

"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The
Message of the East



VOLUME VI.
1917

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
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"	14th	<i>The Practice of Meditation.</i>
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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.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. VI.	JANUARY, 1917.	No. 1.
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Let your life be as deep as the ocean, but let it also be as wide as the sky. Take your stand on the one central Truth of religion, the Spirit of man, the immortal, birthless, all-pervading eternal Soul of man, before whose majesty the universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae is a drop. Every man or woman, nay, every being from the highest Devas to the worm that crawls under your feet, is such a Spirit evolved or involved. The difference is not in kind but in degree. This infinite power of Spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development; made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality; and made to act upon itself makes of man a God.

First let us be Gods and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make." Let this be our motto. Say not that man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a Devil, it would be our duty to remember God always and not the Devil. If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the practice, the affirmation, the constructive that is immortal; that will remain forever. Let us say, "We are" and "God is" and "We are God" and march on. Not matter but Spirit.

All that has name and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the Scriptures preach. Bring in the light ; the darkness will vanish of itself. Manifest the Divinity that is within you. Believe that your Soul is immortal, infinite and all-powerful.

The surface of the sea rises and sinks alternately, but to the observant soul—the child of light—each sinking reveals more and more of the depth, and of the beds of pearls and coral at the bottom. Coming and going is all pure delusion. The Soul never comes nor goes. Where is the place to which it shall go, when all space is in the Soul? When shall be the time for entering and departing, when all time is in the Soul? The earth moves, causing the illusion of the movement of the sun ; but the sun does not move. So Maya or Nature is moving, changing, unfolding veil after veil, turning over leaf after leaf of this grand book, while the witnessing Soul drinks in knowledge, unmoved, unchanged. All Souls that ever have been, that are or shall be, are all in the present time, and—to use a material simile—are all standing at one geometrical point. Because the idea of space does not occur in the Soul, therefore all that were ours, are ours and will be ours ; are always with us, were always with us, and will be always with us.

Each Soul is a star, and all stars are set in that infinite azure, that eternal sky, the Lord. There is the root, the reality, the real individuality of each and all. Religion began with the search after some of these stars that had passed beyond our horizon, and ended in finding them all in God and ourselves in the same place. Bring forth then the power of Spirit. Call up the Divinity within you. Be great. Proclaim God to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.

Extract by Swami Vivekananda.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE AND DEATH.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

There is nothing more vital to human hearts than the question of life and death. Does the soul die? Do we cease to exist with the body? What happens after death to this life of which we are now conscious? This has always been the most absorbing and the most perplexing of problems to the human mind. Ages have gone by. Now and then some one has caught a glimpse of the truth regarding it and has declared it boldly before mankind, yet to every individual it comes afresh. Why? Because this question is only solved by one's own Self-realization. As our hunger cannot be satisfied if someone else eats for us; similarly the knowledge of the Self, which solves this problem, must be gained by each individual for himself. It never comes through others' knowledge or experience. The Sages who have realized immortality, who know what death means, have answered this question; but we can only know that their answer is true by proving it through our own experience. Whoever tastes the nectar becomes immortal; but no one can become immortal by merely hearing about it.

What good, then, do these great men do us, if the solution of this problem is impossible without our own perception? They at least give us the hope that even in this life we can rise above death and gain immortality. We also get much help from them because they show us the way to acquire knowledge of the Soul. But after the path is shown, we must ourselves follow it. We must work with sincerity, faith and earnestness to reach the same state as these Great Ones have attained, that state which is the goal of every human being. The effort must be all our own, and this is the reason why this question rises afresh in every individual mind. Sometimes we may forget it through attachment to the transitory things

of this world; but however we may cling to our external surroundings, sooner or later the problem is bound to come up. Disease, death, misfortune will bring it to the surface of our minds.

Why should the question rise at all? Because man does not want to die. He wants to live, and his clinging to life makes him restless to solve this problem in order to overcome death. Man loves life. And what is this life to which he clings? It is the only thing that exists; the only thing that brings consciousness. Without it no one can move, or talk, or see, or do anything. Material forms have no value, no power independent of this life. It is indeed this life which we love when we say that we love our friends. It is not the material form of the friend that we love, but the life, the vital force, the Soul which dwells within. This is clear, because when the life goes out of the body we no more care for the bodies of those friends whom we loved. This shows that we love, not the material bodies, but the Soul, the Inner Spirit. That Self or Spirit is one without a second, deathless and indestructible.

The idea that the Soul does not die brings a great sense of responsibility. If there is a future life, then it rests with us to make it what we will. We can make it happy or miserable, a life of freedom or of bondage. No man wants to go on eternally through these changes of fortune and misfortune, pleasure and pain, these endless births and deaths. Yet he cannot help it so long as he has the least desire. Hence the Sages teach us to control all desire. The soul is dragged down by these different desires for enjoyment, for wealth and power. But all these conditions are related to the body and we have just seen that the idea we had about ourselves as the body is a delusion. The body dies, but the Self is deathless; the body is limited, but the Self is infinite; the body has form, but the

Self is formless. It has no form of its own. It is "greater than the greatest, and smaller than the smallest." As water has no form, yet it takes different forms in different vessels and again becomes one with the ocean when thrown back into it, so the Soul has no form of its own, but it assumes different forms as it dwells in different bodies; and when it knows its own nature, it becomes one with the Universal Self.

The wise ones realize this through the process of "*Neti, neti*" (not this, not this). They begin with the body and they see that that which has beginning must also have an end, so they know that this cannot be the Self. Then they turn to the mind. They see that the mind is constantly restless and changing, whereas the Self is changeless, therefore it cannot be the Self. So by this process of discrimination they go on until they come to the Self and then they rest satisfied. "The life to which you are clinging you have within yourself," they declare. "You are that. Atman or Soul exists in every living being, but so long as you dwell on the gross material plane, you cannot see it; you will have to go within. There you will find your True Self and you will realize that it is birthless, formless, infinite and eternal."

But you may say: "If my Soul is by its very nature immortal, it does not matter whether I know it or not. If my life is eternal, why should I bother about it?" There is a great difference between having a thing and knowing that we have it. A man may be the possessor of a vast hidden treasure, but if he does not know it he feels poverty stricken and at every moment is in fear of starvation. Although our Soul may be the descendant of that Immortal, Infinite, Eternal Being, yet if we are not conscious of it, we are constantly afraid; our life is full of anxiety and suffering. Knowledge alone will eliminate this suffering. Until we know by our own experience what it means to go beyond death, it is useless to read

about it in the Scriptures or to hear others talk of it. When death comes we are still fearful. Descriptions of immortality will not give us courage or conviction or strength. We must know. Each individual must cultivate the faculty of true discrimination and think for himself. Why should we accept any theory, whether it is set forth in the East or the West? No one can have firm faith in what other people say; each one of us must "prove all things" for himself before he can be convinced of the truth of any religion or philosophy. We may take suggestions from outside; we may listen to those who inspire and stimulate our minds; but we must dispel the veil of darkness through our own effort. When we hear that the Soul is undying in the midst of the dying, unborn and endless, we must ask ourselves what it means. Certainly that is not the definition of this material organism, for like all combinations of matter it must be dissolved sooner or later. There must be something else therefore within us which is ever-living. Shall we then depend upon this perishable physical existence, or shall we seek for that something which cannot be corrupted or destroyed or taken from us? That alone is the source of all real strength and inspiration. Through That only can we transcend our difficulties and limitations.

Also only as we realize our Higher Self are we able to help others. The mortal who believes in his physical nature alone, who is disturbed by heat and cold, pleasure and pain, who is running after name and fame or personal gratification has no time to give to any one else. He is like a hungry man; when food is brought, although someone beside him may be starving, he thinks first of satisfying his own appetite. Nothing makes a man so strong or so self-denying as the knowledge of his Higher Self. It eliminates the impatience and unrest which are killing us, and which make us struggle madly to fulfill our ambitions here and now because we fear we may

miss our only opportunity. It is lack of faith in the eternity of the Soul and the long habit of looking upon existence as a little circle of one life that lie at the root of all selfishness and wrong-doing. When a man awakens to the fact that the few years which he spends in this body represent only a very small fraction of an eternal existence, and that bodily death does not mean the end of a journey, but merely a change of form and environment offering him new opportunities, he will no longer regard death as an enemy; nor will he feel discontented with his present life.

In seeking to gain knowledge of our Soul, however, there is no need to denounce or neglect our body; we are merely to put the proper valuation upon both. We must cherish the Soul as the Soul should be cherished, and we must also treat the body as the body should be treated—as an instrument in the hands of the Soul. Only the one who is able to do this accomplishes the purpose of life. Those who merely follow the whims and appetites of the body miss both the Here and the Hereafter. Do not think, when we are trying to make the most of this life by getting all we can of physical satisfaction and enjoyment, that we are gaining anything. We are the gainers only when we sacrifice the pleasures of this life in order to find That which connects us with the Unseen Realm; and when we do this, we actually gain more in our present life, because we learn how to live with understanding and how to face death fearlessly. That is the proof of the true Knower,—to be able to meet death as only a change of garment. Why should we feel afraid of death? It may destroy the body, but not the Soul. And when we see someone we love dying, why should we suffer? The true man is not dead. It is only the fleshly covering which he has left behind. The real person is still living. It is because we have so little understanding that we suffer. The Hereafter is nothing but darkness to one who

has not studied this life and grasped its meaning; but he who understands this life, quickly finds his connection with the other life. He walks into that other realm and takes up his next duties naturally and easily.

Such a man becomes fearless and lives only to fulfill the commands of God. If he meets with misfortune, he sees God's will working through it; and he knows also that all happiness and success come through His Will. Thus seeing all life as nothing but a manifestation of Infinite Will, he gives himself up wholly to that Divine Will and the Infinite radiates through his every thought, word and action. His body may fall, hundreds of bodies may fall; still, knowing the undying nature of the Soul, he stands up and boldly declares "Death cannot harm me." When one has that conviction it matters not where he lives, whether in the world or out of it, whether in the midst of activity or in the calm of solitude, everywhere he carries this mighty consciousness. This is what St. Paul meant when He said: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." It is not that we actually overcome death or save the body from dying, but we overcome the ignorance of what dies and what is undying; and we realize that there is no death for the Real; that the Soul within, which is part of God, cannot die.

To be in accord with man is human happiness; to be in accord with God is Divine happiness. Those who enjoy the happiness of God, when born into the world, are but fulfilling their Divine functions; when they die, they do but undergo a physical change. Thus those who enjoy the happiness of God have no grievance against God, no grudge against man. Nothing material injures them; nothing spiritual punishes them.

Chuangzu.

WHAT SEEKEST THOU, MY SOUL?

By M. Storey Williams.

Seekest Thou liberation, O my Soul?

Seekest Thou Supreme Knowledge, Supreme Wisdom, Supreme Bliss?

Then must Thou enter the Path.

Fearest Thou toil and hardship therein?

Nay, fear not, for Love is the Guide and Life the Goal.

If hardships oppress Thee, murmur not;

If thorns tear Thy garment, bewail not;

If sharp rocks cut and bruise Thy feet, moan not;

Nor if cloud and storm darken the way and buffet Thee shalt Thou lose heart.

Naught canst Thou encounter along the Path that Thou hast not Thyself placed there.

Thine own thoughts and deeds and words are gone ahead to form and fashion Thy Path to be.

'Tis well, my Soul, if Thou dost comprehend, and so retain Thine inner poise amid all adverse happenings.

For thus alone canst Thou neutralize the karmic seeds of woe and learn to tread the Path as freeborn child of Heaven.

Mayhap wilt Thou oft find mossy dells bedecked with fragrant flowers, that are as jewels to delight Thee; sunshine, warm and tender, and shade of foliage rare to shelter Thee; the song of birds, the laughter of rippling streams, all these and many more to bring Thee joy, mayhap, shall greet Thee as on Thou journeyest.

Ah! then, my Soul, in great humility rejoice, for in all this gladness dost Thou encounter but Thine own thoughts of love, Thy tender words, compassionate deeds and conquests over self already offered.

Go ever bravely on. A day must dawn for Thee when sowing and reaping are forgotten, when yesterdays and to-

tomorrow, joy and sorrow are no more, When "That"
alone is known.

THE POWER OF SPIRIT.

Class Lecture by Swami Ramakrishnananda

In this world we no doubt see that a man who does not glorify the Lord may live a successful life. Often those who have no moral standard, who oppress the poor, who lord it over the good, appear to live happily ; and in many ways wrong seems to prosper. But this material power wins the victory only for a few days. In the end God always comes out victorious. It is the spiritual power that endures. The power of a Napoleon or an Alexander the Great is nothing compared to the power that have those men who never shed a drop of human blood and never care to seek for power. I can prove this. What is man? Man is mind. When you can control your own mind, the art which shows you that will show you how to control all other minds. If you can solve one problem by the rule of three, you can solve all other problems. The principle remains the same for all. So if you have learned to control the force working through your own mind, it is easy to control the same force elsewhere, for mind is everywhere alike. The teacher is one who has learned the art of controlling his own mind. The Great Ones like Christ or Buddha who have conquered the world did so because they had conquered themselves.

The power of Spirit is infinitely greater than the power of matter. But what is Spirit and what is matter? Whatever can be felt, conceived, thought of, seen, or heard, is matter. It is the object, something that can be known. Spirit is not all this. Put a *not* to all these and that will define Spirit. Matter is heavy, Spirit is not heavy ; matter is limited, Spirit is unlimited ; matter is changeable, Spirit is not changeable.

All that is not matter is Spirit ; so by knowing what is not matter, we know Spirit indirectly. But what am I? We think that this "I" is the name of the body and we therefore identify ourselves with the body. But this "I" is something else. The body is destined to die, but this "I" shrinks from death ; the body is dull and stupid, but this "I" is eager, hungering to learn ; this body is unconscious, but this "I" is ever striving to be more and more conscious. So all the tendencies of this "I" are away from the body or matter ; and if we have this spiritual tendency, we must have come from spirit. All the great teachers have taught us : "Do not think that you are this bundle of flesh and blood. This idea is the offspring of ignorance. You are not made to live on what the world can give you. You are self-existent. You are beginningless, endless Spirit. You are naturally conscious. Eternally you are existent. 'Sword cannot pierce you, fire cannot burn you, water cannot wet you, air cannot dry you.' This is your true nature."

Ask yourself whether you wish to live or whether you wish to die ; whether you wish to be ignorant, or whether you wish to be all-knowing. We all want to be all-knowing, therefore by nature we must be all-knowing. We all want to be blissful, therefore we must be all-blissful ; and we must be eternal, because we never want to die. A fish taken out of water will not care for the greatest luxury or honor on land. You may lay him on a throne and offer him everything, but he will say : "Put me in dirty water even, but do not keep me on land." This is because water is his natural element. We judge of the nature of an animal by its likes and dislikes ; if in the same way we look to our own likes and dislikes, we can tell what is our real nature. Does not every one like to be *Sat* or existent? No one wishes to die. Does not every one long for unlimited knowledge? Does not every one desire unbroken happiness? So the great teachers have found out that the nature of man

is *Sat-chit-anandam* (eternal life, knowledge and bliss). He is not the material body ; he is not the subtle body ; he is not all these *koshas* or sheaths ; but he is That which he is desiring. The more we think of ourselves in this way, the more our infinite nature will manifest itself.

It is not possible to know the Infinite if we are finite. We must first know that we are infinite. We wish to marry the Infinite, we must therefore belong to the same caste. A Brahmin boy can only marry a Brahmin girl, so to win the hand of the Infinite we must prove and know that we are infinite. Matter is that which is limited and which limits. We now feel limited by coming in contact with matter. We must realize that we are not matter but Spirit, we must cease to identify ourselves with the body. We must convince ourselves that we are Spirit by differentiating ourselves from matter. We must join ourselves to God. To do this we must conquer all egotism. This "I" is the greatest barrier between ourselves and God. It hides our God from us.

Do I belong to myself? Can I do what I wish? Or am I guided by a Higher Power? If I analyze my life, I shall find that I am a plaything in the hands of an Infinite Power. I am not my own master. If I were, I could get what I like. Who does not wish to have everything to gratify his desires? But no one succeeds in getting all that he wants. No matter how rich a man is, he always wants something. Do we find anyone who is perfectly happy? Go to the Emperor of Russia, go to any prince or king and ask if he is happy. They have power, they have wealth, they have apparently everything ; and yet not one of them will say that he is truly happy. This is because no joy can be found in selfishness. It is only when we forget ourselves for some one else that we become happy, and lasting happiness is ours only when we have forgotten ourselves wholly for God.

It is the highest duty of man to love God above all things, and this love must be incessant and disinterested. We must never cease to love Him, but not because He has power to satisfy our desires. We must not love Him for what He gives—as people seek out a rich man, follow him about and flatter him; then, being satisfied or disappointed, go away. Such time-servers are not real devotees. Their love is not for the Lord but for what they can get from Him. They are not God-worshippers but Mammon-worshippers. What is disinterested love? The little child loves his father. That father may be poor and wretched, yet the child will run and jump up in his lap with joy, but not in the lap of the rich man who comes with him. Such should be our love for God. And it must be unceasing. We must never forget Him for a moment. Then only will our higher nature be free to act. If we really love the Lord of the universe, we shall no longer care for the temporary things of the world. When love for the Infinite One awakens within us, then all these small worldly satisfactions,—name, fame, property, position, will seem worthless to us. If a man can claim a millionaire for his father, he will be so proud and so secure in his father's wealth that he will fear nothing and ask nothing. So if we can once learn to regard the Lord of the universe as our real father, then we shall lose all anxiety and greed.

We fear and desire because we do not know what we are. The light of the lamp above us there is brilliant; but if the chimney which surrounds it were not transparent, the light would be obscured. So each of us is a great light, but that light has been obscured by our ignorance, because we identify ourselves with the body and are attracted by the things of this world. Incessant and disinterested love for God, however, will remove all these obstructions. When we have been able to give our whole heart to Him, a revelation will come to us

which will make the little riches of the world, the little joys of the world, the little sorrows of the world seem as nothing. It is these narrow earthly attachments which have covered up the infinite nature of man and which make him think that he is this limited human being. When they are removed, then at once he will realize his own nature; and when he realizes his own nature, he will know that he is the son of the Infinite and Eternal Lord of all.

WHEN THOU DIDST MAKE ME.

From the Tamil of Siva-vakyar.

(A South-Indian poet of about the 10th century.)

When Thou didst make me, Thou didst know my all:

But I knew not of Thee. 'Twas not till light

From Thee brought understanding of Thy ways

That I could know. But now where'er I sit,

Or walk, or stand, Thou art for ever near.

Can I forget Thee? Thou art mine, and I

Am only Thine. E'en with these eyes I see,

And with my heart perceive, that Thou art come

To me as lightning from the lowering sky.

If thy poor heart but choose the better part,

And in this path doth worship only God,

His heart will stoop to thine, will take it up

And make it His. One heart shall serve for both.

The more a man followeth after his own self-will, and self-will groweth in him, the further off is he from God, the true Good. For a man's highest good would be and truly is, that he should not seek himself nor his own things, nor his own end in any respect, either in things spiritual or things natural, but should seek only the praise and glory of God and His holy will.

Theologia Germanica.

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL.

The Vedanta philosophy declares the Soul to be without a beginning, ascribes its special lot in life to its own Karma (past actions) in other bodies, and believes its salvation to be the fruit of its own efforts. On what grounds does it make these claims? One fundamental principle underlies them all. It is the doctrine of an ever unfailing and infallible justice presiding over the economy of the whole universe. The law that all actions and all thoughts make their mark on the destiny of the struggling Soul and that both virtue and vice meet with their due, is the law that determines the entire career of the Soul from its first beginning up to its final attainment. Justice is the law of the universe; and each one's share of suffering and happiness, as also each one's capacity for spiritual progress and salvation, are proportioned to his good and evil deeds in this or in previous births. The follower of Vedanta accepts this law as the basis of his philosophy of life and to him it is a self-evident axiom. Virtue based on self-sacrifice is followed by happiness, and vice based on selfishness is followed by suffering, as invariably as light follows the rising of the sun and darkness its setting. If in the world "the good die first and they whose hearts are dry as summer dust burn to the socket," this involves no violation of the due apportionment of the results of conduct.

This principle of universal justice may be set down by many as an assumption not supported by the actual facts of experience, which appear to show in Nature more of injustice than justice. But Vedanta does not confine its vision to one life only. It takes the career of the *Jiva* or individual Soul as a whole, and regards the present life as simply a stage in the onward march of its evolution. It does not have recourse to the unphilosophic doctrine of original sin to explain the Soul's present condition. It recognizes that the lot of man in the

world, so far as it is open to our observation, is not what it ought to be, if this one life covers the whole of his embodied existence. Estimating action and its reward within the limits of our personal experience, we are all forced to admit that they are too often sadly out of proportion to each other. But such an estimate does not take into account the balance of past action which the Soul brings with it. It does not come here fresh from the Maker's hand. It has had its morning elsewhere. "The Soul that rises with us hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar." Plato and Wordsworth both seem to think that the Soul enters upon its earthly existence from a region of absolute happiness and glory. But this is not exactly the conception held by the follower of Vedanta. He believes that the present life is not the first voyage of the Soul in a bodily form, but that it is only one journey in a series of such voyages; that the Soul sets out on this journey freighted with the unexhausted loads of other voyages; and that it will keep voyaging thus from port to port until it succeeds in reaching the first haven of God-existence from which it started.

The Divine Guide and Ordainer of things simply measures out to each individual a lot in life corresponding to the sum of his earnings in past lives. He who has not sown cannot reap. In this life we reap the fruits of our past labors and sow the seed of future good or evil harvests; or it may be that we work towards liberation from all bondage of birth and death. The Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad states it thus: "A person consists of his desires. As is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that will he reap. To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously together with his deed; and having obtained the results of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world (which is the tem-

porary reward of his deed) to this world of action. So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who is satisfied in his desires, or who desires God only, his vital forces do not depart elsewhere; being one with God, he goes to God." That is, he is not forced to seek further embodiment, but he passes into the God-state of existence. What this is, only he who has experienced it can know. As Sri Ramakrishna once replied to the question: "When anyone asks you what is the taste of ghee (clarified butter), all you can say is that it is like the taste of ghee." Nor does Vedanta attempt to tell us why the soul ever emerged from that state to undertake the world-journey, because it knows that where the question is asked the answer cannot be given, and where the answer can be known the question will not be asked.

The difficulty of a rational explanation of the distribution of good and evil in the world is one to be met by every thoughtful observer. It is the stumbling block of pure Rationalism and the chief support of Nihilism and Atheism. It is also the parent of many a curious doctrine in theology. The idea of the tree of knowledge and the temptation of the serpent came into existence under its influence. It has made almost every system of philosophy and religion pessimistic. In nearly all the writings of religious philosophies we find this irresistible conviction—that the world is inevitably imperfect contrary to the intention of its Author—finding expression in exact proportion to the general clearness of their understanding. This problem however of reconciling the presence of evil in the world with the doctrine of an omnipotent and all-good Creator does not exist, as we have already said, in the system of Vedanta. According to it our present happiness and misery are not to be estimated merely by our conduct in this life, but should be considered in connection with what we were in the past.

Because the present course of life is insufficient to explain the purpose of creation or to account for the apparent lack of justice in the social economy, Vedanta, instead of losing faith in the wise ordering of the universe, becomes convinced by the law of cause and effect that the Soul's present life forms only a small fragment of its real life. It counts, as it were, merely as one rung in a ladder, the top of which rests against the very throne of God and the foot of which lies buried deep beyond the ken of men. Whether the individual goes up or down this ladder is wholly determined by the nature of his activities in each embodiment. But however he may loiter on the way and waver in his course, Vedanta firmly holds to the doctrine that eventually every living being must reach perfection. And the whole of creation is designed for this,—to provide a field where the weak may become strong, the ignorant may gain knowledge, the unseeing may learn to see; where all Souls through patient striving may attain to God, their home of eternal peace and infinite bliss.

YUDHISHTHIRA'S PILGRIMAGE TO HEAVEN.

Taken from the Mahabharata.

Having heard of the slaughter of the Vrishnis and Sri Krishna's ascension into Heaven, Yudhishtira, the Kaurava king, set his heart on leaving the world. Calling Arjuna, he addressed him thus: "Time consumes all things. All that has happened is due to the cords of time with which every living being is bound. It behooveth thee to see this." Arjuna assented, as did Bhima and their twin brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva. Then the Pandavas, together with the Queen Draupadi, having made over the kingdom to the son of Yudhishtira's uncle, resolved to retire from worldly life. Putting off all their royal garments and ornaments, they

clothed themselves in the soft bark of trees, and set out for the forest with their faces turned toward the East. But as they walked a dog followed them.

These princes of restrained souls, devoted to Yoga (religious practice), and purified by fasting and meditation, wandered from one point of the compass to the other, until at last, travelling towards the North, they beheld the towering Himavat, then the loftier Meru, the foremost of all high-peaked mountains. But as these mighty ones were proceeding upward, all rapt in religious contemplation, Draupadi, falling away from Yoga, dropped down upon the earth. Beholding her fallen down, Bhima, the second brother, of great strength, questioned King Yudhishtira, saying: "O Scorcher of thy foes, this princess never did any sinful act. Tell us, for what cause has she fallen down on the earth?"

Yudhishtira answered: "She had too great partiality for Arjuna. She obtains the fruit of that conduct today, O best of men."

Having said this, that first of Bharata's sons, of righteous soul, endued with great intelligence, and with his mind intent upon itself, proceeded onward. Then Sahadeva, of great learning, fell upon the earth. Beholding him drop down, Bhima again addressed the King, saying: "He who with deep humility used to serve us all, alas, why is this son of Madravati fallen down on the earth?"

Yudhishtira answered: "He never thought anyone his equal in wisdom. It is for that fault that this prince has fallen down."

Having said this, the king went on with the three remaining brothers and the dog. Beholding Draupadi and Sahadeva gone, the brave Nakula, whose love for kinsmen was very strong, himself fell down. Beholding the falling down of the heroic Nakula, famed for his personal beauty, Bhima once

more addressed the King, saying: "This brother of ours who was endued with righteousness without a flaw and who always obeyed our behests, this Nakula of unrivalled beauty, why has he fallen down?"

Thus addressed, Yudhishtira spoke these words: "He was indeed of righteous soul and the foremost of all in intelligence, but he thought there was none who could equal him in beauty of person. It is for this that Nakula has fallen down."

Beholding Nakula and the others fall, Arjuna, that slayer of heroic foemen, himself fell down in overpowering grief of heart. And again Bhima said unto the King: "I do not recall the least untruth ever uttered by this high-souled one. Indeed, not even in jest did he ever speak aught that was false. For what then has this one fallen down on the earth?"

Yudhishtira answered: "Arjuna, proud of his heroism, boasted that he would consume all our foes in a single day; but he did not fulfill his word. Hence has he fallen down. He looked with disdain upon all other wielders of the bow. One desirous of lasting glory should never be guilty of such vain thoughts."

Having thus spoken, the King proceeded on. Then Bhima fell down. Having fallen, Bhima addressed the King a last time, saying: "O King, behold! I who am thy beloved brother have fallen! For what reason have I dropped down? Tell me, if thou knowest."

Yudhishtira answered: "Thou wert too greedy for food and thou wert accustomed to boast of thy strength. Also while eating thou didst not attend to the wants of others. It is for that, O Bhima, that thou hast fallen down." Having spoken these words, the mighty-armed Yudhishtira journeyed onward without looking back. He had only one companion now,—the dog still followed him.

Then the Lord of Heaven, filling earth and sky with a loud sound, came towards the son of Pritha in a chariot and asked him to mount upon it. But King Yudhishtira said unto that Deity of a thousand eyes: "My brothers have all dropped here on the earth. They must go with me. Without them I do not wish to go to Heaven. The princess Draupadi also should go with us. It behooveth thee to permit them."

Indra said: "Thou shalt behold thy brothers in Heaven and Draupadi likewise. Having cast off their human bodies, they have gone there before thee. But it is ordained that thou shalt go thither in this very body of thine."

Yudhishtira said: "But this dog has been devoted to me. He too should go with me. My heart is full of compassion for him."

The Lord of Heaven replied: "Immortality and a state equal to my own, also glory, high success and all the felicities of Heaven thou hast won today! But do thou cast off this dog. He cannot go with thee."

Yudhishtira said: "O thou Mighty One, it is exceedingly difficult for the righteous to perpetrate an unrighteous act. I do not desire a prosperity for which I shall have to cast off one that is devoted to me."

Indra insisted: "No one can enter Heaven with a dog. Do thou abandon it."

Yudhishtira said: "It has been declared that it is most sinful to abandon one who is devoted. Hence, O great Indra, I shall not abandon this dog today out of desire for my own happiness. This has always been my vow steadfastly pursued: I never forsake one who is frightened, nor one who is devoted to me, nor one who seeks my protection, nor one who is afflicted, nor one who is weak or fearful of his life. I shall never give up such a one till my own life is at an end."

Indra said: "Do thou abandon this dog, for thereby thou

shalt attain the region of the gods. Thou didst leave behind thy brothers and Draupadi; why art thou now so obstinate? Thou hast renounced everything. Why then dost thou not renounce this dog?"

Yudhishtira answered: "I abandoned my brothers and Draupadi because they were dead and I was unable to revive them. I did not abandon them so long as they were alive. To frighten one who has sought our protection, to slay a woman, to steal from a holy man, and to injure a friend—like unto these evil deeds is the abandonment of one who is faithful and devoted."

Hearing these words of Yudhishtira, the dog became transformed into the Deity of Righteousness, who, well pleased, spoke these words in a sweet voice fraught with blessing:

"Thou art well born, O King of kings, truly wise and of righteous conduct. Thou hast compassion for all creatures. For the sake of a faithful dog thou didst renounce celestial joys. Hence in Heaven is there none equal to thee and the regions of inexhaustible felicity are thine. Truly hast thou won a high goal."

REPORTS.

No one of the younger branches of the work undertaken by the Ramakrishna Mission has moved forward with greater zeal and rapidity than the Centre at Dacca in East Bengal. Although established only a few years ago, already a suitable building has been erected for the resident workers and for a Free School. Now a report comes to us of the dedication of the first building of a hospital, erected, fully equipped and presented to the Mission by a prominent Zemindar in memory of his only son. At the opening exercises the Governor of Bengal, the Honorable Thomas David Baron Carmichael, pre-

sided. In his address he paid the following glowing tribute to the work of the Mission: "The members of the Ramakrishna Mission are actuated by that spirit of helpfulness which is much needed in this world—the spirit which makes men ask themselves the simple question: 'Can I help?'; and which makes them say, 'If I can, it is my duty to do so'; the spirit which leads to social service without any distinction of caste or race or creed. The members of the Mission work in this spirit for the spiritual, intellectual and bodily good of their fellowmen. They hold religious services, thereby helping men to realize that personal relation of man to God which is the foundation of religious devotion. They conduct schools for the elementary education of the masses and they maintain hospitals for the relief of human suffering. Their spirit of helpfulness carries them further. It takes them out into the highways and byways of life seeking to bring relief to the poor, the sick and the helpless. All honor to them in their work!"

* * *

Although it has been possible to close some of the Relief Centres opened by the Ramakrishna Mission in the famine-swept districts of Bengal, the pitiful distress in other regions has obliged them to open new Centres. In these they are not only distributing food, but have irrigated a large tract of land by digging a canal, thus assuring a better harvest. During the month under review, 4048 people were cared for weekly.

Another band of workers has been called to a flooded district near Benares. As soon as news of the distress reached the Mission, two boats were sent out with provisions, 40 villages were visited and 215 families, consisting of 631 members, were given rations of food for three days. This expedition was followed up by others, bringing further relief to the afflicted districts.

* * *

Swami Paramananda left Boston on Dec. 11th to return to Los Angeles for a short season. He will go from there to San Francisco, and later will probably deliver some lectures in Seattle.

* * *

The work will continue as usual at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Services and Classes being conducted by Sister Devamata during the Swami's absence. In December, Sunday the 24th, was set apart for the special Christmas Services. In the morning the subject of the address was "Divine Incarnation," and at the hour of Vespers the windows of the house were bright with many candles, especially that on the corner of the Parkway, where an altar to the Christ Child had been arranged. Throughout Christmas week this altar was lighted every evening. The Chapel was also trimmed with evergreen garlands and everything possible was done to add to the beauty and joy of the holy season. On Christmas afternoon the workers were "at home" to all friends of the Centre in the Community House and many came to make merry around the tree and share in the Christmas cheer.

* * *

The Centre and "The Message of the East" begin the new year with the earnest prayer that it may be their blessed privilege to bring new light and courage and peace to an ever increasing number through the coming months; and that they may more fully fulfill their mission of binding together not only East and West, but North and South, high and low, Christian and Buddhist, Hindu, Mohammedan and Jew in a closer bond of understanding, tolerance, sympathy and love; that the day may be hastened when men will no longer see creed, caste, race or color, but only throbbing human hearts, possessed of like feelings, beset with like temptations and seeking consciously or unconsciously the same God.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The

Message of the East



FEBRUARY 1917

Issued by

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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VOL. VI.

FEBRUARY, 1917

No. 2.

HOW TO CONSERVE OUR ENERGIES.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

According to ancient Indian philosophy this universe is composed of two principal elements. One is called *Akasa*, an all-pervading primordial substance, imperceptible to the senses, but manifested in the basic elements, earth, water, air, fire and ether, out of which all bodies come into existence. The other, which holds together these material forms, is known as *Prana* or vital force, the force by which man lives and moves and without which he can do nothing. The senses which appear to be such important factors in our life would be of little use without this vital force, so also the mind and every part of the physical organism. We should therefore try to understand what the nature of this life-force is and how it may be controlled; for the great Indian teachers have taught us that by proper control of this force a man can be not only physically healthy, but intellectually brilliant; he can also rise spiritually and become illumined. At present there are very few who know the use or even the existence of this *Prana*, for we cannot see it. Most of us live here unconsciously, doing everything automatically through habit. We utilize our energies without thinking what they are or what they should bring us; still less does it occur to us that it is our duty to conserve and direct them to definite ends. Yet we shall not know what true health or happiness or illumination is until we have learned how to gather up these vital

forces of our organism and command them at our will. Just as light when dissipated scarcely suffices to read by, but when we put a shade over it and concentrate its rays we are able to see the finest print; similarly when all the forces manifested through our body, mind and senses are stored up, regulated and focused, we discover possibilities of wisdom and happiness within us of which we are wholly unconscious at present.

But how is this to be accomplished? Some may think hastily that by not doing anything one may store up his energies. It has been found, however, that the energy of a man who does nothing, instead of increasing, fades away. On the other hand, if we imagine that by constant use of our faculties we can gain greater power, that also is a mistake; for we know that through overwork a man often breaks down. Neither of these methods therefore can help us to conserve and increase our energy. But there is a way by which it can be done,—not by overworking, nor by stopping work, but by finding balance in all our activity. When this balance is manifested in the physical body, the result is good health; when it is manifested on the mental plane, we have intellectual power; when it is found on the spiritual plane, the result is super-consciousness or illumination. But the energy is one. It is always the same life-force which the Indian Sages called *Prana*—the vital cause of our existence, of all our thinking and doing. It manifests itself on every plane; but as we are able to draw it up from our lower organism, we gain ever-increasing power for higher things.

As thought guides all our bodily activities, so the Sages found that thought was the best medium for directing this life-force. How little attention we pay to this great instrument which is placed in our hands by God Almighty! How often we abuse or misuse it! Yet our actions can never pro-

duce the best results until our thoughts are properly regulated. Only as we cease to dissipate our mental energies and are able to establish a balance between our outer and our inner activities, between our body and our mind, can we hope to have either peace or strength. Every living being, even the most insignificant, has the same possibility of awakening this great life-force within himself. As a rule, however, we run after pleasure and power and try to gain these from the external universe. The result is that we are always rushing outward and we do not stop to think what we have within ourselves. Whenever a problem arises in our mind, our tendency is to go outside; we hasten to consult a book or some person; but the wise men tell us that we have within ourselves the key to all knowledge. In fact, no one can give us knowledge beyond the point where our inner nature is unfolded. We must therefore discover this inner storehouse of energy, and in our search it is best to deal first with that which is most immediate. This body is the most immediate reality to the majority of people. We may talk of subtle spiritual forces, of an imperceptible Soul abiding within, but very few can understand or believe in the reality of finer things. For that reason we must begin with the grossest of all instruments, the physical body. And the first question that arises is, have we this body under perfect control? Will our hands and feet, our senses and other organs obey us? Can we govern and direct them as our higher instincts prompt us? When we analyze, we find that very few of us have any power of control over what we call our body. The energies which manifest through it have become dissipated and because of this dissipation our eyes cannot bring us perfect vision, our ears and all our senses can give us only partial knowledge; that is why our perceptions are never free from error. But when we go to the foundation of our being and gather up all our forces, then we

gain command over them and can utilize them to our best advantage.

Matter cannot exist without the support and co-operation of *Prana*; therefore if man wants anything, he must try to understand this vital principle; and to do this he must first of all find balance. As long as there is undue activity or lethargy in our body, we cannot have true insight. What we need is to gain equilibrium in our whole organism, for equilibrium means strength. The body also must be obedient to the mind. Which is the sign of greater strength: when you let a horse rush madly on carrying you to destruction, because you have no power of control over it; or when you hold the reins firmly and make it go as you will? Certainly when you control it. Similarly this little body of ours, this instrument which God has given us, we should train and control it in such a way that it will be a true aid in our spiritual journey, instead of being the drawback it too often is. We must cease to be governed by our impulses. We must also cease to live thoughtlessly. We must learn to think intelligently and for ourselves; we must not let others think for us. Even what we gain through books cannot be true knowledge for us, although it may help us on our onward march; but true knowledge means direct vision, or as the Indian Sages call it, realization. It means coming face to face with the Truth; it means the union between subject and object. And only as we attain this shall we know our true power. Therefore we must exert ourselves; we must begin to think; we must question whether we guide our body or whether it is rebellious, and even a little observation will show us that not many of us can claim perfect mastery over the body.

Very few indeed are regulating and directing their forces properly. How much energy do we waste talking unnecessarily or in permitting useless automatic physical action which

only exhausts us. How much nervousness and misery might human beings avoid by a wise expenditure of their God-given energies! To remedy this is the stepping-stone to religion. Religion is not confined to one department of life. It has not only to do with man's soul nature, with his spiritual interest. It covers the whole ground of his being, for how can man rouse his spiritual interest until he has freed himself from physical bondage? All things work together. There is only one law and the law is uniform on all planes. What is good for one plane is good for all. If man tries to prepare his body, not for selfish ends, but in order that he may acquire greater wisdom, there is no wrong in his devoting himself to the care of his physical being; but he cannot gain either health or strength until he has proper control over that through which all his power comes. Man cannot truly enter into possession of his own latent possibilities until he has discovered and connected himself with his inner resources—until he has awakened his spiritual nature. If he is outdrawn, dragged hither and thither by his uncontrolled energies, he must try to be indrawn. He must cultivate his faculty of intra-vision. He has been looking outward so long without realizing his dreams or finding true happiness; let him now look within and see if he cannot find there what he has been vainly searching for on the outside.

He must also practise moderation. As long as man strives madly for pleasure, without using his faculty of discrimination, he merely exhausts himself and makes himself miserable. Nor should he go to the other extreme and practise self-torture. That man alone enjoys real blessing who observes moderation in all his activities. We must neither destroy any of our propensities nor become slaves to them; but we must take a masterly attitude towards them. And this is a great lesson that everyone needs to learn. How often we raise our

voices and want others to obey us ; but have we succeeded in making ourselves obey? Yet we have the power. All power is within us. The very power which enables us to see ordinary things can be stored up in such a way that it will give us Divine sight ; the power which helps us to hear these outer sounds and gain knowledge of this material world, can also lead us upward and enable us to hear the Eternal, that which satisfies the Soul of man. We must therefore gather up our forces and gathering up means concentration and concentration means strength. A single thread is easily broken, but when a number of threads are put together and twisted into twine, what power of resistance they have. Similarly all our small dissipated forces can be gathered together and through the power of concentration twisted into one strong whole ; then we shall be able to resist anything. It is through such positive thoughts that the Sages have taught us,—not that we are sinners, but that each one can save himself ; that the only saving Grace for each one of us is in his own higher spiritual nature ; and until we have awakened that no one can save us. Do you suppose that by merely making laws for the prevention of crime we can prevent it? What we want is education, and the greatest education is to give man confidence in his Higher Self. In every man there are two tendencies:—one is dragging him down through the senses, the other is telling him what his soul needs. If he will awaken that higher Soul-Instinct and follow that, then he will find his Saviour within himself.

