

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary; the Master receives the devotees

The devotees are taking Prasâdam (food offered to the Deity). Sweets, flattened rice and many other things have been served, which the devotees are taking with satisfaction. The Master asks M. “Have you not invited the Mukherjees? Ask Surendra to call the Bauls for meal.”

Srijut Bepin Sarkar has come. The devotees introduce him to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master gets up from his bed and says with humility, “Bring a seat for him and offer him some betel.” He then speaks to Bepin Sarkar, “I am sorry I could not talk to you; see what a crowd we have !”

At the sight of Girindra, the Master asks Baburam to procure a seat for him. He then finds Nrityagopal sitting on the floor and says, “Bring another for him also.”

Mahendra, a Kaviraj from Sinti, has come. The Master is signing to Rakhal smilingly to get his pulse examined. He then turns to Srijut Ramlal and says, “Make friends with Girish Ghose and then you can easily attend the theatre.”

Narendra was talking with Hazra for a long time in the outer verandah. Narendra's people at home are passing through hard days since the death of his father. Narendra now enters the room and takes his seat.

Instructions to Narendra

Sri Ramakrishna (to Narendra): “Were you sitting with Hazra? He also wants a thousand and five hundred rupees. (Laughter.)

“Hazra says, ‘Narendra has cent. per cent. of the quality of Sattva; there is only a slight touch of Rajas. But I possess even more than cent. per cent. of pure Sattva.’ (All laugh.)

“When I say, ‘you always indulge in ratiocination and so you are dry’, he replies, ‘I drink nectar that originates from the sun and so I am dry.’”

“When I talk of pure devotion and say that a pure devotee does not pray for wealth or power, he replies, ‘When the flood of His grace descends it overflows the river and fills to the brim even a small pool and a narrow canal; it confers not only pure devotion but brings in its wake the six miraculous powers and even wealth.’”

Many devotees including Narendra and others are sitting on the floor of Sri Ramakrishna’s room. Girish comes and takes his seat.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Girish): “I look upon Narendra as a veritable embodiment of the Atman, and I am devoted to him.”

Girish: “I wonder to whom you are not devoted!”

Sri Ramakrishna (with a smile): “His attitude is that of a male whereas mine is that of a female. Narendra is a highly spiritual soul.”

[Girish goes out to smoke.]

Narendra (to Sri Ramakrishna): “I had a talk with Girish Ghose. He is a very great man. We were talking of you.”

Sri Ramakrishna: “What was that?”

Narendra: “We were saying that you were illiterate and we were learned.” (Laughter.)

Learning and Scriptures

Mani Mallick (to the Master): “You are learned even without book-learning.”

Sri Ramakrishna (to Narendra and others): “Really I do not at all feel sorry that I have not read the Vedanta and other scriptures. I know that the essence of Vedanta is that Brahman alone is real and the world is unreal. What, again, is the essence of the Gita? It is what turns out if you repeat the

name ten times, that is, ‘Be a man of renunciation.’ (Gita, Gita, becomes Tyâgi, Tyâgi.)

“One should learn from the Guru the substance of the scriptures and then apply oneself to spiritual practices. A man wrote a letter. But it was missing before it had been read. All began to search for it. On recovery it was read and learnt that five seers of sweets and a piece of cloth had been ordered. The letter was then thrown away and the people were busy at securing the things. Likewise after learning the essence of the sacred books what use is there in poring over them again? What is then required is practice.”

[Girish now enters the room.]

Sri Ramakrishna (to Girish): “Well, what were you talking about me? I live here quite innocently!”

Girish: “What can we talk of you! Are you a Sâdhu?”

Sri Ramakrishna: “Nothing of that sort. Really I am not conscious that I am a Sâdhu.”

Girish: “We cannot surpass you even in wit and humour!”

Sri Ramakrishna: “I once put on a cloth with red borders and went to the garden-house of Jaygopal Sen. Keshab Sen was present there. At the sight of that cloth with red borders, Keshab remarked, ‘What a display of colour today, and what a splendid red border! What is the matter?’ I replied, ‘I am to charm the mind of Keshab, so I have appeared at my best.’”

Narendra will again sing now. Sri Ramakrishna asks M. to take down the Tânpurâ (a stringed musical instrument). Narendra is tuning the instrument for a long time. The Master and all others have grown impatient.

Binode says, “Today it will only be tuned and the singing will take place some other day.” (All laugh).

Sri Ramakrishna laughs and says, "I feel like smashing the Tânpurâ."

Bhavanath : "One feels equally disgusted at the beginning of a theatrical play."

Narendra (while tuning the instrument) : "One feels like that because one cannot understand."

Sri Ramakrishna (with a smile) : "Ho ! how he puts at nought everything we say !"

Narendra sings and Sri Ramakrishna enters into an ecstasy

Narendra is singing. The Master is sitting on the smaller bedstead and listening to it. Nriyagopal and others who are seated on the floor are also listening.

Song: 'Ever dost Thou abide in my heart,
O Mother ! the inner Ruler of my soul ;
Thou holdst me in Thy lap day and night.'

Song: 'O Thou single-stringed lute of mine,
Sing the name of the blissful Mother,
The name that showereth peace in life.'

Song: 'In the midst of the dense darkness,
O Mother ! breaketh forth a flood of light,
Thy wealth of formless beauty. To this end is the Yogi's meditation within the mountain cave.'

The Master, in an exalted mood, comes down from the cot and sits by the side of Narendra. He speaks in that mood of ecstasy.

Sri Ramakrishna : "Shall I sing? (to Nriyagopal) What do you say? One

should listen to songs for inspiration. When that is attained it matters little whatever may take place afterwards.

"The idea is this : We are to be merged in the ocean of bliss.

"Shall I sing? Of course, I may sing as well. Water is water whether it remains steady or moves."

Go beyond both knowledge and ignorance

Narendra is sitting near. His mother and brothers are in extreme straits, and this is causing him constant anxiety. He used to go to the Sâdhâran Brâhma Samâj. Even now he always discriminates between the real and the unreal, and has got a great desire to study the Vedanta and other scriptures. He is twenty-three now. The Master looks at Narendra with steadfast eyes.

Sri Ramakrishna (with a smile, to Narendra) : "You are indeed the *Kha* (i.e., your real self is as universal as the formless *Âkâsha*). Only if there were no taxes (i.e. anxiety at home) to be paid ! (All laugh).

"Krishnakisore used to say 'I am the *Kha*.' One day I went to his house and found him sitting in great perplexity. He was not talking much. I inquired, 'Well, my good sir, what is the matter? Why are you sitting like this?' He replied, 'The tax-collector came and held out the threat that if I failed to pay the taxes he would dispose off all my utensils and realise the amount. So I am much worried over that.' I laughed and said 'What is there, you are the *Kha*, the formless ether ! Let the devils take away the utensils, what is that to you?'

"So I say, you are the *Kha*, why then worry so much? Sri Krishna once told Arjuna 'If you possess one of the eight Siddhis you may have some power, but

not me.' Great power, wealth and such other things may be attained through Siddhis but not God.

"One thing more: Go beyond both knowledge and ignorance. People extol a man and say 'He is very wise.' But really it is not so. Vasishtha, considered to be so wise, was overpowered with grief at the death of his sons. At the sight of this Lakshmana said to Rama, 'Rama, how I wonder that even he is so

much overwhelmed with grief!' Rama replied, 'Brother, one who has got knowledge, has got ignorance too; one who has got the sense of light is conscious of darkness also; one who is aware of what is good knows the evil also; one who is attached to happiness is subject to misery too; dear brother, go beyond both, beyond happiness and misery, knowledge and ignorance.' So I say, go beyond both knowledge and ignorance."

LETTERS OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

San Francisco, California,
C/o Mrs. C. F. Peterson,
Buchanon Street,
Nov. 16, 1901

My dear . . . ,

I thank you for your good letter I received day before yesterday. I was so much concerned and sorry to learn about Miss B's illness. Will you please let me know how she is doing now by return of post. May she get well soon and feel hale and hearty. Remember me to her please and give her my love and best wishes. I received your card you left the day you came to see me. That was the first time I went out for a walk after my recovery. I am feeling almost all right now, and hope to be myself again soon under the good and kind care of . . . I am glad to know that you have moved the children and you all are feeling well. Hoping to hear from you soon about the well-being of Miss . . . , with best wishes and love,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA

San Francisco, 1309, Buchanon St.,
Nov. 18, 1901

My dear . . . ,

I have received your good letter and the book you sent yesterday. I thank you very much for them. It pleased me immensely to learn that Miss B. is out of danger and improving steadily. I saw this book when I was at Cambridge near Boston. I saw and was introduced to its author too in the same place where he came to lecture on St. Frances. I liked him very much. Especially his simple, unassuming attitude I noticed with great satisfaction and pleasure. I think he is an advanced thinker of this country and tries to live the life as best he knows. I think too he has not come in close contact with the Vedanta Truths yet. However, he seems very free and liberal in his ideas. I will read the book with care this time. I thank you again for the book. I shall be so

glad to see you whenever you shall find it convenient to come. I am feeling well and strong again. Trusting you are all doing well, with best wishes and love,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA

Brindaban,
May 27, 1908.

My dear . . . ,

Your kind letter of April 18 I believe is to hand. It contained a kind note from Miss B. also. I received your other beautiful and affectionate letter you wrote to me in the month of October, 1902. I thank you ever so much for both of them. And my thanks are also due to Miss B. I am sorry I could not write to you so long. I had been suffering more or less from something or other all this time and am not quite free from complaints even now. I think my nervous system has undergone a terrible shock under all those severe tests of life that I have gone through during the past few years. And it will take a considerable time, I believe, before it can come to its natural condition of health if it ever comes at all in its present lease of existence. I have been very glad to hear that Swami Trigunatita has done such good work in San Francisco and that you all like him so well. But I do not hear from anybody any detail of the work done as you think I do. I like to hear so much of it and will be so glad if you will let me know the full account of the work. But our letters will be between you and me. I understand that there is one Swami Rama amongst you for some time. I would like to know something of him from you. It is so nice you have seen the photos of other Swamis with me in the group. Will you send me a copy of the same if you can? I like to see it. Kindly send it to my Brindaban address. Nothing pleases me so much as to know that you are treading on and on in the path of religion you have once begun and that you are following your Ideal as best as you can. May Mother bless you all and keep you close to Her embrace. It gave me great satisfaction to learn that you are in correspondence with . . . What a noble soul this dear . . . is. He is now all alone in the Ashrama. . . . is true to his name in the very real sense of the term. He is indeed blessed. Kindly remember me to Mrs. . . . and Miss . . . and give them my best wishes and regard. I feel really glad to know their feelings for me expressed in their words and writing and to know about their spiritual advancement. All love to . . . May Mother keep him and bring him up after Her own choice. My best wishes and love to all the friends please. With prayer and love for you as ever,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA

SILENT SOURCES OF LIFE AND STRENGTH

“The real wisdom of human life is compounded out of the experiences of ordinary men”.

—Woodrow Wilson.

The longer one lives, the more one realises the limitations of a college education. These limitations are not imposed from without, but seem to exist as a part of the thing itself, being inextricably bound up with the very conception of college life. The student is expected to specialise in certain subjects. Knowledge may be as wide as the world, but he has to restrict himself to some “compulsories” and a few “optionals”. The more time he is prepared to spend in college the more restricted his choice becomes, until at last we get the specialist, who is profoundly interested in his own subject and pretty little outside it. *Ars longa, vita brevis*. Art is long, life is short, none can deny that. The grinding poverty of the country has made the life-span here much shorter than it is elsewhere. The average Indian’s expectation of life is just about a third of the psalmist’s three score years and ten. Again within the short time at his disposal, the student is expected to cover the essentials of the past achievements in the chosen subject and thus prepare himself to add to the store of human knowledge in that particular branch. Necessarily, he looks backwards to the past and endeavours to appreciate what the great masters have done. Consequently the shades of the past are more real to him than the living flesh-and-blood men and women of his own times. A third limitation of college life arises from the fact that the student is temporarily placed

in a state of cloistered existence. Elders, teachers and university authorities, all join in a sort of a conspiracy to keep the student away from what they call the distractions of the world. Even if they relax their grip, the all-important examination has its stranglehold and will not permit the student to turn his eyes away from his books. The teachers themselves are forced to lead a secluded life. The demands of the higher branches of teaching and research are so great that the conscientious professor finds little or no time to establish human contacts. The upbringing of his own children is often left to his partner in life. The first university professors were monks and recluses; the tradition, we see, is maintained in effect, even as the gown and the hood have come down unchanged throughout the centuries.

* * *

Is there no possibility of freeing college education from these limitations? The task appears well-nigh impossible. If the student is asked to interest himself in many subjects, he will lose in depth what he gains in breadth; he will develop a superficial versatility and defeat one of the ends for which college education is intended. If the student is asked to turn away from the past and take into consideration only the present, he runs into the danger of becoming a law unto himself, much in the same way as the school of modern poetry has become. Thirdly, if the student gets too much interested in the active life around him and actively participates in politics and social service, he may miss not only his examination, but also the enduring discipline of college life. If the limitations are indis-

pensable, what is the best way of harmonizing college life with active life and producing the balanced individual whose keenly trained mind will be at the service of society and assist it to solve the real problems of real life? Commenting on the making of a philosopher, George Bernard Shaw says: "When we come to humanity it is still the same: only by intercourse with men and women can we learn anything about it. This involves an active life, not a contemplative one; for, unless you do something in the world, you can have no real business to transact with men; and unless you love and are loved, you can have no intimate relations with them. And you must transact business, wirepull politics, discuss religion, give and receive hate, love and friendship with all sorts of people before you can acquire the sense of humanity. If you are to acquire the sense sufficiently to be a philosopher, you must do all these things unconditionally. You must not say that you will be a gentleman and limit your intercourse to this class or that class; or that you will be a virtuous person and generalize about the affections from a single instance—unless, indeed, you have the rare happiness to stumble at first upon an all-enlightening instance. You must have no convictions, because as Nietzsche puts it, 'convictions are prisons.' "

* * *

From the above it is plain that the college student in order to become a full man should take the earliest opportunity of entering the school of life with an open mind, ready to learn. If his senses and his mind have been fed, strengthened and made keen and receptive by a college education—this is, of course, the best that a college education can do for anyone—he would patiently gather his material out of the experi-

ences of ordinary men and women and compound out of them the real wisdom of human life. The priest, the philosopher, the man of letters, the social worker, and the politician have to receive their second and true schooling in the same school, the school of life. Ordinary life is so rich that all these persons can receive all that they need for their intellectual sustenance from it, however varying their needs might be. At the same time, even as the leaves absorb the life-giving air and sunlight and pass it on to the tree, so can educated men transfer to common people the life-giving ideals they gained in their college course and the facts they gathered by their subsequent reading. This would establish that interdependence, so necessary for the healthy growth of a living organism. The plant rooted out of the soil, the plant, in which the life-giving sap has ceased to flow from the roots to the leaves and from the leaves back again to the roots, becomes effete and soon withers away. The sooner we become aware of the silent forces of life and strength hidden in the soil, the better it will be for our national progress. What a wealth of wisdom—mind you, true living wisdom—is exhibited by the folk-lore and the folk-songs of India. Some of our great leaders,—we may not be far wrong in saying, all our great leaders—who represent the dumb millions of this motherland of ours have drawn their wisdom of life from those same dumb millions. They make their approach with humility, sympathy, and true fellowship and the dumb millions become extremely eloquent and communicate to them the true secrets of life.

