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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

VOLUME VII.

1918

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

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REPORT.

Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

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Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF YOGA.

By Swami Paramananda.

As physical science strives to demonstrate the laws of the material universe before it accepts them, so the science of Yoga seeks to prove the laws of the spiritual world. The one is the science of the seen, the other the science of the unseen. The aim of both is knowledge, but the processes employed necessarily vary. When people out of spiritual yearning want to prove the deeper facts of existence, Yoga offers them certain methods by which the revelation of these facts can be gained. The word means literally "union" — union between subject and object. Knowledge takes place through this union. There must always be some point of contact. We cannot know Truth from a distance. We may make a mental picture of It, but it cannot be exact. For precise knowledge there must be contact and this contact is Yoga.

There are, however, certain qualifications which we must possess before we can gain this union. First of all we must gather up our scattered forces and establish perfect unity in our own organism, between body, mind and Soul. The Yoga system is not limited to the spiritual. It applies equally to all planes of activity. Its practices are directed along three distinct lines,—physical, mental and spiritual. The first step deals with that which is most immediate to

us—our body. This special branch is known in India as Hatha-Yoga. Its chief aim is to establish a healthy balanced condition in the body through physical exercises, postures and by regulating the functions of the breath. It teaches us how to control every muscle, how to command all our energy, so that this physical organism which is now so often a drawback may become a powerful instrument for higher investigation. Through its practices we learn to carry ourselves with lightness and balance. A systematic knowledge of this branch of Yoga also helps us to prevent disease and decay. Longevity is one of the natural results of its study. Yogis live long because they know the laws of life and do not go against them, but we do not obey them because we are ignorant of them. People become nervous wrecks and invalids wholly because they transgress these laws. Yoga helps us to discover them and shows us how to obey them.

We imagine that we are born with certain tendencies and that these compel us to act in a certain way; but a Hatha Yogi—one who has attained absolute mastery over his body—claims that this is a mistake, that we have hypnotized ourselves into this negative thought, that there is no reason why we should follow blindly all our physical instincts. He tells us that we have latent powers within us, by awakening which we can unite our forces and gain all the strength necessary for complete mastery. Now we rush headlong, impelled by our self-imposed desires, until utterly exhausted we reach a state which we call old age. Yoga teaches that this is due wholly to our limited apprehension of the laws of life; that if we will but study our organism and learn to use it with moderation and understanding, we may make of this body a most efficient and valuable instrument. There are people who live long yet

never appear aged or worn out. This is because the Spirit within is beyond all time, space and causation; and as man is able to turn his thoughts to that Spirit it brings him an ever fresh supply of *Prana* or Life-Force.

The method by which we gain perfect control and balance in our physical system is known as *Asanam* or posture. The study of psychology shows that the greatest part of our activity originates in the spinal column, where all the main nerve centres are located. Therefore it becomes necessary for us to keep this passage clear by sitting, walking and lying properly, in order that the life current may not be obstructed. Abnormal positions may wholly block our higher progress. Through experience we know that different states of mind tend to express themselves by certain positions of the body; grief and depression bend down the head and spine and contract the muscles, while joy expands the chest and lifts the whole frame. The reverse is equally true: when we hold the body in certain positions, it seems to awaken certain kinds of thoughts. These fall into three general classes, called in Sanskrit *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Those thoughts which stimulate our lower brute instincts are produced by *Tamas*. They bring a sense of quietness, but it is the quietude of lethargy, not of concentrated energy. The second class, born of *Rajas*, give rise to nervous excitement, manifesting as excessive ambition, envy, jealousy, discontent and all those states of mind which spring from lack of poise. *Sattwa* is the balancing factor between these two extremes. Through the systematic practice of various postures we can overcome both physical heaviness and nervous unrest; the muscles and bones can be made more flexible, the flow of the nerve currents more even; and the whole system will gain greater lightness and endurance as well as better health.

Yoga offers a large number of different postures, each of which is supposed to quicken certain latent forces in the nerve centres. Many of them are very intricate and practically impossible for ordinary persons. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, being the steadiest of all postures, has been adopted throughout the Orient and all the varying postures in Yoga are based on this fundamental position; but those to whom this is too difficult can gain good results by sitting on a straight chair, of such a height that the legs from the thigh to the knee are perfectly horizontal and the feet firmly planted on the ground. The principal points to keep in mind are:—The back, neck and head must be in a straight line and the chest erect, so that the nerve currents may have free action; there must not be the slightest leaning forward or backward or at any angle. The lips must be kept closed, but the teeth must not touch; while the hands must be relaxed and rest in the lap. At first such a posture may seem unnatural, but Yoga declares that what we consider natural may be really unnatural and what is now unnatural for us may become perfectly natural.

