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The Message of the East



MARCH 1912

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Sunday, 4 p. m.---Service with Lecture

by SWAMI PARAMANANDA

of India



SUBJECTS FOR MARCH 1912

March 3rd. Ideal of Womanhood in India

" *10th. Greek Philosophy and its Relation to Indian Thought*

" *17th. Philosophical Systems of India*

" *24th. Modern Science in its Relation to the Ancient Sciences of India*

" *31st. The Teachings of Christ and Oriental Ideals*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. I MARCH, 1912 No. 3

As long as there is creation, so long there will be variety. But even in the midst of this variety unity may be realized by finding the essence which lies behind creation and supports it. As it is said in the Gita: "All this is strung in Me (the Lord) as pearls on a thread." What we need is to perceive this thread which binds together these pearls, however diverse they may be in shape and color; then we shall not be deluded by outer appearances. He indeed is wise who can see only one in the world of many and many as the manifested parts of that one stupendous whole. It has been the constant struggle of all great Seers of Truth to discover this underlying thread of unity. Again and again we find the idea of universal harmony presented by the different Scriptures, especially those of the Aryans. "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever path, I reach him. All men are struggling along paths which ultimately lead to Me." This is the dominant note of the Vedas. There is indeed no room given to sectarianism or bigotry in the religion of the Vedas. The word *Veda* means wisdom, while Vedanta signifies ultimate or supreme wisdom; and the fundamental principles proclaimed in the Vedanta are not confined within any one creed or Scripture, but cover

the whole realm of religion. Vedic teaching, indeed, is like that connecting thread running through all the different pearls. Vedas, or the eternal laws, are already in every soul. It is not that they exist somewhere outside ourselves. Religion is the expression of Truth already existing in man. This is a great thing to understand, — that all power is already ours. Each is trying to express the Truth according to his capacity; but as we go through the process of evolution, our conception of Truth expands and becomes more and more inclusive. The difference between individuals lies only in the degree of manifestation of the same Truth. A truly universal religion, therefore, must offer a series of gradual steps to suit the various states of individual development. No one set of religious practises and no one form of faith could possibly meet the needs of all men in such varying stages of growth. Recognizing this fact, the system of Vedanta, in order to lend a helping hand to all according to their degree of development, is divided into two portions, — the *Karma-Kanda* and the *Jnana-Kanda.* The *Karma-Kanda* deals solely with the external side of the spiritual kingdom, with doctrines, ceremonies and outer religious practises for the purification and training of mind and body. This portion of the Vedas seeks to express the infinite in terms of the finite and is especially intended for those who cannot go beyond the limits of their mind and senses. The *Jnana-Kanda,* or the wisdom portion, on the other hand, has to do entirely with the inner nature of man, and enables him to transcend external phenomena and come face to face with the eternal, unchangeable and all-pervading Being within him. Religion, to suit all men, must be all-sided. It must be intellectual, devotional and philosophical.

It must have infinite scope. And this idea we find pervading the Vedic religion through and through. The religion of Vedanta stands on the basis of unity and all-inclusiveness. It does not ask a Christian to give up his own faith and become a Hindu, or a Hindu to become a Christian; but it looks upon all religions as paths leading to the same goal. It attaches no importance to an outward change of faith, but insists on sincere and whole-hearted practice of the Ideal whatever may be its name and form. Through the grace of the Divine Being, may each one of us find the underlying harmony existing in all manifested life and attain peace.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

If through the grace of God the real spirit of renunciation come to even a worldly man, then will he be able to overcome his attachment to sense-pleasure and money, free himself from worldly bondage, and attain wisdom.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

The Kingdom of God is within you, saith the Lord. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the Lord, and forsake this wretched world and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise outward things, and to give thyself to things inward, and thou shalt perceive the Kingdom of God to come in thee . . . . He that seeketh any thing else but merely God, and the welfare of his own soul, shall find nothing but tribulation and sorrow.

—*Thomas à Kempis.*

The self-sufficient and needy philosopher lives a life truly similar to Divinity and considers the non-possession of external and unnecessary goods as the greatest wealth. For the acquisition of riches sometimes inflames desire; but not to act in any respect unjustly is sufficient to the enjoyment of a blessed life. . . . He is a wise man, and beloved of Divinity, who studies how to labor for the good of his soul, as much as others labor for the sake of the body.

—*The Pythagorean Sentences of Demophilus.*

Child, if you want to be free from bondage, then give up all worldly thoughts and desires as poison. And know the path of Divinity to be forgiveness, simplicity, compassion, contentment and truthfulness and take them as nectar.

—*Ashtavarka-Samhita.*

If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problem of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant — I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.

—*Prof. F. Max Muller.*

MONASTIC LIFE IN INDIA

By Sister Devamata

In India the religious life is not a distinct vocation taken up here and there by an isolated member of the community. It is the basis of all living. Every child born into a Hindu family may be said to be born into the religious life; every act thereafter is directly or indirectly a religious act; and each new step in the earthly career is marked off by a religious ceremony. The songs that lull him on his mother's lap are sacred songs; the stories that stimulate his awakening mind are of the great saints and spiritual heroes. Has he perchance a toy? It is a miniature sacred image. Does he play? It is at worship with bits of a broken earthen pot as his sacramental vessels. The songs and games of his school-room are most often of the shepherd days of Sri Krishna at Vrindavan or of Lord Rama in his forest exile; and even the scavenger boy as he drives his ill-smelling cart along the country road sings gaily of Divine things.

The first lessons in literature or history are learned in a temple porch or on a school verandah in the cool stillness of the evening, when some itinerant *pandit* chants to the vibrant notes of the tambour the ringing metres of the great epics, the *Mahabharatam* or the *Ramayanam*. Or perhaps in the hushed hours before dawn, the father will rouse his little sleeping brood from their last slumber, and while the mother busies herself about the house, he will teach them of their saints and Scriptures. As the boys pass out into active life, it is the monastery more often than the club which draws them at the close of their day's work; and busy doctors, lawyers and government officials will gather at the feet of some simple, holy man to hear him expound the Vedas or to chant together

the praises of the Lord. With coming age more and more is the daily routine permeated with religious thought and practice; until the man or woman who began by bringing religion into every part of life, ends by taking the whole of life into religion.

Along the way, the Hindu declares, human existence falls naturally into four stages: — child-life, student life, the householder's life and forest life (or a life of religious retirement), each with its special duties and opportunities for spiritual development. Yet it is not believed that every soul must necessarily pass through all these stages in each birth. Since to the Hindu life is not merely a stretch of seventy years, but a consecutive journey through many earth lives back to God, it is quite possible that a man may have learned all the lessons of the earlier stages and be born here with a natural tendency to the forest life. Whether it come at the beginning or at the end, however, to every Hindu this is the highest point to be attained, the culmination of all human effort and achievement; and the man who has entered on the life of renunciation so far transcends all social and caste restrictions that even a king comes down from his throne to bow and touch his feet— though perhaps the beggar monk was once a pariah.

In India, however, taking up the monastic life means a very different thing from what it means in the West. It is not passing from a home into an institution, from a family into a larger household. It is going out into the open, the sky the only roof, the ground the only bed, and chance alms from door to door the only food. Caste, kinship, name, fortune, all are merged in a larger measure of things. The whole human race becomes the family of the *Sannyasi* or monk, every

living being must be equally dear to his heart, every part of the world must be equally his home. Because he seeks to rise above body and ego and realize his soul, he must renounce all that is related to the body and little self,—comfort, ease, money, the special community and associations of his birth. He must transcend the physical, if he would reach the spiritual. Yet all this must be done with no sense of giving up. As a mountain climber reduces his luggage to a minimum and rejoices in the lightness of his kit, so must the *Sannyasi* feel. He is setting out on a journey and he must not weight himself with material possessions and concerns. The wrench of renunciation must be forgotten in the joy of expanding spiritual consciousness. He must be like the man who, having found the pearl of great price, sells all he has to buy it. And when this call comes no Hindu dares gainsay it, for it is the voice of the Lord, before which every human voice must be silent.

Nor are these acts of sudden and complete renunciation rare in India. A religious play at the theatre, a chance word in the street, a vision of higher things in meditation, the touch of a holy man, are even to-day sending men out from offices, counting-rooms and palaces to search for God. The story is told of a rich man in Bengal, who, while taking his evening bath after a day of pleasure in his garden house on the Ganges, overheard a *dhobi* or washerman chiding his wife, because "the day was nearly gone and she had not yet burned her banana stalk to ash." The word "banana stalk" and "desire" closely resemble each other in Bengalee, and Lala Babu, understanding, "The day has nearly gone and you have not yet burned your desires to ashes," started as if suddenly awakened from a sound sleep. Tearing his rich cloth into

a narrow strip, he bound it about his loins, went out from his house, travelled to Vrindavan (the birthplace of Sri Krishna) as a beggar and from that day no money ever touched his hand. He lived on alms, gave himself up to prayer and earnest practice of that purity or singleness of heart which brings the vision of God, until he became a great saint, noted for his lowliness and spiritual wisdom.

Only a few years ago while I was in Calcutta, there came a married couple from the South. They were of the merchant caste, rich and still in their thirties, yet the husband was bringing his wife to take her first vows in religion. "I cannot give myself up to the forest life," he said, "because my brothers have been less successful than I and their families are dependent on me. But my wife has fulfilled her duties. Our two daughters are well married; and I should feel it a great sin to keep her from following out the deep religious longing she has always had. I have taken the first vows of *Brahmacharya* (godliness and continence) with her. Now we shall go home together and wait two years. Then I shall bring her back and leave her with the Order. I know that her life of spiritual consecration will bring blessing to the whole family."

In entering the monastic life, all initiation is given by the individual Guru, or spiritual teacher, who must himself be a *Sannyasi,* or monk. Is he a member of a special monastic Order? Then the neophyte may be regarded as a member of the same Order; but this is a secondary consideration. The initiation is primarily not into an institution but into a new life of selfless devotion to Truth; not into an association with a brotherhood or sisterhood, but into direct companionship

with God. His daily prayer becomes: "O Supreme Lord! Thou art my Mother. Thou art my Father. Thou art my Friend and Companion. Thou art all my learning. Thou art all my wealth. Thou art my all in all."

The first initiation, into *Brahmacharya*, vows the disciple to a life of spotless purity, of absolute simplicity and above all of service. It is believed that only through constant service, perhaps the most menial, can body and mind be purified and prepared to receive the Truth. In the old days the disciple went to his Guru in some quiet hermitage hid away in the heart of the forest, and his daily duties were to bring firewood from the jungle, water from the stream, to cut fresh bamboo poles to rebuild the hut or collect dried palm leaves to mend the thatch. And when these simple tasks were finished, the boy would sit at the feet of his Master and learn from him the Sacred Teachings of the Scriptures. The chief lessons, however, were given not in words but through hourly contact with an enlightened soul. It was the Kindergarten system applied to spiritual training. The disciple was taught what holiness was by watching a holy life. He learned of purity and unselfishness by living with a pure and selfless character; just as a little child growing up in daily association with a naturalist comes to know all the birds and flowers without apparent effort or study. Often days passed by in perfect silence, when the Guru was so wrapped in contemplation that none could approach him. The sincerity and earnestness of the neophyte were also tested in this way. It is on record that a disciple served the great Sankara eleven years before the Master even spoke to him; and in the Upanishads we read of this service stretching over long periods of time before

the ultimate Truth was revealed.

Outer conditions may have changed since then, but the fundamental principles, methods and ideals for the period of *Brahmacharya* remain the same to-day as in Vedic times. It is a life of humble, loving service near the Master, learning through obedience and devotion the lessons of the spirit. Throughout there is no violence of enforced discipline. There is as much of play and simple gayety as there is of work and grave study. It is told of Sri Ramakrishna that one day a stranger, coming to the Temple to see him, was amazed to find the great Paramahamsa (enlightened soul) playing leap-frog with his disciples; and frequently was he heard to say: "I would not have anything to do with a religion that had not a laugh in it." Those who enter upon the life of *Vairagyam* (non-attachment) must feel the joy of the Lord, the freedom and light-heartedness that come through renunciation. It is believed that no one should renounce the world and take up the life of the spirit unless he feels that he is exchanging a lesser thing for a greater, that his "loss" is literally "a gain," as Saint Paul declares. Does he feel this? Then he need not be driven to any rigid training, any more than an eager student has to be driven to his books. God, he is told, is most easily perceived where opposites meet, hence the best hours for meditation are at dawn when night melts into day, or at sunset when day fades into night. Does the neophyte care too much for his sleep or comfort to remember these hours—then what use to ring a bell to remind him? His ear is not yet open to the Divine call, so let him go home and serve God in the world. Does he heed more the hunger of his body than the hunger of his soul, so that of his own accord

he does not curb his appetites—then of what avail to lock him in a cloister? Better for him to live a godly married life at his own fireside. Yet he is not made to feel any sense of failure or degradation in returning to the householder's life. It is equally honorable, he is told, and if properly lived, may lead to high spiritual attainment; but the ideal remains none the less clear in every Hindu mind that the highest state is, as Christ put it, not to keep all the commandments as a member of the social body, but to "sell all thou hast, give to the poor, take up thy cross and follow me." He who goes away sorrowing is not yet ready to pass on to higher things; but he who hears the call, and with a heart aflame with eager longing follows it, for him all the discipline and denial which the vocation itself involves, become a blessed privilege, which, without need of coercion, he practices for himself.

When months or years of selfless service have subdued the ego and a first vision of the Divine has fortified the *Brahmacharin* in his life of detachment, then the Guru bids him make ready to set out on the ruder way of the *Sannyasi*—one who renounces all. Mixing a special natural clay or powdered rock with water, he dyes his cloth the bright orange, typical of the flame of wisdom and renunciation; he shaves his head; and receiving a begging bowl from his Master's hand, he sets out to beg food, which he cooks and offers to his Guru. He then receives the last solemn rites of *Sannyasa* (complete renunciation) and taking his begging bowl and staff, he goes forth alone, with the parting injunction from his Guru to follow his staff, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and never remaining more than three days in any one place, lest some new bondage of attach-

ment seize upon him. Through this first period this staff becomes the symbol of renunciation; and since in shape it suggests the Christian bishop's crozier, one is tempted to ask whether it was not the cross or crozier of renunciation which Christ bade the man take up to follow Him.

The first thought of the young *Sannyasi*, or monk, thus thrown out upon himself, is to make a pilgrimage on foot to all the holy shrines of India. Fulfilling literally the injunction of Jesus to his disciples, he wanders under the burning heat of the sun or beaten by the storm, carrying "neither purse nor scrip." One such Swami known to me, while crossing the great desert of Gujrat in the dense darkness of a tropical night, was overtaken by a band of rude hill men who searched him in vain for money. Wishing to see what manner of man it could be thus alone in the vast waste of sand with not even a *pice* (one sixth of a cent) on his person, they struck a light, and when they saw the youthful face under the shorn head, the orange robe and the little Gita in his hand, they prostrated before him in humble apology and begged to carry him in safety across the desert. For even the worst criminal in India bows down before the *Sannyasi*, and no one commands so much respect as one who has renounced all for the sake of the Ideal. Still to-day, when many go clothed in the yellow cloth who do not wear it worthily, the Hindu welcomes, honors and feeds worthy and unworthy alike, saying: "It is the state of renunciation which I honor. If the monk is not a true *Sannyasi*, that lies between him and God. It is not for me to judge."

Nor are these wholly selfish days thus spent in humble pilgrimage. Through every village and hamlet unconsciously the *Sannyasi* carries the

message of the Lord, and they are the God-appointed teachers of the people. As Swami Vivekananda declares, in his "Inspired Talks," "The beggar monk carries religion to every door." Has any one a doubt or question? At once he brings it to some *Sannyasi* resting under a tree by the road-side or in a shaded temple porch; and often a householder will beg such a holy man to live with him for months at a time and become the teacher of himself and his family. Not men only but women, too, thus wander, so safe that the most timid have gone on pilgrimages of two years' duration, or more, fearless and joyous in the companionship of the Lord. The married woman may go veiled, but the *Sannyasini*, who has consecrated herself to God, walks freely with face uncovered, for no one looks upon her except with deepest reverence. Many of them, too, have been teachers. Some of the great Vedic Scriptures were indeed written by women, and it was from such a learned and pious *Sannyasini* that Sri Ramakrishna took his first lessons.

The early monastic system of India was free from the trammels of organization. It was Buddha who first created the fixed institution of the monastery; and nearly all the monastic systems of the West can be traced to Buddhism. Having broken the crystallization in which hereditary caste had imprisoned society, he laid the foundation of a new and equally dangerous social crystallization in making the cloister the one sure refuge from the ills of life. No one ever preached a loftier ethical ideal than he; but as time went on and thousands gathered within convent and monastery walls, the old ideal of *Vairagyam* was lost, corruptions crept in one by one, until India was sinking under the weight of them and a mighty re-

former—Sankaracharya—sprang up, swept the degenerated remnants of Buddhism out of India and raised aloft once more the pure ideals of the Vedas. The monastery, however, remained, cleansed and purified, and still remains. Not a monastery, however, as in the West, with Gothic cloisters filled with hooded monks, but a simple, barren house, where the one fixed resident is God, while the other inmates go and come, scarcely a handful there at any one time. It is the worship and service of God which determines the whole routine of the day and all is done for Him as if He were an actual Presence in the house. All food is prepared for Him and offered to Him first, all flowers grown in the garden are solely to be laid at His feet at the hours of worship. Is a new class to be begun? The text-book is first laid on the altar and the Lord's blessing asked. Is a new work to be undertaken? The plan is first told to God in the chapel. No one leaves the monastery without taking "the permission of God"; no one returns without coming to the shrine to tell Him of it. The monks live like children in the Mother's house,—going off for long periods in solitary wandering or in loving service to others, then coming back at intervals to rest and pray at the Divine Mother's feet. It is a life of true freedom, in which renunciation and service are the watchwords and God-vision the goal.

REPORT OF THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service at Benares, which has recently come to us, is of special interest this year, since it records the formal opening of the new and

model hospital buildings erected for the use of the Home. Remembering the modest beginning of this admirable work, one realizes of what true love and selfless devotion these buildings with all their modern equipment stand as monuments. An earnest-hearted disciple of Swami Vivekananda, passing along a street of Benares one day, chanced upon an old woman lying ill and dying. With tender hands he lifted her, gave her what care he could, and at last found refuge for her in a distant hospital, already crowded to its doors. Then it occurred to him that other such pilgrims, come to the Holy City to pass their last days in prayer and worship, might be lying thus unseen; so the began to wander up and down the narrow, winding streets of Benaris, seeking the sick and suffering. A band of eager helpers gathered around him and from this "originated the work of relief, which silently begun ten years ago, has grown from year to year and now embraces in its operations social problems, the solution of which has been the despair of statesmen and philanthropists." Owing to the limited quarters of the Home heretofore, it has not been possible to receive more than a few hundred indoor patients during the year, scarcely a handful of those seeking admission. Now, however, the number can be largely increased. The Institution's main channel of usefulness in the past has been the help carried to the aged and suffering in their own homes. Benares is full of old, decrepit men and women, who, having exhausted what little property they have and unable to maintain themselves, lead lives of the direst poverty, often without food and a prey to slow disease. The members of the Home go out

daily seeking such cases of misery, adding them to the ever-lengthening list of those to whom each day a supply of food is carried. During the year 5,953 such starving, suffering persons were fed, nursed and given medical care in their own accustomed surroundings, which means so much to the aged. While one portion of the workers has thus been busy in loving service, another group has spent its time in going from door to door to beg the rice and money needed for distribution. In this way the work is carried on wholly by voluntary contributions—gathered from all sources—for as the Home takes no account of caste, creed or nationality in the service it offers, it has a claim on all classes. At present an effort is also being made to enlarge the field of usefulness by opening a Refuge for the homeless and destitute, who, although bent with age, have often no place to lay their heads.

* * *

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre in Boston on February 24th. It began at 11 in the morning with a lecture on the life of the great Teacher. At 5 in the afternoon there was a devotional service consisting chiefly of music and meditation, and at 8 o'clock Swami Paramananda delivered an impressive address on the main lessons to be drawn from Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings.

The offerings of flowers and fruits brought by the students were so generous that they completely covered the platform and altar on which was placed the picture of Sri Ramakrishna. This remained through the Sunday services which were also made a part of the celebration.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II APRIL, 1913 No. 4

Among all the difficult problems which perplex the human intellect, the most difficult is man himself. Whence has he come? Whither is he going? Is this the whole of his life or does he continue to live after death? The past is invisible, the future is invisible; he stands helpless in an ever-shifting present, not knowing why he is here or what power is guiding him. He sees all around him differences in character and condition: some healthy, happy and prosperous; others miserable, perhaps even penniless and starving. Why these inequalities? Is the Lord partial? If some are happy and others unhappy, there must be some reason. Vedanta says, it is a man's own Karma. His present condition is the fruit of his past thoughts and deeds. Whatever he has sown, that he must reap. This is an inevitable law. What he deserves he gets. Nothing can take from him what he has earned, and nothing can bring him anything else.

We may ask: In the case of a blind crippled baby, from whence does his Karma come? Also from his past. If we believe in a future existence, we cannot help believing in a pre-existence: for if the present forms the basis of a future life, so this life must rest upon some previous existence, of which it was once the future. Life does not begin

or end with this gross material body. There exists a subtle body consisting of mind, intellect, the individual ego and the vital forces. All our Karma is stored up there and through that moulds our future destiny. This explains why there are such distinctions and differences. All beings cannot be equal because they do not act or live in the same way.

But which among all our different thoughts and actions determine our future environment and condition? Lord Krishna declares in the Gita: "Whatever state one dwells upon in the end, at the time of leaving the body, that alone he attains, because of his constant thought of that state." We may say: Then it does not matter what we do during our lifetime if we think of God at the moment of our departure. But we cannot deceive God. We cannot possibly hold our mind on any unaccustomed thought at the time of death. Dying means separation of the spirit from the body, a process of acute pain. At that precarious moment to think of anything which we have not lived and thought of all our life is impossible. That is the reason why we should guard well our thoughts and deeds. "He who, at the time of death, thinking of Me (the Lord) alone, goes forth, leaving the body, he attains unto My Being. Therefore at all times think of Me and fight (perform actions). Having offered thy mind and intellect to Me, thou shalt without doubt come unto Me. . . . By the steadfast practice of meditation with unwavering mind and constant thought of the Supreme Divine Being, one goes to Him. (He who thus meditates on Him) at the time of death, with unflinching mind, possessed with devotion, he attains to the Supreme Divine Being."