Until we have gained control over our lower nature, however, we never even suspect that we have imbedded in our heart the potentiality for the highest illumination and the highest happiness. We should therefore form the habit of having times when we relax and withdraw from all bodily activities. We find in all religions times set apart for prayer

or meditation. Why? Because as long as we are constantly moving outward and never look within, forgetting the vital factor in our life, there is nothing to sustain or nourish us; the storehouse is blocked. We must always try to keep ourselves connected with the storehouse of our life-force; and the more we can do this, the more irresistible will our power become. The man who has command over his vital energy or *Prana* will always accomplish greater things in less time and with less exertion. Also the more quickly we can achieve victory over our lower self, the sooner shall we gain spiritual illumination. These ideas of self-conquest, of the power of concentration and meditation, are not peculiarly Indian. In every religion, wherever there has been any true growth of spiritual thought, you will find that it has come from an in-drawn, meditative life. Even material scientists, how much they have to concentrate on a problem before they can solve it; for concentration always throws light and gives greater power. Physical concentration is necessary to gain health of body; mental concentration is necessary to sharpen our intellect; and when we have practised these two well and with discrimination, there will come a time when we can direct all our forces towards spiritual regeneration. Then the things which seem to us impossible today will become absolute realities. Our doubts will vanish of their own accord, for where there is sunlight there cannot be any darkness.

All the imperfection and limitation which we feel in our body and mind we can remove by not constantly thinking of this immediate, apparent, physical existence, but by joining our thoughts with the Higher Source, the Fountainhead of life and energy. When we can remain focused there, we shall be able to go on doing our duties without feeling any reaction. That is one of the great secrets of the Indian Sages. Through the ages they have taught that man can make his work a recre-

ation, that if he will connect himself with the Highest and keep his motive lofty, his work instead of exhausting him will bring him ever greater strength. It is not necessary for us to retire to a corner or become inactive to restore our vitality. If we will but learn to practise balance and moderation in all our activity, we shall enjoy true health of body and mind and shall surely attain spiritual illumination and freedom.

SELECTION FROM THE SAMHITA.

A Dialogue between the Sage Astavakra and King Janaka.

The Sage Astavakra said:

Self-knowledge is the source of blessedness. Self-government gives supremacy. Self-control confers contentment, and the vision of the Self reveals the Absolute.

Blessed is that wise man who is thoughtful yet free from care; in full possession of his sense organs yet not a slave to them; intelligent but not cunning; self-possessed but not egotistical; neither a pleasure-seeker nor a misanthrope; neither satiated nor thirsty; who is unattached and prays for nothing; who is undistracted in the midst of distractions; surrounded by matter but not a materialist; learned but not vain.

The fool in his mad longing for liberation forges fresh chains of bondage. The wise man cleaves the root of the tree of ignorance, which is the source of all misfortune.

The fool longs for peace and fails to enjoy it. Peace dwells in the mind of the wise man, for he knows the Truth.

How can one see the real, whose gaze is fixed on the apparent? The wise man, with eyes ever on Truth, sees not the unreal.

The fool vainly strives for self-mastery. The wise man, of joyous soul, without straining or striving, is always a perfect master of himself.

He who has a wandering mind controls it ; but the all-embracing mind of the wise man is never distracted, so it requires no controlling.

The man who is free from selfish desires, whether a king or a beggar, shines by his own light ; he remains unmoved by good or evil, by the beautiful or unbeautiful.

The humble-hearted wise man works without a sense of "I" All the passions and propensities of the lower nature weaken when the Sage feels "I am not the doer," "I am not the enjoyer," "I am not the sufferer."

The wise man, free from the impulse of desire, can live with equal ease in the midst of luxury or in a mountain cave.

He does his duty and expects nothing . . . His behavior is quiet. Without desire, he conforms to the customs and usages of society. Having left all sorrow behind, he lives like a vast lake unruffled by waves.

Blessed is that man who keeps an even temper in all the affairs of life. . . . What is sadness or mirth, bondage or liberation, to him in whom the lamp of Truth burns perpetually?

He rushes not into the crowded arena of life nor repairs to the wilderness. He lives self-poised anywhere and everywhere.

In this world a true knower is never miserable or discontented and never complains. He never thinks: "I do not possess this" or "I would have been happy if I had that," for he knows that God fills the entire universe.

The Yogi has everything in common with all except the feeling of "I-ness" and "Mine-ness." Nothing annoys him, he longs for nothing. Ever pure in heart, free from all selfish desires, his liberated soul shines.

Who can imagine the feeling of completeness and sweet restfulness which the wise man enjoys in his inner soul? His sorrows are over, he has outlived his little hopes and fears.

KARMA-YOGA.

By S. E. Waldo.

The goal of life is really knowledge, knowledge of the reality of things. We are apt to think that it is pleasure, and seeking pleasure in sense-gratification, we meet with so many disappointments and sorrows that we sometimes almost despair and are led to believe that all life is a vain dream with no sure foundation anywhere. Knowledge alone can enable us to set our feet on a trustworthy foundation, but this knowledge is not to be gained by accumulating facts about the material universe. It must be knowledge of the internal world, not the external; and one way of gaining this Knowledge Absolute, which is also Freedom Absolute, is through *Karma* or work. This word *Karma*, in its most limited sense, is work or action. Everything we do, is *Karma*. Then there is a wider sense in which this word is used; it means also the accumulated results of all past actions which become the seed or cause of future actions. It is an endless chain of cause and effect in which we are involved, and from which only a knowledge of how to act without producing reaction can ever free us.

Karma-Yoga is meant to teach us exactly this,—to make clear to us first the causes of our bondage, and secondly the method of getting rid of the causes so as to escape from the effects. In this as in every thing else the cure of an evil, to be effective, must reach to its roots. It is no use to deal merely with effects; we must get behind them, find the causes and deal with them. Behind all actions lies their cause, that ceaseless endeavor of the soul after freedom, after the realization of its true nature. This intense desire for freedom is like a gigantic, immensely powerful spring, coiled up in every human being and incessantly urging him in his effort to find release from its mighty pressure—release which can only come when the

desire for freedom has been satisfied, when the spring has expanded, when the goal has been reached. Very few of us really know the reason of our unrest, the cause of our endless struggle which too often leaves us baffled and exhausted. Yet even while we tell ourselves that there is no truth to be reached, deep within us speaks an insistent voice denying this conclusion, a voice which tells us there is a glorious goal and impels us to take up the struggle again and again. All this struggle and pain and doubt come from our ignorance of what we really are and of how we may reach that true happiness which ordinarily eludes our grasp.

The first lesson of Karma-Yoga is a hard one to learn, for it calls upon us to abandon the search for pleasure, to cease struggling for something to increase the comfort and well-being of our little personalities which we think so important; it tells us to sink our petty interest in these our apparent selves and to devote all our efforts to widen out the little ego and make it all-embracing. It calls upon us to work for all humanity with as keen an interest as that with which we are accustomed to work for ourselves. Now we work from some motive, we work to get something we want; that something varies with every human being, and so each is pulling apart from all the rest and striving to get the particular thing upon which his heart is set, all to himself, thinking that if he only succeeds in getting it he will be satisfied and happy. How many do we find who are so satisfied and happy? Think of the countless ages through which this struggle has been going on! And yet we are as far from the goal as ever. That is because we are simply "chasing the horizon" whenever we seek to get something for ourselves alone, or even for our families or our relatives or our friends or our city or our country or even the whole human race. That little possessive pronoun *our* poisons every effort at its source. As long

as we say "our" and seek to benefit any person or persons because they belong to "us," we are cutting ourselves off from the "not-us" and in that line of separation lies the whole of our misery. If we succeed in identifying ourselves with the whole universe and work for it as a whole, we shall lose all sense of "mine" and "our."

What need is there to label anything in particular as "ours" when we possess all things and there is nothing in this wide universe which is not ours? The grand old Vedic hymn tells us how the Great Self says: "Through all eyes I see, through all ears I hear, through all mouths I eat, in all life I live." When we can feel that to be true of ourselves, we shall be able to work for all and to get beyond the effects of work done for our own personal gain. Altruism so-called, when pushed to its ultimate position, means practically just this. When we have learned to include the whole universe in ourselves, what then can remain to us of the little self? In our ignorance we are too frequently apt to mistake this little self for the universe, to let it stand between us and all outside, until it obscures our vision and we come to think of it as though it were all there is of any importance to us. Intense selfishness defeats its own ends, because it opens as many avenues for suffering as for self-seeking. We can really get very little; but if we desire everything, each disappointed longing has its own sting and we become more and more unhappy and discontented. Then we blame every one but ourselves for all our disappointments; and that, reacting on us, increases our discomfort. We thus make of our whole mentality a mere bundle of sensitive points, every one of which is open to wounds and blows of every sort and from each of which we suffer pain more or less acute. This arises no doubt from a perfectly natural desire to be happy, but in seeking to fulfill this desire we make the mistake of supposing that our little personal self

is all. We do not look ahead far enough, we limit our world to a narrow circle, and only the knowledge of truth will help us to widen it ; that is why knowledge is our goal.

We must begin where we stand and take up the work that comes to us in our daily lives ; by doing that unselfishly we make ourselves fit for larger and higher work. It is no use to rush away in discontent from the particular place in the world's great workshop in which we find ourselves and seek a wider and more inviting sphere of action. We never can be fit for that wider sphere until we are first able to thoroughly and wisely discharge the particular duties laid upon us by our present position in the world. Everything in this universe is a continuous process, a growth, one thing gradually evolving from another. There are no sudden jumps here. It is only steady, persistent, patient effort that brings the greatest results. We can only begin where we are, we cannot by any amount of wishing transport ourselves to other surroundings. If we were wise we would not even wish to do so, for just where we are is the very best place for us to begin the work of attaining something higher and better.

There is no general objective duty ; indeed there cannot be, because human society has so many grades and states. We cannot make a hard and fast standard of morality. All we can do is to recognize that according to the environment this standard must and should and does vary. There is no positive duty from the subjective side ; there can only be one general rule, that any action which leads us upward and Godward is a good action, while any action which leads in the contrary direction is bad and has to be avoided. The one universal rule of duty is to go upward and strive to reach the Divine ; therefore we can safely say that every human being should do those things that tend to exalt him and leave undone such things as tend to debase and degenerate him. At this gener-

alization we must stop; for if we seek to go farther and particularize the special acts that will elevate or degrade us, we shall find ourselves in difficulty at once. This kind of specific determination of right conduct must be left to the special needs of nations, or races, or particular social conditions—the needs that give use to it. The idea that what is duty to us ought to be the duty of everybody is a great superstition, and forms the most fruitful source of “envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness.” It is one of those natural and well-nigh universal mistakes that we need to escape from as quickly as we can.

In addition to the fact that the results of all our actions have finally to come back to ourselves, we must also consider how they affect others and how we are affected in turn by the actions of our fellowmen. Every act a man does is the result of a certain mental condition, and in its turn it will, upon repetition, have a tendency to create that condition. Thought and action constantly act and react on each other. When a man's mind is in a certain state, either of good or ill, he is laying himself open to receive impressions from all similar states in other men. When we think evil thoughts, we make ourselves ready for all the evil thought in the universe to rush in upon us. That is why we seem to gather such rapidly accelerating impulse when we start on what we call the “downward course.” The more frequently we give way to evil thinking, the harder it becomes for us to conquer it; and that is not entirely due to the force of habit. It comes quite as much from this evil influence to which we are opening ourselves and which would have no power over us if we did not so invite it. When we endeavor to keep our minds fixed on good thoughts, we gain the added strength of all the good thought in the universe, because we have removed the barrier and as it were invited it to flow into our minds. We therefore run a double

danger in doing evil,—we lay ourselves open to all surrounding evil influences and we add to them that evil which will in turn affect others. In doing good to others we are really helping ourselves more than we can possibly help them; and the reverse also is just as true. No action can be an unmixed good or evil, there must ever be a share of both in every action, but we can see to it that good predominates in our activities. We use the good to overcome and displace the evil, but the time must come when we find that good too brings bondage. It may be a golden chain, but it will bind us quite as securely as an iron one. When we reach this perception, we shall find that our next endeavor must be to transcend good itself, to reach That which is neither good nor evil but includes both.

We now begin to understand what the *Gita* means when it says: "To work you have the right but not to the fruits thereof." We have to detach ourselves from our actions in such a way that no effects will return to us. Only by succeeding in doing this can we escape all pain and sorrow. As long as the results of our actions can touch us, just so long shall we be liable to suffer pain and distress. As long as praise can please and gratify us, so long will blame disturb us. When we can entirely separate the idea of self from what we do, then neither praise nor blame will have the least effect upon us. When we can regard our own conduct with the same absence of bias as we display when considering the conduct of another, in cases where it has not even the most remote effect upon ourselves, we shall smile serenely upon adverse criticism and upon any amount of adulation. Now the one is apt to throw us off our balance and the other to turn our head. We have only to think a minute to see how all our judgments are colored by the personal element, how hard it is to put this all-important "I" out of our minds. Consideration for this little "I" clouds our vision and warps our views of life. It is hard indeed to set

aside this importunate "spoiled child," to silence the clamor of the personal element and listen only to the voice of the higher wisdom, which tells us that this seeming self is false and unreal, that our real self is above and beyond all these trifling considerations, serene and untouched by the turmoil of life, an unmoved witness of this panorama of the universe that seems to us so real and so terrible.

When Karma-Yoga has taught us the secret of work and by our own effort we have begun to put what it teaches us into practical operation, we shall find that life is easier, that we are happier than we supposed we could be, and that in ceasing to chase pleasure we have come very nigh to capturing her. The result of all unselfish work is to purify us, to wash away the dross, to refine the gold. It is a long process, but it is sure. It teaches us the one great lesson to be learned in this world,—to forget ourselves. Jesus said: "He who loses his life shall find it;" and this is precisely the teaching of Karma-Yoga, which tells us that only through entire abnegation of the little self are the barriers and limitations of the aspiring soul thrown down and a realization of the One Self made possible. All distinction, all separation, is limitation; and whatever tends to intensify this feeling of separateness takes us so much farther from the goal. All life is one and indestructible; the differing, ever-changing forms under which it manifests itself to us can be destroyed, but life itself is eternal. There is one undivided mental ocean, in which our minds are but little whirlpools, so to say. Matter is one also, and all the varying forms we see around us are but brief eddies in the ever-rushing stream. Our lives are like the wind rushing through the street when the leaves lie scattered thickly on the ground. Now it picks up a few, whirls them round for a short space in a little ball, then drops them and picks up another pile. It is the same wind, but it is invisible to us; all

we can see are the manifestations of its presence in these little apparently self-animated balls of dancing leaves.

We are all like those little whirling leaf-balls; behind the name and form that seem to make us separate entities is the one Life which animates us all, the one Mind that supplies all our apparently differing minds, the One Self that is the basis and only reality of all these seeming selves. Our trouble is that we are always mistaking the apparent for the real. To take off the veils that cover our eyes, to free ourselves from the erroneous views we take of life, we need the purifying effect of unselfish action. We can so do our daily work, no matter how ignoble it may seem to us or to others, that our minds will be enlightened by the inner wisdom taught by unselfish action; and then true knowledge will be ours. This is the highest result of good work. When a man has reached the state of entire self-abnegation and is ready to sacrifice mind, body and everything for another being, he has attained the perfection of Karma-Yoga. "If a man has not studied a single philosophy, if he does not believe in God and has never believed, if he has never prayed once in his whole life, but if the simple power of good actions has brought him to that state wherein he is ready to give up his life and everything for others, he has reached the same point to which the religious man will come through his prayers and the philosopher through his knowledge." Work, worship and philosophy—all meet at one point, and that is self-abnegation. Whatever our own conduct may be, we all yield involuntary reverence to a purely noble and unselfish action.

Karma-Yoga tells us that only unselfish action escapes all personal effects. We did not do it for ourselves, so nothing returns to us. "Every good work we do without any ulterior motive, instead of forging a chain, will break one of the links in our chain. Every good thought that we send to the world,

without thinking of any return, will be stored up and break one link in the chain and make us purer and stronger." Thus by daily effort to do unselfishly the little tasks that each day brings, we gain experience and progress toward freedom. We rise gradually to feel that duty no longer compels us, that we have lost all sense of the compulsion of duty and are acting aright from our own nature; for us the "ought" has become the "is." When we have reached the point where we naturally do good because it is good to do good, where all sense of reward or punishment or personal gain of any kind has entirely disappeared from our minds, no more bondage can ever come to us from work. Then we shall have transcended law and shall be beyond its power. We shall work incessantly, but never identify ourselves with our work. We shall work as masters, no longer as slaves. We shall work through freedom and through love. We shall then have learned the secret of work, and learning that we shall have attained the goal. In the words of the Gita: "The man who worketh unattached attaineth the Supreme."

We desire, and desire most passionately when we are most ourselves, to give our service to that which is universal and to that which is abiding.—*Balfour*.

The essence of true nobility is neglect of self. Let the thought of self pass in, and the beauty of a great action is gone—like the bloom from a soiled flower.—*Froude*.

Know thou that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. Thou canst not possess perfect liberty unless thou wholly renounce thyself. Give all for all, seek nothing, ask back nothing, abide purely and with a firm confidence in Me, and thou shalt possess Me; thou shalt be free in heart, and darkness shall not tread thee down.

—*Thomas à Kempis*.

ALL IS HIS SERVICE.*Song by Kabir.*

(Translation by Rabindranath Tagore)

O Sadhu! the simple union is the best.
Since the day when I met with my Lord, there has been no end
to the sport of our love.
I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my
body;
I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty every-
where:
I utter his name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him;
whatever I do, it becomes His worship.
The rising and the setting are one to me; all contradictions
are solved.
Wherever I go, I move round Him,
All I achieve is His service:
When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

He is the only adorable one to me; I have none other.
My tongue has left off impure words, it sings His glory
day and night:
Whether I rise or sit down, I can never forget Him; for the
rhythm of His music beats in my ears.
Kabir says: "My heart is frenzied, and I disclose in my soul
what is hidden. I am immersed in that one great bliss
which transcends all pleasure and pain."

The kingfisher dives freely into the water, but the water
does not wet its plumage; so the emancipated saint lives in the
world but the world does not affect him. . . . That man is a
true hero, who while living in the midst of the temptations of
the world attains perfection.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE POWER OF DETACHMENT.

From the Teachings of Chuang-Tzu.

Chi Hsing Tzu was training fighting cocks for the prince. At the end of ten days the prince inquired if they were ready. "Not yet," was Chi's answer; "they are in the stage of seeking fiercely for a foe."

Ten days elapsed and the prince asked again. "Not yet," replied Chi; "they are still excited by the sounds and shadows of other cocks."

Ten days more and once again the prince inquired. "Not yet," Chi answered; "even the sight of an enemy still excites them to rage."

After another ten days, however, when the prince asked, Chi replied: "They are ready. Other cocks may crow, but they take no notice. To look at them one might think they were made of wood. Their virtue is complete. Strange cocks will not dare to meet them; they will turn and run."

* * * *

Yen Yuan one day said to Confucius: "When I was crossing over the Shang-shen rapid, I noticed that the boatman managed his craft with marvellous skill. I asked him if handling a boat could be learned. 'It can,' was his reply. 'The way of those who know how to keep you afloat is more like sinking you. They row as if the boat wasn't there.' I inquired what he meant, but he would not tell me. I now ask you."

"He means," answered Confucius, "that such a man is oblivious of the water around him. He regards the rapid as if it were dry land. He looks upon an upset as an ordinary cart accident. And if a man can thus be fearless as to cap-sizings and accidents, whither should he not be able to go in peace and comfort?"

"A man who plays for counters will play well. If he stakes his girdle, he will be nervous; if yellow gold, he will lose his

wits. His skill is the same in each case, but he is distracted by the value of his stakes. And everyone who attaches importance to the external, becomes internally without resource."

Chuang-Tzu declares: Only the perfect man can transcend the limits of the human and yet not withdraw from the world; can live in accord with mankind and yet suffer no injury himself. Of the world's teachings he learns nothing. He has that within which makes him independent of others.

TAPAS, OR THE PRACTICE OF AUSTERITY.

"By truthfulness, by *tapas*, by right-knowledge and self-restraint the Divine Self is to be gained." The Sanskrit word "*tapas*" used here is one which appears frequently in Indian Sacred Writings and always as an important element in spiritual practice. The fact that the original term is so often retained in translations shows that there is no exact English equivalent for it. Some Oriental scholars have tried to convey its meaning by the word "penance," others by "austerity," "asceticism" or "self-discipline"; but though all these ideas are contained in it, no one fully expresses it. It is derived from a root which means "to heat," and denoted originally the heat that is the source and support of life and energy in every form. The action of fire is twofold: it gives warmth, which is the condition of life; and light, which is the condition of knowledge. It was undoubtedly because of this vivifying and illuminating quality of fire that the ancients came to look upon it as the Divine agent of the mind, as also of life and motion. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus declared fire to be the foundation of all creation; and throughout the early Vedic writings Agni, the Fire-god, is often invoked as if he were the Creator Himself, but only because he stood as the personified element of life, energy and thought, upon which all creation must rest.

Gradually, however the conception of the term *tapas* underwent a transition. What originally signified only heat and light, or life and knowledge, was now used to mean meditation and concentration of mind—a change which was natural and legitimate, since only by meditation can the highest knowledge be acquired. With this change, the idea of *tapas* took its place in the individual life and came to be applied to any exercise that regulated the mind, cleansed the heart and prepared man for the revelation of the Divine. The Bhagavad-Gita declares: “Worship, charity and the practice of *tapas* are the purifiers of the wise.” Every such practice indeed was looked upon as a purifying fire, gradually burning away all the imperfections of man’s nature and reducing his diverse selfish desires to one homogeneous ash of God-yearning. Until this oneness was attained there was no chance of the Supreme Vision, since God can only be seen by the pure or single heart. What special form of self-discipline lighted the fire and fed the flame did not matter. Each could choose his own path. In the Gita we are told again:

“To revere and serve the gods, the twice-born, spiritual teachers and wise men; purity, simplicity, continence, non-injury: these are called *tapas* or austerity of the body.

“Speech which causes no pain to anyone and is true as well as pleasant and beneficial; regular study of the Scriptures: these are called *tapas* of speech.

“Cheerfulness of mind, kindliness, silence, self-control, purity of heart: these are called *tapas* of the mind or mental austerity.”

No more general rules for the gradual refining and lifting of man’s thoughts, words and deeds could be framed. They call for no special condition, environment or constitution. They can be practised as well in the counting-house as in the Sanctuary. They are fitted to men of every grade of develop-

ment and in every walk of life; hence none need be exempt from observing them. And this is invariably true when the real spirit of religion prevails. The spiritual teaching at such times is always direct, inclusive and free from extremes. Men are admonished to follow the middle path, to be "moderate in their eating and diversion, moderate in their activities, moderate in their sleep and wakefulness"; and sharp distinctions between different stations or modes of life grow faint. Godliness is a universal quality which has small concern with rank or circumstance. The Divine Presence is no more accessible in a cloister than by the family hearthside. The forest and the crowded street are one to the man who has perceived It. Only when the letter begins to dominate the spirit do wide differences arise, and men in order to set themselves off from their fellowmen begin to elaborate and distort their religious practices until self-torture becomes a glory.

In the history of every faith we find these periods when penances, flagellations, and painful vigils marked the measure of piety. Many such waves have passed over India—as over Europe in the Middle Ages—but the Vedanta has never upheld such excesses as useful to man or pleasing to God. It offers no encouragement to this spirit of self-torment; on the contrary, it condemns it in unmistakable terms. It cannot conceive of a Deity who could find pleasure in seeing His children expend their energies in self-inflicted miseries. It believes that life itself and our own untrained natures provide opportunity enough for self-discipline. Wise restraint of the senses and the mind; forgetfulness of self through righteous works; prayer and meditation: these are the simple and safe means it offers for attaining realization. Pain and suffering undoubtedly have their part in our unfolding; but when we create them through self-sought austerities, too often we feed our egotism and vanity and thus defeat our purpose. The

ultimate attribute of the Supreme is blissfulness ; and spiritual growth is a growth in joyousness. It is measured not by intensity of struggle, but by the gradual elimination of all struggle, as man's nature is purged and unified through selfless consecrated service to the Ideal. "The mortal who has reached the Supreme Being rejoices, because he has found what is a cause for rejoicing," Yama tells Nachiketas in the Katha-Upanishad. Any method which leads us through the shadow instead of out into the sunshine, which does violence to any part of our being and hence weakens rather than strengthens, is not a sound method, nor can it be effective. Rather let us remember the Lord's promise in the Gita : "He who is without any other thought but Me, who remembers Me daily and constantly, by that ever-devoted Yogi I am easily attained."

REPORTS.

Swami Paramananda is continuing his work in Los Angeles. On January 21st he began a course of public lectures in Music Hall. His subjects for the two remaining Sundays of the month were "India's Message to the World" and "Krishna and His Teaching." During February they will be "Buddha and His Teaching," "Emerson and Vedanta," "Spiritual Healing and Vedanta," and "Spiritual Preparedness." Besides these public meetings, he is holding regularly at the Vedanta Centre, 1071 South Hoover St., a Devotional Service every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, and a mid-week class on Wednesday at 8.

A new and valuable booklet by Swami Paramananda has just been published by the Centre under the title, "Universal Ideal of Religion." It contains three chapters, the first on the "Universal Ideal," the second on "Tolerance" and the third on "Spiritual Culture, the Vital Need of This Age." It sets forth with force and clearness the broad inclusive attitude of Vedanta, and will surely do much to break down the sectarian prejudice and narrow-mindedness which many people mistake for religious fervor.

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The
Message of the East



MARCH 1917

Issued by

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. VI.

MARCH, 1917.

No. 3

MORALITY AND SPIRITUALITY.

Extract by Swami Saradananda.

Can there be any high philosophy or religion possible without a high standard of morals? The answer which the Vedanta gives to this question is always in the negative. No one can rise to the highest stage of spirituality without being perfectly and absolutely pure and high in point of morality. Examine the lives of the Vedic Rishis ("the Seers of thoughts") who attained to superconsciousness; or of Buddha, or Christ, or Sankara, or Chaitanya; were they pure or impure men? Has God ever manifested Himself through an impure channel? Never. These founders of the different religions have always been men pure in thought, word and deed; and what did they teach, every one of them? That morality must be the basis, the foundation, upon which spiritual life should stand; it must be the corner-stone of the spiritual building. Here the Vedic Rishis and all the Prophets of other religions are at one. The one great point of the teachings of the Vedanta, however, is that man's spiritual evolution does not stop with the evolution of a high code of ethics alone, but that there is another higher step to which he can reach, another link in this process of evolution and involution which completes the circle. And this is to be gained, not by denying, but by the fulfilling of all laws; not by throwing overboard

all duties, but by the right performance of all duties ; not by discarding society, but by being useful members of it ; not by contracting the self, but by expanding it to its farthest limit ; not by a man's thinking of himself as a cut and dried entity separate from the universe, but by feeling and realizing that he is one with this universe.

This universe according to Ramanuja, the great leader of the Qualified Monists in India, has been produced by the contraction of the knowledge of the soul, by the soul's forgetting that it is the storehouse of all knowledge and bliss and that it is one with the Infinite Ocean of Knowledge, which forms the background of the universe and is called God, the Absolute, Brahman, Atman, by so many different names. And liberation is to be attained by the expansion of the knowledge of the soul, when it will feel its union with the Divine and with the universe, which is nothing but a projection out of the Divine. Monism goes only a step further than the position of Ramanuja and teaches that perfect liberation is to be attained when the individual soul will not only feel this union and see the unity in the sum-total of all these differentiations, but will feel its identity with the Deity. This stage the Vedanta describes as the state of realization or the super-conscious. The three states of the human mind,—the sub-conscious, the conscious, and the superconscious, are not three distinct minds, but the three different stages of one and the same mind. Modern science has discovered the process in the theory of evolution,—how the subconscious develops into the middle plane, the conscious existence, and the Vedanta is one with it as far as it goes ; but it says further that this leaves the evolution (or as the Vedanta says, the involution) incomplete ; the conscious will have to develop into the super-conscious, and then alone will the process be complete. All our struggles, individual, social and human, are for that end,

trying to gain that higher stage. There alone will man find the permanent basis of ethics, of religion, of everything. There, if an illiterate man enters, he will come out a sage, a prophet. The founders of the different religions, the religious giants whom the world has produced and will produce in the future, have been and will be men who have raised and will raise themselves to this higher stage. This is the stage which was described by Buddha as *Nirvana*; by Christ as being one with the Father; by the Mohammedan Sufis as *Analhak*, union with the truth; and in the famous aphorisms of the Vedanta as "Thou art that Infinite Ocean of Knowledge and Bliss," or "I am that Absolute Brahman."

The universe according to the Vedanta is one indivisible whole. It is by mistake that we think ourselves separate from the rest of the world. In the external world our bodies represent so many different points in the one vast ocean of matter, in which there is no break. Behind that lies expanded the one universal ocean of mind, in which our minds but represent so many different whirlpools; and behind that even is the Soul, the Self, the *Atman*, the storehouse of all knowledge, power, and bliss. So, though there is but one soul shining above, there are so many millions of reflections on the millions of whirlpools in the mental ocean; and these reflections are nothing but so many individual egos. When a man raises himself to the superconscious, he sees the One Sun that is shining above the mental ocean and he knows that he is not a particular reflection but the Sun himself, who has given rise to all the reflections in the ocean of fine matter called the mind. And where lies the basis of all ethics? In the fact that I am one with and not separate from the universe; that in injuring you I injure myself, in loving you I love myself; in the fact that behind the manifold diversity there is a unity, or, as the Vedantist says, behind these names

and forms there is that one eternal, unchangeable ocean of Knowledge and Bliss which is our real nature. "This universe has been projected out of that Ocean of Bliss Absolute." That Divinity is trying to manifest itself through all these names and forms, and the evolution of nature into higher and higher forms is caused by this struggle of the Divinity within to manifest itself better and better.

Every form or organism is a conduit through which that Divinity is trying to manifest, and all that we need to do is to remove the barriers which obstruct this flow of the Infinite within. With every act of love and sympathy, every performance of duty, every observance of morality, man is trying to go beyond himself by feeling himself one with the universe. He is abnegating his lower self, and does not in this self-abnegation lie the basis of all ethics? Examine all the ethical codes which the world has ever produced and you will find this one great fact taught,—to live up to the higher Self by denying the lower. Consciously or unconsciously, every code of ethics is leading to that. They may not give you adequate reasons why a man shall be moral and deny himself, but are we not thinking according to the laws of logic in every act of reasoning though we may not have read a single page of logic? The Vedanta supplies the reason why we shall be moral, why we shall do good to others, why we shall love all humanity as ourselves. Behind all these varied codes of ethics lurks that one great truth that we are one with the universe.

He who lives up to that one central truth has truly renounced himself. He who does not know this truth but tries to become a perfectly moral man, in thought, word and deed, he too is unconsciously living up to that truth. This word renunciation has got a very bad name nowadays. Yet every religion has enforced it often and often. It is the corner-

stone upon which all religions, all ethics, have been built. Nay, we are practising it every day of our lives, consciously or unconsciously. A man loves his wife, his children, his country, what is he doing all the time? Is he not renouncing himself? True renunciation, which every religion teaches, does not consist in isolating oneself from everything and every being, but in expanding oneself more and more widely, embracing the whole of the universe in oneself by love. For not in isolation or contraction but in expansion consists life and progress; this is the teaching of the Vedanta.

The eyes of my soul were opened, and I beheld the plenitude of God, whereby I did comprehend the whole world both here and beyond the sea, and the Abyss and all things else; and therein did I behold naught save the Divine power in a manner assuredly indescribable, so that through excess of marvelling the soul cried with a loud voice, saying, "This whole world is full of God."

Angela da Foligno.

As people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being.

George Fox.

God hath introduced man as a spectator of Himself and His works; and not only as a spectator, but an interpreter of them. It is therefore shameful that man should begin and end where irrational creatures do. He is indeed rather to begin there, but to end where Nature itself hath fixed our end; and that is in contemplation and understanding.

Epictetus.

THE THREE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

By Sister Devamata.

In and out through the duality of nature is woven a triplicity; the very two implies a third. There can be indeed no duality without a trinity, because there where the two opposites meet is created a third thing born of the union of the two. Thus we have day and night and the point where they join called twilight. We have sound sleep and waking and the mingling of the two in dream. We have the knower and the object and the result of their union, knowledge. We have the brute and the Divine and that state in which they meet known as the human. All manifestation falls inevitably into one of these three states, which are called in Sanskrit *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattwa*. The first is a state of darkness, heaviness, dullness, lethargy—such as we see in the lower forms of animal life; the second is a state of unrest, activity, passion, ambition, self-assertion—the characteristics of the human plane; and the third is a state of calmness, lightness, illumination, serene joy—to be found only on the spiritual plane. In man these three states express themselves as the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious; and according to the predominance of one or the other does he appear to be a brute, an intellectual and moral being, or a Saint and Seer.

We are in the habit of looking at all things in creation as fixed, predestined to a definite condition; but in reality the whole of Nature is in a state of quivering instability—nowhere a solid mass, nowhere a persisting form, nowhere a dead level. Every atom is perpetually moving, every condition is incessantly changing. Diminish the density of any rigid substance through the application of heat or otherwise and it will pass beyond the range of visibility; congeal or condense the lightest vapor and it will become a solid block. The same holds true

of men. One man is not cut out of a grosser kind of matter, irrevocably condemned to a life of stupidity, ignorance and brutality, while another is made of a finer material with every aptitude for enlightenment. All men are born in the image of the brute, in the image of God, and in the image of that which stands between. All living beings are made of the same elements and possess the same potential powers. One force plays throughout Nature, one substance underlies it; and the endless variation apparent everywhere reduces itself to a question of what direction that force takes and what state that substance is in. We have, each one of us, in our hands at this moment the possibilities of the lowest and the highest. Not one is less well equipped than another, not one is lacking in a single element necessary to ultimate attainment. The only task before us is to realize where we stand; what state has become habitual; and if it is not desirable, to transform it.

Man is that which his consciousness dwells upon. If he falls short of his ideal, he has only to begin to lift his thought up the sliding scale of consciousness from the thing he is to the thing he longs to be. To do this there are no chasms over which he has to leap. His consciousness stretches in one unbroken line from the grossest to the subtlest stratum of his being; and on it he may climb steadily from subconscious through the conscious to the superconscious; from brute to man and from man to God. These different states, however, have not clearly defined areas. No milestone stands to tell us where subconscious ends and conscious begins. As certain thoughts and actions by constant repetition deepen into habits, they drop to the automatic plane; thus yesterday's conscious activity becomes today's subconscious; and in like manner the reasoned effort of the present moment will in time become instinctive. This is Nature's method of releasing man's will-

power from the dulling routine of his lower being, that he may push on to higher realms.

The upward process, however, must be a continuous one. We cannot jump suddenly from the state of *Tamas* or heaviness to the state of *Sattwa* or illumination. And this rule applies not only to our general evolution, but also to our daily practice. When we feel overpowered by dullness or depression, it is futile to combat it by trying to meditate. We must first rouse our vital energies by some active exertion. Then when we have driven out *Tamas* by *Rajas*, we are ready to sit down and become reflective. To the great majority the third and highest state is practically unknown. Their life consists almost wholly in ceaseless reactions between *Tamas* and *Rajas*, that is, from over-activity to weariness and back to over-activity. This is true both in work and in play. Usually when people feel the need to relax they go outside, they move towards the circumference; only the wise man turns inward and moves towards the centre. They seek their recreation in restless excitement, mingling with the crowd; he finds his in the quiet places, communing with the hidden things of life and Nature. It is the direction of these daily reactions which differentiates the sage from the foolish man. As human beings we stand midway between the two poles of existence; at every moment we can reach out either towards God or towards the brute. The wise man turns Godward for replenishment, the foolish man turns earthward.

To learn to control and direct these reactions is one of the primary lessons in our spiritual education. We must first check all extremes. Elation and depression, feverish activity and lethargy, both represent unbalance, hence weakness. We must set our will firmly at the middle point and govern the swing of the pendulum into rest and action. Until we can do this we shall have no real strength or joy in living. It

is not the man who is swaying and catching himself who feels pleasure in exercise, but the one who has found his balance and moves securely. If we grow weary and feel the need of renewal, we should seek it on the higher plane. When we are overcome with intense weariness, if we will remind ourselves that we are not the body and turn our thoughts from it, we shall quickly react. The body represents *Tamas* or heaviness in us, that is why it weights us. Therefore when it begins to drag, we should learn to drop it from our consciousness as we do at the time of sleep. The same refreshment will follow. Naturally this cannot be done all at once. It will come only as the result of practice, through the cultivation of a higher state of consciousness. We live now too much in the subconscious. Our chief concern is to make this body comfortable, to shelter, feed and clothe it. Think how many hours and days and weeks of each year this Western world spends in dressing and playing with this body as a child dresses and plays with its doll! Yet so long as we make our physical existence the governing principle in all our activity, we are dwelling in the subconscious or brute state; not until we have ceased to identify ourselves with it and have discovered a loftier motive for action shall we rise fully to the human plane.

But here again little rest or peace will come to us. Our mind is a more wearing companion than our body: Desire for pleasure, many interests and ambitions, greed, jealousy, discontent, nameless longing, prod it on to ceaseless motion, making serene thought impossible. We are not wholly absorbed in our own well-being and happiness as we were on the subconscious plane. We are ready to share up to a certain point, but beyond that we feel it our duty to defend our rights and property; so we find ourselves at constant war with something or someone. The plane of *Rajas* is the plane

of struggle and conflict; it throws us back and forth between the contending dualities of pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor, success and failure, until worn and breathless we cry out for relief. As before, our only escape is into a higher state of consciousness; and we reach it, as in the previous upward step, by shifting the point of self-identity, by detaching ourselves from these mental conditions and realizing that our true Self is in no way touched by them. The ocean is always the same mighty ocean whether the surface is lashed to fury or rolls in even swell; so down in the depths of our being the stream of our real life flows ever onward in steady quiet current, undisturbed by the waves and eddies that may stir its surface. The moment we have crossed into the superconscious or meditative realm all the noise of battle ceases and we are at peace.

The subconscious is the plane of sensuality; the conscious, of morality; the superconscious, of spirituality. In the subconscious, instinct guides us; in the conscious, reason; and in the superconscious, revelation or inspiration. The first and third seem unerring, the second full of error. Why? Because in the highest and lowest there is oneness or unity. The Cosmic will works unimpeded through the brute and through the Saint. In ordinary man self-consciousness enters in and the one is broken into two, hence every light brings a shadow which bewilders and misleads. Yet the very effort to distinguish between reality and unreality gradually develops the power of discrimination and converts the brute into a moral being. Then as he learns to efface himself for his neighbor and his neighbor's neighbor, the horizon of his self-consciousness gradually expands until it embraces the whole universe, he comes "to see his Self in all beings and all beings in his Self," and he returns to voluntary oneness with the whole. His eye grows single, there where he saw diversity he now

sees unity, and his being becomes full of light—the light of superconscious illumination.

Man was not meant to be a brute, he was not meant to be human, he was meant to be Divine. It is by our own choice that we grope our way along in our present state of unknowingness, seeing all things dimly. If we will but make the effort, we may in this very life gain the power of unerring vision. It must be done, however, by a gradual transformation not only of our inner nature, but of our outer environment. The process of purification must be both exterior and interior. Since through all Nature there run these three qualities of *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, we must strive to relate ourselves everywhere to the highest *Sattwika* element of purity, goodness and light. Food is recognized as an effective factor in accomplishing this; but food in this case does not signify merely the nutriment we give to our body; it also includes that which we give to our mind, our heart, our whole organism. It is what we eat, what we read, the association we seek, the desires we cherish.

As a good mechanic is careful to select an oil that does not clog his machine, so we should choose a physical diet that does not overweight our system. As much as possible animal food should be eliminated. Among vegetables, it is said that those which grow in the earth are the most *Tamasika* in their nature and those that grow above ground are more *Rajasika*, while fruits and foods which need not be cooked are the most *Sattwika*. There can be no fixed rule of diet for all; it must be modified according to the individual constitution and circumstance. We must observe the effects of different foods upon us and take that which gives strength without destroying the sense of lightness. We must also consider what fits us best for our special task. We should not choose to induce a certain state in us merely because it is desirable, without

regard to our position in the world. If we are free to devote our time to spiritual study and lead a retired life, we can safely cultivate more of the element of *Sattwa* in our system; but the average man and woman, who are in close contact with the world, need some *Tamas* or density just as a ship needs ballast. They should have a larger supply of *Rajas* or vital energy; and if with these they can acquire by meditation and earnest study a predominance of *Sattwa*, they will do their work with a speed, efficiency and understanding impossible to the man weighted by *Tamas* or rendered unsteady by an excess of *Rajas*. They will also possess such poise and quietness that they will reduce waste to a minimum and suffer less from fatigue.