Having taken the right posture, it is then necessary to make the breath rhythmic by maintaining an equal count for inhalation and exhalation. One of the commentators on Yoga says that this inbreathing and outbreathing serves as an automatic scrubber, cleansing the system of all impurities. Through lack of conscious direction of our physical functions we have lost the habit of normal regular breathing, and this is one of the main causes of weakness and ill health. With the different postures there are specific breathing exercises given, the purpose of which is to remove the density and lethargy of the body, to purify the nerve tissue and to establish a state of perfect balance. In every case, however, these must be modified to fit the

individual need and should never be practised indiscriminately or without competent guidance.

We must remember that all this physical study is not an end in itself, but merely a preparation for higher metaphysical research. Until we have gained a certain amount of mastery over our outer being, it is impossible to attain inner mastery; but when this preliminary work is done, the next and more important step is the training of the mind, which is accomplished through the practice of discrimination and concentration. Discrimination is that faculty of intelligence which enables us to ascertain the true value of all things in the universe. The right and constant exercise of this faculty increases the alertness and keenness of the mind. The study of logic, of mathematics and philosophy are especially directed to the cultivation of the power of discrimination; but any systematic effort in our daily life to distinguish between the real and apparent, the essential and non-essential, the fleeting and the lasting will develop it. Discrimination alone, however, will not safeguard our mental progress; for even though we may discover the real value of certain facts and laws, we are incapable of following them up without the power of concentration. Actually these two forms of mental activity are so inseparable that one cannot advance without the other. Discrimination like a searchlight points the way; concentration supplies the necessary power by which to reach the goal. Concentration means gathering up or focusing our scattered mental energies. As a general must gather together all his military resources before making an attack on the enemy, similarly our mind must assemble all its forces before it can hope to conquer Nature either without or within.

Concentration forms a vital part of Yoga; without it

we can accomplish but little, because our mind dissipates its energy and defeats its own ends. The majority of us have not begun to use the whole of this mind. We use only a fragment and it is for this reason that the field of our accurate knowledge is so limited. The first effort in concentration should be to withhold the mind from unnecessary activities. This is done by persistently restraining all wandering aimless thought, all idle conversation, and all non-essential interests, which now consume so much of our time and energy. We should next begin to diminish the circle of our thought until it is wholly indrawn to the centre and has reached that state which in Yoga is defined as *Ekagra* or one-pointed. In the preliminary stages it becomes necessary to have a definite concrete point on which to focus the thought,—between the eyebrows, on the tip of the nose, on the heart as a lotus-bud filled with light, on a picture or symbol. Each one can choose whatever appeals to him, provided it has a purifying and strengthening influence. The object is of secondary importance, the chief thing is the mastery of the mind. Just as unbroken horses are useless, so is an untrained mind; and we must sometimes even resort to rigid discipline in order to gain full control over it. As it grows more obedient, however, we are able to draw it gradually from objective to subtler subjective forms.

This leads naturally to the final step,—meditation. Meditation is the most practical of all branches of Yoga; because dealing as it does directly with our innermost life, its only method of expression is silent practice. But meditation does not mean holding the mind in a negative dreamy state or on a vague abstraction. It means the continuous flow of the thought towards the Ideal without any break. It brings the unseen world before us and makes it real to

us; then we no longer doubt or have confused ideas regarding spiritual things, but we know. Thus our Ideal becomes an absolute reality for us, and through this realization we are spiritually regenerated. Also the knowledge gained by such realization is perfect and unmistakable. The knowledge acquired through our sense perceptions is often erroneous, but when the mind is purified and the senses are spiritualized, then the vision which comes is free from error and productive of great good.

True meditation cannot be taught by words, because it is beyond words. It has rather to do with the deeper feelings of the Soul. First of all we must have eagerness to realize; and the more we cultivate this eagerness, the better fitted we become for the life of meditation. The steadfast practice of meditation lifts us by degrees to a state of consciousness known as *Samadhi* or superconsciousness, which is the ultimate goal of spiritual Yoga. When we reach this point, we are wholly freed from the bondage of the two lower stages of consciousness, known as the subconscious and the conscious. The subconscious represents the state of *Tamas*, dullness and inertia; the conscious corresponds to *Rajas* or the state of excessive activity; while in *Sattwa*, the state of pure serenity and lightness, we rise to the superconscious. It is when we are firmly established in this state, through the unbroken habit of meditation, that we gain all transcendental knowledge.