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

As a man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others which are new, similarly the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new. —*Bhagavad-Gita.*

Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? . . . Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back? —*Lessing.*

None but hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the realm of reality. —*Huxley.*

Seeing, then, that it is clear, that whatever moves itself is eternal, can there be any doubt that the soul is so? For everything is inanimate which is moved by an external force; but everything which is animate is moved by an interior force, which also belongs to itself. For this is the peculiar nature and power of the soul; and if the soul be the only thing in the whole world which has the power of self-motion, then certainly it never had a beginning, and therefore it is eternal. —*Cicero.*

They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. . . . The soul then being immortal, and

having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or the world below, has knowledge of them all, and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything; for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in her eliciting, or as men say learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all inquiry and all learning is but recollection.

—*Plato.*

To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously together with his deed; and having obtained the end of whatever deed he does on earth, he returns again from that world which is the temporary reward of his deed.

So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital energies do not depart elsewhere,—being Brahman (one with the Supreme) he goes to Brahman.

—*Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.*

The caterpillar gets itself imprisoned in its self-woven cocoon. So the worldly soul gets itself entangled in the meshes of its desires. But when the caterpillar develops into a bright and beautiful butterfly, it rends the cocoon and enjoys freedom. So the worldly soul can be free from the meshes of Maya (birth and rebirth) by developing the wings of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (renunciation).

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

EVOLUTION AND REINCARNATION

Lecture by Sister Devamata

Grave deliberation is the sign of wisdom everywhere. Whatever is well done is deliberately done. The impulsive, quick action is the inferior or incomplete action. Efficient work is always deliberate; and the more permanent to be the result, the quieter and slower the process. Thus in nature we find organic growth the slowest because it is to be the most lasting. The mushroom that springs up in a night shrivels before sunset. The butterfly that is born so easily flies quickly to its death. The lower forms of life have short periods of parturition, because they need to create a body scarcely more than for a summer holiday; while the higher forms of life that are to persist through winter and summer, through cold and heat, are slowly, carefully formed. But nowhere is nature guilty of haste or thoughtless action. Always each step of evolution and growth is wisely counted and then taken with quiet deliberation, for to her a thousand years are as a day.

If this be true in the lower realms of her activity, how much more must it be in dealing with her greatest achievement, the human soul. The highest thing that we have yet perceived on this earth must be the longest and the slowest in its development. Think how long it takes us to master our bodies. Look at the little child scarcely acquainted with its hands and feet, not knowing the use of its senses, crying for the moon as for the candle flame within reach, unable to make use of this instrument, the body, until day after day it has examined it, moved it, studied it and thus grown little by little into an acquaintance and understanding of it.

Then how much longer does it take to make

acquaintance with its mind. How slow and nearly unconscious are those first processes of thought. With what gentle wisdom must it be led from a to b, from b to c, from one to two, from two to three. And still slower is the quiet, steady development of the power of reason, of the higher intellection. How tardily does a man become a reasonable being. For how many years does he move along the line of his impulses, yielding to anger and impatience, impelled by his desires, led to reason only after he has blundered, and then making his process of reasoning little more than the review of his mistake. Scarcely indeed has he begun to develop the power of reason and discrimination before his body is aged and ready to totter into the grave.

Yet there lies beyond still another realm that he has not touched. Perhaps when grief has rubbed away the scales from his eyes, when disappointment has cleansed and purified his heart, when his body has gone beyond the power of satisfaction of desire, when the senses are growing weary and act slowly, perhaps then does he begin dimly to perceive that part of his being which is yet in embryo, but about which he knows nothing. Can you say that, when this life is ended and he lays his body down, his chance is over? Nature who wastes no effort, Nature who never halts until she has brought even the smallest seed to its fullest development, Nature who works quietly and steadily all through the summer, not merely to create the fruit of that summer, but to leave the bud of the next season ready, as the chestnut wrapped in its fur coat to guard it through the winter: can you say that careful Mother Nature leaves this her greatest task unfinished? Go out into the woods in the

late autumn, brush aside the dead leaves and you will find all the little green leaves of the next year's growth there hidden close to the ground. Is it possible that when she provides so well for the plants and the fruits of the field, she wastes this highest fruit, the human soul? It is not possible. Brush aside those leaves of the dying life and you will find already there the first little green shoots of a new existence. Not merely after the body is gone, but already in this life is the embryo of the new life formed.

Man is not dying when he drops this body, he is being born again. Evolution is going on unchecked. Because the leaves have fallen, it does not mean that the tree has stopped living or growing. And this body is like the leaves. We think of it as the whole garment of man and imagine the soul standing bare, uncovered, naked when the body goes, whereas it is but the outer dress. Man is covered by a subtler garment within. His character, this sum total of his deeds, his thoughts, his past experiences, these are woven into a finer, more indestructible garment that continues to clothe him. His character is his real covering, and this body so thinly veils it that every change of character shines through. A face that before was heavy and lifeless will grow bright and beautiful; a body that moved slowly gains new grace, new ease and activity; senses that were dull become quick and intelligent. It is this inner body, this inner garment that is man's real dress and this he takes with him. Just as when the leaves fall, the tree draws all its sap down into the roots to prepare for a new season of activity; so man, at the dropping of his body, gathers together all his vital forces, all the fruits of his experience and draws them

down into the roots of his being to prepare for a time of new growth. As it is said in one of the Upanishads: "And as policemen, magistrates, equerries and governors gather round a king who is departing, thus do all the *pranas* (vital energies) gather round the Self at the time of death, when a man is thus going to expire . . . and he taking with him those elements of light, descends into the heart. And when he thus departs, life (the chief *prana*) departs after him and when life thus departs, all the other vital energies depart after it. Then both his knowledge and his work take hold of him, and his acquaintance with former things."

The tree, however, remains ever the same. Man moves on. Why? Because he is a conscious germ of life. A tree does not yet know its own soul, while man does. It is but the blind servant of evolution. Man is an active co-partner. We can all be co-workers with Nature. Not merely can we die and be reborn as many times as we choose, but we can determine the grades of our evolution. Why we came into this great wheel of the universe to gain experience from life to life, we shall know when we return. That question, as Swami Vivekananda says, can only be answered where it is never asked. But that we have come, that the germ of life, in a momentary independence, set out from the Absolute as an individual soul and is now making the circle, so much we know. And through eons each one of us has been travelling up and up. We are in the condition of a man who, standing on a high bluff, has plunged into the ocean with such force that it has carried him to the bottom, and he is struggling to regain the surface. So we have plunged into the ocean of duality which we call matter and are now battling to rise out of its depths and

save ourselves. We think it is our own special environment or association which so smothers and oppresses us. But it is more than that. It is the entire realm of duality, not merely the limited fragment of it where we dwell. Matter is too dense for us to live in; it is not our natural element.

We can never forget the thing that we have been. Why? Because all of this is destructible and that is indestructible. The Soul will not be forgotten. It remembers itself in us and reminds us of itself at every turn. And so we push on and on. When we would give up and go down like shipwrecked mariners, still it drives us on. We cannot relinquish the desire for life. We cannot abandon the conviction that we must live, that we cannot die. So we continue to struggle. It is this which explains the whole course of evolution. The man who dwells altogether in the external and is content to study phenomena alone, perceives Nature operating only in the realm of effects. He watches the battle of forces without understanding the cause or the purpose of it. He sees all Nature fighting, but does not know for what she is fighting or why she began the fight. He believes that the germ of life is pushed on from form to form by the pressure of environment and association. He does not perceive that within, which impels it and which is independent of all outer circumstance. It was not the pursuit of the larger fish which transformed the fins of the little fish into wings; it was the quickening of a new consciousness that life was its birthright, which under the outer pressure expressed itself in a higher material form.

It is always that something within which is the cause of growth and which utilizes the outer

condition. When we take an acorn and put it into the ground, it is not the ground or the water or the sun that makes that acorn an oak. Why is it always an oak? Why is the peach always a peach? The earth is the same, the water is the same, the sun is the same. The difference is in the seed. It has its own ideal. It has its definite course of action laid out. It has said to itself: "I shall be an oak, and any amount of earth and water and air and sunshine will never make me into anything but an oak." Thus it springs up and utilizes all of its environment to fulfill the ideal that is within itself. So has it been from the beginning.

Evolution is nothing at all but: first, a subconscious incarnation; next, a conscious but involuntary reincarnation; then a voluntary and superconscious reincarnation. Through all the subconscious stages of evolution the germ of life moves, as it were, mechanically, from the very force of the power that has dropped it into matter. It goes on, a blind slave to the laws of nature. Like a little child carried in arms, clothed and fed and housed by the mother, fulfilling the law of the mother, having no volition of its own; so the soul in this first stage, the babyhood of evolution, is carried in the arms of Mother Nature. It is she who determines what shall be its dress and food and condition. Thus guarded and directed, it grows quietly up into self-consciousness. When it reaches this second stage, that of self-consciousness, then the mother puts it down and says: "Now you must learn to be a man and take care of yourself." From that moment freedom of choice is ours. We can create our own condition and environment. But we are reluctant to grow up. We prefer to go on living like igno-

rant, irresponsible children, with no power of choice. Even though we have been given human bodies, we persist in our animal tendencies; and so we come back again and again, just as idle children are sent back to the same class in school year after year. Only when the Divine Mother has reminded us many times through thwarted desire, through bitter blows and disappointment, of our lost opportunities, do we wake up and listen to her admonition: "Give up this narrow measure of things. Do not identify yourself with this little earthly life. Know that your life is eternal. Live in that and be free."

So long as we believe that we have but one short life in which to work out our salvation, or even to satisfy our desires and ambitions, we are bound to live nervously and fearfully. There can be no calmness or majesty in our manner or behaviour. The time is too short. We must perforce be always hurried and troubled. But when we awaken to the fact that this life is not a thing in itself; that its little joys and sorrows have no independent value, but that their whole purpose is to prepare us for something bigger; at once we grow strong and brave; and the daily round of homely tasks gains new significance and dignity. Then the sorrows are just as useful to us as the joys, the disappointments serve us as well as the gratifications, since all alike are training us for the larger life. We no longer weigh experience by its effect upon us today. We measure it by its eternal effect upon us. And we seize every experience, whether painful or pleasurable, which will hasten the evolution of our soul through higher and higher forms of life. Our one concern is to take advantage of the precious opportunity, which the Most High has given us, to evolve into that

which will be as perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect. What intense interest does life gain for us! What tremendous opportunities awaken before us! How quickly do our standards grow! To be called the man of one life seems to us an insult. We who have outlived universes! Who have transcended all time and all creation and are living in eternity today! For the man who can look at life from this height, the momentary sorrow is no more than a flash of lightning across a dark sky. There may follow the low roll of grief, but quickly the storm breaks and the sun shines again in his heart.

Already astronomy has reduced the earth to a point in space without length, breadth or magnitude. Can we not rise and reduce this little life of ours to such a speck in time? If we can, then we shall pass over every difficulty as a man walks over pebbles! We shall be able to brush aside every trouble and annoyance as a man brushes aside a cobweb! But we must not look at this life in relation to that greater life, because the nearer thing will always seem the bigger to us; let us look at that life in its relation to this, and at once this one is dwarfed and reduced to its proper proportion. Live in the consciousness of the eternal. That is the secret. Let a man fully grasp the doctrine of Reincarnation and it will help him as nothing else will, to transcend all this temporary life. It will carry him out of today into eternity, away from all that is ephemeral and fleeting into that which endures. It will make him understand that he is living as a man travels in a railroad train. The man buys his ticket here to reach his destination there. The stations along the road, what does he care about them? He is going on a journey. Even if the

journey is a hard one, he bears it, saying: "To-morrow it will be over and I shall have reached my destination." He lives not in the objects which he passes quickly on the way; his consciousness is fixed on his journey's end.

The fact of Reincarnation comes to remind us that we are travelling a mighty journey, with perfection, unending bliss, infinite knowledge, eternal life as the destination. If we think of that, if we keep that in our mind, these stations along the way, the passing events of these little lives, will scarcely count for us. They only mark the progress of the journey, and we are content to stop and equally content to go on; what happens in between does not matter. Christ said: "He who loses his life for My sake shall find it," that is, he who loses the consciousness of this small fleeting, temporal life, gains the consciousness of that one unbroken sweep of eternal life—not an eternal life in some future state, but an eternal life that we have now; for that which is eternal, infinite and indestructible must be existent at this moment.

You are living in that, and you have cut it up into little pieces, and you cling to one small fragment which you call this human life. Take it all. Do not be content with a fragment of it. Gather it all into your consciousness now. Live by that. Think of this life constantly as just one little piece of unbroken existence which is yours. Think of every little trouble and sorrow in this life as but a tiny bubble on that great stream of existence. How quickly will man transcend his griefs! How quickly will he wipe out his desires, when he grows up into the realization of what he is and what he has. It is foolish to try to wean a child away from his toys. He will cry

and cry and then get a few little sticks and a bit of string and make for himself a new toy. The only way is to expand his consciousness, to interest him in something bigger, and then he drops his toy of himself. That, too, is our only way. Keep the bigger thing constantly in mind and grow up to it.

We must seek everything possible to stimulate the evolution of our higher faculties. We must seek an association, an environment that will hasten the expansion of our consciousness. We cannot lose a single opportunity of coming into the presence of one who has awakened to the responsibility of this higher evolution, who has gone out of human embodiment into divine embodiment, even though he may still wear this human body. Every time we come into the presence of one who has transcended this merely human consciousness, we have given ourselves a push upward. Every time we neglect the opportunity, we have delayed our evolution. Every time that we take up a newspaper and idly read its columns, when perhaps we might have taken a Scripture and read one life-giving word, we have arrested our evolution. Every time that we worry and trouble over our passing trials, every time we give reality to these outer conditions that tomorrow may be gone for us, we have arrested our evolution.

Reincarnation is not counted merely from birth to birth. Every day we are re-embodied. Every night we die and the way we live today determines our embodiment of tomorrow. Have we conquered self for one instant today, tomorrow we are a bigger person. Have we given way to the little self, given way to its demands upon us, felt a greater concern for this body of flesh than

for that greater body of character, we have arrested our development. Stop and think of it. Every moment is a death and a rebirth. Are we determining these reincarnations in an ever mightier chain? Is each link bigger and stronger than the last one? Is each day's body and mind and soul-life a conscious widening and expanding of the one of the day before?

It is time that we stopped to think of this. Not only can we dwarf this little life into nothingness by thinking of infinity, but we can expand every moment of this life into eternity and infinity by gaining a consciousness of its import and possibilities. As we move along the street, as we do our daily tasks, as we pass our hours of leisure, as we study and strive, if we say to ourselves: "This moment is a part of eternity, shall I use it for infinite and eternal things or for merely finite and temporary ends?" If we do that, we shall put into every moment a thoughtfulness and wisdom which will make our life here and now, in this one birth, the completion and fulfillment of all desire, not the desire for outer things, but the fulfillment of that one supreme desire of the soul. —to attain perfection and liberation.

REPORTS

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre of Boston on Monday, March 10th. Services began in the early morning and continued throughout the day. From four to five in the afternoon passages from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna were read and explained, after which an hour was spent in meditation and chanting. The chief public meeting of the day took place in the evening at eight.

There was a large gathering and the Swami Paramananda, after music and meditation, delivered an address in which he said in brief: What makes Sri Ramakrishna stand out from among men? Why do we pay tribute to him? Born in a remote village, of poor parents, with scarcely more than a rudimentary education, performing the modest duties of a priest in an isolated temple on the Ganges, why did the greatest minds of the times seek him out and ask to be taught of him? It was because, not content with mere book-learning, he had gone to the fountainhead and gained his knowledge first hand. He first knew, then he talked; and as a result, although he spoke the simplest language, every word he uttered was full of mightiness. In every living being there is a soul-consciousness which can only be convinced by true soul-wisdom. He who knows God has the whole treasure of this wisdom at his command, and such was the case with this great Teacher. Yet he had no desire to gain recognition. He refused to accept honor, he shrank from name and fame, because he never forgot that he was nothing but an instrument in the hands of the Divine. He came to show us how we may realize the Truth. His life was a practical illustration of one who knows. Material science there are many who can teach; but very few can teach the science of the spirit, because it requires the living of the life. Having reached the centre of things, Sri Ramakrishna was able to embrace and understand all religions, all phases of thought. He knew God so well that he could accept everything. The man who has a partial view of things, disputes, differentiates and condemns; but Sri Ramakrishna was an embodiment of universal tolerance. To him all

creeds were but different radii converging to the one centre,—God. Let a man have sincere faith and steadfast devotion and he must gain Truth, no matter what the form of religion he practises to reach it. Realization was his watchword. A man must know before he can teach or help others. He must have the badge of authority which experience alone can give. But if he dedicates his life to an ideal and serves it truly, he may die unknown, but his life will surely bring blessing to the world.

A brief address by Sister Devamata followed, after which the blessed fruits were distributed to all present.

The Talks on The Great Scriptures of India, given by Swami Paramananda at the special Sunday evening meetings through March, were greatly appreciated by all who attended them. The essential spirit and teaching of the Vedas was the subject of the first Talk; in the second, the Swami explained the difference in character and purpose between the Karma-Kanda or Work-portion of the Vedas and the Upanishads or Knowledge-portion. The third Talk was on the Ramayanam and the fourth on the Mahabharatam, the two great sacred epics of India.

The Swami sailed for Europe on March 29th. Friends are awaiting him at Naples, and his plan of work for the summer will then be definitely formed. During his absence the meetings and classes at the Vedanta Centre of Boston will be conducted by Sister Devamata. The Tuesday evening class will be devoted to the study of the Bhagavad Gita; the Talks on the Upanishads will continue at the Thursday class, which will

again meet in the afternoon at four o'clock. The Sunday Vesper Service at five o'clock will be resumed and the subjects for the lectures at the Sunday morning Service will be: April 6th, "Psychic Power and Spirituality"; April 13th, "Control of Mind through the Breath"; April 20th, "The Practice of Unselfishness"; April 27th, "Building of Character."

The Mayavati Charitable Dispensary has just issued its report for 1912. This work is carried on under the direction of the Advaita Ashrama or Peace Retreat, founded by the Swami Vivekananda in the foot-hills of the Himalayas not far from Almora, and now one of the most active centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Dispensary was opened nine years ago. "Situated in the midst of the Himalayan forests stretching for miles and miles and only relieved by very sparsely populated villages here and there, the value of the work done should not be gauged merely by the number of patients, but by the urgency of their demands and the extreme helplessness of their condition, which we annot emphasize too strongly here". In all 406 patients were treated; of these 316 were Hindus, 81 Mahommedans and 9 Europeans. A large donation of medicines helped much toward the care of these; and a "German friend" contributed 700 rupees (about $225) towards the general expenses, besides 1300 rupees (about $435) towards the building fund.

Swami Virajananda, in charge of the Ashrama, announces that "the construction of the permanent quarters for the Dispensary and the indoor patients has been taken in hand by clearing, levelling and

banking up a suitable site adjoining the Ashrama compound and by building the foundations". But to meet the increasing need, the original plan of a one-storied house with three rooms has been changed to a two-storied house which will contain a dispensary room, an examining room, a room for indoor patients, a room for the doctor in charge, a bath-room and also a kitchen separate from the main building, as is the usual custom in India. This will necessitate a much larger outlay, for which more funds are needed.

At the recent regular meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission Boy's Society at Madanapalli, India, the new President, Mr. Subramaniam Iyer, delivered an instructive address on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. "Man-making," he said, was their chief import, because they showed to every human being how he could bring out the latent Divinity within him and thus realize perfection. The man who through any path of spiritual practice can perceive the Divine within him, that one becomes a free soul. At the close the President exhorted the members of the Society to keep ever before them the ideal of service preached by Swami Vivekananda and to rise above those social differences which have in recent times obscured the religious ideals of India.

Swami Vivekananda's lecture on "The Nature of the Soul and Its Goal," recently published in two numbers of The Message, has been brought out in pamphlet form and is now on sale. (Price, 10 cents; postage, 1 cent.)

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. I MAY, 1912 No. 5

It is possible for us all to earn spiritual knowledge, if we work with the same diligence as we do to earn our livelihood; and for the Truth-desiring this is the most practical thing in life. The ordinary man works with decision and hope in his worldly pursuit, because he is sure that through his labor he can obtain all his material needs. Similarly, the spiritually-minded man, to supply his needs on the higher plane, must work with the same persistence and confidence. He must also regard these needs to be as real, as important and as attainable as his physical wants; for we can never sincerely devote our heart and soul to an end which we believe to be unattainable.

Our whole idea of what is practical and what is unpractical arises from our acquaintance or non-acquaintance with the different spheres of life. We are all conscious of our bodily existence, hence the body seems to us the greatest reality and we consider it most practical to earn food and clothes for it. But why should we deem it less practical to earn our spiritual livelihood? In the one case we are laboring for the life which perishes; in the other for the life which is eternal. As we grow more familiar with the realm of our spiritual consciousness, we become more and more convinced

of its reality, as also of its practical utility; because increase of knowledge means increase of power. Therefore the one who has attained the highest knowledge—that of the spirit—must be the strongest and most efficient man; and he alone can render true service in all spheres of life.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

As a lamp cannot burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God.

As the street-minstrel with one hand plays upon the tambur and with the other strikes a drum, all the while chanting a song; so, thou world-bound soul, perform all thy worldly duties with thy hands, but never forget to repeat and glorify the name of the Lord with all thy heart.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Let thy desire be the vision of God, thy fear the loss of Him, thy sorrow His absence, and thy joy in that which may take thee to Him; and thy life shall be in great peace.

—*St. Thcresa.*

The soul needeth no other birth than a turning toward God, and an entering into Him. As soon as the centre of all being is apprehended, there ariseth a joy in the heart that surpasseth all other.

—*Jacob Boehme.*

When, therefore, the soul is shone upon by God as if at noonday, and when it is wholly and entirely filled with that light which is appreciable only by the understanding and by being wholly surrounded by its brilliancy, the soul is free from all shade or darkness.

—*Philo of Alexandria.*

He, therefore, who knows It (the Self), after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient and collected, sees self in Self and sees all as Self. Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. Free from evil, free from stain, free from doubt, he becomes a true *Brahmana* (God-knower).