* * *

There come moments of true inspiration in the lives of all thinking men when they feel fed up with books,

magazines, newspapers, the radio and all such propaganda machines and thirst for true wisdom. If they would start life anew and have their own way in planning out their education, they would probably follow the path of Socrates and seek wisdom in the marketplace, at the crossing of roads and all such places where men gather and they may also like that great philosopher begin catechizing their friends and acquaintances to the mutual advantage of the parties concerned. Their writings, if they write at all, would glow with life and provide true illumination to all seekers after truth. The essential thing is to approach the silent sources of life with an open mind. The man who stupidly gets entangled in the cobwebs of his own thoughts and the other man who is hide-bound in his own convictions can have no access to these silent sources. He who is seeking for true religion can get it in market-places, in hospitals and in cremation grounds, as well as on the banks of the Ganges and the seclusion of Himalayan peaks. If he fails to get it in these places, vain is the search he makes for it in religious scriptures and philosophical treatises. The history of Mediæval India could better be studied first-hand from the tombs of Delhi than from the dusty tomes of college libraries. Villages and temple fairs would teach one more about Indian economics than learned treatises produced from British and American universities. As for the fine arts, no argument is needed to convince the reader that the material for them has to be drawn first-hand from one's own surroundings. The great mystics whose poems and writings enrich the religious literature of this land draw all their illustrations from the ordinary lives of ordinary men and women; how apt and how convincing those illustrations are.

Educationists, who advocate the use of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction are guided by the true insight that recognises the mother-tongue as the great store-house of the accumulated experience of the people of the country. The literary renaissance that we see in all provinces realises the necessity for recording the hopes and aspirations of the ordinary man. The poet who sings to a classical strain, and the lecturer who stands aloof from the realities of contemporary life cannot get anything much of an audience these days. It is well that it should be so. In our last number we commented on the ideals set up by those who are labouring for the regeneration of Marathi and Sindhi literatures. Similar movements are afoot all over the country. Princes have ceased to be the heroes of the poets of India. The modern Indian poet sings of the peasant. India is beginning to know herself. It is time that the educated Indian makes the attempt to understand India, not the India of legend and history, but the land of the toiling millions, who in the midst of starvation are prepared to share their last crumb with a needy neighbour, the land that has not lost its soul, in spite of poverty and oppression, the land for the regeneration of which Swami Vivekananda and other noble souls laid down their precious lives.

* * *

Knowledge leads to understanding, which begets sympathy. To know the masses of this country is to love them. The love and the sympathy thus engendered would lead to mutual service. The uplift of the whole country and of all classes of people centres round the uplift of the "great struggling unknown masses of the men who are at the base of everything."

The Hindu myth regarding the origin of castes says that the Sudra caste came out of the feet of the Creator, probably the myth symbolizes the fact that the labourer is the prop and support of all other classes: priests, rulers, soldiers and traders. Those who would labour for the regeneration of the country have got to direct their best attention to the uplift of the masses, knowing fully well that their own interest is intimately connected with the welfare of the people. True wisdom consists in appreciating the interdependence of the various limbs that constitute the organism known as society. The limbs would suffer unless the whole body is nourished and strengthened. There is poverty in the country and there is ignorance. For some years to come, the national mind has to concentrate its efforts in the direction of food-production and removal of illiteracy. The masses have the will to help themselves, but there are obstacles on the path. All that the educated man has to do is to help in the removal of these obstacles. Even in this, the educated man would do well to respect the wisdom of the ordinary man. The theories learnt at college regarding agriculture and rural economics may be applied to the solution of the real problems of real life. But such application should be considered experimental, until the experiment is confirmed by the practical wisdom based upon the experience of the ordinary man.

* * *

Human contact with the masses will help the educated man to shake off some of his weaknesses. Instead of vainly seeking for employment and "making it the be-all and end-all of life", the educated man may get the necessary self-reliance to start a little

business of his own. By human contact, he may get to know his markets and the sources from which he can get his supplies advantageously. He may discover new avenues of wealth and employ labour to the mutual advantage of both parties. The ordinary man has a greater sense of physical righteousness than the college graduate. He never runs into excesses and seldom attempts to burn the candle at both ends. He knows that a certain amount of physical exertion and regular hours of sleep are absolutely necessary for health. In these matters the average educated man sins very deeply. When it comes to strength of character and spirit of philanthropy, the man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow often possesses these qualities to a higher degree than those who merely use their cunning to live upon the fruits of other peoples' labours.

* * *

In India as well as elsewhere, the lower classes are awakening. Hereafter it will not be possible for the upper classes to repress the lower. As Swami Vivekananda says, "The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights." Swamiji goes on to say, "Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love you and never hate you.' If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching, the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both parties will

become friendly to each other." The time has come for Young India to work

out the programme outlined by Swamiji, in the words quoted above.

WHAT IS RAMAKRISHNA ?*

BY PROF. DR. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR,

President, Bengali Institute of Sociology, Calcutta

It is already 8 o'clock; I doubt very much if it is possible for anybody present here to listen to my words about religion, morality, spirituality and things like that. Just at present, you are thinking of other things, quite substantial things, mundane items, things that are likely to be supremely useful. It may, therefore, be quite appropriate to deal with these topics of religion, spirituality, Avatarhood and so forth, from a material, temporal and secular point of view, especially because, as I believe, it is possible to think of Ramakrishna as a man, as a man of flesh and blood. It is possible to think of Vivekananda as a man of muscles and bones, like yourselves and myself. The Swamis of the Ramakrishna movement, who are about 500 in number today, are also human beings, as you see, men of flesh and blood like all of us. Let me then try to find out what is Ramakrishna, what is Vivekananda and what is the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement from the standpoint of human beings, men and women as we know them here, there and everywhere.

There are human beings the world over, who are all the time using the word "God" or the word *Avatar* (Incarnation of God-in-Man), and it is very curious that men and women in Europe, America, Asia, and of course our India do not, as a rule, think that they are

discussing something great, unless they can connect it with God or *Avatar*. I believe they are philosophers, religious-minded or pious people, they are wise men and women, and I congratulate them on their philosophical bent of mind and admire their mentality, their brain-power, their logic, and their personality. But unfortunately my mentality is very earthly. It is possible for me to think of the highest things of the earth, to think of the greatest glories of man and the world, without any reference to God or *Avatar*. At any rate, you will admit that God is only a word, and I ask, who created this word? Yourself, myself, these men and women, those other men and women over there. It is man that created gods in the past and it is man that will create gods in the future. Nobody knows if God ever created man but everybody is certain that God, the Gods and the *Avatars* are all creations of man. The creator of the external, physical, natural world is unknown. But it is self-evident that man is the creator of the moral and spiritual world, the sphere of values, perhaps the only world that counts. While trying to ascertain what is Ramakrishna (1836-1886) you can, then, well imagine that I have but to discuss the powers of man, only the creative abilities of human beings.

Now, what is Ramakrishna? If people

* Based on the report of a public lecture delivered at Dhanbad (Bihar) under the auspices of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Society on April 21, 1940. Shorthand notes were taken by Mr. Sudhir Chandra Nandy.

believe that by calling him a god or an *avatar* they honour him tremendously, they are at liberty to do so. Emotions, sentimentalities, and enthusiasms are valuable ingredients in human personality. Idealistic feelings and expressions will always have a very large place in the character and cultural creations of men and women. I can have no objection to the display of the *bhakti*, emotive or devotional elements in human character. The *bhakti* method of approach to Ramakrishna is by all means to be conceded to those men and women who cannot think of any other methods. I concede it with all my heart. The world is wide enough for all of us, *bhakti-yogis*, *jnana-yogis*, *karma-yogis* and what not. But to me, if Ramakrishna was a god or an *avatar*, at once the following questions arise: Is a god or an *avatar* such a very glorious being, an extraordinary creature? Are men and women, as a rule, really sincere and serious when they take delight in pious words or phrases, nay, devout feelings and sentiments about gods and *avatars*? Do we genuinely make Ramakrishna great and glorious by treating him as a god or an *avatar*? If a god is one creation of man and an *avatar* another creation, how can a god or an *avatar* be appraised as something superhuman, extra-mundane, exceptional?

To be a god or an *avatar* is by itself not a merit or a qualification as I understand it. In order that the god or the *avatar* may be worshipped it has first to be proven that the god or the *avatar* has been serviceable or useful to man. The godliness or *avatarhood* must depend on the serviceability or usefulness. The epithets, God and *Avatar*, are of no intrinsic significance. They have no *swaraj* or self-determined validity, no independent worth in the domain of moral and spiritual values. Instead of expatiating on a person's godhood or

avatarhood it is more reasonable to deal direct with his contributions or services to the world of men and women. For, the god or the *avatar* has always to justify his existence or very mention by positive marks of co-operation with man in the sphere of values. The supreme governor in the moral and spiritual realms is man.

Let me be perfectly frank. The picture of Ramakrishna as a god or an *avatar* does not enable me, my stupid and impious self, to realize his greatness or glory in any remarkable manner. I am almost positive that it does not satisfy the real spiritual sensibilities of even the peasant, the workingman, the poor and the pariah—men and women who are supposed to be credulous and have faith in the mysterious, the unknown, and the unseen. And of course the sophisticated, hypercivilized bourgeois or highbrows of the world care, generally speaking, as much for the divinity, sanctity or piety associated with such a picture as you and I have for the man in the moon.

If, then, you ask me how I want to pay homage to or worship Ramakrishna, I should begin by saying that I know nothing of him. It is clear that I have not seen him. There is nobody present here who saw him. There is none among the 500 Swamis of the present day,—Bengali, Madrasi, Ceylonese, Maratha, Oriya—who are veterans enough to have seen him. How, then, is it possible for an ordinary man, the man in the street, a rural peasant, an industrial worker, a school boy or a school girl, the academician, and the researcher to know or to understand Ramakrishna?

The fundamental problem for all of us is to try to find out what is Ramakrishna from the persons who came in contact with him, and if possible from some of the words and phrases which are

supposed to have fallen from the lips of Ramakrishna. You know quite well that there is only one document in the form of a book in Bengali which contains the words of Ramakrishna, the "*Kathamrita*" (1882-1886), and that happens to be the only literary document in print available today. This has been translated into many languages of India as well as several languages of Europe and America. There is hardly anything to doubt the authenticity, the genuineness of the words which were collected so religiously and scrupulously by the compiler. I ask you, those of you who have read the *Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, as I ask myself, as to how it is that a book like that has been able to produce the vast organisation that the world sees today, the organisation which I have always had the liberty of describing as the Ramakrishna Empire. Is there anything in those words, which can serve as the texts, as the foundations, as the pillars of the influential structure of world-wide importance,—although not yet very large and magnificent in dimension,—which is today being governed by the 500 Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission? I say, hardly anything.

The Ramakrishna Mission, as you all know, has been growing, although not by leaps and bounds, but steadily growing all the same,—from village to village, province to province, country to country, and continent to continent. It represents a world-embracing system of intellectual re-makings and moral reconstructions. These spiritual values have been giving rise to a humane democracy among the races, nations or peoples based on the fundamental ground-work of social equality, personal dignity and moral freedom. The Ramakrishna Empire has already been functioning as the nucleus of a new world-order emancipated from the tyranny of

superiority-complexes of all sorts, but broadbased on constructive co-operation between diverse races, nations or peoples in the field of societal enterprises.

It is, again, impossible to connect with the *Ramakrishna Kathamrita* this little institution over here at Dhanbad except perhaps in a very indirect manner. There is hardly anything in those words and phrases on the strength of which we can account for the social services as embodied in the wonderful hospital that is being run by the Ramakrishna Mission at Rangoon in Burma, that great hospital which is the second biggest hospital in Burma, the first being the Government institution. It is scarcely possible with the help of the *Ramakrishna Kathamrita* to explain the vast network of primary and secondary schools which are being conducted by the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission in the island of Ceylon. And I wonder if those words and phrases can substantially account for the great success of the regular and systematic teachings on the *Vedanta*, the *Upanishads*, the *Gita*, etc., conducted by the Ramakrishna movement in the United States of America. You know that today in the United States of America there are over a dozen centres, operated by thousands of dollars, all contributed by American intellectuals, middle-class people and bourgeoisie. Finally, what is there in the *Kathamrita* which could explain satisfactorily the gradually growing hold of the Indian cultural movement which is associated with the Ramakrishna Institutions on the different parts of the world. I suspect that the words of the *Ramakrishna Kathamrita* do not furnish much guidance in regard to these organisations of all sorts in the two hemispheres.

My remarks must not be misunderstood. I do not mean by any means that the *Kathamrita* has no value. It

is certainly valuable in its own way. The compiler was interested in particular sentiments or expressions of Ramakrishna and he knew that they were valuable to himself and to many others. They have indeed rendered service and been useful to thousands of men and women since. And I have no doubt that in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Czech and other translations they have been serving to enrich mankind in the two hemispheres with moral and spiritual counsels. But, on the other hand, it is perfectly clear, first, that the compiler could not possibly collect all the words and phrases that fell from Ramakrishna's lips, and, secondly, that there were dozens, nay, hundreds and thousands of others besides the compiler with whom Ramakrishna held conversation and who accordingly saw so many other sides of the great Master. Naturally, therefore, the *Kathamirta* is but a part, although a valuable part of Ramakrishna's entire personality and not the whole. There were many Ramakrishnas,—the Ramakrishnas *vis-à-vis* the carpenter, the boatman, the housewife, the merchant, the lawyer, the clerk, the medical man, the intellectual, and so forth, that were not recorded by anybody. All those unreported Ramakrishnas, those unwritten selves of Ramakrishna cannot possibly be discovered in the *Kathamrita* however valuable and useful it be in other ways. The *Kathamrita* Ramakrishna cannot be taken to be the entire Ramakrishna.

We are, therefore, compelled to try to discover Ramakrishna somewhere else. There seems to be only one possible way, so far as I am concerned, by which it is possible to know something about Ramakrishna, and that source is none other than the personality and workmanship or handiwork of Vivekananda (1863-1902). He is the

only source on the strength of which it is possible for me to understand a little bit of Ramakrishna with reference specially to the activities developed by the Ramakrishna Mission. If Vivekananda had not opened his mouth and had not been open-hearted enough to declare in so many words that whatever good he had done he owed to Ramakrishna, I as an ordinary mortal would have said it is impossible to connect the Ramakrishna Empire with Ramakrishna.¹ If Vivekananda had not been sincere enough to announce that every thought of his life, every activity that was associated with his own life, and his entire life-work was a direct contribution of his great Master, I should have said that the gap between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's personality and workmanship is unbridgeable. But, curiously enough, Vivekananda says nowhere in his seven volumes of complete works exactly what Ramakrishna told him to do. Not a word, not a phrase, not a hint appears to have been given out by Vivekananda which could furnish us with an effective key to the contacts between him and his great Master.