This superior state, however, is not gained by any method of exclusion or destruction. As nothing goes out of a dark room when a light is turned on, so no part of our nature is destroyed when we attain illumination. It is not a question of exchanging one kind of consciousness for another, but of extending our dominion over the whole area of consciousness. We must recover control over the subconscious, which now acts almost wholly independent of our volition; and we must lay hold of the superconscious. The subconscious mind is seated in all the nerve ganglia of the body and we govern it by regulating our sense-reactions. No impression can enter through our sense-gates except by our consent. It is we who record our sensations, they do not record themselves. A picture may form on our retina, but if we block the perceptive organ behind, we shall see nothing; or if we look at it, yet check the reaction of the nerve, there will be no reflex motion. The same is true of sound. Usually when a noise disturbs us, we fix our attention upon it and increase its power tenfold. If, on the contrary, we withdrew our attention and turned it resolutely elsewhere, we would soon cease to hear it.

By the same method we can rise above pain or any distracting sensation. We have a striking example of this when we are deeply absorbed in a book or swept by some strong emotion. Often people who have been unable to move a limb without acute suffering have been known to run from a burning building without the least feeling of discomfort. The man who is completely master of his subconscious mind sees, hears, feels only what he chooses. Every sensation and its corresponding reflex action are entirely under the command of his will.

The preliminary steps in meditation, such as the practice of posture and breath-control, have as their aim the release of the subconscious faculties. Until they are wholly free from distraction, we shall find it difficult to withdraw into the inner recesses of our being. The next step is the subjugation of the conscious mind. With nearly everyone this is now weak because it is used only in fragments. Very few can put the whole of it into any one mental or physical act. Hence the need of concentration. So long as one filament hangs loose, catching at chance objects, there cannot be an even united flow of thought and no meditation is possible. When, however, perfect stillness of body and mind frees the entire stream of consciousness, the momentum gained is so great that it quickly carries us into *Samadhi* or superconsciousness. Gradually with the increase of *Sattwa* in our nature, the meditative state will become habitual; then, however incessant the outer demands upon us, our thought will remain in unbroken contact with the Divine.

It is not by changing our life, but by infusing into it this quality of light and serenity that we shall become spiritual. Our inclinations, however, are not a safe guide in doing this. On the contrary they will unfailingly mislead us. When we are in a state of *Tamas* or lethargy, through despondency or

discouragement, our desire will be to lie down or sit idly brooding. What we should do is to keep steadily active until the heaviness is worked off. That is the secret of travel as a remedy for grief or melancholy. When on the other hand we are over-nervous, our craving will be for excitement, change, a multiplication of engagements and duties. Persons of this temperament should seek in every way to simplify their life and leave many spaces in their daily routine. Whenever we find ourselves hurrying unduly, it is an excellent exercise to sit down, close the eyes, fold the hands, and swing to the central point of stillness, if only for a moment. No time will be lost; the poise gained will enable us to save that and many more minutes. The same remedy may be applied when we observe that we are moving noisily, overturning and breaking, or growing impatient and irritable. It indicates that there is too much *Rajas* in our system and we should check it by a voluntary exercise in quietness. The practice, advised in Karma-Yoga, of pausing for a Godward thought before each undertaking is a great corrective for nervous over-activity.

We may not derive the same immediate satisfaction in adopting this course that we gain from following our present natural tendencies; but all education consists in deflecting the thought into higher channels, and it is as important to cultivate a taste for the right state of body and mind as for good art, good music or good literature. Also in the training of children, an understanding of these three *Gunās* or qualities will prove invaluable, for by a counteracting choice of play-mates, games, books and studies we can gently modify their nature and save them many later struggles. No one who has experienced the deep delight of the state of *Sattwa* or illumination, when the whole organism is in perfect balance, every fibre charged with subtle power, can doubt the blessing of it.

The very body becomes transformed and luminous. This is the reason for painting the Saints and Saviours with a halo or nimbus. An effulgence actually emanates from them, which is perceptible to those "who have eyes to see." But it is not their peculiar property. All men may possess it. When through meditation and steadfast practice the whole consciousness has been purified and lifted, it becomes as a radiant path along which every living being may travel to the loftiest heights of God-Vision.

In the presence of that Light one becomes such, that never could one consent to turn from it to any other sight. Because the Good is therein wholly gathered.

Dante.

THE INNER VISION.

Bengalee Hymn.

O my mind, meditate thou upon the Lord, the Essence of Spirit, upon Him who is spotless and free from taint.

Unequalled is His Glory, of untold charm is His form; dear is He ever to the hearts of His devotees.

Behold, His Beauty grows in wonder by fresh outpourings of Love! It putteth in the shade the lustre of a million moons! Verily, the lightning flasheth out from His Radiant Beauty and the Blessed Vision filleth the soul with delight.

Worship His Holy Feet on the lotus of thy heart.

Gaze upon the Blessed Form of matchless beauty, while thy thought is at peace and thine eyes quickened by Love Divine.

Inspired by pure Love, be immersed, O my mind, in the sweetness of Him who is the Fountain of Absolute Intelligence and Bliss.

AIDS TO MEDITATION.

Class Talk by Swami Paramananda.

Before we can take up any spiritual practice the mind must become well established in the fundamental ethical principles, such as non-injuring, non-stealing, truthfulness, continence, external and internal purity, contentment, control of the senses, study of the Scriptures and self-surrender. This means that we must not give way to jealousy, anger, hatred or unkindness by thought, word or action; we must not covet or envy; we must speak the truth fearlessly; we must observe chastity, inner and outer cleanliness and self-restraint; and we must be faithful in our higher study and in devotion to our Ideal. Until these are firmly fixed in the heart, no amount of outer practice can help us; for the foundation must be right before we can construct a solid building, and the building of our character or spiritual structure can never be solid unless we are well grounded in these moral qualities. They are also essential to tranquillity of mind, for unless we can look within and find ourselves above reproach, we can never enjoy peace or serenity. Christ said: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." If we have anything in our life that is not in accordance with our spiritual principles, no amount of sitting still and trying to meditate will bring us the blessing of contemplation.

The next step is the practice of posture; that is, one must learn to sit properly. You may ask: "What can that have to do with our spiritual progress?" We imagine that we can sit in any way we wish, but that is not true. Unless the mind is balanced, we cannot sit still even for a few seconds; also if our body is not in a good condition the mind

cannot help thinking of it and it is difficult for it to gain absolute tranquillity. The idea of posture, therefore, is to acquire firmness of both mind and body. We learn to sit in a manner in which we are less conscious of our physical existence, thus our mind is not dragged down by the weight of the body and it more easily grows calm. One who has not proper control over his body cannot make proper use of his mind, he can never concentrate—much less can he meditate. A man who lacks mastery over the physical organism cannot possibly gain spiritual consciousness; hence the need to practise posture.

In the beginning we may have to force the body to be still. We do this by making up our mind that for a certain length of time we shall hold our body in a certain position with balance and stability. By doing this from day to day we overcome physical restlessness as well as physical lethargy. How often we feel overpowered by our bodily conditions, the body does not want to do a thing and at once we yield. Perhaps it does not feel well and so we sacrifice our spiritual study. This means that the body is proving its supremacy over the mind, which should never be. The practice of posture will help us to gain control of the body so that it will not interfere with our mind, and we can become less conscious of our physical and more conscious of our spiritual nature. The chief suggestion with regard to posture is to hold the spinal column in an easy, erect position, for we find that most of the conditions of ill-health arise from disorders in the spinal column. The flow of the life-force or *Prana* and the breath also have much to do with the position of the spine. Unless it is properly held, neither the breathing nor the circulation of the nerve currents can be normal. There are people who are not used to sitting straight and at first it will be very difficult for them; but after a little effort it will become easy and

natural and then the mind will have greater freedom to think. When we have learned to hold ourselves in an erect, easy, natural way, the mind will be able to go upward. As long as the body keeps moving we cannot focus and elevate our thought. We know that a telescope needs to be steady before we can focus the lens and observe the stars or planets; similarly these instruments of body and mind must be steady before we can have clear inner vision. *Asana* or posture means a steadfast feeling. We feel no wavering anywhere; our body is well established, our mind is well established, neither can drag us down, so we acquire a state of perfect equilibrium.

Breath is the next thing to be considered. "What can breath have to do with our spiritual development?" you may ask again. Breath is life. It is the medium through which the life current flows into us, permeating our whole being and sustaining us. We know that a person has ceased to live, that the life current is no longer working in him when he has lost the power to breathe, and we say that "he has breathed his last." Now we breathe automatically, involuntarily, unconsciously; we must learn to breathe consciously, properly and rhythmically. Through breath alone we can create such a rhythm within the body that it will restore health. *Pranayama* means controlling the life-force by controlling the breath. When we understand how to do this, we can fill ourselves with *Prana* or life-force and eliminate all impurities. We all breathe, but we do not derive the proper benefit from our breathing. This is because we do not consciously regulate our breath. Breath is controlled by thought. If we observe, we shall see that whenever our mind is very restless, our breathing becomes irregular. Also when the body is ill, the breath becomes disordered. It is because we have lost the rhythm, everything is thrown out of balance and the result is

a disturbance in both our physical and mental health. To avoid this, the Yogis tell us to cultivate the habit of rhythmic breathing and this will enable us to store up the vital energy we have within us. When our inhaling and exhaling become even, it affects us just like a musical rhythm, creating harmony throughout our system.

After these preparatory steps, the next is to make the mind introspective. It is all very well to have someone tell us to look within, that only there shall we realize the Truth; but how to go within? We cannot do it suddenly, because of the hold the body has over us. Our mind also is divided and claimed by many things. To detach ourselves from our bodily conditions and make our mind one-pointed requires a long struggle. Sometimes we grow discouraged and want to give up; but those are the moments when we must hold firmly and not let our spirit be depressed or allow ourselves to fall back. Arjuna says to Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: "How can I ever expect to realize these wonderful truths when the mind is so fickle, unyielding and turbulent?"; and Sri Krishna replies: "Do not be depressed; even this mind which seems so unyielding and difficult to subdue, will become your slave through constant practice of dispassion and discrimination." Intensity of purpose is what brings concentration. When we really feel devoted to an Ideal, then nothing can hold us back; we shall surmount every difficulty. At first we may have to make a great effort, but if we really yearn for spiritual things, our mind will naturally become single. Singleness is what we want. The ideal of Yoga and of all philosophy and religion is to make the mind single, the heart single, the purpose single; for all Sages and Seers recognize that in this singleness lies the whole secret of realization. Christ says that the eye and heart must be single before we can see God or Truth.

Holding the mind to one point means controlling all the

waves or modifications which rise on its surface. You know that in order to put a thread through the eye of a needle, you have to twist the thread into a point; if you do not, it is a difficult task to put it through. Similarly the mind which has become divided through its varied interests must be made single before it can penetrate into the depths of our being. This does not necessarily mean that we cannot take interest in other things, that we must give up everything; singleness means that whatever we undertake we are able to put our whole force into it, and through this concentrated energy we see more clearly and accomplish things more quickly. Concentrating our mind on ordinary external objects, however, gives us only limited results; but when we can direct our thought on inner spiritual objects:—on infinite strength, infinite wisdom, infinite love or purity; on the effulgent flame of life seated in the heart; on anything through which the current of Divine life is running; we find that our mind becomes quickened, all its latent qualities are awakened. The mind takes the color of whatever it dwells upon and by bringing it in contact with spiritual things it becomes purified and strengthened.

We must not think that the aim of these spiritual practices is to gain a little bit of physical health or a little bit of mental power; their main object is to make the soul free. Freedom means completeness, no lack anywhere—no lack of knowledge, no lack of power, no lack of anything. Before we can realize this and release the soul from bondage, we must go through certain practices in order to form fixed spiritual habits and entirely wipe out past impressions. We have to choose the ideal upon which to concentrate according to our own individual need or inclination. One cannot go contrary to his natural spiritual instinct. Whether we recognize it or not, we have within ourselves a spiritual instinct just as

we have a physical instinct, and this spiritual instinct must be our guide in choosing our Ideal. Having chosen, we must follow this Ideal in spite of failures, in spite of obstructions in the way; day by day we must hold it before us; and if we forget it we must bring our mind back to it. In this way the mind grows unwavering and one-pointed, we can easily follow a thought without interruption and meditation becomes possible.

No one else can give us an adequate idea of what meditation is, of the value or the ecstasy of it; we can never know until we ourselves taste it. Then only does the soul become wakeful, become itself, enter into its own element. Why is it we suffer? Because we come in contact with so many things that are not in harmony with our real nature. Meditation eliminates all such foreign elements from our thoughts. But this practice of exclusion is not to make us more narrow and bound, but to help us collect our forces. Whenever we have an unusual task we always try to store up our energies and have a reserve to call upon. So before we undertake the practice of meditation, we must have so collected and stored our forces that we shall not be wanting in strength, either physically or mentally. Often people fail to realize a desired end because of the lack of collectedness in body and mind. So Patanjali, the great teacher of Yoga, tells us that we must protect ourselves from the very outset. If we neglect to make the foundation strong, the superstructure cannot be satisfactory. Many people do not gain spiritual vision because they have not paid proper attention to the preliminary stages. When we are well established in our first practices, then the other things will come naturally. This higher study not only deals with the spiritual nature, it also deals with our human nature. We must discipline and gain mastery over the whole of our being. But we must do everything gradually. This is one of the great things we must bear in mind. We must not be im-

patient and overdo. What we need in all practice is moderation ; then we shall go steadily forward, doing each day a little more according to our capacity. We must not put too much pressure either on our body or mind ; but if we are patient and persevering, soon we shall find that things which seemed impossible to conquer have been conquered.

This life is not a matter of a few seconds. It did not spring just from this little beginning ; it has had a past and it will have a future, so there is no need for undue hurry. If we have imperfections, we can overcome them ; and whatever virtues we possess, we did something to earn them and we can earn more. Understanding this, we should strive to take up these practices and do them with perseverance and an undepressed heart ; then we shall gradually overcome all obstacles and our mind will grow so powerful that it will never give up. One little glimpse of higher things, one little proof will strengthen our faith on our journey. First we hear about a thing ; then we reflect ; and after thinking and reasoning, a flash of light comes and proves to us that what we heard is true. Just one little flash is enough to give us confidence to go on ; then comes another and then another, until at last the whole truth shines. That is the result of meditation. At first it comes only once in a while. One day perhaps we feel a great calm, a great sense of illumination, then it disappears. Again we persevere and again it comes and remains a little longer. So we go on forming the habit until some day it comes and stays with us. But this is only possible through habitual meditation. To make it a permanent factor in our life we must practise steadily.

During thirty years I sought for God, and when at the end of that time I opened my eyes, I found that He was seeking me.

Bayazid Bistami.

**FROM THE MAITRAYANA—BRAHMANA—
UPANISHAD.**

As birds and deer do not approach a burning mountain, so evil never approaches those who know Brahman (the Supreme.)

When he who knows has restrained his mind and placed all sense objects far from him, then let him remain without forming conceptions.

What is without thought, though in the centre of thought, what cannot be thought, the hidden, the highest,—let a man merge his thought there; then will this living being be free from attachment.

And when, after the cessation of all mental activity, he sees his own Higher Self, smaller than small and shining, as (one with) The Highest Self, then he becomes selfless, and because he is selfless he is without limit, without cause, absorbed in thought. This is final liberation.

Through the serenity of the thought he kills all (the bondage of) actions, good or bad. His Self serene, abiding in the (Supreme) Self, obtains imperishable bliss.

Meditation should be directed to the Highest Being within; thence the indistinct understanding becomes distinct.

And when the activities of the mind are dissolved, then (is known) that bliss which requires no other witness; that is the Supreme, the Immortal, the Shining One; that is the way, that is the true world.

The shrine which consists of the ether in the heart, the blissful, the highest retreat: that is our own, that is our goal.

After having left behind the body, the organs of sense and the objects of sense; and having seized the bow whose stick is fortitude and whose string is self-discipline; having struck down also this first guardian of the door of Brahman with the arrow which consists of freedom from egotism (for

if man looks at the world egotistically, then taking the diadem of passion, the earrings of greed and envy and the staff of sloth, sleep and sin, and having seized the bow whose string is anger and whose stick is lust, he destroys all beings with the arrow which consists of evil desire)—having therefore killed that guardian, he crosses by means of the *Om* (repetition of the Sacred Name) to the other side of the ether within the heart; and when the ether becomes revealed, he enters slowly, as a miner seeking minerals in a mine, into the Hall of the Supreme. After that let him by means of the instruction of his teacher, break through the shrine of Brahman, which consists of the four nets (food, breath, mind and relative knowledge), until he reaches the last shrine, that of blessedness and identity with God. Thenceforth pure, clean, tranquil, breathless, bodiless, endless, imperishable, firm, everlasting, birthless, independent, he stands on his own greatness, and having seen the Self in its own greatness, he looks on the wheel of the world as one who has alighted from a chariot looks on its revolving wheel.

REPORT.

Swami Paramananda will leave Los Angeles on March 20th and it is expected he will arrive in Boston on the 24th. He will conduct the Sunday Services on the 25th and all the usual meetings thereafter. During his mid-winter season in Los Angeles he gave a successful course of public lectures and held regular Sunday Services and weekly classes at The Vedanta Centre there. These will still be continued by the Sister in residence.

A new and thoroughly revised edition of "Vedanta in Practice" by Swami Paramananda is now in press and will probably be ready before the end of the month. This book presents the practical side of the teaching and is specially useful to those who are beginning the study of it.

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APRIL 1917

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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VOL. VI.

APRIL, 1917.

No. 4.

RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY.

Easter Address by Swami Paramananda.

Know That to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can ever cause the destruction of the Soul who abides within, the Immutable. This body has beginning and end, but the Dweller within this body is deathless. Therefore he who regards the indwelling Soul as perishable does not know its true nature. It is not born nor does it ever die, nor after existing for a time does it go into non-existence. It is unborn and eternal. Though the body may change and perish, the Soul is undying and unchanging. He who knows such to be the nature of the Soul, how can he grieve about anything! Why should he lament over passing conditions, since they do not touch the Soul? As one casts off worn-out garments and puts on new ones, similarly the Soul, casting off worn-out bodies, takes fresher ones for its use. It is not to be pierced by the sword, it cannot be burned by fire, it cannot be wet by water, nor can air dry it. It is impenetrable and indestructible. Knowing this, why should one fear death? All bodies are perishable, but the Dweller within is imperishable; therefore the wise man never grieves or fears.

Thus have the Indo-Aryan Sages and Seers sung regarding the true nature of the Soul. But no amount of mere hearing can convince us, not until we have had a practical proof that

the Soul survives bodily death shall we truly believe. And that is why a Christ must come and rise from the dead to show us that death cannot destroy the True, the Real. Unless man can see this face to face, unless he can have it actually demonstrated, he doubts again and again; and even after he sees, he often forgets. For that reason we have, in all countries and among all religions, certain figures who stand out as having survived death and thus given tangible proof of their immortal nature. The idea of rising from the dead does not appear for the first time in the Christ life. Indian history contains many instances of Saints and Sages who were often seen after they had departed from this body. It is a very old conception and it goes hand in hand with the conception of the immortality of the Soul.

Although, however, there may have been rare instances of Incarnate Teachers actually rising and reassuming the use of their physical bodies, this was possible only because the body had been so spiritualized and brought into such perfect harmony with the Soul that it was no longer subject to the laws governing gross matter. But this cannot apply to the ordinary human being, whose spiritual nature is unawakened and whose body is dense and under the laws of the physical plane. Those, therefore, who interpret the "resurrection of the body" to mean that man will rise as a man of flesh are destined to disappointment; for that idea cannot stand the test of science, logic, or true religion. The body is a composition of material particles and all things that are composed must sooner or later be dissolved; but within this gross body there is another known as the spiritual body, which physical death cannot destroy. When the Soul departs from the physical body, it takes with it this subtle body, which according to Indian psychology consists of *Manas* (mind), *Buddhi* (intellect or reason) and *Ahamkara* (ego). It is this body which rises

from the dead, hence man should strive to know this subtle principle of his being and learn to identify himself with this rather than with his outer form.

In the early stages of our Soul evolution, it is difficult for us to separate our spiritual life from our physical life. Even when we seek spiritual consciousness, it is in order to demonstrate something through the body and for the benefit of the body. But this body is only the dwelling-place of Something more vital, and until we gain knowledge of That, we cannot know the true use and purpose of life. We must not let our consciousness be buried in the grave of matter. It should rather rest in that Higher Principle within man which is indestructible. We are told this again and again, yet when death comes we shudder before it. What is the cause of all such fear? False perception, ignorance. Our life is centred in the body, and our bodily consciousness so overpowers our spiritual nature that we cannot imagine the existence of anything apart from our physical being. True resurrection means rising out of this grave of ignorance before we are separated from this body. When we have had even a glimpse of our True Self, then death can never again touch us. Christ manifested this. He was so convinced of the immortality of His Soul that He had no fear when death confronted Him. Death, from which every created being instinctively shrinks, He embraced easily, because He knew that for the real man dying was no more than a change of garment. The outer garment might fall, but the inner garment of the Soul could not be destroyed on the cross. Knowing this, he did not try to escape from what we call death. We find the same thing in the lives of other great Teachers,—Socrates, for example. Having absolute faith in his immortal nature and in that subtle body which does not perish with physical death, he was most willing to give up this coarser garment of flesh.

Until we are in the same way conscious of a spiritual body within us, we cannot transcend the grave. Do not think that all people will rise from the tomb at the Day of Judgment, as it is generally believed. Only those who have a clear conception of their spiritual Self rise, but others who cling to matter do not. They will remain bound by their self-created chains until the beginning of a new cycle, when they will take up again the thread of life and continue their evolution. You have heard also of earth-bound spirits. No supernatural power holds them to this plane; it is their own ignorance. The physical body seems the only real thing to them; and even after they are forced by death to leave it, they still cling to it. But nothing they can do will change its perishable nature, and when the Soul cannot detach itself, it suffers untold miseries. That which is unreal will always remain unreal; that which is fleeting can never become everlasting; merely because man takes one thing for another and gives a wrong name to it cannot alter the truth.

This Easter feast teaches us a wonderful lesson. It is celebrated in almost every country. Others may not call it by the same name, but everywhere it is a feast signifying resurrection or the coming of new life. As nature bursts forth into blossom after the long dead winter, similarly man must rise with fresh vigor and strive to manifest new life. All such festivals are symbolic. If we do not understand their real significance and merely observe them by dressing the body in fresh garments and attending a religious service, we miss their purpose. It is true that this body is the temple of God, and because it is the temple of the Infinite, Indestructible, Immortal Self, we must cherish and care for it. Fresh outer garments and freshness in external environment no doubt help in giving us a fresh impetus to spiritual growth, and so far they are good. But we should not forget the deeper meaning of these feast

days. What is the real lesson that Christ by his rising sought to teach? That man, the true man, is the son of God; hence he is immortal, indestructible, and he must prove it by transcending death. Our consciousness is now buried in our material interests; we must dig down beneath this physical life until we touch our spiritual nature and let that blossom forth. Such is the true lesson of Easter. It comes anew each year to remind us that we must not cling to this life which is so perishable, but we must gain a consciousness of that within us which survives all bodily dissolution. The Aryan Sages deny death. They declare to all men: "Children of Immortal Bliss, why have you forgotten your Divine nature? Do not remain buried in ignorance. Follow the path, realize your true Self, and you will find Everlasting Life."

No one can give us immortality; we must attain it for ourselves. If we always worship Mammon and cherish the body, forsaking the Soul, what have we? We may gain the wealth of this entire universe, but it will dwindle into nothingness unless we have possession of the God-part in us. It is the Infinite that we must try to inherit. We are by birthright heirs to that Infinite, but we do not know it. Why? Because our mind has become so enshrouded in matter that Soul consciousness is for us an alien consciousness. Yet only when we are sincerely striving for spiritual consciousness do we truly live the spiritual life. It does not matter how many times we fall, God knows our heart, and He rewards us according to the spirit within us. If our spirit is earnest and full of yearning, He will give us all that we need for our highest growth. The spiritual life must be lived side by side with our material life. We should never set aside our Soul, for our condition here and hereafter is wholly according to our spiritual unfoldment. All people do not meet the same end. There are some who rise above death here in this body, and there are others who cannot

sever themselves from their bodily consciousness even after they have entered the grave. It is most important for us to detach ourselves from this clinging to matter before we die. If there is any spiritual freedom or real happiness to come after death, we should try to make it ours here and now.

It is not true that after this life we shall find eternal life. Life is eternal now. Immortality does not begin after the grave. Then you may say, "What is the need of struggling for it?" Because, unless we free our mind while we are living here and make it a true instrument with which to gain God-Vision, it will prove a drawback to us after death. We must realize the existence of our subtle body in this life. The ordinary body must die, because it is a combination of earth, water, ether, air and fire; and these elements, now held together by the Soul, fall apart when it is gone. But that other subtle body is less destructible, because it is nearer the effulgent Spirit of man and the effulgent Spirit of man is part of God. Man does not need to go outside to find Godhood; on the contrary, he can never perceive the Divine in the external until he has seen It within himself. There are many ways by which we can purify our hearts and thus revive the Spirit of God within us. Service, self-abnegation, meditation, one-pointed devotion to an Ideal all help. Actually we are struggling every minute to manifest this Divine Spirit, but we go in the wrong direction. We cling to mere shadows, for this phenomenal world is full of shadows; and the result is painful, because the shadows must vanish. Let us find the Real! This is the mission of Christ and of all great Saviours or Seers—to show us the Real, to help us believe in a world which is invisible to us in our days of ignorance, and to make that world real to us, that we may enjoy the bliss of God-consciousness while still in the body. May the Spirit of Christ, of Buddha, of all the Great Ones inspire us to realize our immortal birthright here and now! Such is the earnest prayer of my heart.

HEAVEN AND TRUE HAPPINESS.*Class Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda.*

Whenever any exertion is made the end is happiness. Happiness is the goal of all living beings, animals and men. But the ordinary happiness of the world will never satisfy man. Nowhere in creation can he find lasting satisfaction, not even if he rises to the highest Heaven. Only when he has gone beyond all the Heavens can he hope to escape from the revolving wheel of birth and death. What is Heaven? It is not a place where man realizes his perfect nature. My Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to tell us that there are chains of iron and chains of gold, but both are chains and bind. Heaven is the chain of gold which binds man and does not allow him true freedom in any way. Yet when man puts the question to himself whether he wants to be a slave or to be free, the answer always comes that he wants to be free. A slave is never happy, for at every moment he is at the command of the master; and just when he is enjoying most, he may be called away to do something else. But if we are not free in Heaven, why should we seek it? Is there no other way that we can find freedom? Vedanta says "Yes"; and it shows us how we may attain, not an impermanent Heaven, but everlasting blissfulness.

Sense pleasure, even the highest, can never be eternal, because all the senses are perishable. For this reason pleasures that come through the senses are invariably accompanied by fear of loss and that prevents real enjoyment. Man runs after sense pleasure because he does not know that he has within himself all happiness. His desire is based on ignorance and whatever is based on ignorance we should avoid. If we study the different descriptions of Heaven, we readily see that it is only a place of continued festivities or enjoyments. Therefore Heaven should never be our ideal, for the Scriptures tell us that we must overcome all desire for enjoyment, whether in

this world or the next. Salvation does not consist in going to Heaven. It consists in realizing that "I am God's child," if I am a dualist; or that "I am one with God," if I am a monist. So long as happiness is sought in that which perishes, it will never be found. Happiness is in you. You take a sweetmeat because you think that in eating it you will be happy; yet the enjoyment that comes from it is not in it, but in you. You seek that which harmonizes with your nature; you try to avoid that which does not harmonize. When you find something that harmonizes, you say you are happy; when you come in contact with something that does not harmonize, you feel unhappy.

Man is a combination of matter and spirit. Matter, because it is limited and changeable, breeds unhappiness; and when man's material nature asserts itself, he becomes unhappy. When, on the contrary, he is able to detach himself from his material being by discovering his true nature, then matter has no more power over him and nothing can make him unhappy. It was thus that Christ could pray for His enemies when on the cross. Those who reach this state never get angry, they never wish to do harm to anyone; they even regard those who injure them as friends. If you study yourself, you will find that you are naturally happy. It is because you mistake your nature that you become unhappy. Instead of identifying yourself with spirit, you have identified yourself with matter, with your bodily conditions, and for that reason you feel yourself miserable and unfortunate. To save you from this mistake the Great Teachers all try to make you realize that you are pure and perfect.

Man is a curious mixture and this is the cause of the many struggles through which he has to pass. If you put a lion and a bull in the same cage—the one carnivorous, the other herbivorous—they will fight until one or the other is killed. So

the lion and the bull in man make constant strife, which will only end when spirit has completely overcome matter. When man will free himself entirely from the thralldom of body and mind, then alone will he know true happiness. Nothing in the universe will ever be able to shake him then, because he will have risen above fear and desire. How many gallons of water are poured into the ocean in a day, yet it remains the same. So no matter how many bow down before such a man, no matter how many may persecute him, it will make no impression on him; he will remain unmoved.

In order to attain this state, you must practise self-purification. By discrimination you must distinguish the real from the unreal. You must not be credulous. You must examine and analyze for yourself and separate right from wrong. Then you must take the right and throw away the wrong. If you will observe the world and yourself, you will find out that all is constantly changing, even your body and mind. The body changes perceptibly, mind also; but you do not change. When you look within, you see that the "I" who was a schoolboy, then a youth, then a man, has not changed; so you have come to know that whereas the body's nature changes and the mind's nature, your nature does not change. Thus by careful observation you learn that you are the only changeless entity in all this changing world. So long, however, as you identify yourself with the body and mind, you must also change; because through this identification you have become one with the world, the mind and the body.

Your duty is to realize through discrimination that you are above change, above death, indestructible; for by doing this you will attain freedom. Freedom is your home towards which you have been struggling through many lives. But as when a man wishes to make a railway journey, he must have money to pay for his ticket; so when you would go to this

home, you must have six sorts of wealth or practise six kinds of purification. You must learn to control the senses and the mind; you must be willing to be ill-treated, villified, persecuted; you must not covet enjoyment and you must have unwavering faith and be steadfast in devotion. By these means you will surely reach the goal. We all have within us the power to discriminate between what will bring happiness and what will bring misery; and this power is the only thing worth having. If a man has wealth and has not discrimination, he will not know how to spend his money intelligently and it may only make him miserable. If a man has learning and lacks discrimination, he will not know how to use his knowledge wisely. But if a man has the discriminative faculty and nothing else, he is still the most fortunate of men, because through it he may attain the loftiest ends.

Buddha's renunciation was the result of the highest discrimination. He found that to go out of the world brought the truest happiness. When He discovered that this earthly life was beset with miseries, disease and death, He said: "Better no life at all than such a life. If life means something which continues in misery to ultimately end in death, rather let me throw such a life away." It was because He had realized the hollowness and transitoriness of worldly joys that He was able to give up His kingdom and become a mendicant. He could no longer rest satisfied in His palace. Earthly power and wealth meant nothing to him. He preferred to go out and seek the higher power, enduring hunger, thirst, privations of every kind to gain His end. Nothing could shake Him, because He was determined to know the Truth. It only shows that man can do anything, if only he has sufficient determination. During that night of final struggle, in the first part Mara tried to terrify Him; in the second part he appealed to His softer nature by assuming the form of His weeping father,

His weeping wife, His helpless child; in the third part He passed through all the Heavens and was offered all the powers, but He threw them all aside. Then He went to *Brahma-loka* or the highest Heaven, and in the last part of the night He attained *Nirvana* or complete illumination.

How was He able to remain firm through all these temptations? Because He never lost His power of discrimination; He never mistook the unreal for the real. Even the delights of the highest Heaven did not turn Him away from His desire to know the Truth. As long as we work for any reward whatever, even to go to Heaven, we cannot attain freedom, for we are still under the sway of ego. But if we can realize that God is all in all and everything else is nothing, then liberation comes easily. For what keeps us from seeing God? Our ego. Egotism is the real hell-fire. The more we can minimize it, the nearer we shall approach the goal. If we can throw it away altogether, then freedom is ours. Therefore the more we can fix our mind on God and forget ourselves and our little desires for enjoyment either here or hereafter, the more quickly shall we reach freedom. There are two ways of going to Heaven; the one is by death, the other by spiritual realization. A man both by living and by dying can go to Heaven. As the ripe cocoanut separates itself from the shell, so if we can learn the secret of separating our Divine Self from all bodily attachments and selfish desires, then we can realize the highest Heaven even in this life.

We make for ourselves our own spiritual world, our own monsters, chimeras, angels. All is marvellous for the poet, all is divine for the saint, all is great for the hero, all is wretched, miserable, ugly and evil for the base and sordid soul.

—Amiel.

THE JOY OF GOD-UNION.

Parable by Meister Eckhart.

There was a learned scholar who eight years long desired that God would show him a man who would teach him the Truth. And once when he felt a very great yearning, a voice from God came to him and said: "Go to the church and there shalt thou find a man who will show thee the way to blessedness." And he went and found a poor man whose feet were torn and covered with dust and dirt; and all his clothes were hardly worth three farthings. And he greeted him, saying:

"God give you good day!"

He answered: "I have never had a bad day."

"God give you good luck."

"I have never had ill luck."

"May you be happy! But why do you answer me thus?"

"I have never been unhappy."

"Pray explain this to me, for I cannot understand it."

The poor man answered: "Willingly. You wished me good day. I never had a bad day; for if I am hungry, I praise God; if it freezes, hails, snows, rains, if the weather is fair or foul, still I praise God; am I wretched and despised, I praise God; and so I have never had an evil day. You wished that God would send me luck. But I never had ill luck, for I know how to live with God, and I know that what He does is best; and what God gives me or ordains for me, be it good or ill, I take it cheerfully from God as the best that can be, and so I never have had ill luck. You wished that God would make me happy. I never was unhappy; for my only desire is to live in God's will, and I have so entirely yielded my will to God's will that what God wills, I will."

"But if God should will to cast you into hell," said the learned man, "what would you do then?"

"Cast me into hell? His Goodness forbids! But if He did

cast me into hell, I should have two arms to embrace Him. One arm is true humility; that I should lay beneath Him and be thereby united to His holy humanity. And with the right arm of love, which is united with His holy Divinity, I should so embrace Him that He would have to go to hell with me. And I would rather be in hell and have God, than in Heaven and not have God."

Then the master understood that true abandonment with utter humility is the nearest way to God.

The master asked further: "Whence are you come?"

"From God."

"Where did you find God?"

"When I forsook all creatures."

"Where have you left God?"

"In pure hearts and in men of good will."

The master asked: "What sort of man are you?"

"I am a king."

"Where is your kingdom?"

"My Soul is my kingdom, for I can so rule my senses, inward and outward, that all the desires and powers of my Soul are in subjection; and this kingdom is greater than a kingdom on earth."

"What brought you to this perfection?"

"My silence, my high thoughts, and my union with God. For I could not rest in anything that was less than God. Now I have found God, and in God have eternal rest and peace."

My heart is filled with devotion to Thee, O Sovereign Lord! Do Thou grant me such understanding, that I may be able to offer at Thy Feet my humble praise. Thou abidest in all, Thou art all, Thou assumest all Forms; all are from Thee, hence Thou art all, the Soul of all. Glory unto Thee, the Lord of all beings.

—*Srimad-Bhagavata.*

THE NECESSITY OF REINCARNATION.

Modern Science postulates the existence of the three ultimate inter-related principles of matter, energy and consciousness. It has also steadily moved towards the conclusion that these three are merely different manifestations of one fundamental reality. And since it has come to recognize that matter and energy are both immortal and indestructible, it is practically driven to acknowledge that the same is true of consciousness. The Vedanta Philosophy has from the outset maintained that there subsists in every form of manifested life an intelligent, immortal entity, which it calls the *Jiva* or individual Soul. This Soul, while capable of self-conscious development and final union with the Absolute, by its own ignorant deeds has become entangled in a continuous cycle of birth, action and death, from which knowledge alone can free it; and because one earth-life cannot suffice to gain that knowledge, it must return again and again to learn its lessons. Thus the nature and destiny of the Soul both necessitate Reincarnation.

It is often urged as an insuperable objection against this doctrine that it is not capable of proof; but what greater proof could there be than the fact that of all theories, it gives the simplest and most satisfactory explanation of created life as we see it? How else can we explain the differences in people even of the same family, or the striking dissimilarities between parents and children? Inherited tendencies cannot account for them, because no trace of like gifts is to be found in the preceding generations; or if found, there is nothing to tell us why one child should inherit a gift rather than another. Why at twelve years of age should Pascal have discovered for himself the greater part of Plane Geometry; or whence came the power that enabled the shepherd Mangiamelo to calculate like an arithmetical machine when only five years old? Mozart, we

know, composed an opera at eight; Rembrandt drew like a master before he could read; and Theresa Milanolla played the violin with such skill that Baillot declared she must have played it before she was born. How was such extraordinary efficiency gained, if not from practice in previous lives?

The German Philosopher Lessing in his treatise on "The Divine Education of the Human Race" writes: "The very same way by which the race reaches perfection must every individual man—one sooner, another later—have travelled over. Have travelled over in one and the same life? . . . But why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world? 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 may not even I have already performed those steps of my perfecting which bring men only temporal punishments and rewards? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back? Is this the reason against it? Or because I forgot that I have been here already? Happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And that which even I must forget *now*, is that necessarily forgotten for ever? Or is it a reason against the hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? Lost? And how much then should I miss? Is not a whole Eternity mine?"

Fichte, Herder and others wrote in the same vein. Schopenhauer says: "Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence and enjoys it as a free gift; but there is, and can be, nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen; they are one being." Plato

advances the same idea when he concludes a discussion on Metempsychosis with the words: "It thus appears to us that the living proceed from the dead, no less than the dead from the living"; while Pythagoras declares: "The all was an harmonious whole, an ever-living life, a continuing Palingenesis. All has soul. All is soul, wandering in the organic world and obeying eternal will or law, the recognition and accomplishment of which is the salvation and blessedness of man."

The whole idea of Reincarnation not only hinges on the theory of evolution, but supplies its logical completion. If it takes ages for the development of higher animal forms from lower ones, and if such development of the material frame be indicative of the advance towards perfection of the embodied Soul, then surely the unfoldment of all the soul's moral and spiritual possibilities cannot be effected in one lifetime. The moment we admit this higher evolution, reimbodiment of some kind becomes a necessity; for this short span of life is altogether insufficient for man's higher development. Scarcely indeed does he seem to begin it here. According to Henry Drummond, his evolution is not progress in matter, for matter cannot progress. "It is a progress in spirit, in that which is limitless"; and this requires unlimited opportunity and unlimited experience, hence a multiplicity of lives in which to exhaust the educational possibilities of this plane. It is here that Karma or the Law of Cause and Effect enters in to determine the Soul's course. Since this Law of Causation presides over the economy of the entire universe, it must be the governing principle also in human affairs; and a man's destiny is wholly shaped by the forces which he himself sets in motion. In other words, out of his own thoughts and deeds is spun the thread of his life.

The misery and happiness allotted to him is in exact proportion to his good or evil actions. An inviolable justice rules over

every existence, and whatever inequalities we see in the world are produced not from without, but from within each human being. Solomon evidently recognized this, as also the fact of rebirth, when he wrote in his book of Wisdom: "I was a child of good nature and a good Soul came to me; or rather because I was good, I came into an undefiled body." When we look at the many miseries of mankind, the prosperity of the selfish, the bitter struggles of the deserving, the oppression of the weak, it is often difficult to hold fast to our faith in a moral law. But this scepticism yields to serene confidence, when we realize that this present life is only one of a great chain of lives, in which every individual is gradually going the round of endless experience for a glorious outcome; that the hedging ills of to-day are a consequence of his own acts of yesterday and a step towards the great things of tomorrow. Thus the tangled snare of earthly existence is straightened out and becomes part of a vast, beautiful cosmic scheme. Viewed as a whole the career of the *Jiva* or individual Soul is one continuous evolution onward to the Godhead; all its strivings have only this one conscious or unconscious aim,—to reach and realize Divinity.

As soon as we understand this, the idea of Reincarnation gains a new and vital significance. Surely no other hypothesis furnishes so logical an explanation of the universe; and from whatever standpoint we look at it, we find it difficult to escape from its inevitable operations. If only the mind of the religious thinker and philosopher were as free from prejudices as that of the purely scientific man, and if in religion unbiased Truth were allowed to dominate under all circumstances, then the doctrine of Reincarnation would beyond doubt become universally acceptable and no one would consider it his duty either to uphold or discredit it. As a thoughtful Christian writer maintains: "The ethical leverage of the doctrine is immense.