— *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

If you see a man undaunted by dangers, undisturbed by passions, happy when fortune frowns, calm in the midst of storms, will you not be filled with reverence for him? Will you not say that here is something too great and grand to be regarded as of the same nature as the trivial body in which it dwells? A divine force has descended here—a heavenly power moves a soul so wonderful, so calm, one which passes through all life as though it were of small account, and smiles at all our hopes and fears. Nothing so great can exist without the help of God, and therefore in the main it belongs to that from which it came down. Just as the rays of the sun touch the earth, but belong to that from which they are sent, so a great and holy spirit, sent here that we may have a more intimate knowledge of deity, lives indeed in our midst, but remains in contact with its source. On that it depends, thither its eyes are turned, thither its life tends: among men it dwells as a noble guest. What then, is this soul? One which relies upon no goodness but its own. What is proper to man is his soul and the perfect reason in the soul; for man is a rational animal; therefore his highest good is reached when he is filled with that of which he is born.

—*Seneca.*

RELIGION, ITS METHODS AND PURPOSE

Unpublished Lecture by

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Concluded from April Number)

This (the training of prophets) is the great work that lies before us, and consciously or unconsciously, all the great systems of religion are working toward this one great goal, only with this difference: that in many religions you will find they declare that this direct perception of spirituality is not to be had in this life, that man must die, and after his death there will come a time in another world, when he will have visions of spirituality, when he will realize things which now he must believe. But the Vedanta will ask all people who make such assertions: "Then how do you know that spirituality exists?"—and they will have to answer that there must have been always certain, particular people, who, even in this life, have got a glimpse of things which are unknown and unknowable.

Even this makes a difficulty. If they were peculiar people, having this power simply by chance, we have no right to believe in them. It would be a sin to believe in anything that is by chance, because we cannot know it. What is meant by knowledge? Destruction of peculiarity. Suppose a boy goes into a street or a menagerie, and sees a peculiarly shaped animal. He does not know what it is. Then he goes to a country where there are hundreds like that one and he is satisfied, he knows what the species is. Our knowledge is knowing the principle. Our non-knowledge is finding the particular without reference to principle. When we find one case or a few cases separate from the principle, without any reference to the principle, we are in darkness and do not know. Now, if these prophets, as they say, were peculiar persons,

who alone had the right to catch a glimpse of that which is beyond and no one else has the right, we should not believe in these prophets, because they are peculiar cases without any reference to a principle. We can only believe in them if we ourselves become prophets.

You all of you hear about the various jokes that get into the newspapers about the sea-serpent; and why should it be so? Because a few persons, at long intervals, came and told their stories about the sea-serpent and others never see it. They have no particular principle to which to refer, and therefore the world does not believe. If a man comes to me and says a prophet disappeared into the air and went through it, I have the right to see it. I ask him: "Did your father or grand-father see it?" "Oh, no," he replies, "but five thousand years ago such a thing happened"—and if I do not believe it, I have to be barbecued through eternity.

What a mass of superstition this is, and its effect is to degrade man from his divine nature to that of brutes. Why was reason given us, if we have to believe? Is it not tremendously blasphemous to believe against reason? What right have we not to use the greatest gift that God has given to us? I am sure God will pardon a man who will use his reason and cannot believe, rather than a man who believes blindly rather than use the faculties He has given him. He simply degrades his nature and goes down to the level of the beasts, degrades his senses and dies. We must reason, and when reason shows us these prophets and great men about which the ancient books speak in every country, we will believe in them when we see such prophets among ourselves. We shall then find that they were not peculiar men, but only illustrations of

certain principles. They worked, and that principle expressed itself naturally, and we shall have to work to express that principle in us. They were prophets, we will believe, when we become prophets. They were seers of things divine. They could go beyond the bounds of senses and catch a glimpse of that which is beyond. We shall believe that, when we are able to do it ourselves and not before.

That is the one principle of Vedanta. Vedanta declares that religion is here and now, because the question of this life and that life, of life and death, this world and that world, is merely one of superstition and prejudice. There is no break in time beyond what we make. What difference is there between ten and twelve o'clock, except what we make by certain changes in nature? Time flows on the same. So what is meant by this life and that life? It is only a question of time, and what is lost in time may be made up by speed in work. So, says the Vedanta, religion is to be realized now. And for you to become religious means that you will start without any religion, work your way up and realize things, see things for yourself; and when you have done that, then, and then alone, you have religion. Before that you are no better than atheists, or worse, because the atheist is sincere; he stands up and says: "I do not know about these things," while those others do not know, but go about the world, saying: "We are very religious people." What religion they have no one knows, because they have swallowed some grand-mother's story and priests have asked them to believe these things; if they do not, then let them take care. That is how it is going.

Realization of religion is the only way. Each one of us will have to discover. Of what use are these books, then, these Bibles of the world? They

are of great use, just as maps are of a country. I have seen maps of England all my life before I came here and they were great helps to me in forming some sort of conception of England. Yet, when I arrived in this country, what a difference between the maps and the country itself. So is the difference between realization and the Scriptures. These books are only the maps, the experiences of past men, as a motive power to us to dare to make the same experiences and discover in the same way, if not better.

This is the first principle of the Vedanta, that realization is religion, and he who realizes is the religious man; and he who does not, is no better than he who says, "I do not know," if not worse, because the other says, "I do not know," and is sincere. In this realization, again, we shall be helped very much by these books, not only as guides, but as giving instructions and exercises; for every science has its own particular method of investigation. You will find many persons in this world who will say, "I wanted to become religious, I wanted to realize these things, but I have not been able, so I do not believe anything." Even among the educated you will find these. Large numbers of people will tell you, "I have tried to be religious all my life, but there is nothing in it." At the same time you will find this phenomenon. Suppose a man is a chemist, a great scientific man. He comes and tells you this. If you say to him: "I do not believe anything about chemistry, because I have all my life tried to become a chemist, and do not find anything in it." He will ask, "When did you try?" "When I went to bed, I repeated, 'Oh, chemistry come to me,' and it never came." That is the very same thing. The chemist laughs at you and says: "Oh, that is not the way. Why did you

not go to the laboratory and get all the acids and alkalis and burn your hands from time to time. That alone would have taught you." Do you take the same trouble with religion? Every science has its own method of learning and religion is to be learned the same way. It has its own methods, and here is something we can learn, and must learn, from all the ancient prophets of the world, every one who has found something, who has realized religion. They will give us the methods, the particular methods, through which alone we shall be able to realize the truths of religion. They struggled all their lives, discovered particular methods of mental culture, bringing the mind to a certain state, the finest perception, and through that they perceived the truths of religion. To become religious, to perceive religion, feel it, to become a prophet, we have to take up these methods and practice them; and then if we find nothing, we shall have the right to say: "There is nothing in religion, for I have tried and failed."

This is the practical side of all religions. You will find it in every Bible in the world. Not only do they teach principles and doctrines, but, in the lives of the Saints you find practices; and when it is not expressly laid down as a rule of conduct, you will always find in the lives of these prophets that even they regulated their eating and drinking sometimes. Their whole living, their practice, their method, everything was different from the masses who surrounded them, and these were the causes that gave them the higher light, the vision of the Divine, and we, if we want to have this vision, must be ready to take up these methods. It is practice, work, that will bring us up to that. The plan of Vedanta, therefore, is: first, to lay down the principles, map out for us the goal, and then to teach

us the method by which to arrive at the goal, to understand and realize religion.

Again, these methods must be various. Seeing that we are so various in our natures, the same method can scarcely be applied to any two of us in the same manner. We have idiosyncrasies in our minds, each one of us, so the method ought to be varied. Some, you will find, are very emotional in their nature, some very philosophical, rational; others cling to all sorts of ritualistic forms, want things which are concrete. You will find that one man does not care for any ceremony or form or anything of the sort; they are like death to him. And another man carries a load of amulets all over his body, he is so fond of these symbols. Another man who is emotional in his nature, wants to show acts of charity to everyone; he weeps, he loves, and so on. And all of these certainly cannot have the same method. If there were only one method to arrive at Truth, it would be death for everyone else who is not similarly constituted. Therefore the methods should be various. Vedanta understands that and wants to lay before the world different methods through which we can work. Take up any one you like, and if one does not suit you, another may. From this standpoint we see how glorious it is that there are so many religions in the world, how good it is that there are so many teachers and prophets, instead of there being only one, as many persons would like to have it. The Mohammedans want to have the whole world Mohammedan; the Christians, Christian; and the Buddhists, Buddhist; but the Vedanta says: "Let each person in the world be separate, if you will; the one principle, the unity will be behind. The more prophets there are, the more books, the more seers, the more methods, so much the better for

the world." Just as in social life the greater the number of occupations in every society, the better for that society, the more chance is there for everyone of that society to make a living, so in the world of thought and of religion. How much better it is today when we have so many divisions of science —how much more is it possible for everyone to have great mental culture, with this great variety before us. How much better it is, even on the physical plane, to have the opportunity of so many various things spread before us, so that we may choose any one we like, the one which suits us best. So it is with the world of religions. It is a most glorious dispensation of the Lord that there are so many religions in the world; and would to God that these would increase every day, until every man had a religion unto himself.

The Vedanta understands that and therefore preaches the one principle and admits various methods. It has nothing to say against anyone—whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, or a Jew, or a Hindu, whatever mythology you believe, whether you owe allegiance to the prophet of Nazareth, or of Mecca, or of India, or of anywhere else, whether you yourself are a prophet, it has nothing to say. It only preaches the principle, which is the background of every religion and of which all the prophets and saints and seers are but illustrations and manifestations. Multiply your prophets if you like; it has no objection. It only preaches the principles and the methods it leaves to you. Take any path you like; follow any prophet you like; but have only that method which suits your own nature, so that you will be sure to progress.

SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT

Class-Talk by Swami Paramananda

The aim and object of all spiritual training is to give us direct vision of Truth. So long as we do not see things for ourselves, doubts are bound to arise in our minds and doubt is always destructive. Thus, when we hear of God or the *Atman*, the eternal and immortal Self, we question because we ourselves have never perceived It; but when through the grace of the Supreme, our third or spiritual eye is opened and we see the glory of our Divine Self, then all doubts vanish and even if the whole world denies its existence, still we remain firm, because our knowledge is based on direct perception.

Through this higher vision alone can we get rid of worldly bondage. By mere practice of Yoga, or the study of the Scriptures, or by work no one can attain to freedom, unless he realizes the oneness of his own Self with the Supreme Being (*Parabrahman*), or with the "Father in heaven," as Christ declared—the same state as that described by the Hindu sages in *"Aham Brahmasmi,"* "I am that Truth." Indeed our study, our spiritual observances, our work, all are only to help us gain this vision; but when we lose sight of this cardinal fact and do our work thoughtlessly, we miss the goal. "As an ass may carry a load of sandal-wood on its back, but is conscious only of the weight of the burden, without enjoying its fragrance or knowng its value; similarly, those who study innumerable Scriptures for the sake of mere learning, without perceiving their true meaning, only bear the burden like the ass."

Study by itself cannot lead us to the Truth. We study in order to know the path; but when we have known it, then we must close our book and walk on

according to its instructions. Once having learned the way, we must lead the life. It is absolutely necessary to live the life after we have found out the way. We may learn of the path from one who knows it or from the Scriptures; but having done that, we must work for ourselves in silence.

Nothing else can destroy our ignorance and ignorance is like a poison in the system. It disturbs the whole balance of the mind and distorts the vision, making the unreal seem real and the non-essential, essential. The only remedy for it lies in knowing the Supreme or in having Self-knowledge. If we are suffering from a disease, we must take medicine to cure it; merely uttering the name of a medicine is not enough. So, without realizing, we may utter the name of God, but that will not cure our ignorance. Unless we possess real knowledge of the Self, what good will it do to repeat, "Soham, Soham," "I am He, I am He"? If we do not know God and our relation to Him, how can we say that we are one with Him? Without realization, these words will not help us. That alone will bring us strength and light.

This realization is never gained until we go within. As Christ said, "the kingdom of heaven is within." The world is constantly dragging us outward; but when we go inward, that is religion. We must know the essence, the substance, out of which the manifold phenomena of the universe have come into existence; and that is within ourself. So Self-knowledge becomes the highest knowledge. When we know our own Self, we know all. How can we know anything that is far from us? We are the nearest to ourself; and only can we know the universe or God by the study of our own nature. Hence we see that Self-knowledge is absolutely essential, since that alone leads to the ultimate goal.

How can we acquire this knowledge of the Self? We shall have to follow the instructions of those who have realized It. As it is declared in the *Katha-Upanishad*: "The teacher of the Self must be wonderful, and wonderful must be he who comprehends the teaching when taught by a wise teacher. When it is taught by an ordinary man (one who is worldly and has mere learning, without realization) it is not easily attainable." An enlightened soul alone can bring enlightenment to others. Therefore, the man who is a genuine seeker after Truth will try to find such a spiritual guide; but having found him and heard his teaching, he will still have to take the trouble to work out his freedom. If you realize for me, that will not satisfy my soul; just as if you eat for me, that will not appease my hunger or nourish my body. You can tell me how to go to work, but I must do the work for myself. Thus the great teachers point the way, but we must travel along it for ourselves.

The first condition in striving for freedom and knowledge is non-attachment. However we may talk about religion, however we may read and study, unless we have this non-attachment, we cannot go forward, we cannot escape from bondage. But this giving up of worldly attachment does not necessarily mean that a man must leave the world. He may still live in the world, but the world must not live in him; just as a boat may be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat. Even if he runs away to the jungle and attachment still lingers in his heart, he will not find any peace and happiness. The true meaning of non-attachment is taking things at their real valuation,—not mistaking the perishable for the permanent, not setting our hearts on that which is fleeting, but seeking that which is unchangeable. It is through the practice

of non-attachment alone that we can overcome all morbid clinging to earthly things and rise to a state of higher knowledge and love. Unless we detach ourselves from our lower propensities and desires, how can we rise?

The soul is naturally free—but when it is overpowered by innumerable worldly desires, their weight drags it down and makes it believe that it is bound and helpless. When, however, through the practice of discrimination and non-attachment, the individual perceives the intrinsic nature of his soul, at once all bondage and imperfection drop off and freedom is attained. "When that highest vision of Truth dawns, all the knots of the heart are untied, all doubts are cut asunder and all the fetters of Karma are broken."

REPORT OF THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT

The ancient city of Kankhal in the foot-hills of the Himalayas has been from time immemorial a favorite resort of pious pilgrims, who often coming from the furthermost parts of India alone and without money, have no one to care for them when overtaken by illness. To relieve such cases of suffering, as well as to provide medical aid for the very poor people of the neighboring villages, the Ramakrishna Mission in 1901 established a hospital to furnish "medical treatment, proper diet and careful nursing to all, irrespective of color, creed, caste or sex." Beginning on a most modest scale, treating in its first year only 1054 patients, the institution has been gradually enlarging its field of usefulness, until the most recent report shows that in the last year under review 8786 Hindus—from Brahmins down to the humblest Sudras—28 Christians and 736 Mohammedans were cared for. The total number of cases treated since the opening of

the Hospital amounts to over fifty thousand—and it would have been still higher had not the limited funds restricted the activities of the institution. As in all branches of the Ramakrishna Mission, the work is carried on wholly by voluntary contributions. Through the energy and devotion of the Swami in charge, a sufficient sum was raised to add a special Tuberculosis ward during the past year and it is hoped that further donations will make possible other sadly needed additions and improvements.

* * *

The Ramakrishna Mission, following out its usual rule to furnish aid so far as possible wherever needed, in any part of India and among all classes, recently sent a band of young men to minister to the comfort of the throng of pilgrims congregated at Gangasagore, a holy place of pilgrimage at the mouth of the Ganges. A Hindu gentleman contributed several hundred rupees towards the work and free transportation was given to twenty-two of the workers. As the majority of the pilgrims consisted of aged widows and illiterate people, there was ample need for loving, protecting hands and it is interesting to read of the timely help they brought to many humble souls. The report tells of two old ladies saved from drowning, of others nursed back to life from sudden attacks of cholera, of the dead cremated, and of several hundred cases of lost and bewildered pilgrims restored to their respective parties; simple service withal, yet representing the alleviation of much suffering and distress.

* * *

The French government has sent Madame Alexandra David Neel, Professor at the University of Brussels, to study the Vedanta Philosophy in India.

Madame Neel has already reached Calcutta and begun her work—having visited the Sanscrit College and held discussions with the pundits there.

* * *

During the month of April, Swami Paramananda gave a series of lectures on "Yoga," in which he sought to show that far from being anything mysterious or dangerous, as so often supposed, the Science of Yoga was a plain, systematic method of spiritual education, as simple and direct in its character as the usually accepted methods of secular education; that it offered various specific lines of training, through which all earnest truth-seekers, each according to his natural tendencies, might develop his higher faculties and accomplish "the union of his lower with his higher Self,"—the word "Yoga," indeed, like our English word "yoke," coming from the Sanscrit "Yug," meaning "to join." Since, the Swami further pointed out, the purpose of the teaching was to develop all of man's latent powers, it necessarily dealt with the subtler and more vital forces of his nature, and only as he attained understanding and command over these, could he hope to gain calmness, concentration and self-mastery, or be able to pass into the higher realms of consciousness where Truth could be directly apprehended, which was the final aim of Yoga. The attendance at the lectures was excellent, as it was likewise at the various classes during the month. There has been a marked growth in the Tuesday evening class through the season, and great satisfaction has been felt in the steadily increasing numbers at the daily vesper service. This service was started last October and has been found especially helpful—not only by members of the Centre, but also by many outsiders.

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II. JULY, 1913 No. 7

The sages, the Illumined Ones, have taught us how to pray, how to take the Name of the Supreme. There are many who call on God, many who pray, but only a few receive answers to their prayers, because to call Him by the right Name and in the right way, we must find the right Self with which to make the call. Finding out this right Self is the aim of all religion and philosophy, and it is this which Yoga teaches. Its whole purpose is to bring union with the Higher Self, the real man, the true child of the Supreme Being. Finding the right Self through discrimination, through concentration, meditation, through work or devotion, these are the different methods of practice which it gives. But practice and realization are two different things; taking the Name of the Lord, practising concentration, and realizing God are very different. If, however, morning after morning and evening after evening the devotee goes to his sanctuary, and tries to pray, tries to meditate, tries to give his heart to God, although he may not seem to succeed in his spiritual practice because his whole time goes in struggling, yet this constantly strengthens his spiritual nature and must eventually bring him the vision of Truth. The Lord is ever ready to give His blessing to all, but our heart must crave for it before we can receive it.

The first thing in the spiritual life is to know that we want something. Just as when the fire of hunger burns within, we know that we want food and we strive to get it; similarly, hunger for higher things is the sign of our needing spiritual food. But no one can give us the spiritual food, no one can make us assimilate it, until the hunger is felt in the heart. When, however, our soul really longs for it, then all our energies become focused and nothing can prevent us from obtaining it. Intense longing to gain anything centralizes the whole nature and gives us mastery over our undisciplined forces. People have this hunger in different degrees. Some have it only temporarily. A blow comes and gives them disgust for worldly things, but circumstances change and the hunger passes away. When, however, it is based on experience, when anyone has had a glimpse of that inexhaustible treasure which can satisfy all our needs, then he struggles and strives until he gains it. There are others who may not have had this glimpse, but who by contact with a lofty soul become convinced that there is something beyond these earthly things, and they, too, are never satisfied until they reach it.

The great Sankara has said that three things are very rare to obtain. The first is human birth; the second, a thirst for liberation; and the third, the good fortune to find a true teacher, one who has had the vision of God. Unless a soul has a human form, he cannot gain this vision. Why? The animal form represents dullness, heaviness, and can never rise higher than the purely physical; and this applies to those who even in human bodies are still bound to the animal plane, never going beyond the thought of what to eat, what to wear,

how to acquire wealth or position. "By human form is meant here a controlled and well-balanced mind, a mind that is not overpowered by brute tendencies. Then again, among intelligent human beings, it is rare to find one who feels the bondage of this world and earnestly desires to free himself from its fetters. And even when this desire comes to us, unless we are helped and guided by a wise teacher, one who is well acquainted with the spiritual realm, all our wanderings and strivings in the wilderness of life may prove vain and fruitless. Only those who have attained blessedness can tell us how to find that Self within us, which alone can call on the Supreme and pray to Him truly. Very few have the power to distinguish between the man made of flesh and the real man who is part of God. But when we find within us that which is a part of God, the man of flesh no longer has any power over us, we recognize that One from Whom we have come, and our whole being goes out to Him spontaneously in praise and supplication.

—*Extract from Class Talk by Swami Paramananda.*

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

If you fill an earthen vessel with water and set it apart on a shelf, the water in it will dry up in a few days; but if you immerse the same vessel in water, it will remain full as long as it is kept there. Even so is the case of your love for the Lord. Fill and enrich your heart with the love of God for a time, then employ yourself in other affairs, forgetting Him the while, and you will find within a short time that your heart has become poor and empty of that precious love. But if you keep your heart immersed always in the ocean of Divine love, it is sure to remain ever full to overflowing with the water of the love Divine.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

He who has found this way of love, seeketh no other. He who turns on this pivot is in such wise a prisoner that his foot and hand and mouth and eyes and heart and all his human faculties belong to God. Happy is he who is thus imprisoned; the more thou art a prisoner, the more wilt thou be freed. That we may be so imprisoned and so freed, may He help us, who Himself is Love.

—*Meister Eckhart.*

God has not made man with two hearts within him. The Incomparable Majesty who has conferred the boon of existence upon thee, has placed within thee but one heart, to the end that with a single heart thou mayest love Him alone, and mayest turn thy back on all besides and devote thyself to Him alone, and refrain from dividing thy heart into a hundred portions, each portion devoted to a different object.—*Jami (Sufi Poet).*

Think oftener of God than you breath. If you always remember that God stands by, an inspector of whatever you do either in soul or body, you will never err, either in your prayers or actions, and you will have God abiding with you.

—*Epictetus.*

Forsaking egoism, power, pride, lust, anger and possession, freed from the notion of "mine" and tranquil: one is thus fit to become one with Brahman (the Supreme). Becoming one with Brahman, serene-minded, he neither grieves nor desires; alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion unto Me (the Lord). By devotion he knows Me in truth, what and who I am; having thus known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me. —*Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita.*

THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION

Lecture by Sister Devamata.

