will be representative of not one homogeneous community, but of several communities with divergent customs and traditions. Thirdly, they will be required to pronounce judgment on each other's community, yet most probably most of them know little outside their own communities. This is farcical. This situation, it must be admitted, is scarcely natural. One has little hesitation in saying that such a legislature cannot be safely entrusted with the work of reforming Hindu society.

III

Yet we have to admit that we cannot indicate any other authority which can enforce the necessary reforms. It cannot be denied that mere public opinion cannot accomplish all that we require. If the public opinion is strong, it may be that a large section will submit to it. But only a large section, and not all. And there is the real fear of the slackening of the reforms when that opinion becomes less vocal. If we want to introduce a wholesale reform in our society and make it permanent and wish that it should be rapid in action, the only agency possible is the Government order,—the authority of law. Formerly the king used to do it. And there were also social *panchâyets*. Now there are neither the Hindu royal authorities nor the authorities of the local *panchâyets*. The *panchâyets* are dead. The people who constitute them are not enlightened. They lack knowledge and mental perspective. They have no vision. And they have lost authority. Even if they conceive any wholesome measure they cannot enforce it. And of course except in the Hindu native states, Hindu princes do not exist. Where can we look for authority if not in the Government? This is our dilemma. What is the way out of it?

Two alternatives may possibly be conceived. (1) We may build up an authoritative body for the Hindu society, which will be able to exercise its will over the entire community. Or (2) we may so change our society and outlook as to fall in a line with the present situation. The first alternative we do not consider quite practicable. Of course Hindu society must have an authority to which it must look for guidance and light and understanding. But it cannot be in any real sense an organised, concretised authority, occupying the position and exercising the power of Government. We have the Hindu Mahâsabhâ. It is at present a deliberative body and in no sense executive. It organises the opinions of

a large section of the Hindu community in certain respects. But if it grows to be an independent power, it must naturally come into conflict with the Government, which is not desirable. When there is national government, the very safety of the nation will require the suppression of any such sectional authorities. Even if such communal authorities are desirable, it is extremely doubtful if those authorities will really represent the best interests of the society. Wherever number of votes decides matters, the truth may not always triumph. In fact, so long as the masses are not enlightened, and endowed with the highest culture, it is scarcely safe to entrust them with the fundamental interests of the nation. And it is needless to say that such an upliftment of the masses is not possible in the near future. The Hindu Mahâsabhâ or any other such organisation is bound to be constituted, at the last resort, on the suffrage of the masses. Can we expect such a body to safe-guard the best interests of our society?

We do not think, therefore, that the first alternative is quite feasible. The second alternative is thus the only way left open before us. Our course lies in so moulding ourselves as to protect our basic interests and at the same time make it possible for the state to legislate for us without any appreciable injury to our communal being.

But before we can determine that course, let us consider a few facts dispassionately. Let us once for all lay it to our heart that all India is going to become more and more one in many respects. We are going to have the Indian nation. What that implies often escapes us. A nationality should not only have a common guiding principle, and a common aim, but its ways and manners also should be more or less uniform. This latter implication we generally do not consider important. Theoretically this may not appear necessary. But practically this is urgent. Why was not ancient or medieval India

a nation in the modern sense? It is because though the guiding principle and aim were common, the ways and means were so divergent that the consciousness of unity was dormant. Yet it is the consciousness of unity that is so important in a nationhood. We have to create a common consciousness, living and active and very much manifest among all sections of Indians, if we would become a nation. Do we see what that implies? It means that the multifarious little customs and traditions that are keeping the different sections of the country separate, should give way to broad, common, unifying nationwide conventions and institutions. A friend once told us that when he visited the great holy place at Cape Comorin, it was the thought of this need that came powerfully surging into his mind. He was strolling along the solitary coast of the Arabian Sea one morning, when he remembered how there, sitting on the last stone of India, Swami Vivekananda had thought over and conceived the idea of a monastic brotherhood which would devote itself to the service of the motherland. And as he dwelt on the Swami's brooding contemplation, he could not refrain from dwelling on India himself. He asked himself: what is it that India needed most of all? The answer that came to him was the vivid picture of an India divided into thousand fragments held separate by forms and formulas, though one in spirit, her children forgetful of the underlying unity, and intensely conscious only of the non-essentials, the thousand customs of eating and moving, meaningless laws regarding marriage, and infinitely various rites and ceremonies, and the like. And then he felt in his heart of hearts that the only way to create a united India was to obliterate these limitations and emphasise and enliven the inner unitary consciousness. Nothing seemed to him of greater urgency than this for the salvation of the motherland. For, the sense of unity, once created, he felt, would endow the nation with an

unwonted vigour and rejuvenate it in all its departments. We cannot but consider the conviction of our friend as correct and precious.

If we read the signs of the times, we shall come to feel that a large section of our countrymen have also become conscious of this need. The plea for the abolition of caste and religion or for the recognition of all Hindus as Brahmins is nothing but an expression of the inner desire to see India united even on the surface. It is true, of course, that such a tendency may take away from the richness of life which variegation confers. Here perhaps we should remember the important fact of historical evolution, to which we have referred in the beginning, namely, that it is not always the best that the changing circumstances require. We must remember that in this new demand of life, we are really facing the spirit of the West. And history claims that there should be an intermingling of the East and West in India. The West is conspicuous for its social endeavour. If we have taken up the spiritual man for his special investigation and nourishment, the West has taken the normal man, the vital and mental man, for his development. It does not look upon man as an essentially spiritual man, but as what we may call a normal man,—the physical, biological, social, industrial, intellectual being. The spiritual aspect comes little within its purview. The result has been astounding. Normal in its outlook, its products also have been normal. The West has succeeded greatly in devising laws and institutions, by which the normal man flourishes best. This attempt has been so successful that today this normal ideal dominates the entire world, and we in India also are feeling its impact very keenly indeed. Too much stress on the spirit of man, if indiscriminate, may indeed stunt the growth of the body and mind. This is the lesson that the West is teaching us. The perfect civilization would be that in which there would be in all-

round growth of both the normal and supernormal man. This lesson of the West India cannot deny. The standardisation and simplification of social life is the peculiar feature of Western civilization. It will, therefore, necessarily assert itself in India also. We do not mean that Indian social laws are to become replicas of the Western. What we mean is that as a result of the mixture, a golden mean will be achieved. Whatever the future, our point is that we cannot cavalierly reject what the West has brought here to India. There is only one way open to us: to assimilate it. There is no doubt that for some time to come at least, we must concentrate on the similarities rather than on the variations, even at the risk of being monotonous. In short, *we want a great simplification of life and its conventions*. Based on the spiritual fundamentals, life should yet be straight and open, its working, clear and strong and realistic, not fragile, subtle and mysterious, as it at present is. The growth of nationhood requires it. It is thus that the different sections of Hinduism can combine together and Hinduism can combine with Islam and other religions.

We are not unaware that such simplification may well end by strangling spiritual life itself. It may block the channels along which spiritual nourishment is at present flowing in the Hindu society. We know that; and in order to circumvent that danger, we require to spiritualise the new modes of corporate life, which the exigencies of evolving nationalism will develop. We have to create new channels for the flow of spiritual vigour. We want to replace the social intricacies which are now the carriers of spiritual significance by broad universal modes. Unless we spiritualise them, the danger of our becoming secular is certainly great. But fortunately, the predominant Indian tendency to spiritualise has already asserted itself. When Swami Vivekananda asked us to discard all gods and goddesses

for fifty years and serve only the Motherland, when he asked us to see God in every man and when he promulgated the worship of *Daridra-Nārāyana*, or when our countrymen idealise India into a goddess or consider national service as the veriest spiritual *Sādhanā*, it is the simplification of the expressions of collective life and the spiritualisation thereof, that is done.

It is along these lines, we think, that the Hindu society is slowly proceeding. And this way the reconciliation between the tendencies of the state and the safety of Hindu society is possible. If we can find substitute channels for the flow of spirituality, we shall not mind if our present contrivances are somewhat neglected. For example, we need not be alarmed at the changes in the position of our women, if we are sure that this new position ensures equal spirituality. We shall not discuss here how the new opportunities of our women are equally congenial to spirituality as the old ones. We dwelt on this in our article, *The Future of Indian Women*, in September, 1927. Similarly the breaking of the joint-family system will not worry us, if we remember that if this is making the individual members apparently self-centred, the enlarged collective duties that are devolving on them are making them sufficiently unselfish.

IV

A state which is constituted of various different religious communities and cultures must be at the most secular in its workings. It cannot interfere in the religions. Nor can its operations be limited to what is purely secular in the life of those communities. For, since all the domestic and social institutions are inter-related with religion, those institutions also will have to be excluded from the operations of the State. To do so, however, would be to weaken the state and make it futile. We have seen that separate communal authorities to deal with the social and personal matters cannot be

created without great harm to the state. The idea that no social legislation in regard to any community should be passed by the Legislative Assembly unless at least three-fourths of the members belonging to that community agree to it, is also not really workable. For, in that case, not much reform will ever be carried out. The fact is, once we recognise the fact that a state is to grow in India and India is to become a properly organised nation, we cannot deny that the state must legislate even in matters relating to our domestic and social institutions. Our clear duty is, therefore, to allow the state to do so. But knowing that the legislature will generally consist of persons who may not be after all best suited to so legislate, it is best we organise a spirit of bold progress among ourselves, and seek legislation only for legal sanction. It is urgently necessary that internal reforms are carried out quickly without interference from outside. If we sit apathetic, such interference is inevitable. But in order that reform may not be destructive, we must conceive it from a spiritual point of view. If we remember that the safety and health of our society depend largely on making provision for the flow of spiritual sap to the superficial life of the people, through their daily movements and avocations, our reforms will not go far wrong. And, knowing that the state must legislate for us, and that the state cannot generally do so from the spiritual view-point, but only with a secular outlook, and that it will tend to create uniformity of life between the different communities, we shall seek to so remould our institutions as to give them a rational, humanistic appearance and try to do away with the many peculiar, mysterious customs that have accumulated through centuries. If we agree to this, state legislation will not affect us, for the legislature also will generally act from a rational, humanistic view-point. But the greatest need is to spiritualise the newly created institutions simultaneously. It is urgent that

we make them the vehicles of our deep spiritual emotions at once. Otherwise there is the great danger of our becoming secularistic in outlook. There is a general tendency at present of freeing the different aspects of life from the interference of religion. This is partly right, for that way only can we straighten our socio-economic and domestic institutions. But since our life-blood consists in religion, we must conceive religion also in its purest form possible so that it may imbue the new forms without any way impairing them. Obviously, what we require is a concrete life in which this process has been clearly exemplified. We want a body of men who have gained the required outlook. The examples of such men are the greatest desideratum of the present day.

Much depends on recognising the fundamental spiritual impulse of which the present transformations in India are the outcome. With this recognition, despair and fear easily vanish and we may descry the workings of the Divinity in the changes going on. Our position is peculiar. Certain changes are going on about us, and certain forces are at work among us on which we have no hold. We can but calmly submit to them. The only means of safety available to us is our power of spiritualisation. It is useless to resist, but profitable and urgently necessary to seek

out spiritual contents in the apparently secular. We do not, however, blame those who are too conservative to give up their struggle against the new. This struggle is not without its meaning and use. It would be dangerous to welcome whatever comes on as good. We must examine everything. If and when we are assured that it is inevitable, it should be welcome. How can a nation know that it is inevitable? It must test it. It must try to reject it. When the desire to accept is stronger in the nation, we may know that it has to be welcomed, be it good or evil. Our orthodox countrymen discharge the function of rejecting. By their opposition, we know the worth of the proposed reforms. Of course the secret is neither in their hands nor in the hands of the ultra-liberals. It is in the hands of those who know the central impulse and who have felt the pulse of the time-spirit. They can hope and are not afraid of even drastic changes so long as they see the new spirit growing. In India none can properly understand the significance of the present transformations, unless they have known that a new spiritual outlook is being created here, which is destined to comprehend entire humanity, and which is, therefore, rejecting the narrow and the sectarian in favour of the broad and the cosmopolitan. Obviously the Lord has willed that the Hindus should pass through the ordeal first.

THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

4TH MAY, 1913.

Swami Brahmananda was speaking with several monks and devotees at the Belur Math. K. who was a lawyer asked the Swami several questions relating to his *Sādhanā*. The Swami said in reply :

“It is no use hurrying oneself. Until the right time comes, it is of little avail. The condition of mind before the favour-

able time arrives, is really painful. The mind is swept alternately by hope and despair, smiles and tears. But if you can secure an efficient spiritual guide, he may, by means of certain spiritual processes, push your mind above this level. You may not, however, be able to stand it, if you are pushed up untimely and too high ; for example, take the case of Mathur Babu. Oh, what

superhuman powers did he (the Master) not possess! At that time we thought that it was merely a peculiar power with him, but could never conceive the nature of it. Now we feel what a wonderful power that was. One day I said to him: 'Sir, I cannot get rid of lust. What shall I do?' He touched me in the heart, muttering certain indistinct words. All lust vanished from me for ever! I never felt its existence. Do you feel the wonder of it?

"*Prânâyâma* and other *Yogic* practices are not suitable to the present times and conditions. One must observe complete *Brahmacharya* in order to practise them. One's food must be absolutely pure, *sâttvika*, and one must be guided by an expert teacher. Meditation, *Dhyâna*, is at first nothing but struggling with the mind, bringing it again and again from its flights to the sacred feet of the Lord. This very soon heats the brain. Therefore, in the beginning one must not exert the brain too much, or hold the breath too long. When one has real meditation, one may easily continue for three or four hours;—one will feel extremely refreshed in body and mind in the end as after a sound and deep sleep.

"The mind is intimately related to the body. If the stomach is upset, you can never have a good meditation. Hence it is that there are so many restrictions about food. The stomach should be filled half with food and a quarter with water, the other quarter being left vacant for passage of air.

"Do not distress the mind by thinking of sins. For however great a sin may be, it is great only in the eyes of men and not of God. His one glance can scatter off the sins of millions of births. But of course there is the effect of *Karma*. If you do any wrong action, you must suffer from disquiet of mind and other consequences.

"The spiritual practices of the Vaishnavas are nice. They contem-

plate on the *lilâ* of Sri Krishna from morning till night. This relieves monotony. But I have noticed that dressing and living like a woman, in the spirit of a lady-friend of Sri Radha, often lead to fall."

14TH MAY, 1913.

At the Belur Monastery, Swami Premananda said at the end of the afternoon class:

"One must have true *Nisthâ*—steadfast, wholehearted devotion and attachment to the aspect of God, one has chosen to realise. But let that not engender repulsion for the other aspects. I was once told a story which was true. There was a rich man who had the image of Mother Kali installed in his home. The Goddess used to be worshipped with rich offerings every-day. One day a Vaishnava came and bowed before the image and said addressing it: 'Sister-in-law, how is my elder brother?' [Some Vaishnavas are so fanatical that they refuse to look upon Siva, the consort of Kali, as the Lord Himself and want to consider Him as only a devotee of Vishnu, and as such their spiritual elder brother.] The Master of the house understood the attitude of the Vaishnava. He welcomed him and gave him a seat, and in order to teach him a good lesson, called one of his men to his side and asked him to prepare a dish of pungent yam. The dish was accordingly prepared and brought to the Vaishnava. He did not know that it was yam and so pungent. He took one morsel and at once felt a burning sensation in his mouth. The host asked: 'Sir, why are you not taking any more?' 'Sir,' he replied, 'it is yam.' 'Sirrah, thy elder brother could swallow and digest potfuls of poison and thou canst not take one dish of yam? Hallo, who is there? Bring me a stick. I must break this rascal's head if he does not eat all the yam.' The Vaishnava was humbled to the dust. He prayed earnestly to be pardoned and promised never to speak

of Siva in that fashion again. The man was then feasted properly and sent away with solemn warning not to be so bigoted again.

“But if the *Nisthā* is true and devoid of the hatred of other Gods and Goddesses, it leads quickly to Divine realisations. The Master one day told us a story: There were two brothers. The younger was the devotee of Gopala, Child-Krishna, and the elder of Kali. Once a nice bunch of plantain grew in their garden and each of them thought that as soon as it would ripen, he would offer it to his Deity. In course of time the fruits ripened, but the younger brother was absent from home. Accordingly the elder brother plucked them and offered them to Kali. When the younger brother returned and learnt that the plantains had been offered to Kali, he got furious and went with a stick to the shrine of Kali to break Her image. But as soon as he entered the shrine, he found that there was no Kali but the image of Gopala installed on the throne! He was struck with a deep remorse. He thought he had mistakenly entered the shrine of Gopala. He came out and went into the other shrine with the stick

in hand. But lo, there also he found the image of Gopala! Then the truth dawned on him. He understood that He who was Gopala was also Kali.

“One who has realised God cannot be bigoted. Take the case of Vijay Krishna Goswami. He was a Brahmo, but afterwards gave up the Brahmo Samaj and practised *tapasyā* and dressed himself like a Vaishnava. One day he said humbly to Sri Ramakrishna: ‘Sir, many want to receive initiation from me. Should I initiate them?’ ‘Why not?’ the Master replied. ‘You are a descendant of Advaita Prabhu, you are as such born as a Guru. You will, of course, initiate.’ When Swamiji returned from America, Goswamiji sent for him. He himself could not come, for he was not doing well. When Swamiji went to his place, Goswamiji vacated his seat and asked him to sit thereon. When Swamiji remonstrated, he said: ‘I know how he (Sri Ramakrishna) used to look upon you. How can we understand your proper worth?’ Swamiji then sat down on Goswamiji’s seat, and Goswamiji sat down below. The disciples of Goswamiji, however, began to cast displeased looks at them.”

POLITICO-ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA

BY A SEEKER OF TRUTH

“With us religion is the only ground along which we can move. . . . The Indian can understand even politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through religion; everything must come through religion. For that is the theme; the rest are the variations in the national life-music.”—*Swami Vivekananda*.