The system of Yoga has existed in India from time immemorial and has always been regarded as an exact science, as fully demonstrable as any department of natural science. It does not ask that anything be accepted on hearsay. It declares that if we do certain things, we shall get certain results as surely as in any experiment of chemistry or physics. For instance, it teaches that if a man can observe

the spirit of non-injury in his thoughts, words and deeds for a period of twelve years faithfully, he will acquire such subtle spiritual power that even the wild beasts of the jungle will forget their ferocity and become gentle in his presence. Christian saints have been known to experience this and it has been attributed to miraculous power; but in reality it was the natural outcome of a certain mode of living and thinking. If a man, again, practises absolute truthfulness in all that he says, thinks and does, whatever he wills comes to pass; or if he observes complete silence for a certain time, he will gain the power of prophecy. The steadfast practice of continence will also develop the power of healing. The various exercises in breathing and posture, already mentioned, will bring equally definite results in the form of physical strength, will power, and supersensuous perception. The difficulty is that experiments of this nature require great patience and perseverance; and when we lack these, we canot help but doubt the plausibility of such claims. But even when we are willing to persist, we must remember that each must do according to his own physical and mental capacity.

Moderation is absolutely necessary in order that we may maintain that perfect equilibrium, without which the goal cannot be reached. Too much is just as bad as not at all. Balance or evenness of mind is one of the definitions of Yoga given in the Bhagavad-Gita. Skillfulness in activity is another. This form of Yoga teaches how a man can take the most direct road to his end and thus avoid all wastefulness. There is nothing mysterious, dangerous or esoteric in the study of Yoga. It is is true that certain psychic powers may be manifested as the result of the practices, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading, etc.; but these are mere passing consequences,

which come to us as our inner organism becomes more purified and susceptible to finer vibrations. If we are careful not to attribute undue importance to them and move onward, we shall not be harmed or misled by them. We shall always be safe so long as we hold firmly before our mind's eye the ultimate goal of all the science and practice of Yoga, which is nothing short of direct vision of Truth and God-union.

ECSTASY OF DIVINE UNION.

Fragment of Song by Kabir.

(Translation by Rabindranath Tagore)

Behold how the thirst of the five senses is quenched there!
And the three forms of misery are no more!
Kabir says: "It is the sport of the Unattainable One: look within, and behold how the moonbeams of the Hidden One shine in you."

I have had my Seat on the Self-poised One,
I have drunk of the cup of the Ineffable,
I have found the Key of the Mystery,
I have reached the Root of Union.
Travelling by no track, I have come to the Sorrowless Land; very easily has the mercy of the great Lord come upon me.
They have sung of Him as infinite and unattainable; but I in my meditations have seen Him without sight.

That is indeed the Sorrowless Land, and none know the path that leads there;
Only he who is on that path has surely transcended all sorrow.
Wonderful is that land of rest, to which no merit can win;
It is the wise who has seen it, it is the wise who has sung of it.

This is the Ultimate Word; but can any express its marvellous savour?
He who has savoured it once, he knows what joy it can give.
Kabir says: "Knowing it, the ignorant man becomes wise, and the wise man becomes speechless and silent,
The worshipper is utterly inebriated,
His wisdom and his detachment are made perfect.;
He drinks from the cup of the inbreathings of love."

THE PATH OF TRUE LEARNING.

By the Japanese Sage Kaibara Ekken.

In studying the wisdom of the Sages it is imperative to have one definite aim—that of becoming a true man. The Ancients said that he who could will, could always accomplish, and that determination was half the battle. Once we have a definite aim, we become as bowmen with arrows trained on the target, or as travellers already moving towards their destination. In formulating our aims, let us be courageous rather than timid, and seek the truth even as the hungry man seeks food, the thirsty water, allowing nothing to hinder us as we press on towards the goal. Chu said: "Unless the aim be single, it cannot succeed." Then let him who ventures in the quest for true wisdom be single-minded, with the concentrataion of a setting hen or of a cat watching her prey.