In the West the necessity of a method in religion has never been recognized. We fully recognize the need of method in science. No branch of knowledge indeed is called a science until it has a fully developed method. A man in his laboratory may by chance make a discovery, but only when he is able to formulate the law that governs it and evolve a method by which to bridle this law, is he called a scientist. Upon method the whole march of knowledge is based; and progress in science has primarily been marked by elaboration and diversification of method; until today, in such branches as Medicine, the old tradition of a certain dose for a certain disease has been entirely swept away, and each individual case determines the mode of treatment to be followed. In other sciences, climate, condition, place, the character of the object under investigation, all are leading to endless modification and refinement of method. Only the department of Religion has practically been left without system, although the same laws and needs apply to the human temperament as to physical nature. People are told "Be good." "How?" "Do no wrong." "Be honest." "How?" "Do not steal." "Be compassionate." "How?" "Do not strike your neighbor." But the space between the "Be" and the "Do not" stretches an unbridged gulf. The science of spiritual education remains unborn.

Not so was it with those ancient Rishis or Seers of Truth in the Himalayas—those mighty ancestors of both East and West. They recognized the value of the inner Science of the Soul. They understood that man was the important thing, that he must be the first object of research. A careful

investigator must know his own peculiarities and those of his instrument before he can perform any accurate experiment; in the same way, these great Seers said, man must know himself and his instrument of body and mind before he can work intelligently in this laboratory of the external universe. Therefore they made man their first study, and, as the fruit of this study, gradually evolved the science of Yoga,—a carefully elaborated system of objective and subjective education, through which each individual may gain the full use of his powers and faculties on every plane of consciousness.

After close observation of human life and activity, they found that all human beings fell naturally into four general groups. There were the temperamentally active, those who were too restless to pursue a quiet course; but who, if they were to attain, must do it through the right direction of their energies in active work. For them was developed *Karma-Yoga* or the path of wise and unselfish service. Then there were others who liked to sit still and delve into their own being, to study the operations of their mind, to fight the battle with their inner forces and master them. To such was given a systematic method of concentration and meditation or *Raja-Yoga*. Among these were a few who, utilizing the power thus gained, pushed still deeper into the realm of reason and philosophy, choosing the path of discrimination or *Jnana-Yoga*. And then there was the great mass of humanity, who worked and lived and thought and acted through their emotions; who loved and hated, drawn here by an attraction which they could not define or turned from there by a repulsion they could not overcome; and for them *Bhakti-Yoga* or The Path of Devotion was laid down.

Some people think, most people work, very few philosophize, but all people love; and as life has moved further and further away from the centre towards the circumference, more and more has it been shaped by this play of desire and emotion. There are very few today who can focus their energies and turn them inward. Among the active, some may remember through perhaps one task to do it for God; then, before they know it, they are doing all the other tasks for themselves. But every one is loving or trying to love in his ignorant way. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna has said that the path of devotion is the one path in our age of materialism by which man can attain God.

This love, however, must not be a mere emotion. We must learn to bridle and direct it. Love is a force like any other force. It is the strongest force in the universe; and as such it must be gathered up, controlled and directed through the right channel towards the right goal. To do this, method is necessary. Those ancient Rishis, with their unerring wisdom, realized this; so they put love under their mental microscope and analyzed it. They discovered that love was of three kinds: First, the love that asks everything and gives nothing; such love as we see in the undeveloped, those who are wholly on the plane of self. This is the love of the brute fighting for his bone, the love of the wild animal in the forest springing on his prey, the love of the primitive man swayed solely by instincts of self-interest and self-preservation.

Next there is the love that buys and sells, that gives so much and demands so much, that asks an even exchange, a fair bargain. All the play of human passion is on this plane of love. Why are we jealous? Because we love some one who is not returning us an equivalent, but is giving what

we consider our due to another. Why do we grow angry? Because we have done a service for which we are not receiving proper gratitude or consideration. Why are we depressed or despondent? Because we are loving the world and the world does not love us. We are doing our best and no one seems to appreciate us. This is bartering love, human love.

Then there is the love that gives freely and asks nothing in exchange. The love of a Christ outstretched on the cross. The love of a Buddha offering himself for the sacrifice in the place of those frightened dumb beasts. The love of a mother plunging into the fire to die with her child, if she cannot save it. This is Divine love, God-love.

We all have latent within us these three kinds of love. Following the path of devotion is not a question of acquiring love. We have it now. It is a question of lifting and expanding our consciousness; of travelling up round by round from this lower, self-centered love of the brute, through the human love of exchange or barter, on to the Divine love of free gift. Every man can do it and every religion has recognized this as the only path of true spirituality, the only path of God-vision.

But how can it be done? We must have a method. So these great Rishis set to work to develop one. They found that that which stood in the way of Divine love was self-love. It was not that every man was not loving, but he was loving the wrong thing, loving himself. Turn this love, which was now directed towards himself, towards God and the whole work was done. But again how? The self is so near and God seems so far away. This ego is so concrete and God such an

abstract thing. For that reason, they said, man must first learn to love something concrete. We can never replace a concrete object by an abstract. If we take a leg from the table, we cannot put a thought in its place; the table will fall. The concrete must be replaced by something equally concrete.

Man must first of all have a concrete Ideal. He must have some definite thing to serve and love, and so the path of discipleship became the great means of attainment in the East. He must begin by loving another self in place of his own, one that represents the Ideal; hence finding the spiritual teacher is set down as the preliminary step in the path of Bhakti-Yoga. Not any chance teacher, however. It must be one who has himself attained the higher vision through religious discipline and the practice of devotion. Having found him, the rule in those ancient times was that the disciple went to live with the Master, in order that through daily, hourly contact with a holy, pure, illumined life, he might come to know what holiness, purity and wisdom were. As the disciple thus watched and served, a great love necessarily awakened in his heart, for no one can live with a lofty, serene, compassionate being and not love him. Even a brute feels an instinctive love for something that is high and holy and beautiful. And when true love comes, the joy of denial comes with it. Is not every mother eager to deny herself for her child? So with the disciple. Through love for the Master, he learns to give up, not with the sense of giving up, but with the feeling of joyful privilege. Thus, little by little, the purified ego of the Master takes the place of the ego of the disciple. He forgets himself in humble, loving service. Then the Master, weaning his spiritual child, as it were,

gradually withdraws his own personality and leaves the disciple face to face with God. In this way love of self is lifted into love for God.

We cannot, however, all find such spiritual teachers. Life today, especially in the West, is not so constituted as to create them. We must learn our lessons of self-effacement as we can. Every true mother, every true wife or husband is learning them, but only partially. It is not enough to forget ourself for another self on the same plane. We must rise wholly off the plane of this lower self, if we would attain true devotion or Bhakti. We must take the great ones and follow them. We must forget ourselves in them. We must have something to love that is God-like, before we can love God. That is the reason why the Lord comes in finite form—in the person of a Christ or a Buddha—that man may be given definite examples of godliness to follow, Divine Masters to love and serve.

Creation means duality, the disturbed equilibrium of two opposing forces, a perpetual battle between light and darkness, good and evil, pleasure and pain. All action on this plane is also dual.. Ordinary unselfishness must have as its reaction selfishness. If I constantly forget myself for you, you will unconsciously grow more and more self-centered. This is the inevitable result so long as our activity is confined to the plane of self. Ego and non-ego are only the obverse and reverse of the same coin. We must transcend this plane to attain true love. It is not enough to be unselfish; we must become selfless. Real selflessness never creates selfishness in anyone. It lifts the mind and heart until a man grows ashamed of his selfishness and strives of his own accord to conquer it. Were we at this moment to come into the presence of

Christ, we would feel as conscious of the stains on our soul as the child is, of the stains on its white frock when it sees the mother. We must develop that kind of selfless devotion which will make people aware, not that we are doing for them, but that we have forgotten that we are doing at all. Then our self-forgetfulness will lead them to try to forget too, and a consciousness of something higher than this human self will begin to stir within them.

This love, however, can only come through practice. You must practise devotion as systematically as you practise art or music, if you would become perfect therein. You must also have some concrete equipment for your study. All practical training, whether in the school or in the shop, calls for certain definite tools or instruments; and so also in your spiritual education. You must have such objective conditions as will stimulate your devotional nature. You must first of all create an atmosphere of reality, of actuality in your spiritual life. Therefore, set apart a room in your house for God; or if not a whole room, then at least a little corner of your own room. Put there a table, a picture, or any object that has a holy association for you. On the table keep a flower, if you will, your sacred books, whatever uplifts your thoughts, and feel that this is your sanctuary, where God has actually come to live with you.

In the beginning it may seem strange to you to thus have a definite place dedicated to God, but why should He not have such a place? Do you not give a special room to your mother or your child? How are you going to feel that God is as near, as real as father or mother, wife or husband, if you treat Him differently? Our whole life is immersed in the concrete, the material; and

as long as you keep God an abstraction, He can never seem real to you. But give Him a place in your home and that will help you to give Him a place in your heart. Learn to feel that He is living at your fireside and in the course of time you will realize that He is dwelling in your soul. Always care for your sanctuary yourself. Keep everything spotlessly clean. Never enter there without washing your hands and purifying yourself. Have certain fixed hours in the day in which you go there and turn your whole thought towards Divine things, through prayer and meditation or in reading some holy book. Do not say, "I have too many duties, I cannot neglect the family." Who is the family, if God is not in it? Give Him an equal place with its other members, if you cannot give Him a larger place; and serve Him in the same way as you serve them.

In India, God is regarded as the head of every household. Even the poorest hut has some small corner consecrated to Him and all is done for Him. The mother rises before dawn to sweep the threshold and decorate it with a pretty design made with fine rice flour, because she believes that God will be the first to cross it. The fruits and flowers in the garden are gathered as offerings for Him. The workman, before using new tools, wreathes them with flowers and lays them at the Lord's feet to be blessed. The wife brings her new cloth to show it to the Lord before wearing it. All food is carried first to the shrine and offered to Him, before it is eaten by the family. So real does this make God seem that old and young alike believe that He is actually with them, taking part in their daily life. The story is told of a small boy, the son of a Brahmin, who was left by his father to carry the noon-day meal to

the chapel. When it was ready, he laid it there at the Lord's feet, with firm faith that He would eat it. Then he sat with folded hands, praying; but the food remained untouched. "God, what is the matter with the food," he cried, "that you do not take it?" And again he folded his little hands and prayed. But still the food was there. At last he began to weep, saying: "I must have made a mistake or done something wrong. Come and help me, God, that I may not disappoint my father or bring misfortune on him." He implored with such intensity of trust and devotion that, it is said, God actually took form, came and ate the food. Then the heart of the little boy was content. He merely thought he had done his duty; he did not know that in the fullness of his faith he had wrought a miracle. To him God was an actual living presence. And why should it not be so? Did not Christ say that "where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I will be in the midst of them?" When therefore an entire family does every task of the day taking His Name, why should He not be there, a true Presence in the household?

What is needed in the West today is a sense of God's reality to counterbalance the overpowering reality of Mammon. Much is said of the great increase just now in religious interest and spirituality. What, however, is stirring everywhere is not spirituality, but only the first awakening from a long sleep of materiality. The nervous stress and strain of life, the discontent and restless pursuit of pleasure, wealth, position: these are all signs that the exalted light of the spiritual consciousness has not yet touched us. The spiritual man walks serene, calm, uplifted; conscious first of God, and secondarily of other things. He knows all men through God, does all tasks for God, loves all be-

ings because they are children of God.

Do we do that? No. But we must learn to do it. We must feel that God is really our father, God is really our mother. Our closest relation is with Him. Our home belongs to Him. Whatever we are doing in this world, we are doing it because He has given us the task and we are responsible to Him for it. Yet we must not do it fearfully, as for a revengeful God, but because we love Him and long to please Him. We must feel that our wealth is God's. And is it not? Have we the power to keep it or take it with us? This life too is God's. Do we maintain it? If this night the call comes, can we stay one moment longer? No; all these things belong to Him. Then why not give them up to Him and free ourselves from a great burden of responsibility?

We have an idea that He will force us to turn away from our present duties and relations, that He will make us hard-hearted and forgetful of those about us, that He will carry us from the world into a cloister. We do not trust Him. We do not wholly believe in His efficiency. We think that He does not understand our conditions and work quite as well as we do. So we dare not yield ourselves up unreservedly to Him. Yet all the understanding that is in us, all the power that we have, our entire sense of duty, comes from God. Surrender your heart fully to Him, and the whole Divine ocean of peace and love, of life and wisdom will be yours. Resign yourself to God, and that which you know now in part, you will then know in full. The day you can give yourself up wholly to Him, it will mean the attainment of all that you are now so vainly striving for. It will be the throwing away of a small thing for a mighty thing. As a great Teacher in India once

said to me: "My life is eternal. This little life belongs to God. Let Him do with it what He will." Feel that; give it all up to Him at this moment and you will stand transfigured, as Christ was transfigured. If you can surrender yourself to the Lord, if you can make a complete sacrifice of yourself to Him, at once illumination will come and you will see all things clearly, not merely the things of the spirit, but the solution of the most practical problems of your daily life, the problems of your profession or business, of your home or your office.

Be willing at least to make the experiment. You will not lose anything. If you have a stream of clear, pure water running before your door, do you dig wells about your house? Yet that is what we are all doing. We are living on the bank of a mighty river, whose waters are the waters of infinite knowledge, endless happiness, eternal life; and we spend our time digging little wells in this world to get our own supply of fleeting happiness, of finite knowledge, of life that fades away in death. Draw closer to the river. Plunge into it if you can and become one with it. Then an inexhaustible store of Divine power, Divine love and strength will be yours.

You cannot, however, do this all at once. It must come gradually through the steadfast practice of devotion. When you rise in the morning, rise with a consciousness of God. Feel just as the little child does, when it opens its eyes, looks into the mother's face and smiles. Open your eyes and look into God's face. Before you rise from your bed, consecrate your body, your mind, your heart, your strength, your life to God and go forth feeling that they are God's. As you take your bath, offer that too, with the prayer that the Lord

may purify you both within and without and make you each day more perfect. Before you eat your meal, offer it up to Him—not in the customary way that He may bless it for you, but forget yourself entirely. Feel that it has been prepared for Him and that what you eat is merely the remnant. Offer up every task in devotion and love, it matters not how menial and sordid it may be. Look upon your money as a treasure belonging to God, to be spent for Him, not for self-gratification. Live every hour of the day for Him. Make Him your constant companion, your playmate even. Run to Him when you are in trouble or perplexity. Take refuge with Him when you are afraid. Seek advice from Him as you would from an earthly mother. Share your joys with Him. Carry the gifts you receive, the money you earn, the things you buy or make, carry them all to your little sanctuary and offer them to Him, just as you would show them to some dear one. Walk with Him, talk with Him, work with Him, eat with Him, live with Him, make every thought, every word, every act, every breath even, an offering to Him; and when the day is done and you lie down to rest, from the momentum of devotion you have gained, your mind and heart will still go to Him in sleep.

If you can thus offer up your whole being a joyful, living oblation to the Most High, God will take these ordinary hands and feet of yours, He will take your faltering mind and heart and make them His own. He will think and act and serve and love through them. Then you will become a clear channel through which the Divine will manifest, and your life, however humble or obscure, will be as a light set upon a hilltop, shedding radiance and blessing out over all men.

NOTICE

Swami Paramananda, after delivering courses of lectures in Geneva and Paris, has returned from Europe and resumed his work at the Vedanta Centre of Boston. During the month of June he conducted the greater part of the meetings, and through July will continue to hold two meetings a week. On Tuesday evening at eight o'clock there will be Talks on the Upanishads, open to all; and on Sunday morning at eleven the usual Service. At this, the subjects for the lectures will be: July 6th, "Who is our Saviour?"; 13th, "Reincarnation and Heredity"; 20th, "What is Meditation?"; 27th, "Final Emancipation." The Library and Reading-Room will be open every Thursday afternoon between 3 and 5. The telephone number for the summer months will be "Milton 11-W."

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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As we cannot know except through effects that we have eyes, so we cannot see the Self except by Its effects. It cannot be brought down to the low plane of sense perception. It is the condition of everything in the universe, though Itself unconditioned. When we know that we are the Self, then we are free. The Self can never change. It cannot be acted on by a cause, because It is Itself the cause. It is self-caused. If we can find in ourselves something that is not acted on by any cause, then we have known the Self.

Freedom is inseparably connected with immortality. To be free one must be above the laws of nature. Law exists so long as we are ignorant. When knowledge comes, then we find that law is nothing but freedom in ourselves. The will can never be free, because it is the slave of cause and effect. But the "I" behind the will is free; and this is the Self. "I am Free"—that is the basis on which to build and live. And freedom means immortality.

—*Unpublished notes of Class-Talks by Swami Vivekananda.*

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

So long as I do not have a knowledge of my True Self, so long as the Reality is hidden behind these outer semblances, I have a perception of many things and persons. Perfect knowledge is knowledge of oneness,—of one only Reality behind the many, one God behind the phenomenal universe.

Many think that knowledge of God cannot be attained without the study of books. But higher than reading is hearing; higher than hearing is seeing (or realization). Better than reading about Benares, is hearing of it from the lips of one who has visited it; better than hearing of it, is seeing Benares with one's own eyes.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

If you know Him by Whom you were made, you will know yourself. The wise man participates of God. The man who is worthy of God is also a God among men.

—*Sextus the Pythagorean.*

We must unfeignedly believe that God is in very fact within our souls, that we must worship Him and love Him and serve Him in spirit and in truth; that He sees all, and that unto Him all hearts are open, our own and those of all His creatures; that He is self-existent, whilst it is in Him that all His creatures live and move and have their being; that His perfection is Infinite and Sovereign, and demands the full surrender of ourselves, our souls and bodies. In simple justice we owe Him all our thoughts and words and actions. Let us see that we pay our debt.

—*Brother Lawrence.*

The absolute Existence, the Substance, (call it

what you will), is God. From Him all concrete individual existences arise. All that exists, exists in and by God; and can only thus be conceived. Here then the mystery of the world begins to unfold before the patient thinker; he recognizes God as the fountain of life; he sees in the universe nothing but the manifestation of God; the finite rests upon the bosom of the infinite; the inconceivable variety resolves itself into unity. There is but one reality, and that is God. Such was Spinoza's solution of the problem. To live with God, to know God with perfect knowledge, was the highest point of human development and happiness; and to this he consecrated his life.

—*George Henry Lewes.*

There is One Supreme Intelligence, who acts with order, proportion and design; the Source of all that is good and just. He is the Eternal Living Being; the most noble of all beings; who understands everything and gives motion to all things, continuing Himself immovable. There are many inferior deities, but only One Mover. This is the genuine doctrine of the ancients, which has happily escaped the wreck of truth and the rock of vulgar errors and poetic fables.

—*Aristotle.*

He (Brahman or the Supreme) is unseen, but seeing; unheard, but hearing; unperceived, but perceiving; unknown, but knowing. There is no other seer but He, there is no other hearer but He, there is no other perceiver but He, there is no other knower but He. This is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal.

—*Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.*

POETRY OF THE VEDAS

Extract from Lecture by Swami Saradananda

The universe is the expression of God, that ocean of absolute love, as the Vedas say. The root of poetry is in the absolute love. The expression of that unbounded love is poetry. The Rishis of the Vedas addressed God as the foremost, the oldest of poets, yet the one who never waxes old. Every expression is not only full of poetry, but is poetry; and blessed are they who can see poetry in everything, everywhere, at all times. Every real poet is a prophet, every real prophet a poet. A genuine expression of the human heart in language, under the controlling sense of the beautiful, is poetry. However separated by time and space, by racial or national prejudices, true poetry appeals to all minds. The same old law,—that expression will vary but the essence remain constant, holds good here as elsewhere. The same fulness of reverence and awe and love, which made the Vedic Seer of old thirst after God and righteousness and helped him to rise to the immediate vision of the superconscious, we see in other Scriptures recorded of other men. Wherever we find a genuine expression of the human heart, it is for us to enjoy; let us not be deprived of our joy by any prejudice.

The poetry of the Vedas is wholly religious. The Aryans, at the time of their composition, had evolved a high civilization and were a strong, sturdy people, full of faith in themselves and in God. In the Rig-Veda, the wonderful experiences of their passage over plains, rivers and vast mountains, became means of expressing their deep emotions. In the later Vedas and Upanishads we see the fruit of their sojourn in India. The writings are full of vigor, purity, simplicity; they are instinct with life.

The earlier portions are like the utterances of youth, —rash and exuberant; the later portions are controlled, chaste, conscious of reserve power, the expressions of a fully developed man. In the former, devotion is through fear; in the latter, devotion knows no fear; love is for love's sake, seeking no reward but that of loving. In the former, God is worshipped as the just judge; in the latter, as the soul of the man's soul. In India, of old, man's life fell into four periods: the student life, the family life, the forest life, and the monk life. After he had discharged his duties to family and state, a man retired to the forests on the slopes of the Himalayas, or on the banks of the Ganges, to meditate on the mysteries of life and death, leaving his place to younger men. There, amidst the singing of birds, the warbling of brooks, the wonders of dawn and day and night, he used to come face to face with nature and learn to feel himself a part of it. He dived into himself to the very roots of consciousness, and brought forth into the light of day the answer to the vexed questions of life, sparkling with dews of meditation. "From love Absolute has all this universe come forth, in love infinite does it continue after birth, towards love unlimited it flows." Need we wonder that the Upanishads are full of living poetry? The Aranyakas, or Forest Books, deal with the experiences of this marvellous third period of a man's life.

"Thou sun! Thou hast covered the face of truth with thy golden disk; do thou uncover it to my vision, for I thirst after true religion. Progenitor and controller of all, O Sun! withdraw thy rays awhile, that I may look at thy blissful form, the real cause of thy power. That form of thine is one with the Infinite Being, and I too am one with Him." The theme of the poetry of the Upanishads

is the Inexpressible, the Unknowable. No wonder the songs of the Rishis are paradoxical, often incomprehensible. Yet their imagry brings us to the very threshold of Deity. Nature becomes a translucent veil. Earth, sun, moon and stars grow dim; an ocean of light is revealed to you; you feel yourself grow larger as you read, till your little personality is dissolved and you feel one with that boundless ocean. "The knower is not born, nor dies, nor was born of old. Birthless, eternal, ever-existent, old and yet ever young, not slain with the slaying of the body. If the slayer thinks he can slay, or the slain that he can be slain, both of them know not. It neither slays nor is slain. It is finer than the finest, greater than the greatest, seated deep within the depth of every creature; beholding the greatness and glory of the Self. By His grace the controlled man goes beyond sorrow. He sits still and yet moves far away. He is all perfect. Who can know that effulgent Being, who is greater than the greatest, except myself? Formless, yet in all form; changeless, yet in all change; knowing that Self, the Lord, the enlightened man never grieves again! That Self cannot be attained by much learning, nor by a keen understanding, nor by the reading of many Scriptures. He whom the Self chooses, by him can the Self be gained. To him the Self reveals His own Essence." "Where the Self is, the eye cannot reach, nor speech, nor the mind; we cannot say we know It, neither do we know how to teach It to others. It is beyond what is known and what is unknown. Thus have we heard from them of old. That which cannot be disclosed by speech, but which gives rise to speech, that is the Self; not this which thou hast been worshipping—know That! That which cannot be measured by the mind, but by which the mind thinks,

that is the Self—know That! Those amongst us who think they know the Self perfectly, they know not; those who think they cannot know, they know!"