I

The political movement in India, in an organised manner, first began in 1885 when the Indian National Congress was established. The conviction that a nation must solve its own problem, in its own way, and by dint of its own power and initiative, was conspicuous by its absence for many years in the history of the Congress. The

then political leaders believed sincerely in the honesty and good government of the Britishers, and hence resorted to a mild method of political propaganda by sending memorandums to the Government of India. In the mean time, other great forces were acting on the national mind outside the sphere of the Congress. The literary and the cultural movements in India, and the recogni-

tion of India's greatness in the West through Swami Vivekananda, had a tremendous reaction on Indian life and thought. Behind the Swadeshi agitation, there was a great cultural upheaval which gained vigour and strength through various national institutions and literary movements. This upheaval which brought a resurgent life, specially in Bengal, into the spheres of art, literature, music and morality, was primarily outside the pale of the Indian National Congress. The educated people were fired with a new consciousness. The Bengal partition came simply as an opportunity for the self-expression of the people, and thus the cultural upheaval reflected itself in our political life for the first time. The ideal of cultural freedom for India naturally developed the ideal of political freedom and economic self-reliance. The then Congress could not whole-heartedly adore this ideal. The politicians divided themselves into moderates and extremists, while the rising youths of the country took to a revolutionary course. The Boycott Movement in Bengal had contemplated a scheme of economic reconstruction, though not all-comprehensive. Side by side with the boycott of British goods, a great emphasis was laid on the development of various industries, and the bigger industrial institutions like the Bengal National Bank were started at that time. But the youths of the country rushed headlong towards revolutionary tactics. They had no time to conceive a comprehensive scheme, embodying all the departments of the national life. Another drawback was that these workers had no time to think seriously of the masses of India. The theme of their revolutionary philosophy was the total destruction of the state. They believed, as many others believe to-day, that once the state was captured by the people, once India was free, the condition and status of the masses would be improved in no time. They thought, as many others think to-day, that politico-economic reconstruction

before the attainment of political freedom was nothing but putting the cart before the horse.

It was the Non-co-operation Movement that appreciably changed the view of the Congress. It set up a moral standard before each political worker within the Congress and introduced some ethical principles in the realm of politics. It inaugurated a thoroughly constructive programme of nation-building, combining economic reconstruction, social well-being and something of religious reconciliation. The four cardinal doctrines of Non-co-operation were (1) Non-violence, (2) Hindu-Moslem Unity, (3) Production of Khaddar and (4) Removal of Untouchability. This movement tended to bring the masses of India into the forefront of active political propaganda. With the apparent failure of this movement, the thoughts and activities of the country seem now to be utterly confused and scattered. There are some important organisations still sticking to, and working out within a small compass, the constructive programme of Non-co-operation. But the educational institutions, started on Non-co-operation principles, are either extinct or decaying. The hot discussion about Dominion Status *versus* Complete Independence has remained merely academic. The activities of the All-India Spinners' Association are not appreciated on all hands, neither have they been able to keep all young workers within the fold. The rising Independence party has not yet framed any definite programme of its own. The communal riots have given rise to fresh socio-religious problems, and divided the attention of many of our active politicians. The communal organisations, both Hindu and Moslem, are mainly sectarian in outlook, and generally lack any comprehensive scheme of socio-religious uplift in conformity with the interests of all sects. One redeeming feature of to-day is the growing spirit of organisation among the youngmen of India. These organisations have risen out of the reaction of the last

political movement and the disastrous communal tussles. We doubt whether there is any proper philosophic basis upon which these organisations make their stand.

The whole of India is in the melting pot now. The traces of the political and economic systems which prevailed in ancient India, are scarcely found today. Moreover, the necessity of the revival of our past politico-economic structure is scarcely felt by our educated classes. A brief survey of the different trends of thought, extant in the country, is essentially required to clear our exact position, before we can frame a fuller scheme of politico-economic reconstruction for India. Aurobindo Ghose represents a type of cultural nationalism for India, and this he has been preaching since the Swadeshi days through his thought-provoking literature. Rabindranath, though he has primarily devoted his attention to the creation of an international status for India, does not fail to give sober and constructive suggestions for nation-building on a sounder basis. The village-work undertaken at Sri-Niketan, with his guidance and inspiration, has received the attention of many people. The Khaddar Movement inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi seems to be dwindling now. The village-reconstruction scheme of Deshabandhu Das has not yet been taken up in an extensive scale. The minds of the youths have become impatient, too impatient. Probably the real cause lies in the want of a proper philosophy of life, which can initiate a comprehensive constructive scheme for the nation. Previously, Indian youths felt very strongly the urge of a nationalism, cultural or political, which could fully satisfy their emotional temperament. But at present, such a nationalism is challenged by Communism and Socialism, in their various phases, both of which, with a very powerful literature at their back, are going to revolutionise the mentality of our young men. There are some special reasons for the popularity of Socialism and

Communism throughout the world. Nationalism is very idealistic, and hence it can rarely touch the lower strata of society. It remains an ideal for the cultured few alone. But the economic bases of Socialism and Communism grapple with the naked realities of life, from which the masses of all countries have been suffering for ages. Therefore, the arguments of Socialism naturally appeal to the minds of the exploited masses who form the overwhelming majority of mankind. The ideal constitutions for society as conceived by the various schools of Socialism may seem imperfect. Nevertheless, the love for the suffering humanity, which is the motive force of all socialist propaganda, cannot but touch all sympathetic minds. There is a growing section of Indian public men, who are out for disavowing all that is old, since, according to socialist theories, the prevailing religions, art, polity and everything are the product of an economic system which aims at fattening the few at the cost of the many. It is generally assumed that the older elements of civilisation can little help to solve the modern problems.

II

The present is a legacy of the past. So, in no way shall we be loser, if we cast a glance over the politico-economic traditions of ancient India, preserved in our literature and in some of our dying institutions. Without serious consideration, we can neither accept nor reject the past *en bloc*. The highest ideal that the Indian scheme of life aimed at, was the realisation of the Self. The sages declared that behind our body, mind and intellect, there was the Spirit, the Sachchidānanda, and the ultimate object of men was to attain this Spirit-consciousness. But men can never reach such a high ideal all on a sudden. A special system of discipline, physical, intellectual and moral, is necessary for guiding men properly towards this ideal. Notwithstanding the setting up of a noble

spiritual ideal, the social, political and economical requirements of the majority of the people were considered none the less important. Indian civilisation knew full well that a man advances from truth to truth, from a lower truth to a higher truth. So there must be a suitable politico-socio-economic structure which can satisfy the demands of all individuals constituting the body-politic. Only the secular institutions must not hinder our progress towards the spiritual ideal. They must be moulded in such a way as to smoothen our path to perfection. Ideals always create forms. The spiritual ideals of our civilisation spontaneously built their suitable forms in the politico-socio-economic structure of our society. It is a mistake to think that any political, social or economic systems can be suitable to the spiritual ideals. Systems create environments to fashion the mind in peculiar ways. They exert a tremendous influence upon the minds of men. So ancient India had no other alternative but to start some distinctive institutions that might serve her national purpose.

Some distinctive spiritual conceptions have been guiding Indian life and thought from the days of yore. Prophets and seers have been appearing to interpret the very same conceptions in different lights, according to the change of circumstances. The first postulate of Indian culture is the Divinity of man, that is to say, a man potentially possesses the fullest perfection in him, the perfect manifestation being only a question of time. The second is the theory of reincarnation, which declares that a man has been experiencing the world through numberless births and deaths. The present life is only an infinitesimal portion of the vast, eternal life that he has previously passed through and that he will have to experience subsequently. The third is the conception of Moksha or liberation. After the enjoyment of the sweets and bitters of lives, a satiety naturally comes in course of time. The serious blows

that fall upon man in course of experiencing worldly life, sooner or later reveal the naked realities in which a man moves and works. His mind now turns back; he seeks through knowledge and devotion his own Self which is Knowledge-Existence-Bliss absolute, and thus ultimately realises the ideal of Moksha. The fourth is the conception of Dharma, that is to say an ethical conduct through which a man is to enjoy life in accordance with his particular temperament, having an eye to the lives that are before him, and without any detriment to his latent spiritual nature. The conception of duty is diametrically opposed to that of right. Duty means self-abnegation—the surrender of one's individual interests to those of others. Right presupposes an aggressiveness—what one has to snatch away from others. It makes man very impatient. Owing to its supremacy in the West, there have been incessant struggles between classes and classes, and nations and nations. To die in harness is the ideal before the noisy civilisation of the West. The conception of duty makes a man calm, patient and self-possessed in the midst of the din and bustle of life.

These ideals have played their parts well in the Indian scheme of life. In society, there were four main groupings—the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra, having Brahminhood, *i.e.*, a state of spiritual enlightenment, as their common goal of life. In the Rig Vedic period, all people within the Vedic fold were culturally Brahmins, while occupationally quite different. Thus we find that a Brahmin father had sons, adhering to the spiritual culture of the family but following different vocations. In all the great epochs of the history of our country, the caste system was very flexible, as we find in the various references of Manu, Apastamba and others. A lower caste could attain to Brahminhood, through culture and learning. Only in the normal condition of society, the community as a whole and not the individual was the

unit. Hindu altruism taught a genius, belonging to a low caste, not to forsake his community but to share his greatness with all its members. The rigid division of castes according to Sattva, Rajas and Tamas commenced as the Vedic society became larger and larger by admitting numberless races of India into its fold. With the cultural conquest of Non-Aryan sects, an aristocratic tendency began to prevail among those who were Aryan *par excellence*. Consequently an elaborate system of rituals grew and priest-craft got the upper-hand in society. The Vedic scheme which allowed a Brahmin to remain highly spiritual, and at the same time follow any occupation according to the need of his society and family, steadily declined, and a fictitious difference was created between culture and calling. The spiritual and intellectual culture of the race became the monopoly of a group, while manual labour, industries and agriculture were handed over to the newly converted Non-Aryans. Thus the schism between culture and occupation was complete. The Vedic ideal was not, however, totally forgotten. The message of Karma Yoga, teaching that no work is mean and that perfection can be attained by following any calling with a spiritual motive, was declared time and again by reformers among whom Sri Krishna stands supreme. Buddha came and democratised the truths of Vedanta, in their pristine purity, for the uplift of the lower castes. Ramanuja, Kabir, Chaitanya and others preached the gospel of social uplift to the masses. Thus, though there has been a tug-of-war between the ideal and the real, the Brahminisation of all individuals, irrespective of their avocations, has ever remained the distinctive feature of the social, political and economical institutions of our civilisation and culture.

Hindu polity had a purpose, both secular and spiritual. From the secular standpoint politics was required for preserving the rights and privileges of the people, and for equalising the in-

terests and enjoyments of all, as far as possible. It was meant for the internal and external defence of the country and for keeping up the flow of traditional culture intact in society. From the spiritual standpoint the entire political system had to be organised in such a manner that people might pursue spirituality with the least difficulty, while undertaking various political functions. Thus a new conception of work naturally developed in ancient India. Work was deemed sacred and was a means to inner perfection: it was transformed into worship. Work, viewed in a spiritual perspective and done with a spiritual motive, is Karma Yoga, which is the cardinal doctrine of the Gita. Karma Yoga demands that work must be heartily loved, and no work can be loved unless all the pros and cons regarding the work are well-known to the doer, unless all details of work are intertwined with the motives and sentiments of the doer. Thus any unnecessary centralisation which makes people mere machines in the hands of a few 'wire-pullers' had to be removed from the politico-socio-economic structure of India. One of the characteristic features of Hindu polity was a system of thorough decentralisation even in the midst of the most powerful monarchies in ancient India. Specially in the secular life, decentralisation made the people highly democratic, for real democracy demands that all possible local affairs must be undertaken by the local people themselves on their own initiative, without delegating powers to the state. Thus the conception of Prajâ-dharma, with a distinct scheme of life, mostly independent of the centralised state, developed and grew in India. Yet, the necessity of a centralised state was never deemed quite unnecessary. Various forms of state, monarchy, oligarchy and republic, flourished in ancient India, and their function was to observe Râjadharmâ, *i.e.*, the duty of defending the country internally and externally, and of preserving the sameness of affairs throughout a given territory. In this

way, Prajâdharmâ for efficient local government and Râjadharmâ for powerful central government grew side by side under the same spiritual scheme of life. In ancient times the central government of the country was crushed time and again, but the local government came down in a flourishing condition, till at last during the East India Company's régime it received a very serious economic set-back and gradually sank into oblivion. The constitutions of Paura, Jânapada, Sreni, Gana, etc. displayed a highly developed self-governing capacity of our people. Republics are mentioned in the Vedas and the Buddhist literature. There are numismatic evidences of some prominent republics. The defect of our ancient system was that the central government was not always a natural development of the local government. A wide chasm separated the two in feelings and interests, and an all-India state on a federal basis could not be constituted with the help of the representatives, hailing from various local institutions.

The division of the Vaisya and the Sudra communities into numberless subcastes was a great achievement, so far as the economic structure of society was concerned. Though in Kautilya's Arthashâstra, royal villages and special state-industries are mentioned, still land generally belonged to the people at large, and the economic requirements were abundantly supplied by the well-organised caste-guilds and the banker-guilds. Traders and trade-routes were not wanting to carry commodities to every nook and corner of India, nay, to the distant places all over the civilised world. The causes that brought about decentralisation in state-affairs, did the same in the economic sphere. Indian craftsmen wonderfully combined religion, art and utility in their industrial avocations. Before commencing their daily work, they would worship Viswakarman, the maker of the universe, and meditate deeply on fresher motifs and designs. Each workman was familiar with the entire process of manufactur-

ing an article, and the drudgery of modern Western industrialism in producing 'the eighteenth part of a needle' was unknown to him. Socially, each guild developed its peculiar manners and customs; politically, each had its Panchâyat to look after local affairs; economically, each trained its members from their very childhood in its own specialised industry; and spiritually,—as we read in some rare inscriptions—the members of a guild sometimes studied the Vedas and lived a Brahmin-like life. The wandering monks at the crossings of roads and in village temples were a source of inspiration to the peasants and the artisans. The craftsmen, enjoying tranquillity and freedom, could display charming designs in industries. The stories from the Râmâyana, the Mahâbhârata and the Purânas were illustrated in the textile productions. The feelings and sentiments of a craftsman were mingled with every detail of his production, and work was really worship to him. The peasants, while going to plough, would sing, "O my mind, thou hast ploughed enough of land, now plough your own life which lies barren." The folk-songs of the various subcastes were the outpouring of a noble emotion and expressed an inner longing for spiritual vision. It is a half-truth that geniuses were crushed in our ancient industrialism. It is generally remarked that a genius does not find scope for self-expression where there is no competition, and that life becomes stagnant in a system organised too rigidly upon co-operative basis. But the fact is that a genius had an ample scope for self-manifestation by way of discovering fresher designs; only he could not exploit his fellow-men by means of his keener intellect. Moreover, the highest ideal being the realisation of God by following Karma Yoga, geniuses naturally betook themselves to spiritual pursuits and became the teachers of society. Had there been no spiritual ideal, there might be disturbance in society owing to the dissatisfaction of

men, possessing exceptional talents. But talents were directed in a spiritual channel. As a result, we come across Dharmavyadha, a philosopher, in a butcher community, Tuladhara, a seer of truths, in a Vaisya community, Nanak, Kavir and others. Through generations, the guild-system had been coming down unhampered till at last it was crushed during the days of the East India Company. The drawback of the Indian guild-system consisted not in lack of scientific knowledge, but in lack of all-India organisation on a federal basis. Simply for want of organisation, the guilds could not stand firm and bring desirable pressure upon the middlemen, the Zemindars, the Rajahs and other designing men who became tools in the hands of the foreigners for destroying the highly developed industries of the country.

III

Clear thoughts and conceptions are the *sine qua non* of successful achievements. Before embarking upon various activities, we essentially require a sound philosophy of life. The history of all great movements shows that a sound philosophy is at first conceived by a few thinkers and then preached to all through propaganda and education. It is only when the proper ground has been prepared that attempts are made to introduce the particular scheme of life, based upon that philosophy. This is the history of the French Revolution, the national movements in Italy, Germany and Ireland, and the awakening of Japan. This is the history of the Proletariat Revolution in Russia. It is to be regretted that we Indians lack such a philosophy as the basis of our national activities. A philosophy of life can be best suited to a people, when it is linked with the past culture of that people, when it can synthesise all the various thought-forces at play at the present time, and lastly when it can stir up the imagination of the people by painting a luminous future, furnished with all the noble elements,

discovered in course of the progress of human history. The railway, the steamship, the airship, the telegraph, the radio-broadcasting, etc. have knit together the whole world. What we think to-day becomes universal to-morrow. No nation can live an isolated life now. So the best thoughts of humanity, that have fortunately penetrated into our country, must be fully utilised by us.

We have seen the past traditions of India. Let us now turn to the creative thoughts of modern times. Nationalism, Industrialism, Socialism and Anarchist Communism represent the various currents of thoughts, simultaneously playing their roles in the soil of Europe. And trained as we are on Western lines and models, all these have come to stay with us. Nationalism has organised the people of Europe into distinct political groups, and the avowed object of each group is purely material enjoyment of life or Bhoga. Nationalism has very naturally culminated in Economic Imperialism, owing to the land-grabbing proclivities of Western nations. Science and Christianity have become the handmaidens of this Imperialism, the one for bullying the weaker nations, and the other for denationalising them and establishing a fictitious cultural superiority for the West. Industrialism has become the chief agent of Western Nationalism and Imperialism to suck the very life-blood of races economically disorganised. But Industrialism has not spared even the Western world. Bernard Shaw says that nine-tenths of what England takes away by exploiting other peoples, are enjoyed only by one-tenth of her population. This is a horrible misdistribution of wealth in a country. This is the case with other European nations as well. As a result of this accumulation of capital in fewer hands, Socialism, Syndicalism, Guild-socialism and Anarchist Communism have risen in Europe. Some want State-capitalism in lieu of individual capitalism, that is to say, nationalisation of land, railways, mines, etc.