Again, our aim in life should be for the highest; otherwise we shall be content with small successes and accomplish nothing worthy of mention. Aiming to become the best man in the world and working diligently with that end in view, we may in the end surpass some others. Aiming for the highest, we may reach the centre; while aiming at the centre, we shall attain the lowest. Aiming at the lowest, our end would be nowhere. Then let our aims be high, while our heart remains humble and lowly and we

accomplish small things faithfully. For if the heart be proud, little things will be neglected.

Let your learning be founded on the rock of humility. Exalt not yourself before others, but treat with respect both your friends and masters. Take delight in listening and asking questions. Be ever modest in thought and speech. Possessing this firm foundation, you will hear useful words, be able to correct your thoughts, widen your knowledge and daily grow in righteousness. Self-conceit is fatal to the acquiring of knowledge, for it prevents a man from listening to the advice of others or accepting their help. Relying on his own wisdom, he fancies he knows more than he does, and believes evil to be good—such a one gains more evil than good from the pursuit of knowledge.

Learning has two aspects, knowledge and action based on that knowledge. Learning may be compared with the eyes, and doing with the feet. Though our sight be clear, we cannot walk if our feet are paralyzed; and however strong their feet, walking is difficult to the blind. To know and not to do is as if our eyes saw the way but our feet refused to follow in it. In order of precedence knowledge comes first, but in order of importance action; for while nothing can be done without knowledge, yet knowledge not acted upon is useless.

As it is written in the Book of Chuyo, in order to advance our learning and live up to it, we must study widely, enquire minutely, think deeply, discern clearly and act faithfully. Seeing and hearing are the means of studying widely. In order to seek the truth we must read the books of the Sages, listen to the words of others and think of the past as well as of the present. The way of mankind is written in the books of the Sages, and if we read them

carefully we can distinguish black from white. The truth of the universe is infinite. Without knowing it, we often fail in our conduct. Seek first the truth which is in our hearts, then afterwards the wider truth to be gleaned from the thousands of outside things which we may make our own.

If by study, enquiry or thought, we have learned the truth, we should then put it into practice in both our speech and action. Let what we say be true and what we do discreet. Regulate the emotions, and suppress anger and selfish desires. Shake off evil and cling to good. Discovering our faults, let us not hesitate to correct them. Towards others let us be considerate. If they do not follow us, rebuke them not, but rather reflect that the fault must be ours. All this is the way of true action, and without studying and enquiring we cannot see the way clearly. Without thinking and discerning we cannot acquire the way; and without putting what we have learned into practice, it bears no fruit.

Always study yourself. Seek good friends and follow their best advice. Since the object of learning is to correct our faults, let us not be afraid to admit them, as well as our mistakes, before others. We are not Sages and we cannot always be right.

In studying a thing or a reason, we should keep our hearts cool. Also, we should not be content with stripping off one fold from the object of our study, for often below the first there are still hundreds of folds. Uncover a fold today, and uncover another tomorrow, till you see the inside of the thing. Under the skin there is flesh; under the flesh bone; and under the bone marrow. A shallow-minded person contents himself with uncovering one fold, thinking then that he has laid bare the whole.

Confucius said: "The Ancients learned for themselves, but men of today learn for others." To learn for ourselves is the true learning, while to learn for others is the ostentatious learning. The main object of learning is not to become famous, but to discipline ourselves and thus become true men. We take food in order to satisfy our hunger, not to satisfy that of others. The Sage said to Shiro: "Be thou a true scholar, and not a little scholar." By true scholar he meant a scholar who lives up to the learning of the Sages; and by the little scholar he implied a scholar who learns for his own fame and profit, without the will to live up to it.

Confucius said: "Learn and cease not until you die." Let us then continue learning and be true men as long as we can breathe.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF RELIGION.

By S. E. Waldo.

In every science the aim is to reach a final unity. In the study of chemistry the one element into which all the rest can be resolved is what is sought. In the study of language and of ethnology, what the student is striving to discover is the root language and the original race out of which the present variety has been evolved. In every instance the attempt is made to reach a common origin for all knowledge. In religion the aim has been similar, but nearly every religion has stopped short at duality, at the idea of God and man. The Vedanta was the first of the great world philosophies to assert boldly that God and man are essentially one. Older even than Vedanta was the system of cosmology and psychology taught by the great Sage Kapila and known as the Sankhya philosophy. It is the foundation of Vedanta, which practically accepts in the

main the position of the Sankhya, but pushes its conclusions a step further and so reaches unity. It is impossible to fix any date for Kapila. He is mentioned even in the Vedas, which proves his work was known and accepted when these ancient Scriptures were composed. In fact, no system of philosophy in India antedates the Sankhya, and the proof of this is that all are plainly built on the foundation of its teaching. All accept its cosmology and its psychology.