One of the counsels we have from Vivekananda in some of his letters to a *gurubhai* (fellow-disciple) is as follows: "Do not try to describe Ramakrishna as an *Avatar*," or rather, "Do not make much of the *avatarhood* of Ramakrishna."² This is a peculiar expression but a very valuable item with reference to the contents of my talk this evening. In this statement we have something negative, however. But this deserves a

¹ See the Address at Calcutta in Vol. III (1932), p. 312 of the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

² See some of the letters of Vivekananda, e.g., the one written from the U.S.A. on May 6, 1895, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V (1924), p. 64. See also the conversations in the same volume, pp. 305-306, as well as Vol. VI (1926), p. 324.

special emphasis by all means by the side of the positive statement referred to above about his alleged totalitarian indebtedness to Ramakrishna.

But I wonder if from such statements, expressive and profound as they are, we obtain any clue to the problem as to which items of his plan, campaign, or propaganda were directly derived from Ramakrishna's counsels. In any case, the greatest gift of Ramakrishna to Vivekananda was perhaps never categorically declared by Ramakrishna nor has it been definitely expressed by Vivekananda. What, then, is Ramakrishna is a mystery to me and that is a question which everyone of us has to explain in his own way.

Let me, then, proceed in my way. I can know Vivekananda in his activities, I can know Vivekananda in his thoughts. Now if Vivekananda is a sincere reporter about Ramakrishna—and I believe he is—then I should say that the inspiration that Vivekananda got from Ramakrishna is to be found embodied in all the activities for which Vivekananda lived and moved and in which Vivekananda had his being. I, therefore, try to discover Ramakrishna not so much in Ramakrishna's words and phrases as in what Vivekananda did and thought. To me Vivekananda is virtually the only creation of Ramakrishna, practically the solitary child of Ramakrishna.

Vivekananda is perhaps too modest, too humble, too self-denying or too self-effacing when he attributes every item of his life's work to Ramakrishna. A critical student of personality, characterology, social processes, human progress, growth of ideas and institutions would observe at once that Vivekananda can by no means be exclusively Ramakrishna. This totalitarian ascription of everything to Ramakrishna is not acceptable as a psycho-social reality. Vivekananda is certainly Ramakrishna,

but he is also something more. And this "something more" can be further analyzed into Vivekananda's "personal equation" plus many things that are neither Ramakrishna nor Vivekananda. But, for the present, interested as I am chiefly in Ramakrishna I may ignore these larger considerations and partially accept Vivekananda's modesty and humility (although not his wholesale self-effacement) as the basis of my knowledge about Ramakrishna. This modesty and humility of Vivekananda *vis-à-vis* Ramakrishna is, let me observe *en passant*, quite genuine and honest. For me the supreme consideration tonight is that, in any case, Ramakrishna is to be discovered in the personality and life's work of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda, as you know, did many things but there is one item which I wish to emphasize tonight and that item is the fact that he left India and crossed over to the other world,—not the other world of theologians and metaphysicians—I mean to the trans-Atlantic world, America.

“Lo there's America newly arisen,
To swallow the universe she maketh
attempt!
Restless has she grown through her
innate might,
Her *hu-humkar* yells cause the earth
to quake.
Disembowel she would the globe, as
it were,
And reshape it fresh at her own sweet
will.”

This is the U.S.A. in the Bengali poet Hemchandra Banerji's imagination as embodied in his soul-stirring verses on Young India (c. 1886). It is to this all-risking and all-seizing America, this new world of creative energists and all-assimilative men and women, that Vivekananda weads his way (1893). To this continent of self-conscious demolitions and reconstructions he swims

across, so to say, in his poverty and in his yellow robe³.

When you ask me what is Ramakrishna, my answer is that every activity of Vivekananda's is Ramakrishna personified. Ramakrishna, then, is Vivekananda's voyage to America. Vivekananda was not invited. He was at the time unknown and untried even in India, nay, in Bengal—in the world of science, philosophy, spirituality or social service. But he ventured to present himself to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, perhaps as an unwelcome guest. The Parliament was a vast assembly of several thousand men and women,—philosophers, scientists, theologians, professors of religion and ethics, race-experts, anthropologists, sociologists, and others. To that Congress he made his way. Who counselled or inspired him to make his way? Ramakrishna. That young man found himself face to face with the most varied specimens of world-wide humanity, occidentals as well as representatives of other races, guests and delegates from the invited institutions from all corners of the globe. The combined intelligence of the entire world assembled at Chicago listened to this uninvited and perhaps unwelcome intruder from the banks of the Southern Ganges and was convinced that a new power had arisen in the international sphere and that this new power was Young India. East and West,—philosophers, scientists, middle-class men and women, business magnates, millionaires,—all came into contact with Vivekananda and they had to declare that this young man of 31 had conquered the world. Vivekananda was acclaimed as the world-conqueror for Young India. Young India got a diploma of world conquest in 1893. What, then, is Rama-

krishna? I deliver the following equation, Ramakrishna=world conquest. *Charaiveti* (march on) and *digvijaya* (conquest of the quarters), which had been the facts of Indian culture, Indian arts and sciences, Indian peoples since the days of the Mohenjodarian and Vedic Rishis have at last come back to modern India through Vivekananda, the child of Ramakrishna⁴. Ramakrishna is the *avatar* or God, if you please, for the establishment of Greater India in modern times.

From 1757 down to 1893 for more than a hundred years,—for nearly 140 years, the world had known almost nothing about Indian India, nothing of the creative Hindus and Mussalmans, nothing of Indian culture, nothing of India's constructive energism. In 1893 Vivekananda threw the first bomb-shell that announced to mankind in the two hemispheres, to the men and women of America, of England, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, nay, to the yellows of Japan and China that India was once more to be a power among the powers of the world. Mankind came to realise 1893 as the year No. 1 of a vast empire and to recognize the founder of that empire as Vivekananda. That Indian Empire of modern times has had a brilliant band of strenuous energists as its architects continuously since 1893. You ask me, what is Ramakrishna? My reply: Ramakrishna is the man who started Young India on the career of world-conquest. The evidence? Ask Vivekananda, he knows.

The men and women of India had been known in those days only as slaves, as clerks and coolies, as pariahs to the rest of the world. But the recognition of

³ See "Vivekananda as World-Conqueror" in B. K. Sarkar's *Creative India*, (Lahore, 1937), pp. 669-688.

⁴ See B. K. Sarkar: *Introduction to Hindu Positivism* (Allahabad, 1937). The doctrine of *Charaiveti* is discussed on pp. 60, 103, 110, 149, 184, 390, 451, 459, 465, 469, 572, and of *Digvijaya* on pp. 15, 86, 362, 572 and 623.

Vivekananda by the combined intelligence of Eur-America as a first-class power in 1898 served to elevate enslaved and parianized India to the plane of equality with the conquerors of the world. The Americans and the Englishmen began to feel that from now on they had to treat Indians, however modest they be in clothing, however humble be their huts, however simple be their food, and however negligible be their earnings in dollars or sterling, as men and women on a par with themselves in the world of intellectual and moral values. The Frenchmen and the Germans also commenced realising that they could not look upon Indians all the time as mere learners at the Universities of Paris, Berlin, Oxford and New York. The world of academies, scientific institutes and learned societies began to feel likewise that representatives of India deserved to be invited to the Western universities and seats of higher learning as teachers on terms of equality with the representatives of their own races. Vivekananda is thus the embodiment of the doctrine of equality between India and America, between India and Europe. What, then, is Ramakrishna? Ramakrishna is a spirit of challenge to the combined intellect of Europe and America, to the superiority-neurosis of the Western world. He is the spirit of defiance against the world domination as established by white men and women, against the chauvinism of albinocracy. He is the embodiment of resistance against all sorts of slavery, willing or unwilling, forced upon the teeming millions of Asia. The emancipation of Asia from the thraldom of Eur-America is the message of Ramakrishna, as delivered in and through Vivekananda, the only creation, the only child, as I say,—the last and the first work of Ramakrishna.

The *status quo* in the relations between

East and West was subverted by Vivekananda in 1898. Equality with the world-powers was tasted by Young India, and the Indian freedom movement was ushered into being. This self-consciousness of the Indian people has been broadening down from individuals to individuals, from groups to groups. Vivekananda's achievement marks the beginning of Young India's serious and cumulative ambitions in the fields of modern science, industry, machinism and technocracy. It is here that we encounter the initial inspirations for the glorious *Swadeshi* revolution of 1905. What, then, is Ramakrishna, if the categories, God and *avatar*, are to be employed? I declare that Ramakrishna is the God or *avatar* of mankind for the Indian Empire that has been unfolding itself in diverse spheres slowly but steadily during the twentieth century within and outside the limits of the Ramakrishna Mission. This Empire is functioning in spite of the poverty of the Indian people. It is functioning notwithstanding the absence of facilities and in the teeth of world-encompassing opposition from the *status quo*.

Young India's men and women of thought and action have been winning recognition in China, in Indonesia, in Japan, in Turkey, in Iran, in Egypt, in the two Americas, in Europe, indeed, wherever there is somebody to take interest in industry and science, politics and culture, manhood and freedom. Power is being conquered by Young India at home and abroad inch by inch or dose by dose. Young India is being silently and even openly recognized as a power among the powers of the world by all those scientists, philosophers, men of letters, statesmen and peace-workers who have the eyes to see the rejuvenation of races and the establishment of new world-orders. What, then, is Ramakrishna? Ramakrishna is identical with

the conquest of power by the young, the new and the untried, with the conquest of power by the poor and the pariah. If you want to create a God or *avatar* for these human activities, I

should say, finally, that Ramakrishna, the prophet of the clerk and the coolie, the apostle of the poor and the pariah, is the God or *avatar* of the conquest of power.

INDIA'S ROLE IN THE NEW WORLD-ORDER

BY SANTOSH DATTA,

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Those who are in the habit of studying the trend of events with a spiritual outlook must have noticed that a resurrection of a spiritual ideal unifying the human race is almost imminent. The world is in the throes of a rebirth. There is a message somewhere, for the fallen children of humanity groping in the dark and engaged in suicidal strife for narrow selfish ends. There is a message somewhere in India not only for Indians, but also for the world for a spiritual empire broad-based on spiritual republicanism. There is very little doubt that modern civilisation is heading towards a crash, and behind the smoke and thunder of the guns, behind the agonised cry of the brutalised children of humanity there is a message of the Ruler of the Universe heralding the dawn of a new era in human history.

It requires no prophet to predict that India will have to take up the role of a high priest in the new order of things that will inevitably evolve out of the ruins of the devastated world.

Whatever may be said to the contrary the true self of India is that of a naked fakir, an eternal pilgrim with the staff of a Shramana travelling across the sands of Time. The smouldering fire of renunciation that burns eternally on her soil will light up the gloom that has enveloped the world and make humanity

realise the mission that she has in store for them.

Age after age, God has graced India with His presence, not for the benefit of Indians alone, but for the welfare of humanity at large. It is a queer fact that India has been His playground for times without number. It is significant that above all other countries in the world He had chosen India as the arena of His mysterious play. In India every stone has a chronicle. Her dust is sacred. Her mountains, rivers and caves have an air of mysticism. At every step of your journey whether through cities or jungles, temples rear their heads. Gods in Indian temples are not deaf and dumb. They hear the prayers of the devotees and speak to them in their hour of trial.

By tradition, by her culture, by her sacrifice and renunciation India has thoroughly equipped herself for the position of the High Priest of all humanity. India has no sect, no community, no narrow nationalism, no particular favourite doctrine, and no pet theory. She calls humanity as the children of Immortality. She stands for Truth. She stands for God.

Humanity will have to look to India in its hour of tribulation, Indians themselves will have to rediscover their soul, and dig out the message of Peace and Liberation buried in the sands of Time.

Indians themselves will have to fall back on their own culture, the priceless heritage of their fore-fathers, when all other western 'isms' have failed, as ready-made political weapons. The yogis and sadhus in Indian jungles and caves keep

the light of the torch burning. They have kept the sacrificial fire burning and are waiting silently for the day when the rightful owners of their lost heritage shall come and possess them. They are anxiously waiting to deliver their goods.

GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY SWAMI DESHIKANANDA

I

Various ideas of God have been evolved from the early Vedic period down to our own times. It is said that the Vedic man looked at the phenomena of nature, such as rain, fire and wind and worshipped them as Indra, Agni and Vayu. The regular return of seasons and the rise of the sun and the moon made early man think that there was some intelligent power behind all these and he worshipped that power as God. The propitiation of the departed, like the tribal chief or the leading headman of the community, led ultimately to the worship of God. As physical objects are generally governed by physical laws, early man was driven to think that there must reside, outside nature, some world-power that designs all these things with some purpose. This fact also made men worship the Designer or the world-builder as God because he recognised some intelligence behind all these. Turning back over a series of cause and effect, early man thought that in the very beginning God created the world; since everything that was found in this world was made of some material, early man began to enquire about the essence of which the world is made and he thought that That must be God and worshipped it as such.

In our own times theistic religions

such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam and all the dualist sects of Hinduism such as Vaishnavism and Shaivism, all give us a personal God with whom it is said to be possible for votaries to come into direct and intimate relations. This faith arises because of man's inability to understand the problems which face him in every day life. A power in heaven, it is believed, would help man to secure after death his needs and wants which he could not gratify here on earth. This is the heaven of the theists.

Influenced as we are, from our very childhood, by traditions and scriptures, which paint and depict our God in certain forms, we naively believe them. We also superimpose all human attributes and all excellences on such a Being, calling him God. This is what is known as anthropomorphism. God is not only fearful; He is friendly. He made the world and also created us. Himself being just and righteous, He demands righteousness from us. He responds to our prayers as our parents respond to our entreaties. We also honour Him with such attributes as Absolute, Eternal, Infinite, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. These are some of the qualities of the God of our theistic religions. Such are the Gods as imagined by us according to our books and traditions. But we

know little, nay, we are quite in the dark about what God actually is.

The mystics of all ages have experienced, felt and communed with their God and have had their satisfactions. But what we want to know is whether this God which the various mystics communed with and drew their inspirations from is God as He is. For when the word God is uttered each mystic, each follower of a certain religion, thinks of Him in his own way. And we know that the various mystics speak differently of their experiences and that no two of them agree. For example, the one word God, when uttered by followers of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and other 'isms', conveys different meanings, for each of them thinks and imagines his God as handed down to him by traditions and scriptures. We do know that these ideas also change from time to time. Men of old were indeed great for their times but their logic and findings cannot be held in the same esteem now. We know that the causes of eclipses, winds and rains ascribed in the early days are quite different from what we know of them to-day. Sacrifices of men and animals were made to Gods but we know that our Gods are now deprived of these sacrifices. So, we depict God as we like and give Him what we think best. We know little of God as he is, other than the anthropomorphic ideas we have projected. What God actually is will be taken up later on, as our main topic.

II

Let us now turn to the problem of evil—why should evil exist if at all, and whether it is justified. The ready-made replies that the founders of traditional religions have given us are: that evil

was created by Satan, the Opponent of God; that in some cases God himself doles out sufferings to the votaries with a view to chastising them and teaching them a lesson and thus ultimately to bring them back to the path of righteousness. If these whims and caprices of God are questioned, the questioners are snubbed by the fanatic followers and told that the doubters would meet with dire suffering in hells. Why should there be differences between man and man in this world under a just and merciful God? For the theistic religions tell us that God is always merciful, just and benevolent. Why should an all-merciful God who is omnipotent treat his children differently? The story of the fall of man from the Garden of Eden as depicted in the Genesis is only an anthropomorphic attempt at tackling these serious problems. It passes our understanding why a just and all-merciful God should punish the innocent children for the sin of their forefathers millennia after millennia.