Some seek to expropriate the capitalist class from their vested interests, and make the labourers the supreme authority in an Industrial Democracy. There is another extreme school, represented by Bakunin, Tolstoy, Kropotkin and others, which wants the abolishment of 'states' altogether, and desires to leave the people alone to organise themselves into free associations on their own initiative. The economic interpretation of history which Socialism preaches is important in the sense that it makes a new attempt to study human institutions in the light of the actions and reactions of economic interests. It opens up a new vista of research for the various institutions of India. Though there is a great deal of truth in this doctrine, still it is partial, because it ignores other creative social forces which are cultural and spiritual in nature. Nationalism is well and good, if it can get rid of economic imperialism with its blood-thirst, if it can allow natural groupings of mankind for cultural and politico-economic self-determination. If nationalism means co-ordination of wills for a definite purpose, then there is ample scope for India to assimilate all the methods of Western nationalism, provided she clings to her spiritual purpose and its corresponding collective life. Industrialism can occupy its rightful place in the future society, if it does not crush millions of powerless people under its heels, demoralising them and blunting their finer susceptibilities, if it does not presuppose the exploitation of the millions of helpless people all over the world. Keeping intact her economically efficient cottage-industries which can stand the tests of modern times, India can assimilate even Western industrialism to a certain extent, provided she can broaden her outlook in the light of an aggressive spirituality. But industrialism with large-scale production must have a limited, too limited scope in Indian life for the best interests of India and humanity. Socialism can really succeed if there be a spiritual

change in the outlook of man and if, as H. G. Wells suggests, it can (1) prepare the individual mind by means of proper education, (2) make truthful presentation of public affairs to the generality of people for their judgment and approval, (3) select real representatives and the faithful executive, and (4) afford scope for free-thought and research. We cannot definitely say now what great changes the doctrines of the Vedanta—such as the Divinity of man, solidarity of humanity, oneness of the whole creation, etc.—will bring in the human society. But it seems that the Vedanta in its practical aspect will bring about a root and branch reform by removing all sorts of privileges and changing the laws relating to inheritance, rent, wages, etc. Socialism is still waiting for a spiritual basis, and most probably that basis is Vedanta. Thus we find that a great responsibility weighs upon India,—a responsibility to spiritualise one of the great creative forces of the modern world.

IV

Modern India at the parting of her ways can ill afford to ignore these thought-forces that have come from the West. In interpreting her philosophy of life, the basis of her politico-economic structure, she must assimilate the best elements of the West without any prejudice. But India must remain India. There is a distinctive tone of the Indian collective life and this tone must be preserved in spite of the various transformations of society. A cultural movement has been progressing for some decades in our country. Though apparently very feeble, it is fraught with immense possibilities. The various institutions, religious, artistic and otherwise, cannot be ignored. They represent the self-expression of India's glorious past. The time has come when Indian spirituality, Indian polity, Indian sociology, Indian economics, Indian art, etc. must be systematised and reinterpreted in the light of Western civilisa-

tion and culture. The East and the West are to be happily blended together; but the racial characteristics of India must not be staked.

It is for this reason that the builders of our society must emphasise the spiritual foundation at the very start. To our Westernised mentality, the very name of spirituality is shocking. Some politicians look upon spirituality as an appendage of the nineteenth century nationalism. In Czarist Russia, the Christian missionaries, who were tools in the hands of the then Government, helped the process of exploitation, undertaken by the state, by repeating certain passages of the Bible to the Russian masses. We find before our very eyes how in the name of a so-called religion, millions of Indians are looked down upon as untouchables, as drawers of water and hewers of wood. Naturally the head of a young patriot reels, and he repeats the dictum of Karl Mark, 'Religion is the opium of the people.' But spirituality which is to be the basis of our politico-economic structure, can never be a priest-ridden religion. It teaches some universal truths pertaining to human life and destiny, and gives some constructive suggestions as to how these truths are to be worked out in the entire life of the nation. There will be very few people indeed to realise these truths in their completeness at the very outset. But if the people be convinced of their final utility, and prevailed upon to give an intellectual assent to these truths, it will be sufficient at present for launching upon constructive activities on a spiritual line. For stirring up our national imagination and vitalising our national life, Indian spirituality, in its aggressive aspect, gives us the following constructive ideas:

(1) Each man is potentially divine. It is a sin to call a man sinner. There is infinite power, sleeping in man. One must have adamant faith in one's mighty self, and be convinced of one's inherent strength. Let us manifest this power physically, and we shall be physi-

cally great. Let us manifest it intellectually, and we shall be world-movers. Let us express it spiritually, and we shall be seers. This is the simple message of Vedanta. We are to look upon men in a new perspective. We are not to seek God in the sky but see Him in men, and behave with them as such. Such a change of outlook is destined to bring about marvellous transformations in society, law, education, criminology and the like.

(2) Essentially speaking, there is no matter; everything is Spirit. Spiritual India has discovered numberless concrete symbols for attaining to this Spirit-consciousness. To the Hindu, the mountains, the rivers and the sacred cities of India symbolise the distinctive spiritual ideals of our scriptures. We are to realise the all-pervading Spirit in 'India.' India is no more to be a mere geographical expression. It is the symbol of the Virât. "For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our keynote,—this, our great Mother India. Let all our vain gods disappear for a time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything."

(3) Each man is responsible for what he is now and what he will become in future. He is unconscious of his immortal nature, and hence experiencing happiness and sorrow, and life and death in the world. It is due to his own Karma that a man is bound to the cycles of birth and death. This is the doctrine of Janmântara or reincarnation. It makes man calm, patient and dignified in the midst of dire calamities, and tends to keep him in the legitimate bounds of a moral order. There will be no reincarnation when the Self is realised.

(4) How to realise the Self? How to get rid of the sorrows and sufferings of the world? Not by denying work, but by fulfilling work. Work should not be shunned. Work, be that political, be that economic, be that social, or be

that otherwise, is to be transformed into worship. Work becomes worship when the worker acts in the spirit of *Juâna* or *Bhakti* or perfect unselfishness and love for mankind. This is *Karma Yoga* which can render immense good both subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, the doer purifies himself by

means of unselfish work and ultimately realises the Truth. Objectively, the whole society is benefited, since all kinds of work become sanctified and the doer performs everything in a worshipful spirit. *Karma Yoga* can spiritualise the proper politico-economic structure essential for New India.

(To be continued.)

A SERAPHIC SOUL

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

V

It was Sunday, the 5th March, 1916, the day of the annual meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission. Many lay members came to the Math on that occasion. Towards the end of the meeting, Baburam Maharaj addressed the members as follows:

“An elephant has two sets of tusks, one outside and the other inside with which it eats. The missionary work that we do is like the external tusks of an elephant. Whatever you might do, whether you establish a home of service or do relief work, nothing will avail if you have no character. Character, purity and one-pointed devotion—these are what we want. If you have these, you will attain something, otherwise nothing. (*Addressing the lay members*) Being only members of the Mission will not do. You must mould your own characters. You must make the world your own through love. Let the people learn from your selflessness, self-abnegation and purity. You must drive away egoism and pride from your mind, look upon yourselves as the servants of God and thus serve others.

“As the Master would not like to have name and fame, so his name and fame are ringing all around. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to say in later years, ‘Oh, I have got a great hatred for name and fame.’ Be you all of character and transformed into gods. Then indeed the work of the Mission

will prosper truly. This is my heart’s prayer to you all.”

In the evening of the same day, after supper, Baburam Maharaj was seated on the long large bench in the verandah. Some *Sâdhus* and household devotees were present before him. He said:

“In the world the mind is scattered on wife, son, family and lust of gold. It is the function of ignorance not to allow the mind to be concentrated. But we have to concentrate the mind, and that is *Sâdhanâ*. The mind cannot be absorbed in God, if there is the least speck of desire in any corner of it. Along with meditation and *japa*, you must have keen discrimination. You must search out the lurking desires from the remotest corners of the mind and drive them away. This is what is meant by the saying, ‘A man should uplift himself by his own self.’ This is how the mind should be conquered. The mind once conquered, one becomes self-contented. Such a one is a *Muni*. It will not do if you only make *japa* or practise *prândyâma*, but do not at the same time try to drive away the innumerable desires that are in the mind, and only hide them covering them with flowers.”

His conversations were not restricted to spiritual matters alone. They covered a wide range of subjects. His words threw a flood of light also on social, national and other problems.

The Swami had the welfare of the women greatly at heart. He knew that the society could not fully develop until the women were educated. He, therefore, took great care to inspire them with the high ideals of the Master and Swami Vivekananda, so that they might be pure, selfless and devoted to God. He tried all possible means to achieve it, and when away, he inspired them through correspondence. As an example we give below the translation of one of his letters to a Bengali lady :

"Dear Mother, . . . I thank you again and again in that you think of the Sister Nivedita. Let thousands of Niveditas come out of Bengal—was the desire of Swamiji. Let there again arise numbers of Gargi, Lilavati, Sita and Savitri in this country. Through purity, devotion and sincerity man becomes God. May the Master graciously inspire you with divine ideals—this is my prayer. Swamiji used to say, 'Men cannot train boys as well as mothers can.' Take three or four children according to your capacity and begin to train them. Rules and regulations will grow of themselves. If you have ideas within, you will not require them so much. Believe, believe that strength and capacity, everything is in you. Think of the Master and Swamiji and set to educate. Open an elementary school. The Master himself will send help. To give away is the primal virtue in this iron age. What better thing is there in this world than learning? Give knowledge, and ignorance will vanish through its culture. Read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* everyday with minute attention. And you will find how much of the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata* is contained in a single word of it. Read the epistles and lectures of Swamiji, and you will find infinite inspiration in them. A new era has dawned with the appearance of the Master. Don't let this opportunity go. Let the people find the beautiful way to peace. Whoever will tread this

path will attain bliss. We must create a sect comprising the whole world. Let none be excluded from it. Let there be none in the world, whom we cannot call our own. If there be any such, it is 'I' and 'mine'; and these 'I' and 'mine' are great enemies. We must destroy and put an end to these great enemies. It is only then that the whole world will be our own and of God and filled with bliss and peace. He alone will be able to give this education—he who has made away with this 'I' and 'mine'. Faith in the name of God will destroy this ignorance, this illusion. Through the power of God everything is achieved. May the grace of God remove the covering from our eyes! . . ."

He looked upon women as the embodiments of Divine Power and showed uncommon respect towards them. Whenever the women devotees came to him, he stood up and would not take his seat until they were seated.

Being the very picture of love, Baburam Maharaj exercised a tremendous influence on the minds of the youths. Attracted by his magnetic love, they used to visit him very often, and he made them his own. Of all people the youths had the greatest share of his love and kindness. He believed that the youths were fittest to imbibe high thoughts and ideals and most capable of realising them in life. He used to say: "We do not care for the big people. We want to make disciples of the young men. We want the stoutest, strongest and most intelligent youths who will give themselves to the propagation of the holy gospel of the Master throughout the world." With this view he set before the young men the lofty ideals of the Master and Swamiji and infused into them a spirit which brought about a gradual change in their life. During vacations of schools and colleges, young men from various places used to come and stay at the Math. Baburam Maharaj treated them most kindly and lovingly. He often wrote

instructive letters to those who came in close touch with him. And thus attracted and influenced by him, many a youth took up God-realisation as the highest and noblest ideal of his life and renounced the world and joined the Ramakrishna Order. We know a good number of the monks of our Order to-day, who gratefully remember Baburam Maharaj as the decisive influence in their life. To him they owe a debt which they cannot hope to repay.

VI

The management of the Math and the training of the young *Brahmachârin*s and monks occupied Baburam Maharaj's most careful and loving attention above all other things. He looked after the management of the Math to the minutest details. Worship of the Master, management of the kitchen, taking care of the vegetable garden and the orchard, feeding the cows, and all such things he himself performed with the most scrupulous care and taught the young *Brahmachârin*s and *Sannyâsin*s to do properly. In all such matters the procedure that was followed by Baburam Maharaj is still largely followed in the Math. He often said that one must be ready to give away one's own head (*shir*) in order to become a leader (*sardâr*). And the truth of this saying he perfectly exemplified in his own life. Whatever he asked the young *Sâdhus* to do he first showed by his own example. He perfectly knew that one must have infinite patience and forgiveness to be at the helm of affairs of such a big organisation, as he had to deal with many diverse elements and temperaments. With a spirit of wonderful patience, endurance and forgiveness, he conducted the affairs of the Math. One day he described to a senior monk of the Order how he proceeded with his work everyday. He said: "After finishing my meditation and *japa* when I come down the stairs of the Shrine, I utter

again and again the *mantram* of the Master,—'Endure, endure, endure (*sha, sa, sa*); one who endures, abides, and one who does not, is destroyed.' " Indeed he was endurance personified. He had not the least tinge of pride in him. That the Master was doing everything and that he was a mere instrument in his hands was fully realised by him. He saw God in everything and therefore found no evil anywhere. He took a lesson for himself whenever he found any *Sâdhu* doing wrong. He writes in several letters:

"This is a lesson I have learnt at the Math. When the boys do any wrong, I reason and find that they are not at fault. Whatever fault there is, is mine.

"I do not harbour the idea that I am good. I have come to learn. There is no end to learning. May the Master give us right understanding—this is my prayer.

"By observing the faults of others we are gradually infected by them. We have not come to look at the faults of or correct others. But it is only to learn that we are here. We must always test ourselves by how much we have learnt. . . What can you do in this dreadful furnace of the world? Love, if you can, and you will get bliss and peace.

"Lord, Thou art everything. Whom should I scold? Everything is He; there is only a difference in the quantity of dust that covers the gold."

"Friend, I am to learn as long as I am to live"—this is a lesson he learnt from the Master and acted up to it throughout his life and taught others to do the same.

In spite of this humble spirit, he was never careless to train the young *Sâdhus* in the best possible way, or loath to assume a stern attitude when necessary. He played the role of a loving yet stern mother in moulding their lives. If any one failed to do and move according to his directions, he did not let him alone. He tried his best to persuade him to follow the

right course. If he failed in that, he did not mind using even force in order to correct him. But the stream of love and kindness that flowed for him in his heart could not be checked, and would on such occasions burst forth only more forcibly. Like a loving mother he would repent and try to make up for his stern behaviour by offering him the best of things to eat. During his last illness when he was at Deoghar, a devotee used to bring the best available things for the Swami's attendants to eat. One day Baburam Maharaj scolded one of them for eating such things, saying: "The Master used to say that a *Sādhu* must restrain his greed and lust and take only half meals at night. Being a *Sādhu* you are doing quite the opposite and eating things out of greed!" The attendant felt wounded at the rebuke and left the place without letting any one know. At the time of the mid-day meal Baburam Maharaj became anxious at not seeing him. He felt that the young monk had taken his rebuke to heart and gone away. He sent out his other attendants to find him out. But they failed. He was sitting in a sad mood in the afternoon when the monk entered the room by a back door. When Baburam Maharaj came to know of it, he called him to his side and said: "My boy, I am old and weakened by illness. I cannot always keep my temper. Should you get angry with me if I happen to say anything in this my condition?" As he said this, tears filled his eyes. And he brought some sweets and fed him with his own hands.

Sometimes he explained his attitude in order to console the chastised. One day repenting his harsh treatment of a senior *Sannyāsin* he said: "Did you mind my scolding this afternoon? Well, from your example the new *Brahmachārins* will learn everything. You should be ideals. . . . A *Sādhu* should keep everything neat and clean. The Master could not bear to see anything unclean. (*Pointing to the Brahma-*

chārins present) They will have to learn everything. In cooking, cutting vegetables, working in the Shrine, worshipping, keeping accounts, lecturing and in everything else, they will have to be experts. It is for their good that I scold them so much and have all such things carefully done by them. I have not the least anger towards any one. (*To the Brahmachārins*) Please don't mind that I scold you." Inspired by pure love as it was, Baburam Maharaj's scolding had no sting in it.

The young *Brahmachārins* and *Sannyāsins* were taught by him how to do even a most ordinary thing perfectly. He insisted on their maintaining good manners and gentle behaviour towards others. "First become gentle if you want to be *Sādhu*,"—this is what he impressed upon them deeply. He asked them all to look upon the Math as a place of training above all and sometimes regretted saying: "Nowadays none like to learn social and common good manners and gentle behaviour. The Master used to take extreme care to teach us these things."

Baburam Maharaj tried for an all-round development of the young *Sādhus*. In order to inspire them with the noblest and highest ideals, he often spoke to them of Sri Ramakrishna's intense renunciation, keen thirst for God-realisation, unheard-of devotion to truth, strenuous *Sādhanā* for twelve long years, extraordinary realisations and uncommon love and kindness for his disciples. And he always set before them the life of Swami Vivekananda who, along with the highest realisations of the Self, reached the pink of perfection in the graces of the head and heart and exemplified in his life perfect *Brahmacharya*, indefatigable activity, extreme purity and wonderful selfless love for humanity. He became inspired when he spoke to them of the Master and Swamiji. One day he held before the *Sādhus* the ideal of purity as the essence of all spiritual practices and impressed the idea thus:

"No one so pure as the Master has as yet been born on earth. He could not touch any impure person. If any such ever touched him, he would cry out in pain. Purity is religion, purity is strength. He was the embodiment of purity. Place him as the ideal before you and get your minds purified. Whenever lust and greed of gold enter into your minds, at once remember the Master and Swamiji and drive away those impure propensities. Have the guard of knowledge keeping watch at the door of your mind, and take care that no impure thought ever crosses its threshold. Get your life moulded in this fashion, and you will see what immense strength wakes up in you. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'"

Another day while saying that religion is not a matter of words but of realisation, he said:

"Many are lecturing on religion and writing books on it; but how many are accepting it? Can you expect any one to accept it until it penetrates into his very heart? Show by life, and people will listen to you. I want life, —life aflame with fire. Let your mouths be closed and actions speak. Stop speaking but show in action whose sons you are. You are the sons of the Divine Mother,—the sons of the Master and Swamiji. May you spit upon earthly name and fame! Never care whether people speak well or ill of you. Purify your heart and soul, install the Mother and the Master there, make yourself Their instrument and calmly work on, being one in mind and speech. This (the Math) is not a place to bustle in, but was founded by Swamiji to make real men. Man is not made by mere book-learning without religion and character. Those who will finish their education here, will be ideal persons of character."

Indeed his last-mentioned claim was quite justifiable. He was a maker of man in the true sense of the term. He was a touchstone. Whomsoever he touched had to be turned into gold.

And there are many who were made into gold by him, and who have consecrated their life as an offering to truth, love and service to humanity.