Its motive power is great; it reveals as magnificent a background to the present life, with its contradictions and its disasters, as the prospect of immortality opens up an illimitable foreground, lengthening out the horizon of hope. It binds together the past and the present and the future in one ethical series of causes and effects, the inner thread of which is both personal to the individual and impersonal, connecting him with two eternities, one behind and the other before. With peculiar emphasis it proclaims the survival of moral individuality and personal identity, along with the final adjustment of external conditions to the internal state of the agent."

BIRTH AND DEATH.

Adapted from the Mahabharata.

There was a certain wise Brahmana who had attained that direct knowledge of all things which Yoga gives. He had mastered the truth regarding pleasure and pain, merit and demerit, birth and death; and understanding this, he was as unattached to all things as the wind. Possessed of perfect tranquillity of heart and with his senses under complete control, he lived like one emancipated from the world. Another Brahmana, Kashyapa by name, having heard of him, desired to see him, and approaching him with dutiful reverence, asked to be instructed by him. The Sage, pleased with his humility and earnestness, one day spoke to him thus:

"By diverse acts and by the aid of merit, mortals attain diverse ends here, as also residence in Heaven. But nowhere is the highest happiness, nowhere can residence be eternal. There are repeated falls from the highest regions, which have been acquired through such bitter striving. Repeatedly have I undergone death and rebirth. I have known many mothers, and many fathers dissimilar to one another. Diverse kinds of

happiness have been mine and diverse kinds of misery. In this world and in the other I have known sore afflictions. But one day, overwhelmed with sorrow, blank despair came upon me. I took refuge in the Formless. I gave up the world with all its joys and sorrows. Perceiving that this was the proper path, I devoted myself to it. Then I attained serenity of heart and gained the knowledge which thou seekest. Now tell me what I can do for thee, for I am much gratified with thy sincere desire for wisdom."

Kashyapa, touching the feet of the Sage, asked: "How does the body dissolve away and how is another acquired? How does one gain emancipation after the long round of rebirths? How does a human being reap the fruits of his good and bad actions?"

Thus urged by Kashyapa, the Sage answered the questions one after another. He said: "Know that the pains of birth and death are equal. The pain felt in casting off the body is like to what is felt in issuing from the womb. When the vital parts are pierced, through acts hostile to life and health, the *Jiva* or individual Soul rising up restrains the life-breath. The man then breathing a long and painful breath, goes out quickly, causing the body to tremble. But as the *Jiva* goes forth, he is surrounded by his good and evil acts, which go with him. Men possessed of the eye of knowledge, behold with spiritual vision the *Jiva* as it leaves the body and as it is reborn. They also perceive whether he is possessed of merit or demerit. It is seen by such illumined Sages that the *Jiva* has three regions assigned to it. This world, where creatures dwell, is called the field of action. In accordance with their good or evil deeds, all embodied creatures earn even here superior and inferior enjoyments. Doers of evil deeds drop to the lower regions, from which escape is difficult, and one should strive hard to save oneself from that misery. The doers of

good deeds ascend from this world to the regions of righteousness. Upon the exhaustion again of their merits, they fall away from those regions. Also there in Heaven itself is distinction of inferior, superior and middling felicity."

The Brahmana continued: "Now let me reveal to you what determines the new birth of the *Jiva*. The acts, good or bad, which he does are not subject to destruction. Upon the attainment of body after body, these acts produce fruits corresponding with them. As a fruit-bearing tree, when the season of productivity comes, yields a large quantity of fruit, so merit achieved with a pure heart yields a large harvest of felicity. In the same manner wicked deeds, done with a sinful heart, produce an abundant harvest of misery. Whatever acts, good or bad, which the *Jiva* has done in a former body, have certainly to be enjoyed or suffered by him. By such enjoyment and endurance former acts are exhausted and other acts again accumulate, till the *Jiva* succeeds in acquiring a knowledge of those spiritual practices which lead to Emancipation.

"A living creature always meets with the acts done by him in a former life. All these acts constitute the cause, in consequence of which he comes into this world in a state different from his true form. But that one who becomes united with the Source of all and who ceases to identify himself with material things, that one, casting off one bondage after another, gradually frees himself from all fetters."

There is no chance, and no anarchy, in the universe. All is system and gradation. Every god is there, sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there, he is alone with them alone; they pouring on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to their thrones. On the instant, and incessantly, fall snow-storms of illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that,

and whose movements and doings he must obey; he fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself? Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. And when by and by, for an instant, the air clears, and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones; they alone, with him alone. — *Emerson.*

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

Of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.

Owing to the absence of Swami Paramananda in January, the Eighth Anniversary of the establishment of The Vedanta Centre of Boston did not take place until the 29th of March.

The exercises consisted in an address by Swami Paramananda; several delightfully rendered harp solos by Miss Hart, a member of the Centre and a professional musician of marked talent; and a learned and impressive address by Mr. John Spencer Clark, which we hope to give at length in the May number of "The Message of the East." With an authority bred of long years of tireless scientific study and deep thought, Mr. Clark laid stress on the value of the Eastern teaching for the Western world, especially in its present state of religious perplexity; and gratefully acknowledged the personal benefit derived from it through his contact with the Centre. A review of the year's work was also given, which in brief ran as follows:

A teaching, like the Vedanta, which upholds no one form of religion, but which proclaims that under all forms lies the same universal Truth, can never tabulate its usefulness in columns of statistics. It works more as an influence than

as an institution, and the results of its labors cover an unseen area that cannot be calculated. In looking back therefore over the Centre's achievement for the past year, we must add to all figures that unmeasured and immeasurable margin. During the twelve months a number of opportunities were given to extend the work and carry the teaching into new fields. A large Congregational Church in East Boston, known as the Maverick Church, invited Swami Paramananda to speak at one of their regular Sunday Evening Services on "The Universal Ideal of Religion." Fully 600 people gathered to hear him and listened with earnest appreciation and surprise to the lofty ideals of India, which had always been represented to them as one of the benighted countries of the world. Later in February the Swami delivered a lecture at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, under the auspices of the College Women's Club.

In June he made a second journey to Los Angeles, in response to urgent and reiterated invitations from those who had followed his lectures and classes there during the previous summer. A course of public lectures, two series of Class Talks and various addresses at outside meetings filled the first ten weeks of his stay and led to the establishment of a regular Vedanta Centre. An excellent house for the purpose was procured in a desirable locality and the definitely constituted work began with a new course of public lectures and weekly classes. Besides these, the Swami also gave a special series of lectures at the residence of Mrs. Marion Craig Wentworth at Santa Barbara. In October the Swami came to Boston for seven weeks and during that interval the meetings in Los Angeles were conducted by one of his assistants. He returned in December for a further season of three months.

Earlier in the year the Branch Centre in Washington arranged for their usual season of classes and lectures under the direction of Sister Devamata. It proved even more successful

than in previous years and bore gratifying testimony to the rapid growth of interest in the teaching. A number of people in Baltimore were also anxious to organize a month of similar work, but the Sister, being forced to return to Boston, was able to give one lecture only. At the Branch Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, a group of earnest students also continued their weekly meetings, striving thereby to keep alive the fire of enthusiasm kindled by the Swami during his visits there prior to the outbreak of the war.

At the Boston Centre the work was carried on throughout the year without interruption, the two Sunday Services and bi-weekly classes being conducted by Sister Devamata whenever the Swami was absent. The attendance maintained itself with encouraging steadiness and a number of new people affiliated themselves with the work. Besides the usual meetings, there were various special Services and gatherings. The Seventh Anniversary of the Centre's establishment was celebrated on January 5th; Swami Vivekananda's birthday was observed later in the same month, and the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on March 7th. In May the Swami entertained sixty friends and students at a dinner prepared entirely by himself, and in the late autumn he again gave a reception. The Christmastide also was marked by special devotional Services and on Christmas afternoon there was an informal reception and a tree in the Community House.

The department of publication is always one of the most potent factors in widening the field of the Centre's helpfulness. The spoken voice cannot reach beyond the lecture hall or chapel, but the printed page can travel round the world carrying to searching hearts everywhere a new message of hope and unity. This is evident from the records, which show that in 1916 over 1500 books and pamphlets went to India alone, a further number to Australia, to New Zealand, to Switzerland,

and to every part of the United States and Canada. The total number of books and pamphlets sent out from the Centre on order, not including the monthly publication for the year, amounted to over 3500. The number would have been much larger, had not the general conditions been so unfavorable that we are still holding large orders which we consider it unsafe to ship. For the same reason also the production of new works was kept at a minimum. Yet several new titles were added to the Centre's catalogue, and a number of previously published works went through new editions. "The Message of the East" continued to appear regularly, having increased its edition and lengthened its subscription list.

Looking back over the activities of the past year, we find many proofs that the work has gained in strength as well as in recognition; and if the promises of the new year fulfill themselves, there can be no doubt that still larger opportunities stretch out before the Centre.

The exercises closed with a prayer and benediction by the Swami. A pleasant hour of friendly intercourse followed, during which refreshments were served. The spirit of the gathering was one of unusual harmony and many declared it to be the most successful celebration ever given at the Centre.

Swami Paramananda reached Boston on March 17th and conducted the Sunday Services on the 18th. Hereafter he will hold all the Services and Classes.

Sister Devamata will leave for Washington on April 8th. She will remain there for one week only, delivering three public lectures and holding two classes. She will then continue her journey to Los Angeles, where she will assume charge of the work through the spring and early summer months.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East



MAY 1917

Issued by

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\$1.00 A YEAR

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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Israel came from the way of the East"
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"Light shall come again from the East"
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VOL. VI.

MAY, 1917.

No. 5

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

By Swami Paramananda.

Unity in diversity is the plan of creation and harmony in religion consists in finding this unity which underlies all the apparent diversity. Oneness can never be reached by trying to destroy differences and to bring all to one form of faith, although this is the method which has often been taken by certain great religions. Being convinced that theirs is the saving faith, they set out with earnest zeal to convert those who do not believe with them. But this has always resulted in emphasizing the differences rather than in unifying the peoples of the earth. The Indo-Aryans, however, have had from the beginning a different conception of unity and harmony. Their point of view is expressed in an ancient text which runs: "As the different streams, rising from different sources, all flow, crooked or straight, into the one great sea; similarly the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they may appear, all lead to Thee, O Lord." It is this spirit of fundamental sympathy which has made the Indo-Aryan so tolerant towards all forms of religious belief. Would to God that we were all so constituted that we could accept one Ideal! But that is not possible. Although we are all human beings, each one is different from every other; and it is not in accord with nature to expect everyone

to follow our special way of thinking. Such fanatical, exclusive ideas have caused much harm to mankind. They have really checked the growth of civilization, for religion is a great power. It is the most powerful factor in moulding human destiny. Therefore misconception of a religious Ideal can be very dangerous. A person who is tolerant and loving to those of his own faith, if he lacks in understanding and breadth, may become a cruel fanatic when he meets some one with an apparently different idea.

To avoid this we must cultivate a broad view-point; our conception of God must be inclusive, not exclusive. And this is what we find in the ancient Vedic philosophy. "Truth is One; men call It by various names according to their comprehension," is its basic teaching. Just as the same substance water is called by different names in different languages, yet thereby the nature of water is not changed; similarly the Supreme is called by different names in different religions, but they all refer to the same Cosmic Being. If we only grasped this vital truth, there would be great harmony in the world; but this cannot be done merely through theory. We must understand what religion means. Religion means union between the individual Soul and God, and only as we attain unity with God can we hope to realize brotherhood with our fellow beings.

Take the definition of God given in every religion. You will find that they all proclaim that God is Almighty, All-Pervading, Omniscient, All-Merciful. Fundamentally they all agree, yet there is quarrelling and miscomprehension. Wherefrom does it arise? Not from the fundamental principle, but from the form. The masses only see the form, and forms always vary. All great religious Teachers give out the same Truth, but they differ in their form of expression; and those who are narrow-minded and limited in their conception cling

to the outer letter and base their faith on that. This is not the case, however, with people who apply religion and make it a living reality. It is because we fail to live up to our ideals that we see so much diversity. It rests with each individual to bring out the ideal of harmony or by his own limitation to create disharmony.

In the Indian teaching unity is the one dominant note. "Whatever paths men may follow, ultimately they all lead to Me," the Lord declares in one of the Scriptures. This is a very broad saying; but the true spirit of religion must be broad, it must be all-embracing. According to the Vedic conception, God is One Stupendous Whole, One without a second, the Unchanging Reality, the Ultimate Centre towards which all creeds converge. Just as we can reach the top of a tower by different means, by a ladder or a rope or a stairway, so there may be many different forms of religion prescribing different methods, yet all lead to the same Goal. On this broad platform of Truth numberless sects have found room in India. Not only, however, must there be different forms of religious belief to suit the needs of different people, but also with ourselves we find that at different stages of our development we need different religious teaching. Just as the books and toys which appeal to a child mean little to a grown-up man or woman; so as we grow, we gradually change our point of view; but this is no reason for condemning the beliefs we have left behind and which helped us to reach our present stage of development. On the contrary, as we rise higher and higher in our spiritual understanding, we see that from the lowest form of ritualism and symbolism to the most abstract conception of Absolute Truth everything has its place. This is what is meant by seeing unity in diversity. It means expanding, becoming more and more inclusive.

But if there is only one God, why can we not have one:

religion? If God were like a finite human being, we might perhaps confine Him within the limits of some one book or doctrine or dogma; but He is Infinite, and the Infinite can never be limited by any finite name or form. It is because of this that the Sages have described Him as "beyond mind and speech." He cannot be expressed by any one form of religion; He includes all forms, all creeds; and all differences melt away in that One Stupendous Whole. Until we can be tolerant, we shall never understand what God is or what religion means. Nor can we have true brotherly love in our hearts. Only when we have found the One in the midst of the many, and have become united with That, can we feel unity with our fellow-beings. This is the task that lies before us:—to realize that Fundamental Principle of all life and work our way on to complete harmony; for disharmony means weakness, while harmony means strength. We see this in our daily experience. Whenever there is disharmony in our body, we fall ill and suffer; also in human society, which is only a larger body, whenever there is lack of harmony, conflict and unhappiness inevitably follow and growth is checked. It is not that we deliberately try to create discord; but despite all our reasoning we fail in maintaining harmony because our vision is confined to one small part and we do not see the Great Whole.

Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this by a story of some friends who, while resting under a tree in a garden, had seen a chameleon. One declared that it was red; another insisted that it was yellow; a third said it was, not red or yellow, but blue. Thus they began to dispute among themselves. Finally they decided to go to the gardener and refer the matter to him. The man agreed with each one, and they were all much disturbed until he explained that the chameleon was a creature of many colors, sometimes red, sometimes blue, sometimes

yellow and sometimes grey. Similarly the Supreme Deity may appear in numberless aspects; religious discussions arise because we lose sight of His Infinite Nature and try to impose on others our own small finite conception, believing that to be the only correct one. Thus it is that in the name of Christ, who taught love, forgiveness, non-resistance, people have deluged Mother Earth with blood. The fanatics of other religious faiths have also tried to convert by the same method. But what is conversion? If you want to convert anyone to a religion, you must reach his soul, not use physical violence; and you cannot reach his soul until your own soul is enlightened.

Before you can preach or uphold an Ideal, you must make it a part of your being. If you have the Light, then alone can you give light to others; and that is the only true conversion. If people could carry this light of realization everywhere, the world would be transformed; and harmony, tolerance, love would prevail. That other form of conversion, however, which proceeds by denunciation and tries to force people to accept some special creed, can only emphasize differences and create fresh barriers in the way of universal tolerance. Conversion of the soul is a very different thing from converting to a form of faith. The true missionary is one who goes, not to proselytize, but to lend a helping hand; to show the reality of religion by living the life. He tries to lead others along the path that is natural to them; to show them how they may serve more truly their own chosen Ideal. He is careful not to rob them of their religious inheritance or to limit them by condemnation.

There is a Cosmic harmony, but it can never be reached in the external, it is to be found within; and only when our inner nature is unfolded shall we discover it. We must widen our vision. A mind which is limited sees only limitation

everywhere. But an open mind penetrates far down beneath the surface and perceives the common basis of all existence. The idea of religion is not to uphold one thing at the cost of another. It means living the life, learning to feel the reality of God. All forms of religion have their use. They have all sprung up to meet some individual need. Nothing exists without a purpose, and when we understand this we become tolerant. Would to God that more among us would live and not merely theorize! Religion is a matter of realization; it is a matter of actual perception. Let all men gain this reality each by his own method. God is the primary factor, and when He is reached, it matters not by what path, all minor differences will vanish. On this basis alone can we realize true religious harmony.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE HIM.

Song by Kabir.

(Translation by Rabindranath Tagore.)

Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades this world!
 Consider it well, and know that this is your own country.
 When you meet the true Guru, He will awaken your heart;
 He will tell you the secret of love and detachment, and then
 you will know indeed that He transcends this universe.
 This world is the City of Truth, its maze of paths enchants
 the heart;
 We can reach the goal without crossing the road, such is the
 sport unending.
 Where the ring of manifold joys ever dances about Him,
 there is the sport of Eternal Bliss.
 When we know this, then all our receiving and renouncing is
 over;
 Thenceforth the heat of having shall never scorch us more.

He is the Ultimate Rest unbounded :
He has spread His form of love throughout all the world.
From that Ray which is Truth, streams of new forms are perpetually springing ; and He pervades those forms.
All the gardens and groves and bowers are abounding with blossom ; and the air breaks forth into ripples of joy.
There the swan plays a wonderful game,
There the Unstruck Music eddies around the Infinite One ;
There in the midst the Throne of the Unheld is shining,
whereon the Great Being sits—
Millions of suns are shamed by the radiance of a single hair of His body.
On the harp of the road what true melodies are being sounded !
and its notes pierce the heart :
There the Eternal Fountain is playing its endless life-streams of birth and death.
They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of Truths, in Whom all truths are stored !

There within Him creation goes forward, which is beyond all philosophy ; for philosophy cannot attain to Him :
There is an endless world, O my Brother ! and there is the Nameless Being, of whom naught can be said.
Only he knows it who has reached that region ; it is other than all that is heard and said.
No form, no body, no length, no breadth is seen there : how can I tell you that which it is ?
He comes to the Path of the Infinite on whom the grace of the Lord descends : he is freed from births and deaths who attains to Him.
Kabir says : “It cannot be told by the words of the mouth, it cannot be written on paper :
“It is like a dumb person who tastes a sweet thing—how shall it be explained ?”

THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT.

By P. S. Row.

Man is a creature of God and has in him a religious instinct which cannot be shaken off or restrained at will. It is implanted in the human heart and will remain there forever. As Herbert Spencer declares: "Religion is a great reality and a great truth—nothing less than an essential and an indestructible element of human nature." It is a grave error, however, to suppose that in investigating the question of religion we should look to theology alone as the science dealing with it. Religion has to do with human duty; and a knowledge of human duty implies a knowledge of human nature; for to understand what man should do, it is necessary to know what man is. Man is a microcosm in the macrocosm, that is, a small world in a large one. His nature and constitution, if properly analyzed, must then afford the best means of disclosing what his duty is and what his religion is. Man must be studied, therefore, and the universe as well, because the relations of man and the universe, he moves in are so beautifully adapted to each other as to form a harmonious whole.

I know that there are certain religious men who are jealous of the investigations of science concerning man and the material world, as though the bulwarks of religion would be undermined by the progress of scientific enquiry. But there is no ground for such fear. Scientific truth rightly understood is religious truth. Indeed, true science and Divine truth are convertible terms. There are undoubtedly people who do not scruple to use the discoveries of science as weapons with which to attack religion. This mistaken effort on their part arises from the notion that the tendency of science is to do away with the mysteries of creation, and to make the whole intelligible without the necessity of a God and all the binding obligations which the recognition of a God would entail upon

them. But this conception of science is far from correct. Speaking of the ultimate ideas of science, Herbert Spencer says in his *First Principles*: "The explication of that which is explicable does not bring out into greater clearness the inexplicableness of that which remains behind. Objective and subjective things, the man of science ascertains to be alike inscrutable in their substance and genesis. In all directions his investigations eventually bring him face to face with an insoluble enigma. He realizes with a special vividness the utter incomprehensibleness of the simplest fact considered in itself." Professor Tyndall also observes that "the problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in prescientific ages." And he adds further: "I do not think that he (the materialist) is entitled to say that his molecular groupings and motions explain everything. In reality they explain nothing." Haeckel also admits in his *History of Creation* that most naturalists even at the present day are inclined to give up the attempt at a natural explanation of the origin of life, and take refuge in the miracle of inconceivable creation. It will thus be seen that modern scientists have not been able to solve fully the problem of man or the universe. Indeed, it is clear that there is a definite point beyond which they have not advanced and probably cannot advance. They say that matter and energy are sufficient to account for the universe; but "if you ask him (the materialist)" to cite Professor Tyndall again, "whence is the matter of which we have been discoursing, who or what divided it into molecules, who or what impressed upon them the necessity of running into organic forms, he has no answer. Science is mute in regard to these questions."

Further, I am not aware of any modern scientist whose scientific researches have enabled him to affirm with certainty that there is no God. On the contrary, even Darwin did not

deny God as the basis of organic evolution; and John Stuart Mill acknowledges that there is nothing in science to disprove the creation and government of the universe by a Sovereign Will. There would seem, therefore, not the slightest warrant for the assertion that any discovery in science can prove derogatory to religion. Religious doubt is no sin in itself; it often forces itself upon the sincerest of men and stimulates them to conscientious inquiry regarding Truth. But what is to be deprecated is that sceptical spirit which not only doubts, but loves to go on doubting, under the erroneous idea that it bespeaks a highly advanced and cultured mind. Fortunately this has not been the spirit of all genuine scientific investigators, who, unmindful of such flippant scepticism, have been tirelessly persevering in their attempts to arrive at Truth, whatever it might be. It is certain that science has discovered nothing that can be used as a fatal weapon against religion; and if we may judge of the future from the past, we may feel sure that no future scientific discovery can ever do it harm. Like pure gold, which does not suffer but gains additional lustre by being made to pass through the furnace, even so true religion gains additional lustre by passing through the purging fire of science.

Religion is ethical as well as metaphysical. It is in the branch of the metaphysical that all discussion and disagreement occur; but the ethical portion still remains, and in its essential parts is common to all mankind. God is One, therefore all religion and morality must be one in essence. "Morality knows nothing of geographical boundaries or distinctions of race," we read in Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*. "You may put men on opposite sides of a river or a chain of mountains; may also part them by a tract of salt water; may give them, if you like, distinct languages; and may even color their skins differently; but you cannot change their fundamental

relationships. Originating as these do in the fact of man's constitution, they are unaltered by the accidents of external condition. The moral law is cosmopolite, is no respecter of nationalities, and between men who are the antipodes of each other, either in locality or anything else, there must still exist the same balance of rights as though they were next-door neighbors in all things."

It is sometimes said that the belief in God is not universal and that travellers have found peoples who have no religion whatever. But we should recollect that the idea of religion differs among men, and what such travellers mean is probably that the religious tenets of the people they have met with are not like their own; for we cannot imagine any race of human beings, not even savages, who are devoid of the notion of the existence of some Superior Being or Power, and of a feeling of reverence for and the necessity of offering worship to such a power. Professor Max Müller bears me out in this when he says in his *Hibbert Lectures*: "We may safely say that in spite of all researches no human beings have been found anywhere who do not possess something which to them is Religion; or, to put it in the most general form, a belief in something beyond what they can see with their eyes. As I cannot go into the whole evidence for this statement, I may be allowed to quote the conclusion which another student of the science of religion, Professor Tieler, has arrived at on this subject, particularly as, on many points, his views differ widely from my own. 'The statement,' he says, 'that there are nations or tribes which possess no religion rests either on inaccurate observations or on a confusion of ideas. No tribe or nation has yet been met with destitute of belief in any higher beings; and travellers who asserted their existence have been afterwards refuted by facts. It is legitimate, therefore, to call religion, in its most generous sense, an universal phenomenon of humanity.'"

Granting, however, that we find no traces of religion among certain tribes, this does not prove that man in general has no religious instinct; for his sense of the Deity may possibly be obscured or obliterated by a variety of circumstances, like any other sense. We know that in studying the true characteristics of a vegetable we do not choose a deteriorated plant; why then, in studying the nature of man, should we take a deteriorated example? If the plant cease to bear seed under some abnormal circumstances, we do not infer from this that it is not the nature of the plant to bear seed; nor should we conclude, because we may find a primitive people apparently without a religion, that the religious instinct is not an innate and fundamental property of every human being.

A man's religion is the relation which he believes himself to bear to the endless universe around him, and to the source of that endless universe; and as every man believes himself to bear some relation to the universe, every man must have a religion.

—Tolstoi.

Depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds alone to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate, and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity: nay, even that school which is most accused of atheism doth most demonstrate religion.

—Bacon.

Where is the Lord and how is He to be found? There are pearls in the deep sea, but one must hazard all perils to get them. So is the Lord in this universe.

—Sri Ramakrishna.

TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE.

From the Mundaka-Upanishad.

Saunaka, a great householder, approached Angiras respectfully and asked: Revered Sir, what is that by knowing which all else becomes known?

He said to him: Two kinds of knowledge must be known, this is what all who know Brahman (the Supreme) tell us,—the higher and the lower knowledge.

The lower knowledge is the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Veda, *Siksha* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ceremonial), *Vyakarna* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chandas* (metre), *Jyotisha* (astronomy); but the higher knowledge is that by which the Indestructible is apprehended.

That which cannot be seen, nor seized; which has no family and no caste, no eyes or ears, no hands or feet; the Eternal, the All-Pervading, infinitely Subtle, that which is Imperishable, That it is which the wise regard as the Source of all beings.

As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, thus does everything arise here from the Indestructible.

This is the Truth. As from a blazing fire sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousandfold, thus are various beings brought forth from the Imperishable, O friend, and again return thither.

That Divine Being is without body, He is both without and within, not produced; without breath and without mind, pure, higher than the High Imperishable.

From Him is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense; ether, air, light, water and the earth; He is the Support of all.

From Him come the seas and all the mountains, from Him flow all rivers; from Him come all herbs and the Life-Force through which the Soul is sustained.

That Being is all; He is *Karma* (sacrifice), *Tapas* (the fire of devotion); He is the Supreme, the Highest Immortal. He who knows This One as abiding in the core of the heart, he, O friend, cuts asunder the knot of ignorance even here on this earth.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

By Sister Devamata.

In all activity we find two factors—will and deed, faith and works, theory and practice; and we recognize that a life is useful and happy only in proportion as the will takes shape in deed, or as the theory is made a fact in practice. The life of abortive intentions is always a life of misery. A man can never be happy so long as he makes pretensions which his daily living does not substantiate. And nowhere is this so true as in religion. Yet strangely enough in religion more than anywhere theory is an accepted substitute for practice. We would not consider a man travelled who sat at home and informed himself of foreign countries through books; nor would we expect anyone to become a good artist merely by reading about painting, but that person quite commonly passes for religious who listens to sermons or reads in the Scriptures about God without seeking to know Him, and who admits the possibility of realization but makes no effort to gain it.

Religion is not an end in itself. It is a method—a method, as the word signifies, by which man may rebind himself to God; and like all methods it has no value unless applied. As a method, however, it need not be fixed or exclusive; for in all departments of knowledge the greatest elasticity in method is observable. How many methods there are in music! How many schools in painting! How many systems in science! In every case the end is the same and the elements to be dealt

with are similar, but the manner in which the means are handled to gain the end is capable of indefinite variation. Each individual, indeed, introduces his own modification. Likewise in the spiritual life, as each man works out his own salvation he evolves his own religion. He may seem to follow in the general plan of action the broad lines of some accepted creed; but if we could place his thought under a psychological microscope, we should see how he interprets and bends the familiar injunctions according to his peculiar mental constitution. It is this individual variation which makes his faith living. Forbid or strangle it and his spiritual nature hardens and withers. We see it wherever bigotry seeks to cast all spiritual aspiration and observance in some sternly defined mould. Freedom is the primary condition of growth for how can we expand unless there is room for expansion? As soon as all latitude for self-expression is denied, practice degenerates into routine and the letter smothers the spirit.

Freedom of thought and action, however, must not be confounded with dissipation of energy. It does not consist in going hither and thither, hearing different forms of teaching but declaring allegiance to none. The law of spiritual growth allows us choice in method, but exacts faithful adherence to the method chosen. Each human being, Vedanta declares, must determine his own path but having once entered upon it, he must not deviate from it. It is no more rational to mix methods in religion than in music or art. A student in any line, who is continually shifting from one school to another, never becomes proficient. He develops proficiency only as he selects the form of teaching best adapted to his requirements and follows it with steadfast regularity, until he has so far mastered the technique of his calling that he need not think of method at all, but can give free play to the spirit within. Nor should we fear that we may become narrow by adopting this

course in our religious life. So long as we remember that our faith is only a means to an end, we are safe. Devotion to a form unquestionably contracts, but one-pointed devotion to an Ideal expands. When God is truly the goal, any road by which we seek Him must inevitably broaden and broaden until it loses itself in infinity. Restless curiosity is not catholicity, nor is multiplicity of interests a sign of universality. One does not become universal by running back and forth on the circumference, but by moving steadily down some one radius to the Centre where all radii meet.

In both secular and spiritual development Vedanta recognises three stages—hearing, reflection, and realization. The first is the stage of theory, the second of practice and the third of knowledge. The theoretical mind always sees and emphasizes differences; it cannot relate, hence it is perpetually replacing one theory by another. Practice, on the contrary, by purifying and sharpening our powers of penetration, enables us to discern unsuspected points of contact; and as we learn to co-ordinate and unify, we grow in understanding; for all knowledge rests on generalization, or as the Vedic Sages put it: “Seeing sameness is knowledge; seeing difference is ignorance.” Theory and practice must follow each other in rhythmic succession. As in Geometry the proposition is first stated and then demonstrated, after which comes another theorem with its demonstration, one leading logically out of the other; so, in living, each new vision calls for a fresh effort and readjustment, which will again lead to a further vision. If we do not make full use of the light which has already come to us, our life will remain in a static condition; we shall receive no new material to work upon. Until we are faithful in lesser things, we cannot expect to be made ruler over greater. Too often people wait for some impelling revelation before devoting themselves to the spiritual life; but only as

they utilize their present opportunity will they create a new and larger one. The first task for us is to put into practice what we now recognize as true, to make our lives obedient to the higher laws we already know.

Take, for example, the ordinary problem of anger. We are all struggling to control our temper, but how many are making a fundamental effort to conquer anger itself? We wait until we feel ourselves growing angry, then we try to suppress it by a sudden act of will, as one would push down the cover on a kettle which is boiling over. But the method does not prove effective; the waves of temper still rise. What we should do is to focus our energy on the inside at the point where anger begins, not on the outside where it ends. We should go deep down within, find that thing which reacts in anger, and deal with that. The only way to permanently eliminate the tendency to anger is by altering our sense of values, by increasing our measure of things through discrimination so that that which made us angry will appear too trifling to disturb us. When Arjuna complains to Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita that he sees no chance of acquiring serenity and self-control because of the extreme restlessness of the mind, Sri Krishna replies: "Undoubtedly the mind is restless and difficult to curb, but through practice and dispassion it can be conquered." It is this element of dispassion in our practice which makes it fruitful. There is a natural upward tendency in every living thing which asserts itself the moment the clinging to the lower level is removed. Thus every growth implies an act of detachment. The child outgrows its toys and drops them; the treasures that tempt the youth fall unheeded from the hands of the riper man. We practise indeed in order that we may outgrow, just as one repeats day after day an exercise in music, only to put it aside the moment it is learned and take up another.

In the practice of religion nothing must be considered a finality short of God. Again and again the Bhagavad-Gita tells us that only those who regard Him as their Supreme Goal will reach Him. Powers, learning, relative knowledge or acquirement of any kind, even the highest, must not turn us aside from this ultimate end. Unless indeed we are striving at every moment to rebind ourselves to the Whole, we have no right to call ourselves religious. It matters not what method we use. If a man is shipwrecked, he cares little with what they lash him to the floating spar: a strip of sail-cloth, a rope or cable are all one to him if only he can save his life. So when there surges up in our hearts the yearning to become one with the Source of wisdom, life and joy, each duty and condition will be utilized to gain our end. The longing for God-union will spontaneously convert every act into an act of worship and make every word we speak a prayer.

The greatest enemy we have to meet along the way is doubt. Doubt is at the root of all weakness. Our jealousy, our discontent, our indecision, all our evil passions, spring from doubt. That is why the Gita declares that "one of doubting mind perishes." And doubt is the close companion of theory. One thing alone can arm us against this enemy, and that is practice. When we have actually experienced anything, our faith remains firm in the face of the bitterest onslaughts. If we have seen Paris or London, no amount of argument can convince us that we have not seen it; in the same way, when we have actually perceived even the smallest ray of Truth, so far as our experience reaches we cannot be shaken. All the noisy arguments about God and religion which have jarred upon the ears of men down the centuries would have died into silence had St. Paul's counsel been heeded to prove all things and hold fast to that which is true. It is the man of theory who is hot in dispute. The man of

practice is quiet and slow to speak. He does not angrily defend what he does not know. He listens, ponders and verifies before he makes any statement. The story is told in India that in ancient days a vast religious congress was held in the Himalayas, and a heated discussion arose in the course of it as to which was the greatest of the Hindu Trinity,—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, or Shiva the Transformer. When the debate was loudest, a highly-honored Sage entered and was asked to decide the question. "I have not seen Brahma or Vishnu or Shiva; how can I tell which is greatest?" was his answer, and stillness fell on the assembly.

It would be a shock to many pious theists to tell them that they are unbelievers; yet their lives prove them so. They affirm confidently that God exists, but they exert themselves less to seek acquaintance with Him than with some passing celebrity of the hour. If they were assured that their mother was in the same city with them, would they make as little effort to go to her? This shows that God's existence has no reality for them. What is God? According to every Scripture, He is all beauty, all power, all joy, all life. If a man really thought that there was someone who could bestow on him these coveted gifts in inexhaustible measure he would strive without ceasing till he had established some relation with him. Let a thief know that there is a bag of gold in the adjoining room and he will gain entrance there at any price; so when we really awaken to the fact that God exists and that He is all that we say He is, we shall not rest day or night until we find Him. It will not matter whether He is intra-cosmic or extra-cosmic, whether He is personal or impersonal, whether He is the God of the Jews or of the Gentiles; all these intricate questions of theology will be as nothing to us; our one cry will be to reach God and unite ourselves eternally with Him. It is told of Swami Vivekananda that

in his youth he went from one holy man to another, asking: "Have you seen God?" When the reply came in the negative, he would remark: "Why are you preaching or singing the praises of someone you have never seen?" At last his cousin said to him: "There is a great soul at the Temple of Dakshineswar who will cure you of your scepticism. Come, I will take you to him." They went. As he sat near Sri Ramakrishna, he asked: "Do you believe in God?" "Yes." "Have you seen Him?" "Yes." "Can you make me see Him?" "Yes." That was enough. From that minute he followed Sri Ramakrishna. Nothing ever turned him aside. Here was one who had seen God, to whom God was an actual reality, and who had the power to make Him real to others.

But how can anyone see God? you may ask. Do you suppose that God, who has made Himself visible in all these myriad forms of His universe, in all this play of glory and loveliness, cannot also make Himself perceptible to each of us in just the form in which we can best comprehend Him? Since he is omnipotent, He has the power to clothe Himself in any dress, to show Himself in any form. Only we must remember the words of Sri Krishna to Arjuna; we cannot see Him with these human eyes; by earnest practice we must develop a subtler spiritual vision. When any man longs for God enough to struggle night and day to reach Him; to make every activity of his life, every thought of his mind, every feeling of his heart carry him Godward, until his whole being is one quivering call for the Divine, God cannot refuse to manifest Himself. He will come whether the man is lettered or unlettered, whether he is a church member or a solitary worshipper, whether he is a Jew or Mohammedan, Hindu or Christian. God will reveal Himself in just the aspect which the devotee can most easily grasp, and at once there will flash in that man's heart such an effulgent light of knowledge that

he will be able to perceive the Divine in all things.

The time has come for us to put aside theoretical interest in religious matters and to consecrate ourselves to a sincere spiritual practice. Recently much has been said about what can be done to fill the churches. Let ministers and people but begin to lead genuine Christ lives, and the churches will be crowded to the doors. It is not by any expedient or policy that the religious consciousness can be quickened; it is by the practice of the faith. No belief in a creed, no mere intellectual study of the Scriptures can make a man a true man. Only devotion to a high Ideal will do it. Take the saintly characters of any religion and follow their example. Be cheerful when you are tempted to give way to depression. Be contented when all your life is other than you would have it. Be happy in poverty when you crave riches. Be patient when all things try you. Be calm and serene even when men ridicule or denounce you. Be pure and holy in the midst of impurity and selfishness. Be earnest and unfaltering in your daily meditation and study. Never forget your purpose; never let your longing for God waver, even though the world call you foolish, and you will surely attain. You need not repeat a creed, you need not have a fixed place of worship, you need not hold to any one name or form of Deity; you need only have your own soul and an insatiable hunger for Truth, and you will grow and flourish and bear fruit like the tree described in the Bible, in whose branches the birds came and lodged and under whose cool shade weary wayfarers found refreshment and rest. This is all you need—earnestness, longing, and determination to embody in your life as much of Truth as you know today; and out of that practice will come each new day an ever-deepening knowledge, an ever-expanding union with the Infinite and Eternal.

THE NEED OF RESOLUTION.

Parable by Gautama Buddha.

There was a zealous disciple of the Buddha who had taken a vow to spend a certain time in solitary contemplation ; but he grew weary and fell away. Then he said to himself : "The Blessed One has taught that there are divers kinds of men ; I must belong to the lowest class and am come to believe that in this world there can be no attainment for me. Of what use a forest life if, with all my endeavor, I cannot gain through meditation the vision which I have sought with such devotion ? Thus he left his wooded solitude and returned to Jetavam.

When his brothers saw him they rebuked him, saying : "You have done wrong, O brother, to give up without fulfilling your vow," and they led him to the Master.

The Blessed One, seeing their approach, asked : "Why have you brought this brother ? I see he has come against his will. What has he done ?"

"Lord, this brother has broken his vow and without completing his meditation has come back to us."

Then the Master said to him : "Is it true that you have given up ?"

"It is true, O Blessed One !" was his answer.

The Blessed One then said : "This present life is a time of grace. If you fail to reach the state of true happiness here, you will suffer bitter remorse in future lives. Why have you grown so wavering and irresolute ? In your past existence you were full of determination. By your effort alone the men and bullocks of five hundred wagons obtained water in the desert and were saved. How is it that you so easily give up now ?"

At once the brother was filled with new strength. But the other disciples besought Lord Buddha to tell them the meaning of His words ; and yielding to their importunities, He related to them this story :

At the time when Brahmadata was ruling in Benares, Bodhisattva took birth in a merchant's family; and when he grew up he went about trading with five hundred carts. One day he arrived at a vast sandy desert. The sand in this desert was so fine that even in a tightly-closed hand it would slip through the fingers. When the sun rose it was like burning charcoal, so hot that no man could walk upon it. Those who had to traverse it travelled during the night, taking with them wood and water, oil and rice. Each morning at daybreak they broke their journey, spread an awning and passed the day under its shade. At sunset they ate their evening meal, yoked their oxen, and when the sands had cooled proceeded on their way, led by a desert-pilot who guided them by the stars.

Thus the merchant crossed the desert with his caravan. Fifty-nine leagues had they gone and they thought: "One more night and we shall be over these burning sands." So when supper was over, again the oxen were yoked and they pushed forward. The pilot sat in the foremost wagon, scanning the heavens; but he was worn with watching, and he fell asleep. In the unbroken waste none saw that the oxen had circled round and were returning the way they had come.

They travelled thus unhindered the whole night through. At dawn the pilot woke and, beholding the stars, in dismay called out: "Stop! stop!" The wagons lined up; then the men cried: "These are the ashes of our fires of yesterday! It is the camp we left last night! Our wood and water are gone! We are lost!" Unyoking their oxen and spreading the canopy, they lay down under the wagons in grim despair. But Bodhisattva said within himself: "I must not lose heart, else all these will perish"; and while it was yet cool he walked about until suddenly he came upon a tuft of Kusha-grass. "Surely this could not have grown without water," he thought.