The Hindu theistic sects and Semitic religions declare that God has created some to be happy and others to be miserable. This is the explanation which is generally given. The followers of religions can neither question nor struggle against the cruel fiat of God, whom they are asked to worship and adore. They are told that they are helpless. This is what is known as the theory of predestination which has made most of them fatalists. Some of the theistic religions also declare that man is born for the first time and when he shuffles off his mortal coil he ceases to be for ever. This is also inexplicable and unreasonable, for if all are born together for the first time they should exhibit equal capabilities and powers, and uniform tastes and inclinations. But our experience tells us the contrary. If these differences are created by God

at the time of creation, He is not worthy of his status and position.

Again, if God has created the world and sustains it and supervises it, whom else shall we hold responsible for all the misery and sufferings? Who created the evils? If God is infinitely good, as we are told, why did he create evils? If Satan created evil, then he becomes more powerful than God, the Lord! What becomes of God's omnipotence then? If He could not prevent Satan from creating sin, evil, pain and suffering, he cannot be called an omnipotent God. If He could do it and yet does not do it, or did not do it, we have no other alternative but to say that that God is not good and merciful, as we are asked to believe.

The only scientific explanation for the solution of this problem is that offered by Vedanta. It is the Law of Karma. Why does evil exist and what is the way out? The answer which a Vedantin gives is that it is due to every man's past actions. He has himself done it and he himself can undo it, if he so wills. These questions are not scientifically or reasonably solved by the theologians of the theistic religions. All that they ask us to do is not to question but to pray and die, so that we will be rewarded in heaven after our death. These are the meaningless hoary myths which are handed down through generations. Vedanta, on the other hand, teaches us that if one is born a king, and another a beggar, it must be due to their respective past actions. It, therefore, follows that our past actions determine the present life. We are the total effect of what we have done. "As we sow, so we reap". It is said in the Upanishads that "As one does and one acts, so he becomes; by doing good he becomes good and by doing evil he becomes evil". If, therefore, 'what we are' is the result of 'what we have

been', it is but logical to say that what we want to be, we can make and achieve. Nothing happens here accidentally. The cause and sequence theory as we see around us is rigorously true. This law of Karma need not drive us to fatalism as many of our critics would have us believe. For each of us is his own architect and can make or mar his future. The Vedantins absolve God and free him from the position of a cruel creator of evil and sin.

Why does the problem of evil exist, and what is the way out? These are the legitimate questions which we hear from various quarters: Evil exists because we ourselves are the cause for it and have sown its seeds; so none other than we are responsible for it. It is not logical to say that we are to suffer, because our forefathers committed sins at the dawn of human history. Neither is it fair and reasonable to think that an all-merciful and just God could create misery for us and afterwards enjoy our suffering the misery.

"Why does man commit sin?" asks Arjuna. Krishna answers that it is due to desire and anger. So if we sin through desire and anger, the way out of this problem is to control our desire. When asked by Arjuna, Krishna further says that desires originate from attachment to the senses. To control desire is, therefore, to control our senses. If it is desire that has brought us here and makes us suffer this misery and unhappiness, then it is the control of the desire alone that can make us free and happy. "What can you do, O God! if what I have done is bad", says Purandharadas. None can help us, not even gods, unless we ourselves undo what we have done. We are suffering and dying every moment of our life because of our desire to possess this thing and the other; and when we don't achieve or attain the object of our

desire we are most miserable and unhappy. If we cannot have it here and now, we have to be born anew to have it or to enjoy it. We, therefore, desire, because of our ignorance of our true nature. We think that we are the body, mind and the senses and that we are so many separate individuals and that we want to possess and enjoy so many things. We little know that we are the embodiment of all our selfish hankerings and desires and that we ourselves are the source of all our happiness.

The Vedic dictum therefore is that "when all such desires that dwell in one's heart or mind are gone, then he, having been mortal, becomes immortal, and attains Brahman here in this very body." So when desires leave us, we attain immortality. This is what is generally known as Moksha or freedom from desire, or liberation from ignorance. Identification of ourselves with our body, senses and mind is due to ignorance. Man is mortal because of his identification with the body and senses under the influence of his desires and past actions. If desires leave him, he will have no more attachment to the body. He knows his Immortality. Because of his attachment to the body, he desires so many things for the gratification of the body and senses. From this we should conclude that our misery and suffering are solely due to our identification with the body and the senses, which were themselves acquired by us as a result of our past actions and desires.

III

This consideration of 'God and the problem of evil' naturally prepares the way for a metaphysical inquiry, and it inevitably takes us to the ultimate philosophic value of the human Experience of the Highest. The question is indissolubly bound up with 'who or what I am'.

That which identifies itself with the body and mind and the senses is known as "I". This 'I' which was and is suffering is not our true self or our nature. It is only the body-idea or the 'ego' which is changing every moment of our life. This 'I' lasts so long as the identification of body and senses lasts. It is but a bundle of sensations which the mind and senses have of the body and the objective world. This 'I' or the 'ego' is as much an object of perception as any gross object is. The only difference is that the gross objects are outside the body and the 'I' is in the body. The constant changing of this 'I' or the 'ego' is clearly brought home to us in our dream and deep sleep. It is within the experience of all of us that when we dream we are mostly other than what we, in our waking state, call 'I'. In deep sleep the 'I' entirely disappears, for we are not conscious that we are sleeping. If we are conscious of our 'I' during sleep, it is no more a sleep. While awake also, we must have often experienced self-forgetfulness when we were deeply engrossed in any thought or object of appreciation. This fact that the 'I' constantly changes, comes and goes, and is an object of our consciousness or awareness is borne out by the psychologists and the scientists. "Alone in the silence of the night and on a score of thoughtful occasions we have demanded, can this self, so vividly central to my universe, so greedily possessive of the world, ever cease to be? Without it surely there is no world at all! And yet, this conscious self dies nightly when you sleep, and we cannot trace the stages by which in its beginnings it crept to awareness of its own existence." (*The Science of Life* by H. G. Wells, G. P. Wells and Julian Huxley—P. 852). "The ego is first and foremost a body-ego, it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself

the projection of a surface it is first and foremost a body-ego". (S. Freud—*The Ego and the Id*). The Buddhists also said that 'I' is an aggregate of skandhas and it is not only unreal, 'I' but is changing every moment. But they did not know that that consciousness which knows the bundle of skandhas or that which is constantly changing is the real 'I'. For change can be known only by that which never changes. Then what is our real nature or which is the real 'I'? Our true nature or real 'I' is that consciousness which sees or knows the coming or going of the ego or the 'I' in waking, dream and deep sleep. Therefore this fundamental contentless consciousness or awareness is the true background not only of our own nature but of the whole universe. This is clearly known to us from deep sleep; for when we get up from deep sleep the first thing we are aware of, is our own body and the next are the objects around us.

IV

Then, again, the question still is what is the personal God of the theistic religions? A personal God or extra-cosmic God is given to the devotees of all dualistic faiths by their founders for the purpose of worship in their early stages of life. However much a man may be intellectual he cannot comprehend or grasp the higher truths unless he purifies himself by a good ethical life. This sort of worship therefore not only helps the devotee to purify his mind but serves him as a kindergarten of the religious life. So, worship appeals to most of mankind. But this should not be construed to mean that this is the highest; the Upanishadic dictum is "While he who worships another God thinking 'He is one and I am another' does not know. He is like an animal to the Gods". The Vedas also say that,

"There is no difference whatever in It. He goes from death to death, who sees difference, as it were, in It." So the votary of religion in the last resort and finally should seek its *terra firma* in the ultimate Atman, Truth. The God whom he was worshipping outside of him somewhere above the clouds, as one or many, finally should resolve into the One which is within him. The votaries of other religions, when asked where God is, may look up to the sky or point to the West. But a Hindu, if asked the same question, would touch his heart and say that his God is within himself. We therefore see how the extra-cosmic Gods which early man worshipped came to be identified with God in one's self, as knowledge gradually advanced. The Rishis have therefore sung that "He the eternal among non-eternals, the intelligence of the intelligent, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many—those wise men, who perceive Him as existing in their own self, to them belongs the eternal peace and to none else."

The question still may arise: Is there no value or use for the theistic religions and their Gods? The simple answer is that they have a very great ethical value for nine hundred and ninety nine out of every thousand of us. They help us to live a good life without hating each other. They are not only of great value for the vast majority but are indispensable for a pure life. So long as man is not able to control his passions and desires, theistic religions are very good correctives. The votaries are thus gradually led from stage to stage. Prayers and fasts therefore help us to a pure and righteous life and also gradually lead us to the highest moral and ethical life here on earth.

One may become God himself, for he is in essence divine. If God is known,

He is no more a God and it is certain that He should disappear in our deep sleep along with 'I' or self. So the Vedic pronouncement is that God as He is cannot be expressed in words, nay, even the mind returns baffled without attaining It. Hence the great Buddha, when asked to define God, kept silent as it is beyond all expression. It has been at best defined in the Upanishads as 'not this', 'not this'. Well has it been said by Yajnavalkya, "Through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the knower?" "It is never known, but 'is' this Knower". As God is the very essence of our being he cannot be brought down to the subject-object relationship.

God, as He is, can, therefore, be realised by becoming one with Him, that is to say, when the identification with external objects and body and mind ceases, we become That. The relation of identity with our true self or being, which is also God as He is, has not to be established or attained from elsewhere, for, it is already there. For example, everyone is experiencing that identity with his own being always in sleep. For in sleep every one goes to his original and true nature. But he is not aware of it, owing to ignorance. The Vedas do not enjoin that this identity with our being or self should be 'established'. In the Upanishads it is said that true knowledge alone can bring about this identity of the self with Brahman. And this knowledge of realising the thing as it is, is what is known as Vastutantra—i.e., knowing the thing as it is, or the self as it is. All that we have to do is to remove the false or erroneous knowledge that we are the body, the mind, etc. True knowledge is realised when this false knowledge is removed; when the false identification with our body, mind and

senses is removed, the true self stands revealed.

We know that most men are not fitted for this kind of enquiry into the nature of the self and, as has been said above, nine hundred and ninety nine out of every thousand are therefore asked to follow religion and devotional practices of various kinds such as worship, rituals, and Yoga according to their mental make-up. All rituals, upasanas and Yogas lead the votary to purification of the mind: "Devotees in the path of work perform action . . . forsaking attachment, for the purification of the heart." And "Let him practice Yoga for the purification of the heart" (Gita V-11 and VI-12). One therefore should not jump to the conclusion that upasanas are useless or unnecessary. He has to pass through the probationary period of an Adhikari before he can think of becoming a student of Vedanta. This period is known as the student-period or the Sadhana period, where he should practise the sadhana-chatushtaya. Sadhana-chatushtaya qualifies the aspirant for the knowledge of Truth. It should not be confused with intellectual acumen or knowledge of shastras or the rich vocabulary of scholars. Scholarship will only lead to a little enjoyment among the learned, but it will not lead to the knowledge of Truth. That is why sadhana-chatushtaya is prescribed as preconditions for a student of Vedanta. They enable him to have a peaceful, steady, unbiassed mind, which would strive after the knowledge of Truth. Faraday who is quoted by Patrick in his *Introduction to Philosophy* says, "The Philosopher should be a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He should not be biassed by appearances, have no favourite hypotheses, be of no school, and in doctrines

have no masters. He should not be a respecter of persons, but of things. Truth should be his primary object." Unless and until one is of this frame of mind, one cannot aspire to be a student of Vedanta, nay, to realise his self, God or Truth, which is the very goal of life. One should be as guileless, as innocent as a child without the least trace of 'I' or ego in him. "Ye shall be like children before ye enter into the kingdom of heaven" says Christ. When one has, therefore, gone through the practices of Yogas and sadhana-chatushtaya he becomes a proper student or Adhikari for Vedanta. The acid test is the life of the aspirant.

To know Self, God or Truth one has to enquire into the nature of Self and non-self. It is ignorance which has covered the Real from us. This wrong knowledge can only be removed by right knowledge. It is said that our misery, Bandha, is due to our wrong knowledge, Avidya, that we are the

body and the senses. This can only be removed by the right knowledge, Samyag-jnâna, that we are the one Self without a second and nothing but Self. This knowledge is not like the knowledge of objects of perception, but knowing the thing or the Self as It is. This Vastu-tantra is contrasted with knowing the object with our mind, or what is called Purushatantra. The Self or God as He is, is not separate from us, as it is our very Being. But we assume or imagine that to be separate from us, or is non-attained, because of our ignorance of It. It is therefore, clear that the non-attainment of Self or God as He is, is but due to ignorance. The attainment of It is simply the removal of the obstructing ignorance by Knowledge. It is like the recognition of the tenth man who was all the while there, but who was omitted in the count by every one of the ten! The Vedas therefore definitely declare that "Being but Brahman, He is merged in Brahman."

Silent rushes the swift Lord
 Through ruined systems still restored,
 Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
 Plants with worlds the wilderness;
 Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
 Apples of Eden ripe tomorrow.
 House and tenant go to ground,
 Lost in God, in Godhead found.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

WHY FAR AWAY

BY A RECLUSE

Many do not care for God. They have no thirst for the religious life; the longing for a higher ideal has not awakened in them. Again, there are many who follow the traditional way of religious practices in order to be religious; they follow prescribed form of worship, undergo much asceticism and hardship, but they have no clear idea as to what they seek. Some become 'religious' in order to be happy after death: they have suffered much in the present life, and they do not want the repetition of the same thing in the life to come, if there is such a life at all. In order to avoid suffering in a future life, they go to church, worship in temples, perform fasts and prayers. Some are more gross in their religious ideals. They pray and perform religious practices in order to get some earthly end—worldly prosperity, health for themselves or for some near relatives.

Such being the case, God is far away from even those who pass as religious persons, those who are outwardly religious. It seems so very tragic, that people undergo so much hard labour in order to build up their spiritual life, nevertheless they do not make much progress; the realisation of God which is the only aim of a religious life, is far, far away from them in spite of all their religious disciplines.

Still, if we look into the scriptures or study the sayings of saints or men of God, it appears that the realisation of God is not very difficult. "Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you"—these are the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible. The

words are clear, unequivocal—there is no mistaking about the sense of the statement. But yet, of the innumerable persons who are earnest about their religious life, how many can say that they have got the direct vision of God, that God is as much alive to them as is any living being? With most men God is simply a name—a word; nothing more than that. God is a word to millions of people. He does not enter into their inner life. Even with those few who outwardly hanker after God, God is not a living presence—He is, to all intents and purposes, a dead entity or was not alive at any time. What is the cause of this anomaly?

It is true, if you seek God you will find Him, if you ask for the vision of God you will be vouchsafed that, if you knock at the door of God, the kind Father will open the door to you. But the thing is, even many devotees fly at a tangent, they do not seek God directly; they have not the courage to think that they will realise God and that they have a claim to that. They have a timid view of the religious life—they are not bold enough to storm the citadel of God. Sometime, they start with the thought that they will realise God, but they lie down on the way in their great journey, and console themselves with the thought that God will be realised in some distant future. Has not the scripture said, one should be persevering, if God is not realised, even through hundreds of lives? They are, however, satisfied with the thought that realisation of God can wait for hundreds of lives, but they do not become persevering according to the direction of the scriptures.