But none of them did he make his disciples. Swamiji had once said to him, "Well, Baburam, don't make disciples. If you do, your disciples and Rakhal's will quarrel with one another in future." Baburam Maharaj acted up to this advice of Swamiji to the end of his days. Though he himself did not initiate anybody, yet his eagerness to help others in the path of God was unique. Whenever he got an opportunity, he tried to infuse power into others and thereby awaken their spirituality. His behaviour clearly evinced that he felt a restlessness as to how to lead men Godward. This trait was very prominent in him. This peculiarity of his character expressed itself in many ways in his dealings with others. Apart from his own help, he sent and often took those who pressed him for initiation to Holy Mother or to Swami Brahmananda and had them initiated by them.

Baburam Maharaj tried his best to observe the rules that had been laid down by Swamiji for the conduct of the Math. Swamiji very much desired that there should be regular studies of the Sanskrit scriptures in the Math. Baburam Maharaj was, therefore, particular about this all his life. And as a result a regular study circle has been formed under the guidance of a learned Sanskrit Pandit. He took keen interest in and encouraged also the study of Western philosophy and similar subjects in the Math. He also took special interest in the spread of general education among the masses. Whenever any one undertook such a work, he inspired and encouraged him. Once he wrote to one:

"Swamiji also desired the imparting of education. It is a very good idea. Only *Sevāshrama* and *Sevāshrama*! That has become a hobby. Why, is there nothing new to do? Even on his last day, Swamiji spoke to me of

spreading knowledge. It is quite certain that this will do immense good to you as well as to the country. Seeing your ideal life, the boys will acquire a new life. Be you the torch-bearers in the path of spreading knowledge. The cultivation of knowledge in the company of the *Sādhus* will impart a new appearance to the country, and the boys will have their life's aim correctly determined. It is only by so doing that the boys will become men,—nay, they will become *Rishis* and gods.

“I have already heard of your school from H. Do as much as you can in the direction of founding schools, spreading education and imparting knowledge. This was Swami Vivekananda's heart's desire. Those fortunate persons who will help in this cause are gods in the forms of men. They indeed are selfless workers, and blessed indeed are their lives. What will one school or three or four *Sevāshramas* avail? Have faith in the name of the Master and through God's grace establish schools and *Sevāshramas* in every town, village and hamlet.”

One of his most prominent characteristics was his utter disregard for his personal comfort. When he would sit down to eat, he would take the best things from his plate and distribute them to the junior members. As to his dress he would never keep more than the minimum supply. During his illness at Deoghar a devotee gave to his attendant four shirts for his use. When he came to know of it, he scolded the attendant and said, “I have never been accustomed to keeping so many shirts. Besides, it does not become a monk to have so much clothing.” When he passed away, nothing but an empty canvass bag and a few books could be found to be preserved in honour of his memory!

VII

Thus lived the Swami all the years since the charge of the Math was given to him after the passing of Swami Vivekananda. The inexhaustible energy

and power that were manifested through him kept him constantly occupied in training and moulding the character of those that had gathered round the name of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, by his living example as well as by his soul-stirring spiritual instructions. He silently lived an unostentatious life in the Math, sometimes playing the part of a spiritual teacher, sometimes that of a loving mother and sometimes even that of a schoolmaster. Man-making was his ideal. His relation with those who came to visit the Math was of the sweetest character. His all-embracing love for each and everybody was truly divine. To the visitors he was the personification of humility. He was verily like a cloud in the rainy season, silently flooding all with the refreshing waters of his love. For about six years he had been exclusively occupied with the management of the Math. In 1911 he set out on a pilgrimage to Amarnath in company with Swamis Shivananda and Turiyananda. After his return he turned his attention to the spreading of the universal message of the Master in the different parts of the country. East Bengal was particularly fortunate in sharing his love and service in this respect. He visited many places of that province several times and evoked great enthusiasm wherever he went. In 1917 he made his last tour in those parts. Being invited by some devotees on the occasion of a festival, he visited Gharinda, a village in the district of Mymensingh. All, Hindus and Mahomedans alike, were attracted by his loving and lovable personality. It was there that one day a Mahomedan, hearing him speak of the one God that existed in all, asked him if he could partake of the food touched by him. “Yes, I can,” was the Swami's reply. Immediately some food was brought in a plate and he unhesitatingly partook of the food from the hands of the Mahomedan. From Gharinda he went to Netrakona. On his way from there to Mymensingh, there was a touching incident. The

Swami's party had gone ahead and he was proceeding in a palanquin. He had not gone far from Netrakona when some villagers saw him and stopped his palanquin and did not let him go till all others of their village had seen and been blessed by him and made an offering of some green fruits to him.

From Mymensingh he came to Dacca where he stopped for some days. From Dacca he visited Narayanganj and some interior villages such as Hashara and Sonargaon. At all these places there was tremendous enthusiasm and attraction towards him. One day at Hashara he found that water-hyacinth had filled a pond and was polluting its water. He asked the young men to be up and doing to remove this pest and himself proceeded to clear the pond. Inspired by his example the young men at once cleared the whole pond. They did not stop there. They organised a party and carried on this work of removing water-hyacinths in several villages of Vikrampur, which had been a standing nuisance for several years.

Travelling thus for two or three months in towns and villages, quite regardless of his personal conveniences and always mindful of the good of others, Baburam Maharaj came back to the Math with fever. The doctors examined him and declared it to be a case of kala-azar. He was advised a change of climate and sent to Deoghar. After suffering from this disease for one long year and a half, when he was on the point of recovery, he suddenly fell a victim to influenza which made its appearance at Deoghar at that time after creating a havoc in several parts of Bengal. On medical advice, he was brought to Calcutta to the house of Balaram Bose. The best physicians saw him but could not give any hope of recovery. And in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 30, 1918, the fourth day of his arrival in Calcutta, he entered into *Mahāsamādhi* in the presence of his brother disciples and monks and *Brahmachârin*s. His body was brought to and cremated at the Belur Math.

VIII

Notwithstanding his extreme and long suffering which reduced his body to a mere skeleton, he was never found to be disturbed in the mind. As in health, so also in illness, he would ever say, "The grace of the Master is the only support," and the name of Sri Ramakrishna was ever on his lips. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a class of men were born on this earth who were indifferent to all earthly enjoyments and name and fame, always engaging themselves in the service of men showing them the path to God. On account of the special manifestation of God in them, he classed them as *Iswara-kotis* and often declared Baburam Maharaj as belonging to this class. It is not for us to fathom the depths of spirituality to which he attained. Only a jeweller knows the worth of a diamond. Sri Ramakrishna spoke of him as a jewel-casket. But does that give us any real glimpse into his inner being? He himself would never like to speak of his realisations but we shall mention here one or two significant incidents. One day after the evening service, Baburam Maharaj sat down for meditation in a corner of the southern verandah of the Shrine. The usual period of time expired but he did not get up. The attendant at the Shrine, when he came to offer the *bhoga* (food to the deity), found him sitting still with his body a little tilted backwards. He thought the Swami had fallen asleep through physical exhaustion. He called him repeatedly but did not get any reply. He returned to his service at the Shrine, and after some time again went to Baburam Maharaj. He was as before sitting still. He called and called him,—there was no response. He then placed a light before his eyes for some time. Baburam Maharaj opened his eyes by and by. The *Brahmachârin* asked him if he had fallen asleep, on which he began to sing sweetly :

"I am awakened and will sleep no more. I am ever awake in the state of

Yoga. Oh Mother, I have given back Thy mystic sleep to Thee and have put sleep to sleep."

He then said to the *Brahmachârin*: "When you see me in that condition, do not call me or cry aloud but repeat the name of the Master in my ears." Another day while Baburam Maharaj was strolling about in the premises of the Math, Sri Ramakrishna suddenly appeared before him and lovingly said holding him by the cheeks: "Dear moon (a term of endearment), where will you run away? You are held in the nose by a rope in my hands." Babu-

ram Maharaj did not explain to us the implications of the Master's words; but it may be supposed that he had decided to leave this world even before the fulfilment of the trust vested in him by the Master, and that the Master had reminded him that the end of the rope tying him was in his hand and he would not leave it until he fulfilled his portion of the work. After years of loving service to humanity and thus fulfilling the trust of the Master, he was at last called to his blessed feet to repose in Peace and Bliss eternal.

(Concluded)

RAMAKRISHNA AND THE KING-SHEPHERDS OF INDIA*

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

Such then were the great shepherds of the people, the king-pastors of India, at the moment when the star of Ramakrishna appeared in cloudless glory above the mountains.¹

Naturally he could not know the first of these four men, the forerunner, Ram Mohun Roy, but he knew the other three personally. He first visited them, urged by that overwhelming thirst for God, which made him always ask himself—Are there no more of His wells, which these have found and from which

I have not drunk? But his practised eye judged them at sight. As he leant over them to taste them with thirsty devotion, he often laughed mischievously, and rose saying that his own were better. He was not the man to be dazzled by outward show, glory or eloquence. His veiled eyes did not blink unless the light he sought, the face of God Himself, shone out from the depths. They could penetrate through the walls of the body as through a window-pane and searched the very heart with eager

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¹I have only mentioned the greatest. There were many others. India has never lacked messengers of God, founders of sects or religions, and they were continually appearing throughout the period. In the recent treatise by Helmuth von Glasenapp: *Religiöse Reform-bewegungen in heutigen Indien* (1928, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrich (?), Morgenland collection), there is an account of the two most curious.—The Atheistic Church of the Superman, the Dev-Samâj, and the Mystical Church of the Divine Sound (or Word), the Râdhâsvâmi-Satsang. They are not included here because they belong to rather a later date. The Dev-Samâj, though

founded in 1887 by Shiva Narayana Agnihotra only adopted the name "superhuman" atheism after 1894; and its violent struggle against God, fought in the name of reason, morality and science, by a "superman," the Dev-Guru (the founder in person), whose initial step was to make himself the object of worship, is to-day in full swing. As for the Râdhâsvâmi-Satsang, founded by a trinity of successive, but indistinguishable holy Gurus, whose deaths occurred in 1878, 1898 and 1907 respectively, it is only since the end of the last century that their doctrine has become firmly established. We need not therefore take it into consideration in this account. The seat of the Dev-Samâj is at Lahore, and almost all its adherents are in the Punjab. The two chief centres of the Râdhâsvâmi-Satsang are Allahabad and Agra.

curiosity. But what they found there sometimes provoked a sudden quiet outburst of hilarity untinged with malice from this indiscreet visitor.

The story of his visit to the imposing Devendranath Tagore, as told by himself, is a titbit of comedy, wherein the critical humour and the disrespectful respect of the "little brother" towards the great pontiff, the "King Janaka," have free play.

"Is it possible," a questioner asked him one day,² "to reconcile the world and God? What do you think of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore?"

Ramakrishna repeated softly, "Devendranath Tagore . . . Devendranath . . . Deveudra . . ."—and he bowed several times. Then he said,

"Do you know what he is? Once upon a time there was a man, whose custom it was to celebrate the feast of Durgâ Pujâ with great pomp. Goats were sacrificed from morning till night. After some years the sacrifice lost its brilliancy. Somebody asked the man why it was so greatly reduced, and the man replied, 'I have lost my teeth now.' "

"And so," continued the irreverent

Hence it is to be noted that both belong to Northern India. Glasenapp says nothing of the appearance of new religions in Southern India, but they were no less numerous. Such was the religion of the great Guru, Sri Narayana, whose beneficent spiritual activity was exercised for more than forty years in the state of Travancore over some million faithful souls (he has just died in 1928). His doctrine was impregnated with the monist metaphysics of Sankara, but tended to practical action, showing very marked differences from Bengal mysticism, whose Bhakti effusions filled him with mistrust. He preached, if one may say so, a Jnâna of action, a great intellectual religion, having a very lively sense of the people and their social need. It has greatly contributed to the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Southern India and its activities have in a measure been allied to those of Gandhi. (Cf. Articles by his disciple, P. Natarajan, in the *Sufi Quarterly*, Geneva, December, 1928 and the following months.)

² Keshab Chunder Sen. The conversation is reported by an eye-witness, A. Kumar Dutt. (*Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 510).

story-teller, "it is quite natural that Devendranath should practise meditation at his advanced age."³

He paused . . . "But," he added, bowing once more, "He is undoubtedly a very illustrious man . . ."

Then he recounted his visit.⁴

"At first when I saw him, I thought him rather proud. Oh! It was natural! He was overwhelmed by so many good things: nobility, prestige, riches . . . Suddenly I found myself in the state when I can see through a man. Then I consider the greatest, the richest, the most learned men as straw, if I do not see God . . . And a laugh escaped me . . . for I discovered that this man at the same time enjoyed the world and led a religious life. He had many children,

³ It must be admitted that Ramakrishna's irony did Devendranath a grave injustice. It did not take into account, he probably did not know it, the absolute disinterestedness of the Maharshi and his years of noble and difficult sacrifice. Here I see the attitude of a man of the people to a great aristocrat.

Another account, given by Sashi Bhusan Ghosh in his *Memoirs* written in Bengali (pp. 245-7) lessens the irony without diminishing the penetration of Ramakrishna, so that justice is better done to the royal idealist.

Ramakrishna said that he was introduced to Devendranath with the words, "Here is a madman of God!" "Devendranath seemed to me to be concentrated upon his own ego, but why should he not have been so concentrated, when he enjoyed so much knowledge, renown, riches and unanimous respect? But I discovered that Yoga and Bhoga (material enjoyment) ran side by side in his life. . . I said to him, 'You are a true Janaka in this age of sin. Janaka was wont to see both sides at once. So you have kept your soul for God, while your body moves in the material world. That is why I have come to see you. Tell me something about God! . . .'"

⁴ Rabindranath Tagore was then four years old. Ramakrishna was introduced by his patron, Mathur Babu, who had been a fellow student of Devendranath. A curious detail of the visit may interest our European psychophysicists. Hardly were the introductions over than Ramakrishna asked Devendranath to undress and show him his chest. Devendranath complied without showing much astonishment. The colour of the skin was scarlet. Ramakrishna examined it. For this persistent redness of the breast is a peculiar

all young. So in spite of his being a great Jnânin, he had to reconcile himself to the world. I said to him, 'You are the King Janaka of our day. He belonged to the world and yet he attained the highest realisations. You are in the world, but your mind rests on the heights of God. Tell me something of Him.' "

Devendranath recited to him some beautiful passages from the Veda,⁵ and the interview proceeded on a tone of familiar courtesy. Devendranath was much struck by the fire in the eyes of his visitor, and he invited Ramakrishna to a feast for the next day. But he begged him to "cover his body a little," if he wished to be present: for the little pilgrim had not put himself to the trouble of making a toilet. Ramakrishna replied with wicked good fellowship that he could not be depended upon; he was as he was, and would come as he was. So they parted very good friends. But early the next morning a very polite note came from the great aristocrat, begging him not to put himself to any trouble. And that was the end. With one caressing stroke of the paw aristocracy remained aloof, secure in its paradise of idealism.

Dayananda was summed up, judged and executed as of less worth still. It must be admitted that when the two men met at the end of 1873, the Arya Samaj had not yet been founded and

sign of the practice of certain Yoga. Ramakrishna never omitted to examine the breast of his disciples, their breathing capacity, and the soundness of their circulation before allowing or forbidding them to undertake exercises of great concentration.

"This universe is to be likened to a candelabra. And each one of us is a bulb. If we do not burn the whole candelabra becomes dark. God has created man to celebrate His glory. . . ."

In Sashi's account Ramakrishna made this naive reflection:

"It is strange! While I was meditating in the Panchavati (the grove of Dakshineswar), I also saw an image like a candelabra. . . . Devendranath must really be a very profound man!"

the reformer was still in the midst of his career. When Ramakrishna examined him,⁶ he found in him "a little power," by which he meant, "real contact with the Divine." But the tortured and torturing character, the bellicose athleticism of the champion of the Vedas, his feverish insistence that he alone was in the right, and therefore had the right to impose his will, were all blots on his mission to Ramakrishna. He saw him day and night disputing concerning the Scriptures, twisting their meaning, and striving at all costs to found a new sect. But all such preoccupation with personal and worldly success sullied the real love of God, and so he turned away from Dayananda.

His relations with Keshab Chunder Sen were of quite a different nature. They were intimate, affectionate, and lasting.

Before speaking of them I must express regret that the disciples of the two masters have left us such prejudiced accounts. Each side has been at considerable pains to "vassalise" the other man of God in favour of its own saint. Ramakrishna's disciples still speak of Keshab with sympathetic regard, and thank him for the homage he yielded to the Paramahansa. But some of Keshab's disciples cannot forgive Rama-

⁶ He recognised in him also this characteristic redness of the breast.

During one of Ramakrishna's interviews as noted by Mahendra Nath Gupta (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) on November 28, 1883, a singular statement with regard to Dayananda is attributed to Ramakrishna. He had heard that Dayananda, burning to measure himself against Keshab Chunder Sen on the subject of his Vedic Gods, in whom Keshab did not believe, cried out, "The Lord has done so many things! Can He not also have made the Gods?" This was not in accordance with the views publicly professed by Dayananda, the implacable enemy of polytheism. Was Dayananda's exclamation inexactly reported to Ramakrishna, or did it refer, not to the Gods, but to the Vedic sacrificial fire, which Dayananda believed in on the faith of the infallible Vedas? I cannot explain this apparent contradiction.

krishna for the ascendancy, real or apparent, he exercised over their master; hence in order to deny that any such influence could have existed, they have reverted to the plan of raising between them insurmountable barriers of thought; they scornfully misrepresent Ramakrishna's true worth, and their harmful spite is also directed against the man who preached his Gospel, and made it victorious—Vivekananda.⁷

But having read certain beautiful and fresh pages concerning Keshab, wherein the ideas and actions of Vivekananda are distinctly recorded, I can well understand that the Brahmós chafe under the silence and oblivion into which the Ramakrishna Mission has allowed them to fall. So far as lies in my power, I shall try to amend this injustice; for I believe it to be nothing but unwitting. But Keshab's memory could not be worse revenged than by being confined by certain Brahmós within their own narrow limits and by putting in the shade the disinterested affection felt by Keshab for Ramakrishna. In the whole of Keshab's life, worthy as it is of respect and affection, there is nothing more deservedly dear to us than the attitude of respect and affection adopted from the first by this great man at the very height of his fame and climax of his thought, and maintained until the end, towards the Little Poor Man of Dakshineswar, then either obscure or misrepresented. The more the Brahmós attempt, their pride hurt by the familiarities of the "mad-man of God" with the prince of intellectuals, to extract from the writings

⁷ I have in mind chiefly the pamphlet of B. Mozoomdar: *Professor Max Müller on Ramakrishna; the World on K. Chunder Sen*, 1900, Calcutta. (Cf. Chapter II, Absurd Inventions and Reports made to Max Müller by the Disciples of Ramakrishna; Chapter III, Differences between the Two Doctrines; and above all the insulting Chapter V, Concerning Vivekananda, the Informant of Max Müller, which does not scruple to join forces with some Anglo-American clergymen, lacerated by the thunderous religious polemics of the great Swami.)

of Keshab proud denunciations of disordered ecstasy, such as they attribute to Ramakrishna,⁸ the more striking is the contrast of Keshab's actual relations to Ramakrishna.