Then he called his men and made them dig sixty cubits

deep. When they had dug thus far, their spades struck on a rock and they gave up, more despondent than before. But Bodhisattva thought: "There must be water beneath that rock"; so he descended into the well and, stooping down, laid his ear against the rock. The sound of gurgling water could be heard. Climbing out, he called his page. "My lad," he said, "if we give up now we shall be lost. Do not lose heart. Take this strong hammer, go down and deal a heavy blow on the rock."

The boy obeyed. He struck the rock with all his might. It split in two, and from under it burst a stream of clear, cold water, filling the well to the height of a palm tree. The men drank and bathed, cooked rice and ate, and fed their oxen. Then they marked the well with a flag, and when the sun had set they resumed their journey. And the Blessed One concluded: "The caravan leader was Bodhisattva, the future Buddha; the page who was then so resolute and broke the stone was this brother now lacking in perseverance; the other men were the followers of the Buddha."

REPORTS.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston there has been a marked increase of activity in every department since the return of Swami Paramananda from the West. The attendance has grown much larger and a number of strangers are coming each week to the Centre. The Swami will continue to conduct all the services and classes, which will remain the same throughout the months of May and June.

* * * *

In order to shorten the interval during the summer when *The Message of the East* will not appear, we shall bring out the succeeding numbers later in the month. Subscribers are requested to notify us promptly of any change of address.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The
Message of the East



JUNE 1917

Issued by

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"	10th	<i>Concentration in Daily Life.</i>
"	17th	<i>Self Knowledge.</i>
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Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. VI.

JUNE, 1917.

No. 6.

SOME ASPECTS OF MAN.

By S. E. Waldo

The old, old question that has been the riddle of the ages is "What is man?" From every plane of thought has come the answer. Every religion offers its own solution of the problem. In the main, Christianity presents the idea that man is a mere worm of the dust, "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity." Material science would make him an outcome of evolutionary processes. But Vedanta, passing beyond his apparent nature, gives us a noble ideal of what he is essentially. It tells us that he is both personal and impersonal, and that the body and mind are only a mask which hides the real man. This is indeed the original meaning of the word person; it comes from the word "persona," a mask, used by actors in ancient times to cover their own features and so help them to portray more truly the character they assumed. These bodies and minds of ours are covering from sight the real being in us and the effort of all existence is to uncover the true man behind the appearance. We have worn these "masks" so long that we have come to identify ourselves with them and have forgotten that they are not really ourselves, but only a temporary covering laid over our real nature by ignorance. Swami Vivekananda describes the soul of man as a circle, whose centre is where his body is and all his activity is manifested

there. Man is really omnipresent, but his consciousness is concentrated in this central point which he calls his body. He has taken up particles of matter and formed them into a machine through which to express himself and this machine for expression is the body. When one machine fails, the centre moves on and takes up other particles of matter, finer or coarser, and manufactures a new machine for expression. Expression or manifestation is only possible through form, though it may be form of a very fine and subtle nature. Manifestation means just this,—that by limitation something is separated from an indiscriminate whole and we recognize it by certain definite qualities as distinct from other things. Emerson says “God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere;” but every point in that circle is equally living, conscious and active; whereas with man only one point is conscious. As man evolves, however, his consciousness expands and his conception of God and of himself will continually enlarge and develop. For what is evolution really? It is the unfolding of nature and the manifesting of the Divine. Veil after veil lifts, revealing more and more of that inner light which is the Soul. When the last veil is gone, man has accomplished the purpose of all evolution; he has reached perfection. This is the answer which Vedanta gives to the question, “What is Man?”

Even materialism is fast arriving at the conclusion that man is more than body and mind, more than a “fortuitous concourse of atoms” moved by some physical law. Every day the earnest scientific investigator in following out his conclusions finds that he reaches a point where physics ends and metaphysics begins. The very term matter has come to include a vast deal more than it did fifty or sixty years ago. Then only what was ponderable was called matter; but since researches into electricity have been carried so much further,

the scientist has found means to detect what he is forced to call substances, which can be weighed on no scale invented or seen through no microscope however powerful. In this world of apparently infinite variety, we have every reason to believe that there is an infinitely greater portion which is entirely beyond the reach of what are called the five senses. As some animals have been proved to possess certain senses in a far more highly developed form than they are found in man, it seems only reasonable to believe that man himself may under certain conditions intensify his present senses and develop new ones. Science, indeed, regards this as a necessary process in evolutionary development. It is believed that in the course of ages, during which man has developed from protoplasm to his present estate, one sense after another was evolved as it was needed until we have the number we now enjoy. Since the working of the evolutionary law is uniform and the end has not been reached, the probability is that other perceptive faculties will be evolved in the ages to come and man will reach a state as far in advance of his present one as this is in advance of the protoplasm. Such is the aspect man presents to the evolutionist.

Turning now to religion, we find that every religion, however primitive, teaches invariably that man is now in a less happy condition than in his first estate. The widest researches among the crudest forms of religion have proved that every race has the tradition of something analagous to the "Fall of Man." The savage always asserts that in the dim past his ancestors descended from either the gods or from a very superior condition of existence, where they possessed greater powers and were happy and contented. The Eden myth, in one form or another, is older than all history. The Vedanta has a more clearly defined idea of what this myth means. It teaches that this inherent belief in man,—that he is at present

in a lower condition of spirituality and happiness than originally belonged to him, is the soul's recognition of its Divine origin. In the darkest ages that remembrance was never entirely obliterated. The One Self was never so deeply covered from sight that man could be made to lose all sense of his relation to the Divine. This is proved by the fact that he always has had some form of religion, which was the expression of his effort to relate himself with an unknown something beyond the range of his senses. That effort is the main-spring of every form of religion the world has ever known, from the crudest attempt of the primitive and savage man to the sublimest concept of the loftiest religion or philosophy. This aspect of man,—as a being ever reaching after the spiritual world and never satisfied with the mere world of phenomena—is the aspect that points to his real oneness with that Divinity which his very nature impels him to struggle incessantly to know. When man is looked at from this point of view, we cease to think of him as a “worm of the dust”; and when he can look upon himself in the light of a Divine being destined finally to reach a full realization of that Divinity, he is able to make an intelligent effort to free himself from the ignorance which prevents that realization.

Ignorance is the source of all our misery. In striving to attain to freedom, we make constant mistakes; these are regarded as “sins” and we are vigorous in our condemnation of those who commit them. All sorts of remedies for what is known as “sin” have been prescribed, yet we see that it still continues with us. One real remedy exists, however, and that is knowledge. Call it by what name we will, yet it is knowledge and knowledge only that can prevent sin. When a man learns by repeated experience that the results of certain actions are invariably unpleasant and unsatisfactory, he ceases to do these actions: he has gained some knowledge. In the same

way, when man finds through numberless other experiences that the results of certain other actions are more agreeable, he will form the habit of performing such acts: he has gained more knowledge. After ages of these alternating experiences man will finally develop a habit of doing right; and then he is ready for the next step,—to do right, not in order to bring pleasure and avoid pain, but to do it for its own sake, because it is good to do good. At last he will come to see that he is one with all mankind; and losing all sense of separateness, he will work in harmony with the universe. He will then have gained the highest knowledge and for him sin will be eliminated. First man works for mere self-gratification; then comes a sense of duty, a sense that it is better to do some things and worse to do others, and that there rests upon him an obligation to do the better things; then finally through action done for duty's sake, man expands and rises to a stage where he acts no more from duty, but from freedom and from love.

While man is striving to do his duty, the various rites and practices of religion are of service to him. If a man begins by a little meditation in the morning and at night, he will end by making his whole life a meditation. The beautiful thoughts and experiences that come to him in the hour of meditation will grow increasingly attractive, and at last his mind will dwell on them most of the time and they will color all his life. No matter then what outward work he may be engaged in, his mind will be filled with the "peace that passeth all understanding." It is not that such a man goes out of the world and abandons his fellowmen. He has learned to live in the world as the lotus leaf lives in the water, yet is never wet. He becomes what the Vedanta calls "non-attached." It does not mean that we are not to love anything at all. That is not being non-attached. It rather means that we become so

attached to all things with an equal love, as parts of one great whole, that we lose particular attachment to any special persons or things on account of their relation to ourselves. The Bhagavad-Gita calls this looking upon everything with equal affection "sameness"; and it is a very high state indeed, a state so high that to most men it is only an ideal to be striven for. Yet it is good for man to strive for the highest ideal of which he can conceive. In that way he makes his greatest progress. The man who is satisfied with mediocrity, may attain to it, but will never get beyond it. It is a great incentive to man to learn how much depends upon himself; to feel that he is not a mere automaton, the helpless victim of fate or chance, but that his destiny lies in his own hands; and that always within him is the upward movement of the soul leading him towards the good.

The Gita tells us that no good action is ever lost, that if a man strives sincerely to come to God and then fails, yet he has not lost anything of the gain made by those sincere efforts; and when he once more sets his face in the same direction, he does not have to start all over again, but can begin where he left off. It is more than the work of a lifetime to fit oneself for the highest realization. That is why the doctrine of Reincarnation, which is universally accepted among the Hindus, is necessary. This one little life that we live and that to most people seems of supreme importance, what is it but an infinitesimal *now* between an infinite past and an endless future? If we can conceive of this life as an infinite circle, beginning and ending in God, then one span of human existence is less than a pin prick on that vast circle.

According to the view man takes of himself will depend the aim he sets before himself in life. If he regards himself as a mere material being, born today to perish tomorrow, he will naturally seek to extract all the pleasure out of the de-

lights of this world. Yet even that view of life is sure eventually to lead him higher. The pursuit of pleasure for its own sake has been proved by millions to be a vain one. Yet other millions have to make the discovery for themselves. Experience is our only true teacher, but it is a sure one. There should be no blind belief, we should *know*. With the growth of knowledge man will get a true concept of what he is. He will perceive that he is essentially Divine; and thus perceiving, he will be ready and willing to enter upon the path leading to the realization of that Divinity. And he will fully understand that he can never reach the goal through selfish competition with his fellowmen; but that only through unselfish effort to help them, to co-operate with them in the endeavor to reach that goal, to realize the existence underlying all manifestation, can he hope himself to attain the desired end. In learning not only intellectually but *actually* that all being is one, man will realize his own true nature, the one Self, the Soul of all existence; and he will perceive that it includes not only humanity, but the universe.

THE LOWER AND THE HIGHER SELF.

Adapted from the Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad

A king named Brihadratha, having placed his son on the throne, went into the forest, because he had realized that this body is transient and that from the satisfaction of material desires no true happiness can be gained. At the end of a thousand days the Saint Sakayanya, who knew the Self, came near, burning with splendor like a fire without smoke. He said to the king: "Rise, rise! Choose a boon."

The king, bowing down before him, said: "O Saint, I know not the Self. Thou knowest the essence of our being. Teach it us."

Sakayanya replied: "What thou askest is difficult to attain. Choose other pleasures."

The king, touching the Saint's feet, said: "O Saint, of what use the enjoyment of pleasures in this body? All things here are perishable. Deign therefore to take me out of this world, for in this world I am like a frog in a dry well."

Then the Saint, well-pleased, said to Brihadratha: "This is the science of Brahman (the Supreme) and the science of all the Upanishads, O king, which was told us by the Saint Maitri. I shall tell it thee. Once the Valakhilyas said to Prajapati Kratu: 'O Saint, this body is without intelligence, like a cart. To what belongs the great power by which such a body has been made intelligent? Or who is the driver?'"

"Prajapati answered: 'He who in the Scriptures is spoken of as "standing above" amidst the objects of the world; he indeed, the pure, the clean, the tranquil one, bodiless, endless, imperishable, firm, everlasting, unborn, the independent one, he stands in his own greatness and by him has the body been made intelligent; he is also the driver of it.'

" 'This is the Self, who seeming to be filled with desires and seeming to be overcome by bright and dark fruits of action, wanders about in every body, himself remaining free. Because he is not manifest, because he is infinitely small, because he is invisible, because he cannot be grasped, because he is attached to nothing, therefore he, though seeming to be changing and acting, is in reality unchanging and actionless. He is pure, firm, stable, undefiled, unmoved, free from desire, remaining a spectator, resting in himself."

"The Valakhilyas said to Prajapati Kratu: 'O Saint, if thou thus showest the greatness of the Self, then who is that other one, also called self, who really overcome by bright and dark fruits of action, enters on a good or bad birth? Downward or upward is his course and overcome by the pairs of opposites (heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.) he roams about?'"

“Prajapati Kratu replied: ‘That is indeed that other different one called the elemental (or lower) self, who overcome by bright and dark fruits of action enters on a good or bad birth. Downward or upward is his course and overcome by the pairs of opposites he roams about. He who acts is the elemental self, he who causes to act by means of the organs is the inner man. Now as a ball of iron, pervaded by fire and hammered by smiths, assumes manifold forms; thus the elemental self, pervaded by the inner man and hammered by the qualities of matter, becomes manifold. And as when the ball of iron is hammered, the fire is not overcome; so the inner man is not overcome, but the elemental self alone is overcome, because it has united itself with the elements.’

“The Valakhilyas, whose passions were subdued, then said: ‘O Saint, we bow before thee; teach us further. By what process may the elemental self, after leaving this identity with the elemental or material body, obtain union with the True Self?’

“Prajapati Kratu said to them: ‘This is indeed the remedy for the elemental self: Acquirement of knowledge and performance of one’s own duty. Through the performance of one’s duty one attains the Highest, otherwise one falls downward. But no one obtains knowledge of the Highest Self who does not practise self-discipline (*Tapas*). By self-discipline goodness is obtained; from goodness understanding is reached; from understanding the Self is known; and he who has known his True Self does not return to this world. By knowledge, by self-discipline and by meditation one reaches the Supreme. He who knows this and worships God through these three, obtains bliss imperishable, infinite and unchangeable. Then freed from the bondage of body, senses and all physical limitations, by which he was filled and overcome, he attains union with the Supreme Self.

RIGHT THINKING AND RIGHT LIVING.

By Swami Paramananda

“Earnestness is the path of immortality, thoughtlessness is the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die, those who are thoughtless are as if dead already. If an earnest person has roused himself, if he is not forgetful, if his deeds are pure, if he acts with consideration, if he restrains himself and lives according to the Law, then his glory will increase.” Such are the words of Buddha. It is thought which moulds our character. Of all factors it is the mightiest in shaping human life and destiny; and unless we pay proper attention to our thought, it is impossible to accomplish anything. A man may work, he may struggle to gain some end, but if he has not the right understanding, that is, if he has not awakened the faculty of right thinking, he is like a boatman who is pulling on his oars without having drawn up his anchor; the boat will not go forward. Similarly those who have not roused themselves from the slumber of ignorance, no matter what they may try to do, they will not succeed.

The power of right thinking must be awakened; that is the first step. You may say: “We all think.” Yes, we all think; but thought is of two kinds:—one is constructive, it uplifts man to great heights; the other is destructive, it degrades and instead of helping proves a great drawback. Yet the same mind is used for both. It is said in one of the Upanishads: This mind is the cause of bondage and of liberation for all human beings. If attached to the world, it becomes bound; if free from the world, that is liberty.” How is it that the same mind can play such a double part? Because the mind can either go downward or it can go upward, whichever way we choose to direct it. It is ready to serve us and lead us onward; and if we neglect it, it will bind us and draw us back to the brute plane. Therefore we cannot

afford to disregard this important factor in our life; for right thought is the fly-wheel of this great machine of human life and unless it revolves properly, this machine can do nothing. It may even be destroyed; for if we are not discriminative, we may make mistakes which will prove our ruin. In the Upanishads this body has been compared to a chariot, the senses are the horses, the mind is the reins, the intellect is the driver, and the Self who dwells within is the Lord of the chariot. Unless the horses are well controlled and the reins firmly held, unless the driver is intelligent, the chariot may be thrown into the ditch and destroyed. But if the discriminative faculty is awake, that is, if the driver follows the path of right thinking, then he has perfect control over both horses and chariot.

There are people who appear to have complete control over their mind, what gives them this power? It comes from right thinking and right living, for right thinking and right living go together. Only the man who lives in the right way; whose thoughts do not betray him; whose mind and mouth are one, as Sri Ramakrishna has said, that is, whose inner thought and outer activity are in perfect harmony: he alone will be able to accomplish great things. No one can do great things unless he first thinks great things. Those who have ambitions and try to realize them by over-riding their fellow-beings can only attain ephemeral results. Right thinking means that we do not wish to hurt anyone; we may want to progress, but not at the cost of another. There cannot be any selfish idea in it. We desire to grow only in order that our growth may prove a help to mankind. No one can really grow who thinks wholly of himself, or even of those who stand closest to him.

Unless we take all mankind into consideration, our growth cannot be far-reaching; we cannot become great. That is the reason why the first principle of all religious teachers has

been to hate no man; to conquer everything through love, because love is constructive. Even when we wish to create something great for ourselves, if we try to obtain it through hatred, we shall find that it crumbles very soon, because there is a destructive element in it. Those who seek to harm their fellowmen sooner or later inevitably meet with punishment. The law of this world makes them unhappy and they will be unhappy hereafter, for the hereafter is nothing but the resultant of what we do here. It is not enough to pray or work for our own happiness and peace; there cannot be any true happiness or peace unless it encircles others. All are related to us in spirit; and if we hate anyone, we are hating something which is a part of ourselves. This realization of universal oneness in spirit destroys what we call evil.

Why is it that we think so much of earthly possessions, of wealth and prosperity, of all these things which begin and end with this life? And we scarcely give a thought to that which is lasting, to that which concerns our soul. Yet we pose as intelligent human beings. If anyone among us tries to live a different kind of life and apply the Gospel of Truth given by the Illumined Ones, we think that that person is doing wrong. Is thinking of God and Truth wrong? Is serving a lofty Ideal wrong? That is a superstition which we must remove from our heart if we would progress. All erroneous and weakening thoughts must be rooted out if we want to advance either physically or morally or spiritually. Too often such thoughts are put into our heads in childhood,—that we must live in a certain way and not do anything different from those with whom we are associated. If all those about us were ideal characters, it might be right for us to follow in their footsteps. But our soul-hunger is for something else and we must gain that.

When we study the teaching of the Vedas, we find that it

insists upon one thing,—being and becoming. Man must become; he must become one with Truth. How? He must first wake himself from the sleep of ignorance. He must acquire strength. A man who is weak cannot attain the Truth, therefore let him be strong. He must not think that he is a sinner, that he is born in sin and iniquity. On the contrary, he must feel imbued with the idea that he is a child of God; that although he may have made mistakes, yet there is hope for him because he is a child of God. Strengthening, lofty thoughts enable us to counteract the weakness which is so dominant in our nature at present. When our mind is fixed on a high Ideal and we become imbued with it, then our actions will spontaneously express it. Now we are constantly afraid. Wherefrom does this fear come? Is it our nature? Our nature is fearlessness, why bring into it something that is foreign? The Vedanta tells us: Shake off all weakness, all fear. A child of God should not be afraid of anything. If you want to rise, make yourself strong. But you must do it for yourself and you can only do it by right thinking. The mind is the instrument by which we accomplish everything. Our mind thinks, that thought creates, and what it creates we see in the external activity of our life. So we must train this mind. We must not let it run wild; but we must curb it and use discrimination. The world approaches us under two forms, one is good and the other pleasant. One appeals to our physical nature and the other to our deeper nature; but that deeper nature is not awake in all. There are some who almost forget that they possess a higher nature or that they have any connection with the Supreme. Yet the higher nature is there, latent within their heart; and when they appeal to that nature and try to judge everything through the light of that higher nature, it is gradually awakened and all their activity becomes directed by it. Then they cannot go

astray, they cannot do anything wrong.

As we unfold our spiritual consciousness, we think and live aright. Everything that approaches us we take at its proper valuation and not as it appears. Nothing can deceive us; therefore we do not labor for what is false and unreal. There are people who work faithfully, but they feel the burden of life because their effort does not bring the desired results. Why is this? It is because their effort is not controlled by discrimination; it is not directed by a purpose that is definite and single. Single-heartedness does not come until we have the higher faculty of discrimination awakened within us. Only then do we think consciously and we are not led away by passing fancies. If something arises that appeals to us and arouses our desire, we do not struggle to gain it without reflecting whether it is going to bring us a blessing or not. Human beings should not run after shadows. We are superior to animals in just this, that we have the power to discriminate; and only as we use it, shall we learn the secret of right thinking and right living. When our thoughts are free from impurity and self-consciousness, our light will shine. But how often we forget this and try to gain our selfish ends even by improper means. We believe too much in things which are temporary and neglect that which is lasting. When, however, our thoughts become connected with our inner nature, then not only will the light shine in the spiritual realm which now seems dark to us, but our life here will also be filled with clearness, directness and fearlessness.

The religious life does not mean devoting certain hours to the study of the Bible or some other Sacred Scripture; it means continuous life in accordance with the Higher Law. And nowhere do we find this more strikingly illustrated than in the Hindu life. It is said that the Hindus eat religion, drink religion, sleep religion. What is the significance of this?

That they do not wish to live without God; that they do not want to be separated for one moment from that Higher Consciousness. They believe that all their actions, from the least important to the loftiest, must start from that one central Consciousness. This is what we need to learn,—that at all times we must lead exalted lives, that every act shall be in harmony with our higher nature, that we shall serve our Ideal even at the cost of our life. Such characters are needed, and we can build them only by right thinking. We must not shut ourselves up in one set of doctrines and dogmas and believe that the whole spiritual Truth is confined in them. According to Vedanta, Truth is the common property of the whole human race; and whoever is wakeful, whoever applies the Truth, whoever lives the life, he is a follower of the Truth, whether he comes from the East or the West. A flower is a flower wherever it grows, and it gives the same fragrance to the one who tramples on it as to the one who cherishes it. That is the nature we should develop. We must not say, "This person does not appeal to me; I cannot love or serve him." The ordinary man does that. The flower does not refuse its fragrance to anyone; it gives what it has to give. Similarly our higher nature should be so unfolded that we can feel for all and give without asking anything.

When that comes, we can truly be called children of God. Then our religion will not be merely a matter of a creed or Scripture, it will be a reality; and this reality is religion. Religion is based on realization. Unless it has become real to us, no amount of argument or reasoning, no amount of observance of outer forms, can bring us anything. We must live the life without condemnation or denunciation. We must let our Soul manifest in us. If we have an Ideal, we must let it grow; and as it grows it will produce its own effect. What we need therefore is to cultivate our spiritual nature

and we do this by right thought. It does not matter what others may think, there is no reason why we should not think in the right way, for what we think, that we reflect. If we have love in our hearts, we send out into the universe a current of love which is united with a similar current; but if we hold unworthy, hateful thoughts, they will come back to us. We shall create conditions which will be hateful to us and which will set in motion forces that we shall afterwards regret, but which we shall not be able to resist. We can avoid this only by thinking from the beginning in the right way.

Our thought is the seed which determines the fruit of our action. If the seed is good, then the flowers and fruits which come from the seed must be good and must prove beneficial to ourselves and others. But if we plant in our hearts a poisonous seed, it will not only harm us but all who come in contact with us. Human life is a great responsibility. Only a thoughtless man will say: "I cannot help what happens. I am not responsible." We are constantly influencing ourselves and our fellow-beings by what we think; because our thought shapes our inner nature and we radiate consciously or unconsciously what we are. Let us be wakeful then. Let us be thoughtful in whatever we do. Let us be faithful to our True Self; for all blessings must come to us, if we prove ourselves true to our higher nature.

The beloved children of God renounce themselves, and hence they do right without effort, and mount up to the highest point of goodness, while he who will not let go of himself, but does right by labor and toil, will never reach the highest that he might. In other words: he whose works proceed from himself, does little good service to God; while he who suffers himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, does great works even in small actions.

Tauler.

SELECTION FROM THE LI-KI.*Texts of Confucianism*

Righteousness is the accordance of actions with what is right.

Wisdom, benevolence, and fortitude:—these three are the universal virtues. That whereby they are carried into exercise is singleness.

Some are born with the knowledge of these; some know them by study; and some know them as the result of painful experience. But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to one and the same thing.

Some practise them with the ease of nature; some for the sake of their advantage; and some by dint of strong effort. But when the work of them is done, it comes to one and the same thing.

In all things success depends on previous preparation; without such preparation there is failure.

Perfection of nature is characteristic of Heaven. To attain to that perfection belongs to man. He who possesses that perfection hits what is right without any effort, and apprehends without any exercise of thought; he is the sage who naturally and easily embodies the right way. He who attains to perfection is he who chooses what is good and firmly holds it fast.

He extensively studies what is good; inquires accurately about it; thinks carefully over it; clearly discriminates concerning it; and vigorously practises it. While there is anything he has not studied, or in what he has studied there is anything he cannot understand, he will not intermit his labor. While there is anything he has not asked about, or anything in what he has asked about he does not know, he will not intermit his labor. While there is anything he has not thought over, or anything in what he has thought about that he does

not know, he will not intermit his labor. While there is anything concerning which he has not tried to discriminate, or anything in his discrimination that is not clear, he will not intermit his labor. While there is anything which he has not practised, or any want of vigor so far as he has practised, he will not intermit his labor. . . . Let a man proceed in this way, and though stupid, he is sure to become intelligent; though weak, he is sure to become strong.

THE UPANISHADS AND THEIR MESSAGE TO THE MODERN MAN.

Extract of Address by P. L. Vaswani

I propose to regard the Upanishads from the point of view not of theology, but of literature; and I think a careful study of these volumes will show that the Upanishads are a contribution to World Literature. There are a few collections which we may regard as world volumes; which are not of local or provincial interest, but have universal value and are therefore classified as World Literature. One of these collections is associated with Hellenic genius; I refer to the ancient classics of Greek Literature. These books articulate the ideal concerning the civic spirit; they sound again and again the note that the duty of the individual is to subordinate himself to the State. This is a note which the world needs. The service of the State is man's duty and privilege. Another collection is the Hebrew Bible, charged with practical wisdom and with the supreme idea that the universe is fundamentally righteous. Another great Scripture is the Koran. The Sovereignty of God and the democracy of believers are the ideas set forth in the Koran. The Upanishads constitute another such collection and have, I claim, an imperishable place in World Literature. Not without reason have the

Upanishads fascinated men in different countries and at different times. Dura, the Moghul prince, had them translated into Persian; Latin and German translations followed; Schopenhauer was fond of them; the German philosophical world was influenced by them.

What is the meaning of the word Upanishad? The word may be interpreted in more than one way. Radically the word means "sitting down near," thus taking us to the far-off times when education demanded no elaborate external machinery, no costly buildings; when the big classes of today were unknown and the pupils sat near the teacher, sat round him on the ground, in Nature's lap, listening to lectures not behind closed doors but in the open air, thus growing in the grace of a higher life by daily communion with Nature's wonder and beauty. The word Upanishad means also "destroying all prejudice and ignorance," conveying thus an idea that he who seeks knowledge must rise above prejudice and acquire a catholic outlook on life. The total number of the Upanishads has been established to be eleven hundred and eighty; of these only one hundred and eight have survived the shock of centuries and have been translated into more than one language. A common misconception is that the Upanishads are infected with asceticism and other-worldism; that they have only a speculative, theoretic interest. It is undoubtedly true that there are in the Upanishads many things of speculative interest, again there are portions bearing upon psychology, and there are also passages which to me at present are unintelligible and enigmatic. But the Books, interpreted as a whole, are charged through and through with a message which is, I believe, of vital value to the modern man. Those who talk of the other-worldism and unpractical character of the Upanishads forget that the Rishis or Seers who composed them were householders, men possessed of practical wisdom,

practical idealists; men who had entered the stream of life and who taught their pupils, not as arm-chair academicians, but as Seers of the Secret of Life. The teachings embodied in these Books were given also to students who were in due course to become householders themselves; and the Great Ones who gave the teachings were men who more than once had been familiar with the problems of civilization and social development. In the Books, for example, the world is represented as a growing tree, which is an anticipation of what we call today the organic conception of Society.

The Upanishads undoubtedly have a message for the modern mind. It is a message of obedience to the laws of life; and according to my reading of the thought of the Rishis, there are four fundamental laws of life. One of these is the Law of Veracity. Our public life is poor because it is a life of compromise and conformity, our civilization is full of contradictions. The Law of Veracity says to us: Be loyal to your higher impulses, convictions and aspirations; worship the Truth in the face of the world's opposition, and though you be poor and obscure, your work will abide and your words will not pass away. Remember, your deepest Self is God; why then be afraid of the world? Another law is the Law of Dharma or Duty. To do one's duty is to be Brahman-like, God-like. What is Brahman? The answer given over and over again in the Upanishads is: Brahman is *Ananda* (the Spirit of Joy). God is joy, love is joy, and your duty is to communicate joy to those who come within the sphere of your influence. Look around you, into your homes and streets and shops, into your schools and colleges and temples, at your activities, organizations and associations, do you see the play of joy? Look into the faces of the students: do they show that they feel the joy of knowledge? Look into your offices, do you see joy in the faces of the clerks? Look into your

streets and see the laborers: are they happy? Look into your homes, into your temples, do you find joy dwelling therein? Examine the condition of the poor people, do they appear as sons of Eternal Joy?

The third great law is the Law of Race Solidarity. When the pupil in ancient India finished his course of studies, he came to the Teacher, the *Guru*, for blessings and advice; and the *Guru* in his parting message to the student about to enter the world said: "See that the thread of your race is not broken." Patriots—Poets they were, the Singers of the Upanishads; they had a profound perception of this Law of Race Solidarity. . . . Emphasis is also laid on body-building in these Books. It is wrong to say that the Upanishads ignore or despise the material basis of life. The body, the *Sthula-sharira*, is in these Books regarded as a mystic temple of the Highest; so it was that every student had to take the vow of *Brahmacharya* (continence and purity). Another thing on which emphasis is laid is Nature communion. "Hearken to the Soul of Nature," said the great Zoroaster; so sang also the Poet-Prophets of the Upanishads. They had faith in Nature more than in machinery; they believed in the value of silence-periods. Our bodies and minds are in the midst of disturbing influences; when shall we realize that there is strength in silence; that in the silence-periods sound the voices of Nature which speak not in crowded cities; that in the silence come the mighty stirrings of the Spirit? Such periods of quiet communion with the wonder of Nature will train our will towards life and prepare us for real service. Great thoughts, great ideas, great resolutions are born, not in the stormy days of life's fever, but in the periods of close fellowship with the simple and profound secrets of Nature.

The fourth great law of life discerned by the Upanishads is the Law of Self-Renunciation. "Rejoice in the Lord

through self-renunciation"—such is the declaration of the Books. The world, according to these Singers of the Upanishads, is an act of Divine sacrifice; the universe is God's self-offering of joy; and over and over again is the teaching given concerning the joy of giving, the joy of sacrifice. This is the great message of the Upanishads to you, to me, to every one who means to play his part in the struggles and strivings of the modern world. There is a touching little story of a pupil who, after a good deal of study and practice in the art of singing, comes to the music master, sings in his presence and waits for his verdict. "You sing well," says the master, "you sing well, but you will never sing divinely until you have offered your all on the altar of love." So spoke the master to his pupil, so I whisper to you tonight. You may come and tell me: "But we have no great talents; we have none of the world's treasure; we are poor and unknown; what can we give?" And I say, why call yourselves poor? Are you not sons of the Eternal? Princes are you all, why then regard yourselves as weak? The world's treasure—earth's silver and gold, titles and pomp and power and dominion—not these the need of the world. You have what God wants,—your aspiration, your thoughts of sympathy, your love and service. Offer these, offer your little at the altar of Love. (From *The Vedanta-Kesari*, Madras.)

A new philosophy we can hardly expect, or wish for; since indeed the same germinal thoughts of the Vedic authors come all the way down history even to Schopenhaur and Whitman, inspiring philosophy after philosophy and religion after religion. But it is only today that our knowledge of the world enables us to recognize this immense *consensus*: and it is only today that Science, with its huge conquests in the material plans, is able to provide—for these old-world

principles—somewhat of a new form, and so wonderful a garment of illustration and expression as it does. The philosophy of the Upanishads was nothing if not practical.

—*Edward Carpenter.*

Go to the East; and as a limit to your horizon, to India. Cast your eyes over the universal symbolism which is everywhere obvious, and everywhere doubtless expressive; and seek with candor and sincerity, what it expresses . . . Beneath all this there is, undoubtedly, some idea; but what is it? For myself, I confess that very often, notwithstanding some preliminary studies, as I consider anew the monuments of this ancient civilization, my opinions bend and are troubled. But I need only read some pages of a philosophical work of that period, and at once order, clearness, and precision, return into my thoughts. A great and sure light spreads over this mysterious civilization; and the whole spirit of its worship, of its arts and of its laws, reflected upon this single point, is wholly revealed.

—*Victor Cousin.*

REPORTS.

On the evening of the 31st of May Swami Paramananda gave his annual dinner to the students and friends of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, as usual the dishes being all prepared by the Swami himself. About fifty guests were present and were seated at tables in the library of the Centre. The key-note of the intellectual feast of the evening was Emerson, introduced by Mr. Clark who gave his personal reminiscences of the great Philosopher-Poet. The subject was suggested by a series of lectures which the Swami had recently given on Emerson and Vedanta. Mr. Orth then followed with some delightful remarks concerning Liszt and both he and Mr. Clark expressed personal gratitude to the

Swami and the teaching. Mrs. Jones spoke most gracefully and appreciatively and Miss Sherwood, the Secretary of the Centre gave a short talk on the spread of the work in Los Angeles. Mrs. Spaulding in her usual happy vein called attention to the fact that under the Vedanta roof real Internationalism could be found, and there all peoples could meet on a common ground of brotherhood and peace. It was a remarkable fact that in this small gathering there were Spanish, French, Swiss, German, English, Canadians, Hindus and Americans. The Swami spoke several times as he introduced the speakers and made the connecting links between the addresses, giving the words of welcome and the final ones of peace and good-will. Everyone pronounced the occasion one of the most delightful ever held at the Centre and there was a standing vote of thanks given to the Swami and also a message of loving greeting was sent to Sister Devamata who is now conducting the work in Los Angeles.

* * * * *

Although the usual season of work in Washington was reduced this year to one week only, it proved as rich in results as the much longer seasons of previous years. During her brief stay Sister Devamata delivered three public lectures and held three classes, besides which she gave a talk at the National New Thought Centre. Her days were also filled with personal interviews. The practical value of the teaching seemed to impress people as never before, and a large number of strangers came regularly to the meetings and sought personal help as well. The seating capacity of the hall proved inadequate at the first lecture, and at the final one between thirty and forty people stood through the entire meeting. On leaving Washington Sister Devamata went directly to Los Angeles, where for the present she will remain in charge of the Vedanta Centre there. Besides the regular Sunday morning service and bi-weekly classes, she has begun a course of public lectures which will continue throughout the month of June.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

JUL 30 1917
The
Message of the East



JULY 1917

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"Light shall come again from the East"
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VOL. VI.

JULY, 1917.

No. 7.

FAITH AND SELF-RELIANCE.

By Swami Paramananda.

The Bhagavad-Gita declares that the man of unflinching faith who has mastered his senses attains wisdom, and having attained wisdom, he enjoys supreme peace; but for the one who lacks in faith there is happiness neither in this world nor the next, because he destroys his own happiness by his doubting nature. Then in another chapter it says: "Let a man raise himself by his own Self". Thus in these two passages there seem to run two apparently opposing principles, one of faith and one of self-reliance; and the question inevitably arises in our minds, how can we harmonize these two? If we have unwavering faith in God and leave everything to Him as the only Doer, there is nothing left for us to accomplish by our own individual will. Where then is the place for self-reliance? A man who trusts in God cannot trust in himself. Looking from the outside, these two ideals seem to contradict each other; yet there is not so much difference between them as we imagine. True self-reliance does not mean reliance on one's physical strength; it means reliance on something mightier, something which is less perishable. When through discrimination we can realize our identity with That which is Invisible and Unchangeable, we are able to trust in That and

not become proud or self-satisfied. Often we think that if a man believes too much in his own power, he will grow arrogant and lose his dependence on God. That is true of an ordinary human being who does not see beneath the surface of his nature ; but one who has full use of his discriminative faculty and has learned to distinguish between the real and the unreal, knows where to place his trust. He bases his faith on the invisible and unchangeable essence of his being, which is not made of flesh, and thus he becomes truly self-reliant.

The Sanskrit term *Shraddha* has a more comprehensive meaning than the English word faith ; it means a sense of trust in one's Higher Self, in that which is more than body and which sustains the body. Until this deeper faith is awakened in a man, he will take the attitude of being the doer and depend upon his own human powers ; and they will always fail him. True discrimination alone can show the way to true self-reliance, and also it alone gives us true faith. Do not imagine that anyone can have true faith in God who has not faith in himself. The coward or weakling never has faith in God. He may pretend that he has, but he invariably falls when he meets with difficulties in the practical problems of life. It is only the spiritually strong man who can have real faith in God and faith in himself as part of God. Self-reliance does not mean arrogance ; on the contrary, it may mean exceeding humility. Arrogance is the result of ignorance, or the identification of the self with the body and with physical conditions ; whereas the truly self-reliant man is one who has faith in his Divine nature only, and therefore he can face even death without being moved or frightened.

The dualist's point of view, that we should surrender absolutely to God and never exert our own will, is true ; and so

also is the monist right when he recognizes only one Principle, one Cosmic Power and that Power within man, declaring: "Thou art That. Know thy Self, for thou art That which thou art seeking." These two conceptions are not antagonistic, they merely represent different stages of development. As our spiritual vision is unfolded, we come to perceive that every individual being is a part of the Cosmic Being. When we feel our separation from That and are conscious of nothing beyond our physical existence, our powers are limited and it would be wrong for us to take the monistic standpoint and say as Christ said: "I and my Father are one." If we wish to invoke the Divine Being, we must take the dualist's point of view, looking upon ourselves as separate beings with limited powers and trying to invoke that which is Unlimited, Infinite, beyond all imperfection. At first we naturally rely more on ourselves than on God. As we go on praying and surrendering, however, and learn through success and failure, happiness and misery, that we cannot depend too much on our own strength, but that there is Something behind us according to whose will everything is happening in this universe, we grow wise and decide to give up, saying "Not my will but Thine be done."

We cannot hope to do this at the very outset. As long as we feel that we ourselves have power to accomplish certain things, it would be a mistake for us to regard this power as false. What we should do is to relate this little power with the Cosmic Power. It is not wrong for a man to trust in himself, if he knows what is trustworthy in his nature; but if he trusts only in the false and unreal, then he is disappointed and defeats his own purpose. Self-reliance is not egotism. It means trusting in the spiritual, having more faith in that which is Imperishable and less in fleeting things. Such self-reliance however, is only possible for

the man who follows the path of righteousness. It is only as we awaken the latent Divinity within us and come to know our Higher Self that we gain true faith. Actually it does not matter what method we adopt, whether of faith or self-reliance; both mean a struggle to relate ourselves with that One Being whom we call God or the Infinite Spirit or Truth. It is One without a second; and until we have established relationship with that One by cultivating moral strength, we shall not find peace. But we cannot do this until we are willing to live the life. We must conquer all our lower propensities, we must seek to discover that part of our being which is infinite. Only so shall we gain the courage and wisdom necessary to carry us Godward.

So long as we believe in our heart of hearts that our capacity is limited and we grow anxious or unhappy, we are lacking in faith. One who truly trusts in God has no right to be anxious about anything. He never loses his sense of complete surrender. This state of mind is not born of any special condition of life, it is a matter of individual unfoldment. A beggar can have just as much arrogance and egotism in identifying himself with his poverty as the rich man in identifying himself with his riches; both are equally far from the goal. One who has spiritual vision does not care where he may be placed; whether in the midst of turmoil or in the quietness of solitude, he maintains his inner balance; and we read in the Scriptures, he who is self-possessed—that is, possessed by his Higher Self—and who by the sword of wisdom has cut asunder the doubt born of the lower self has reached the highest. This is the goal of all living beings. We are all consciously or unconsciously marching towards that goal; but unless we follow a practical method, we shall not attain it. No amount of theory or imagination can help us gain it. Every religion

or philosophy offers us some method, based either on self-reliance or self-surrender, and it is for us to choose one or the other and practise it.

The idea of faith is often misunderstood by people, because they associate it with those who are ignorant, uneducated, and who have no power to investigate for themselves. But faith is not blind belief. It is never well founded until it is based on experience. Vedanta teaches that each individual must prove everything for himself before he can have faith. Realization is the basis of all true faith. Otherwise, if we merely believe without knowing, we are no better than the parrot who may be taught to repeat holy names, but who, as soon as it sees a cat approaching, forgets everything and only utters its natural cry. In the same way we may have wonderful theoretical ideals; but until we have put them into practice and proved them by experience, we are powerless to withstand the difficulties which confront us every day. A superficial acceptance of any religion is not faith. Religion is never a question of following a creed or attending a church. Religion is something which every individual must work out for himself or herself; and we cannot call ourselves religious until through our life we prove the reality of God and the reality of our own Soul. Merely talking about lofty ideals does not make us religious. Therefore again and again we are reminded by the Vedic Seers that we must live our religion, we must practise. Until we have penetrated to the depth of our being and perceived our own possibilities, we cannot fathom anything; there will always be many things which will remain obscure to us. Now doubt of self rises because we do not know what we are. Instead of believing that we have a mighty, indestructible Soul, we believe in death and are afraid to die. Our conception of immortality is based on words only.