The characteristic peculiarity of the Upanishads is that they attempt to describe by negations. Metaphor after metaphor is given, only to be cast away. Not this, not this! Further! Beyond! Beyond! They fill the mind with amazing images, only to have them serve as successive rungs of a ladder. "Whence speech falls back with the mind, unable to attain—That is the ocean of unbounded bliss. Attaining That, the enlightened man goes beyond fear. Neither the sun appears bright there, nor the moon, nor the stars; the flash of lightning is darkness, the brightness of fire, gloom beside It. It shineth, and all else shineth after It; all else is bright alone in Its brightness." Large similes serve to express the omnipresence of the One and the merging of all things in the One. "As the rivers flowing into the ocean become one with it, losing separate name and form; so the enlightened one, freed of name and form, approaches the supreme effulgent being." "As from a blazing fire come out thousands of sparks of the same nature as the fire itself, thus, O Beloved, come out the different existences from that eternal unchangeable Being and enter Him again." Birds, trees, a chariot drawn by fiery steeds, all serve to suggest relations of the individual soul to itself and its divine beginning and end. Allegories abound, picturesque stories, but all have one interpretation, the unknown Knower that knoweth us, in and through us—Whom to know is life eternal.

(*Reprinted from Lectures, Literary and Religious.*)

KENA-UPANISHAD

Translated and Commentated by
Swami Paramananda

Peace Verse

May my limbs, speech, Prana (life-force), sight, hearing, strength and all my senses, gain in vigor. All is the Brahman (Supreme Lord) of the Upanishads. May I never deny the Brahman. May the Brahman never cast me off. May there be no denial of the Brahman. May there be no separation from the Brahman. May all the virtues of the sacred Upanishads rest in me, who delight in the Atman (the Higher Self). May they rest in me.

Peace! Peace! Peace!

Part I

I

By whom commanded and directed does the mind go towards its objects? Commanded by whom does the life-force, the first (Cause) move? At whose will men utter speech? What power directs the eye and ear?

Thus the disciple approaches the Master and inquires concerning the cause of life and human activity. Ordinary minds are satisfied to see the effect only. Very few have the keenness of perception, the desire, or the purity to inquire about the subtler cause behind. Only a discriminative and Truth-seeking mind will formulate such questions, and it was because the disciple had a sincere longing for the Truth that he asked them. He desired to know who really sees and hears, who actuates the apparent man, the physical man. He perceived all about him the phenomenal world, the existence of this he could prove by his senses; but he sought to know the invisible, causal world, of which he was now

only instinctively conscious. Who is the cause of the apparent man, and what is the nature of the real man? Is mind all-pervading and all-powerful, or is it impelled by some other force? Who sends forth the vital energy without which nothing can exist? What is the power by which mortals speak or by which eye and ear perform their functions?

The teacher replies:

II

It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the life of the life, the eye of the eye. The wise freed (from the senses and from mortal desires), after leaving this world, become immortal.

When the soul has departed, the body may still have good ears, good eyes, all the organs may be there intact, yet they are not performing any task. Why? Because the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, he who talks and sees and hears and thinks, the living Cause, the *Atman* or Self is not there. It is because of That a man is able to see, to hear, to think and speak. As long as anyone confounds soul with non-soul, the real with the unreal, so long as he confines himself to this physical plane, he remains bound to perishable things and cannot attain immortality. An ordinary man hears, sees, thinks; he is satisfied to know as much as can be known through the senses, but he perceives nothing behind the ear or eye or mind. If there is anything there, he does not analyze and try to find it. There is a difference between the manifested form and That which is manifested through the form, knowing That, one becomes immortal. We are very much identified with our external nature. If some one asks who we are, we at once give answer "I am Mr. So and So, I am born in such a family;" and we

draw a condition that is limited in every way. Thus we hold a false perception and identify ourselves with the lower Self. This comes from the fact that our conception does not go beyond this little circle of flesh which constitutes the outer man. We think we have eyes, ears, and identify ourselves with them, but our true Self is not the eye, our true Self is not the ear. It is that which enables eye and ear to perform their tasks. When we know that, we shall not die with the body. One who clings to the senses and to things which are ephemeral, must die many deaths; but he who knows the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, having severed himself from his physical nature, that man becomes immortal. There are two natures, the real and the apparent. Immortality is attained when man transcends his apparent nature and finds that subtle, eternal and inexhaustible Essence which is within himself.

III

There the eye does not go, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know That; we do not understand how any one can teach It. It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown. Thus we have heard from the ancient (teachers) who have instructed us in this.

Ordinary eyes are too limited to see that subtle Essence. Then you may say: If we cannot see It, what is the use of searching? It means only that we cannot perceive It with these physical senses. Nor can speech convey what is Its nature. It cannot be expressed by finite language, because It is infinite. It is distinct and separate from that which is known. We cannot say that we know God as we know finite things; for our conception of knowing anything is to know its name and form. But

the knowledge of God is distinct from this. This is why some have described God as unknown and unknowable; because He is far more than eye or ear or speech can comprehend or express. This becomes clear when we consider the three states of mind:—the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious; the state of ignorance, the state of intelligence, and the state of wisdom. In the state of ignorance, we cannot know the true nature of anything, because our mind is too limited. God must ever remain unknown to the mind in this state. In the state of intelligence, we begin to know partially; but our knowledge is not free from error. This is the state which Christ described as "seeing through a glass darkly." But wisdom knows fully, or "face to face."

The Upanishad does not say that God cannot be known or that He can be known. He is unknown to man's finite nature. Man cannot conceive of the Infinite Whole. How can a mortal who has a limited nature and limited capacity contain all of God? But He can be known by the purified mind and heart, by the God-like nature. The wise man says: "How can I know Him?" Because the more we know about Divinity, the less we feel that we can ever know It. To know It we must raise ourselves to the same level. A mountain top may look very beautiful from the valley below, we may be able to see it vaguely, but we cannot have any full conception of what it is. Only as we approach it, will it reveals little by little its true form and nature.

IV

That which speech does not illumine, but which illumines speech, know that alone to be the Brahman (The Supreme Being), not this which people worship here.

V

That which cannot be thought by mind, but by which, they say, mind is able to think, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which people worship here.

He is not dependent on speech, but speech is dependent on Him. It is because He is present that the senses, mind and body act. He is the heart of all these functions. But if man does not know this, then he cannot worship truly. Few people worship the true God, the Sustaining Power of the universe. Unconsciously they give all their devotion to what is fleeting, because their mind cannot go beyond that; and since they must worship something, they worship matter. The tendency of the unawakened mind is to cling to the visible. It judges everything by the external. But merely having hands and feet, eyes and ears, does not make one a worthy human being. It is the knowledge of that inner Power which makes man worthy. This is where the blunder of human life comes. It is not wrong for us to be conscious of our body and senses, but if we are not conscious of That which sustains them, then we fall into error. Worship is here used in the sense of "cherishing," "clinging to;" and he who cherishes the world but does not cherish its Source, must remain in ignorance. That by which man is able to see, to talk, to hear, breathe and think, that Power which is behind all activity of mind and senses, if we can tear the veil and worship That, then we worship truly.

VI

That which is not seen by the eye, but by which the eye is able to see, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which people worship here.

VII

That which cannot be heard by the ear, but by which the ear is able to hear, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which people worship here.

VIII

That which one does not breathe with the breath, but by which breath is inbreathed, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which people worship here.

By the eyes we can see, by the ears we can hear, by our words we can express; through all these we can get some idea of God, but God is something beyond. Ordinarily we know three states,—waking, dreaming and sleeping; but there is a fourth state, which transcends these. In the ordinary conscious state we perceive things, but our mind is not clear enough to save us from error. In the fourth state, which is super-conscious, the mind has all the strength of the conscious state and something more. It is by this that God can be known. If God could be known by the limited mind and senses, then the knowledge of God would be like any other knowledge; spiritual science would be like any other science. No, it can be known by the purified mind only. Therefore to know God, man must purify himself. The mind described in the Upanishads is the superconscious mind,—the mind of the mind, that which makes it possible for the mind to think. According to the Vedic sages, mind is only another sense. This form of mind is the ordinary mind. This mind is limited and with it one cannot go very far. But when the same individual comes to know the mind of the mind, this ordinary mind becomes illumined and he gains the light of true knowledge.

Union between subject and object means knowl-

edge. To attain that union, we must take some method. For instance, if we want to comprehend the eye of the eye, we must make our mind introspective and practise contemplation. The teacher says: "It is not the thing itself. Do not think you can see because you have these eyes." If you have a telephone, even though it has a receiver, yet it cannot transmit the message unless it is connected with the main wire. So you may have body, mind and senses, but they cannot perform their functions if not connected with their Source. A man who desires to know the purpose of existence, who has any discrimination whatever, cannot be satisfied with mere knowledge of external phenomena; he must search and that search leads to the root of things. You are the one who wants to know and you are also the object of knowledge; when the two are united, then the ultimate knowledge is attained. The veil which separates us from the thing to be known, must be destroyed and every time we strive for higher things, we make the veil thinner. To do this we must rise above duality; we must learn to worship the One. Nowhere is this more clearly expressed,—that there is only one God, One to be known, One to be worshipped, than in the Upanishads. This is why the Upanishads are called the Scriptures of Supreme Wisdom (Vedanta).

(*To be continued in the October number.*)

The earliest of these philosophical treatises (the Upanishads) will always, I believe, maintain a place in the literature of the world as the most astounding productions of the human mind in any age and in any country.

—*Max Müller.*

REPORTS

During July at the Vedanta Centre in Boston the Tuesday Evening Class, usually for regular students only, was open to the public and an unexpected number of strangers availed themselves of the opportunity to hear the Swami Paramananda expound the Katha-Upanishad, manifesting the deepest appreciation of his clear and inspiring explanation of that remarkable Scripture. The attendance at the Sunday morning Services was also exceptionally large. The tenor of the lectures at all of these was eminently practical and helpful. In the one on "What is Meditation?" the Swami laid convincing stress on the need of the meditative habit in every department of life, if man would gain the mastery and use of all his powers. In "Self-Help and Self-Surrender" he showed that so long as man considers himself the doer, he is responsible for his own actions and must help himself. When, however, he has risen to the plane where he sees God as the only Doer, complete surrender to the Divine becomes possible. Therefore self-help is the preparatory stage, leading to the higher stage of self-surrender.

* * *

Swami Bodhananda is carrying on the work of the Vedanta Society in New York with praiseworthy zeal. A new circular, just issued by the Society, announces a Public Lecture every Sunday at 3 P. M., a Gita-class on Tuesday at 8, and classes for the study of concentration and meditation on Thursday at 8 and Friday at 3.15 P. M.

* * *

At the Vedanta Society in San Francisco the usual meetings will continue through the summer:— three lectures every Sunday; a Gita Class on Tues-

day and a class for the study of the Vedas on Thursday, both at 8 P. M. The work is conducted by Swami Trigunatita and Swami Prakashananda.

* * *

The second Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Sevashrama at Allahabad records a most promising growth in the new work. Like all similar institutions carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission, it renders help without regard to caste or creed, and in the 12 months under review 5856 patients were treated, among them being 11 Christians and 207 Mohammedans. Allahabad is an important place of pilgrimage in India and it was especially to care for suffering pilgrims far from home and friends that the hospital was established. It is at present sadly in need of a proper building to house the sick and Swami Vigyanananda, now in charge, closes his report with an earnest appeal for help in this direction.

* * *

The eighth Report of the Ramakrishna Relief Work in Bahubazar, Calcutta, gives as its chief work during the past year the support and education of 22 destitute boys; and its patient, modest efforts have already received the recognition of the Bengal Government, and the municipality, besides many prominent persons. The members, thus encouraged, are striving to raise funds for a permanent Boys' Home.

Another similar Society has been formed in a very small village of the Hoogli District and is working bravely to provide relief for the suffering and poverty-stricken. It is interesting to see how Swami Vivekananda's oft-reiterated, stirring appeals, added to the examples of loving, tireless service set by the members of the Ramakrishna Mission, are bringing into life such charitable organizations in every part of India.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II. SEPTEMBER, 1913 No. 9

It was discovered in the early stages of Vedic research that man was not homogeneous in his constitution and capacity. Far from being a simple independent mechanism, thinking through a brain, feeling through a heart, functioning through certain members, the whole of equal power and duration, he was an aggregate of many different parts, widely varying in their nature, duration and range of action. In the Upanishads we are told: Beyond the senses is the mind, behind the mind is the intellect or discriminative faculty, beyond the intellect is the individual soul, behind this the Prakriti or unmanifested creative force, and still further beyond is the Great Supreme Self, which is one with God the Absolute. In other words, man stretches from the atom to the Infinite, touching the universe at every point, the planes of his being like a broadening chain of reservoirs, supplied from the mighty ocean of cosmic life and all joined by one stream,—the stream of thought. Ceaselessly this stream flows on, the proof of existence itself Descartes declares in his fundamental axiom: "I think, therefore I am." If it flows united, well held within its banks, then its current is swift and strong and quickly cuts a deep and clean-swept

bed. If, on the contrary, it branches out into a delta of little streams, then even though it cover a larger area, its current slackens and it soon grows shallow.

The use man makes of this stream of thought determines his condition, as truly as the use of the water-ways of a country affects its prosperity and development. If he regards it merely as a commercial high-road for transportation, to bring him health, wealth, pleasure, power, he will undoubtedly increase in worldly advantage; but only as he learns its real value and begins to follow its course back to the unknown regions of its source will he gain knowledge and understanding. Again and again the illumined Seers of the Upanishads admonish man: "Do not concern yourself with what thought can bring you. Rather seek to find where it can lead you"; and this journey along the stream of thought to the origin of all things is the chief subject of the Vedic Scriptures.

It becomes plain that by this stream man is connected with every plane of cosmic being; and if he but pursues it with determination, all the realms of knowledge must be open to him. Swami Vivekananda asserts that "by concentration of the thought every truth in the universe becomes evident"; and Patanjali, the founder of the system of spiritual or super-conscious development known as Yoga, claims that if anyone directs his thought in a single, determined current on any object of the external or internal world, its innermost nature will be revealed to him. Before each one of us lie these endless realms of knowledge, the stream that will bear us to them is flowing by our door. Shall we sit at home in indolent content, or shall we rouse ourselves and set out on this journey towards Truth?

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

God is seen when the mind is tranquil. When the mental sea is agitated by the wind of desires, it cannot reflect God and then God-vision is impossible. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.—*St. Paul.*

Nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity; and I affirm that tranquillity is nothing else than the good ordering of the mind. . . . . Remember to retire into this little territory of thy own and above all do not distract or restrain thyself, but be free. . . . . Things do not touch the soul, for they are external and remain immovable; but our perturbations come only from the opinion which is within.

—*Marcus Aurelius.*

As the champion warrior relies for victory upon his armor's strength, so right thought is like a strong cuirass able to withstand the six sense-robbers. —*Buddha.*

For thoughts alone cause the round of births; let a man strive to purify his thoughts. What a man thinks, that he is: this is the old secret. The mind, it is said, is of two kinds, pure or impure; impure from the contact with lust, pure when free from lust. Mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberty for men; if attached to the world, it becomes bound; if free from the world, that is liberty. —*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad.*

POWER OF THOUGHT

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

Nothing is more potent to mould human life than thought. It is the motive power which drives this machine of body, mind and senses; but its activity is not limited to the physical organism or to immediate surroundings. It encircles vaster regions, outstripping the lightening in swiftness. All mortals possess this power intrinsically. Though its outer manifestation may vary in different individuals, yet it is equally latent in every living creature. The variations which exist arise from the differences in the development of the mind, which is its conveying medium. According to the capacity of the medium is this inner power manifested. As the one sun appears of varying strength when it shines through clear or clouded glass, so the power of thought through some minds shines more effulgently than through others.

The use or abuse of this force determines the destiny of man. When the thought is properly controlled and directed, it lifts him ever higher and higher; when it is ill-directed and uncontrolled, it drags him down and bars his growth, for verily man is what he thinks. Our whole life is nothing but the outer manifestation of our inner thought. Whether this is conscious or unconscious, it is always a creative force, a seed which sooner or later will bear fruit as good or evil action. If our mind dwells on things which are trivial and unwholesome, very soon we find that our whole nature is being colored by them. Similarly, when our mind is fixed on lofty ideas, our nature is inevitably uplifted and transformed.

All activity is preceded by thought. First we think, then we act; therefore it is impossible for any one to refrain from mistakes or evil deeds

without paying proper heed to his thoughts. The thought must first be correct before we can act wisely. Buddha says: "If you remove (from conduct) the purpose of the mind, the bodily act is but as rotten wood; wherefore, regulate the mind, and then the body will spontaneously go right." There are very few people who think consciously. An impulse comes, a desire awakens in the heart, and at once the whole thought is carried away by it; it takes possession of the mind, as if the man has sold himself to it. In the Gita we read: When a man's mind constantly dwells on sense-objects, he begins to value them and becomes attached to them. From this attachment arises the desire to possess them, and if anything stands in his way, he grows angry. Through anger he loses all control and power of discernment, and thus he works his own ruin. At first the object and he stand as two separate entities; but through attachment and lack of discrimination, he becomes identified with it and naturally suffers from whatever effect it may produce.

When, however, the mind is controlled and discriminative, one can avoid such dangers. Suppose someone speaks harshly to you, can it really hurt you? No; it is you who give it importance through your own thought. If you analyze you will find that you are hurt on account of your own mental attitude; and it is that which shatters your strength and brings suffering. Without a properly controlled mind and the habit of right thinking, therefore, no one can safely travel along the path of life. Even our ordinary duties cannot be performed without right thinking; and right thinking means the awakening of intuition, the establishing of tranquillity in our whole being, cultivating strength of mind. This is what we need

in order to think properly. Ordinary minds think, but their thoughts are broken before they have achieved the object of their thought; therefore they cannot attain their purpose. However small or great the object to be gained, unless the mind is a thinking mind it cannot accomplish anything. No matter what we do, no matter how insignificant our position may be, whether many depend on us or few, we have a certain responsibility in life. To meet this ably, we must learn to live understandingly; and we cannot acquire understanding without bringing our thoughts under our control, making the mind introspective; in other words, without gaining the power of concentrated thought.

The chief aim of all religion and philosophy is to lift the mind to a state of perfect balance, serenity and vigor. In order to do this, concentration is essential; hence practical religion always leads to contemplation. We must think diligently and learn to adjust our forces. We must find out what are our needs and defects; what are the causes of our mental disturbances and distractions. We can discover these things only when we look within; so we must become meditative, for going within ourselves is what meditation means. When we think constantly of objects in the external universe, that too, is a kind of meditation, since our thoughts flow steadily in that direction; but this dissipates our strength. When, however, our mind is focused and turned inward, when it is well established on the higher problems of life, then it may be called truly meditative and through such thought we gain real wisdom and happiness.

Meditation is the key to knowledge, the source of all power. Even those who seek knowledge on the material plane,—scientists, discoverers, inven-

tors, must develop a certain habit of meditation. If they do not have great concentration, if they do not plunge heart and soul into their research, they cannot discern anything. In the same way, when we wish to discover the subtler facts of the spiritual plane, we must gather up all our forces and turn them within; then alone can we understand. Man must know. Merely believing in some theory, in some doctrine or dogma is not enough for the intelligent mind. A wakeful mind cannot be satisfied by simply hearing about things from others. Therefore Vedanta declares that religion is a matter of perception, of actual realization or individual experience. This power of realization is not confined to a few great ones only. It is the birthright of every living being. We all have the power to centralize our energies and realize the same Truth. If we will only try to awaken our inner nature and strive with perseverance, determination and real power of will, nothing can stand in our way.

Through the meditative habit we gain intuition. Things which once seemed impossible grow possible to us, when we learn to turn our eyes inward and see for ourselves. All the mighty truths proclaimed by the great Seers, we too can perceive and prove them, if we follow in their footsteps and lead the same kind of life. Self-control, the mastering of our lower nature, the acquisition of direct knowledge: these are not mere theories. They can be achieved. We know that there are people born with superior power, superior understanding, greater control than others. What makes the difference? It is the wakeful nature of their mind which enables them to acquire these. We all have the same possibilities, however. We can either become weak by letting our mind be scat-

tered and filled with selfish desires, or we can become great mentally and spiritually by focusing all our energies on higher ideals.

It is said in the Scriptures: "Mind alone is the cause of the bondage and of the liberation of mankind." The impure mind binds man, the purified mind frees him. Mind is impure when it is divided and lacking in discrimination. It is pure and clean when it is single; for purity means singleness, something that is unmixed. The tendency of the undisciplined mind is to be divided and scattered. Most people never try to control their thought; they do not seem to realize that following it helplessly, letting it wander hither and thither unchecked, means a tremendous waste of energy. The scattered state of mind, indeed, is the greatest drawback in all human endeavor. We may have every advantage in our outer life, but if we are lacking in purity or singleness of mind, we can make little use of our opportunities. Most of our sorrow, suffering, sickness and failure are due to a divided mind. Until we can gain command over our scattered forces, we can achieve very little on any plane. In fact, we cannot perform the simplest task ably unless we have a certain amount of concentration in our thought. The unconcentrated mind is bound to be visionary and unstable. It cannot see the present clearly, it has no power of foresight with regard to the future, and it cannot retain the experiences of the past. Experience is the basis of all our knowledge; and only when we can retain what we have learned through experience, can we progress. Yet how few really remember the lessons they have gained from their past experiences, so that they can recall them and not commit the same blunder over and over. This is because their mind is so fickle,

so unstable that they cannot carry any line of thought to a conclusion. Continuity of thought is necessary to attain success in any undertaking and continuity comes only through the power of concentration.