If it is true that Keshab, unlike most of the religious men of India, never took a Guru, an intermediary between himself and the Divinity,⁹ it is untrue to say that he was a disciple of Ramakrishna, as is claimed by the Ramakrishnites; his generous spirit was ever ready to appreciate greatness, and his love of truth was too pure for vanity to have any part in it. Hence this teacher was ever ready to learn,¹⁰ and said of himself, "I am a born disciple

⁸ Cf. B. Mozoomdar, *op. cit.* Chapter II. In his treatise on Yoga Keshab says: "Knowledge and Bhakti are interchangeable terms. Bhakti is only possible in those who have knowledge, an unknowing Bhakta is an impossibility." But this does not condemn the religious ecstasies of Ramakrishna; for first it must be proved that a higher form of knowledge was not contained therein. It merely marks the different character of Keshab's contemplations, for whom the highest condition consisted in a union of mind with the Eternal, wherein the practical intelligence was not obscured in the midst of the manifold occupations of life, society and the home. Keshab's views were in accordance with the spiritual traditions of the Brahmó Samaj. Further in Chapter III Mozoomdar quotes Keshab as saying, "Fie a hundred times to the Yogin, if he abandons everything for the love of Yoga! . . . It is a sin to abandon those whom God has given us to cherish." He claims to find in these words a reference to Ramakrishna as having neglected his duties towards his wife. But it is untrue to say that he neglected them. Not only did he love his wife with a profound and pure love, but he knew how to inspire her with a love, which for her was a source of peace and happiness. I have already shown how seriously he took his responsibility to her, and that he did not allow his disciples to give up duties already contracted to old parents, or to wife and children dependent upon them in order to follow him.

⁹ "From the beginning of my religious life," he wrote, "I have been ever wont to receive instruction from Thee, my God! . . ."

¹⁰ I have been happy to find the same point of view that I have adopted in the beautiful book, illumined by the faith of

. . . all objects are my masters. I learn from everything."¹¹ How then can he have failed to learn from the Man of God?

During the early months of 1875 Keshab happened to be with his disciples at a villa near Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna went to visit him¹² with the words:

"I hear you have seen a vision of God. I have come to find out what it is."

Thereupon he began to sing a famous hymn to Kali, and in the midst of it he fell into an ecstasy. Even for these Hindus enlightened by reason this was an ordinary sight; and Keshab, who, as we have seen, was sufficiently suspicious of such rather morbid manifestations of devotion, would hardly have been struck by it, if, on coming out of Samādhi at the instance of his nephew,¹³ Ramakrishna had not forth-

Manilal C. Parekh, a Christian disciple of Keshab (*Brahmarshi Keshab Ch. Sen*, 1926, Oriental Christ House, Rajkot, Bombay). Manilal C. Parekh clearly recognises that Keshab owed much to Ramakrishna, probably more than Ramakrishna owed to him. But, like myself, he sees in it another reason for admiring the largeness of his spirit and his great heart.

¹¹ But he says also: "God has implanted in me the power to aspire to the good qualities of every man."

¹² He had marked him as early as 1865, when young Keshab was Devendranath's second at the head of the Adi Brahma Samaj. Keshab's face had struck him. It was not the kind that is easily forgotten. Keshab was tall, his face oval, "his complexion clear like that of an Italian." (Mukerji). But if his spirit, like his face, was tinged by the tender sun of the West, the depths of his soul remained Indian. Ramakrishna, watching him as he meditated, was not mistaken. "On the platform of the Brahma Samaj several people were meditating," he says of his visit in 1865. "In the centre of the group was Keshab lost in contemplation; he was as motionless as a piece of wood. He was then quite a young man; but it was at his bait that the fish was nibbling. . ." (a familiar metaphor meaning that God was responding to his appeal alone).

¹³ For the interest of European science, it is to be noted that the only method of

with launched into a flood of magnificent words regarding the One and Infinite God. His ironic good sense appeared even in this inspired outpouring, and it struck Keshab very forcibly. He charged his disciples to observe it. After a short time he had no doubt that he was dealing with an exceptional personality, and in his turn went to seek it out. They became friends. He invited Ramakrishna to the ceremonies of his Brahma Samaj; or else came to take him from his temple for excursions on the Ganges; and since his generous soul was obliged to share his discoveries with others, he spoke everywhere of Ramakrishna, in his sermons, and in his writings for journals and reviews, both in English and in the native languages. His own fame was put at Ramakrishna's disposal, and it was through Keshab that his reputation, which until then had with a few near exceptions not reached the popular religious masses, came to be known in a short time within the intellectual middle class circles of Bengal and beyond.

The modesty shown by the noble Keshab, the illustrious chief of the Brahma Samaj, rich in learning and prestige, in bowing down before this unknown man, ignorant of book-learning and a knowledge of Sanskrit, who could hardly read and who wrote with difficulty, is truly admirable. But his penetration confounded him and he sat at his feet as a disciple.

But let me never say that Keshab was the disciple of Ramakrishna, as is claimed by some over-zealous followers of the latter. It is not true to say that any one of his essential ideas was

recalling Ramakrishna from his ecstatic trances was to pronounce in his ear such or such a name of the Lord, or some Mantra (form of prayer), differing according to the degree and the form of the ecstasy. The character of psychic concentration was then very marked; and it was impossible to speak of any initial physiological disorder: the spirit always remained in full control.

derived from him; for they were already formed when he met Ramakrishna for the first time. We have seen that after 1862 he began to conceive of the harmony of religions and their original unity. He said in 1863, "All truths are common to all, for all are of God. Truth is no more European than Asiatic, no more yours than mine." In 1869 in the course of a lecture on the Future Church, he visualised all religions as a vast symphony, wherein each one, while keeping its distinctive character, the tone of its instrument, the register of its voice, united to praise God the Father and Man the Brother in one universal anthem. On the other hand, it is false to claim that Keshab needed Ramakrishna's help to arrive at his conception of the Mother—a conception common to all ages in India, as that of the Father in the West. Ramakrishna did not create it. The hymns of Ramprasad, stored within his memory, sing Her in all keys. The idea of God's maternity had been incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj during the pontificate of Devendranath. Keshab's disciples have no difficulty in citing invocations to the Mother all through the work of their Master.¹⁴

Undoubtedly the twin ideas of the Divine Mother and the brotherhood of Her worshippers were beautiful ones, whatever the forms of their ritual and means of expression, and, as ideas, they were already possessed by Keshab and revived by his sincere faith. But it was another matter to find them alive

¹⁴1862: when Keshab was still the minister of the Adi Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath, a hymn was sung, "Sitting on the knees of the Mother."

1866: Manual of the Brahmo Samaj, "O Divine Mother, bind me by Thy mercy. . . O Mother, come, draw near!"

1875: "Happy am I! I have been merged in the heart of the Mother, I am now among Her children; the Mother dances with Her children. . ."

(But before this last date the meeting of Keshab and Ramakrishna had taken place. Cf. B. Mozoomdar, *op. cit.* Chapter III.)

and vital in a Ramakrishna! The Little Poor Man was not troubled by theories; he simply *was*. He *was* the communion of the Gods with believers; **he *was* the Mother and Her adorer**; he saw Her; She was seen through him, She could be touched. What a discovery this genius of heart, who communicated to those coming into contact with him the warm breath of the Goddess and the shelter of Her beautiful arms, was to Keshab, and how deeply he must have felt its impact: for he too was a Bhakta, a believer through Love!¹⁵

"The sweet, simple, charming and childlike nature of Ramakrishna coloured the Yoga of Keshab and his immaculate conception of religion," wrote Chiranjib Sarma, one of his biographers.

And one of the missionaries of Keshab's Church, Babu Girish Chundra Sen,¹⁶ wrote,

"It was from Ramakrishna that Keshab received the idea of invoking God by the sweet name of Mother with the simplicity of a child. . . ."¹⁷

Only the last quotation needs comment; for we have shown that Keshab did not wait for Ramakrishna before invoking the Mother. Ramakrishna, however, brought him a renewal of

¹⁵ Promotho Loll Sen says that he communed daily with God.

"Let prayer be your chief preoccupation! Pray ardently and without ceasing, alone and together, let it be the alpha and omega of your life!"

¹⁶ *The Life and Teachings of the Paramahansa Ramakrishna*, Article in the *Dharmatatwa*.

¹⁷ Babu Girish Chunder Sen and Chiranjib Sarma, quoted by the Ramakrishnites in support of their thesis, certainly exaggerate the influence of Ramakrishna on Keshab's Brahmo Samaj. Those who try to prove too much lay themselves open to suspicion. To write like Chiranjib Sarma that "the worship of God as Mother was due to Ramakrishna," is a contradiction of the facts. It is quite enough to say that Ramakrishna's example developed it in the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo cult was rather hard. "The shadow of Ramakrishna," to use a simile of Babu Girish Ch. Sen, "softened it."

love, and immediate certitude, the heart of a child. Hence it was not the discovery of the "New Dispensation" that Keshab began to preach in the same year, 1875, that his path crossed Ramakrishna's,¹⁸ but rather an irresistible outpouring of faith and joy that made him cry his message to the world.

Ramakrishna was a wonderful stimulant for the Brahmos, a tongue of flame dancing at Pentecost over the heads of the apostles, burning and enlightening them. He was at once their sincere friend and their judge, who spared neither his affection nor his mischievous criticism.

When he first visited the Brahma Samaj his penetrating and amused glance had seen through the rather conventional devotion of its excellent members. According to his own humorous account:¹⁹

"The leader said: 'Let us commune with Him.' I thought, 'They will now go into the inner world and stay a long time.' Hardly had a few minutes passed when they all opened their eyes. I was astonished. Can anyone find Him after so slight a meditation?"

¹⁸ Nevertheless Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, in his sympathetic life of Keshab, admits that the meeting with Ramakrishna, without altering the essentially theistic character of the New Dispensation, led Keshab to present it in a more conciliatory and easily accessible form.

Ramakrishna "had gathered the essential conceptions of Hindu polytheism into an original structure of eclectic spirituality. . . . This strange eclecticism suggested to Keshab's appreciative mind the thought of broadening the spiritual structure of his own movement. . . . The Hindu conceptions of the Divine attributes spontaneously recommended themselves as beautiful and true, and also as the surest means of making his faith intelligible and acceptable in the land. Of course he kept the simple universal basis of theism intact." But Mozoomdar adds with regret that such a presentation of theism with a multiplicity of Divine attributes has since been exploited in favour of popular idolatry.

¹⁹Cf. Dhan Gopal Mukerji: *The Face of Silence*, 1926. (Saradananda gives a similar account in his chapter on the Brahma Samaj and Ramakrishna).

After it was all over, when we were alone, I spoke to Keshab about it: 'I watched all your congregation communing with their eyes shut. Do you know what it reminded me of? Sometimes at Dakshineswar I have seen under the trees a flock of monkeys sitting, stiff and looking the very picture of innocence. . . . They were thinking and planning their campaign of robbing certain gardens of fruits, roots, and other edibles. . . . in a few moments. The communing that your followers did with God to-day is no more serious.'

In a ritual hymn of the Brahma Samaj this verse occurs:

"Think of Him and worship Him at every instant of the day!" Ramakrishna stopped the singer, and said,

"You should alter the verse into 'Pray to Him and worship Him only twice a day.' Say what you do really. Why tell fibs to the Infinite?"

The Brahma Samaj of Keshab, while it extolled faith, did so in a purposely stilted, abstract and solemn tone, reminiscent of the Anglican. It seemed to be always on guard against any suspicion of idolatry.²⁰ Ramakrishna took a mischievous delight in accusing it, not without justice, of mild idolatry. One day he heard Keshab in prayer enumerating all the perfections of the Lord.

"Why do you give these statistics," he asked him. "Does a son say to his

²⁰ Here is a type of Brahma prayer, quoted in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

"Om! Thou art our Father. Give us knowledge! Do not destroy us!

"Om! Brahman! Truth! Knowledge! Infinite! He is Bliss and Immortality! He shines! He is Peace! He is the Good! He is the One! . . .

"We bow before Thee, O Supreme Being, O First Great Cause! . . . We bow before Thee, O Light of Knowledge, O Support of all the worlds!

"From the Unreal lead us to the Real! From Darkness lead us to Light! From Death lead us to Immortality! Reach us through and through our self! And evermore protect us, O Thou Terrible, by Thy sweet compassionate face!"

father, 'O my father, you possess so many houses, so many gardens, so many horses, etc.' . . . ? It is natural for a father to put his resources at the disposal of his son. If you think of Him and His gifts as something extraordinary, you can never be intimate with Him, you cannot draw near to Him. Do not think of Him as if He were far away from you. Think of Him as your nearest! Then He will reveal Himself to you. . . . Do you not see that if you go into an ecstasy over His attributes, you become an idolator?"²¹

Keshab protested against this attack on a sensitive point; he declared that he hated idolatry, that the God he worshipped was a formless God. Ramakrishna answered quietly, "God is with form and without form. Images and other symbols are just as valid as your attributes and these attributes are no different from idolatry, but are merely hard and petrified forms of it."

And again,

"You wish to be strict and partial. . . . For myself I have a burning desire to worship the Lord in as many ways as I can; nevertheless my heart's desire has never been satisfied. I long to worship with offerings of flowers and fruits, to repeat His holy name in solitude, to meditate upon Him, to sing His hymns, to dance in the joy of the Lord! Those who believe that God is without form attain Him just as well as those who believe He has form. The only two essentials are faith and self-abandon. . . ."²²

I can copy the colourless words, but I cannot communicate the real presence, the radiance of person, the tone of voice, the look in the eyes and the captivating smile. Nobody who ever came in contact with them could resist them. It was above all his living certitude that impressed the onlookers; for with him words were not, as with

others, a loose and ornamental robe, hiding as much as they claimed to reveal of the unfathomable depths of life; with him the depths of life blossomed, and God, who for the majority even of religious men, is a frame of thought drawing an impenetrable veil across "the Unknown Master-piece,"²³ was to be seen in him; for as he spoke he lost himself in God, like a bather who dives and reappears dripping after a moment, bringing with him the smell of seaweed, the taste of the salt of the Ocean. Who can rid himself of its tang? The scientific spirit of the West can indeed analyse it. But whatever its elements, its synthetic reality was never in doubt. The greatest sceptic can touch the diver as he returns from the depths of the Dream, and catch some reflection of submarine flora from his pupils. Keshab and several of his disciples were intoxicated with it.

The strange dialogues of this Indian Plato, delivered on Keshab's yacht as it went up and down the Ganges,²⁴ deserve to be read. Their narrator, afterwards Ramakrishna's evangelist, was the first to be astonished that such a meeting could have come about between such opposite types of mind. What common ground could there be between the man of God and the man of the world, the great intellectual, the Anglomaniac Keshab, whose reason condemned the Gods? Keshab's disciples pressed round the two sages at the port-hole of the cabin, like a swarm of flies. And as the honey of his words began to flow from Ramakrishna's lips, the flies were drowned in their sweetness.

"It is now more than forty-five years

²³ Allusion to a celebrated "novel" of the great writer, Balzac.

²⁴ Two of them are to be found in an account by M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta), the author of the *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, dated October 27, 1882. Another witness, Nagendra-nath Gupta gives an account of another interview in 1881. (Cf. *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, May, 1927.)

²¹ *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 365 and *The Face of Silence*.

²² Mukerji.

ago that this happened and yet almost everything that the Paramahansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did . . . As he spoke he would draw a little closer to Keshab until part of his body was unconsciously resting on Keshab's lap, but Keshab sat perfectly still and made no movement to withdraw himself."

Ramakrishna looked with affectionate intensity on the faces surrounding him, and described their moral character one by one, as delineated in their features, first the eyes, then the forehead, the nose, the teeth, and the ears; for they formed a language to which he had the key. As he spoke with his sweet and attractive stammer he came to the subject of the Nirâkâra Brahman, the formless God.

"He repeated the word Nirâkâra two or three times and then quietly passed into Samâdhi as the diver slips into the fathomless deep . . . We intently watched him. The whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb. Both his hands lay in his lap with the fingers lightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body was easy but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. The eyeballs were not turned up or otherwise deflected, but they were fixed . . . The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce."²⁵

He was recalled to the world by the singing of a hymn. . . .

"He opened his eyes and looked around him as if he were in a strange

²⁵ Nagendranath Gupta.

In another ecstasy, the one described by M., Ramakrishna spoke to the Mother: "O Mother, they are all fastened inside their bars, they are not free; is it possible to loose them from their prison?"

place. The music stopped. The Paramahansa looking at us said, 'Who are these people?' And then he vigorously slapped the top of his head several times, and cried out, 'Go down, go down!' . . . The Paramahansa became fully conscious and sang in a pleasant voice (a hymn of Kali)."

He sang the identity of the Divine Mother with the Absolute. He sang the joy of the flying kite of the soul, launched by the Mother while She keeps it attached to Her by the string of Illusion.²⁶

"The world is the Mother's plaything. It is Her pleasure to let slip from Illusion one or two flying kites among the thousands. It is Her sport. She says to the human soul in confidence with a wink of the eye: 'Go and live in the world until I tell you to do something else!' . . ."