Their contentment is simply a cloak for their inertia, idleness and lukewarm feelings. They have no eye to detect that, for they do not want to see their weakness.

If God is a loving father, He must be impartial. It cannot be that God was kind to a devotee thousands of years ago in the remote past and since then He has closed His doors to all mankind. If God was realised in the deserts of Arabia or in the wilderness of Palestine, He can be realised even now—this very moment. Every devotee has a claim upon the love of God; what is needed is that he should assert his birthright. If you, the heir to a rich father, walk about like a wretched beggar, who can help it? You may say if God is all kind, why does He allow His children to be so miserable? Well, it is none of our business to find out an explanation for the conduct of God—good or bad. On our side, we know, it is a folly to forgo our right to the love of God and court misery. All our miseries are thus of our own creation.

Believe that the realisation of God is possible, and you will have it. Much depends on self-confidence. Faith in oneself is absolutely necessary for success in earthly life; it is equally necessary in religious life. If you want religion, ask for the direct vision of God; long for the living presence of God; don't be satisfied with anything short of that. Because you are so easily satisfied, God plays tricks with you.—He is far away from you. If God be all-pervading,

God is present at the very spot where you are ignoring God.

The lives of the saints and prophets are simply examples before us. Their words and sayings are true, very true. Because you do not pay sufficient attention to them, because you do not ponder deeply over their meanings, you do not reap the full measure of benefit from their examples. But know it for certain, the value of religious life is nil—nay, less than nothing, if you do not realise God, if you cannot feel His presence as a living entity. If you know that, you will pant for the vision of God just as a child longs for his home when overtaken by night in an out-of-the-way place. And once you have that kind of hankering, God will no longer be so remote from you. When you are seized with that earnestness, in a trice you will realise God. God has put on a mask over His face. At any time He can put it off.

So be bold in your desire, firm in your resolve and sincere in your hankering. If there come a time, in your life, when it is impossible for you to live without the realisation of God, God will no longer be far away. So long as you are satisfied with anything other than God, God will not be perceived by you. God is a jealous Being. One cannot serve God and the world together. Here the word 'world' means anything other than God. So giving up every other thing, seek Him and Him only. And you are sure to reach the goal.

Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

—Shakespeare

THE VENERABLE LOUIS OF BLOIS AND HIS WRITINGS

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

[The paper gives an account of the life and writings of the great mystic and heroic monk who consecrated himself to the task of reforming the monastic life of his day from within.—Ed.]

I

The venerable Louis of Blois, descendant of a highly aristocratic family, was born in the Spanish Netherlands in October, 1506, in the ancestral castle of his mother's family of Donstienne in the Hainault. His parents were the Count of Blois and Champagne and Catherine of Brabancon, who belonged to the highest aristocratic circles of Belgium. Louis had four sisters and five brothers. The four sisters became canonesses at Andennes-sur-Meuse and Moustier-sur-Sambre, but the youngest of them later renounced her canonry in order to live in a small cell near the monastery of Liessies under the direct guidance of her brother. All the members of the family showed great nobility of character and love for spiritual things.

Louis himself was educated at the Court of Brussels together with Prince Charles, who in later years became the well-known emperor Charles V., both being tutored by Hadrian Florentius, the future Pope Hadrian VI.

At the early age of fourteen the call from God to renounce the world and all the pleasures that might await him and that his social position seemed to promise came to Louis. His was to be a life of the highest consecration to the Divine, and he joined the Order of St. Benedict in the Monastery of Liessies, the name of which, being a mutilation of the Latin 'laetitia' (joy) or the French 'liesse ici' (here is joy) was, as

it were, the very symbol of his future life, one of deep inward peace and joyfulness in spite of all the struggles he had to face during his life-long endeavour to bring about the needed reforms in the monastic life of his day. In this he was a close spiritual brother to Saint Teresa of Jesus, who also dedicated her whole life and activity to the unrelenting struggle against the laxity of life in the religious orders of their day.

The abbot of Louis of Blois, Dom Gilles Gippus, being struck by the exceptional straightforwardness of the boy's character soon made him his coadjutor, and after his death Louis of Blois succeeded him in his office at the age of barely 24 years. From this time onward he dedicated himself wholly to the duties of his position and to untiring literary work, slowly bringing about a marvellous reformation and revival in his own monastery of Liessies and from there influencing other monasteries and leading them back to a stricter observance of their vows and to a deeper and truer understanding of the evanescence and will-o'-the-wisp-like nature of the tinsels and baubles of physical life.

When his friend, Charles V., offered him the rich abbey of St. Martin of Tournai he refused to accept it, just as he later on refused the archbishopric of Cambrai, wishing, as he did, to consecrate himself to the great task of reforming the monastic life of his day from within.

He was a helper to all those souls who sought guidance in the arduous paths of darkness and aridness they had to traverse in their eternal quest before reaching the healing light of the presence of God and final union with their Beloved. For many years he worked out the reforms he wanted to introduce, always first trying to apply the rules practically in the life of his own monastery, and only after having tested them in prolonged daily experience embodying them in his statutes. His reforms were publicly approved by Pope Paul III., in his bull of April 8th, 1545.

Louis of Blois really succeeded in changing the conduct and attitude of his monks so greatly that he was able to say on his death-bed, "You all know how highly esteemed and revered our monastery is. Act in such a way that this good repute is kept up."

His death was caused by what at first seemed nothing but a very slight accident. He got a small wound when striking his leg against a beam in a building under construction, and in consequence of this he died on the 7th January, 1566, at Liessies after having served his monastery and brethren for 35 years in deep love and wisdom. He had become a guide to true spiritual inwardness for many a soul, inside and outside the monastery, through his numerous practical treatises on the life of the spiritual aspirant and true monk with all its difficulties and duties, all its uncertainties and waverings, all its doubts and aridity, and with its ultimate blissful consummation. Of him might well be said in the words of the Bible, "I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done. And I will be little in my own eyes", for he had a deep horror of pride and self-assertion and of all forms of worldliness and impurity.

Coming to the writings of Louis of

Blois we find the decided influence of St. John Chrysostomos, Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Lorenzo Giustiniani, Tauler, Seuse, Jan van Ruysbroeck and St. Catherine of Siena in them, but his greatest favourite seems to have been St. Gertrude and her teachings. In spite of that the advice given in his works is more than anything else the ripe fruit of his very own inner experience, mellowed by close observation of human nature with all its weaknesses and imperfections, whether inside or outside the monasteries. He stood, as it were, on the border between the Middle Ages and the new times that were coming in Europe, being himself the representative of Mediaeval Asceticism and the heir of the still undiluted Mediaeval spiritual traditions which were to be overthrown by the great tidal waves of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the forerunners of the present-day materialism and fossilized, lifeless religious dogma, though glowing at the time with life and vigour and bursting the rigid bonds of doctrinal assertions by their overwhelming vitality.

In many of his writings Louis of Blois stresses the short intense ejaculatory form of prayer, to be practised in the course of the day or while busy with one's work. According to him this kind of practice helps in creating the habit of being and remaining fully attentive to the inner presence of God at all times and in all places.

It is a great pity that, especially in his writings against 'Heretics', his insight into the deeper workings of the Divine has become clouded to such an extent that he approaches to dogmatic fanaticism so often found in 'Christian', but never in Christ's teachings and doctrines. He did not possess that deep inner tenderness for all life which pro-

tected St. Antonio of Padua from the worst forms of attack in an earlier age, and which fills the pages of St. Hildegard of Bingen's mystical writings with such poetic intuitive realisation of the oneness of Life.

St. Antonio, the great follower of St. Francis, in spite of his devoting much time and energy to the campaign against the Albigenses, the Patarins and the Catharists, the representatives of the reformatory tendencies of his day beyond the boundaries of the Church of Rome and even of Christianity, in the South of France and Italy, refused to take part in the bloody and treacherous 'crusade' against the Albigenses which will ever remain one of the worst blots on the name of institutional Christianity. Being the greater psychologist and the truer Christian, he tried to convert his opponents through love, through open discussion, and, above all, through the example of the self-sacrificing life and true Christian spirit of the Franciscan friar, and those who could not be reconverted to Christianity he always wished to leave to the hands of God and not to those of human brutes piously wearing the Cross on their garments, masquerading as humble followers of Christ.

Much of the beauty of the writings of Louis of Blois is marred by dogmatic narrowness as soon as he touches upon the question of the rigid assertions and claims of his Church. But in spite of this very human frailty and clouding of his insight, wherever doctrinal controversies are concerned, he was and still can be a faithful guide to many, turning their hearts to the highest Divine Love and to a deifying simplicity, and thereby sweetening the dryness and desolation of the stage of purgation during which the beginner has to cleanse himself from all the

gross accumulated by his sensual self, and which has been built into inveterate and often even quite unperceived habits. Louis of Blois himself cared very little for knowledge and philosophy, notwithstanding his well-grounded education, and came, as the years rolled on, to concentrate more and more on love and perfect selflessness, feeding with deeds of charity and sacrifice a glorious flame, which was to consume all the hindrances standing in the path of man on his way to God, and making these his daily hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

Surveying his life and work one is reminded of the beautiful thoughts expressed by Gregory of Nyssa that the souls are, as it were, vessels and containers, rooms, wherein to store up the good, which go on expanding with the quantity of that which is being poured into them, it being the characteristic of Divine Goodness ceaselessly to give strength and greatness, at the same time making him who is nourished by it become more and more capable of taking in the good, until a greatness is attained that surpasses all limits of growth. So all through the years of his life, the natural love and kindness of Louis of Blois steadily increased and expanded together with the keen insight into the practical needs of all those entrusted to his care and guidance. And the greatest recommendation to his advice and instructions lies in the example of his own life of spotless purity and self-surrender to the Highest.

His writings were greatly appreciated in his own times and translated into many of the most important European languages. They were recommended by St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis of Sales. Loyola himself was in correspondence with Louis of Blois and ordered that his works should be read aloud to the novices of the Jesuit Order.

All his writings have been preserved, and they can be divided into four classes:— Prayers, Treatises on the Spiritual Life, Writings against Heretics,—the greatest blot on his otherwise spotless and loving character—and finally Extracts and Translations from the work of the Fathers and other mystic writers.

Several of his treatises on spiritual life are particularly addressed to beginners, which makes them so highly practical, others embrace the whole of Christian life and aspiration from the very first steps to the highest Divine Union, but even in these the practical training of the novice is never lost sight of.

The works are all written between 1538 and 1562. In all of them Louis of Blois has tried to lead the aspirant to Christ direct through mental prayer and contemplation, and especially to that Humanity of Christ which was so dear to St. Gertrude the Great, who, as has been said, was his great favourite, and whose doctrine and style have influenced him more than those of any other.

II

Of his writings the most important and popular one is the 'Speculum Monachorum' (Mirror of Monks), written under the pseudonym of 'Dacryanus' in 1538, and meant as a preparation for the coming monastic reforms the author had in mind.

The following passages may give the reader an idea of the general trend of this work, which, although it was meant exclusively for monks, can be of great profit to the general reader also.

He says,—

"What I recommend to you more than anything else is to think often and seriously of the end which has led you to the monastery: to become dead to the world and to yourself so as to live for God alone. Therefore apply yourself

to that for which you have come here. Learn courageously to despise everything of the senses, to vanquish yourself energetically, to renounce yourself to your own benefit. Make haste to mortify your passions and vicious affection. Make an effort to repress the mad vagaries of your mind. Try to control your lassitude, discouragement and the disgust of your heart that feels its shortcomings. This must be your glorious fight and your salutary test.

"No cowardice! Arise! Deliver yourself up wholly! Do not spare yourself; it will be to your own misfortune! That is what God demands of you. You are called a monk. See that you really are that of which you bear the name. Do the works of a monk. The struggle against faults and their annihilation, it is this which must be the object of all your assiduous solicitude. May depraved nature, may the ardour of passions and the desires of the flesh, may the seductions of sensuality always find you fully armed!"

"Understand me well. If pride, braggardism, vainglory, personal complacency are given license to prevail against reason, if you dare to follow shamelessly the promptings of your own mind and to have nothing but contempt for all that is humble and simple, then you are not truly a monk."

"If, as much as the measure of your strength permits, you do not throw far from you envy, hate, harshness, indignation, if you do not put away temerarious, suspicious, puerile complaints, perfidious murmurings, then you are not a monk."

"If some dissension arises which puts you in strong contestation with some other person, and if you do not try to be reconciled and do not forgive immediately, whatever may have been the injury done to you, but instead seek to be revenged or cling to your sentiments

of discord, no longer cherishing sincere affection, if this even carries you so far as to show outward signs of disaffection, or if he who injured you finds himself in need, and you do not seize the opportunity to come to his aid, then you are not a monk, nay, you are not even a Christian. God holds you in abomination."

"If you neglect your interior, busying yourself solely with the exterior, and this but through a kind of habitual lukewarmness, giving to the work of Religion not your heart, but only your body, then you are not a monk."

"If you leave solitude and silence, taking pleasure in idle talks and inordinate laughter, then you cease to be a monk."

"If, putting your joy in the company of worldly people, you wish to run hither and thither outside the monastery through town and borough, then you are not a monk."

"If, holding cheap the commandments of Holy Religion, however small they be, you voluntarily transgress them, if, in short, you seek in the monastery anything else but God alone and do not strive with all your might towards a perfect life, then you are no longer a monk."

"Thus, as I said, in order really to be that of which you are given the name, and not to wear the monk's dress in vain, do the works of a monk. Arm yourself against yourself, fight against yourself, and, in so far as this is possible to you, become the victor and trample yourself under foot."

"That which you must try to attain above all is freedom, unalterable constancy and purity of the heart. You must renounce all self-seeking in order always to remain before God in peace and serenity. No other practice, however troublesome and difficult it be, is

worth this in the eyes of God. Consequently leave all that could become an obstacle to this holy freedom, however spiritual and useful it may appear, as much as obedience permits you to do so. Yea, apply yourself to reject all restlessness and anxiety of the heart, for this is a hindrance to true peace and perfect trust in God and to all spiritual progress."

"Do not abandon yourself at any time to a pernicious idleness, this being the perdition of souls. Avoid even all unnecessary and idle occupations. I call 'idle' those which do not possess any utility. And do not be surprised at hearing me recommend you to flee all pernicious idleness. There is a repose of which only good can be said:—that of a soul wholly delivered up to God, disengaged from the noise and images of things of sense and which resposes in interior silence and the delightful embraces of its Beloved in a holy quietude. If it be the hand of the Lord that leads you there, then your repose will be happy and fruitful. If not, be always busy, either with reading or meditating or praying or with some serious and absolutely necessary work."

Assuredly, if you but consent to apply yourself resolutely and with great care to holy readings, you will find therein a great charm, and any spiritual subject will soon appear to you full of sweetness and of great delight, so that the habit of supernatural joys will render the contempt of the pleasures of the flesh an easy thing for you, and your mind will marvellously be strengthened in good. In order to merit plucking so precious a fruit, love to read and do so with a wisdom, seeking therein spiritual profit and solace coupled with the love of God, and not the satisfaction of an idle curiosity or superfluous knowledge and science or the pleasantness and elegance of style. For the

Kingdom of God is not in fine speeches, but in the saintliness of life. Nevertheless this elegance, which need not preoccupy you, if it be lacking, should not be despised when it is there, for it also is a gift of God. Receive all as the action of grace, and you shall profit thereby for your salvation."