Therefore we should try to get a glimpse of That which is beyond. This we are asked to do by all great Teachers.

But how can we do it? We must apply either one or the other of these ideals. The two ways are open to us all. If it appeals to you to trust in God and not depend on yourself, then do it. Even when you fail and everything is crumbling around you, hold fast to your faith in God; know that He is all-loving, all-protecting. If you can do this, you will find yourself protected and guided at every moment. If that ideal does not appeal to you, then seek within yourself, find what is Real, and do not be deluded by that which is perishable and limited. Some people are naturally energetic and egotistic and find it difficult to have faith; but if they can direct their activities inward and begin to investigate their own nature, they will in time through their spiritual seeking gain possession of That which is imperishable. Then they will realize what the monists declare: "I am He. There is no difference between me and that Infinite Spirit; for this body is not my whole being; I am Spirit, I am the Soul, I am one with God." Thus they will be able to shake off all imperfections and limitations. Often people say: "I am all-Good, I am all-Truth;" but their actions betray them. They do not live out their words and such theoretical statements weaken rather than strengthen their spiritual faith. One who recognizes the value of an Ideal should put it into practice, not misuse it. What we need is to apply the ideals which are given to us in the different Bibles of the world and prove ourselves true to them. Difficulties are sure to arise, but they are not permanent; they come and go. Whenever we meet them, we must remember that they are born of finite conditions and are bound to disappear. We must maintain our balance and keep our faith unflinching.

There is but one goal and that is to transcend the limitations of our body and mind, and through our thoughts and deeds to strengthen our spiritual nature. Only as we are able to serve our Ideal will our limitations disappear. One who serves his Ideal faithfully, even though no one may recognize what he is doing or give him credit for it, will expand; and with him his Ideal will also expand. Until we can enrich our lives and make all our thoughts and actions worthy of the Divine Being, we cannot have true faith either in ourselves or in God. One who does not do right, who does not speak the Truth, how can he have faith in anything? But when we learn to live worthily, faith in ourselves increases and faith in God increases in the same proportion. We believe then that we are children of God, children of immortality, that nothing can destroy us; and this idea at once takes away all our impatience and selfishness, all our jealousy, intolerance and narrowness. We do not feel any weakness, because we know that the Infinite Ocean of strength is flowing into us so long as we keep the channel open. We do not want to take from others, because we know that there are infinite possessions behind us. As through discrimination and spiritual vision we thus realize our own Divine heritage, we are able to take our stand as human beings and as worthy children of God; then only can we do our duty towards our fellowmen. When we prove the reality of our spiritual nature, not only do we help and bless ourselves, but we bless many. Think of the influence of a spiritual character on others! It lasts through the ages. The message which Buddha gave five hundred years before the Christian era still lives. A spiritual Ideal always gives inspiration to others; and whenever we begin to unfold our spiritual nature, we bring benediction to mankind. Therefore we must believe in our power to unfold. We

must become more trusting in God and we must have greater faith in ourselves. We must cease to put our trust in things which are fleeting and perishable. At every step of our life let us use discrimination, let all our actions be guided not by impulse but by wisdom, and let us seek that wisdom from the Infinite Source.

BENGALEE HYMN.

(Translated especially for "The Message of the East")

O Lord! The embodiment of All-Goodness art Thou. This
do I know;
For all the day come new proofs of Thy Mercy.
Happiness or misery do Thou send me as Thou deemest
best;
Naught can affright me.
But whatever Thou willest, this only I pray—do not leave
me.
Come! Come within my heart, O Lord!
Then must all be well with me;
For I know, Gracious Lord, that Thou art the embodiment
of All-Goodness.

Since the last end of man is the union of the soul with God as the beginning and centre of all things; and since this union consists in love, which cannot be without an entire conformity of our will with the will of God; the order of things requires that we should now apply ourselves to the contemplation of this heavenly virtue. This conformity is defined as "a habitual disposition of the soul, in which one is always ready to do or to suffer whatever is pleasing to God."

— *Saint Ignatius of Loyola.*

THE NEED OF AN IDEAL.

By Sister Devamata.

When a child begins to write, he is given a copybook with a line at the top of each page to copy. If he wishes to draw, a plaster cast or some simple object is put before him as model. Does he take up music, the teacher places her hand in the right position on the keys to show him how he must hold his. Imitation of something lies at the bottom of all education and growth. The baby learns to walk and talk by watching or listening to others. His elders serve as a constant suggestion and stimulus to his unfolding powers and his chief ambition is to reproduce them. Within him undoubtedly there is an impelling desire for self-expression, but the form which such expression takes is largely determined by his outer environment and association. One of the first conscious acts of the growing boy or girl is the choice of some example to follow—a bigger brother or sister, some hero of the hour, a character in history, or perhaps only a champion ball-player. Whatever the bent of mind or age, always every human being is measuring up to some abstract or concrete ideal that towers above the level of his own capacity. Even the thief looks to some defter thief as model. Never can man, however vain, cover his own horizon line; the greatest sting to his vanity is that there is always something in the unseen beyond which overshadows him and reminds him of his littleness. He cannot be his own god, however he may try. Behind every created form one senses the presence of a faultless pattern, the archetype or prototype, as Plato called it, which Nature is vainly striving to make manifest. Everywhere the Absolute Ideal beckons and evades us, luring us on to final perfection.

No living being is without some ideal. Each act he per-

forms presupposes one. But with the great majority, it remains vague and shifting; and that is why most human lives are so fruitless and disappointing. In target practice, we know, the bull's eye must be clearly defined, otherwise the gunner's aim will be wavering and his shot ineffective. So in life and especially in the spiritual life. We must have some definite, concrete Ideal to follow, in the beginning at least. As we advance, it will spontaneously grow more subtle and abstract. But we are children in the spiritual world and everything must be made distinct for the child mind. An oral definition or a sign of the hand is not enough; the letter or figure must be drawn large on a blackboard. The object-lesson is vital in early training. It was the recognition of this need which led in India to the system of discipleship as the best means of attaining spiritual efficiency, just as in mediaeval Europe apprenticeship was considered essential to secular efficiency. When the soul-consciousness awakens, the first step, according to Indian teaching, is to find the Guru or Master who embodies the Ideal and who will thus provide a model which the disciple may copy. Close daily association with a holy life is regarded as the surest means of gaining holiness; and no instruction imparted through precepts is believed to be so potent as that of a living example held constantly before the eyes. We know how sometimes even to read of a saintly character will kindle a new fire of devotion in our hearts.

It was to give us definite ideals of godliness that all the Saviours came to earth; and one of the chief marks of their greatness is the precision and definiteness of their teaching. Nothing is left vague or hazy. To Jesus the Father in Heaven was not a subtle metaphysical abstraction. He was more real than any earthly father and the relation He bore to Him was as familiar and intimate. This is one of

the fundamental lessons of His life,—that God must be to us a living, pulsing reality. We cannot love air or fire or water, even though we recognize that they are necessary to our physical existence, because they are without outline and evasive; so as long as the Supreme remains to us a vague, undefined Principle, we shall never feel true love for Him and by love alone can we gain union with Him. We must bring him near to our hearts by entering into some natural relation with Him.

To many it may seem a superstition to conceive of Deity in so human and so familiar an aspect. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem even denounced it as blasphemy, when a half century before Christ's birth Rabbi Hillel, the leader of the Hellenic movement which then swept over Palestine, began to preach the Fatherhood of God. But this prejudice is based wholly on a misconception of the reason and purpose of a clearly defined Ideal in the spiritual life. It is not meant to represent or describe the Infinite. A sum-total of all conceivable names and relationships could not do that; the Infinite would still remain undefined and indescribable. Its purpose is to create a point of contact with God. We can never by any effort of ours gain knowledge of the Absolute. The lesser can never compass the greater. It is He who must reveal Himself to us. "He whom the Divine Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained," the Vedic Scriptures declare; and that one is chosen who is seeking knowledge of the Higher Self. Only he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. Our heart must be turned towards God. In ordinary life we do not attempt to explain anything to a person whose attention is wholly fixed in another direction; so God knows that it is useless to try to reach us so long as our thought is absorbed in other things. It is not easy, however, even for the earnest

seeker to fix his attention upon a formless abstraction; there is nothing upon which to fasten and the heart wanders. Let the Supreme Being, on the contrary, become to us a definite conception,—a real Mother, a real Father, a real Friend and Companion; at once it grows easy to think of Him and live with Him, a point of contact is established, and He can gradually reveal to us all aspects of His Divine Being.

If it is less difficult for us to acquire this sense of unbroken association with the Divine through some visible form—a God-illuminated character or an Incarnation—then we should take that one which makes the strongest appeal to our spiritual nature and follow him with steadfast devotion. It matters not through what channel we gain contact with God; it is enough to touch Him at any point and salvation is ours. He who purifies himself by unfaltering service to his Ideal “easily attains the infinite bliss born of contact with the Supreme;” such is the promise of the Bhagavad-Gita. We must never forget, however, whatever the lesser example we hold before us, that God is the Supreme Goal. The Gita lays insistent stress on this. All our life and effort must be directed towards Him alone, and only those interests and associations should be cultivated which strengthen our relation with Him. Whatever obscures His Face and weakens our yearning for His companionship must be eliminated, no matter at what sacrifice of worldly advantage. We must seek out those who stimulate us on the God-side, and gradually withdraw from those who foster the thoughts and habits that smother our higher impulses. Nor is this selfishness. To what end do we live among our fellowmen? Is it to pamper them in their weaknesses or to benefit them? If to benefit them, then what greater good can we do them than to lead them to loftier ideals by being true to our own?

But it is not enough to possess an Ideal; we must make it a working model after which our whole life is patterned. It would profit the child little to carry his copybook round under his arm, he must fill its pages with pothooks and letters. An Ideal is equally useless to us unless we are striving to follow it day by day and hour by hour. We must meditate on the character, the life, the words, all that the Ideal represents and try to reproduce that in ourselves. If we desire to match a color, we go from shop to shop always laying our sample against each piece of cloth shown us; in the same way we should refer each act and thought and word to our Ideal. This will keep us open to its purifying influence and gradually we shall form the habit of constant communion with it. We do not realize that spirituality is a habit, courage and steadfastness and singleness of heart are habits; and the easiest method of forming these habits is by association, either in thought or in outer life, with one who possesses them. When we live with people, unconsciously we grow to talk and walk and act like them; and when we live every moment with a pure Ideal, quickly do we grow to resemble it. Man must always imitate something. He must strive for something. Let him take whatever seems holiest and highest to him, keep that before him, copy it, think of it, serve it, love it; little by little it will fade away and in its place will stand the Supreme Ideal, God Himself.

Dost thou of a truth desire Him the Hidden to discover?
Then go look for Him, O seeker, with the longing of a
lover;
Go not groping in the dark with learning's horny lantern
dim,
Borrow eyes of those who love Him; thus, O seeker, look
for Him.

—*Jalaluddin Rumi.*

REVEL IN BLISS.*By the Tamil Poet Tayumanavar.*

The Light which is the beginning and hath no beginning, which shineth in me as Bliss and Thought, appeared as the Silent One. He spake to me, sister, words not to be spoken.

The words that were spoken, how shall I tell? Cunningly He seated me all alone with nothing before me. He made me happy, beloved, He grasped me and clung to me.

He bade me put all other things aside and cling to Him within. What I got as I clung to Him, how shall I tell? He spake of things never spoken, beloved.

I had wandered about, babbling, telling of untold woes, a mere devil-ridden body. But the Lord drove away the demon of desire, and held me down at His feet, beloved.

Holding down, withdrawing the senses, I gathered love for His form. He folded me unto Himself, sister, and blended with me so that I could not speak at all.

"Whatsoever thy heart hitherto hath looked upon in its thought as real and unreal, cast away," said my Lord, and He made me Himself. Behold His cunning, sister.

"The earthly and other elements thou art not; reflect—the earthly organs of action and sense thou art not. Thou art pondering Thought." Blissful are the words that the Lord spoke in love, sister.

To His lovers He is love; He is true, my Lord. The blissful Silent One, the gracious Master, laid His foot on my head. Lo, I knew myself, I died to sense.

I considered how death and birth came to be companions to me. They grew, beloved, from the treacherous illusive Sense which is alike oblivion and thought.

O Sense, was it not for me that God came under the banyan tree as the Silent Teacher, and with dumb show of

hand annulled the works that were mine and set me in the blissful ocean of His Grace?

“Think not in thy heart of Me as other than thee; be thou without second.” When he uttered this one word, how can I tell the bliss that grew from that word?

The field where grew the bliss of Siva, that pure space I drew near. Weeding out the weeds of darkness, I then looked. Save the Lord’s splendor, I saw naught, sister.

Life, the laughing-stock of all that see, with both our eyes we see depart; it passeth away as in sleep. Say, what good, what merit, is there in it, sister?

To me who knew naught of good, He granted the search for the pure Stillness that is beyond the Sound. He rid me of all unrest, the all-powerful One; with his foot He struck my head, sister.

The blessed Light of Bliss that struck me by His grace made me, who am less than an atom, into perfect Fulness without motion hither or thither. Lo, the strangeness of it, sister.

Making, maintaining, destroying—all these are the works of the Almighty, yet they touch Him not, not so much as a grain of sesame. On this true Witness it is well to think, sister.

There Thought is born, there Thought dieth away and is purified; there all states are; there I who see am standing without second.

Is there a “there” or a “here” when the glory of the Trinity of Being, Thought, and Bliss hath been seen arising and spreading abroad in undivided manifestation? Can we speak then of *one* or *two*?

Is there a Yea and a Nay? If thou wouldst have bliss, thou wilt know it by abiding awhile as Understanding: thus is the mystic rule that our Lord spake, sister.

GOD-LOVE.

Extract by Swami Vivekananda.

Why a man should love God is the question to be solved; and until we understand that, we shall not be able to grasp the subject of *Bhakti* (devotion) at all. There are two entirely different ideals of life. A man of any country who has any religion knows that he is a body and a spirit also. In Western countries, as a rule, people lay more stress on the body aspect of man; those philosophers who have written on *Bhakti* in India lay stress on the spiritual side of man; and this difference seems to be typical of Oriental and Occidental nations. It is so even in common language. In England, when speaking of death, it is said a man gives up the ghost; in India, a man gives up his body. The one idea is that man *is* a body and *has* a soul, the other that man *is* a soul and *has* a body. It naturally follows that the ideal which holds that man is a body and has a soul, lays all the stress on the body. If you ask why man lives, you will be told that it is to enjoy the senses, to enjoy possessions and wealth. He cannot dream of anything beyond, even if he is told of it; his idea of a future life will be a continuation of this enjoyment. He is very sorry that it cannot continue all the time here, but he has to depart; so he thinks that somehow or other he will go to some place where the same thing will be renewed. He will have the same enjoyments, the same senses, only heightened and strengthened. He wants to worship God because God is the means to attain his end. The goal of his life is enjoyment of sense objects, and he comes to know that there is a Being who can give him a very long lease of these enjoyments; that is why he worships God.

The Indian idea, on the other hand, is that God is the goal of life; there is nothing beyond God, and these sense enjoy-

ments are simply something through which we are passing now in the hope of getting better things. Not only so; it would be disastrous and terrible if man had nothing but sense enjoyments. In our everyday life we find that the less the sense enjoyments, the higher the life of the man. And the lower the man, also the more delight he finds in the senses. As he rises higher, the goal becomes reason and love. In proportion as these faculties develop, he loses the power of enjoying the senses. For illustration's sake, if you take for granted that a certain amount of power is given to man and can be spent either on the body, or the mind, or the Spirit; then all the power spent on any one of these leaves just so much less to be expended on the others. The ignorant or savage races have much stronger sensual faculties than the civilized races; and this is, in fact, one of the lessons we learn from history,—that as a nation becomes civilized, the nerve organization becomes finer and it becomes physically weaker. Civilize a savage race and you will find the same thing: another barbarian race comes up and conquers it. It is nearly always the barbarian race that conquers. We see then that if we desire only to have sense enjoyments all the time, we degrade ourselves to the brute state.

We cannot conceive of any higher enjoyment than that of love, but this word has different meanings. It does not mean the ordinary selfish love of the world; it is blasphemy to call this love. That love which is perfectly unselfish is the only love and that is of God. It is a very difficult thing to attain to. No one in this world can really love anything but God. Man finds out that human love is all hollow. Men cannot love, though they talk of it. A finite object cannot love, nor a finite object be loved. When the object of the love of a man is dying every moment and his mind also is

constantly changing as he grows, what eternal love can you expect to find in the world? There cannot be any real love but in God, why then all these loves? These are mere stages. There is a power behind impelling us forward; we do not know where to seek for the real object, but this love is sending us forward in search of it. Again and again we find out our mistake. We grasp something and find it slips through our fingers; then we grasp something else. Thus on and on we go, till at last comes light. We come to God, the only One who loves. His love knows no change and is ever ready to take us in. How long would any of you bear with me if I injured you? He in whose mind is no anger, hatred or envy, who is he but God?

But the path to God is long and difficult, and very few people attain Him. We are all babies struggling. A few men in a century attain to that love of God and the whole country becomes blessed and hallowed. It is true that few such are born in any one century in the whole world, but all should strive to attain that love of God. Who knows but you or I may be the next to attain? Let us struggle therefore. We always find that when more intense objects of love come to us the previous love slowly vanishes. Children at school think of their schoolfellows as the dearest beings that they have in life, or their fathers or mothers; then comes the husband or wife and immediately the old feeling disappears and the new love becomes uppermost. One star rises; another bigger one comes; then a still bigger one; and at last the sun comes and all the lesser lights vanish. That sun is God. The stars are the smaller loves. When that sun bursts upon him a man becomes mad, what Emerson calls "a God-intoxicated man." He becomes transfigured into God, everything is merged in that one ocean of love.

THE STORY OF PRAHLADA.

There was a great king of the Daityas called Hiranyakashipu. He had succeeded in vanquishing his cousins, the Devas, and having seated himself upon the throne of the heavens, he ruled over the three worlds. Believing himself invincible and above all living beings, he made a proclamation declaring that he was God of the whole universe, that like unto him there was none, not even the mighty Lord Vishnu, therefore all worship should henceforth be offered to him alone. But Hiranyakashipu had a son, whose name was Prahlada. From his babyhood the boy was devoted to God. Perceiving this tendency in his son, the king of the Daityas, fearful lest in his own family there might rise one to cloud his glory, gave the boy to the care of two teachers, Shanda and Amarkya, who were enjoined never to allow Prahlada to hear the name of God.

The prince was taken to their home and placed among their pupils. But the lad, instead of studying his lessons, spent all his time in teaching his playmates how to worship the Most High. When Shanda and Amarkya discovered this, they were filled with terror, for the great king Hiranyakashipu was cruel and relentless and they feared his wrath. They did their utmost to silence the child, but worship was as natural to him as breathing and he could not remember to obey them. To protect themselves they appealed to the king, saying that the prince was corrupting the whole school by teaching everyone to worship the Lord Vishnu.

When his father heard it, he grew very angry and summoned his son. First he tried gently to dissuade the boy from his devotion to Vishnu and to convince him that he, the king, was the only Lord to be worshipped. But Prahlada continued to declare that worship belonged only to the

Lord of the Universe, for even the king himself held his throne only by the grace of the Supreme. Then the wrath of Hiranyakashipu passed beyond all bounds and he ordered his son to be killed. The soldiers struck the lad again and again with sharp weapons, but the child's thought was so fixed on God that he felt no pain. This frightened the angry Sovereign, yet he dared not desist, for his own power and authority were at stake, so he determined to torture the boy into submission. He had him thrown under the feet of a wild elephant, but the boy's body resisted as if it were a rod of iron; it could not be crushed.

Next they threw him over a high precipice; but taking the Name of the Lord, Pralada dropped softly on the earth as a flower petal on a tuft of moss. Then he was plunged into boiling oil, but he remained unharmed. At last the king commanded him to be bound to a mighty sea-serpent and cast to the bottom of the ocean; but the boy as he plunged cried out: "Salutation to Thee, Lord of the Universe, Thou All-Glorious One!" At once the water, the serpent, all the perils of the deep vanished and he felt the loving arms of the Supreme Protector enfolding him. He seemed one with God; one with every danger that threatened him, one with the sea, one with the mighty monster glaring at him. Everywhere he turned he saw God, what could he fear? Suddenly the snake-bonds snapped, the ocean heaved and a motherly wave layed him tenderly on the beach. As Prahlada stood gazing at the receding waters, all earthly things fell from him. He forgot that he had a mortal body, time stood still, space melted away, his consciousness merged in the Infinite Consciousness and he passed into an indescribable ecstasy of bliss.

When the king found that the boy could not be destroyed by mortal means, he again made gentle appeal to him to

honor God in the father's form ; but Prahlada still refused to bow before him. Then the king determined to bend his spirit by subtler means ; so he sent him back to Shanda and Amarkya with the command that he be instructed in the duties of a ruler. But Prahlada paid little heed to their words and all the day he talked to his playmates of the joy of devotion to the Ruler of the world.

Then Hiranyakashipu gave way to uncontrollable passion and sending for the boy, he heaped upon him the most violent abuse. The boy watched him with quiet wondering eyes and still proclaimed that God alone was Lord of all. "This God of yours," the king roared, "if he be omnipresent is he perchance in yonder carven pillar?" "He is," the child replied with unwavering conviction. "Then let him defend himself and thee," the king cried striking a deadly blow at the pillar as he rushed upon it with uplifted sword. A thundering voice was heard and out of the pillar sprang a terrifying form. The Daityas fled in all directions panic-stricken ; but Hiranyakashipu fought long and desperately until he was finally overpowered and killed.

Then the Devas descended from the heavens and sang joyous hymns of praise to the Most High. Prahlada also fell prostrate and poured forth his heart in humble devotion. As he prayed, he heard the voice of God saying : "Thou art my beloved child. Ask, Prahlada, ask anything. It shall be given thee." But Prahlada replied : "For what, O Lord, can I ask? I have seen and know Thee. Tempt me not, O Gracious Lord, with gifts either of this earth or of the heavens". But again the voice insisted : "Yet ask of Me one boon at least, my child." Then Prahlada replied : "That intense love which the ignorant bear towards earthly things, grant, O Lord, that I may have that intensity of love for Thee ; but only for love's sake."

EDUCATION IN INDIA

By Lady Katherine Stuart.

(Excerpt from address delivered before the East Indian Association, London.)

In the West we look upon education as a means to an end, that end being a livelihood to be earned; but in the East, where a man can make do with a mat, a garment, and one meal a day, a means of livelihood becomes a secondary consideration and education becomes the end and not the means. You do not learn to live, you live to learn, and you continue learning till you arrive at the burning-ghat, at the feet of a succession of Spiritual Gurus. True culture! This is the goal of life to an Oriental, not fame and fortune. He aspires to *be* rather than to *do*. The Indian believes firmly that ideas govern the world, and that the greatest thing a man can do for his day and generation is to enrich it with fresh thought.

A Hindu child, some ten or twelve years of age, showed a remarkable aptitude for Sanskrit. Help was afforded him in his studies by a European lady. Upon the road up to the hills, the boy contrived to lose a warm garment with which his parents had provided him, so it was proposed to supply him with another. The child steadily refused. "Mother," he said solemnly—"mother, do not give me *material* comforts, give me *wisdom*; then I shall not lose it by the way." A simple utterance, but eloquent of the Oriental attitude to life. In England *religion is for man*, in India *man is for religion*; and if man, how much more woman? Broadly speaking, if we ask ourselves: "Who is to teach England to be spiritual?" We must answer: "India." And again if we ask: "Who is to teach India to be practical?" We must reply: "England." May we not mutually accept this as the ultimate aim of the "Divinity that shapes our ends" in bringing us together?

In commenting on Lady Stuart's address, Lord Ronaldshay, the new Governor of Bengal, who presided, remarked:

"The whole life of India is built upon an atmosphere of religion; and this makes it all the more necessary that we should try to understand something of the spirit of Indian religious thought by recognizing that the religious practices of the country are characterized by much symbolism and are consequently open to much misunderstanding. I am quite sure that if once a man begins the study of the religions of India, he will very soon find himself absorbed in an intellectual life (a life in which religion and philosophy go hand in hand more harmoniously than anywhere else I know) transcending in interest that of any other country of which I have knowledge."

REPORTS.

A general Report of the Women's Work in Calcutta, carried on under the direction of the Ramakrishna Mission, has recently been received. The work was begun in 1901 by Sister Nivedita, under the personal inspiration of Swami Vivekananda; and was extended by Sister Christine, who since 1904 has been the ruling spirit in it, Sister Nivedita having devoted her energies chiefly to lecturing and writing during the last years of her life. The main centre of the work is in Bose Para Lane, where there is a Girls' School with an enrolment of 150 children and 37 advanced students. The Kindergarten system is employed during the first year, after which every effort is made to give the scholars a good foundation in their own language, with some knowledge of Sanskrit and English, also History, Geography, Arithmetic and the elements of Algebra and Geometry, cutting, sewing and painting. The advanced course, known as the Purdah Ladies' Department, consists of two divisions. In the one the young girls are given a more thorough schooling in the

branches already named, with instruction in modern scientific methods of teaching; in the other the students are carefully trained to be teachers and mistresses of schools. At the present time there are 14 widows in the first division and 6 married girls, whose husbands have been anxious to have them continue their education; and 17 ladies are following the normal course of the second division. The daily work of the school is being carried on by 13 of these ladies, and each member of the first division is also expected to teach the younger scholars two hours a day. For the last three years, during the absence of Sister Christine, the school has been conducted entirely by the older students under the direction of her assistant, Miss Sudhira Bose.

In 1914 a Home for women was established and its success has surpassed the expectations of its founders. The purpose of this *Matri-Mandir* or Temple of the Mother, as it is called, is to provide a home for Hindu girls who desire to devote their lives exclusively to the cause of education and service; and for a few select students who could not otherwise avail themselves of the privileges of the school. It also offers facilities to those who wish to learn nursing or some trade by which to earn their living.

* * * *

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the work during the past three months has shown unusual activity. The course of lectures given by Swami Paramananda on "Emerson and Vedanta" and "Plato and Vedic Idealism" brought an exceptionally large number of strangers to the Centre, many of whom have become regular attendants. The Swami has now left for the West where he will resume charge of the Services and Classes at the Los Angeles Centre. The two Sunday services and the Tuesday evening Class will continue at the Boston Centre, being conducted by Sister Devamata, who recently returned from Los Angeles.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

OCT 5 1917
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The Message of the East



OCTOBER 1917

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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Israel came from the way of the East"

Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"

Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. VI.

OCTOBER, 1917.

No. 8.

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

Class Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

There are many who claim that the universe is never really destroyed. Just as through the day many objects are visible, but on a dark night, although they are still there, they cannot be seen; so *Prahlaya* or dissolution, some say, is like that. The universe is still there, but cannot be perceived. Matter is indestructible. Forms come and forms go, but that which is behind all forms is indestructible, and that indestructible substance is called matter. Now there is a meeting here. It began at seven-thirty and will break up at eight-thirty; then the meeting will disappear, but those who formed the meeting will not vanish. In the same way the objects which constitute the universe may come and go, but that which makes up these objects does not go. For this reason forms are never real. Hence from this we learn that that which has a form, as a form, is not real. Only the formless can be real. A form, according to Geometry, is that which is bounded by lines; only that which is not bounded by lines, therefore, can be real, and that must be the infinite. Therefore the infinite alone is real and the infinite is God, hence God is the only reality.

The same reasoning applies to the human being. The Self which dwells in the body is not the body, so the

boundary line of the body is not its boundary line. Yet it is true that every part of this body is animated by the Self. If I touch your arm, I touch you, which shows that you are everywhere in the body. But although the Self or Soul is inside, it is not confined by the body. Now let us find out your boundary line. Your body exists, your mind exists and you exist. These three make up you,—body, mind and Self. But although you are connected with the body, yet every moment you prove that you are not the body, that it is merely something which you train and direct; therefore what is true of the body need not be true of you. Next, what is the mind? The mind is that which thinks, remembers and desires. So long as you have not arrived at a definite knowledge about a thing you keep on questioning and thinking. So thinking is the outcome of doubt. But Soul can have no doubt. It knows everything. Hence Soul or the Real Self within you is that which does not think; it is also that which does not will; for only he who doubts thinks and only he who desires wills. He who is perfectly rich desires nothing. Willing is based on desire, which comes from a sense of incompleteness, a lack somewhere. The Soul is free from self-will because it is wantless; and that which has no want is perfect, therefore the soul being free from want must be perfect.

Soul again can have no emotions. It has no anger, no pleasure or pain; for all these emotions create unrest and the Soul is absolutely calm. There is no wave in it. Emotion is a sign of weakness rather than of strength, for when an emotion agitates the mind it shows that the feeling is stronger than the mind and so overcomes it. But there is no feeling stronger than the Soul, hence it is never agitated. As Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, it is like the ocean into which many streams and rivers enter and are

lost, but it maintains its steady level. That undisturbed being goes by the name of Soul. You may add to it or take away from it, yet you can never increase or diminish it.

Thus studying body and mind, we see that they are limited; but Soul being different from body and mind, is unlimited. The body is born and grows. The mind, too, grows; the man's mind is not like the boy's mind. So body has growth and mind has growth; but this does not indicate greatness, it rather indicates weakness, because it shows them to be incomplete. But the Soul is that which never grows. It never changes. The boy at the high school is quite different from the baby in arms: the same body is not there, nor the same mind, but the same person is there. This proves to us that the Soul does not change. It is always the same. Therefore you must know that in your true nature you have no growth and if you do not grow, you do not change; and if you do not change, you must be all-full, all-perfect; and if you are all-perfect, you must be infinite.

It is that Self in you that knows. Do the eyes know anything or the ears? Does even the mind know anything? No, only when you come does this organism begin to perceive, will and remember. Mind can know only when you are there. The power of knowing is innate in you, it is not something you acquire; consciousness and you are synonymous. You are made up of consciousness. When this consciousness stands behind the mind as the astronomer behind the telescope, then it begins to know. Your eyes cannot see any more than the telescope sees the stars; nor can your ears hear, your tongue taste or your mind think. Being conscious also, you must be infinitely conscious, for consciousness is formless and hence is infinite. And if you are infinitely conscious,

you must be infinitely powerful. Nothing can overwhelm you. Food changes your body, what you hear and learn changes your mind, but nothing can change you. You are changeless and hence eternally calm. Also you must be birthless and deathless. But that which is formless, changeless, birthless and deathless is what is called Truth, so the Soul is Truth. The Soul again is eternal, peaceful, all-blissful, all-knowing; but this is what God is, and as things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, the Soul must be of like nature with God and one with Him. This is why the great Vedic Sages declare: "*Aham Brahmasmi*", "I am Brahman or one with the Absolute."

But who are you? "I" is the label of this bodily manifestation. It is born with body and dies with body. But we know that when this body is worn out, there is something in the body which does not die; and that principle within is called the *Jivatman* or individual soul. Body, mind and ego make up man; mind and ego make up the *Jivatman*. *Jivatman* is that which existed prior to this present body and will exist after this body, but always in connection with a body, either gross or subtle. It is constantly developing; with each body it may get different experiences. It leaves one body and goes to another, therefore it has motion; but the *Paramatman* or Supreme Self of man has no motion. It is changeless and infinite; and being infinite it must be one. *Jivatmans* are innumerable and their life is unlimited; *Ahamkaras* or egos are also innumerable, but they die; while the *Paramatman* is one and deathless. *Ahamkaras* are many, *Jivatmans* are many, but *Paramatman* is one. It is the centre of the circle; and as there are many radii which meet in one centre, so while as radii we are many, we are all one in the centre, the *Paramatman*.

This *Paramatman* or Supreme Self seems to be occupying this body, but in reality He is occupying all bodies. He is everywhere. And how can we know Him? By going into our own Soul. We can find Him when the fire of wisdom has burned up the dross and separated the real from the unreal in us. This *Paramatman* is Truth, and all power is in Truth. Whatever goes away from Truth must perish; so falsehood has no hope, while Truth is life itself. It is always perfect. Therefore our first duty should be to unite ourselves with Truth by clearly understanding that from Truth we have come and not from falsehood. Blessed are they who realize that they have come out of Truth, in Truth they live and into Truth they will merge. And unfortunate are they who believe that out of matter they have come and that it is this world which gives them life. They are thirsting for life and courting death; they are seeking misery, imagining it to be happiness; they are drinking poison and taking it for nectar.

We ought to stand alone and single, i. e., severed from the multitude and crowd of things born and decaying, lovers of eternity and unity, if we desire to cleave to One God and Lord.

—*Saint Augustine.*

THE LOVE OF THE SOUL.

By Jalalud-din Rumi. (Sufi Poet.)

The love of the Soul is for Life and the Living One,
 Because its origin is the Soul not bound to place.
 The Love of the Soul is for wisdom and knowledge,
 That of the body for houses, gardens, and vineyards;
 The love of the Soul is for things exalted on high,
 That of the body for acquisition of goods and food.
 The Love, too, of Him on High is directed to the Soul:
 Know this, for "He loves them that love Him."

INNER COMMUNION.

By Rabbi Bachye.

(A Jewish Teacher of Spain, 11th Century.)

Every human being is bound, in proportion to his mental gifts, to keep account with his Soul, and to calculate what service of heart and mind he owes the Creator. Such contemplation concerning the Deity and man's relation to the Creator will show the duty of concentrating the heart on God's unity and spirituality, and on His service; so that there is no other thought or intention in all that one does, except to do it for the sake of God alone, with no thought of human praise or of the fear of man, or of advantages or of the removal of dangers in this world or in a future state.

A man should commune with himself in reference to the desires of his heart and his worldly tastes; and a careful consideration of the ends they serve will lead him to look with contempt on ephemeral possessions; and his thoughts and desires will be fixed on the highest good, and on what is of eternal value to his mind and Soul; and he will learn to strive only for what is barely necessary of the things of this world. He will desire to be kept both from poverty and riches, so that he may have enough for simple healthy life; and he will yearn after wisdom and spiritual possessions, of which no one can rob him.

One should also consider well, in communing with his Soul, whether he has made the best use of any wealth that he may possess, doing good with it. And he should meditate also on the many ways in which one man can help another; and consider that he should love for others what he loves for himself, and hate for others what he hates for himself, rejoicing in their joy and grieving at their sorrow. And he should be full of compassion for them and ward off from them, to the utmost of his power, anything that may

injure them; as it is said (Levit. xix.), "And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The intention of all separation from the world is only so that one may concentrate the whole heart upon the one object of love for the Creator, and that one may be filled with longing to fulfil His will. This perfect love of God is the primary aim and intention, as well as the end and fulfillment of all obligations taught by Reason, by Scripture, or by Tradition. This love of God is the yearning of the Soul for the Creator, and her turning of her own accord towards Him, so that she may be united with His light, which is the highest. That is, that the Soul, which is herself pure spirit, inclines more than any other spiritual being to her like, and in her very nature recedes from that which is her opposite,—from gross matter.

They who love God will do all that is right, without the hope of reward; and will forsake all that is evil, without the fear of punishment. They will also have no fear of anything, or of any person, in this or any other world, except of the Creator alone. And they will be indifferent to the praise and blame of men in doing the will of God. They will be pure in body as well as in mind, and fly from evil deeds of all kinds. They will serve the Creator not only in obedience to the laws of revelation, some of which are only binding in given circumstances, but also in the duties that are commanded by Reason and Conscience, and with every good spiritual quality.

See then, Serenus, that the perfect man, full of human and divine virtues, can lose nothing; his goods are surrounded by strong and impassable walls. The ramparts which protect the wise man are safe from fire and hostile invasion. They afford no passage; they are lofty, impregnable, divine.

—*Seneca.*

THE BONDAGE OF IGNORANCE.

By Swami Paramananda.

Whenever we succeed in making ourselves silent, that is whenever we are able to withdraw from the external, then naturally and spontaneously we begin to talk with our own inner being. As a devout Saint of Bengal sings in a sacred hymn: "O Mind, why dost thou not cast off this lethargy and heaviness which holds thee back from that blessed communion? Why dost thou not meditate on that Supreme Being who is easily obtained through the power of devotion?" We are often afraid of cutting off our connection with the outside world. We fear it will be too lonely. The idea of retiring within ourselves does not appeal to us. When, however, we are able to retire within, we find there a companion—our own Higher Self, the very best part of us—who begins to guide us more wisely than anyone from whom we could ask guidance in the outer world, and through whose help we are able to discover things which were wholly unknown to us when we did not understand how to collect our forces and become indrawn.

It is the inherent tendency of every human being to seek companionship, but we usually look for it on the outside. If, however, we can become quiet, the mind will begin to talk with Someone within who will prove the truest companion. There are various methods by which we can purify ourselves and render this silent communion possible. When, for example, we do not use our voice and talk unnecessarily, then this energy which is being constantly manifested through our lips begins to move inward and lead us to the inner companion. This is what the Yogi tries to do through silence, discipline and the practice of concentration, in order that he may always be able to consult his Higher Self and thus acquire the power to differentiate between right and

wrong. "O how eager am I to reach that goal!" another great Indian Saint cries out. "How eager am I to listen to that Voice! Yet hundreds of other voices are ceaselessly filling my ears and preventing me from hearing that One Voice which I so long to hear!"

Until man can grow quiet, stilling all the restlessness which is being manifested constantly through his body, mind and mouth, he cannot hope to hear the Voice or gain the Divine Vision. Only by physical and mental discipline can he attain that state of tranquillity in which everything is seen in its true color. So long as he has not reached this state he cannot help being deceived again and again by ignorance. Ignorance is the greatest drawback in our path. And what is this ignorance? It is the cause of all our bondage and miseries. But what is its nature? Pantanjali, author of the Yoga Aphorisms, describes it as "taking the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure, what is really painful for happiness". That is, when we take things in the wrong sense or call them by wrong names, that is ignorance. Sankara uses the illustration that it is like mistaking a snake for a rope, or a rope for a snake. But such an error cannot alter the real character of any object. The false fear created in our mind by it vanishes when the light discloses its true nature. Before we have seen that, however, we tremble and suffer. So must it always be so long as we remain in ignorance and do not perceive the true nature of things; or so long as we imagine that this Self, which is pure and untainted by the sins and sorrows of this world, is something which is subject to change and easily destroyed.

Constant identification of ourselves with wrong things, we see therefore, is ignorance; and when we analyze, we find that we are perpetually identifying ourselves, not with

the unimperishable in us, but with all that is non-eternal. We regard this body as a real part of us. We depend on possessions, worldly power and pleasure, on things which are fleeting, treating them as if they were eternal; and when they drop away from us, it causes us pain. As long as man is not able to see things as they are, he can never be free from such pain-bearing obstructions. To free himself from this false perception he must practise self-discipline or *Tapasia*. Physical discipline purifies the body so that it ceases to be a weight on the mind. The body changes its nature and becomes suitable for spiritual illumination. Through the practice of mental discipline, the mind which is now always running downward, thinking of small ends, attaching itself to changeable things, will become lighter; and this lightness of body and mind means freedom.

That is the aim of all *Tapasia*, or mortification. The sooner we can destroy the heaviness of body and mind through study, through discipline, through the various methods of Yoga, the more quickly we shall acquire the power to reflect and distinguish right from wrong; the sooner also shall we be able to accept and follow what is right. We shall not be deceived then by that which is non-eternal, or by that which is impure; for we shall be able to identify ourselves with the True Self, with that part of our nature which is eternal and not bound by the modifications of ignorance. The Bhagavad-Gita thus describes the different disciplines or austerities which bring us to this state:

“Worship, service of Spiritual Teachers and wise men, practice of purity, simplicity, continence and non-injury: these are called austerities of the body.

“Speech which causes no pain to others and is true as well as pleasant and beneficial, regular study of the Scriptures: these are called austerities of speech.

“Cheerfulness of mind, kindness, silence, self-control, purity of heart: these are called austerities of the mind.”