There can be no peace or rest for us until our mind is well collected and focused. Often we see a person who is tired and wants to rest, but even though he may be lying on a soft bed, yet he finds no rest. Why? Because his forces are so scattered, his thought is so distracted, that he cannot quiet his mind, even though his body is free from activity. There are some who have the notion that resting means doing absolutely nothing—that if the mind is restless, to quiet it we must give up all thought. But we cannot give up thinking. The mind will always go on thinking something; only there are certain thoughts which are restful and certain thoughts which bring unrest. When our mind is directed towards elevating objects, then it will grow calm, serene and strong. But this is only possible through constant mental discipline. When we first try to focus our thoughts, we find how dissipated they are. This state, however, is nothing but the result of our own unconscious habits of thinking. Therefore, to surmount these, we must cultivate counter-habits; for all thinking is a matter of habit. At first it may be very difficult, because all our past habits rise and try to overthrow the mind; but through constant determined effort and discrimination we can conquer. For instance, one who has been accustomed to many forms of distraction, like reading light novels, finds it very difficult to hold the mind on serious subjects. Yet by persisting, he begins to cultivate a taste for them and finds the same satisfaction in these that he once found in his previous habits.

This shows that what we call the natural trend of mind is nothing but a habit which we ourselves have formed. Therefore the most weak and degraded human being can become strong and noble through the power of well-directed thought. The same force which once dragged him down, now becomes the means of his regeneration. By right thinking a man can free himself from bondage, disease, imperfection; and through wrong thinking he can create fetters for himself. By constantly thinking that you are pure, that you are a child of God, you become so. And this is one of the great lessons which have been given to the world by the Teachers of India. From time immemorial these sages have declared that if a man desires to be liberated from bondage, the power of right thought must be awakened in him. Let a man feel hopeful, for he has something which is mighty within. Let him not think that he is weak or a sinner. If he has committed blunders out of weakness or ignorance, it can never help him to dwell on them. Even if he has done something wrong in his life, it would be better for him to forget it and start afresh. That is the only way he can counteract his defects and go onward. Let him have an ideal on which to focus his thought; then, when he has learned to concentrate all his forces on that, he will very soon rise above his present weakness; for all weakness is the result of dissipation and misuse of energy.

There are four kinds of help which we can render our fellow-beings. We may give food, clothes or money to a needy man, but his need returns. Next we may offer secular education. Education opens a man's eyes and teaches him to take care of himself; so to give him knowledge, even secular knowledge, is a great thing. The third

form of help is to save a man's life. This may seem the greatest, but death may seize him again at any moment. The fourth and highest help is to teach a man how to control and direct his thought properly, that he may gain understanding or wisdom, for this will save his soul. The first three forms of help are unquestionably very good; but the only permanent help is to give people the mastery over all their powers, since they can then stand on their own feet and work out their own salvation.

The secret of success, health, and happiness lies in the power of concentration; and nowhere is this need felt more keenly than in the Western world to-day. What is the cause of the many nervous disorders to be found among people? Is it because they work too much? No, it is not the amount of their work. It is the misdirection of their energies. It is the lack of proper control over mind and body which at present is killing everyone little by little. Work of itself will not exhaust us, will not make us restless and unhealthy. It is misdirected activity. We do not know how to use our activities properly, how to protect ourselves from our own undisciplined thoughts. What we need is not so much to lessen our activity, as to gain the habit of control over our mind and through our mind over all our forces.

This, however, cannot be accomplished in a day or by chance. Nor can it be given by another. It can be acquired only by ourselves through regular practice. In the Gita when Arjuna, the disciple, says: "This wisdom which has been declared by Thee as even-mindedness, I do not see the possibility of its lasting existence because of the restlessness of the mind"; the Lord replies: "It is true that the mind is restless and difficult to con-

trol, yet through constant practice and dispassion it can be subdued. But this wisdom is undoubtedly difficult to attain by one of uncontrolled nature." Therefore, if you wish to gain control over your mind, you must take up some regular practice. The first thing you must learn is to sit quietly; for until you can restrain your physical activities and hold your body still, you cannot gain mental poise. Nothing will so quickly cure nervousness and benefit the health than the daily exercise of sitting still and checking all unnecessary and unconscious movements of the body. When you have succeeded in doing this, the mind will naturally grow calmer. Then you must take some Ideal on which to fix your thoughts. At first the main practice will be to drive out from the mind the many other thoughts that crowd into it; but by persistent effort the number of these will gradually decrease and the mind will become stronger, steadier and purer. Even a few moments spent in this way each day will clarify the mind, strengthen the will and enable you to do your duty with ever-growing efficiency and wisdom.

Our thought is such a mighty factor in our daily living, that one single thought in the morning can fill our whole day either with sunshine and joy or with gloom and depression. All our power and all our weakness come from this one source. Each one of us creates a world of his own, which is but a reflection of his thought. It is our own mental attitude which inspires love or hatred in those whom we meet. Every thought of love sent out by us is sure to awaken a thought of love in response; so too with every unloving thought. Each one of our little thoughts also unites us with the great cosmic currents of thought, intensifying our individual state of mind. All the results we attain

are according to our thoughts. It is the thought which determines the true value of every act. Sri Ramakrishna shows this in His parable of two friends. One day they were strolling about together when they passed a place where a religious service was going on. One of them said: "Come, let us stop here for a while and listen to the holy words which are being spoken." The other refused, saying: "No, what is the use of listening to the Bhagavatam? Let us spend the time in yonder public hall where we shall have some recreation and pleasure." The first one, unwilling to do this, stayed to hear the Bhagavatam; while the other went to the place of amusement. But all the time he was there, he kept thinking to himself: "Alas! why have I come here? How much happier my friend must be, listening to the sacred words of the Lord." Thus, although in a public hall, his thoughts were fixed on God; while the other, who was listening to the Bhagavatam, found no joy in it, but kept regretting that he had not gone with his friend. His thought remained constantly on the pleasure he was missing, so he reaped the fruit of worldly thought; while his friend gained all the merit of holy thought.

This shows that our outer actions cannot be fruitful unless our thought is in accord with them. That is why many of our apparently good undertakings do not bring the desired results; it is because our heart and hand do not work together. Without harmony between body and mind we cannot achieve any great end, either physically or mentally. When, on the contrary, all our forces are united, so great is our power, that, if we fix our thought on anything, it is sure to come to us. Hence we must consider carefully whether what we are thinking of, we shall want when it comes.

This is the reason why we should practise discrimination at every step. But not only for our own sake, for the sake of others as well we should guard our thought carefully, because it is influencing directly or indirectly all those with whom we associate. We may refuse to acknowledge this, saying: "I have no responsibility for any one else;" but no one can come in contact with us without being affected by our state of mind. It may not be intentional on our part, but our every thought, conscious or unconscious, is radiating a good or evil influence and creating an atmosphere which everyone must feel.

It is not enough, however, merely to discover this power within us; we must also find out what it is, whence it is, whose it is. Unless we understand this, we cannot use it intelligently. So long as it is in the hands of one who is limited and ignorant, it is a danger; for infinite power in finite hands is always dangerous. We must trace it to its source. We must realize that our little mind is an actual part of a great universal mind, the thought which impels and shapes our life is in reality one with a mighty current of cosmic thought. We may use it independently and to small ends, to gain health, mental power or success; but only when it is united with the Supreme, when our mind constantly rests in Him, when we are conscious of His presence in all our thoughts, in all our acts, in all our life, when our whole heart, soul and body become instruments in His hands, only then do we gain possession of this power in its full measure. Therefore let a man ever remain connected by his thought with the pure Essence of his being.

FREEDOM

No, not the plaything of the years,
And not the drudge of circumstance,
If lifted far from human fears,
To a great height above mischance.
The steadfast will, alert and free,
Lives its pure life, rapt in tranquillity.

—*H. P. K.*

THE STORY OF KING BALI

There was once a king in India by the name of Bali, who, thirsting like Alexander the Great for new conquest and restive under the enforced monotony of a peaceful rule, commanded his minister to find some new outlet for his pent-up energies.

The minister replied: "True it is that you have conquered all the world; but there lies still a kingdom unsubdued, vaster, richer than any you have vanquished."

"Where is it?" the king asked eagerly. "I know well all countries and all peoples, but of such a kingdom I have not heard. Tell me where it can be found and who rules over it, that I may at once set out and conquer it."

"The Sovereign of that empire is a gentle, unoffending person easy to capture," was the answer; "but he has a minister who is full of cunning and intrigue, and difficult to overcome. Unless, however, he is subdued no one can approach that kingdom."

The king was all aflame with desire of conquest. "Tell me, tell me where it is," he exclaimed. "That kingdom must be won! My name is not Mahabali if I do not conquer it. Make ready an army and let us be on the march at once."

With quiet deliberation the minister replied:

"That kingdom is within yourself."

The king drew back in dumb surprise, and then with grave earnestness said:

"You speak the truth. The Atman or Higher Self, that inner ruler of man, can never be approached unless his minister, the mind, is first subdued. But how difficult is this! Yet of what avail is it to conquer the whole world and be the slave of one's own self?"

And it is recorded that from that day the king devoted himself to the subjugation of his inner kingdom.

REPORTS

During the month of August both the Sunday Service and the Tuesday Evening Class at the Boston Vedanta Centre were very well attended. After completing the study of the Katha-Upanishad in the Tuesday Class, Swami Paramananda began some Talks on the Bhagavad-Gita. The subjects for his lectures at the Sunday Service were: "Law of Karma," "What is Yoga?" Jnana-Yoga" and "Karma-Yoga."

* * *

Swami Sarvananda, who has been placed in charge of the Madras branch of the Ramakrishna Mission's work, has been carrying on a zealous and praiseworthy crusade throughout Southern India; and recently he pushed his efforts as far as Singapore, where he was invited to open a Vivekananda Reading Hall. While there he delivered several able lectures each of which was heard with deep appreciation by several thousand people.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II. OCTOBER, 1913 No. 10

Nothing is more contrary to the highest teaching of Vedanta than to accept forms and rituals in place of that which is absolute and undivided; and also there is no other religion or philosophy more tolerant towards ritualism and dualism. First of all we must understand that God the Absolute, the One without a second, can never be represented by one or many forms. It is a mistake to suppose that the Supreme Being can be confined in any fixed set of forms, rituals, doctrines or dogmas. Those who try to represent That which is infinite and formless by finite objects can never succeed. Yet, whenever the mind tries to conceive of God the Absolute, it at once begins to form ideas which result in shaping a definite picture of Him; for it is the natural tendency of the human mind to create something concrete. Therefore Vedanta declares that monism and dualism, the conceptions of God with and without form, are equally true and necessary to man in the different stages of his spiritual development. The two ideas may seem contradictory, and they would be if it were a question of finite objects; but Infinity is boundless, limitless; in It are contained all aspects and all attributes. We must never confine our idea of Him to one thing. We may begin with form, but we must end with

the formless. We may start as dualists, but our goal must always be the One, because oneness, oneness with the Supreme, is the solution of life.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

These philosophers forget that the same Being is both personal and impersonal. They do not see that the Supreme Being manifests Itself as a Person of infinite power so long as we are persons. . . To think of Him as the Formless Being is quite right. Take care, however, that you do not run away with the idea that that view alone is true and all others false. Meditating upon Him as a Being with form is equally right. But you must hold to your particular point of view until you realize, until you *see* God, then everything will become clear. Seek to know God and revere God. Love God. That is the duty nearest you. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

I know that Heaven has an intelligence which nothing escapes. I know that it regards all things; that it enters into all; that it is present incessantly to all. Heaven penetrates to the depths of all hearts, as day-break illumines the darkest room. We should strive to reflect its light, as two instruments in complete harmony respond to one another.
—*Confucius.*

There is One Universal Soul diffused through all things; eternal, invisible, unchangeable; in essence like truth, in substance resembling light; not to be represented by any image; to be comprehended only by the mind; not, as some conjecture, exterior to the world, but in himself entire, pervading the universal sphere. —*Pythagoras.*

He knoweth the past and the future, but no one comprehends anything of His knowledge, except that which He revealeth. With God are the keys of the secret things, none knoweth them but He. . . . No vision taketh Him in, but He taketh in all vision. —*Koran.*

He whose nature is beyond our reach, whose being escapes our senses, who is invisible and eternal, He the All-pervading Spirit, whom the mind cannot grasp, even He shone forth.—*Code of Manu.*

God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in Truth.
—*Jesus the Christ.*

The reason which can be reasoned is not the Eternal Reason. The name which can be named is not the Eternal Name. —*Laotze.*

The height and depth of the world is centred in Thee, O Lord. I know not what Thou art. Thou art what Thou alone canst be.
—*Persian Scriptures.*

I am that which has been, which is and which will be; and no one has yet lifted the veil that covers Me. —*Egyptian Temple Inscription.*

I am the Origin of all, everything evolves from Me. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with loving ecstacy. With their heart fixed on Me, with their life absorbed in Me, mutually enlightening (one another) and perpetually singing My glory, they are contented and rejoiced. To these ever steadfast and loving worshippers, I give that Yoga of wisdom by which they come unto Me. Out of pure compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the effulgent light of wisdom.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

THE PERSONAL GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE

Extract of Lecture by Sister Devamata

As water cannot rise higher than its source, so man cannot transcend the highest level of his understanding. What he is able to perceive in the world outside is measured by what he has perceived within. He can grasp only so much of the external universe as he has analyzed and understood within himself. The world he lives in is his own world and as he finds it good or evil, he draws the outlines of his own nature.

So is it with his conception of God. God is the whole. Man sees as much of Him as he chooses to make room for in his consciousness. The God of each one of us is always the reflection of our own mental development. If we remain on the plane of personality, bound by our lower self, we cannot hope to have any idea of the Absolute. So long as we cling to our human nature, our God must be a human God. Everywhere in the early stages of evolution, we find this tendency to merely inflate human attributes and powers and apply them to the Supreme. He is the Lord of Hosts, the Judge of Judges, the Ruler and Governor, the strongest of the strong—in other words, the largest thing we can think of, but always an expansion, an extension of our own human personality. In fact, so long as we name God, so long as we speak of Him at all, we are speaking of a personal God; for out of what has language itself grown? Out of our personal need. Therefore speech can never transcend the plane of personality. The story is told in the Upanishad of a father who, wishing to test the knowledge of his sons on their return from the house of their Teacher, asked each one: "What canst thou tell me of Brahman (the Absolute)?" The older boy replied by long quotations from the

Scriptures; "This Sage has defined Him in this way, another in that." But the father checked him saying: "It is clear that thou knowest nothing of Brahman." The younger boy, when questioned, hung his head and was silent. Whereupon the father, content, exclaimed: "I see, my son, that thou hast begun to have some idea of what God is."

The Infinite admits of no definition. The Absolute can never be grasped by the relative mind. Man must transcend himself to know God. It is in the rapt silence of the super-conscious that the last veil falls and the seeker beholds Him face to face. Until then, mere abstraction is not a substitute for Infinity. Intellectual dissection, divesting God of form and definite qualities, does not bring knowledge of the Absolute. When we have subtilized our idea to the ultimate point of vagueness, made our Deity a formless philosophic entity, if we analyze, we shall find that He is still a glorified image of ourself, the furthest point of vision possible to us, that which we are striving to manifest in our individual life.

It follows inevitably that the ignorant man cannot have the same conception of God as the wise. He can take only as much of the Divine as his limited mind can grasp. It is not superstition or religious degeneracy, it is true wisdom to give to each man the idea of God he can comprehend. However primitive it may be, let him serve it faithfully and it will lead him to the Infinite. It matters not where he fixes his mind, even on the crudest earthen image, God is there. We talk as if the universe were one thing and God another, as if to look for Him in creation were idolatry. But what sustains the universe? Whence has come the earth out of which the image is constructed? What makes it possible for those particles to stay together

as an image? What conceived even the simple idea which stands behind the image, if it is not the Supreme? He is literally there, not because man places Him there, but because He inheres there as the basis of every atom in the earth; and the truly devout worshipper can call Him out of that image as surely as out of subtler forms or realms. How foolish then to break the image and take away some humble soul's object of concentration. Let him rather kneel before it day after day. If he bows down with earnest, whole-hearted devotion, he has more chance of seeing God even in His Absolute form than you who break the image. Because it is not a question of getting a truer image, or of finding purer material out of which to make his image; it is a question of realizing an object in his own consciousness. And whatever starts him on the way, whatever helps him to make his mind one-pointed, that is of value and should not be destroyed. We should never try to impose our God on another or borrow his. Only that can be a true God for us which has sprung out of the depths of our own inner experience, the fruit of our own earnest searching

As a matter of fact, there is no difference in essence between one aspect of Divinity and another, between the formful and the formless God, the personal and the impersonal. What is the personal God? Just as much of the Absolute as each one can cover with his understanding; in other words, each person's vision of the Supreme. Let the understanding widen, more of the Absolute will be covered and the personal God for that one will grow proportionately vaster, mightier, more majestic. All spiritual growth is summed up in this, the covering day by day of more of the Absolute, moving towards the whole, passing from the particular

into the universal. So long as we cling obstinately to our present narrow vision of the Infinite, believing it to be the whole and trying to impose it on others, our progress must necessarily be slow and cramped. But when we cast aside all prejudice, learn to be humble and tolerant, and open ourselves to the larger view of things, then we move forward with amazing swiftness. Each time we touch the least of God, our nature is purified, we are able at once to perceive more of Him and this means the awakening of a new power of perception. We see a little of God, that God in us sees more of God at once, and again that sees still more of Him. Thus that which we started out to do for ourselves, the Infinite does for us.

It is the same as when the sun rises. Fogs and mists may screen it and the foolish man imagines that he must light a fire to dry them up; but in a few hours the sun of its own power has dissipated them and unveiled itself. So when we come in contact with this great Sun of the soul, the Infinite Divine Consciousness, it eats up all these clouds of ignorance that envelop us, the sky of our mind grows clear, our horizon line broadens; and as it expands, we rise into higher and higher states of consciousness, gaining an ever-widening vision of Divinity, until we reach the highest super-conscious state and behold the Supreme.

Then what happens? To know the Supreme means to become one with It, because only God can know God. "Then I must lose my individuality?" the timid soul asks. Necessarily something must go. You have been a limited entity. When you go out into the unlimited, how can you expect to keep your limited nature unaltered? What is the thing that shuts off God from you? What is it that you have been trying day by day to conquer?

What is that against which you are beating, which you are striving to break down? Your own little personality. The barrier of your ego. It alone stands between you and God; and only as you transcend it, can your consciousness expand. That which you are now, that which marks you as a person, how can you expect to take the Infinite into that? No, you must go out into It. This is inevitable, and people are frightened at the thought. They prefer to have only a little bit of God, and all of themselves. Yet it is against this partial, limited condition of the little self that they are blindly struggling; and it is the unrecognized longing for more and more of that undefined Absolute Good which causes all their unrest. But when they are told that they can get the whole of It, they draw back.

Have you found that as your consciousness has expanded through this one life, you have felt poorer for it? Has there ever come a time when you have said: "I am afraid to learn anything more lest I lose myself?" On the contrary, with growing understanding have you not also felt increasing wisdom, increasing power, increasing efficiency? Can you imagine, therefore, that that which has proved good all along the way, will not be good when the last barrier breaks and you attain that goal towards which through ages you have been travelling,—oneness with Eternal Life, Infinite Happiness, Unbroken Bliss? Can a sum of countless gains make a loss? Can ever-expanding consciousness end in darkness and unconsciousness? It is not possible. That which has led to more and more knowledge, must ultimately lead to unlimited knowledge; and in absolute knowledge alone is joy and strength. The man who turns back does not know himself, does not know why he is toiling and struggling.

He is the man who identifies himself with his body, who measures life by the narrow circle and environment in which he revolves today. He does not believe that he is actually created in the image of God, that Divinity is his real nature. He has not awakened to the fact that within him are infinite possibilities, that in his own being there is a Divine Power, which if he will only let it work freely, will lead him to the Absolute, that is, to absolute happiness, absolute existence, unlimited consciousness, to that which can never be destroyed or changed. And who is there who does not long for life which has no end, knowledge which has no limit, happiness which has no break? For this alone are we all striving; but we cannot attain it until we are willing to pass out boldly from time into eternity, from the finite into the infinite, from the relative into the absolute.

How can we do it? Not by a sudden jump. Nowhere in nature do we find evolution moving otherwise than by gradual consecutive steps; and the laws of nature are the same on all planes. Physical evolution has been a slow building up atom on atom; never a sudden expansion which would mean explosion, but a gradual spreading-out of consciousness. And so must it be in the evolution of our higher understanding. We must begin where we are. At the present moment we are far from the Absolute in our consciousness. We are bound fast to this relative plane, to these perishable bodies and all that is related to them; and when any teaching comes that seems to lead us away from these outer conditions and associations, we declare it dangerous. Just as dangerous as the Absolute is dangerous; as eternal life, universal love, unlimited knowledge are dangerous. Which is dangerous for you, ignorance or knowledge, death or life, this happiness of an hour or eternal happiness?

You must be willing to let yourself outgrow these ideas in which you are now so rooted. No longer live as if you were a body. How can you get the least conception of that which is beyond body, if you live day by day bound up in this physical organism? You must transcend the body and whenever it tries to fasten itself upon you, refuse to be claimed by it. But mere denial will not do. You can accomplish nothing by a negative process,—first destroying the body idea and then filling your mind with another; asceticism first and realization afterwards. No; you must go within and find something that is not body. Seek God and the rest will follow of itself. Let Truth drive out falsehood. Do not try to destroy the false and then go in search of the True.

Begin by spending some moments every day looking within for something in yourself which is not body. What is it which directs and moves this outer shell? Why not live in that and identify yourself with that? Why let the stronger thing in you be the slave of the weaker? Hold your thought there; develop the consciousness of that. Soon you will discover that this inner power of mind also does not act of itself, that behind it there is something still stronger. Identify yourself with that. Make both mind and body the servants of that. Then as you dwell on that, your consciousness will expand and you will begin to discern something behind which is yet mightier. Seize hold on that, follow that. Thus the daily journey inward will carry you further and further back, until at last you will reach the source of your being.

It is not enough, however, to set apart hours of the day to think about this. You must live it. If you are dealing all the time with personality, if all your thought and conversation are about people.

all your activity and interest in outward things, it will not be possible to transcend the plane of personality. If you would gain a larger, truer vision of God, your whole life must be a withdrawing from the personal, the limited. You must cease to be petty and narrow in your judgments, in the demands you make upon others, in your standards and aims. Let no hatred or jealousy, no intolerance or condemnation, no discouragement or doubt rise in the mind. Where they are the Sun of Divine Consciousness can never shine. Learn to be God-like and God will reveal Himself in His true nature. Serve your present finite vision of the Infinite with faithful devotion and He will gradually unfold before you the fullness of His glory.