And in imitation of Her he turned to the disciples of Keshab with an indulgent irony that made them laugh.

"You are in the world. Stay there! It is not for you to abandon it. You are very well as you are, pure gold and alloy, sugar and treacle. . . . We sometimes play a game in which one must gain seventeen points to win. I have passed the limit and I have lost. But you clever people, who have not won enough points, can still continue to play. . . . In truth, it matters little if you live in the family or in the world, so long as you do not lose contact with God."

And it was in the course of these monologues, wherein observation and ecstasy, mocking common sense and highest speculation were so wonderfully blended, that the Paramahansa pro-

²⁶ The metaphor of the flying kite is to be found, as we have said, in a hymn of Ramprasad, which Ramakrishna loved to sing: "The Divine Mother and the Liberated Soul" It is also used in a hymn of Nareshchandra quoted in the *Gospel*. Nearly all the metaphors, particularly that of the diver to the depths of the Ocean of Life, are used again and again with variations in the poetic and musical folklore of Bengal from the XVth century onwards.

duced his beautiful parables, quoted above, of the Divine Reservoir with several ghâts (steps) and of Kali, the Spider. He had too keen a sense of reality, he saw too clearly to the very bottom of his listeners, to imagine that he could raise them to the heights of his own liberated soul. He measured their wisdom and their capacity, and he asked nothing of them beyond their powers, but he asked for the whole of that! Above all he communicated to Keshab and his disciples the spirit of life, the creative breath, coupled with a wide and intellectual tolerance, which recognised the truth in quite diverse points of view previously considered by them to be irreconcilable. He freed their intellectual limbs, petrified within the groove of reason, and made them supple. He tore them from their abstract discussions. "Live, love and create!", so that blood again flowed through their veins.

"To create is to be like God," he said to Keshab, who was then spending himself in endless and fruitless polemics. "When you yourself are filled with the essence of existence, all that you say will come true. Poets in all ages have praised truth and virtue. But does that make their readers virtuous or truthful? When a man despoiled of self comes among us, his acts are the very pulses of the heart of virtue; all that he does to others makes even their most humdrum dreams greater, so that all that they touch becomes true and pure; they become the father of reality.²⁷ And what he

²⁷ Cf. Gandhi, who was averse to all religious propaganda by word or writing. When he was asked, "How then can we share our experience with others?" he replied, "Our spiritual experiences are necessarily shared and communicated whether we suspect it or not—but by our lives and our examples, not by our words, which are a very inadequate vehicle. Spiritual experiences are deeper than thought itself. By the very fact that we live spiritual experience will overflow. But if you deliberately set yourself to share your spiritual experience with another, you raise an intellectual barrier between

creates never dies. That is what I expect of you. Make the dogs of invective keep quiet. Let the elephant of Being sound the clarion trumpet of his benediction over all living things! You possess this power. Are you going to use it, or are you going to waste this brief span called life in fighting other people?"²⁸

Keshab listened to his advice and took deep root in this warm living earth, bathed in the sap emanating from the Universal Being. Ramakrishna made him feel that no particle of this sap was ever lost, even in the most humble plant of human thought. His mind was sympathetically reopened to all other forms of faith, even to certain outward practices, which he had avoided. He was to be seen invoking by their names Shiva, Shakti, Saraswaty, Lakshmi, Hari, identifying God's attributes with them. For two years he was absorbed in each of the great religious types, the heroic Incarnations of the Spirit: Jesus, Buddha, Chaitanya, each representing one side of the Great Mirror. He sought to assimilate them each in turn, so that through their synthesis he might realise the universal ideal. During his last illness he was especially drawn to that form of Bhakti most familiar to Ramakrishna—a passionate love of the Mother. Keshab's disciples told Ramakrishna, when he came to see him during his last days on earth, that "a great change had taken place." "Often we find him talking to the Divine Mother, waiting for Her and weeping." And Ramakrishna, enraptured by this news, fell into an ecstasy. There is nothing more touching in the whole account of this supreme interview²⁹ than the appear-

you." (Discussions at the Council of the Federation of International Fellowship, Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, January 15, 1928.)

²⁸ Mukerji.

²⁹ *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, I, Section V, Chapters 1 and 2. It was on November 28, 1883 at the close of the day that Ramakrishna entered the house of Keshab with several of his disciples.

ance of the dying Keshab, shaken by a mortal cough, holding on to the walls, supporting himself by the furniture, coming to cast himself at the feet of Ramakrishna. The latter was still half-plunged in ecstasy, and was talking to himself. Keshab was silent, drinking in the mysterious words that seemed to come from the Mother Herself. They explained to him with ruthless but consoling tranquillity the deep meaning of his sufferings and his approaching death.³⁰ With what deep insight he understood the hidden confusion of this life of faith and restless love!

"You are ill," he said sweetly. "There is a profound meaning in that. Through your body have passed many deep waves of devotion seeking for the Lord. Your illness bears witness to these emotions. It is impossible to tell what damage they do to the organism at the time they are produced. A boat passes along the Ganges without attracting attention. But some time afterwards a great wave, displaced by its passage, dashes against the bank and washes away part of it. When the fire of the Divine Vision enters the frail house of the body, it first burns the passions, then the false ego, and at last it consumes everything. . . . You have not yet reached the end. . . . Why did you allow your name to be inscribed on the registers of the Lord's hospital? You will never be allowed to come out until

³⁰ Ramakrishna, hardly awakened from ecstasy, looked round at the drawing-room full of beautiful furniture and mirrors. Then he smiled and spoke to himself: "Yes, all these things have had their uses some time ago; but now they serve no purpose. You are here, Mother. . . . How beautiful You are! . . ." At this moment Keshab entered and fell at Ramakrishna's feet. "Here I am," he said. Ramakrishna looked at him without seeming to recognise him clearly, and continued his monologue about the Mother and human life. Between the two men not a word was spoken about Keshab's health, although it was the object of the visit. It was not until after some time that Ramakrishna uttered the words I have quoted above.

the word 'Healed' is written across them."

He then invoked the gracious parable of the divine gardener digging round the roots of a precious rose tree, so that it might drink the night dew.³¹

"Illness digs round the roots of your being."

Keshab listened in silence and smiled; for it was Ramakrishna's smile that shed a light of mysterious serenity into the funeral darkness of the house and into the sufferings of the sick man. Ramakrishna did not adopt a solemn tone until Keshab, exhausted, was about to leave him. Then he suggested to the dying man that he ought not to live so much in the inner room with the women and children, but alone with God.

And it is said that in his death agony, Keshab's last words were, "Mother! . . . Mother! . . ."³²

³¹ "The gardener knows how to treat the common rose, and how to treat the rose of Bassora. He loosens the earth round her roots, so that she may benefit from the night dew. The dew gives strength and freshness to the rose. It is even so with you. The Divine Gardener knows how to treat you. He digs round you right down to the roots, so that His dew may fall upon you, that you may become purer and your work greater and more enduring." (*Gospel of Ramakrishna*, Vol. I, Section V, Chapter II.)

³² The repercussion of some of Ramakrishna's words, spoken during his last interview with Keshab, on the latter's last thoughts, have, I think, never before been noticed.

Ramakrishna spoke to him for a long time about the Mother and said, "She watches over Her children. . . . She knows how to obtain true freedom and knowledge for them. The child knows nothing. . . . Its Mother knows everything. . . . All is ordered according to Her will. 'You fulfil Your own will, O Divine Mother, and accomplish Your own work. The foolish man says, "It is I, who have accomplished."'"

Moreover, when Keshab in the midst of his own sufferings was consoling his real, his mortal mother, who had given him life, he said, "The Supreme Mother sends everything for my good. She plays with me, turning sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other."

It is so easy to understand how this great idealist, who believed in God, Reason, Goodness, Justice and Truth, should have discovered during these tragic days that he was too far from the High God, the Unattainable God, and that he needed to draw near to Him and to touch Him with the dust of Ramakrishna's feet, to see Him and hear Him through Ramakrishna, and find refreshment in his fever. Such is an expression of universal experience. But it is just this for which some of Keshab's proud disciples cannot forgive Ramakrishna. On the other hand I must beg the Ramakrishnites not to make too much of it, but rather let them follow the example of their sweet Master. When Keshab had just left him after this last interview here described, Ramakrishna spoke modestly and with admiration of Keshab's greatness, which had won the respect both of a social and intellectual elite and of simple believers like himself. And he continued to show his esteem for the Brahma Samaj.³³ The best of the

Brahmos have held him in veneration in their turn,³⁴ and have known how to profit from their intercourse with him. His influence widened their brain and their heart and did more than anybody else's to bring them into line in people's estimation with the best thought of India, which the first influx of the scientific knowledge of the West, badly assimilated, threatened to alienate.

One example will suffice; his great disciple, Vivekananda, came from the ranks of the Brahma Samaj and from the most bigoted, at least for a time, of iconoclasts, in the name of Western reason against Hindu tradition, which later he learnt to respect and defend. The true thought of the West has lost nothing through this Hindu awakening. The thought of the East is now independent, and henceforth union can be effected between equal and free personalities, instead of the one being subjugated by the other, and one of the two civilisations being assassinated by the other.

³³ In 1878 after the fresh schisms within the Brahma Samaj, Ramakrishna remained faithful to Keshab when he was deserted by a section of his disciples. But he refused to make any distinction between the three separate branches of the Brahma Samaj, joining them all alike in prayer. *The Gospel of Ramakrishna* has recorded several of these visits, in particular one of October 28, 1882, when he was invited and was present at the annual festival of Keshab's Brahma Samaj. He was eagerly surrounded and questioned on religious problems, and replied with his usual breadth of spirit. He took part in the song (the song of Kabir), and in the sacred dances. When he retired he saluted all forms of devotion, ending up with homage to the Brahma Samaj: "Salutations to the feet of the Jnânin! Salutations to the feet of the Bhakta! Salutations to the devout who believe in God with form! Salutations to the devout who believe in a God without form! Salutations to the

ancient knowers of Brahman! Salutations to the modern knowers of the Brahma Samaj!"

The other two branches of the Brahma Samaj showed him far less regard. The most recent, the Sadharan Samaj, owed him a grudge on account of his influence over Keshab. At the Adi Brahma Samaj of Devendranath he was doubtless regarded as belonging to a lower level. At one visit which he paid to it (May 2, 1883) which Rabindranath Tagore may perhaps remember, since he was present as a lad, his reception was hardly courteous. (Cf. *Gospel of Ramakrishna*.)

³⁴ Especially Keshab's successor, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, and Vijay Krishna Goswami, who later on separated himself from the Brahma Samaj. The great composer and singer of Keshab's Samaj, Trailokya Nath Sanval, maintains that many of his most beautiful songs were inspired by the ecstasies of Ramakrishna.

PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

KARMA YOGA

In the present article we shall try to deal briefly with *Karma Yoga*: All those who remain in the world, whether married or unmarried, and even many of those who have renounced, have to work more or less. It is not for all to remain absorbed in meditation or contemplation the whole day. Until the mind has been thoroughly purified, one cannot concentrate it for long on God. It *will* go out and seek worldly objects. In order to take advantage of even these outgoing tendencies of the mind and its occupations with the activities and objects of the world, *Karma Yoga* should be properly understood and practised.

The philosophy of *Karma Yoga* is simple. It is a fact that our body is a part of the vast material universe, and our mind, of the infinite cosmic mind. Now these cosmic body and mind have behind them, manipulating and controlling, the Universal Soul or God. If that is so, our own bits of body and mind have in fact God behind them as controller and manipulator. What is then the need of interposing our own ego between God and the body and mind? Let us withdraw it. It is unnecessary. The body and mind belong to God and not to me. Let me have no more to do anything with them and their activities. Henceforth let God move them. If we can actually realise this state, we shall at once find ourselves free from the body and mind and identified with *Brahman* Himself,—we shall realise our true self. But it is not at all easy to realise this state. Still, that is the goal and that the spirit in which we should try to do all our work. A *Karma Yogin* should always feel that he is not connected with the activities of the body and mind,—he is not the mover of them. This non-

attachment is the very essence of *Karma Yoga*.

The best exposition of *Karma Yoga* is to be found in the *Gitā*. In the *Gitā* the unmixed *Karma Yoga* is not generally propounded. For, very few can practise pure *Karma Yoga*. For most men *Karma Yoga* has to be related with *Bhakti* or *Jñāna Yoga*. That facilitates its practice. Thus the *Gitā* prescribes that we must dedicate the fruits of our actions to the Lord. If we have devotion to the Lord, we shall find it very easy to do so. Whatever we do, apparently good or evil, we have to dedicate at the feet of the Lord, so that the works may not affect us and we may through the continual practice of such surrender learn non-attachment. Or if we are followers of *Jñāna Yoga*, we may easily practise non-attachment in work, for the *Jñāna Yoga* itself will impel us to think ourselves as beyond all actions and their effects. Therefore in practice, it is best that *Karma Yoga* be combined with *Bhakti* or *Jñāna Yoga*.

There are at least three stages of the practice of *Karma Yoga*. First, *Karma Yoga* may be practised for the purification of the mind. Most people are selfish and full of unclean desires. They are ever engaged in satisfying those low, selfish desires. How can such minds as theirs ever conceive any spiritual ideals? Yet they must be brought up higher and higher if they are to become spiritual at all. For such, any practice of unselfish *Karma* is good. Let them work for the good of others. Of course even such services they will not be able to do in a non-attached way in the beginning. That does not matter in their case. Let them first practise unselfish work which itself is difficult for them. Let such unselfish

work purify their mind. When the mind has been purified sufficiently, they will intuitively feel that there is such a being as God or *Atman* existing, who is eternal and beyond the changing world ; and they will feel a longing to realise Him. It will be possible for them now to dedicate their works and their results to God. This is the first stage of the practice of *Karma Yoga*,—work for the purification of the mind.

In the second stage, work is done in the spirit of worship. We are now so imbued with the idea of Divine existence that we do not want to feel separated from Him even for a single moment. We want to adore Him every moment of our life. That is easy so long as we pray to Him, or repeat His name, or meditate on Him, or sing His praise or read books concerning Him, or worship Him in the shrine. But there will be still other hours in which we shall not be connected with God in any such conscious way. We shall perhaps have to work for our living and discharge social duties. Then we feel inclined to conceive those apparently secular actions also as worship itself. Every moment of our life becomes a worship. Of course here also we dedicate everything to the Lord. In fact the desire to so dedicate is the very essence of all worship. And we try to be non-attached. But the spirit of worship makes it all very sweet and natural.

But the ego still persists. We yet do not feel that God is the doer and not we. We do not feel that God is manipulating our mind and body. When the spirit of worship grows intense, the self-effacement comes. Our self is lost in the consciousness of God. God suffuses our life and being and the world. In that condition we feel that everything is the *lilā* of God,—His divine sport. We are oned with God, and become partners in His *lilā*. This is the third stage. The great saints and prophets realise this state. Their thoughts and actions are no longer theirs, but of God Himself.

Obviously we have here to consider specially the case of those who are in the second stage. They are eager to realise God and devote all their time and energy to Him. What shall they do? Of course so long as they are consciously engaged in meditation or worship, they have little to worry about. But what shall they do with their, say, office work or family and social duties? These also they must conceive as worship. Suppose one is a clerk. He must conceive his clerical work also as worship. He must begin his office work with an earnest prayer that what he was going to do might be a worship of the Lord Himself. In his heart of hearts he must feel that his work at the desk was not for the satisfaction of his official superiors but for the satisfaction of the Lord. In the shrine he offers flowers, leaves and fragrance to the Lord, here his offering is his official works. In this spirit let him begin his work ; let him remember this motive again and again in the middle ; and when the daily work is over, let him dedicate it to God. Let him at the end of his day, offer all his thoughts, actions and desires, his body, mind and soul to the Lord. In this way, even his office work will become spiritualised. Suppose one is a mechanic in a factory. Let him also consider that his work is worship itself. The fact is, every work must be taken out of its apparent setting and offered at the feet of the Lord as we offer a flower. A new setting will have thus to be created for every work within our soul in intimate relation with God, sweetened by our own devotion and interpenetrated by the Divine presence. It is an inner world where God alone reigns, to which we shall have to transfer every work.

Our purpose, we must remember however, is not to *work*, but to be absorbed in God. No doubt at the height of *Karma Yoga*, this God-absorption comes of itself. But those who are not *Karma Yogins par excellence*, those who are essentially *Bhakti Yogins* or *Jñāna*

Yogins, will try to minimise work and be lost in the consciousness of God. Their effort should be to decrease the amount of apparently secular occupations of the day and to increase the period of meditation and prayer, so that there may not be any interposition of work even in the spirit of worship. In this way they may reach a condition when their whole day will be engaged in pure meditation and worship of the Lord, in a deep and prolonged ecstasy.

But perhaps it is necessary to repeat the warning of the *Gitā* that mere outward renunciation of work is not real renunciation. It should be above all internal. The mind must *naturally*,

spontaneously detach itself from all work. The condition of Divine saturation should be natural and not forced. For in the latter case, there is bound to be reaction and ultimate waste of time and energy. It is better, therefore, that we do not give up work forcibly, but try to perform it in the spirit of worship. When the spirit of worship has grown intense, the outer work will drop of itself, even without any conscious effort on our part.

It is needless to mention that we have here dealt with *Karma Yoga* as a spiritual discipline. It has a collective, a national aspect also. That does not concern us here.

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

CHAPTER X

QUIETUDE

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

विहाय वैरिणं काममर्थं चानर्थसङ्कुलम् ।
धर्ममप्येतयोर्हेतुं सर्वत्रानादरं कुरु ॥१॥

वैरिणं Enemy कामं desire अनर्थसङ्कुलं full of mischief अर्थं worldly prosperity च and एतयोः of these two हेतुं cause धर्मं good work अपि also विहाय forsaking सर्वत्र everywhere अनादरं disregard कुरु do.

1. Be indifferent to everything having given up *Kāma* (desire) the enemy,¹ *Artha* (worldly prosperity) which² is attended with mischief as well as *Dharma*³ (good works) which is the cause of these two.

[¹ *Enemy*—Because desire for sensual enjoyments obstructs the attainment of Knowledge and binds the soul to the world.

² *Which etc.*—Because the acquisition and preservation of wealth are attended with difficulties, and are harmful to our higher nature.