Another product of ignorance is the identification of the Seer with the instrument of seeing. Whenever an impulse comes in our heart, we feel that we are that impulse, whether it be happy or unhappy. In the same way we identify ourselves with the different states of our mind and body; and so we come to believe that we are puny mortals, subject to death and misery. When the Seer and the instrument of seeing become wholly identified and inseparable, that brings the idea of ego. As a rule we are very much bound by this ego, and that is why we find no tranquillity; for peace can never come so long as we confound our real nature with all these egotistical notions. In our waking, dreaming and sleeping, these bind us and retard our spiritual growth. Therefore we must constantly try to exercise our faculty of discrimination and distinguish between what is real and what is not real. We should not be bound even by the pleasures which we are promised after this life. The ego which strives perpetually to enslave us through material objects should be overcome by the light of wisdom.

The distinction between ego and the Self is very great. The Real Self of man is always blissful, ever-existent, all-knowing and ever free. When man identifies himself with this little cage of flesh and loses the vision of his Self—because instead of looking within, he looks without where things are complex and scattered—he continues to gather experience in the realm of duality only and he feels himself lost. The man who has become thus scattered should open that third eye of his inner being and see for himself his true nature, for delusion can never be destroyed by mere theories or intellectual speculation. You may ask: Why should we

trouble to know about this Self if we are immortal and cannot be destroyed? Quite true, but the ignorant man must inevitably go through the agony of grief, death and separation as long as he clings to this body and looks upon it as his real self. When knowledge comes, however, and the inner spiritual eye opens, then he is able to penetrate to the depth of his being and see that Undying, Undecaying Self, which is mightier than all the instruments we possess; mightier than seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting; greater even than the powers of mind and intellect.

There is a story told in one of the Upanishads that the senses strove together as to which was the most important. Sight said: "If I did not exist, mortals would not be able to accomplish anything"; but hearing claimed that it was he who gave greater knowledge. In the same way the senses of smelling, tasting and touching declared that they were the most vital factors in human life. Then *Prana*, the Life-Force, the Self, the Abiding Inner Spirit withdrew; the senses at once became powerless and thus they realized that not by them did any mortal live or act. Man lives by the Self alone; how foolish it is then to identify ourselves merely with these external instruments and forget the One who uses them. If we would rid ourselves of this error, we must go into our own being and seek subtler and subtler forces, until we find the subtlest, the most powerful of all, that One who is not dependent on anything but on Whom all things are dependent.

When man is able to find his union with that Spirit, he does not grieve. He does not feel anger. He is never miserable. Nor is he ever carried away by the thought of pleasure, for his notion of existence is not based on material conditions. Such a soul is ever free, ever happy. And this happiness does not rest on praise or blame, heat or

cold, honor or dishonor; because all are alike to him. He has found a permanent basis of life. This is what is meant by union with the True Self or God. The little ego, which always deceives us, drops; and the Great Self shines forth and destroys all limitation. In Its light no deception can exist, for all things are shown as they are.

Ignorance, egotism, attachment, aversion: these are the pain-bearing obstructions, according to Patanjali. Attachment is that which dwells on pleasure. We like whatever gives us pleasure and we want to run away from whatever creates pain. We cling to the pleasant and try to avoid the painful; thus attachment and aversion both become a bondage and both arise from ignorance. Nor can we have one without the other. If we feel attachment, we cannot help feeling aversion; for like and dislike, pleasure and pain, darkness and light go together. They are the modifications produced from ignorance, from duality, from matter; but the Spirit is not bound by any of these. When through earnest striving, through purification of our vision and through concentration, we cease to depend for our knowledge and happiness on that which is at the surface of our being and begin to penetrate to the innermost depths, we find another channel open to satisfy us.

The man who refuses to listen to any other voice than that which speaks from those inner depths is never alone. When we overcome all dependence on human aid, then the Divine Voice speaks in our heart. It has been speaking to us always, but our ears have been turned outward, so we have not been able to hear or locate it. Also as long as our eyes remain distracted by the external world we shall not perceive that Subtle Being who abides within. To see or hear Him, there must be silence. You may say: "How can we practise silence in the noisy places where we live?

There are ceaseless distractions. The outside world is constantly disturbing us." But the stillness which we need is not dependent on external conditions. Until we have silenced our own mind and uncontrolled nature, if we should retire into the deepest recesses of the jungle, we should still find no solitude or quietness. What we need is to draw within ourselves in the midst of external noises. We must learn to turn our mind inward even on a crowded street.

Our mind can never be bound by any external thing unless we permit it to be. Once a pious man was being persecuted by a tyrannical ruler, who said to him: "Now what will you do? You cannot have your way because we have bound you fast. Will you not then obey my command?" The man replied: "You may bind my hands and feet, but you cannot bind my mind or heart. They are mine and I give them freely to God." So it is with us. The bondage we feel is not so much from the outside, for that has very little power over us. External objects exist alike for the saint and the sinner. One takes the object within himself, forms an attachment for it, and thus through his ignorance creates bondage; the other moves about freely and enjoys life as one should enjoy it; for all enjoyment comes from freedom and freedom cannot be attained until we have broken the fetters of ignorance.

All the pain-bearing obstructions which rise in our lives spring from ignorance, out of which are born attachment, aversion and the clinging to life in this body. Through discipline of body and mind and complete surrender to God, however, a man can escape from these. Every time he says "Not I, not I!" he weakens the chain of ego which binds him. Therefore while the ignorant man constantly says "I, I", the wise man repeats "Not I, not I". When the sense of ego is identified with this flesh and we cling to that, it

creates bondage; when, on the contrary, the sense of ego becomes identified with the Pure Essence of our being, it diminishes our bondage. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that this ego is very difficult to conquer, because it takes so many subtle forms to deceive us. It is like an onion: we peel off the outside husk and then we go on peeling and peeling, but we never seem to find a place to stop. Similarly we take off the ego from the body and it begins to manifest in the mind or the intellect, and we think we are very intelligent or very learned. Then it takes the subtle form of "I am more spiritual than others". Often people who devote themselves to higher study and contemplation come to feel themselves superior to every one and thus the ego deludes them once more. We must be very watchful therefore and guard ourselves against this enemy who is ever trying to deceive us.

"If this ego is so difficult to conquer", the devotee says, "then let it remain as a servant of God, or a child of God, as anything that will enable me to identify myself with the Pure Essence of my being instead of with the body and with physical conditions." This is one of the ways by which we can throw off this sense of "I". Instead of attaching ourselves to the little things of this world, to little powers, little pleasures, little joys, which are so changing and unsatisfactory, let us lift the ego and try to identify it with the True Self within. Thus shall we get rid of the bondage of ignorance and enjoy perfect freedom.

If we liberate our hearts from petty selfishness, wish no ill to others, and become clear as a crystal reflecting the light of Truth, what a radiant picture will appear in us mirroring things as they are, without the admixture of burning desires, without the distortion of erroneous illusion, without the agitation of sinful unrest.

—*Gautama Buddha.*

THE WISE MAN.

From the Teachings of Chuang-Tzu.

It was the time of autumn floods. Every stream poured into the river, which swelled in its turbid course. The banks receded so far that from one to the other it was impossible to tell a cow from a horse. Then the Spirit of the River laughed for joy that all the beauty of the earth had been gathered to himself. Down the stream he journeyed until he reached the ocean. Then looking out towards the East and seeing no limit to its waters, his countenance changed. As he gazed on the boundless expanse, he sighed and said to the Spirit of the Ocean: "A vulgar proverb says that he who has heard but part of the truth thinks no one equal to himself. Such a one am I. Now that I have looked upon your inexhaustibility—alas for me had I not reached your abode! I should have been the laughing-stock of those who possess comprehensive enlightenment."

To this the Spirit of the Ocean replied: "You cannot speak of the ocean to a well-frog—the creature of a narrow sphere. You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect—the creature of a season. You cannot speak of Tao (the Way) to a pedagogue—his vision is too restricted. But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere and have seen the great ocean, you realize your own insignificance and I can speak to you of great principles.

"There is no body of water beneath the canopy of heaven which is greater than the ocean. All streams pour into it without ceasing, yet it does not overflow. It is constantly being drained off, yet it is never empty. Spring and autumn bring no change; floods and droughts are equally unknown. Thus it is immeasurably superior to mere rivers and brooks; though I would not venture to boast on this ac-

count, for I get my shape from the universe, my vital power from the *Yin* and *Yang* (the positive and negative principles of Nature). In the universe I am but as a small stone or a small tree on a vast mountain. And conscious thus of my own insignificance, what is there of which I can boast?

"The Four Seas—are they not to the universe but like puddles in a marsh? Of all the myriad created things, man is but one. And of all those who inhabit the land, live on the fruit of the earth and move about in cart or boat, an individual man is but one. Is not he, compared with all creation, but as the tip of a hair upon a horse's skin?"

"Am I then to regard the universe as great and the tip of a hair as small?" asked the Spirit of the River.

"Not at all," answered the Spirit of the Ocean. "Dimensions are limitless; time is endless. Conditions are not invariable; periods of time are not final. Thus the wise man looks into space and does not regard the small as too little, nor the great as too much; for he knows that there is no limit to dimensions. He looks back into the past and does not grieve over what is far off, nor rejoice over what is near, for he knows that time is without end. He investigates fullness and decay and does not rejoice if he succeeds, nor lament if he fails; for he knows that conditions are variable. He who clearly apprehends the scheme of existence does not rejoice over life, nor repine over death; for he knows that no period of time is final.

"The truly great man, although he does not injure others, never credits himself with charity or mercy. He seeks not gain, but does not despise his fellows who do. He struggles not for wealth, but does not take credit for letting it alone. He asks help of no man, but takes no credit for his self-reliance; neither does he despise those who seek

preferment through friends. He acts differently from the vulgar crowd, but takes no credit for his exceptional behavior; nor because others act with the majority does he despise them as hypocrites. The ranks and emoluments of the world are to him no cause for joy; its punishments and shame no cause for disgrace. I have heard it said, the man of Tao has no reputation; perfect virtue acquires nothing; the truly great man ignores self;—this is the height of self-discipline.

“The man of perfect virtue cannot be burned by fire, nor drowned by water, nor hurt by frost or sun, nor torn by wild bird or beast. Not that he makes light of these, but he discriminates between safety and danger. Happy under prosperous and adverse circumstances alike, cautious as to what he discards and what he accepts:—nothing can harm him.

SPIRITUALITY

Adapted from the Brahmavadin.

Can we call a man spiritual merely because he has a belief in God? By no means, for in many cases this belief has been early implanted in us by a pious parent and is nothing more than an instinctive faith riveted in the mind by an association of long duration. In other and higher forms it is found to be only a reasoned intellectual conviction based on study and inference. The Vedanta has never set a high value on this kind of purely intellectual or speculative belief. In fact, it makes no very serious distinction between the man who in this manner believes in God and the man who does not believe at all. “Religion is realization”, says Swami Vivekananda. It is not a mere theoretical conviction. It may even be permissible to have no faith whatever in any special form of religion and yet be

spiritual. Sankara truly says: "Option is possible as to whether a substance is to be thus or thus. All option depends on the notions of a man; but the knowledge of the real nature of a thing does not depend on the notions of a man but only on the thing itself."

The holding of some notion regarding God is no guarantee of knowledge of Him or even of a proper attitude towards Him. There are many whom the world has considered and revered as spiritual men, who had not this belief in God as we usually understand it. The great Rishi Kapila, recognized in India as a Divine Manifestation, held that the universe could be accounted for without a God and in that sense he might be classified as a non-believer. The same holds true of the Sakyamuni. In Western lands people like George Eliot, Comte, Rousseau, or even some of our earnest scientific investigators, who devoted all the resources of their speculation or active energies to the relief and advancement of struggling humanity and whose passionate longings after a higher social ideal have burnt into our hearts: even they have often been regarded as deeply religious and even spiritual, though undoubtedly they had many enemies who looked upon them in quite a different light.

Nor is it permissible to take spirituality to mean a vague, indefinable aspiration after some ideal; or the mere kindling of man's emotional susceptibilities in favor of some noble cause. Certainly we shall not be justified in ascribing spirituality to those men who show spasmodic emotions in favor of human freedom or social reform, but who have no solid foundation of knowledge or practice beneath their feverish efforts. On the other hand men like Emerson or Renan or Tennyson, who possess the dual gift of a deep-feeling heart with strong intellectual insight, must be re-

garded as spiritual personalities.

The careful observance of religious form again does not imply spirituality. The masses of the people who are ready not only to bow credulously before any superstition or dogma, but even to sacrifice their possessions and life itself for the sake of their belief, cannot for that reason be said to possess that which constitutes the essence of spirituality in man's nature. Yet the Vedanta does not fail to glorify all forms of sacrifice and religious practice. The value of ritualistic observances has been accepted by every religion, and Vedanta fully appreciates the importance of these outer observances in the onward march of the Soul. As means of purification they lead to spirituality, but are not evidences of it.

What then is spirituality? The first of its constituent elements is the feeling that we are by our inherent nature superior to the deluding and fleeting physical world around us. The second element is an intense deep-rooted desire for release from the bondage of our lower self. The mind gives such easy theoretical assent to both these statements that they seem well-nigh platitudes. Yet how many are living them out in their daily life? "Miserable are they", the Neo-Platonist Hierocles exclaims, "because they see not and hear not the good that is nigh them; and the way of escape from evil, few there be that understand it." How rare indeed are they who, even after having their minds enlightened as to their relation to the Infinite Intelligence, Power and Bliss, are capable or desirous of rising to the supreme grandeur of the higher planes of existence? How many strive to show forth the essential elevation of their true nature as spirit? Even the more thoughtful among us are too often wilfully blind to the Truth we clearly perceive. We are easily unsettled by the conflicting experiences of the world

and waver to and fro; or we toss about on an ocean of doubt and perplexity, until our lucid intervals are rare and these fitful flashes fail to make any marked impression on our activities or aspirations.

Frequently also we become absorbed in the humdrum routine of daily toil for bread and butter and allow the higher light to die out. So long, however, as we are not animated by an earnest longing to rise out of our lower nature to a higher plane of existence, we must inevitably give way to anger, pride, vulgar self-assertion, to all those states of mind which humiliate and discourage us. We are at every moment in danger of being overpowered by the cravings of the brute in us. We have no purpose in life; we discover no law in Nature; we waste and fritter away our energies; and all the time we are puffed up with false pride even when we are living like slaves, cowed by ignoble passion and lust of the flesh.

But the man who realizes that he has a higher nature and a higher destiny, and who is burning with the desire for emancipation from his lower nature, what course does he take to protect himself from his own weakness and avoid any lapse or falling back into his brute habits? This question leads us to the third and last element of spirituality. Conscious of his own weakness, he seeks out an Ideal that conforms to his need and makes an unreserved surrender of his mind and heart to It. It is this act of absolute self-surrender to the Ideal which sets the seal on his spiritual nature and guarantees his elevation to the highest altitudes of self-conquest and self-realization. If he can find this Ideal in embodied form, his chances of rapid unfoldment, according to Sankara, are greatly increased. There is nothing like the contact of Soul with Soul to inspire men to noble deeds and heroic activities, to raise what in them is low and

illuminate what is dark. As Socrates declares in Plato's Republic: "I can but suffer the penalty of ignorance; and that penalty is, to be taught by those who know." Few are they who realize the profound need of superior guidance and enlightenment as a preparation for life. Often the crisis arrives before we awaken to the need and then we fall. Trials and tribulations abound in the world; temptations innumerable beset us along our path; and too often we fail to comprehend that there are great ones on earth whose benign hearts and sympathetic understanding can bring to us the inspiration we need and help us in our struggle towards the realms of eternal light.

According to Vedanta, whether this surrender of the human mind and will is to an ideal principle or to an ideal teacher matters not, for there is no real distinction. The teacher is regarded as ideal not for his personal sake, but for the principle he represents and exemplifies in himself. To the followers of personal religions this is unintelligible, for these religions are so closely bound up with the personality of their founders, that the founder becomes all-important and the principles which he represents often sink into comparative insignificance. But this is a great disadvantage, especially in an age of accurate historical inquiry like the present. When the recorded facts regarding the founder of any personal religion fail to satisfy the demands of scientific scrutiny, he is treated as legendary; this weakens the influence of his teaching, and the loss to human society is deplorable. But impersonal religions, or religions of principle, take their stand solely upon the spiritual truths they inculcate; and while insisting upon the utmost reverence and surrender of heart to the Great Teachers who have worked for the spiritual elevation of humanity, they are in no danger from scientific scrutiny, because its rigorous

methods are powerless to strike at their foundations.

Actually, however, the ideal principle and the ideal master in whose life the principle is illustrated are not to be looked upon as separate or separable; yet inasmuch as it is conceded in all training that example is better than precept, practice more potent than theory, the surrender to the personal teacher seems normally to precede the surrender to the abstract principle. As, however, through humble service and submission the disciple gradually purifies his nature and subdues his ego, he passes unconsciously and spontaneously up from the plane of personality to the plane of principle. To use the words of Robert Browning:

"And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew,
With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it, too,
The submission of Man's nothing—perfect to God's All-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit I climb to His feet."

This "obeisance in spirit" is the crowning element in all higher attainment. Through it the sense of I-ness is worn off and the real nature of man stands revealed. The lower self is not destroyed, it is merely swallowed up in the brighter light of the Higher Self, as stars in the sunshine. When this is accomplished, mind and flesh become willing servants to the Soul and the state of pure spirituality is realized.

REPORTS.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the two Sunday Services and the Tuesday Evening Class continued without interruption during the summer and the attendance remained excellent throughout. All the meetings were conducted by Swami Paramananda until the 17th of July, after which they were left in charge of Sister Devamata. The Swami started for Los Angeles on the 19th and immediately on his arrival resumed the Sunday Service and bi-weekly Classes

at the Centre there. Later he began two series of public lectures, on Tuesday and Sunday Evenings, which aroused such growing interest and appreciation that when the first courses were completed he was persuaded to extend them for another six weeks. Some of the subjects of his lectures have been: "Yoga," "Universality of Vedanta," "Sin and Salvation," "Occultism and Mysticism," "Right Discrimination." On the 19th, 20th, and 21st of September he lectured in San Diego, under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, on "Spiritual Idealism of the Vedas," "Concentration and Illumination," "Meditation and Superconsciousness." He also spoke during the same week at the Metaphysical Library of Los Angeles. It is not known just when the Swami will leave the West; but it is probable that he will accept an invitation to deliver some lectures in Seattle before returning to Boston.

We were glad to hear from Geneva that the faithful group of students there would begin their weekly meetings on the first of this month. Ever since the Swami's last visit to Switzerland in 1914 they have met together regularly during the winter season, reading and doing their utmost to foster the work begun by him—awaiting eagerly his return at the close of the war.

Two useful booklets have just been published by the Vedanta Centre of Boston, under the titles "The Problem of Life and Death" and "Concentration and Illumination." They consist of lectures by Swami Paramananda which appeared originally in *The Message of the East*, but which thus brought together in consecutive form acquire new force and significance. In the first the subjects treated are "Life and Death", "Can Destiny be Overcome?", "Reincarnation and Evolution" and "Resurrection and Immortality". In the second the chapter headings are "Concentration and Illumination", "Meditation" and "Aids to Meditation."

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The
Message of the East



NOVEMBER 1917

Issued by

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"Light shall come again from the East"

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VOL. VI.

NOVEMBER, 1917.

No. 9.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE EAST.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

If God is the common origin of all living beings, what causes the differences we see among nations and races and men? Does He bestow on some greater blessings than on others? In the Bhagavad-Gita the Lord says: "Alike am I to all beings, hated or beloved is there none to Me"; that is, He loves all His children equally, He is never partial. It is because our wisdom is covered over by ignorance that we are deluded and imagine that God wills to bestow more on one than on another. It is we ourselves who create these differences. As a worldly father brings many gifts and lays them before his children and lets each child choose according to his inclination, so the Supreme Father of the universe has an endless variety of gifts for us. He lays the whole world before us — the world of thought and the world of physical attractions — and we, His children, are allowed to choose whatever we want. But we must naturally reap the result of our choice; for every act, every condition, brings its result, which we cannot avoid however we may try.

It is this difference in the choice of gifts from the Almighty God which distinguishes the East from the West. From time immemorial the East has chosen the spiritual

life ; and the West, so history tells us, has chosen the other path. As a result of her choice the East has produced many spiritual giants and has always exercised a strong religious influence on the world ; while the West has set in motion great material forces and made discoveries which have been helpful on the external plane. It is not a mere matter of accident that we find all the great Spiritual Teachers born in the East. The word "East" indeed has become symbolic of wisdom:—"the wisdom of the East", "the wise men of the East". Even the sun which saves the world from outer darkness rises in the East. The world of the inner life has a greater reality to the Oriental than to the Occidental ; and wherever we devote our energies, there we are sure to discover that which will satisfy the desires of our heart. So East and West, in parallel lines, have evolved practical methods by which to gain their different ends. A casual Occidental observer, going to the East, looks upon the Oriental as a dreamer, because his thought dwells on the Unseen and he sets little value on the comforts of this life. An Oriental, on the other hand, who has devoted his whole soul to fathom the mysteries of that Unseen Realm, smiles as he sees grown-up people in the West playing with worldly things of only momentary worth. Yet both are travelling to the same ultimate goal and both are born of the same Father, who provides all this diversity of choice in order that His children may grow and find their real nature.

The difference, however, is not so great as we might think ; it is only a difference in degree. The Oriental desires that which is more lasting and the Occidental still cherishes that which is fleeting ; but these fleeting things may also help to educate the Soul-consciousness. It is unjust, however, to look upon the East as less practical than

the West. The Orientals are not visionary in spiritual matters. In the West, whenever any new teaching is brought, at once the question is asked: What is its practical utility? Will it bring success or some tangible benefit on this plane? And if it does not offer an immediate result here, it is rejected. In the East, on the contrary, they ask: Is it a practical method by which to obtain spiritual consciousness? If so, the Oriental will plunge into it. No matter what the sacrifice, he is ready to make it. This longing to penetrate to the depths of being has given to the children of the East the power to discover the reality of the Unseen. From the very outset of religious search they have tried to make God a reality. That Unseen Realm—to many a mere speculation, an abstract Ideal, which can never be seen by these eyes—the East believes in; not only believes in, but sits down quietly and strives to see. And that is what gives her so much power on the plane of Spirit.

On the physical plane the West has achieved marvellous things. But is that all we need to complete life? We need something also for our Soul, and until that greater part of our being is satisfied, no fleeting outer satisfaction can enable us to reach completeness. We must not look with one eye only on this world; we must have both eyes wide open if we wish to get a full vision. If we close the spiritual eye and see only a partial external existence, we miss something which is most vital. The East has cultivated above all Soul-vision. It has found a practical method by which everyone may develop his full power of sight and see for himself if there is a Reality, or if that Unseen is merely an intellectual speculation.

What we need today is balance. It is not that the West should give up her Ideal or her effort at accomplishment on the physical plane, but she should at the same time strive

to make real the spirit of Christ, for religion does not mean merely accepting a name. It means being and becoming, manifesting Reality. The watchword of the East is "Know thy Self. Know God, for He is thy true Reality; and knowing Him, thou shalt know all things." Having firm faith in this, the people of the Orient find it easy to renounce; but this spirit of renunciation which exists naturally in the East is shunned by the West. Why should it be so? Renunciation does not mean tearing our hearts to pieces; it means distinguishing between the real and the unreal, the vital and the not-vital, and choosing that which is vital and real. It means refusing to compromise between religion and worldly desires. There is too much compromise in the practice of Christ's religion in the West today. As we study the lives of His followers, do we see His spirit manifest in all their actions? Is not the Christ they follow rather one they have created, an Occidental Christ?

The well known clergyman, Rev. Heber Newton, writes: "Christianity has seen Christ, not as He really was, but as He has appeared to its eyes. Our Western eyes have seen Him westernized, distorted in the lenses of Grecian speculation, of Roman institutionalism, of Mediaeval scholasticism. How grievously the image of Jesus has suffered in this transference, scholars know right well. The image of Jesus which the Christian Church has framed in its theologies is far from a counterpart of the original and real Jesus; so far that were most Christians carried back into the age when He was upon earth and set down in His own Galilee, He might pass them never known or recognized. How can we ever get back to that far-off age and see Him as He was? Simply by getting over into the position of those who today reproduce the life and spirit of His day.

In the East, time is not. Today is as yesterday, and our century as eighteen centuries earlier. As the East now reads Him, coming to Him in a free and natural manner—that we may be sure is the nearest approach which we can get to a true image of Him. For Jesus was an Oriental, and only by the Orientals can He be interpreted.”

When people are able to go to the source and recognize Christ as He was, then there will be no difference between the religious Ideals of West and East. There will never cease to be a difference between forms and forms. We shall always see differences when we look upon this universe from the point of view of diversity, but an underlying unity is there. A thread runs through and connects all souls, the thread of spiritual consciousness; when we touch that we find unity. Therefore we must try to go deep into our being. We must strive to realize the true significance of religion. It is not that we should change our Ideal, for there is no difference between one Ideal and another when properly apprehended; but if we sacrifice the Ideal to follow our own fleshly desires, then we shall never be able to find a common ground on which to meet. Diversity in races, in modes of living, will always exist; but there is little difference in Soul-consciousness, for it leads men to the heights where all things are one. It is on this basis alone that we can realize oneness, never on the physical plane, and it is here that we must try to establish it. If we are willing to give up this spirit of compromise between our religious Ideal and our physical desires, then we shall find that no matter what we do, we shall be moving towards the ultimate goal of unity.

The East has always been brave in her search for spiritual truths. “Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven”—that is the voice of the East. And whatever we want, God

grants it. He has given spiritual blessing to the children of the East because that is what they longed for. When that same hungering will come in the heart of the West, she will also be filled with spiritual blessing. The plan of creation is not to destroy anything. We need certain things for our physical well-being, no doubt; but the purpose of human existence is not merely to live happily in this world. We must also seek for that which can satisfy the demand of our inner nature. When we can harmonize these two, we have indeed solved the problem of life. In the East whatever they do, eating, drinking, sleeping, it is made a religious act. Why should it not be so? Why should religion be apart from the ordinary life? Is God apart from us? He abides in the heart of all living beings; but those who do not recognize this, go round and round as if mounted on a wheel. They try to find happiness elsewhere, whereas the very source of their happiness is within themselves; and finding that storehouse of wisdom will satisfy them not only here but hereafter. Knowing this the East has never been willing to sacrifice her spiritual life. It is because of this she has gained spiritual treasure and this treasure she is ready to share with the West.

But the West also has something to give the East, for East and West are two parts of the same universe. When all the children of God will learn to work in harmony; when East and West will be willing to exchange Ideals, not with any feeling of exclusion, then there will come a greater vision; sympathy, tolerance and mutual understanding will prevail and we shall attain a truer state of civilization. Today we realize many things that we did not realize years ago, because material progress enables man to come in contact with others, nothing can be hidden from him. What we experience in this way also has its value; for as

we go on expanding in knowledge of the external universe, we move towards knowledge of Ultimate Being; only it is a slow process. Physical science offers us knowledge, but its method takes endless time; for we have to study every atom, every form of existence before we can arrive at a final conclusion; and no matter how much time we spend, we can always find something more to know. In the East they take the more direct course. They try to find the very Essence of creation, to gain a knowledge of their relationship with God; and by this method they arrive at a perception of unity in the midst of diversity. This unity is what the world is waiting to realize, but it is not to be found in the external universe. We must try, therefore, to find it within; to realize that God is a reality, and that we are all children of that one Father, whether we live in the East or West; that the fictitious barriers we create of caste, creed, race and nationality do not exist in His eyes, for He is the Father of the whole universe. This breadth of vision we can never gain except through spiritual culture. We must learn to open another eye, an eye that has not been developed in the majority of human beings,—the eye of the Soul. And that eye can only be opened through the spiritual life. Religion does not call upon us to give up this life, but it asks us that in all our thoughts, words and actions we cultivate the sense of the nearness of God; for without Him we are lonely, without Him we are helpless, while with Him we have all things. It is this which the East gives to the world,—a vivid sense of the presence of the Unseen. It holds out the hopeful promise that we can all prove for ourselves the reality of God and our oneness with Him. Knowing this we shall see that all are His children; then disharmony and every feeling of difference will vanish and we shall realize the universal ideal of brotherhood.

THE GLORY OF TRUTH.

From the Teachings of Lord Buddha.

The Truth is not arbitrary or a matter of opinion, but can be investigated, and he who earnestly searches for the Truth will find it.

The Truth is hidden to the blind, but he who has the mental eye sees the Truth. The Truth will remain the ultimate standard by which we can discern false and true doctrines.

Let us, then, revere the Truth; let us inquire into the Truth and state it, and let us obey the Truth. He whose spiritual eye is open will discover it.

The throne of Truth is righteousness; and love and justice and good-will are its ornaments.

Righteousness is the place in which Truth dwells, and here in the souls of mankind aspiring after the realization of righteousness there is ample space for a rich and ever richer revelation of the Truth.

Truth is the end and aim of all existence, and the worlds originate so that Truth may come and dwell therein.

Those who fail to aspire for the Truth have missed the purpose of life.

Blessed is he who rests in the Truth, for all things will pass away, but Truth abideth forever.

Errors can be fashioned as it pleases those who cherish them; therefore they are pleasant to look upon, but they are unstable and contain the seeds of dissolution.

Truth cannot be fashioned. Truth is one and the same; it is immutable.

Truth is above the power of death, it is omnipresent, eternal, and most glorious.

The nature of delusions and errors and lies is death; and sin is the way to perdition.

Delusions, errors, and lies are like huge gaudy vessels, the rafters of which are rotten and worm-eaten, and those who embark in them are fated to be shipwrecked.

Yet does all life yearn for the Truth and the Truth only can cure our diseases and give peace to our unrest. Truth is the essence of life, for Truth endureth beyond the end of the body. Truth is eternal and will still remain even though heaven and earth shall pass away.

There are not many truths in the world, for Truth is one and the same at all times and in every place.

FOREST SCHOOLS OF ANCIENT INDIA.

By Sister Devamata.

The natural university of the early Indo-Aryans was the forest. No college campus or cathedral close could offer so still a retreat as was to be found under the high-arching trees of the jungle beside some cool-flowing stream. It was Nature's own cloister made for the student. And here the teacher lived in humble retirement, accepting the pupils who came to him as his own; clothing them, feeding them, caring for them like sons, and sharing with them whatever of plenty or privation was his. Even the richest were not allowed to pay for their tuition: to impart knowledge as a means of livelihood was regarded in those days as a dishonor, unfitting the teacher for his task. Did not Truth belong to God, how could it be sold by man? Every child was taken as a sacred charge. Nor did it matter whether few came or many. The schoolroom with its carpet of soft moss and roof of over-lapping branches was elastic and could be stretched to any limit. There were also bamboo poles and palm leaves in plenty for the walls and thatch of a new dormitory.

To this secluded woodland college the father brought his boys at the age of eight or ten and surrendered them without reserve to the guidance of the teacher. During the years of schooling there must be no conflict of authority, no counteracting influences. As home and parents had possessed the toddling child, giving him his first lessons by sacred song and story; now at the outset of a new period the boy must be carried into a specialized environment, to live beside one whose whole thought was consecrated to the pursuit of knowledge and whose earnest exalted life was the chief text-book spread open before the scholar's awakening mind. The nursery time was over and the moment came for the graver duties of *Brahmacharya*,—service and study. These two factors were given equal place in the daily routine; although, if anything, service received the greater emphasis, as it did in the system of apprenticeship during the Middle Ages. Those wise men of the forest knew that only he who can make himself a servant is ready to receive so great a thing as Truth.

We read in the Chandogya-Upanishad that when Satyakama came to a sage begging for instruction, he was given four hundred lean cows and told to drive them to a distant pasture and keep them until the drove had multiplied to a thousand. Evidently the deep-seeing eyes of the master discerned that the boy's heart was ripe for solitude and contemplation, hence there could be no better preparatory training than that which would be gained on the high stretches of a lonely mountainside. And so truly did experience bear out his judgment that when at last the patient student, his task accomplished, returned once more to the hermitage, the master greeted him with the words: "Friend, your face shines like one who knows the Truth." Education, as those ancient teachers conceived it, meant

primarily a process of purification, a removal of that within which barred the way of knowledge inherent in every human being; and this was most quickly achieved by the lowlier activities of the common life. Also in this way a more familiar relation was established and it was believed that the lessons learned through close personal contact between teacher and pupil were of greater value than those taught during class hours—just as more of birds can be learned by one walk through the woods with an ornithologist than in many recitations behind four walls.

Nor was the feminine element lacking in those woodland cloisters; for nearly every forest school had its mother, and the dripping vessel of cold water from the lake or the fagots of wood from the jungle were as often for her needs beside the hearth as for the sacrificial rites of the master before the altar. Now and then, too, her softer heart would plead against the stern discipline of her husband. Thus was it in the house of Satyakama Gabala, after he had become a teacher. When a certain student, Upakosala, had dwelt with him for twelve years patiently serving, his wife made appeal to the master: "This boy is quite exhausted with service. He has carefully tended your fires. Let not the fires themselves blame you, but teach him." Yet Satyakama went away on a journey without having taught him and the boy from sheer grieving could not eat. Then the wife approached him with tender concern, saying: "Student, eat! Why do you not eat?" And the boy replied: "I am full of sorrows and shall take no food." The record makes no further mention of her, but it is evident that she revived his drooping spirits; for soon he returned to his service and out of the fire, which he had so faithfully tended, he heard a voice revealing the knowledge which the master had withheld—perhaps because this

final test was necessary to prepare the pupil to grasp it.

The courses of study in these schools were not unlike those followed in the nascent mediaeval universities of the Occident,—a classic instruction with a dominant background of religion. But while in the West religion during that scholastic period was theological and verbose, in Vedic India it tended away from dogma towards silent independent research. The method of imparting instruction also was not the dialectic method of mediaeval Europe, but rather the dialogic method adopted later in Greece by Socrates and Plato. All branches of secular learning in the Indo-Aryan curriculum were classed as “lower knowledge”, or the preparatory stage, while “higher knowledge” was defined as “that by which the Indestructible is apprehended”. The chief aim of their study was to reach an ultimate generalization, because they saw that without an understanding of the Final Cause no explanation of the universe could be stable or conclusive. And the student should be so trained that he would be able to apprehend this for himself. Education which merely gave information about things was in their opinion superficial and incomplete. Learning, in other words, was not accepted as a substitute for direct vision. A father, for example, chides a son, who being asked “What is God?” replies with long passages from the Scriptures defining Deity. “That is enough,” he says sternly. “You have evidently profitted little by your schooling.”

Another youth after spending twelve years in the teacher’s house returns home self-satisfied and “considering himself well-read.” His father deals a telling blow at his pride by putting the question: “My son, since you are so conceited and think yourself so well-informed, have you ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what

cannot be heard, perceives what cannot be perceived, knows what cannot be known?" And the youth, humiliated, is forced to admit his ignorance. Also a book-wise Brahmin, who comes again and again to a court offering to teach the king, is told; "Go and learn." Each time, puzzled by the rebuff, he plunges deeper into his study, until at last the true meaning of knowledge bursts upon him and, grown humble, he stays at home. Then the King comes to seek him and asks to be taught of him.

In the Vedic system three distinct stages in the acquisition of knowledge were recognized:—hearing, reflection, and realization. The first was the period of theory; the second, of experiment and proof; the third, of definite knowledge. In the terms of an educational curriculum, these might be classed as the preparatory school, the college and the final specialized work of the university. The method employed in the last two was strictly empirical. Present day science is not more rigidly exacting in its demands that all statements rest on direct observation and experiment than were those ancient instructors. Thus when Svetaketu is being taught by his own father regarding the True, he is told to bring a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree and break it. "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see there?" "These seeds, almost infinitesimal." "Break one of them." "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see there?" "Not anything, Sir." Then the sage drives home the lesson: "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists. Out of this subtle essence springs all life. It is the True and thou art It." Then the youth craves to know more and he is told to put some salt in water and leave it until the morning. On the morrow the salt of course could not be seen and the father tells him to taste the water from the bottom, from the

surface, from the middle. "How is it?" he inquires. "It is salt everywhere." "Throw it away." The son does so and as the water dries up the salt lies, a white deposit, on the ground. Again a lesson: "Now also in this body, forsooth, you do not perceive the True, my son; but it is always there." Could there be a more vivid tangible demonstration of the reality of the unseen Soul or God?

Thus in the laboratory of nature did they study the hidden facts of life. But it may be objected that this does not bear the character of true scientific analysis. It is rather a moral lesson. So it seems to the Western mind; but to the Indo-Aryan there was no distinction between physical and metaphysical, moral and material. God and Soul were as much objects of empiric study, as were unknown substances in chemistry or the rock strata of geology. For them there was no limit to the area of exact science. It must reach to the very end of creation. And if they seemed often to proceed by inference and analogy, so also does the modern scientist when he frames a fresh hypothesis based on the observation of some new and unexplained operation in Nature. This stage, moreover, was wholly primary in their scheme of education and the student was not expected to stop until he had found an original demonstration for every theorem thus propounded. In the ancient writings we find it recorded that the master sometimes did no more than repeat the initial equation each time the pupil returned with an answer, and the student was thus led on and on until wholly by his own thought processes he reached an ultimate solution.

The man of science, however, must have instruments, it may be said. Yes, and those age-old teachers knew it as well as the instructors of today; but almost at the outset they made the valuable discovery that nature had pro-

vided every human being with an instrument of wider range and more delicate adjustment than any man could make with his own hands,—the instrument of the human mind; and the aim of all their instruction was to give their pupils a thorough command of this. Therefore the pupil was trained in concentration, meditation and intravision as today we are taught the use of microscope or telescope. Nor was this a mere idle subjective theory. There can be no doubt of its practical validity; for centuries before the Christian era we find these wise forest-masters teaching virtually all the axiomatic truths of modern science,—the equilibrium of forces, the indestructibility of matter, the uniformity of law, and the vital fact of evolution. Also they had a remarkable understanding of the human organism, its control and use. How did they discern these things? By studying Nature they discovered that the swifter and finer the vibration, the greater the penetrative force; and since focused thought was the swiftest and finest vibration known, it should be able to pierce the densest veil of matter. Working on this hypothesis, they soon discovered that creation was a loosely woven mesh, easily penetrated by the trained and subtle gaze. This makes plain why in their system of education such stress was layed on the rigid discipline of body, mind and senses, for these were the student's instruments and must be well-tempered.

In those ancient days there was no break in the course of study. The school merged automatically into the university. It was customary for the scholars to remain in their teacher's house for eight, ten or twelve years. At the expiration of that term the father came to take his sons, leaving a thank-offering had he wealth. But often it happened that among the sons some one showed such

aptitude for study that he remained longer with the teacher, and in the course of time he might even build his own bamboo hut and settle permanently in the jungle. Thus round the nucleus of a simple school-master's thatched cottage there grew up extended seats of learning. Often, too, scholars in advanced grades came. Thus only ripe and thoughtful minds could have formulated such questions as appear at the outset of one of the sacred records of the time: "Whence are we born, whereby do we live and whither do we go? Should time, or Nature, or necessity, or chance, or the elements be the cause, or He who is called the Supreme Person (the Personal God or the Creator)? Or is the Absolute the cause?" Also that more ancient pupil in the Rig-Veda must have passed beyond the primary grade when he begged to be taught "that, knowing which all else is known." In another record we read that Narada approached the venerable Sanatkumara and said: "Teach me, Sir." And Sanatkumara replied: "Please tell me what you already know; afterward I shall tell you what comes after." Narada then enumerates the studies he has completed: "I know the four Vedas, Grammar, the rules for certain sacrifices, the science of numbers, the science of portents and of time, logic, ethics, etymology, pronunciation, ceremonial and prosody, the science of weapons, astronomy, and the fine arts (the making of perfumes, dancing, singing, playing, etc.) But, Sir, with all this I know the Sacred Books only, I do not know the Self or Spirit within." And the master replies: "Whatever you have read is a name only."

This strikes the keynote of all ancient Indo-Aryan teaching. The knowledge of this world was by no means despised. On the contrary, nowhere was learning more eagerly cultivated; but the pupil was never allowed to forget

that without the illuminating flash of Soul-consciousness, all was but a dead letter, a lightless lantern. And his craving for the higher attainment was fired by such promises as this: "If you were to tell this truth to a dry stick, branches would grow and leaves spring from it." Or again: "If a man knows the underlying Truth of all things here, that is the true end of life. The wise who have thought on all things and discovered the Divine Essence in them, attains immortality." "He who knows Him who has no beginning and no end, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, is freed from all fetters." What wonder that, with such words of hope ringing in their ears, young men lingered year after year in some quiet retreat striving with heightening fervor to plunge deeper and deeper into the hidden recesses of knowledge? Thus the forests became populous with men — and women too — aflame with the desire to know that ultimate unit by knowing which all else would become plain. Sometimes they gathered into groups called hermitages, which grew to number many hundreds. Bodily needs were reduced to the simplest formula in order that the major portion of time and energy might be devoted to the quest of Truth. They married, but with the lofty aim of creating the best possible environment and conditions for enlightened souls to incarnate; and it is said that children were born among them with such aptitude for knowledge that even in tender years they attained super-conscious vision.