Here in the West evolution is a doctrine which still has not won universal acceptance. Thousands still believe in a "special creation" which took place a few thousand years ago, and regard all attempts to discredit such a belief as positively impious, tending to the overthrow of the Christian religion. The conflict between science and religion is regarded by many as irrepressible and irreconcilable; and it is claimed that if one believes fully in the conclusions of science, he cannot believe in the Christian religion. In taking this position, the defenders of Christianity do not realize that they really injure their own cause. In the failure to perceive that the idea of God must of necessity evolve and enlarge with the evolution of the race, they seek to impose upon the present day a concept of Deity fitted only for a much lower stage of human progress. By this I mean that as man develops, his concept of God develops; and to force upon a highly developed man a crude concept suited to a less advanced stage is like trying to crowd a full-grown man into the garments of a child. Still, as there will always be children, suitable garments must be preserved for them; and the opposite mistake of trying to make them wear the larger habit of manhood is equally to be avoided. In other words, each must be provided for according to his needs. This is precisely the effort of Vedanta. It takes each human being just where he

stands and helps him to do his best in that position. It does not say to him, become a Christian or a Hindu or a Musselman; it simply tells him to be pure and unselfish and to strive to realize his highest ideal; the rest will follow in due time.

To return, however, to the great Sankhya system as taught by Kapila. It divided the universe into two great divisions, Souls and Nature. The whole evolution of Nature was for the purpose of giving experience to the Soul, in order that the Soul should realize its own nature and become free. Nature exists in two states, a manifested and an unmanifested state. What modern science calls evolution is the manifested state. The Sankhya calls the unmanifested state involution or a return to equilibrium. Creation is a projection from the unmanifested; and it is eternal, without beginning or end. It occurs in cycles or periods of time of inconceivably long duration; and this evolution and involution have gone on eternally and will go on this way forever. At the end of one cycle another begins. The whole cycle includes both the unmanifested and the manifested stage and is called a *Kalpa*.

The Sankhya used two names for Nature. One of these, *Prakriti*, means almost the same thing as our word Nature. The other is perhaps more scientific. It is *Avyaktam* or undifferentiated. This word also means "without vibration;" it is defined by Kapila as the "equilibrium of the three forces." These are called *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. They are considered as the three sorts of material out of which all forms of manifestation are produced. *Tamas* is a force corresponding to attraction, *Rajas* to repulsion, and *Sattwa* is the balance between the two. When these two forces, attraction and repulsion, are held in perfect equipoise by *Sattwa* there is no creation, no movement. As soon as this

perfect balance is disturbed and one of these forces gets stronger than the other, then motion begins and creation or manifestation results. All this occurs periodically; there is a period of disturbance and a period of equilibrium; and these eternally succeed each other. This never-ending succession of manifestation and non-manifestation is the Sankhya doctrine of creation. When the balance between the forces is disturbed, the first manifestation is what Sankhya calls *Mahat*. This literally means "the great principle"; we call it universal intelligence. It covers all the ground of sub-consciousness, consciousness and super-consciousness. It must always be remembered that the Sankhya recognizes no difference between matter and mind save in degree. Both are substance, one coarser, the other infinitely finer, but still material.

This *Mahat* or universal intelligence changes into universal consciousness, and that in turn develops into universal fine particles and into universal organs of perception. This means that all special organs of perception are formed out of the material of universal perception. From the subtle particles, the *Tanmatras*, come the gross particles, the *Bhutas*. Thus Kapila divides the cosmos into twenty-four categories and behind them all he places a twenty-fifth, which he calls the *Purusha* or Soul. The modern idea of evolution begins with what Kapila calls the *Bhutas* or gross particles. Constant motion in the fine particles produces *Vayu*, the vibrating, which in turn produces *Tejas* or heat. This liquifies and produces *Apas* or water, and it later solidifies into *Prithivi* or earth. These stages correspond very nearly to the theory of evolution as taught in the West. It is a curious confirmation of the conclusion reached by two methods so opposite in operation that the result should be practically the same. The Western student examined the

external side, the Oriental studied the internal; but both arrived at conclusions marvellously similar as far as the material universe was concerned. The Oriental was not satisfied to stop here; he wanted a further solution, he wanted to arrive at what lay behind. He felt Nature alone was incomplete without a reason for all her efforts; and he found this reason in the necessity of the Soul's having experience, through which alone it could realize its true nature and reach liberation. Of these *Purushas* or Souls the number was infinite; and right here lies the main difference between the Sankhya and the Vedanta, which says there can be but one Soul and that the apparently infinite number of Souls are but the reflection of that One—as the one sun is reflected in millions of dewdrops.