³ *Dharma etc.*—*Dharma* is good work both secular and religious, especially the latter. By performing rituals as prescribed in the scriptures, we earn religious merits which confer on us worldly prosperity as well as sensual enjoyment.

Dharma, Artha and *Kāma* are the three ends of a common man's existence. But in order to attain *Moksha*, liberation, which is the *summum bonum* of life, one has to renounce all these three objects. The Absolute can never be reached as long as there is the least speck of desire. And without desire all these three ends are meaningless. Hence the necessity of renouncing these, so that our eyes may be opened to the Supreme Self.]

स्वप्नेन्द्रजालवत् पश्य दिनानि त्रीणि पञ्च वा ।
मित्रक्षेत्रधनागारदारदायादिसम्पदः ॥२॥

वैचि Three पञ्च five वा or दिनानि days (स्थायिन्वः lasting) मित्रक्षेत्रधनागारदारदायादिसम्पदः friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, presents and such other good fortunes स्वप्नेन्द्रजालवत् like a dream or a juggler's show पश्य see.

2. Look upon friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, presents and such other good fortunes as¹ a dream or a juggler's show, lasting² three or five days.

[¹ As etc.—i.e., unreal.

² Lasting etc.—i.e., very transitory.]

यत्र यत्र भवेत्तृष्णा संसारं विद्धि तत्र वै ।
प्रौढवैराग्यमाश्रित्य वीततृष्णः सुखी भव ॥३॥

यत्र यत्र Wherever तृष्णा desire भवेत् is तत्र there वै indeed संसारं world विद्धि know (अतः so) प्रौढवैराग्यं firm non-attachment आश्रित्य adopting वीततृष्णः free from desire सुखी happy भव be.

3. Know the world to be indeed wherever¹ there is desire. Betake yourself to firm² non-attachment, go beyond desire³ and be happy.

[¹ Wherever etc.—Analysis shows that our knowledge of and entanglement in the world has desire for its root and basis. The moment one is completely freed from desire the world vanishes.

² Firm—indicates an attitude of absolute non-attachment to the objects of enjoyment even when they are in one's possession.

³ Desire—for those objects that are yet to be obtained.]

तृष्णामात्रात्मको बन्धस्तन्नाशो मोक्ष उच्यते ।
भवासंसक्तिमात्रेण प्राप्तितुष्टिर्मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ४ ॥

बन्धः Bondage तृष्णामात्रात्मकः consisting in desire alone तन्नाशः destruction of that मोक्षः liberation उच्यते is called भवासंसक्तिमात्रेण by non-attachment to the world alone मुहुर्मुहुः constantly प्राप्तितुष्टिः joy from Attainment (भवति is).

4. Bondage¹ consists only in desire and its² destruction is called liberation. By non-attachment to the world alone is attained constant joy from the realisation (of the Self).

[¹ Bondage etc.—See Note 1, last verse.

² Its—of desire.]

त्वमेकश्चेतनः शुद्धो जडं विश्वमसत्तथा ।
अविद्यापि न किञ्चित्सा का बुभुत्सा तथापि ते ॥५॥

त्वं You एकः One चेतनः Intelligent शुद्धः pure (अस्ति are) विश्वं universe जडं devoid of intelligence तथा and असत् non-existent (अस्ति is) अविद्या Ignorance अपि also न not किञ्चित् anything (भवति is) तथा अपि yet ते your का what सा that बुभुत्सा desire to know.

5. You are One, Intelligent and Pure. The universe is non-intelligent¹ and non-existent. Ignorance also is not anything. Yet what desire to know can there be for you?

[That the Self which is One, Intelligent and Pure is the only thing to be known has been emphasised here. We should not desire to know what is not absolutely real. And it is the Self alone which is such, while the world that is apparently presented to us and Ignorance that causes the appearance, are not really existent. The knowledge of the Self, therefore, should be the end and aim of our life, which alone will put an end to desire that constitutes bondage as mentioned in the previous verse.

¹ *Non-intelligent*—According to Vedanta philosophy, the conscious principle in nature is the reflection of Brahman Itself. All consciousness is of Self; all non-self is thus non-intelligent.]

राज्यं सुताः कलत्राणि शरीराणि सुखानि च ।

संसक्तस्यापि नष्टानि तव जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥६॥

संसक्तस्य Attached अपि though तव your राज्यं kingdom सुताः sons कलत्राणि wives शरीराणि bodies सुखानि pleasures च and जन्मनि जन्मनि birth after birth नष्टानि have been lost.

6. Kingdom, sons, wives, bodies and pleasures have been lost to you birth after birth, even though you were attached (to them).

[That the world is false has been mentioned in the previous verse. The idea is dilated upon here.

The second line of the verse gives a commonsense reason why we should take recourse to renunciation. Such is the transitory nature of worldly things that even when we love them dearly, we cannot retain them long,—they get lost and thus cause us suffering. This process has been repeated life after life. What then is the use of being attached to such things?]

अलमर्थेन कामेन सुकृतेनापि कर्मणा ।

एभ्यः संसारकान्तारे न विश्रान्तमभून्मनः ॥७॥

अर्थेन With prosperity कामेन with desire सुकृतेन pious कर्मणा with deed अपि and अलं no need संसारकान्तारे in the dreary forest of the world मनः mind एभ्यः from these विश्रान्तं reposed न not अभूत् was.

7. Enough¹ of prosperity, desire and pious deed. The mind did not find repose in these in the dreary forest of the world.

[¹ *Enough etc.*—See note 3, verse 1 of this chapter.

Ashtavakra is again maintaining the worthlessness of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* as ideals of life and emphasising *Moksha*.]

कृतं न कति जन्मानि कायेन मनसा गिरा ।

दुःखमायासदं कर्म तद्द्याप्युपरस्यताम् ॥८॥

(त्वं You) कायेन with body मनसा with mind गिरा with speech कति how many जन्मानि births न not दुःखं painful आयासदं involving difficulty कर्म work कृतं did तत् so अद्य to-day अपि even उपरस्यताम् cease.

8. For how many incarnations have you not done hard and painful work with your body, mind and speech! Therefore cease at least to-day.

[We have our present body and misery as a result of our actions in the past incarnations. This process will continue so long as we continue to act and shall go from birth to birth. To escape misery for ever, we must cease from worldly activity at once.

Ashtavakra indicates that our past actions entailing so much labour and suffering have not given us any lasting happiness. Why should we then continue our worldly actions?]

NOTES AND COMMENTS

In This Number

Sri Ramakrishna on Himself is translated from the Diary of M., a direct disciple of the Master, as published by him in Bengali. . . . We have great pleasure in introducing to our readers A SEEKER OF TRUTH who contributes *Politico-economic Reconstruction of India* to the present issue. The writer wishes to remain anonymous. But we may disclose that he is quite new to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*. His theme is an important one. We shall not make any comment on his argument, but shall leave our readers to form their own judgment on it. There is no doubt that they will find the article interesting and profitable-reading. . . . SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA concludes *A Seraphic Soul* in the present issue. . . . *Ramakrishna and the King-Shepherds of India* by ROMAIN ROLLAND, which is a brilliant study of the interactions between Sri Ramakrishna and Devendranath Tagore, Dayananda Sarasvaty and Keshab Ch. Sen, calls yet for some answer to the charges the writer has brought against us, the followers of Sri Ramakrishna. We may assure the noble writer that we are always ready to learn and correct ourselves wherever we feel we have been mistaken. In the present case, however, we are not yet convinced that we have been wrong in our attitude towards Keshab Ch. Sen. We have our reasons which we would have shown in the present issue, had not want of space precluded us from doing so. We hope to publish our reply in the next number. . . . *Practice of Religion* by ANANDA is continuing and is expected to do so for some time more. Some readers have enquired after Ananda's real name and whereabouts. We wish we could comply with their requests. But Ananda is determined to remain completely incognito.

"Reason v. Authority"

It is with reluctance that we are trying here to reply to what Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his *Young India* (September 26, 1929) under the caption, *Reason v. Authority*. He is not concerned with the subject of the controversy—*Charka* and *Khaddar*—in his present article ;— he is content to leave the final answer to that to time and experience. His present theme is that 'the inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege.' And he thus supports his thesis :

"I think that the duty of avoiding in a reasoned discussion inferences from the writings of the founder of an order devolves more specifically upon its members and its organ, for to sceptics the authority of the founder will be of no avail, even as the authority of Shri Krishna is of no use to one who is not his follower. And experience has shown, that in every case where there is an appeal to reason, any inference drawn from the writings of a great person, however illustrious he may be, is irrelevant and calculated to confuse the issues at stake. I would like the editor and the reader to note also that I have not criticised the citing of the specific writings of great men, but I have suggested the impropriety of drawing deductions from his writings instead of leaving the reader to draw his own from such writings. Thus, for instance, have not the so-called Christians distorted the undiluted message of Jesus? Have not sceptics drawn different and often opposite deductions from the same texts in the Bhagavad Gita, and is not the Bhagavad Gita today quoted in support even of assassination? To me it is as plain as a pike staff, that where there is an appeal to reason pure and undefiled,

there should be no appeal to authority however great it may be."

From the above we understand that Mahatmaji allows us to quote from Swami Vivekananda, but he does not allow us to deduce anything from those quotations. He is against our inferring anything from Swami Vivekananda in course of our articles, because the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*, according to him, hold a sceptical attitude towards the Swami and any inferences from him would thus be useless; because they are irrelevant and will confuse the issues at stake; and because we shall misinterpret the Swami. It is really surprising that Mahatmaji does not see to what position he is trying to reduce us by this his literary dictum. He asks us in effect to completely eschew all mention of Swami Vivekananda, all inferences from his life and teaching and all references to him as an authority. He even asks us not to preach anything in the name of Swami Vivekananda; whatever we are to say in *Prabuddha Bharata* should be said in our name. That is to say, *Prabuddha Bharata* should no longer claim to disseminate the teachings of the Swami. It is true, he has permitted us to quote from him; but evidently no quotation may be made in course of our articles. For to quote in course of an article is to use it in support of certain statements, and that will amount to a kind of interpretation and is thus not permissible. Unless we completely renounce Swami Vivekananda, our articles are bound to offend in any of the several ways to which Mahatmaji has referred in his article.

Does Mahatmaji really ask us to take up that position? We regret we cannot do so. *Prabuddha Bharata* is devoted to the dissemination of the truths of Vedanta and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It cannot now give up its functions.

There is no doubt some truth in what Mahatmaji has said: there may be a

few sceptics among our readers, who would not like Swami Vivekananda to be referred to as an authority on matters spiritual and national. But we cannot for that reason give up all references to the Swami in *Prabuddha Bharata*. There is also no doubt the chance of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Swami. But does it follow from this that all interpretation is misinterpretation? To us Mahatmaji's dictum seems to be unnecessarily extreme. According to him, the followers of a teacher should not preach or interpret him for others. Mahatmaji must excuse us, we are not prepared to follow this principle.

And obviously Mahatmaji does not read *Prabuddha Bharata* though we have been regularly sending it to him for the past several years. Had he done so, he would have found that it is always our habit—as all readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* will testify—to give every possible reason for our statements in our articles, and that we refer to the Swami only *after* having proved our theses. From the way in which Mahatmaji has written about us, one would imagine that we have not given enough reason in our articles, and that we have referred to the authority of Swami Vivekananda in lieu of arguments and have thus sought to cloud the issues for our readers. But what are the facts? Did Mahatmaji find any lack of reason in our articles? In the Notes, *The Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (March, 1929) and *An Explanation* (April, 1929), on which Mahatmaji made such strong comments in his first article, there is only one reference to Swami Vivekananda, in the last paragraph of the first Note. This paragraph really did not form any part of our arguments. We gave full reasons for our opinion of the Khaddar Movement without invoking the authority of Swami Vivekananda or any other. After having finished our arguments we said in conclusion:

"The present age in India requires the formulation of a synthetic philo-

sophy of life and action, which will comprehend all the healthy impulses and aspirations of the human mind, and yet lead them and point to an ideal which is supramundane, spiritual, cosmic. The ideal has to be formulated and made living and invincible through the *tapasyā* and realisation of a dynamic spiritual personality. So far as we know, these conditions are fulfilled completely in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. We showed it in our last month's editorial. When will India learn to walk in his footsteps?"

Is the above of such heinous character as to deserve the epithet "sacrilege?" Yet this paragraph evoked the following remarks from Mahatmaji: "What was more painful still was the exploitation of the name of Swami Vivekananda in connection with the double-edged theory propounded by the writer. The inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege." Even after perusing what Mahatmaji has said in his present article in support of his attitude, we confess we fail to see our guilt.

But perhaps what Mahatmaji has pre-eminently in mind is that we are misinterpreting Swami Vivekananda. We asked him in our September Note to quote chapter and verse if he really thought so. In his present article, he

reproduces two quotations from Sister Nivedita's *The Master as I Saw Him*, supplied him by a correspondent. The fun of it is that while there are seven big volumes of the Swami's speeches and writings extant, Mahatmaji brings forward one isolated quotation from another writer (the second quotation is irrelevant) as a proof of our misrepresentation of the Swami. Of course he ends by saying that whether those quotations correctly represented the Swami was more than he could say. But before he even hinted at our misinterpretation, was it not incumbent on him to go through the works of Swami Vivekananda and ascertain the correctness of his charge? We wish we could reproduce enough passages from the Swami here in defence of our position. But want of space forbids us to do so in the present issue. We reserve it for some next number.

By the way, in the same page of *Young India*, in which Mahatmaji so strongly condemns inferentially invoking the authority of great persons, there is a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita in course of another article (*Simplifying Marriage*) by Mahatma Gandhi. This seems to us a curious instance of self-contradiction. But of course *we* do not see anything wrong in such quotation.

REVIEW

VISIONS AND VOICES. By Amrita. Arye Sahitya Bhawan, College Street Market, Calcutta. 84 pp. Price not mentioned.

A small book of attractive get-up, it gives an original interpretation of the meaning of life and universe in a language at once suggestive and poetic. Here and there a *Sādhaka* may find light for guidance; but as the thoughts of the writer wander too much within the intellectual limits, his words lack the directness of spiritual appeal.

LIFE AND TIMES OF LOKAMANYA TILAK. By N. C. Kelkar (Translated by

D. V. Dvokar). S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. xi+564 pp. Price Rs. 4/8.

Possessed of sturdy manhood and virile intellect, a profound scholar and a shrewd politician, a patriot whose patriotism stood the fiery test of sufferings on more than one occasion, Bal Gangadhar Tilak had many avenues to reach the heart of his countrymen. Because of his versatile genius he compelled admiration even from his enemies, and it is no wonder that he was almost literally worshipped by many of his admirers.

A good biography of such a personality

was a long-felt want and we are glad that a Madras publisher has brought out one for the English-reading public. The present volume is an English version by Mr. Divekar of an original biography written by Mr. N. C. Kelkar in Marathi. There is no gainsaying that Mr. Kelkar is by far the fittest person to attempt a biography of Lokamanya Tilak, connected as he was with him from as early as 1896 and was his comrade-at-arms in many fights. And as to the faithfulness of the English translation Mr. Kelkar himself bears testimony in the foreword written by him to the volume.

The book does not simply give a chronicle of events, but contains many things which are edifying. In its pages we find many interesting facts which have not appeared in the pages of newspapers. The book gives a picture of the Maharashtra country in the later part of the last century and shows besides how the master-mind of Tilak viewed many years back the problems of female education, social reform, Hindu-Moslem unity, etc.—problems which are no less keen now than they were before. It is interesting to note how Tilak was the unconscious victim of a great conspiracy by which many Maharashtra leaders were led to drink tea in the house of a Christian Missionary. Those were the days of unrelenting orthodoxy and Tilak along with others was threatened with social boycott. Tilak saved the situation by performing penance at Benares. "But if anybody took it into his head to taunt him with it, he was ready to prove that the merest sipping of tea which was only a mixture of milk, water and tea-leaves, called for no such purification." This indicates his attitude towards social reform. "He wanted social reform to evolve itself from within" and was against imposing it on the public.

Tilak's policy represented the golden mean between two extremes. About the Hindu-Moslem problem, as early as 1894, Tilak "steadily continued to din into the public ear the advice not to purchase peace with Mohammedans with dishonour to their own religion or with loss of self-respect." "From time to time he laid down his belief for the guidance of the people that, there could not be co-operation and harmony between two parties unless either was convinced of the necessity of the other for its very life and existence." "There was, in his opinion, a limit to the demands of the minority on the majority and also a limit to the surrender

of the majority to the sentiments of the minority. He did not conceal his view that, even if the necessary consequences would threaten to be somewhat serious, the legitimate rights of the Hindus must be protected." According to the author, "the judgment of history" justifies the above views.

The book contains an additional chapter on "Tilak and the antiquity of the Vedas" from the pen of Prof. Champhekar, which is highly illuminating.

We cannot help mentioning here that though hero-worship is good, we must not pursue it with a fanatical zeal. The book is disfigured, to our great regret, by unseemly remarks against persons who were opposed to the views of Tilak or were his enemies as is here depicted. If anything were to be said against any person, the relevant facts could be stated without any remarks. The thing is more unfortunate as we cannot know from the reading of the book, what the other camp has to say on the points. This attitude is likely to perpetuate bitter feelings in association with a memory which is universally held as sacred. This is, however, a small matter in comparison with the general value of the book.

The present volume narrates events up to 1899 and is the first of a series which is to be completed in three parts. We welcome this book and shall be eagerly expecting those to follow.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA.
By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.
Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.
42 pp. Price 3 as.

The book is a nice and concise presentation of Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of Indian Genius. The author gives at the outset a brief life-sketch of Sri Ramakrishna and a small collection of his sayings on soul, *Sādhanā*, God and several other subjects. He then carefully examines the nature of his religious practices, realisations and teachings with a view to show how the genius of India fully manifests itself through him. They are characterised by that comprehensive vision, synthetic unity, penetrative insight and assimilative power, which are the essential features of the Indian spirit. His teachings relate to all phases of life, such as individual, domestic, social and purely spiritual. His influence is also Indian in character. It is gentle but effective, potent yet fascinating. His most distinctive contributions, to Indian thought

are, as stated by the author, his declaration of the harmony of religions, his proclamation that religion is realisation and his emphasis on the Motherhood of God. Last of all, the author draws a lurid picture of the present state of affairs both in India and abroad and shows that the East as well as the West are in need of Sri Ramakrishna's ministry.