Nor was their life over-grave and joyless. The note struck in a hymn of the Rig-Veda: — "Let the oxen work merrily, let the men work merrily, let the plough move on merrily, fasten the traces merrily," is characteristic of all true Vedic teaching. The West regards it as pessimistic

because it sets small value on those things which the Occident prizes, just as to a boy the grown-up who prefers a lonely walk to base-ball or cricket seems a misanthrope. But whoever takes delight in his task is an optimist, and no people ever found deeper delight in any labor than did the Indo-Aryan in his search after the Ultimate Reality. Could a dejected heart have given voice to that verse of the Vedas: "Out of joy the universe has come, in joy it lives and back to joy it goes"? In the scheme of life developed by the Aryans of India we find no conflict of ideals, no contradictions or inconsistencies. The home, the school and the temple all faced in the same direction. There was as natural an orientation in the performance of the homely tasks of the household as in the setting up of an altar, and no scholar ever began his schooling without bowing before the family shrine and invoking the blessings of the Most High. The final goal of all their effort was one, which may be summed up in the words spoken by a saintly teacher to a worthy pupil in the Chandogya-Upanishad: "The Infinite is bliss. There is no true bliss in anything finite. The Infinite alone is bliss. This Infinite, however, we must desire to understand."

The Gate was opened to me, that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an University. For I saw and knew the Being of all beings. And I saw and knew the whole working Essence in the Evil and the Good, and the origin and existence of each of them; and likewise how the fruitful bearing Womb of Eternity brought forth. . . . I saw it as in a great Deep in the internal. For I had a thorough view of the Universe.

— *Jacob Boehme.*

MY GOD IS EVERYWHERE.*By Pattanattu Pillai.*

(A South-Indian Poet of about the 10th Century)

If He be mine, what can I need?
My God is everywhere,
Within, beyond man's highest word,
My God abideth still.

In sacred books, in darkest night,
In deepest, bluest sky,
In those who know the truth, and in
The faithful few on earth ;—

Where'er wind blows or compass points,
God's light doth stream and shine.
Yet see yon fool—beneath his arm
He bears the sacred roll.

How carefully he folds the page
And draws the closing string!
See how he binds the living book,
That not a leaf escape!

Ah, yes! the truth should fill his heart;
But 'tis beneath his arm.
To him who knows, the sun is high;
To this, 'tis starless night.

If knowledge be not thine, thou art
As one in deep midstream,
A stream so wide that both the banks
Are hidden from thine eyes.

THE ETHICAL IDEALS OF THE HINDUS.

Extract by Swami Saradananda.

In order to trace the gradual evolution of ethics, it is necessary that we should consider a little of the history of India. The one great peculiarity of India that the student of history finds, is that the Hindus never regarded anything as unnecessary, to be thrown away; they believe that man travels from truth to truth and not from error to truth. What is truth for one mind under some circumstances might not appear as truth when one arrives at a higher stage in the process of evolution; yet that apparent error helped him to come up to the higher truth, and there will be found minds which have arrived only at that point in the appreciation of truths. So the Hindus always preserved the lower truth which helped them to come up to the higher ones. For instance starting from dualism, when they discovered or evolved the higher truths of qualified monism and ultimately monism, they did not throw away dualism or qualified monism, but regarded them as stages in the process of development. They had no quarrel with them, for they knew that in order to come up to monism man must rise through the other two stages.

The first great positive fact that comes before us in the early history of India is that Vyasa, a great sage, divided and classified the Vedas into the four great divisions: the Rik, the Sama, the Yajus, and the Atharvan; and that he collected all the historical narratives up to that time and called them the Mahabharata, or the history of the great descendants of the King Bharata. This Vyasa was a contemporary of Sri Krishna, whom the Hindus regard as the greatest of all Divine Incarnations. It is difficult to determine the age of Vyasa and Krishna, but Hindu scholars are one in their opinion that the age of Krishna pre-

ceded the age Buddha; and that Rama, the hero of the great epic Ramayana, was born before Krishna. So the early history of India before the advent of Buddhism may be divided into these three great periods:—The earlier Vedic period, before the Vedas were classified; the period of the Ramayana, the age of Rama and Vasishtha; the period of the Mahabharata, the age of Krishna and Vyasa.

The first of these three periods must have covered many thousands of years, and all that we know of the period is from the narratives in the Vedas themselves. The facts that we gather from these narratives show that the Aryans have already come to the rich valleys of the Indus and the Ganges, and have settled there by conquering the aborigines. They were a nation of growing people, with young blood in their veins, highly moral and religious. They were pushing their inquiries into every department. Truthfulness and morality were regarded very highly. The marriage system had already been introduced and chastity in women was highly honored. The caste system was already growing naturally amongst them, and they had divided themselves into the two castes, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas (or the warriors). Those in society who were highly advanced in spirituality and were devoting all their energies towards that end were regarded as Brahmins; and the rest, who were devoting their energies to conquest and war and other affairs, were the Kshatriyas. We find that this caste system was not regarded as very rigorous; the best men in society were regarded as Brahmins, and the qualities of a man made him a Brahmin and not the circumstances of his birth. Everywhere we find traces that the caste system arose naturally on account of social conditions, as in every other nation, and had nothing to do with the religion. The polytheism of the early times has al-

ready developed into monotheism; nay, some of the great sages have already arrived at the truths of monism and the unity of the Soul. The theory of the cosmology of Kapila, that nature is evolving and involving from all eternity, has been universally adopted. Looking to material civilization, we find descriptions of the courts of good and great kings; of female education and the institution of women monks who discussed abstruse metaphysical questions with the men in the courts of kings, the description of Aranyakas or men who with their wives were living the latter part of their lives in beautiful forests or by the sides of rivers and devoting themselves entirely to religion and meditation. . . .

The battle of Kurukshetra (described in the Mahabharata) marks a great change in the social and political life of India. Almost all the kings who joined in the fight were killed. One great factor of society, the warrior caste, became thus annihilated. The result was that the other half, the Brahmins, suddenly rose to great power. The high spiritual teachings of Sri Krishna and the Bhagavad-Gita went on very well for some time. But the disturbed balance in society was never restored, and the conservation of power grew more and more on the side of the priests. The real religion of the Vedanta was practised by a few only, and those few left society and took to the forest life, or the life of a monk; and the great mass of people in society became more ignorant and superstitious day by day, when the great Buddha, "the ocean of light and compassion," took his birth. He joined the order of monks in his thirtieth year and by means of his pure life and courageous teachings succeeded in bringing back the true Vedanta religion to the people; for the religion which Buddha taught is nothing more or less than the Karma-Yoga of the

Vedanta, which teaches that unselfish work will lead men to the highest stage of development, the super-conscious state.

Freed from the trammels of ignorance by the powerful touch of Buddha, society and the people rose again to a high stage of progress. The condition of India at this period can best be seen by reading the accounts which the Greeks have left of the country and the inscriptions of the Buddhist King, Asoka. In the Greek accounts we find that the people are strong and brave and highly moral, so much so that in many places there is no use for any law-courts. Truthfulness is natural to them. The women are all chaste and beautiful and educated. They are a very kind people and extremely hospitable.

In time Buddhism got mixed up with phallus worship and other symbols and ceremonials prevalent in Thibet and other parts of Asia, and degenerated India more than ever. The birth of the great teacher Sankara at this time saved the country again from the bondage of vice and corruption. He is perhaps the greatest philosopher that India has ever produced. His pure life and great genius enabled him to guide his country safe through the period of religious anarchy which prevailed at the downfall of Buddhism. The date of Sankara is, like the chronology of all other things in India, wrapped up in mystery. The Hindus place him nearly as far back as the first or the second century after the birth of Christ, while modern scholars place him between the 5th and 7th centuries of that era. In any case the Mahomedan conquest of India took place long after the birth of Sankara and the account which the Mahomedans give of the country and the people, will suffice to show the high ethical conditions in India brought about by the teachings of Sankara's philosophy. The Mahomedans when they

first came to India also found the people brave, loyal, truthful and kind. They would not be false to their enemies or use any unfair means even in the battlefield. They would not march their soldiers over their enemies' cornfields or poison the wells. The women were very chaste, and the men were perfectly moral and peaceful. The women had an almost equal position in society, as the laws regarding property and inheritance show. . . .

The one strong fact which shows the strength of the Vedanta and its ethics is that it has survived and triumphed in its turn over all the numerous invasions of the existing great religions . . . because it is based on principles broad as the heavens, which underlie every particular religion; because it teaches that the whole universe is one indivisible unit so that by loving you I love myself, and by hating and doing injury to you, I am doing the same to myself; and because it teaches the grand truth that all the different religions are true, they are all so many different ways to attain to that Infinite Ocean of Knowledge, Existence, and Bliss.

REPORT.

Swami Paramananda is expected to reach Boston about the first of November and will at once take charge of all the Services and Classes at the Vedanta Centre. His season in Los Angeles has been in every way most gratifying to those who have been persistent in their desire to have a permanent Centre there. Many new people have affiliated themselves with the work and from week to week a steadily growing interest in the teaching has been manifest. Likewise at the Boston Centre there was great activity throughout October. A number of strangers were seen at the Services and the attendance was excellent at all meetings. Sister Devamata was invited to speak also during the month at the New Thought Library and before the Metaphysical Club.

WORKS BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

DEC 10 1917

**The
Message of the East**



DECEMBER 1917

Issued by

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

With this number THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST completes its sixth volume. The present moment is an extremely difficult one for all publication work and we therefore make an especially urgent appeal to our subscribers and readers to lend their cooperation, not only by renewing their own subscriptions promptly, but also if possible by subscribing for their friends and by making the magazine known to others. We shall always be glad to mail sample copies.

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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.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. VI.

DECEMBER, 1917.

No. 10.

GOD AND THE WORLD.

By Swami Ramakrishnananda.

No man who has not true love towards God can be religious. Religion begins when attraction towards God is greater than attraction towards the world. Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to say that there are two loadstones in the body, one below and the other above. The mind is like a piece of iron in the middle. If the lower loadstone is the stronger, the mind will be drawn downward; if the upper loadstone is the stronger, then it will be attracted upward. In most people the lower loadstone is all clear and able to attract the mind, while the upper one is so covered with the dirt and dust of *Tamas* (ignorance and impurity) that it cannot exercise the least power of attraction. Remove the dirt and dust and at once the mind will be drawn to God. In all men of the world the attraction is downward towards sense-pleasure and worldliness. If this lower loadstone ceases to attract, it is because some stronger attraction is being exerted and that attraction is God. The attraction upwards, towards God, is called religion; the downward attraction, towards the world, is irreligion. Therefore no man can begin to be religious who has not a strong love towards God.

You cannot mix these two attractions, however. As

light cannot be mixed with darkness, so God cannot be mixed with Mammon. The attraction towards the world means egotism, attraction towards God means self-surrender. The very existence of egotism shows that man is a bond-slave to the world. For what is the world? It is sense pleasure, it is money, it is names and fame. We see something that attracts us and we say: "I must have that; it must be mine." But there are perhaps a hundred others who also want the same thing, so we begin to fight for it. Thus competition and struggle come. Out of this struggle rises the idea of *my* right, *my* property, *my* advantage; hence an ever-growing consciousness of ego. But this is an active aggressive condition, while the first condition of being attracted is to have a sense of complete surrender. The iron is wholly passive when it is drawn to the magnet. So long, therefore, as a man is struggling for his rights and believes he is the actor, he cannot feel the attraction of God. Only when he becomes perfectly surrendered does he begin to be drawn upward. When he says with full conviction: "I can do nothing of myself; Lord, do Thou act;" then that upper loadstone begins to exercise its power.

As long as we keep asking: "Lord, shall I do this or that? Shall I go here or there?", we may be sure that we cannot know the Divine Will; because this means that our egotism is in full play. If, however, we can let go completely and say: "Lord, do whatever Thou wilt, I belong to Thee. Guide me wholly according to Thy wisdom;" then at once God will show us the way. Whenever we pray to God in right earnest, He is sure to come to us. The trouble is we pray to so many others beside God. We pray to the doctor to give us health, and to the shop-keeper to give us food or dress, and in among the rest

we pray to God to give us spiritual light and knowledge. When we look to Him alone and pray to Him and to no one else, He never fails to answer our prayers, if we make them really intense.

Actually very few of us believe in God all the time. How do we know this? Because we allow anxieties and fears to arise in our minds. If we really have faith in God and in His infinite power and goodness, we can never feel fearful about anything. God is the only one who can free us from desires and fears, hence He is called the Purifier. What makes the mind impure? Desire. Free the mind of all desire and at once it becomes pure. A man, however, who has no idea of God can never get rid of desires. He will rather say: "Desire is the only thing that makes life pleasant. If I have no desires, what difference will there be between me and the wall? It is desire alone that gives me enjoyment. If I had no hunger, I could not enjoy good dishes; if I had no thirst, I could not enjoy a refreshing drink. For every desire in me I find a satisfaction in the world. I have hunger, there is food; I have thirst, there is water; so it is through desire that I enjoy the world." Believing this, he will never be willing to give up desire.

The lover of God, on the other hand, sees that instead of bringing enjoyment these desires are the source of all his miseries. He understands that in God alone can he find the satisfaction of all desire, for He is infinite bliss and all other pleasures are finite and perishable. *Anandam* or bliss is the best definition of God; and if God is bliss, then no man is an atheist, because everyone is seeking a happiness which has no break and that happiness is God. The real Ideal of every human being is *Satchidanandam*,—Eternal Life, Infinite Knowledge and Everlasting Joy; for

all men wish to live forever, to be all-knowing and to have eternal bliss. But God alone is all-life, all-knowledge and all-happiness; therefore God is really the Ideal of every living being.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "First let a man know his infinite nature, then let him play with the finite. First seek God, then the world." Or as Christ taught: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven." Let God shine alone in His glory. Now we let the ego shine above Him and we throw God into the background. We make Him the last consideration. We seek matter first and spirit afterwards. We should reverse the process. Our hearts also must be free from any ulterior motive. If we love God for what we can get from Him in the world, we really love the world, not God, and we can never be true devotees. The true devotee loves God just for the joy of loving Him, because God is his Beloved.

PRAYER.

By the Persian Sufi Jami.

O God, deliver us from preoccupation with worldly vanities and show us the nature of things as they really are. Remove from our eyes the veil of ignorance and show us things as they really are. Show not to us non-existence as existent, nor cast the veil of non-existence over the beauty of existence. Make this phenomenal world the mirror to reflect the manifestations of Thy beauty, and not a veil to separate and repel us from Thee. Cause these unreal phenomena of the universe to be for us the sources of knowledge and insight, not the cause of ignorance and blindness. Our alienation and severance from Thy beauty all proceed from ourselves. Deliver us from ourselves, and accord to us intimate knowledge of Thee.

APOCRYPHAL TEACHINGS OF CHRIST.

According to Mohammedan Agrapha.

Jesus said: Take not the world for your lord, lest it take you for its slaves. Lay up your treasure with Him who will not waste it.

Jesus said: Ye company of apostles, verily I have overthrown the world upon her face for you; raise her not up after me. It is a mark of the foulness of this world that God is disobeyed therein, and that the future world cannot be attained save by abandonment of this; pass then through this world and linger not there, and know that the root of every sin is love of the world. Often doth the pleasure of an hour bestow on him that enjoyeth it long pain.

He said again: The world seeketh and is sought. If a man seeketh the next world, this world seeketh him till he obtain therein his full sustenance; but if a man seeketh this world, the next world seeketh him till death cometh and taketh him by the throat.

Jesus said: The love of this and of the next cannot agree in a believer's heart, even as fire and water cannot agree in a single vessel.

Jesus said: Woe to him who hath this world, seeing that he must die and leave it and all that is in it! It deceiveth him, and it betrayeth him.

Jesus said: Who is it that buildeth on the waves of the sea? Such is the world. Take it not for your resting-place.

Jesus said: Ye company of apostles, be satisfied with a humble portion in this world, so your faith be whole; even as the people of this world are satisfied with a humble portion in faith, so this world be secured to them.

Jesus used to say: I warm myself in winter in the sun;

my candle is the moon; my mounts are my feet; my food and dainties are the fruits of the earth; neither at eventide nor in the morning have I aught in my possession, yet no one on earth is richer than I.

Jesus said: The world is a place of transition, full of examples; be pilgrims therein, and take warning by the traces of those that have gone before.

Jesus said: Be in the midst, yet walk on one side.

Jesus said: I have treated the leprous and the blind and have cured them; but when I have treated the fool, I have failed to cure him.

God revealed unto Jesus: Command the children of Israel that they enter not my house save with pure hearts and humble eyes and clean hands.

Jesus said: Who knoweth and doeth and teacheth, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said: Commit not wisdom to those who are not meet for it, lest ye harm it; and withhold it not from them that are meet for it, lest ye harm them. Be like a gentle physician, who putteth the remedy on the diseased spot.

Jesus said: How can he be a wise man who, when his journey is unto the next world, maketh for the things of this world? How can he be a wise man who seeketh for words in order to communicate by them, not in order to act according to them?

God said unto Jesus: Exhort thyself, and if thou hast profited by the exhortation, then exhort others; otherwise be ashamed before Me.

Jesus said: converse with those whose presence will remind you of God, whose words will increase your works, and whose works will make you desire the next world.

Jesus was asked by some men to guide them to some course whereby they might enter Paradise. He said: Speak

not at all. They said: "We cannot do this." He said: Then only say what is good.

Jesus said: Devotion is of ten parts. Nine of them consist in silence, and one in solitude.

Malike, son of Dinan, said: "Jesus one day walked with his apostles, and they passed by the carcass of a dog. The apostles said, 'How foul is the smell of this dog!' But Jesus said: How white are his teeth!

Christ passed by certain of the Jews, who spake evil of Him; but He spake good to them in return. It was said to Him: "Verily these speak ill unto thee and thou dost speak good?" He said: Each giveth out of his store.

WHO IS OUR SAVIOUR?

By Swami Paramananda.

If we wish to be saved we must connect ourselves with the source of salvation. We may have a hidden treasure, but we must be conscious of it; otherwise we suffer from poverty. Similarly, unless we know our connection with the Infinite Ocean of Life and Wisdom, we cannot be saved by It. That is the real significance of the idea that Christ takes the burden of those who come to Him. Why does He not take the burden of all? Because all do not cast their burden on Him. The majority of us rely on our ego, not on Him. But so long as we depend on that which is perishable and limited, we shall never attain to that which is imperishable and lasting. Saviours have come and gone, yet how many souls have failed to recognize them! This shows that we cannot be saved until we have unfolded certain spiritual qualities within ourselves. Man has been blessed countless times by God and by Great Teachers, he has been given frequent opportunities to save himself, but

he has not been able to profit by them because his mind is under the sway of ego.

Unless the mind is ready, even though a Saviour may come He can do little for us. It is the mind which causes all our unrest and it is the mind which makes us calm and serene; it is this mind which makes us happy and this very same mind can make us miserable. We should take care of this mind, therefore, because it is the determining factor in all our undertakings. Upon it alone rests our success or failure. No one can say then that our destiny depends on anything outside ourselves. For this reason Sri Krishna declares in the Bhagavad-Gita: "Let a man raise himself by his Higher Self, let him never lower himself; for he alone is the friend of himself and he alone is the enemy of himself. He who has conquered himself by his Higher Self, he is the friend of himself; but he whose self is unconquered, his self acts as his own enemy, like an external foe." The idea, therefore, that if we believe on a certain Saviour we have only to fold our hands and let Him save us, is a grave mistake. Unless we lead a true life and uplift ourselves, even a Saviour cannot bring us salvation.

It is only through the life that we can prove the truth of a Saviour's message. We must not only hear His words, but assimilate them; and assimilation requires practice, leading an inner spiritual life. Christ declared that not those who merely cry, "Lord! Lord!" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who do God's will. Buddha taught His disciples never to try to convert by words, but by holy acts; because He knew that the only true help lies in converting a man's Soul to righteousness, not merely in changing his faith from one form to another. Living the life is what every Saviour preaches; infilling each thought,

deed and word with spiritual power. Spirituality is a living force. When we allow ourselves to be wholly guided by this force, resisting all lower impulses, we make ourselves ready for the Lord's saving Grace. The mirror of our heart must be washed clean by the practice of forbearance, charity and loving-kindness towards all, then it will be able to reflect the image of our Saviour.

Those who are unworthy have not the spiritual sight necessary to perceive a Saviour. Who is to know when God comes? Only those who are God-like, whose vision is clear. We must first prepare the field. We must have a real thirst for righteousness in our hearts. We must feel as Buddha felt,—that this whole world is a vast prison-house, that life is not safe without Truth. Although surrounded by luxury and living in conditions which mortals most long for, He saw misery and death hunting Him at every step and He felt He must save His fellowmen from these. To do it He plunged within Himself; He fixed His whole heart in His inner being and that gave Him the power to discover the remedy for all mortal ills.

The true Saviour is within us. As soon as we analyze and turn our thought inward, we discover that the Kingdom of Heaven is an inner spiritual state, not an external realm of enjoyment. Merely believing that someone from the outside can save us is not sufficient. Ignorance is the cause of our bondage; rising out of ignorance is our salvation. In accomplishing this, the personal example and inspiration of a Saviour or Divinely-appointed Teacher is of incalculable help. We must, however, establish a close relation with Him; we must listen to His voice and obey His teachings. Simply declaring ourselves His followers with fanatical devotion will not open us to His saving Grace. We must mould our life in the smallest detail ac-

according to His injunctions; we must constantly bear in mind that the saving power of religion does not lie in a superficial acceptance of the form, but in holy living. We must base our daily actions on the fundamental principles of every religion,—humility, purity and love. We must give up all hypocrisy and half-heartedness. We must be absolutely sincere in our spiritual devotion.

It does not matter what personal Saviour we follow. If in our daily living we practise the teachings of any great Teacher, we shall surely realize the One who is the basic rock of all. The idea of a Saviour cannot be limited to one form or to one conception of Divinity. According to Vedanta, God comes to earth whenever there is a need; and He comes to all men, not to one special group of people. His form is universal. He is the Infinite Father of all, but He appears to His children in many different garments. When we lack direct perception of Truth, we see differences and sow seeds of discord; but the more we grow in inner wisdom, the more we shall learn to tolerate all creeds and see the same God in all Saviours.

EARLY CHRISTIAN HYMN.

By St. Joseph of Studium, 9th Century.

(Translated from the Greek.)

O happy band of pilgrims,
If onward ye will tread
With Jesus as your fellow,
To Jesus as your Head!

O happy, if ye labor
As Jesus did for men;
O happy, if ye hunger
As Jesus hungered then!

The Cross that Jesus carried,
He carried as your due;
The Crown that Jesus weareth,
He weareth it for you.

The faith by which ye see Him,
The Hope in which ye yearn,
The Love that through all troubles
To Him alone will turn,—

What are they but vaunt-couriers
To lead you to His sight?
What are they save the effluence
Of Universal Light?

The trials that beset you,
The sorrows ye endure,
The manifold temptations
That Death alone can cure,—

What are they but His jewels
Of right celestial worth?
What are they but the ladder
Set up to Heav'n on Earth?

O happy band of pilgrims,
Look upward to the skies,—
When such a light affliction
Shall win you such a prize!

How high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! And Thou never departest, and we scarcely return to Thee. Up, Lord, and do; stir us up, and recall us; kindle and draw us; inflame, grow sweet unto us; let us now love, let us run.

— *St. Augustine.*

THE CHRISTMAS FEAST.

By Sister Devamata.

In the early Christian Church there was no uniform date for the celebration of the birthday of Jesus. Clement of Alexandria speaks of some communities who observed it on the 20th of May, others on the 19th or 20th of April, while he himself believed it to come on the 17th of November, 3 B. C.; still others fixed it on January 6th. The author of a Latin tract written in Africa claimed by virtue of private revelation that it fell on March 28th; and the reason he gives is that when the Saviour appeared, the earth must have been in the most perfect state,—flowers in bloom, trees in leaf, the moon full, and on March 28th all these conditions were most completely fulfilled. The first known identification of the birthday with December 25th is mentioned by Theophilus of Antioch (A. D. 171-183); but there can be little doubt that this could not have been the date, since that is the wet season in Judea and the shepherds could scarcely have been watching their flocks on the rain-swept plains around Bethlehem. Chrysostom in a sermon preached at Antioch on December 20th, 386 or 388 A. D., again mentions the 25th of December as the proper date, and there was evidently a growing tendency to observe it on that day; but we find no evidence of any general concensus of opinion regarding it before the 5th century. The year was equally uncertain, it would appear. The Church Father Irenaeus (A. D. 190) declares on the authority of “all the elders who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord,” that Jesus lived to be nearly fifty years of age and must therefore have been born much earlier than recorded. Cannon Farrar, more conservative, writes that “there is at least a large amount of evidence that He was born four years before our era;”

while the Church historian, Eusebius, places His birth at about 10 A. D.

With such complete absence of fact or even concordant tradition regarding the moment when Jesus took birth, it became necessary to fix arbitrarily a date for the Feast of the Nativity; and it seemed but natural and logical to choose one which already had a sacred association in the minds of the people. From the beginning of history the 25th of December appears to have been consecrated by a common observance in practically every country and by every nation. In China there are still religious solemnities at the time of the winter solstice; all shops are closed and the courts suspended. The ancient Persians celebrated the birthday of their Lord and Saviour Mithras on December 25th. Among the ancient Egyptians their Deity Horus was believed to have been born on the night of the winter solstice, and each year an image of the Holy Child was brought out of the sanctuary with solemn ceremonies on December 25th, as the sacred Bambino is today exhibited in Rome; while the "Chronicles of Alexandria," an ancient Christian work, tell us further that this son of the Virgin Isis "was exposed in a crib to the adoration of the people." Among the Greeks, Bacchus was supposed to have been born at early dawn on the 25th of December and in his Mysteries he too was shown to the people as an infant. The birth of Hercules and of Adonis was also celebrated on the same day. In Rome this was equally a very holy festival, observed under the name of *Natalis Solis Invicti* (the Nativity of Sol the Invincible). "It was a day of universal rejoicings. All public business was suspended, declarations of war and criminal executions were postponed and friends made presents to one another."

The name Yule as applied to Christmas comes to us from

the ancient Germans and referred likewise to the feast of the winter solstice. It was a time for the renewal of agreements, the consultation of the gods and for lavish hospitality. The Scandinavians also celebrated their "Jul" on this "Mother-night," spending it in riotous feasting, and at its close the most important guests received presents,—usually horses, battle axes, swords and gold rings. "The Druids," Godfrey Higgins writes, "kept this night as a great festival and called the day following it Nolagh or Noel, or the day of regeneration, and celebrated it with great fires on the tops of their mountains, which they repeated on the day of the Epiphany or Twelfth Night." In Britain, December 25th was a feast day long before the Britons were converted to Christianity. Bede narrates that "the ancient peoples of England began the year on the 25th of December, when we now celebrate the birthday of the Lord, and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue *Modranecht*, that is, the Mothers' Night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed." To these Northern races we also owe the use of evergreen garlands and gift-laden trees.

Thus we see that on this special day almost every nation of the world celebrated the nativity of a Virgin-born Saviour. What wonder then, as Mr. Gibbon declares in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, that "The Roman Christians, ignorant of the real date of His (Christ's) birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December, the *Brumalia* or Winter Solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the birth of Sol." St Chrysostom (390 A. D.) tells us that they did this "in order that, whilst the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies, the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed." The reason,

however, lay deeper, we believe. Already the festival was dear to them; and also, in adopting not only this but various pre-Christian holy days, they were probably moved by the same natural impulse which led originally to their choice. In every human heart there is an innate sense of the fitness of things, a memory of Divine Harmony, of that perfectly ordered law which brings each thing in its due season and manifests on all planes in perfect balance. The Saviour comes at the moment of greatest need, that is, when densest darkness envelops the souls of men; why should that not be linked with the season when the nights are long and the hours of daylight few? Why should not the rebirth of the earth at the turn of the sun stand beside the rebirth of mankind at the rising of the Redeemer? And why should the joining of the two conceptions, or the discovery that it has been done down the ages, resolve the holier idea into a myth?

Humanity is one; and as the same life-giving sun has waxed and waned through the centuries, shedding its light on the peoples of the earth without respect of persons, so has Nature taught her children the same lessons by the same symbols in the same way at all times over the entire world. History repeats itself, as does Sacred Lore and Scripture, because the drama of life, with all its diversity in detail, is ever the same. Human passion and human aspiration are unaltered by race or creed, and the human heart lives out the same story of Divine unfoldment wherever or whatever it may worship. That the Christian Church and Christ's life contain facts or customs of an earlier day does not weaken or disprove their authenticity. It shows rather that they are rooted more deeply in the human consciousness and need. Narrow indeed must be the mind which would revoice the words of Tertulian, a

Church Father of the 3rd century, who in writing to his brethren declares it to be "rank idolatry" to hang their doors "with garlands or flowers on festival days according to the custom of the heathen;" or which could feel with those Puritans who in 1644 by an act of Parliament forbade any merriment or religious services on December 25th because it was a pagan festival. Those also who would discount as myth what has been a persistent repetition in human life and thought, have not seen far below the surface and know little of the simple round of Nature's ways.

That which has no foundation in reality cannot live down the ages. Besides, dates and events do not make a Saviour. Divine facts need no support from history. Whether the Christ-Ideal rises out of the hunger of man's higher nature, as embodied in the myths of every nation; or whether these myths and legends spring out of the lives of mighty God-Men; the reality of the Divine, breaking like a flashing sun-ray through the storm-clouds of human error at the moment of darkest agony, cannot be denied. Any religious faith, no doubt, is vulnerable that makes the Divine rest on the human, the Infinite on the finite; and the Church, so far as it has held tenaciously to historic authenticity or has made exclusive claims to certain facts and truths, has opened itself to violent shocks which have threatened at times to shake its very foundations. Yet, however theology may suffer by the revelations of science, true religion will pass through every fire of research unscathed. And when all the noise of argument has ceased and the voices of higher criticism have died away into silence, there on the barren hill of Golgotha will still tower the cross of the Crucified One, symbol of supreme sacrifice; still shall we find the new-born Child in the manger at Bethlehem, with the pure-hearted Mary bending over Him;

still will the sweet notes of Sri Krishna's flute sound in the fields of Vrindavan; still round the flaming Yule log, the air fragrant with fir and balsam and pine, we shall hear how "whenever religion declines and irreligion prevails," God comes to earth "to destroy evil, to protect the good, to restore religion," and "to bring peace and good will among men."

TO THE GOD RA.

Rendered from Egyptian Hymns.

Hail to Thee, Ra, at Thy rising; the night and the darkness
are past.

At the dawn of the day Thou shinest, the heavens are filled
with Thy light.

King of the Gods art Thou, all glory and triumph are Thine.
The Gods come as dogs to Thy feet, rejoicing to greet
Thee at dawn.

Hail to Thee, Ra, at Thy rising; at Thy coming all men
are made glad.

In joy dost Thou come in the morning, with glory Thou
rulest the world.

The stars of the heavens adore Thee, the Gods of the earth
extol Thee.

Mighty Lord of the heavens art Thou!

Hail to Thee, Ra, at Thy rising!

None can express Thy glory, Lord of all Wisdom and Truth;
The Souls of the East attend Thee, the Souls of the West
are Thy servants. The North and the South
exalt Thee.

Worshipped art Thou, our Ruler, by those whom Thou hast
created.

Thou risest in heaven's horizon, Thou causest mankind to
rejoice.

Hail to Thee, Ra, at Thy rising, at Thy rising in glory, O Ra!

TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP

From the Talmud.

They asked our sages in Rome, says the Babylonian Talmud: "If your God is displeased with men's worship of other gods, why does He not make it void by destroying all idols and objects of false worship?"

"If the objects of false worship," replied our sages, "were things unnecessary to mankind and to the world, then this might be. But behold, they adore the sun and moon and the constellations; plants and animals; and the trees and the streams, and many other things both useful and beautiful. Shall the Creator destroy His world because of the fools?"

Then said they of Rome: "But there are among the objects of what you call false worship some that are useless to mankind—stones and blocks of wood and hideous effigies. If your God be, as your prophet says, 'a consuming fire,' why does He not burn up these and spare only such as the world really needs?"

"If God were to destroy some of the idols," replied our sages, "and were to spare others, this would strengthen the heads of the idolaters. For then, indeed, would those whose gods had been spared exclaim: 'Behold ours are proved to be true gods, for all the false ones have been destroyed.'

"Nor is this all. God has formed a world full of beauty and order; a universe full of exquisitely adjusted laws that work together for good. There is nothing in it useless or evil or even superfluous. Shall God destroy His world, or interfere with its order and the regular working of His perfect laws, because of the fools that abuse His gifts?

"Suppose a man steals a measure of wheat and sows his field with it: according to judgment and religion it ought

not to grow. But Nature goes on her orderly course as fixed by the Creator, and those that treat His laws with contempt are destined to have to render an account."

LET THY GARMENTS BE WHITE

Hebrew Parable.

"It is said, 'Let thy garments always be white, and let not oil be wanting for thine head!' Doth then the Scripture care about white garments and oil for the hair?" asks Rabbi Jochanan ben Zachai. "For have not the heathen plenty of white garments and many oils for anointing the head?"

Behold the Scripture speaks in figurative language of the commandments: of religious duties and good works, and of the Torah. Rabbi Judah, the Prince, likened it to a certain king who made a banquet and invited travellers and strangers to it. He sent word to them: "Wash ye, make ye clean and anoint yourselves, and wash your clothes and prepare yourselves for the banquet of the king." But he did not appoint a time. Then the prudent among them made themselves ready and waited at the entrance of the palace. They said: "In the palace of the king nothing will be wanting and there need be no signs of preparation, but the feast may be ready at any time." The stupid among them, however, did not prepare themselves. They said: "There cannot be a great banquet without much stir and trouble and gathering together of stores and provisions. We need not disturb ourselves until we see signs of preparation at the palace." So they joined themselves with their fellows, and thought only of their common and everyday interests, and took no thought of the word of the king. The plasterer went to his plastering, and the potter to his clay, and those working with pitch and tar and

at other dirty trades went on with their ordinary occupations.

Suddenly came the word of the king: "Let all come to the banquet!" And the servants of the king hastened them and pressed them to come forthwith at the bidding of the king. Then those that had not prepared themselves came in their pollution and uncleanness. And the king rejoiced over the wise that had done according to his bidding, and who, moreover, had honoured the royal palace; and he was angry with those who had taken no heed of his word, but who had polluted his royal palace with all the uncleanness that clung about their garments and had treated it with contempt.

Then said the king: "Those that have prepared themselves for my presence and were ready when I called, shall come and feast at the royal table; and those that did not prepare themselves shall not eat at the banquet." They thought perhaps they might depart, but the king replied: "No, but those shall recline at the banquet and eat and drink, while these stand upon their feet and are smitten and look on distressed." Thus of the life to come, this is what Isaiah says: "My servants shall eat and you shall be hungry." It is said, in the name of Rabbi Meir, that also the unprepared were allowed to sit at the table of the king, but not allowed to eat and drink; and their suffering was infinitely greater than if they had been made to stand. For they who stand and do not eat and drink are only like waiters and attendants, but those who sit at the board and are not treated as guests are shamed and disgraced.

And this is a truer picture of the life to come as indicated by the prophet Malachi: "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." Let thy

garments always be white in sinlessness, and let the ointment of good deeds and holiness be never lacking for thy head. . . . There is an old traditional saying transmitted by the sages of the Mishnah, "Return to God in repentance, one day before thy death." His disciples asked Rabbi Eliezar: "But how is a man to know the day of his death, so that he may become penitent?" "That is just the point," explained the Rabbi. "Repent today; tomorrow you may die."

A man should be found turning from sin to God every day of his life; therefore it is said, let thy garments at all times be white.

REPORTS

For some time past, frequent announcements of the establishment by the Ramakrishna Mission of new hospitals, schools and other needed philanthropic institutions have come to us; but no report has brought a more vivid picture of the Mission's expanding usefulness than the one just received, telling of the Relief Work carried on by its members during twelve months only. Although the war has raged far from Indian soil, it has nonetheless struck a deadly blow at India. The closing of European mills has meant no market for jute and the farmers in Bengal were forced in 1914 to dispose of their crops at one-tenth the normal price. This meant ruin, which was made complete by a second season of destructive planting due to a pest of insects. The result was a wide-spread famine. At once the Mission sent a band of workers to the affected districts; and we find them feeding during the first month 5590 starving souls in 460 villages, and the following month 11,186 persons in 927 villages. When a small harvest relieved the pressure of want here, greater activity was centred in other regions where floods had wrought

terrible havoc by submerging the unripe crops and sweeping away houses and cattle. In Northern Tipperah, Calchar, Silchar and elsewhere members of the Mission could be seen pushing over the flooded area in open boats, often in danger because of the heavy windstorms that lashed the waves into fury, yet determined even at the risk of drowning to carry relief to the thousands of men, women and children calling across the waters for help.

Before these young men had finished their task, others were rushed to answer a loud cry of distress caused by a continuous drought and consequent famine. Here the rescuing band undertook a vigorous irrigating campaign—digging canals many miles in length, sinking cemented walls, making new tanks, and clearing springs and ponds; thereby not only quenching the thirst of thousands, but permanently bettering the agricultural conditions and also furnishing employment to more than fifteen thousand hungry laborers who because of the imposed suspension of all cultivation were left without work. In one region only, the Government requested the Mission to take charge of the relief of three towns and thirty unions, which covered over 250 square miles of territory.

During the year under review more than one million pounds of rice were distributed; 86,259 persons were saved from starvation, and 5,466 villages were relieved and restored. The succor given, however, was not limited to food only. Temporary hospitals were established along the way and hundreds of sick or injured were given the best medical care; large numbers of people were clothed; where necessary, money was supplied; those whose houses had been destroyed by flood or the ravaging fires which followed the long droughts, received building materials; farmers were given seeds for planting and weavers yarn for

their looms. A number of Girls' Schools were also saved from collapse by timely financial aid and personal assistance. No one can read the report of the work done without feeling a glow of satisfaction and a desire that the Mission may be able to extend still more this department of its service. A permanent Relief Fund was started several years ago, but by no means suffices for the heavy demands upon it; and were it not for the energetic coöperation of other bands of workers who devote themselves to collecting money and materials as they are distributed, it would not be possible to do what is done at present. The hope is that the Relief Fund may be put on such a basis that no call for help from any part of India may go unheard.

* * * *

We have received an interesting report from a new Home of Service recently established at Silchar, Assam, under the direction of the Ramakrishna Mission. Several members of the Mission were sent to Silchar to carry on Relief work after the floods in July 1915 and the young men of the district, who assisted them, became so impressed by the selfless devotion of the Sannyasis that they banded themselves into a League to continue their good work. The present Home of Service is the outcome of the League. In connection with it there is a free Library and a Night School for poor boys who are forced to work during regular school hours. The League members have also formed a Fire Brigade to fight the destructive fires which often break out in that locality.

* * * *

On the first Sunday in November Swami Paramananda resumed charge of the Services, delivering an address on "Thought-Force and Prana," in which he made plain the

great responsibility resting on every human being to make proper use of the powerful instrument of mind placed in his hands. "Thought," he said, "may not always be constructive, but it is always productive," hence every thought we think is creating something which is bound to react on our life and character. This idea was further emphasized in his address, the following Sunday, on "The Law of Human Destiny," which was listened to with special appreciation and interest. With convincing clearness he showed how each of us is weaving his own destiny, of shining threads or dull, according to our desires and deeds; and by a natural sequence, in his next address, he made an earnest appeal to every sincere seeker to strive to learn "The Science of Self-Mastery," that no more time be wasted on the way, but that the conduct of our life be placed in the keeping of our Higher Self so that we may become truly Self-possessed, or possessed of our Soul-nature, instead of being slaves to the lower propensities of our mind and body.

On Thursday, November 15th, the Swami gave an informal reception to the students and friends of the Centre. A large number responded to his invitation and the evening proved exceptionally enjoyable because of the delightful singing of the eminent Spanish baritone, M. Ramon Blanchart, and his daughter, who possesses a well-trained soprano voice of rare quality. Mr. Blanchart sang for many seasons at "La Scala" in Milan and is well known throughout Europe. He has also been a prominent member of the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. Miss Blanchart has not yet begun her public career. Being devoted members of the Centre, unfailingly present at every meeting, it was with evident joy that they seized the opportunity to express their love for the work and this lent an even deeper charm to the beauty of their art.

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