KENA UPANISHAD

Translated and Commentated by
Swami Paramananda

PART II

I

If thou thinkest "I know It well," then it is certain that thou knowest but little of the Brahman (the Absolute Truth), what form of Him thou art and in what form He (resideth) in the Devas (minor aspects of Deity). Therefore I think that what thou thinkest to be known is still to be sought after.

The teacher, having given the definition of the real Self or Brahman, by which mortals are able to see, hear, feel, think, was afraid that the disciple might conclude after merely hearing about It, that he had known that subtle Self; therefore he proceeds by saying: "If you have the idea that you know It, then you know very little. One cannot

even teach It. One can show the way, but it is a question of direct perception through unfoldment. You may have heard about It or read about It in books, but that is not enough. You must experience It, see It. Mere intellectual grasp or acceptance is not the way of true knowledge. Each one must find It out for himself."

This is the special characteristic of the ancient teaching. It is very easy for the disciple, after hearing the teacher, to think he knows; but the teacher can only show the way, the disciple must go on seeking until he attains. While you are listening, you may think: "Oh yes, I am the eye of the eye;" but when you try to define yourself, you will find that you are a very limited thing according to your own definition. Therefore intellectual recognition alone will not help you. You must practise. The previous chapter has shown that the knowledge of Atman or Brahman (the Higher Self or the Infinite), is beyond sense-perception. "There the eye does not go, nor speech, nor mind." "That is distinct from known and also It is beyond the unknown." Therefore it was necessary for the teacher to remind the disciple that knowledge based on sense-perception should not be confounded with that of the supersensuous state. The disciple had accepted what the teacher said. It had been made as clear to him as language could make it, but now it was necessary for him to prove it by his own experience. Thus guided by the teacher, the disciple sat in solitary contemplation, seeking the true meaning of Brahman within himself. Then, having gained a new vision, he approached the teacher once more.

II

(The disciple said:) I do not think that I know It well, nor do I know that I do not know It. He among us who knows That, knows (what is meant by) "I know" and also (by) "I know not that I do not know It."

This is very perplexing, for it seems to be contradictory, but it is not. From the previous chapter we have learned that Brahman is something different from the known, and beyond the unknown. The disciple realizing this, says: "As far as mortal conception is concerned, I do not think I know, for It is beyond mind and speech, limitless; yet it is not true that I do not know, for the very fact that I exist, that I am here in your presence, that I can seek It, shows that I know, for It is the source of my being. One who says "I do not know," can say it only from ignorance, for the very existence of a mortal shows that he knows. But I do not know in the sense of knowing the Whole, of comprehending the Infinite Ocean of existence." Who can even know the Atlantic ocean in its every part? Yet we do know its water and waves and general character. In the same way the disciple declares: "I know the varied forms of the phenomenal world which spring from the ocean of the Absolute. In that sense I know."

That is vast, That is infinite, beyond mind and speech. We cannot say It is good, we cannot say It is evil, because It is beyond all dualities. We cannot say It is light, we cannot say It is dark, because It is above light and darkness. The word knowledge is ordinarily used to signify knowledge of limited phenomena, and by this knowledge the Infinite cannot be known. Man must transcend this relative knowledge before he can have a clear

conception of God. One who wishes to attain soul-consciousness and immortality must rise above matter.

The word "know" is used here in the same sense as it is used in modern science. The observation of material science being confined to the sense-plane, it ignores what is beyond. Therefore it must always be limited and subject to change. It discovered atoms, then it went further and discovered electrons, and when it found the one, it had to drop the other; so this kind of knowledge can never be final, and therefore can never lead to the ultimate knowledge of the Infinite. Spiritual science is not merely a question of mind and brain, it depends on the awakening of our latent higher consciousness.

III

It is thought by him by whom It is not thought (because beyond thought). He by whom It is thought, knows It not. It is unknown to those who know and known to those who do not know.

By this text the teacher confirms the idea that Brahman is unthinkable, because unconditioned. Therefore he says: It is thought by him by whom It is not thought, that is, he who considers It beyond thought, beyond sense-perception, beyond mind and speech, he alone has a true understanding of Brahman. They who judge a living being from his external form and sense faculties, know him not; because the real Self of man is not manifested in his seeing, hearing, speaking. His real Self is that within by which he hears and speaks and sees. In the same way, he knows not Brahman who thinks he knows It by name and form. The ordinary point of view is that God can be known through the study of books; but being able to quote from the Scriptures and discourse learnedly about

Him does not give the knowledge of the Supreme. The arrogant and foolish man thinks he knows everything; but the true knower is humble. He says: "How can I know Thee, Thou who art beyond mind and speech, Infinite?" In the last portion of the text, the teacher draws an impressive contrast between the attitude of the wise man who knows, but thinks he does not know; and that of the ignorant who does not know, but thinks he knows.

IV

It (Brahman) is known when It is known as the Witness of every state of consciousness. (Through such knowledge) one attains immortality. By this Self one attains strength and by knowledge immortality is attained.

We have learned from the previous text that the Brahman is unknown to those whose knowledge is limited to sense experience; but He is not unknown to those whose purified intelligence perceives Him as the Witness of all states of consciousness and the Essence of all things. By this knowledge one attains immortality, because although the material form may change and the body may decay and die, the subtle essence of our being remains untouched. Therefore he whose knowledge is based upon direct perception of this undying essence, transcends all fear of death and becomes immortal. He also acquires unlimited strength, because he identifies himself with the source of all things. The strength which comes from one's own muscle and brain or from one's individual power, must be limited and mortal and therefore cannot lift one beyond death; but through that strength which *Atma-Jnana* or Self-knowledge gives, immortality is reached.

V

If one knows (That) here, that is Truth (the goal of life); if one knows It not here, then there is great destruction (rounds of birth and death). The wise seeing the same Self in all beings, having departed from this world, become immortal.

(To be concluded in November.)

NEW BOOKS

"La Voie de la Devotion," a translation of "The Path of Devotion" by Swami Paramananda, has just been received from its Swiss publisher, Theo. Sack-Reymond of Lausanne. The lucidity and grace of the French translation lend new beauty to the forceful and inspiring words of the original, which has already helped so many hundred striving souls that it is now in its third edition. The present volume is brought out in an unusually attractive form and comes not merely as an old friend in a new dress, but as a new friend with a charm all its own.(Price 75 cents. Postage 4 cents).

A sister volume, "The Way of Peace and Blessedness," by the same author appeared in September. It is of a deeply devotional nature and no one can read its pages without feeling a quickening of spiritual fervor and understanding. Each chapter opens with helpful quotations from the Eastern Scriptures and a prayer, while every line is full of instructive and life-giving teaching. The book can well serve as a manual of daily devotions. One passage reads: "Our duty is to harmonize, to sympathize, but never to antagonize. Some times it may take long to make people understand a great Ideal; but patience, perseverance and love conquer everything in the end. It is good to give people joy and happiness, but it is infinitely greater to be able to help them through the light of understanding, because the light of Truth saves one from many rounds of birth and death and gives eternal bliss."

NOTICE

During the month of October Swami Paramananda will conduct the following Services and Classes at the Vedanta Centre of Boston: Sunday 11 A. M. Service with Lecture and at 5 P. M. Vesper Service; Tuesday 8 P. M. Class Lecture on the Bhagavad-Gita; Thursday 8 P. M. Yoga Class. The subjects for the lectures on Sunday morning will be: "What is Vedanta?" "The Motherhood of God," "Value of Concentration," "Right Thinking and Right Living."

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II. NOVEMBER, 1913. No. 11.

What dignifies and distinguishes the science of today is its effort to find the unit, the point of convergence in the endless divergence of nature. In so doing, it has completed an age-long circle and returned to the Vedic method of the early Indo-Aryans. The whole search of those ancient Himalayan Rishis or Seers was for the One; and their science, religion and philosophy grew up out of their earnest longing to find that One. In times too remote for history, they proclaimed what modern science has only recently discovered,—that there is but one force in the universe, the centripetal; and that that which seems to be centrifugal is only the counter-action of another centre of gravity. So is it also with man, they said. One force alone operates within him. His natural course is inward, centripetal, Godward; but he is kept revolving in a distant orbit by the play of the external world upon him. Remove its attraction; at once he will fly towards the centre and realize union with his source. By the very law of nature, this will accomplish itself ultimately. The weaker centre of gravity must inevitably be overpowered by the stronger; the infinite must conquer the finite. Hence Vedanta declares that every soul will finally reach perfection. But each one can

hasten this hour by voluntarily resisting the deflecting influence of his own lower nature and yielding himself up to the in-drawing power of the great Divine Central Will; or, as all the great Teachers have taught it, by learning to say and live: "Not I, O Lord! but Thou."

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

The perfect liberation of the Soul is within the reach of him alone who, being convinced that God is the Disposer of all things, hath learned the lesson of complete self-abnegation and absolute forgetfulness of "I," "Me," "Mine."

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

The Scripture and the Faith and the Truth say: Sin is nought else, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable Good and betaketh itself to the changeable; that is to say, that it turneth away from the Perfect to "that which is in part" and imperfect, and most often to itself. . . What did the devil do else, or what was his going astray and his fall else, but that he claimed for himself to be also somewhat, and would have it that somewhat was his, and somewhat was due to him? This setting up of a claim and his I and Me and Mine, these were his going astray and his fall. And thus it is to this day.

—*Theologica Germanica.*

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to enquire whence is matter? and whereto? many truths arise out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the real universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or power,

but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates, that behind nature, throughout nature spirit is present. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God: he is nourished by unfailing fountains and draws at his need, inexhaustible power.

The Soul gives itself alone, original and pure, to the Lonely, Original and Pure, who on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then it is glad, young, and nimble. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own perfect. I am somehow recipient of the great soul. So I come to live in thoughts, and act with energies, which are immortal.

—*Emerson.*

SELF-ABNEGATION AND REALIZATION.

Familiar Teachings by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Without absolute self-abnegation no one can realize God. You must know that you are utterly powerless, worthless, that of yourself you can do nothing. Until you recognize this, the realization of God will not come. You may regard yourself to be a learned scholar, to be healthy, to be rich, to be an honorable man; but all this is merely a phantasm. The time is near at hand when you will be disabused of this idea. Your health may be destroyed, your riches swept away, your social standing may be impaired. Or if you keep them, you will begin to say to yourself: "I have wealth, but perhaps that man who is poor is better off than I because he has health; or I have health,

social position, but there is a person who seems happier than I without them."

If a man has the power to see things as they should be seen, to analyze himself properly, to analyze his mind properly, he will understand that he is absolutely in the hands of a Power who uses him as It pleases and whom he is powerless to resist. Then he says: "When man's vanity is puffed up by beauty, name, fame, wealth, he has no hope to reach Thee, O Lord! Thou art the property of those who have none else to call their own. Thou belongest to the poor, the lowly, to those who have nothing in this world. Therefore come to me, O Lord! All that I have is Thine. It never was mine. Thou art all my wealth!"

Health, wealth, beauty, property are really not friendly to man. They rather mislead him. They may seem to bring him happiness for a time; but at last he will have to confess that although he knows what is right, he has no power to do it; that he is too weak to lift himself up. Hence self-surrender is the only path for him. So he gives himself up entirely to the Lord. And in so doing, he is really not the loser. He actually gains, for he is a person who commits all sorts of blunders, while God never commits a blunder. If he directs himself, where will he go? To the grave-yard, to the cremation ground. But the one who is guided by God knows that there is no death for him. He understands himself to be self-luminous, self-existent; sword cannot cut him, fire cannot burn him, water cannot wet him, air cannot dry him; he is birthless, deathless, eternal and changeless. He knows that for him death is only throwing away a worn-out cloth to get a new one. People think that death is being no more. Those who think thus make much of health, wealth, beauty and

property; and when they care for these, that means that they identify themselves with their bodies.

The man who is vain on account of his wealth, on account of his health, on account of his beauty or learning, what does he gain? Even if he can read all the Vedas, he is not qualified to know the Truth. All this only increases his vanity. Sri Ramakrishna used to compare such vain pandits to vultures, who, although they soar high in the sky, always have their minds on the carrion pits on the earth. This is no learning. The real learning is that which will enable a man to realize the Truth. Our Master used to say: Repeating "Food, food, food," will not appease your hunger; so repeating the texts of books will not appease your spiritual hunger. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you see God. God is that food, eating which you will never hunger again. God is that drink, drinking which you will never thirst again. You imagine that unless you have health, wealth, beauty and property, you cannot be happy. But you have actually need of nothing. You are already complete and perfect. You are now really omnipotent, really omniscient, and you have forgotten it. You have thrown away the diamond and are making much of a pebble in the street. You have given up your omniscience, and are thinking yourself a scholar with a little learning, belonging to a certain community, a Brahmin, a limited being three and a half cubits in length. No; you are infinitely better than all this. When you once understand this, then you will not be content with these little things. You will say: "Not only this wealth is mine, but I possess the wealth of the

whole universe, for God Himself is my wealth. He is my father and my mother, and all my relatives."

When a man comes thus to identify himself with the universal Power, then he sees that nothing really belongs to him, that he does not really belong to himself, that all belongs to that Power; and he says: "Now I have found out that nothing belongs to me. This body is not mine; if it were, I could do with it what I chose. This mind is not mine, for I have no power to control it. Am I in any way then my own master? No; for I must go away whenever that Power wills. Then I must be the property of that Power, since He does with me whatever He chooses. When man knows thus that he is nobody, that he can do nothing for himself, at that moment God comes and says: "Now he is not trying to guide himself, so I will guide him. I have been guiding him all the while but he did not know it. Now let him see that I am doing it." So God begins to walk with his legs, to work with his hands, He begins to see through his eyes, to hear through his ears, to speak through his mouth, to think through his mind; and the man becomes a saint. He speaks like God, he looks like God, he acts like God; and he makes himself blissful and all others blissful. But this can be reached only by complete self-denial. Say: "I have nothing. This little beauty is not mine; I am eternally beautiful. This little span of life is not mine, my life has no beginning and no end. My knowledge is not this little limited knowledge, but it is infinite."

Why should you throw away your perfect nature and take an imperfect nature? Why do you give up your infinite life for this perishable life of a

few years? You have degraded yourself so low that you cannot fall any lower. The omnipotent, omniscient, immortal, eternal being is imagining that he dies, that he is limited, ignorant, weak and helpless.

You are pure, you are perfect. Hear it from one who has realized it and try to realize it yourself. You are pure, you are spotless. Do not give way to false imaginations. This false imagining will make you what you are imagining yourself to be. You are like the man who has received the false news that all his property has been lost and he begins to weep: "All my fortune is gone, how shall I live? What shall I do?" While all the time his lands and money are there just as before. So you are imagining that you are poor and helpless.

You have not lost your infinite glory; but the false news has been brought you and so you have been imagining yourself weak, miserable, imperfect. Now the good news that you are not all this comes to you from the great teachers, like Sri Krishna, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna. Believe them when they tell you that you are absolutely perfect, all-knowing, all-blissful and immortal.

THE LITTLE LAMP

I keep a little lamp alight,
All day, all night.
The moon can quench it not, nor sun;
It shines before the Holy One.
O, my soul's light,
Burn bright!

—*H. P. K.*

KENA-UPANISHAD

Translated and Commentated By

SWAMI PARAMANANDA.

(*Concluded*)

PART III.

I.

The Brahman once won a victory for the Devas. Through that victory of the Brahman, the Devas became glorified. They thought, "This victory is ours. This glory is ours."

Brahman here does not mean a personal Deity. There is a Brahma, the first person of the Hindu Trinity; but Brahman is the Absolute, the One without a second, the Essence of all. There are different names and forms which represent certain personal aspects of Divinity, such as Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Transformer; but no one of these can fully represent the Whole. Brahman is the vast ocean of being, on which rise numberless ripples and waves of manifestation. From the smallest atomic form to the highest form of a Deva or an angel, all spring from that limitless ocean of Brahman, the inexhaustible Source of life. No manifested form of life can be independent of this source, just as no wave, however mighty, can be independent of the ocean. Nothing moves without that Power. He is the only Doer. But the Devas thought: "This victory is ours, this glory is ours."

II.

The Brahman perceived this and appeared before them. They did not know Him and exclaimed: "What mysterious form is this?"

III.

They said to Fire: "O Jataveda (All-Knowing)! Find out what mysterious spirit this is." He said "Yes."

IV.

He ran toward That (spirit) and He (Brahman) said to him: "Who art thou?" "I am Agni, I am Jataveda," he (Fire) replied.

V.

Brahman asked: "What power resides in thee?" Agni replied: "I can burn up all whatever exists on earth."

VI.

Brahman placed a straw before him and said: "Burn this." He (Fire) rushed towards it with all speed, but was not able to burn it. So he returned from there and said (to the Devas): "I was not able to find out what this great mystery is."

VII.

Then they said to Vayu (Air): "O Vayu! Find out what this mysterious spirit is." He said "Yes."

VIII.

He ran toward That (spirit) and He (Brahman) said to him: "Who art thou?" "I am Vayu, I am Matarisva," he (Air) said.

IX.

Then the Brahman said: "What power is in thee?" Vayu replied: "I can blow away all whatsoever exists on earth."

X.

Brahman placed a straw before him and said: "Blow it away." He (Vayu) rushed towards it with all speed, but was not able to blow it away. So he returned from there and said (to the Devas): "I was not able to find out what this great mystery is."

XI.

Then they said to Indra: "O Magavan (Worshipful One)! Find out what this mysterious spirit is." He said "Yes," and ran towards That, but That (Brahman) disappeared from before him.

XII.

Then he saw in that very space a woman beautifully adorned, Uma of golden hue, daughter of Haimevat (Himalayas). He said: "What mysterious great spirit was that?"

Here we see how the Absolute assumes concrete form to give knowledge of Himself to the earnest seeker. We cannot know Him except through His manifested forms. So Brahman, the impenetrable Mystery, disappeared and in His place appeared a personal form to represent Him. This is a subtle way of showing the difference between the Absolute and the Personal God. The Absolute is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, but He assumes deified personal aspects to make Himself known to His devotees. In this way you find that Vedanta tolerates all aspects and manifestations of Deity. It proclaims a God both with form and formless. This may seem like a contradiction. How can the formless have form? It would be contradictory, if we were talking about an ordinary individual. But God, Who is limitless, must be both formless and with form; and if there is anything beyond, He must also be that. Such is the definition of God according to Vedanta.

Now when Brahman disappeared, Indra, the Lord of the Devas, beheld a beautiful form, Uma, daughter of the Himalayas. The Himalayas stand as the symbol of the Eternal, Unchangeable One; and Uma as the personal aspect or the offspring of that Infinite Being.

PART IV.

I.

She (Uma) said: "It is Brahman. It is through the triumph of Brahman ye are triumphant." Then from Her words, he (Indra) knew that it (that mysterious form) was Brahman.

Uma replied to Indra, "It is Brahman indeed, who conquered the enemies of the Devas. It is through His power that you live and act. He is the agent and you are all only instruments in His hands. Therefore your idea that 'This victory is ours, this glory is ours,' is based on unwisdom." At once Indra saw their mistake. The Devas being puffed up with vanity, had thought they themselves had achieved the victory, whereas it was Brahman; for not even a blade of grass can move without Him. He is the only doer.

II.

Therefore these Devas,—Agni, Vayu and Indra, excel other (Devas), because they came nearer to Brahman. It was they who first knew this spirit as Brahman.

III.

Therefore Indra excels (all) other (Devas), because he came nearest to Brahman and because he first knew this spirit as Brahman.

One who depends on God but never on himself, his vision must be more inclusive, more powerful, because spirit is always more potent than matter. Our mind fails, our body fails, but the spirit never fails. Therefore he becomes great who depends on spirit. For this reason Agni, Vayu and Indra were superior to the other Devas because they came nearer to Brahman, that is, they gained a closer vision, and they were able to do this because they were purer; while Indra stands as the head of the Devas, because he came nearest of all. The significance of this is that whoever comes in direct touch with Brahman or the Supreme is glorified. Thus Indra excelled all others because his knowledge was first-hand; he reached Brahman, he realized the Truth directly.

IV.

Thus the teaching of Brahman is here illustrated in regard to the Devas. He flashed like lightning and appeared and disappeared just as the eye winks.

The teaching as regards the Devas was that Brahman was the only doer. He had appeared before them in a mysterious form; but the whole of the unfathomable Brahman could not be seen in any definite form; so at the moment of vanishing, He manifested more of His immeasurable glory and fleetness of action by a sudden dazzling flash of lightning.

V.

Next (the teaching) is regarding Adhya-Atman (the embodied soul). The mind seems to approach Him (Brahman). By this mind (the seeker) again and again remembers and thinks about Brahman.

Only by the mind can the seeker after knowledge approach this Brahman, whose nature has been described in glory and speed as like unto a flash of lightning. Mind only can picture the indescribable Brahman; and mind alone being speedy in its nature, can follow Him. It is through the help of this mind that we can think and meditate on Brahman; and when by constant thought of Him the mind becomes purified, then like a polished mirror, it can reflect His Divine Glory.

VI.

That Brahman is called Tadvanam (object of worship). (Therefore) He is to be worshipped by the name Tadvanam. He who thus knows Brahman is sought after by all beings.

Brahman is the object of adoration and the goal of all beings. Therefore He should be worshipped and meditated on as *Tadvanam*, that is, One who is to be adored as the Self of all living creatures. He who thus realizes Brahman, to him all crea-

tures come to gain the fulfilment of their desires, as they go or pray to the Lord Himself. The knower of Brahman becomes one with Him, and serves as an open channel through which the blessings of Brahman flow out to others. He who has realized the Truth is loved by the Truth. He who recognizes Truth, Truth recognizes him. It is always mutual; as the Blessed Lord says in the Bhagavad-Gita: "He who sees Me in all and all in Me, from him I vanish not, nor does he vanish from Me." One who knows Brahman, he dwells in Brahman and he is loved by all living beings.

VII.

(The disciple asked:) O Master, instruct me regarding the Upanishad. (The teacher replied:) The Upanishad has been told to thee. We have certainly told thee the Upanishad (wisdom) of Brahman.

VIII.