"And do not be sad if your memory does not retain all that you read or hear that is good. A vessel which is frequently filled with pure water, keeps its cleanness even if the water does not remain in it for long. Just the same happens in the case of a well-disposed soul which receives the dew of the spiritual doctrine often. It may be that it does not stay there for long, but in spite of that it gives and conserves purity for that soul and is pleasing to God. The real profit of your readings lies not in that you learn by heart all the formulas of the doctrine, but in that the doctrine and formulas have their effect on you, that you may find in them the secret of inner purity and of a will determined to put the Divine Commandments into practice."

"Do likewise if the question of fleshly acts arises. Do not allow your thoughts to halt there, but pass on. Your imagination should no more lose its calmness and tranquillity when the act of human procreation is treated of than in the case of any other outward action of man. Tell yourself that marital intercourse is nothing but one of the functions essential to mankind. Pass on as lightly and without greater mystery than if your imagination showed you a simple block of stone. As far as possible avoid the danger of letting even the most delicate things exercise an attraction upon you such as may give rise to dangerous emotion. And if ever they take the form of an importune temptation which harasses and troubles you, give it a very definite refusal with your

reason and, at the same time, turn your whole mind and will to God. By this means you will be able to get out of the danger unscathed."

"What you have to avoid is acting like those who follow no definite order in their reading but amuse themselves by reading anything that comes under their eyes. Nothing interests them, but what is new and unpublished. All that is known and old may well have its value, but they despise it. Far be such flightiness from you, for this is not the stimulating of the mind at all, it is its distraction, and the work of a man infested with that evil is fraught with dangers. Restrain yourself wisely to fixed reading and create the habit of holding yourself to it even if it happens that you no longer find the same interest therein. Read, but do so with order and not just here and there as chance will have it. Force yourself to listen to the same truths more than once. All this does not mean that you are forbidden to seek a necessary relief in times of tribulation and spiritual dryness by leaving what you have begun in order to apply yourself to other devout practices from which you expect greater solace."

"Our Fathers have taught us that it is good to pass from study to prayer or to meditation and then you come back to study again after prayer. Alternatively substituting study by prayer and prayer by study offers the great advantage that one does not grow tired of either. The mind thus can apply itself by turns with a new vigour and get therefrom more abundant fruit. And who prevents you from interspersing your readings with ejaculatory prayers or letting your desires elevate themselves in holy aspirations to God? There are certain readings which are as convenient for prayer and meditation as they are for study. All Holy Scriptures,

for instance, where the soul holds converse with God."

"Now you may ask me to which subjects it would be convenient for you to apply yourself by preference in your prayers and private meditations. If you will believe me, you will implore God, after having recognised your faults and asked His pardon, to mortify your bad passions and vicious affections completely and to strip you absolutely of all imperfection; that He may grant you the grace to bear every tribulation and temptation with an equal and even joyous soul. You shall ask Him for the deepest humility and the most ardent charity. Further ask Him that He may deign to direct you in any and everything Himself, to instruct you, to illumine you and to protect you. This is in my eyes the grace which you need most. It is of capital importance. It is sublime, and you will not obtain it except by assiduous and persevering prayer. Thus, do not grow tired of knocking every day, for without doubt the Lord will finally open and give you as much bread as you need. But take great care to give thanks for the benefits received, for you do not know how greatly ingratitude is displeasing to God."

"Leave, put aside, destroy, reject any and every obstacle capable of retarding, however little, your progress in Divine Love. Mortify yourself in every way. This is the shortest and surest path. It is the only path. Make haste to follow it in order to become perfect."

"Do you wish to learn now in what the complete mortification of yourself consists, to know this short and certain path? I will indicate it to you and point it out to you. Listen:—strip yourself of all property. This is the shortened path. Strip yourself of all property! And what does this signify?

No longer cherish any affection of your own, no longer any will of your own, no longer any self-seeking. Strip yourself completely of the old man."

"So as to aid you to a better understanding of what I am asserting, I am going to develop my thought a little. You have engaged yourself to observe poverty? Be poor! Poor, in what manner? Poor in possessions, but above all in attachment to these possessions and completely stripped of the passions of the heart, poor in spirit. If passion or the senses still make you keep a spirit property in that which you love or desire, if you continue to seek yourself in anything, then you are not yet voluntarily poor, truly poor. You cannot yet say to God with the blessed Peter, 'Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee!' Thus free yourself, leave all things, strip yourself of all property. All that is not God shall no longer have any place in your heart:—no attachment, no human affection that turns you away from Him. Free yourself from all that is outside God, so that events, whether happy or unhappy, will no longer make you pass from mad glee to an exaggerated dejection.' Neither frustrated hopes nor the loss of an advantage already obtained will ever hinder the tranquil equanimity of your soul."

"Yea, renounce the sense-world and your ego completely for the sake of God. I mean by this:—mortify in yourself the natural ardour of concupiscence, of pleasure, of anger and indignation, and always, whether in adversity or prosperity, accept the will of Divine Good Pleasure without the very least resistance."

"This is the shortest path, and I have shown you that complete mortification is nothing but entire and unconditional renunciation of all spirit of property, and it is this also that is perfect humil-

ity. Perfect humility, indeed, is the shortest way that will lead you straight to the very summit of perfection. And this summit, again, is perfect charity and absolute purity."

"And the means, do you ask, by which to know that I have attained it? If assiduously dwelling in the silence of the heart as in a tranquil haven you have detached your soul from all solicitude or inordinate attachment, from the obsession of created images, from all anxiety and agitation, and have lovingly turned to God in Whom the soul finds its rest, so that memory, intelligence, will, in short, your whole mind have the good fortune to be united to God, then you have attained the summit of perfection, for all perfection is there."

"Before ending this short survey with a few meditations we shall give some quotations from the 'Daily Practices of the Spiritual Tyro' (*Exercitia quotidiana tyronis spiritualis*) which give the author's advice to all aspirants as it were in a nutshell."

"For the love of Jesus Christ who suffered in order to redeem you, renounce the satisfaction of the senses. When you desire to see, feel, touch, say something, remember that it is not the excitations of sensuality, but reason and God who speaks within you, whom you must obey. Renounce even the spiritual consolations if this be the good pleasure and order of God. And when you taste the interior joy and sweetness, beware that you do not take your rest there or turn them to your own satisfaction."

"Guard your eyes, your ears and your tongue with the greatest care for fear that they pasture on forbidden, vain and useless objects. You must use great vigilance and attention in your conversations in order not to speak more nor other than is convenient.

Speak with sobriety, simplicity and calmness. Hold all the limbs of your body in perfect modesty. Avoid immoderate laughter and all flightiness in your actions."

"Entertain holy and pious thoughts and think everywhere of the presence of God. Speak lovingly with Him, whether you feel devotion or not. The following words, when often meditated upon, can greatly aid the spirit of recollection and help you to respect the presence of God,—'O Lord, you are always present to me. You dwell in the very depths of my soul. Be it so!'"

"Look upon everything that is not God as but of small interest to you. Thus you can by holy recollection think of and attend to God in all freedom of spirit. And truly one thing is necessary. In order to obtain it, you must redouble your efforts and your works without ceasing, in short do your very utmost, but in the conviction that with all your diligence you are absolutely powerless, and must put all your hope in God, in His compassion, His goodness, and the help of His grace alone. For without God you cannot but sin."

The following meditations are culled from the 'Manual of the Little Ones' (*Enchiridion parvulorum*).

"When you think of God with sincerity and devotion, you have the idea of a living and spiritual substance, transcending every creature, absolutely free from all limits, all-powerful, with sovereign beauty supremely attractive, lovable and gracious, sweet and delightful, a substance which persists by itself, not receiving its being from elsewhere and not dependent on anything else, but on the contrary itself the very Principle of Existence in the things which exist, the source of life in the beings who live, the source of feeling, reason, holiness, light, for all that is sensible, reasonable, holy, luminous, perfect.' In short, the

source and cause of all good, of all dignity and power, of all virtue and wisdom, of all grace and beauty, of all sweetness and mirth, eternal plenitude of consummate bliss."

"All things are present to God as He Himself is present to all things, even if He is deeply distant from the sense of the impious. But it is above all to the saints that He is marvellously present, because He dwells in them as in His temple by His salutary grace. He is in all things through presence, through power, through essence, and nevertheless nothing touches Him with its impurity. Nothing is impure for Him, except sin, and even that cannot defile Him. What is called sordid in things of sense is so only for the senses; it is not so in sane philosophy. And as to knowing how God who always dwells within Himself in an eternal stability, beyond all change, can find Himself substantially or 'through His essence' in the creatures without these being in Him of their own nature,—for there is no being in God through essence or nature except God Himself—, this cannot be attained in this life by the understanding of the human mind."

"And if it now be asked where God was before He made the world, the true answer would be that He was in Himself, that He dwelt in Himself. Thus God is everywhere, everywhere without local situation, or distinction of parts, always complete, without becoming small in small things, but being in small things, just as in big things, without quantity or dimension, in all His greatness."

"The Divine Essence surpasses so greatly the created natures that compared with God they should rather be called non-beings than beings. No doubt, they are beings, because they come from the Highest Being, but they are non-beings, because by themselves they are but nothingness; in

themselves they are changeable and infinitely distant from and lacking in the immensity and perfection of God who is wholly immutable. There is but He who is in all truth and in all the rigour of the term, He who has not His being from another, who has neither beginning nor end and never changes. That is why He said to His servant Moses, 'I am That I am. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'"

In spite of all the limitations of outlook and dogmatic assertions which have dimmed the vision of Louis of Blois, his writings contain many of the eternal and unchangeable truths of spiritual life, truths which do not belong to any particular creed or time or climate, but which are manifestations of the Divine through the instruments of highly purified individuals. He knew, as all spiritual messengers did, that none can hope to reach happiness without previously renouncing the very best of what he has, considered from the emotional and worldly standpoint. None can come to the Divine, neither through Christ nor through any other of His Embodiments without first giving his all for Him, all he holds dear in the way of possessions, material, mental and emotional.

No one who merely pretends to have communion with the highest Truth, but is still bound by all the fetters of ordinary humanity, a bondsman to the whims of nature, and to the caprices of his own mind, can ever advance through this hollow, hypocritical lip-service to the feet of the Highest. So the first epistle of John very rightly says,

"God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (I, 5-6).

And to this 'darkness' belong all our pretty attachments, likes and dislikes, hatreds and ephemeral wishes.

Truth never comes to him who desperately clings to his pet-desires and inordinate human affections, who gives way to the numberless attractions the phenomenal world continually spreads out enticingly before his eyes, and none can really advance in the spiritual path or ever attain Divine Bliss without previously renouncing all materialistic and emotional self-seeking. So there is the beautiful Vedantic instruction, going out to the world and voicing the same truth, that says:—

“Fill the mind with Vedantic thoughts

until you fall asleep or until this body of yours drops off.”

Which, as it were, contains the whole of spiritual life in a nutshell, for the West as well as for the East, and finally leads the undaunted seeker to the ultimate goal of his age-long arduous quest.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” (Epistle of James I, 5-7).

EDUCATION FOR BUILDING A GREATER WORLD

BY S. SIVARAMAN, M.A., L.T.

[This thought-provoking article may be profitably perused by parents, teachers and others interested in education.—Ed.]

The cry of humanity everywhere is for a greater world. Urged by the spirit that disturbs the clod, man is moved by a great discontent of the prevailing imperfections. Out of the broken arc, the Divine in him plans for the perfect round which is his promised goal. The building of a greater world goes on through all time, and 'tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection'.

Of this great building, the education of the child is the foundation. A world built on an unsound system of education is like an edifice built on the loose sands of the sea. The problem of the adult vanishes not until the problem of the child is solved.

What is education? One of the broadest and best definitions that can be given is that education is preparation for complete living. The definition consists but of a few words; yet to one who

reflects deeply it is rich in meaning as an inexhaustible spring.

What is complete living? It is the living of man in the development and enjoyment of all the powers latent in him, in the multiplication of all the 'talents' which God has entrusted to him.

What are the various aspects in which a man has to grow and manifest himself, in order that he may live completely? They are the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual. To develop any one of these aspects to the neglect of the others would be to produce a monster out of a man. The West has developed the physical and mental sides to a surpassing degree, while it has not bestowed thought on right emotional and spiritual training. As a consequence there is dissipating excitement in social life, unfeeling competition in economic life, and short-

sighted egoism in political life. The East, on the other hand, has developed the spiritual side to the general neglect of the others. As a result its life in the physical, mental and moral spheres is far from yielding happiness. There is no harmony in the West or in the East, for each is guilty of the sin of not having prepared for complete living. Harmony and happiness will reign, and the Kingdom of Heaven will come on Earth, when not only the physical and the mental powers are educated, but also the emotional and the spiritual.

On the physical and mental training of the child, there is abundant literature. The physical form has to be developed to the finest proportions possible for each child (whatever is said of boys here applies equally to girls also). The physical body has to be made healthy and strong; for without such a fit body, development in the mental, emotional and spiritual spheres will be stunted.

‘To man, propose this test—

Thy body at its best,

How far can that project thy soul on
it's lone way?’

The training of the mind is tried at the present day in good, bad, and indifferent ways. What has to be borne in mind is that it is not only the acquisition of facts that is important for the child, but also the unfoldment of the intellectual powers by stimulating the child to think for himself, on all occasions and by encouraging originality. Any system of mental education should be judged by its fitness for this purpose of drawing out the capacities of each child to the fullest.

Next comes the education of the emotions. It is seldom realized that this is the best and most vital part of education. For in life it is the emotions of the man that will determine how he will express himself in action, how he will employ his mental and physical powers.

It is the emotions of a man that will decide whether he will lead a life of happiness to himself and others or otherwise.

Right emotional training, then, should be the key-note of education. What are right emotions? The world's choicest wisdom is agreed on the answer. First, right emotions are those which enable man to derive happiness which is assimilable by his spirit and hence lasting, as against the happiness which is of the gross body and hence evanescent. Again right emotions are those which enable man to live in harmony with his neighbours, his community, and all humanity, promoting not only his own happiness but also that of others.

The great key to such emotions is the love of the Beautiful and the Good. The love of the Beautiful is not that which merely cloy the eye or the ear, but that which beyond pleasing the senses delights the mind through an ideal; whereas the love of the Good is not mere cloistered asceticism nor passive obedience to doctrines or commands, but is an active training in employing one's powers towards helping others to live more happily and towards the building of a more harmonious world.

What are the means? Let the child live in a world of art. Let the school lie in a setting of natural beauty. Let the class-rooms and the hostel be enriched with simple art in painting and sculpture and carving. Let each child make for himself objects expressing a beautiful ideal, and live in their atmosphere. Let the children do deeds which will bring out kindness, charity, and love. Let there be movements and organizations which will help them ever to feel good emotions and translate them into action. Let the children be creative. Let them plan and accomplish new and newer forms and deeds of beauty and

goodness. Let their worship of the beautiful and good be dynamic and original, for only then will youth find its heaven therein.