The vast majority of men are dualists in religion, that is they teach a Deity eternally different and separate from man. Even while stating that God is omnipresent, they do not carry that idea to its literal conclusion, which is that if God is everywhere present, all is God or else there would be some place without Him and then He could not be omnipresent. At most, only a small number rise to the next conclusion—that man is a part of God, as a spark is part of the fire yet one with it. To such, God and man, while always distinct, are never separate; but the final unity is not reached until it is clearly seen that God and man and every manifested thing are one in essence. Then this universe is seen as an ever-varying panorama, the unchanging background of which is God. All is One Existence seen through name and form, which seem to change It into the wonderful variety we see. We can only know this One Existence through manifestation or limitation, so that we can never know It as It is. We are It, but can only realize this by going beyond reason and relative knowledge and

reaching what is called the superconscious state.

The Vedanta, as expounded by its great teacher Sankara, gives a very similar account of creation. It says that there is an unmanifested state, in which *Prana* and *Akasa,* primal force and matter, rest in perfect equilibrium. This balance is disturbed and *Prana* acting on *Akasa,* the result is the gradual projection of this universe. The order of the elements is first air, then fire, then water, then earth, as was the case in Kapila's system. According to both, the evolution of the microcosmos or of man proceeds in the same order as in the macrocosmos; for man is a little world in himself, duplicating all that is in the great world; and as there is a ruler directing each body, so there is a Ruler of the universe. This Ruler is called by Vedanta *Isvara,* but He does not entirely correspond to our Western idea of God. As the One Existence is beyond thought and has no attributes or qualities, it is necessary for the human mind when trying to conceive the idea of the One to do so under the limits imposed by time, space and causation. Within these limits the highest possible view that the human mind can take of the Absolute is the *Isvara*, the sum-total of the universe, from Whom it proceeds, in Whom it exists, and to Whom it returns. He is the repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities. He is the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent Ruler of the universe. Yet no temple is ever erected to *Isvara*, only to the lesser deities who personify His attributes of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, or *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Siva.* To them the Hindus pray, as we do to God, for various material benefits either here or hereafter, but never for salvation or final liberation. This liberation comes only when the Soul realizes its oneness with the Divine.

In the religion of the Vedanta we find many seeming

incongruities existing peacefully side by side, because we find the man of the highest spiritual development beside the man who is what we call an idolater, and yet the enlightened man is not at all disturbed by the fact that his brother has not yet reached to the same heights as himself. Why is this? The answer is simple: — because the highly developed man sees in his idol-worshipping brother one who is on the way to the highest, just as the most learned college professor sees in his baby son a possible future successor to all his honors and never dreams of blaming the little one because he has not attained the goal.

The idea of evolution,—that men are in various stages of development and must be treated accordingly, combined with the recognition of the essential unity of all existence, is the element that binds the varying aspects of religion into one great whole. Vedanta alone, of all the great philosophies, says that all the different religions that are in the world are only so many different roads to the one goal, to that One Existence called by so many names. We find in the world two opposing opinions. One says everything is change, a constant flux with nothing permanent; and the other says that behind all this ever-changing flow of existence there is an unchanging eternal reality. The harmonizing of these opposite views is accomplished by the non-dualists or Advaitists in Vedanta. They say that each is right according to the point of view taken. As long as there are two things, the seen and the seer, only ceaseless change can appear. In reality, however, there is both change and changelessness in the universe. Change can only appear to that which does not change. Unless you stand still on a bank you cannot perceive the movement of the current of a river. Taken as a unit, there can be no motion in the universe because motion is relative; one

thing seems to move in relation to some other thing that is either at rest or in motion at a different rate of speed. If then we conceive the entire universe as a single whole, how can there be any motion? In comparison with what can it be said to move? So with what we call the body, mind and Soul: they are not separate existences, but three phases of one existence. He who sees the body does not see the mind; and when he sees the mind he does not see the Soul. For the man who sees the Soul, both body and mind have vanished. To use the famous Indian simile of the rope and the snake: both cannot be seen at once. While the rope is mistaken for the snake, not the least idea of rope can be in the mind; and when the rope is seen as rope, the snake cannot be seen at all. Yet there are not two things but only one.