The book will help the English-reading public to view Sri Ramakrishna's life in its true perspective. But a study of Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of Indian Genius cannot be said to be complete, unless it affirms by historico-comparative method that the national genius of India has reasserted itself through him at the call of the hour to meet the requirements of the national life. We have to see how far Sri Ramakrishna's life represents the highest ideal of India and offers a true solution of the problems of the age. If his personality is judged primarily from the universal standard of greatness without particular reference to the times and the nationality it belongs to, the impression left on the mind is generally of a transcendent spiritual figure having no national colour. Perhaps, the book under review has too narrow a scope to be a full treatment of the subject. It contains a handsome portrait of Sri Ramakrishna and is nicely got up.

KALIDASA. By Sri Aurobindo. Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta. 51 pp.

This little master-work of literary criticism is a striking evidence of a philosopher's appreciation of poetic genius. It includes Sri Aurobindo's two valuable essays on (1) The Age of Kalidasa and (2) Kalidasa's Seasons. The first essay is no controversial discussion on the date of Kalidasa, but a vivid estimate of the Poet's creative genius and his place in the cultural history of India. Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa represent three different moods of Aryan civilisation, moral, intellectual and aesthetic, manifested in three successive stages of India's cultural development.

In the second essay the author dwells on the authenticity, the substance and the poetic value of Kalidasa's *Ritusamhāra*. The juvenile work, which, we know, Mallinātha takes no notice of, is rightly described by the author as 'an interesting document in the evolution of a poetic genius of the first rank.' "The prophet of a hedonistic civili-

sation," writes he, "here seizes with no uncertain hand on the materials of his work. A vivid and virile interpretation of sense-life in Nature, a similar interpretation of all elements of human life capable of greatness or beauty, seen under the light of the senses and expressed in the terms of an aesthetic appreciation,—this is the spirit of Kalidasa's first work as it is of his last." The last and greatest of Kalidasa's works is according to our author, *Kumāra-Sambhava*, the Birth of the War-God. But, according to some authorities it is *Raghuvamsha*.

THE UNIFYING OF CIVILIZATION. By G. Davies Watkins, B.Sc. (Economics), F.R.G.S. Christian Literature Society for India, Madras. 166 pp. Price Re. 1/-

The book contains eight University Lectures on the League of Nations given by the author to the post-graduate and honours students of the University of Madras in 1927-28. The subject is treated under the following headings: (1) the Business of Living Together, (2) the Birth of the League, (3) the Constitution of the League of Nations, (4) the International Labour Organisation, (5) Mandates and the Backward Peoples of the World, (6) the Permanent Court of International Justice, (7) Disarmament, and (8) India and the League of Nations. The book is useful as an introduction to the subject of International polity. There are some illustrative maps and diagrams in it and a bibliography at the end of each chapter. The style is easy and clear. The print and the get-up are good.

In the first lecture the author traces the growth of the International Idea from its early beginning to the present-day stage of development. The League Idea differs from the medieval ideal of super-state for the establishment of international peace. It is far in advance of the theory of the Balance of Power which dominated the world-politics for three hundred years till the end of the 18th century. The progress of science, the extension of commerce and the spread of culture have fostered the international spirit during the last century; and the movement has taken more and more a humanitarian turn. In the second lecture the author shows how the Great War of 1914-18 gives the League Idea a practical shape. The League of Nations came into existence in January, 1920 with the avowed object of putting an end to wars by united human

effort. The author concludes the third lecture with an attempt to answer some criticisms levelled against the League. His examination of them does not go to the root of the matter. In his last lecture the author dwells on India's gains from the League, which, we are afraid, are too poor to justify any enthusiasm.

We cannot be so hopeful of the League of Nations in the matter of world-peace as the author himself is. How can nations which live and grow at the expense of one another, stand on the principles of equity, truth, love and sacrifice in their natural dealings? To our thinking, the League will remain a poor machinery to accomplish its much-advertised object, so long as it will seek to prevent war by manufacturing laws and covenants without trying to elevate individual minds and broaden national outlooks.

THE ILLUSION OF THE CHARKA. By Anilbaran Roy. *Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta.* 89 pp. Price not mentioned.

We have followed with interest Mr. Roy's vigorous onslaughts on Mahatma Gandhi's Khaddar programme. We approve of all that he says on the subject and we request our readers to peruse the book carefully. Mr. Roy is quite right in thinking that it is Mahatmaji's personality which is blinding the vision of the country in this respect. The point at issue, as the author indicates, is what should be our economic aim. The Khaddar programme tacitly assumes that the condition of our masses cannot be improved much, so the best thing is the plying of the Charka. But the moment we accept that our people also should be as prosperous as other nations, the utter inadequacy of the programme becomes at once explicit, and industrialism and scientific agriculture become necessary. And of course the Khaddar policy is the antithesis of this desired industrialism.

Mr. Roy's arguments are well-nigh irrefutable. The sooner our people break the illusion of the Charka, the better.

NEWS AND REPORTS

R. K. Mission Flood Relief Work

Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes under date 15th October, 1929:

We are glad to announce that the harvesting of the autumnal rice crop having been finished in the flood-stricken areas of Sylhet and Cachar and labourers finding employment, we have discontinued the relief work in Assam since the 28th September, after distributing rice for two weeks in advance. Hut-construction has also been finished in all the centres.

The relief work in the Midnapur district will be continued up to the end of October.

In Akyab (Burma) the work will go on till December. At present 10,000 people are receiving doles every week. Up to the 20th September 3,000 patients have been treated. We are also distributing fodder. Hut-construction is to commence from this month.

We offer our hearty thanks to all who have helped us to bring the Assam relief work to a successful completion.

Reception to Swami Madhavananda in Calcutta

A largely attended public meeting to

present an address of welcome on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta to Swami Madhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who had returned from America recently, was held on the 21st October at the Albert Hall, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, presiding. The proceedings commenced with music followed by a welcome song and the recitation of a poem. Two addresses, one in Bengali and the other in English, were then read, and the Swami was garlanded and presented with the addresses in a silver casket by the president.

In course of reply to the addresses the Swami said that after going to the West he came to know that Sri Ramakrishna was not only the saviour of India but of the whole world. The message which he had given to the world was not derived from the books or doctrines but from his heart. His message of fellowship and universal brotherhood was not confined to India only but to the whole world. After seeing the religious disputes between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in America, the Swami said, he was convinced that Sri Ramakrishna was not only a great synthesising force of religious differences in India but he would also bring harmony in the whole world. Proceeding the

speaker said that the great Swami Vivekananda had two kinds of messages to give to the world, one for India and another for the West. The people of the West were practically rolling in wealth. But they were eager for peace. The great Swami went to the West and gave them the message of spirituality to satisfy their hunger. In India where poverty reigns and the people had not even ordinary comforts of life, Swami Vivekananda gave them the message of man-making and preached the doctrine of the worship of Daridra-Nārāyana, a new form of worship—the worship of God in many. The Swami continuing said that it had been his impression from the West that education was the only means by which the inner power was drawn out of a man. He also wanted the people of his country to be educated, as without education the masses would not be able to realise the traditions of the land. Time had considerably changed now and interchange of thoughts and ideas between the West and the East was necessary and that could not be done unless the whole country was educated. Speaking about Miss Mayo the Swami said among other things that she had done one good thing, namely, that she had given the widest publicity of the people of India before the whole world. Now the whole world was anxiously looking on India. They should now prepare themselves in such a way that their messages were readily accepted by all. They should not engage themselves in communal or sectarian differences but stand united to give their message of universal brotherhood before the world.

Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta in his speech said that they must follow the message of the Swami to every letter and educate the whole country and thereby drive away the darkness from the country.

R. K. Tapovan Charitable Dispensary, Dharchula, Himalayas

Swami Anubhavananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has been engaged in the work of service among the backward hill-people in the interior of the Himalayas for some years. He opened in 1924 a Charitable Dispensary, a report of which from 1924-1928 is to our hand. The utility of the Dispensary is increasing rapidly and it is attracting people from very distant places. The number of patients treated during these four years was 4,580. The

Dispensary is chiefly maintained by the grants from the District Board of Almora and the Medical Board of U. P., the amounts received being Rs. 360/- from the former and Rs. 400/- from the latter annually.

The immediate needs of the institution are workers' quarters and a separate block for the Dispensary with its necessary apparatus and two buildings, one for the indoor hospital and the other for the rest house, at a cost of about Rs. 10,000/-.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by *Swami Anubhavananda, Monk in charge, Sri Ramakrishna Tapovan, P.O. Dharchula, Dt. Almora, U.P.*

R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Rangoon

We have read with great pleasure the eighth annual report of the above Sevashrama for the year 1928. It is a record of excellent work done. One of the principal events of the year was that the Corporation of Rangoon added two new wards to the Hospital for the treatment of women and children at a cost of about Rs. 21,000, thus extending the usefulness of the institution to the great benefit of the suffering public. During the year the total attendance of patients at the Sevashrama was 1,16,954. All these patients did not belong exclusively to the city of Rangoon, a considerable number of them coming from the suburbs and from some remote districts of Burma. The number of patients admitted in the Indoor department was 1,646; the aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 22,265 and the average daily attendance was 61. At the Out-patients department the total number of attendance came up to 94,689. In the year under review the total receipts including contributions, donations, subscriptions, etc., together with the opening balance of Rs. 2,968-6-0, amounted to Rs. 32,644-2-6 and the total expenditure to Rs. 26,584-10-6.

Any contribution, in cash or kind, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:—(i) *The President and the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal;* (ii) *The Imperial Bank of India (Rangoon), Ramakrishna Mission Acct., Rangoon, Burma;* and (iii) *Swami Shyamananda, Monk in Charge, Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Rangoon-East, Burma.*

R. K. MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

The Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes under date 15-10-29 :

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following articles as donations for the Flood Relief Work from the 15th June to the 13th October, 1929 :

Cloth

Hazigunj Sevashram, cloth 25 pieces.
 Sj. Lalji Chancharji, Chittagong, cloth 68 pieces.
 Cachar Relief Committee, cloth 200 pieces.
 A Desh Sevak, cloth 407 pieces.
 A Sympathiser, cloth 1 piece.
 Midnapur Sevak Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.
 Thro. Sri Krishna Vidyapitha, Falta, cloth 8 pieces also 2 towels and 2 bundles of old cloth.
 Chandernagar Flood Relief Committee, 200 pieces of old cloth.
 Saroj Nalini Nari Mangal Samity, Basirhat, cloth 1 piece, also 2 bundles of old cloth.
 Calcutta Yuvak Sangha, 1 bundle of old cloth.
 Sj. Ramprasad Mahadeo, Calcutta, cloth 40 pieces.
 Sj. Hazarimal Hiralal, Calcutta, cloth 200 pieces.
 Ramkrishna Satsangha, Satkhira, a few old pieces of cloth.
 Arya Samity, Behala, cloth 13 pieces also 1 piece 36½ yds. long, and 85 old pieces and 15 old garments.
 Ramkrishna Vedanta Society, Calcutta, 2 bundles of old clothes.
 Mazilpur Satsangha, cloth 9 pieces, also 2 bundles of old cloth.
 Sir Gurndas Institution, Narkeldanga, 1 bundle of old cloth.
 Jagaddal Seva Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.
 Students, Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1 bundle of old cloth.
 Sj. Pashupati Bose, Calcutta, 1 bundle of old cloth.
 Bally Seva Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.

Sj. Sakhi Datta, Salkea, a few old pieces of cloth.
 Sj. N. C. Mustafi, Tufangunj, cloth 4 pieces, also a few old pieces.
 Thro. Sj. N. V. Manohar, Digras, a few old pieces of cloth.
 Thro. Sj. Bijoy Madhav Das, 2 pieces of cloth.
 Sj. Rathindra Nath Sen, Calcutta, 2 pieces of cloth.
 Mr. H. C. Sarker, Calcutta, 2 pieces of cloth.
 Chetla Boys' High School, a few pieces of old cloth.
 Hutmura Yuvak Samity, a bundle of old cloth.
 Mrs. S. C. Roy, Calcutta, one bundle of old cloth.
 Baliati R. K. Mission, 2 bundles of old cloth.

Rice

Hailakandi Relief Committee, 100 bags.
 Sj. Nriya Gopal Mandal, Dacca, 4 bags.
 Messrs. Karim Chailaji Sarjan & Co., and Ramchurdas, Chittagong, 35 bags.
 Railway Construction Staff, Karimgunj, 10 bags.
 Special Relief Officer, Silchar, 15 bags.
 S. D. O., Karimgunj, 64 bags.
 Karimgunj Congress Committee, 9 bags.
 Thro. Mr. C. Humphry, Asst. Commissioner, Camp, Badarpur, 115 bags.
 Nowgong Relief Committee, 93 mds., also 30 mds. of paddy.
 Silchar Relief Committee, 50 bags.
 Sj. D. P. Chatterjee, Calcutta, 25 bags.

Other Articles

Cachar Flood Relief Committee, 4 boxes of condensed milk.
 Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, about 1 md. of Alum.

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following donations from the 14th September to 15th October, 1929 :

		Rs. A. P.			Rs. A. P.
Amount	previously			R. K. Mission, Barisal	25 0 0
ledged	29,334	5 0	Sj. Satish Ch, Dey, Purulia	5 0 0

Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

	Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.
Sj. Harendra Nath Singh, Narayanganj	10 0 0	Hutmura Yubak Samity ...	18 5 0
Diana Club, Ramkrishnapur ...	10 14 0	Students, Railway H. E. School, Pahartali	20 0 0
Dumka Public, through J. N. Mukherjee	170 13 0	Sj. Sures Chandra Chakravorty, Patrasayar	20 0 0
Ramkrishna Satsangha, Sat- khira (2nd instalment) ...	6 0 0	„ Jyotindra Nath Pain, Ramjibanpur	2 0 0
Mr. Satbhai Patel, Guzrat ...	15 0 0	„ Kotiswar Guha, Algi ...	2 0 0
Cachar Relief Committee ...	1,500 0 0	„ Tamasranjan Roy, Santosh Secretary, T. S., Kharda ...	10 0 0
Mr. S. B. Kar, Upper Burma ...	3 9 0	Secretary, Relief Committee, Netrakona	1 0 0
Sj. Satya Prosad Mallick, Calcutta	1 0 0	Rastriya Stri Sabha, Bombay	59 14 0
General Secy., Bengalee Asso- ciation, Rangoon	150 0 0	Trustees of Bhagirati Bai Janardan Damodar Estate, Bombay	600 0 0
Sm. Hemangini Devya, Rangoon	4 0 0	Mr. Narayan Gonesh Joshi, Bombay	51 0 0
Sj. T. C. Chatterjee, Rangoon	1 0 0	Messrs. Muthra Das, Gokul Das, Bombay	7 0 0
„ Bijoymadhab Das, Mahes ...	62 0 0	Mr. Binayak Jasabant Kul- karni, Bombay	5 0 0
Head Master, Govt. Normal School, Muzaffarnagar ...	5 0 0	Dr. Keshab Rao, Bombay ...	5 0 0
Mr. Bhangoo Singh, Dehra Dun	4 0 0	Mr. S. G. Rajadhaksha, Bombay	3 0 0
Chetla Boys' H. E. School ...	7 12 0	„ V. V. Vandarkar, Bombay	3 0 0
Professor G. D. Dutt, Ratanganj	0 8 0	„ Jashabant Krishna Pra- dhan, Bombay	2 0 0
Sj. Haripada Dutt, Narsingpur	1 0 0	Sj. Charu Ch. Basu, Cal. ...	20 0 0
„ Prohlad Ch. Dam, Matha- bhanga	2 0 0	Bengalee Community, Bilashpur	23 13 0
„ Kailash Ch. Ghosh, Khan- janpur	10 0 0	Sm. Hemnalini Basu, Cal ...	1 0 0
Sm. Subba Lakshmi, Vargaber	10 0 0	Sj. Rathindra N. Sen, Cal. ...	5 0 0
Sj. Kishori M. Ghosal on behalf of Bench Bar and Staff, Serampore Courts	778 2 9	Non-Official Flood Relief Com- mittee with R. K. Seva- sram, Iamkek	876 14 0
Mr. Srinivas Ayar, Shiyali ...	20 0 0	Sj. Kunja Kisore Dey, Kaliganj	1 0 6
Sj. Gour Ch. Mandal, U. Burma	10 0 0	Ramkrishna Asram, Chandpur	27 4 0
Through Mr. N. K. Baksi, Simla	100 0 0	A Friend	1 0 0
Sympathisers, Maymyo ...	16 0 0	Sm. Maya Debi, Allahabad ...	2 0 0
Students, Scottish Church College, Calcutta	97 0 0	Jharia Raj High School, and Boarding	4 0 0
Mr. H. L. Roy, Bhagalpur ...	3 0 0	Sj. Rash Behari Laha, Cal. ...	10 0 0
Sj. Ashutosh Ghosh, Daltanganj	26 12 0	Dr. R. P. Roy, Ngape ...	3 0 0
Indian Patriots, Persia ...	124 6 0	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Ajmirganj	5 0 0
Sj. Paresh Ch. Das Gupta, Dacca	20 0 0	Mazilpore Satsanga	20 0 0
Sm. Kumudini Basu, Calcutta	10 0 0	Medical College Students Club, Calcutta	29 0 0
Mr. E. K. Lakshma Goundar, Eklasapuram	5 0 0	Flood Relief Committee, Chandernagore	100 0 0
Sj. Ramkrishna Sarkar, Cal.	10 0 0	Bengalee Community, Maymyo	6 10 0
Sjs. Jugal Kishore & Phani B. Rudra, Calcutta ...	10 0 0	Ramakrishna Vedanta Society	12 0 0
Sj. Sashi Bh. Rudra, Cal. ...	2 0 0		
„ Pashupati Kumar, Cal. ...	1 0 0		
A Friend, Cal.	2 0 0		
Others	1 0 0		
Sj. Ashutosh Biswas	2 0 0	Total	35,159 1 0