Emotional education leading to the delight of the mind through an ideal merges imperceptibly into spiritual education. For what else is spiritual life than the experience of a happiness which does not die with the moment or is identified with the mere body, but which can be assimilated by the spirit in man and enable it to express itself more and more in the outer world? In spiritual education, however, the teacher has to steer clear of the quicksands of the set beliefs of himself or his community or his religion. The growing spirit rebels against the imposition of any sectarian belief or creed from without. For youthful life, it is a positive danger. Let the noblest that has been said of man and his soul, without savouring of any sectarianism however broad, be placed before the child. Let the child be trained to understand, appreciate, and practise a great idea wherever it lies. Let him be trained to

have no prejudice and to value an open mind. Let him be helped to realize the essential unity underlying all great religions. Above all, let him be trained to test all things in the light of truth and harmony. Doing this is enough for spiritual education.

Thus in the re-building of a greater world, the body should be developed to its fullest health and strength, the mind should be trained to think clearly and originally, the emotions should be directed towards the love of the beauty which delights through an ideal and the good which enriches the harmony between the self and the not-self; and the spirit should shine forth in the outer world through harmonious thought, word, and action. Then this world will be a heaven where men and women struggle not for the narrow satisfaction of desires which aim at aggrandisement in externals and toil not in weariness and strife, but where men and women realize an ever-growing happiness and peace through clear thought, ideal art, abidingly delightful emotion, and wisely planned action yielding harmony.

A NEW ERA IN CULTURE

The Indian imagination regards all knowledge as beatitude. Nor is any intellect in the world more keenly logical and inquisitive, or at the same time more disinterested and comprehensive in its grasp. A great Indian school of science is therefore no absurdity, but, under necessary conditions, one of the most attainable of all ambitions. The Hindu has but to realise that the world waits for the hundred and eight Upanishads of modern knowledge; the Mussulman needs only to understand that the time is again ripe for Averrhoes and Avicenna; and both will make, not only their own opportunity, but a new era in culture as well.

—*Sister Nivedita*

THE TEN IDYLLS

of Early Tamil Literature

[We refer our readers to the note on "Translations of Early Tamil Classics" in the "Notes and Comments" section. Our views concerning the antiquity of Tamilian civilization have been expressed in the essay on "The Origin and Growth of Tamil Literature", contributed to *The Cultural Heritage of India* published by the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, Belur-Math, Calcutta. Ed.]

To the west of the city of Madura, lies the hill of Param-Kunram with its shrine dedicated to Murugan, the war-god, the manifestation of the ideals of youth, beauty and valour. Murugan, the tutelary deity of the hill-men of Tamil-land, the son of "Kotravai, the goddess of victory," has been identified with Subrahmanya. According to Northern traditions, the eternally youthful war-god remains unmarried, whereas the traditions of the South give him two spouses: Devasêna, the daughter of the king of the gods, and Valli, the daughter of a sage and the foster-daughter of the chief of the hill-men. The former represents wealth and prowess (the fruits of Action, *Kriyâ-Shakti*) and the latter love and beauty (the objects of Desire, *Ichchhâ-Shakti*). His weapon, the celestial lance, (*Vêl*) represents wisdom (*Jnâna-Shakti*). The Titans (Asuras) whom he conquered represent the forces of darkness. Some of the poems of the *Pari-Pâdal*, one of the Eight Anthologies, give full accounts of the birth of the war-god, his youthful exploits, his victory over the Asuras and other details. Param-Kunram, the hill near Madura is one of his camps, Alai-vai (Tiru-Chendur), Âvinan-kudi (Palni), Erakam, the hills (generally), and Pazham-uthir-cholai are the other camps. *Tiru-Murugatrappadai*, the first of the ten idylls, a poem consisting of 317 lines, is a panegyric on the war-god and is attributed to the poet Nakkirar. It is divided into six

sections devoted to the six camps mentioned above. The prevailing *Rasa* (sentiment) of the poem is heroism, the substance of which may be translated, but the majestic rhythm of the unrhymed verse in which it is written defies translation. In this brief account it may be profitable to record the visions that pass before the mind's eye on reading the poem, for such a record might give a fair idea of the contents and the "atmosphere" of the poem. Dawn: the sun's rays break through the azure surface of the sea, exhibiting the cosmic painter's picture of the youthful god of red complexion, seated upon his vehicle, the blue peacock; the deep recesses of a dense forest where the first rains have fallen; a band of celestial nymphs, resplendent with precious jewels, singing the glories of the youthful god and dancing on the peak of a hill; the sea again; the celestial lance attacking the chief of the Titans in his last hiding-place, the mid-ocean; the battle-field; a demoness with owls and snakes adorning her ear-lobes dancing amidst the carnage singing the praise of the hero. A poet in quest of wisdom appears and gets himself directed to Param-Kunram; here ends section one.

A description of the divine form of Murugan with six faces and twelve arms is given in section two. One of the faces dispels universal darkness, by shedding forth rays of light; the second, of a gracious aspect, grants boons to

devotees; the third protects the Vedic rites of the brahmans; the fourth, shining with the mild lustre of moon-beams, expounds the sacred lore to the sages; the fifth, flashing forth sparks of anger, views the battle-field; the sixth, beaming with a smile, speaks words of love to Valli; the functions of the arms corresponding to these six faces are next described. Section three gives a picture of the sages, who had overcome passion and anger and also of the guardian deities, Vishnu, Rudra, and Indra, celestial damsels with harps, the thirty-three gods and the eighteen *ganas*, all of whom are seen moving across the empyrean and assembling at *Āvinan-kudi* to pay their homage to Murugan. Section four gives a picture of the twice-born brahmans, who tend the threefold fires, coming at the break of dawn to worship in *Tiru-Erakam*. Section five brings to view the hill-men wearing garlands of red and white flowers, carrying drums, flutes and timbrels, hoisting up Murugan's banner in which the emblem of the cock is drawn. They and the hill-maidens sing and dance while the priest, possessed by the lance-bearing god, offers worship. In the last section, we see Murugan worshipped in forests, in groves, in beautiful islets in the midst of rivers, in the junctions of three or more pathways, under *Kadamba* trees, and in hamlets; goats are sacrificed and their blood mixed with rice is offered; turmeric-paste and sandal-paste are sprinkled on the floors of the shrines; garlands of red oleander are hung; amidst the ringing of bells and the blowing of horns, the officiating priestess—who is a hill-maiden—offers incense along with red flowers and *thinai* grains soaked in goat's blood. From the highest Devas, down to the hill-folk, all offer worship in their own way. Finally, the poet addressing his brother-poet commends to him the

worship of Murugan, telling him how the god will appear to him and grant all prayers. The poem ends with a beautiful description of the grove surrounding the sixth camp referred to above.

We shall now proceed to the seventh idyll which is also attributed to poet Nakkîrar. This poem, named *Nedunal-vâdai*, has for its hero, the Pandya King, Nedun-Cheliyan, victor of the field of *Talaiyalankânânam*. "Vâdai" is the north-wind; here it refers to the season in which the north-east monsoon blows, the season of sleet and rain, when normal outdoor activities are ordinarily avoided. The king is away in the camp, personally inspecting the forces and issuing orders. His moral triumph in casting aside the pleasures of the court and responding to the call of duty is celebrated by the poet, who, therefore, distinguishes this particular rainy season from those that went before it, by adding the attributes "Nedu" and "Nal." The title of the poem may be rendered into English as, "The long-remembered and auspicious rainy season." The first 75 lines give a vivid picture of the season and its effect upon man and beast; the king's palace and its interior furnishings are described in lines 76 to 135, which incidentally give a good deal of information on ancient architecture and the taste with which the ancients furnished their dwelling-houses; lines 136 to 166 paint a picture of the love-lorn queen sighing for her absent lord; in the next two lines the chamber-maid, who is the narrator of the poem addresses a prayer to the goddess of victory for the king's triumph in arms and speedy return; the remaining twenty lines bring to view the king in the camp, going behind his torch-bearers, in the small hours of the night, visiting the wounded soldiers, and

cheering them up with words of encouragement.

A certain amount of similarity as regards subject-matter exists between the seventh idyll, just mentioned and the fifth idyll, *Mullaippattu* (103 lines) of Nappûthanar, the son of a gold-merchant of the city of Kavirippûmpattinam. In Nappûthanar's poem also, the hero goes round and visits the wounded soldiers. The poem gives a realistic picture of camp-life and detailed accounts of the functions of various officers attending the king. The *Mahouts* addressing the elephants in the northern tongue (Sanskrit) is another point of interest in the poem.

The eighth idyll *Kurinchippattu* (261 lines) ascribed to Kapilar contains beautiful sketches of highland scenery and describes a day in the life of a chieftain's daughter who, accompanied by her attendant maid, repairs to a park in the outskirts of the town, where she meets with various adventures and finally falls in love with a young hunter. The attendant maid narrates the incidents to the mother urging upon her the necessity of joining the hands of the two whose hearts were already joined. The poem gives a long list of hill-flowers.

The sixth idyll *Maduraikkânchi*, running up to 782 lines, is the longest poem in the collection. In subject-matter and treatment also it differs from the remaining nine. Mânkudi Marutanâr addresses it to his sovereign, friend and patron, the Pandya king Nedun-Cheliyan of Talaiyalankânânam fame. We have already mentioned the name of this king in connection with the seventh idyll. He is a great warrior and in the battle referred to, he fought against the combined armies of the Chola and Chera kings and five minor chieftains. The poem is partly benedictory and partly didactic; in outspoken words it exhorts the king to walk in the path of righteous-

ness. How greatly the king valued the friendship of the poet may be seen from *Puranânûru* 72. We shall refer to this more fully in a subsequent essay. The valour of the king, his generosity and other noble traits are beautifully sketched in the poem, which also gives an account of some of his great ancestors. With the help of this poem one can visualize the city of Madura as it stood two thousand years ago. The marketplace, the streets of the *hetaerae*, the police who went their rounds in the night and the burglars who eluded the grasp of the law are all drawn with such precision and detail so as to make the ancient city live and move before our very eyes. This poem contains a great deal of historical material and scholars have largely drawn upon it.

The ninth idyll *Pattinappalai* (301 lines) is addressed by Rudrankannanâr of Kadiyalur to the Chola king Karikâl, the Great. It is said that the king rewarded the poet with sixteen lakhs of gold coins. We doubt whether the history of world's literature has another well-attested case of munificence approaching to that of Karikâl, the Great. This poem also contains a great deal of historical material which has been largely drawn upon by authors and students of history. Kavirippûmpattinam, the chief city and sea-port of the Cholas, its export trade, the lives of sea-faring men, the extent of the wealth drawn from countries beyond the seas, the youthful exploits of Karikâl, his conquests, the prisoners he brought to the city, these and other matters are beautifully described in this noble poem.

The second idyll, *Porunar-âtruppadaï* (248 lines) addressed to the same Chola monarch Karikâl, the Great, by the poetess Muda-thâmak-kanniyar, the third *Sirupân-âtruppadaï* (169 lines) by Na-Tattanâr, addressed to the chieftain Nalliyakkôdan, the fourth *Perumpân-*

âtruppadaï (500 lines) by Rudrankanânâr, addressed to Thondaimân Ilanthiraiyan and the tenth, *Malaipadu-kadâm* (583 lines) by Perum-Kausikanânâr, addressed to Nannan, son of Nannan, may all be considered together, for their "arguments" are similar. Bands of wandering minstrels accompanied by dancers and carrying with them musical instruments such as the harp, the flute and drums of various sizes meet on the way others of the same vocation, returning from the court of some patron or other, after receiving valuable gifts. The latter give directions to the former regarding the path to be taken and incidentally describe the character of the patron and the fertile lands over which he rules. This extremely simple framework serves as the basis for beautiful effects of colour, movement and character. The present writer made use

of these poems in preparing a course of special lectures on "Ancient Tamil Music", delivered by him under the auspices of the Madras University. The information contained in these and in certain other Early Tamil Classics enabled him to reconstruct the four kinds of harps (Yâzh) which were used by the minstrels of ancient Tamil-land and which have gone out of use now.

Ever since Mr. V. Kanakasabai published his "Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago" various scholars have gone into the subject of Tamil culture and have published their studies. Although much has been achieved, a great deal more remains to be done. As we have shewn under "Notes and Comments", good translations of the classics would bring the subject to a wider circle of scholars in India and abroad.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

Mountain ranges and impenetrable forests that lay stretched between the Deccan and the Northern regions acted as no barrier to the establishment of intellectual and spiritual kinship in Ancient India. Linguistic differences did not in any way impede the spread of a common culture. Lofty thoughts and bold speculations, no matter where they originated, soon found their way to the four corners of this vast land. Even before the coming of the Aryans, there seems to have been close intercourse between the North and the South, the communication was established probably by a sea route. From the Upanishadic Age onwards the Sanskrit language became the medium of intellectual co-operation between the various parts of

the country, even as Latin was the medium of international scholarship in Mediæval Europe. The researches in Philosophy and Religion carried out in the forest universities of Ancient India became the common heritage of the whole land.

BUDDHIST UNIVERSITIES AS CENTRES OF CULTURE

With the advent of Buddhism the languages spoken by the people took a definite step forward by becoming the vehicles of lofty philosophical speculations, ethical discourses and literary works of all kinds. Pali, the language in which the Blessed One delivered his message, usurped to a certain extent the place occupied by Sanskrit. The Buddhist Universities were centres for the dissemination of Indian Culture in

the fullest sense of the word. It seems that the time has come to revive that spirit of Indian unity which pervaded the old Buddhist Universities. Each linguistic unit in India has some distinctive trait, some definite contribution to make to the common national culture. More systematic intellectual co-operation between the various linguistic units is bound to produce results of far-reaching importance. The India of the future, the India of our most cherished dreams, would be the richer if she would organize into one whole the cultural treasures of all her children. The languages of India form the repositories of these cultural treasures.

TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY TAMIL CLASSICS

The Tamil race with its ancient civilization and extensive literature has something unique to offer. The Early Tamil Classics known as the Sangam Literature comprise the extant literary records of the Tamil race from pre-historic times to the early centuries of the Christian era. These contain a wealth of material of very great use to students of Indian History, Sociology, Religion, Art, Antiquities and Literary Criticism. The language in which these classics are written is rather archaic and consequently it is difficult for research students in India and abroad to have access to the originals. This difficulty can be overcome to a very great extent, if good translations are made available. This is one of the urgent items to be included in all schemes of national planning.

Mr. O. C. Gangoly, Art-critic and Art-historian, writing to us in September last, drew our attention to this need. He said, "Why not make a start by translating the *Ten Idylls* (of Early Tamil Literature) and publishing them in the *Prabuddha Bharata*—say four

pages in each issue—the text in English transliteration should be given face to face against its translation in English on the opposite page. I hope my humble request will meet with your approval." We replied stating that the regular publication of translations from secular Tamil Classics did not fall within the scope of this Journal, but that occasional contributions on Tamil Culture as part of Indian Culture would be legitimate; these, we said, we proposed to introduce. Accordingly, in this issue, we are giving an account of the "Ten Idylls" and in a subsequent issue propose to give an account of one of the eight anthologies of Early Tamil Literature. In the January and subsequent issues we have given translations of as well as stories drawn from Shaiva and Vaishnava religious classics of the South. Sri Ramanuja, the great Âchârya, who gave to the world the Visishtadvaita system of philosophy, recognised the value of *Divya-Prabandham*, which he called the Tamil Veda. Many friends have expressed their thankfulness for these translations and stories and consequently we feel that they fulfil a real need.