The Self or Soul is all that exists, but seen through the veil of name and form, it appears to be many. While we see the many, we do not see the Self; but when the Self is realized, the many have disappeared. The wave is nothing different from the ocean. The form taken for a moment by the water, we call a wave; but it can never be separated from the sea. The sea exists always, whether there are waves or not; but no wave could appear for an instant but for the sea. All existence as we know it, that is, all manifested existences are but waves upon the ocean of Absolute Existence. Seen as waves, there is only endless change; but seem as the ocean itself, there is one eternal whole. Modern science has shown that matter is really one unbroken ocean, constantly changing in configuration. A particle of matter that is in one being today, may be next month in a plant and later in an animal. Every particle of matter is constantly changing its position, just as do the drops in the ocean; and all the forms we see are like so

many waves appearing on this ocean of matter. We give them names and call the different points the sun, the moon the stars, men, animals, plants, etc., but in reality there is but one never-changing mass of matter.

The same is true of the mind, which is only matter in a finer form. And the Soul is likewise one, but It is Unchangeable, Unbroken, Absolute Being. It is the eternal Witness of the Universe, before whom turn the leaves of the book of life; the Soul never comes and never goes. The Self is omnipresent. This is the teaching of the non-dualist. Thus the Vedanta declares that underlying and embracing all forms of religion is Religion itself; and this is not talk, not theory, not doctrines, but realization. "It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging. It is not intellectual assent, but the whole nature becoming changed into it. That is religion." All the varying forms of religion are but so many attempts to reach the one Goal; and this can only be the final unit Existence, the One without a second, the Self.

THE STEADFAST TITTIBHAS.

Rendered from a Sanskrit Parable.

There once lived a pair of Tittibhas on the surf-hardened beach of an Ocean. The male bird, confident of his own strength, set the great Ocean at naught and took his wife away, leaving their newly-laid eggs on the sands. The fearful mother-bird vainly begged and protested. "Do not be anxious, my dear," he said. "If the foolish Ocean is so daring as to carry off our eggs, I shall punish the insolent fellow by depriving him of all his surging waters. You will see how he will tremble before me." "Tremble before you?" said the wife. "What are you compared with the Ocean?" The male Tittibha paid no heed to her words,

but spread his wings and called to her to come and look for food.

The Ocean overheard their conversation and when they were gone, he rolled his angry waves up the beach and swept their eggs into the surf. But he was by nature thoughtful and he said to himself: "I am not quite sure who this Tittibha may be, what his position, to whom he may appeal. Therefore I will hide his eggs in a safe place and wait." When the Tittibhas returned, full fed, their eggs were missing. Then the male bird, hot with indignation, ruffled his feathers and hopped noisily back and forth, sternly resolved to dry up the Ocean. His wife looked at him terrified. "What are you," she said, "a small creature born of an egg, compared with the mighty Ocean? How dare you plunge into a struggle with one so strong? Enmity is fitting only among equals. You and the Ocean are not equals. Your body is but sixteen inches long and your wings scare a foot across. Your legs are like the stem of the mango fruit and your beak is like the kusa grass. Friends you have none except myself, a poor helpless creature. You can fly in the air barely the distance of an arrow's flight. By birth you are a Tittibha, the meanest of the oviparous race. But the Ocean is a million miles long one way and two million miles the other and he is as deep as the earth itself. He holds within him quite as many beings as there are on earth and he hoards precious gems of countless worth. Among his friends may be reckoned the *Devas* and *Munis* (holy men) of rigid austerity. He has even given refuge to lofty mountains, such as Mainaka, when they fled from Indra's wrath. Compare yourself with such a foe. Do not thus tempt ruin. Already by your foolhardiness we have lost our children. Add not further to my misery by your death."