The Upanishad is based on tapas (practice of the control of body, mind and senses), dama (subjugation of the senses), karma (right performance of prescribed actions), on the Vedas and their limbs (different branches). Truth is its abode.

IX.

He who knows this (wisdom of the Upanishad), having been cleansed of all sin, becomes established in the blissful, eternal and highest abode of Brahman, in the abode of Brahman.

Here ends this Upanishad.

SUMMARY.

This Upanishad is called Kena, because it begins with the inquiry: "By whom (Kena) willed or directed (Ishitam) does the mind go towards its object?" From whom comes life? Who enables man to speak, to hear and see? Thus the disciple

questions his Master regarding the Final Cause of all things, and the teacher in reply gives him the definition of Brahman, the source and basis of existence. The spirit of the Upanishads is always to show that no matter where we look, what we see or what we feel, whatever there is in the visible world, it all proceeds from one Source. The prevailing note of all Vedic teaching is this: One tremendous Whole becoming the world, and again the world disappearing in that one Whole. It also strives in various ways to define that Source, knowing which all else is known and without which no knowledge can be well-established. So here the teacher replies: "That which is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, That is the inexhaustible river of being which flows on eternally, while bubbles of creation rise on the surface, live for a time, then burst."

The teacher, however, warns the disciple that this eye, ear, mind, never perceive It; for It is That which illumines speech and mind, which enables eye and ear and all sense-faculties to perform their tasks. "It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown." He who thinks he knows It, knows It not; because It is never known by those who believe that It can be grasped by the intellect or by the senses; but It can be known by him who knows It as the witness of all states of consciousness. The knower of Truth or Brahman, although he has attained the knowledge of the Supreme, says "I know It not," because he realizes that he knows only some limited aspects of Divinity, Who is unconditioned and unlimited. He who thus knows him, declares: "Thou art this (the visible), Thou art That (the invisible), and Thou art all that is beyond." The ordinary idea of knowledge is that which is based on sense-

perceptions; but the knowledge of an illumined Sage is not confined to his senses. He has all the knowledge that comes from the senses and all that comes from spirit; yet he realizes that he cannot know the Supreme wholly, because all phenomenal knowledge is limited and God is infinite. "I know it all"—that is the expression of the ordinary mind; but the mind which is serene and illumined, says: "I know and I do not know. Thou art unfathomable and indescribable, vast, supreme."

The special purpose of this Upanishad is to give us the knowledge of the Real, that we may not come under the dominion of the ego by identifying ourselves with our body, mind and senses. Mortals become mortals because they fall under the sway of ego and depend on their own limited physical and mental forces. The significance of the parable of the Devas and Brahman is that there is no real Power, no real Doer except God. He is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear; and eyes, ears and all our faculties have no value independent of Him. When we thus realize Him as the underlying Reality of our being, then we transcend death and become immortal.

REPORTS

A terrible flood recently swept over a portion of the province of Bengal in India. The Ramakrishna Mission according to its usual custom, at once sent bands of workers to the afflicted districts and the following report of their work has just reached us: "The water is subsiding slowly but there will be no crops for some time to come. The people are dying by inches and there are thousands all around whose emaciated appearance strikes the visitor with horror. The cattle, too, are dying everywhere for want of food. No government relief

has yet been opened. Reaching Bhagabanpur on the 19th of August, our workers began by distributing the provisions supplied by Babu Bijoy Chandra Singha. The Mission has undertaken to spend 400 Rupees weekly through this centre, but a hundred such centres will not be adequate to meet the pressing demand." The Mission sent another band to the flood-swept villages about Khanakul to distribute foodstuffs provided by a number of Calcutta merchants, while other parties were dispatched to many other districts. At Autpur alone between Aug. 12th and Aug. 25th the total number of persons relieved was 2,500. "The Mission is arranging to open other centres in the interior, where there is greater suffering. The work will have to be continued for some months to come and we look to the generosity of the public to support us in this undertaking." Any offering, however small, towards the relief fund will be thankfully received by the Editor of *"The Message of the East,"* 16 St. Botolph St., Boston, Mass., and forwarded promptly to India.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Vrindavan, recently issued, shows that during the year 5906 in and out patients were treated, among them being 15 Christians and 153 Mohammedans, besides Hindus of every caste.

* * *

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston during October four meetings were held each week by the Swami Paramananda—two services every Sunday, a class for the study of the Bhagavad-Gita on Tuesday, and the regular Student's Class on Thursday. The same program will be followed through November. The subjects for the Sunday lectures will be—"The Bhagavad-Gita," "Reincarnation," "Self-Mastery," "Fear is Death" and "Tolerance."

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The Message of the East



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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. II. DECEMBER, 1913 NO. 12

Gautama Buddha declared to His disciples: "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky. I, Gautama, have reached that; so you will all reach it; struggle for that." The term "Christ," too, we know has much the same signification. A Christian or a Buddhist, therefore, is strictly speaking a seeker after enlightenment, not a follower of a personality; and only as he attains that state can he justly bear the name. Birth or creed cannot give it to him. Mere belief in the Divinity of Jesus or any Savior has in itself no saving grace. Their power of salvation lies in the fact that They hold up to mankind a definite Ideal to follow, a definite precept to practise, "that all men may become Buddhas," as the Sakyamuni Himself proclaimed. They show the way to Buddhahood, to Christhood. And only those who travel the way and attain that state can be truthfully called their followers.

This state, furthermore, must be the same for all men, whatever the form of faith. Knowledge or enlightenment is not differentiated by the method taken to gain it. To know is to know. And he who knows God is at the same time a true Chris-

tian, a true Buddhist and a true follower of every Savior. "Shall we say, then, that there were no Christians before Christ, and that there are no Christians outside of what we call Christendom?" Dr. Minot Savage asks in one of his sermons, "Augustine was wiser than that. He refers somewhere to that which has always been in the world from the beginning, and which, in these latter days, we have come to call Christian. So Augustine, the old Church Father and theologian, recognized that what we regarded as important and essential in Christianity was older than what had gone by that name . . . The ideal man is the man who loves, and the man who knows how to apply his love power and impetus in such a way as to help, save, transform, develop and glorify mankind . . . and I think the man who embodies these three things is a Christian, whatever he believes else."

The German philosopher, Lessing, teaches a like lesson in his play, "Nathan the Wise." "Why, Nathan, you are a Christian," one of the characters exclaims in reply to certain noble thoughts expressed by the Jew. "What makes of me a Christian in your eyes makes you a Jew in mine," was Nathan's answer. The same lofty Ideal was held by both, each gave it his own name. All noble Ideals must be close akin, because of their relation to the Ultimate Ideal, which can be but One. There is a brotherhood of Saviors as truly as there is a fatherhood of the God, whom They show forth. And when the same brotherhood will be manifest in the followers who bear their names, without regard to land or race or creed, then alone will Their mission be accomplished on earth.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

God is indeed infinite. But He is omnipotent. He may so order that His Divinity as Love may be manifest in the flesh and be among us as God Incarnate. Divine Incarnation is a fact. It is a fact to be seen and realized by the spiritual eyes. God incarnateth Himself and becometh man in order to teach what is True Knowledge, what again is True Devotion or Love of God.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

The idea of a man being worshipped as God—especially a living man—has in it something paradoxical and revolting, but the following considerations must be examined before we pronounce judgment respecting it. The conception of Spirit involves its being regarded as inherently, intrinsically universal. This condition must be particularly observed, and it must be discovered how in the systems adopted by various peoples this universality is kept in view. It is not the individuality of the subject that is revered, but that which is universal in him; and which, among the Thibetans, Hindoos, and Asiatics generally, is regarded as the essence pervading all things. *Hegel.*

There is one God, passionless, formless, uncreated, the Universal Soul, the Supreme Spirit, the All-pervading, whose shadow is the world; who has become incarnate and done many things, only for the love that He bears to His faithful people; all-gracious and compassionate to the humble; restorer of the past; protector of the poor; all-good, all-powerful. In Him centre all knowledge and virtue, and by His Truth the dullness of material creation shines bright as the Ideal.
—*Tulsi Das* (Hindu Saint of the 16th Century.)

Those . . . . . that are called *Heroes full of goodness and light* think without ceasing on their Creator, and are all resplendent with the light that reflects from the felicity they enjoy in Him. For being united to God as middle Essences, and having received the grace of being always turned towards Him, without its being in their power ever to depart or go astray from Him, they continue always in the presence of this First Being . . . . . And, therefore, they are with reason called *Excellent Heroes,* the epithet that signifies *excellent,* intimating to us by its root, that they are full of goodness and of understanding; and the word *Heroes,* coming from a word that signifies "love," to show us that, full of love for God, their whole endeavors are to assist us in our passage through this terrestrial life to a life divine, and to help us to become citizens of Heaven.

—*Hierocles.*

For the soul of Christ received grace in such a manner that from it, in a measure, grace overflowed upon others. And hence it was necessary that he should have the greatest grace; just as fire, which is the cause of heat in all warm things, is hot in the highest degree. . . . . Inasmuch, also, as he is man, it belongs to him to join men to God, by showing the precepts and gifts of God to men and making satisfaction and intercession in men's behalf. And hence he is most truly called mediator as man.

—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

The ignorant, unaware of My Supreme state, as the great Lord of beings, disregard Me dwelling in human form.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRIST-IDEAL

Extract from Lecture by Swami Paramananda

God manifests in the form of a man that man may comprehend what God is. The Absolute is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, hence He is beyond the reach of the human mind. But to make it possible for man to understand Him, He assumes personal aspects and comes as a Christ or a Buddha. This is what is meant by a Divine Incarnation. Such a manifestation serves as the connecting link between God and man. He is Divine enough to be in touch with God and human enough to be in touch with man, so that man may realize Divine things through Him.

To truly grasp what an Incarnation is, however, we must have like qualities and show them forth in our lives. The words and actions of a great teacher no one can wholly understand until he has risen to the same plane of spiritual consciousness. When we have the same thing in us that was in Christ or in Buddha, then it is possible for us to comprehend what they taught. Until then, what they say and do must remain a closed chapter. We can never draw the picture of a great Being either to satisfy ourselves or others until we have the same qualities. One who speaks of Christ must himself be Christ-like in his life, love and wisdom, else his words will carry but little weight. When our inner being becomes attuned with the Supreme then alone can we express Him in our words and actions. That is why all the Divine Seers unanimously declare the absolute need of the practical application of Spiritual teaching. "Being and becoming" is the watchword of the sages. Let your light shine, that light within, the light of your living soul, let that shine forth, then all the clouds of doubt and ignorance will be dispelled and you will

be able to comprehend the Divine. When your heart becomes pure you must see God. No one can prevent you. No church, no priest, nothing can keep you from seeing God.

To the majority the Christ-consciousness or the direct perception of Truth seems something unattainable. But that cannot be. What has happened once will happen again. What has been done can be done: that is the law. The purpose of a Divine Incarnation is not merely to manifest His superhuman and miraculous powers, but to point out to mankind by His life and example the goal of existence and man's Divine birthright. Saviors do not come to proclaim things which are impossible for man to attain. No, we think them impossible because we do not try to practise them, so our religion degenerates into a blind and thoughtless acceptance of certain fixed forms and doctrines. When religion thus becomes a matter of mere belief and exists only as a theory, having lost its living quality, then God incarnates in human form to re-establish spirituality and destroy materialism. As it is declared in the Bhagavad-Gita:

"Though I am unborn and of unchangeable nature, and though I am Lord of all beings, yet by ruling over my Prakriti (Nature) I come into being by my own Maya (Mysterious power). Whenever there is decline of virtue and predominance of vice, then I embody Myself. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil-doers and for the re-establishment of Dharma (virtue and religion) I am born from age to age."

Thus God manifests Himself at different periods of history in order to give tangible knowledge of His Divine nature. To make things that are incomprehensible to the finite mind, comprehensible, He takes finite form. He comes not to display His

own glory; no, but to show man how as man he can manifest God; or as St. Augustine puts it—"God was made man that man might become God."

The purpose of the life and teaching of a great Savior is to open man's eyes to his own higher Self, to awaken more love for God than for mundane things; or in other words, to make a mortal feel conscious of his immortal nature. In order to gain this consciousness and make it a part of our being we must learn to practise the Christ-Ideal in our everyday life. We must picture it. We must make it living to our heart. We must feel its reality. As we cultivate this habit of feeling the living Presence within, our vision will become more and more open to subtle spiritual facts, which otherwise remain vague and unreal. People's sight varies. Things which we may see plainly are not visible to the blind man; so in the days of our inner blindness, we cannot see God or understand His manifestations. This was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, who although scholarly men possessing the full knowledge of the letter, yet failed to understand Christ because they lacked that inner light which comes only through practise of the spirit. With most people the spiritual life is a matter of theory. They have just a little intellectual grasp of it; that is quite enough for them. But practice is the whole of it and not having practical experience in religion, we can never penetrate the inner depths of anything.

One man may go to church, pray and sing hymns in the name of Jesus, appearing righteous, but this cannot make him spiritual or bring him blessing so long as he does not manifest the teaching in his life; and there may be another who may never go to a church or utter the name of Christ, but who through the practice of holiness and purity so em-

bodies and radiates the Christ-spirit that he becomes a living symbol of the Christ-life. Such a soul alone truly honors Him and proves a worthy follower. As it is said in one of the Buddhist Sacred Books: "Now it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata (Incarnate One) is rightly honored, reverenced, venerated, held sacred and revered. But the brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman, who continually fulfils all the greater and the lesser duties, who is correct in life, walking according to the precepts, it is he who rightly honors, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Incarnate One with the worthiest homage."

We do not honor our Savior by merely belonging to a creed founded in His name or by offering Him lip-praise. Only as we learn to shape our lives after the model of His own do we show ourselves worthy of Him; and this can be done only by living His teachings. Jesus the Christ Himself taught this lesson to His disciples, when He said to them: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream broke against the house and could not shake it; because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great."

THE SAVIORS

The splendor of the saviors of the world
Hath shone about me. I have stretched my hands,
Have heard the music of their soft commands,
And seen their wide, unfathomed eyes aglow.
Gods have descended to me from the skies,
Through chant and prayer, incense and sacrifice.
Through the mysterious murmur of the rite
They have descended low to bless my sight.
And their strong words have stricken to my heart,
And in their strength I have walked through many days,
Lost in a dream of hope, rapt and apart.
O, high-uplifted Ones, loud be your praise!

H. P. K.

THE GREAT WORLD-TEACHERS

Extracts by Swami Vivekananda

Most of us are born believers in a personal religion. We talk of principles, we think of theories, and that is all right; but every thought and every movement, every one of our actions shows, that we can only understand the principle when it comes to us through a person. We can grasp an idea only when it comes to us through a materialized ideal person. We can understand the precept only through the example. Would to God that all of us were so developed that we would not require any example, would not require any persons. But we are not; and, naturally, the vast majority of mankind have put their souls at the feet of these extraordinary personalities, the Prophets, the Incarnations of God,—Incarnations worshipped by the Christians, by the Buddhists, and by the Hindus. . . These are the sign-posts here and there, which point to the march of humanity; these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the earth,—they

stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by Jesus of Nazareth: "No man has seen God at any time, but through the Son." And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son? It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even, embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is everywhere, omnipresent; but we have to strike the light of the lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps of the earth,—the Prophets, the man-Gods, the Incarnations, the embodiments of God. . .

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of light, compare His character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually embodied have practically realized, and set before us as an example. Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at the feet of these man-Gods, and worship them as the only Divine beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try, by struggle, by abstraction, by whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of man, your world is human, your religion is human, and your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical enough to take up an actually existing thing, and give up an idea which is only an abstraction, which he can-

not grasp, and is difficult of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all countries. . . .

Let us therefore find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in all the great Ones that have preceded Him, in all that came after Him, and all that are yet to come. Our worship is unbounded and free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God. They are all pure and unselfish. They struggled, and gave up their lives for us, poor human beings. They each and all suffer vicarious atonement for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter.

In a sense you are all prophets; every one of you is a prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders. Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great prophets were giants—they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task; in our little circles, in our little homes we are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross. But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the Divine. For, know for certain, that the moment the touch of the Divine is lost there would be annihilation. And because none can be annihilated, there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the Divine.

Our salutations go to all the past prophets, whose

teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime or creed! Our salutations go to all those God-like men and women, who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, color or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future,—living Gods, —to work unselfishly for our descendants!

EPISODES FROM THE LIFE OF BUDDHA

There came to Buddha, the Awakened One, five Brahmins who were discussing among themselves regarding the nature of God. The first said: "Blessed One, my book declares that God is so and so and we must come to Him in such a way." Another said, "No, that is wrong, for my book says this and this," and so each gave his own point of view. The Blessed One listened to all calmly and then asked each one in turn: "Do any of your books say that God is prone to anger, that He injures any creature, that He is impure?" "No," each answered, "they all teach that God is pure, is holy, is all-perfect." "Then, my friends," Buddha replied, "why do you not first become pure and good, then you will know what God is."

On another day the venerable Kashyapa sought out the Blessed One to destroy the doubt that had risen in his mind. "All things," he said, "are made of one essence, yet things are different according to the forms which they assume under different impressions." The Blessed One thus spoke to him:

"It is, Kashyapa, as if a potter made different vessels out of the same clay. Some of these pots are to contain sugar, others rice, others curds and milk; others still are vessels of impurity. There is no diversity in the clay used; the diversity of

the pots is only due to the moulding hands of the potter who shapes them for the various uses that circumstances may require. And as all things originate from one essence, so they are developing according to one law and they are destined to one aim which is Nirvana (perfection). Perfection, comes to you, Kashyapa, if you thoroughly understand, and if you live according to your understanding, that all things are of one essence and that there is but one law. Hence, there is but one perfection as there is but one Truth, not two or three. And the Tathagata (Incarnate One), is the same unto all beings, differing in his attitude only in so far as all beings are different. The Tathagata recreates the whole world like a cloud shedding its waters without distinction. He has the same sentiments for the high as for the low, for the wise as as for the ignorant, for the noble-minded as for the immoral. The Tathagata, O Kashyapa, knows the law whose essence is salvation, and whose end is the peace of Nirvana. He is the same to all, and yet knowing the requirements of every single being, he does not reveal himself to all alike. He does not impart to them at once the fulness of omniscience, but has regard to the disposition of various beings." . . .

Kutadanta, head of the village of Danamati, having heard of the Blessed One, approached Him with reverence and asked: "If thou art Buddha the Holy One, the Lord of the world, why dost not come like a king in all thy power and glory?"

"Thine eyes are holden," said the Blessed One. "If the eye of thy mind were undimmed, thou couldest see the glory and the power of Truth."

The Tathagata then expounded His teaching to Kutadanta and, as he listened, his spiritual sight was open and he cried out: "Accept me as thy dis-

ciple, O Blessed One! and let me partake of the bliss of immortality."

Then the Blessed One said: "Those only who do not believe, call me Gautama; but you call me Buddha, the Blessed One, and Teacher. And this is right, for I have even in this life entered Nirvana (state of enlightenment), while the life of Gautama has been extinguished. Self has disappeared and the Truth has taken its abode in me. This body of mine is Gautama's body and it will be dissolved in due time, and after its dissolution no one, neither God nor man, will see Gautama again. But the Truth remains. Buddha will not die; Buddha will continue to live in the holy body of the law. The extinction of the Blessed One will be by that passing away in which nothing remains that could tend to form another self. Nor will it be possible to point out the Blessed One as being here or there. But it will be like a flame in a great body of blazing fire. That flame has ceased; it has vanished and it cannot be said that it is here or there. In the body of the Dharma, however, the Blessed One can be pointed out; for the Dharma has been preached by the Blessed One.

"Ye are my children, I am your father; through me ye have been released from your sufferings. I myself, having reached the other shore, help others to cross the stream. I myself, having attained salvation, am a Savior to others; being comforted, I comfort others and lead them to the place of refuge. I shall fill with joy all the beings whose limbs languish; I shall give happiness to those who are dying from distress; I shall extend to them succor and deliverance. I was born into the world as the king of Truth for the salvation of the world. The subject on which I meditate is Truth. The practice to which I devote myself is Truth. My

words are all of Truth. My thoughts are always in the Truth. For lo! my self has become the Truth. I am the Truth. Whosoever comprehends the Truth, he will see the Blessed One, for the Truth has been preached by the Blessed One."

REPORTS

The new season's work at the Vedanta Centre of Boston has started under most encouraging conditions. The average attendance at all the meetings has increased as also the membership. During November Swami Paramananda conducted two Sunday Services and two weekly classes. He also gave a recent lecture before the Metaphysical Club of Boston on "The Ideal of a Universal Religion," and on December 16th he has been invited to speak before a large Men's Club in Quincy, Mass. His subject will be "India and Her Achievements."

The meetings at the Vedanta Centre will continue as heretofore. The subjects for the Sunday lectures will be: "Secret of Work," "Search after Truth," "The Power of Love," and "Divine Incarnation."

* * *

We have received the twelfth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevasrama or Home of Service at Kankhal in the foot-hills of the Himalayas. To serve and nurse the sick without any distinction of caste or creed is the aim of the institution, and during the year under review 9344 persons received help. The patients treated were many of them from the most distant parts of India, as Kankhal is a sacred place of pilgrimage to which flock every year thousands of pilgrims from every quarter of the country. The work is under the able management of Swami Kalyanananda and it is gratifying to note that it received recently not

only warm praise from the Government but an official donation as well. It is carried on wholly by voluntary subscriptions, which, although generous, are seldom enough to permit the institution to meet all the demands made upon it.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

With this number "The Message of the East" completes its second volume. During the two years of its existence it has found a place on the tables of over one hundred of the leading libraries of this country, and many have been the words of appreciation and gratitude which have come from its individual readers and subscribers. This now encourages us to enlarge the scope of the publication in order that we may offer a greater variety of subject matter. During the coming year we hope to bring out a still unpublished lecture and notes of Class Talks by Swami Vivekananda; as well as more of the invaluable manuscripts left us by the Swami Ramakrishnananda. Lectures and articles by other able Hindu teachers and further translations of the Upanishads will also appear. The special new features of this third volume will be sketches of the lives and teachings of the great Indian saints and philosophers; and translations from the most eminent modern writers of India, including selections from the dramas of the famous dramatist, G. C. Ghosh, who is called the Shakespeare of Bengal.

May we ask the co-operation of all friends and sympathizers in our work? Those who have already felt the value of "The Message of the East" can help it by securing new subscriptions and thereby extending its field of usefulness. Present subscribers are also requested to renew their subscriptions promptly.

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