It is not only Mr. O. C. Gangoly who has expressed the need for good translations of Early Tamil Classics. Prof. Jules Bloch of the Collège de France, stressing the same need in a foreword, he contributed to Mr. V. R. R. Dikshitar's translation of "The Silappadikâram," says: "The historian has resorted to the more difficult and often ungrateful, but also more beneficent, task of translation. Let the reader have the plainest possible access to the text; help him with all the needed current explanations, and reserve personal inductions for the introductory survey. This will be a boon not only to the student of history but also to the literary man and to everybody interested in

Tamil Culture. And this means many people at a time when so much is being done, not only to assert India's culture before the world, but also to make India known to herself, and to show in their true light the various original civilizations which all together form Indian civilization.

“Among them the Tamil country can boast of an antique and original culture. A picture of India, historical or literary, will not be complete if due importance is not attached to it; no more than a physical description of India will be complete if rocky Deccan and southern deltas or back-waters are omitted.

“But how many are there who have access and are able to enjoy or usefully consult Tamil literary works, especially the older ones? It is a matter of common knowledge that only a few can do so even among those born in the Tamil country. On those few lies the responsibility of helping their compatriots to appreciate those works which are the particular glory and the inspiration of their country, and to give outsiders a faithful rendering of them.

“Scholars themselves will be benefitted by that work. Need I recall what progress in Sanskrit studies has been due to translations from Sanskrit into European languages and primarily into

English? And to those interested in furthering the cultural unity of India, need I recall that those periods of history when translations were most numerous were also periods of unification and progress.”

Mr. V. R. R. Dikshitar also quotes from a letter of Mr. F. J. Richards, in which he says : “I have no hesitation in pressing for English editions, for the reason that Tamil is almost a sealed book to all who are not Tamilians, and it is a pity that the rest of India does not realize the importance of the Tamil contribution to Indian culture. We can only be made to do so by publishing for a wider circle of readers, and English is the most handy medium for this publicity both in India and elsewhere.”

SINDHI LITERATURE

We are very happy to learn that a two-year programme for the advancement of Sindhi Literature is being put forward by the Minister of Education. Translation into Sindhi of outstanding works in world literature, creative prose, poetry, philosophy, history etc., and search for collection and publication of all the wealth that lies hidden in Sind in the form of manuscripts or oral tradition are some of the items in the programme.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE UPANISHADS. SELECTIONS FROM THE 108 UPANISHADS WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY T. M. P. MAHADEVAN. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 400. Price Re. 1-4 as.

G. A. Natesan and Co., who have brought out many abridged editions of sanskrit books on Hindu religion and philosophy with English translation, have added yet another volume to their list of useful publications. The Upanishads embody undoubtedly the highest consummation of Hindu metaphysical thought reached through spiritual intuition and mystic experience. In addition to the philosophical aspect, the melody and harmony of the Upanishadic verses arouse deep feelings of peace and joy in the heart of the devoted reader. The book under review contains inspiring passages selected from most of the Upanishads. All the 108 Upanishads have been touched upon and while a few of them have been reproduced in their entirety, a few others have been merely mentioned without any selection being given. The book is divided into two broad sections, of which the former includes the ten major Upanishads and the Svetâsvatara and the Kaushitaki, and the latter section contains all the minor Upanishads classified into six groups which are—Sâmânyavedântopanishads, Yogopanishads, Samnyâsopanishads, Vaishnavopanishads, Saivopanishads and Sâkthopanishads. Every Upanishad has a very interesting and useful introductory note giving details regarding the Upanishad and its contents. With a view to help the reader in getting a continuous idea of the whole Upanishad, short notes have been introduced as a sort of connecting link wherever necessary. The English rendering of each verse is lucid, easy and as literal as practicable.

ELEMENTS OF HINDU CULTURE AND SANSKRIT CIVILIZATION. BY PRASANNA KUMAR ACHARYA, I.E.S., M.A. (Calcutta), PH.D. (Leyden), D.LITT. (London), PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF THE SANSKRIT DEPARTMENT, ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY. Published by Meher Chand Lachhman Das, Prop., The Sanskrit Depot., Jain Street, Said Mithabazar, Lahore. Price Rs. 1/8/- (2s. 6d. foreign). Pp. 184.

In the preface, the learned author says: "In this little book mere elements of Hindu Culture and Sanskrit Civilization have been briefly dealt with in consideration of the present need. This does not aim at an elaborate discussion. It has grown out of lecture notes delivered at B.A. and M.A. classes in ancient history sections of our History and Sanskrit Departments." The book is divided into the following sections: (1) Family life, (2) Social life, (3) Political life and (4) Moral and Spiritual life. Under all these heads, a large amount of accurate information is given and the sources are pointed out enabling the student to pursue his studies further. The various forms of marriage, the Vedic Samskaras and rites, the origin and elaboration of the caste system, food, clothing, ornaments, occupations of the people, trade and commerce, literature (Hindu, Buddhist and Jain), forms of political organization, systems of philosophy and forms of religion are all dealt with briefly, but with the accuracy inherent in good scholarship. We commend the book to students of Hindu culture.

TAMIL

SRI BHAGAVAD-GITA (RENDERED INTO TAMIL VERSE). BY A. RAMASWAMY GOUNDER, M.A., L.T., PRINCIPAL, SALEM COLLEGE. Published by the Author. Price not mentioned. Pp. 192.

The translation is lucid and terse. The learned author has endeavoured to preserve the sense and spirit of the original. Anyone having a moderate knowledge of the Tamil language can peruse this translation with pleasure and profit.

SANGA ILAKKIAM. (THE EIGHT ANTHOLOGIES AND THE TEN IDYLLS OF EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE). Published by the Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, 22-A Kallukaran Street, Mylapore, Madras. Price Rs. 3 as 4. Pp. 1526.

The Saiva Siddhanta Samajam has admirably served the cause of Tamil Scholarship and Indian Culture by publishing in one volume the entire text of the eighteen major works of Early Tamil Literature. The volume contains the literary masterpieces of no less than 473

poets whose dates range from pre-historic times to the early centuries of the Christian era. The 2381 poems comprising the whole collection are grouped under the names of the authors and these are arranged alphabetically, thus providing the facility for easy reference. This entirely new feature enhances the value of the publication. During the last forty years as many as twenty scholars have brought out portions of Sangam Literature with or without commentaries, but this is the first occasion in

which the eighteen major works are presented under one cover. The text is carefully collated and the various appendices are of great use to students of Tamil. We take this opportunity of suggesting to the Samajam and to all others interested in the subject, the urgent necessity for bringing out translations of Early Tamil Classics. We have written a note about this in our "Notes and Comments" section, we have also given in this issue an account of the "Ten Idylls".

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI PARAMANANDA MEMORIAL MEETING

A largely attended public meeting was held at the Albert Hall in Calcutta, on Sunday, the 14th July, to pay homage to the memory of Swami Paramananda who had recently passed away in America. S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee occupied the chair. In the course of a message which was read out at the meeting, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore recalled the hospitality which Swami Paramananda had, on one occasion, extended to him in America, and referred to the immense popularity the Swami used

to enjoy there. S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee in his presidential address observed that Swami Paramananda was one of those worthy souls who, like the Buddhist monks of old, carried in the present age the message of India's culture and religion to the nations abroad. He suggested the compilation of a treatise on the life and teachings of the Swami. Mr. J. N. Bose, Dr. Sundari Mohan Das, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Dr. D. N. Maitra and others were among the speakers.

TRICHUR

The Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul, Vilangans, organised a rural and Industrial Exhibition for three days from the 12th to the 14th February, 1940, with the object of giving the rural population a comprehensive idea of the need and possibilities of improving agriculture, cattle-breeding and various cottage industries. A Baby Show also formed a part of the Exhibition. The Exhibition was opened by Dr. A. R. Menon, the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development.

The Minister in his opening speech dwelt at length on the humanitarian activities of the Ramakrishna Mission and paid a glowing tribute to the rural reconstruction work that the Gurukul had undertaken. Prizes in the form of silver medals, certificates, clothes etc. were awarded for the best products. Over 5,000 people visited the Exhibition. Various entertainments were provided for the visitors.

RAJKOT

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, with a three days' programme. About 1,500 Daridra Narayanas were fed. The Central hall of the Sri Vivekananda Gurukul was opened on the occasion by His Highness the Maharaja Saheb of Morvi, who in course of his address observed, "The greatest of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples was Swami Vivekananda who revived India by

his wonderful oratory, and gave to India and the world the basic truth of religion. Rajkot is most fortunate that this Ashrama was opened here in 1927 ; I have listened with great interest to the beneficent work the Ashrama and the Gurukul have been doing in various directions, specially in religious and moral, as well as, in vocational and physical education. . . . It is very gratifying to see that you have undertaken this educational

experiment which deserves every encouragement. I have great pleasure, therefore, in declaring a small donation of Rs. 5,000/- to the Gurukul, and I hope it will be the nucleus of a suitable fund towards the accomplishment of your laudable conceptions."

Swami Sambuddhananda, President, Rama-

krishna Mission Ashrama, Bombay and Dr. T. N. Dave, M.A., Ph.D., spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Swami Sambuddhananda went to Junagadh on an invitation to deliver lectures. Owing to want of time he could not accept the invitation from Morvi.

JAMSHEDPUR

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Vivekananda Society for six days from the 6th to 11th April. A ladies' meeting was held in the Society hall on the 6th. Mrs. R. Chowdhury presided. Two ladies spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna after which Dr. Kalidas Nag, M.A., D.Litt., delivered an address on "The Indian womanhood and its world significance." About 600 ladies attended.

On the second day there was feeding of the Daridra Narayanas. The annual general meeting of the Society was held in the evening under the presidentship of Mr. W. H. Ames, the Acting Chief Engineer of the Tata Iron and Steel Company. Swami

Dhiratmananda, Secretary, read the annual report for 1939. Mrs. B. Ray gave away the prizes to the boys and girls of the Vivekananda Primary Schools and also to the winners of the essay competition. Swamis Chidbhavananda and Vamadevananda spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Dr. Kalidas Nag delivered a speech on "Sri Ramakrishna and world harmony".

Swamis Chidbhavananda and Vamadevananda addressed three other meetings on "Unity in diversity", "Necessity of religion" and "The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna." Swami Chidbhavananda delivered another speech in Tamil on "Harmony of religions".

POONA

Swami Sambuddhananda, President, Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay, came to Poona on an invitation by the local Vivekananda Society to preside over the 78th birthday celebration of Swami Vivekananda held on Sunday, the 18th February, 1940. The Swami delivered two inspiring lectures on the day, one on "Swami Vivekananda and his contributions to India and her religion" and the other on "Swami Vivekananda's contributions to the cultural invasion of the West by India."

On the 19th the Swami spoke on "The need of the hour", under the auspices of the South India Association and the next morning he presided over a meeting held at the Gujerathi High English School. On the 21st he was invited to speak to the students of Sir Parushurambhau College on "The message of Swami Vivekananda to young India." On the 23rd he addressed another meeting at the Wadia College on "Unity of religions."

KANKHAL

The 78th birth-day anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kankhal from the 31st January to the 4th February.

On 31st January, the Tithipuja day, special Puja was performed in the morning and discourses on the life and teachings of the great Swami were delivered in the evening. On the 3rd February, about 900 Daridranarayanas were sumptuously fed. On the 4th a public meeting was held with Swami Atulananda in the chair. Mr. Satyavrata, the Governor of Gurukul and Pandit Liladhar Sastri, Princi-

pal, Rishikul, and others spoke on the life and message of Swamiji. The president gave a vivid description of his personal reminiscences of the great Swami in New York, and also of the profound influence he exerted on the American mind.

The Sevashrama celebrated the birth-day of Sri Ramakrishna for a week from the 11th March, the day of his birth. About 250 Sadhus of different Maths and a number of devotees took Prasadam on the Tithipuja day and discourses on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were held every evening

till the 16th. On the 17th a public meeting was held over which Srimat Swami Bhagavanandaji Maharaj, Mandaleswar of

Hardwar, presided. He dwelt, in an illuminating speech, on the spiritual message of Sri Ramakrishna to India and the world.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SWARNALATA WIDOWS' HOME, PURI

The opening ceremony of the Ramakrishna Mission Swarnalata Widow's Home at Puri took place on the Akshay Tiritiya day. Puja and Homa formed the programme for the day. On 19th May, a public meeting was organised under the presidentship of Rai Saheb M. N. Bose, District Magistrate of Puri. After the opening song Pandit Vasudev Misra chanted a benediction prayer in Sanskrit. Pandit Nilkantha Das, then, addressed the audience in Oriya on the spirit and method of social service in India. Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee and poet Bijoylal

Chatterjee, who were the next speakers, dwelt at length on the utility of service both as a means for personal liberation and for the upliftment of the country.

The president in his brief speech thanked the donors Sja. Swarnalata Devi and Sj. Sanat Kumar Roy Chowdhury, ex-Mayor of Calcutta, for their munificent gift which would make the institution almost self-supporting. The Mahanta Maharaj of the Emar Math then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair, with which the function came to a close.

FAMINE RELIEF IN DHRAFA THANA, KATHIAWAR

In co-operation with the Western Kathiawar Agency the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, started famine relief in Dhrafa Thana, Kathiawar, on 1st October, 1939. At the outset the Ashrama authorities formed a local Famine Relief Committee and with the help from Western Kathiawar Agency arranged to give gratuitous relief to nearly 500 poor, old, invalid and helpless persons of the whole Thana at the rate of 30 lbs. of grains per head every month without any distinction of caste or creed. In December, 1939, the local Famine Relief Committee started a cattle camp in order to give shelter to stray cattle and the number of cattle at present has been nearly 200. Weaving of cloths by supplying yarn to weavers and making of bamboo baskets were started for giving employment to Harijans. With the help from Kathiawar Harijan Sevak Sangh repairing and excavation of an old tank was taken up for providing the Harijans with employment. The local committee has also made provision for giving cloths and distributing free medicines to the poor, old, and invalid people. Since the third week of January, 1940, a cheap grain shop has been opened at Dhrafa.

Cash contributions received up till now are as follow:

	Rs.	A.	P.
Western Kathiawar Agency ...	7,959	4	9
Maharana Saheb, Porbander	1,250	0	0
Sheth Velji Kalidas, Bombay	1,001	0	0
Sankat Nivaran Samity, Porbander ...	1,000	0	0
Other contributions ...	8,106	2	0

Total Rs. ... 19,316 6 9

Receipts in kind:—

The Porbander State—2,500 mds. of fodder.
The Dharampur State—250 mds. of grass.
Porbander Mahajans—51 bags of joar.
Sheth Mathuradas Vasanji, Bombay—50 bags of bran.
Gujarat Prantic Samity—one bale of cloth.
The Morvi State has charged 8 as. less than the original price per maund for 1,200 mds. of wheat purchased.

As the months of May, June and July form the worst part of the famine year the Committee appeals to the generous public and charitable institutions for stretching a helping hand so that the relief activities may be successfully brought to a close at the end of July, 1940.

(Sd.) ATMASWARUPANAND,
President,

Famine Relief Committee,
Dhrafa, Kathiawar.