The male bird's eyes grew red with anger and each feather stood erect. Gazing sternly at his wife, he said: "In times of prosperity friends are to be found in plenty, but that one is a true friend who remains loyal in adversity. Whoso forsaketh at the hour of need is an enemy, whether it be son or wife or parent. He alone is a friend who never wavers in virtue or sin, in happiness or misfortune. That one who seeks success in life should slay first the enemy who is disguised as a friend, and then the open foe. But I have lived long and happily with you, how can I now injure you? No. All I ask is that you leave me. Tarry no longer near. Alone and by my own might I will dry up the Ocean." Thus saying, he flew into the air and began to work. The hen-Tittibha, seeing his resolve and ashamed of her unwifely behaviour, came to his aid; and all day and night they toiled, dipping their beaks and throwing water into the air; but still the Ocean seemed as full. Then fellow Tittibhas came and laughed to scorn their foolish efforts. "Either help or go away," the tireless couple called. Shamed in their turn by the courage of the little birds, they too joined; and so with others, until the entire race of feathered things was assisting them. At last the holy sage Narada passed and tried again to dissuade them from their apparently unreasoning task. But they would not listen. Seeing them so steadfast and firm in their resolve, he admonished them to invoke the aid of Garuda. At the very sight of the fierce Garuda the Ocean trembled and restored the eggs of the Tittibhas.

Thus untired should man work at the subjugation of his mind. If he will but make a firm resolve, then will God come to his aid as did Garuda to the brave Tittibhas. Help never fails those who persist in righteous action. That one can achieve all things who possesses manliness, self-con-

trol, courage, strength and skill. Just as the lion never retraces his steps when once he has begun his march, so he who engages in the subjugation of his mind should never turn back even in the face of a deadly foe. Thus say the Scriptures: "Like the emptying of the ocean by the tip of a blade of Kusa grass, drop by drop, so has the restraint of the mind to be achieved without weariness."

REPORTS.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the chief event of the month was the Christmas celebration, which took place on Sunday, the 23rd. At the morning Service, the subject of the Address by Swami Paramananda was "The Practice of the Christ-Ideal;" and in the evening at 5 o'clock the regular devotional service was extended and made the real Christmas Eve celebration. The usual altar to the Christ Child in the corner window of the house was lighted with many candles and the Chapel itself was trimmed with flowers and evergreens. Besides music by the regular organist, Senor Blanchart and Senorita Blanchart sang several sacred songs with deep fervor and devotion. The Swami gave a short address in which he layed emphasis on the need of manifesting the Christ consciousness in our daily life throughout the year, if we would taste the true Christ joy at the Christmastide.

The religious celebration on Sunday was followed on Christmas day by an informal reception to all the students and friends of the work, an especial effort being made to reach those who were alone and away from their home and friends. There was a tree in the Community House and refreshments were served throughout the afternoon.

The Centre will celebrate the ninth anniversary of its foundation on Tuesday evening, January 1st, at 8 o'clock. All the friends of the Centre are cordially invited to be present.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

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Ezekiel.

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Tyndall.

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THE VALUE OF NON-ATTACHMENT.

By Swami Paramananda.

Serenity of heart is attained when all the blemishes are wiped out of our nature through the subjugation of self. Only when we have succeeded in eliminating all worldly impressions and no longer allow our mind to cling to the non-essential, can we attain perfect tranquillity; and we do this through the practice of non-attachment. For this reason non-attachment forms one of the most vital factors in our spiritual path. In order to gain it people subject themselves to rigid austerities and sacrifices. But these do not always lead to detachment. Often we find as much attachment in a beggar as in a prince. It is not a question of many possessions or few. Non-attachment is a quality of mind and has very little to do with external conditions. Through a momentary impulse due to unhappy circumstances we may tear ourselves away from our association and environment; but even by doing this, we are not able to break the tie which binds us to them. The outer renunciation of earthly things does not liberate us from the hold they have upon our mind.

We usually imagine that we feel attachment only for what is pleasing to us, but in reality aversion binds us as much as desire. It is sometimes even more difficult to

free ourselves from unpleasant impressions than from pleasant ones. There are certain blunders, hasty words, unworthy acts, which leave a bad taste in our memory and we would like to forget them; but we seem powerless to do so, because our mind stubbornly clings to them. Often, too, we recognize something plainly detrimental to our progress, yet we are unable to drive it out of our thought. Another mistake we frequently make is to suppose that there cannot be any true love without strong attachment. In reality, however, they are totally different in nature and produce contrary results on our character. Attachment contracts, love expands. Attachment calls out all the baser selfish instincts. We are attached because of the gratification it brings us, with only a secondary thought for the happiness and well-being of the one to whom we are attached. Love, on the other hand, makes us absolutely forgetful of our own self-interest or satisfaction and thinks only of the loved one. It gives perfect freedom, while attachment creates slavery both for us and for the one to whom we bear attachment. Love gives for the joy of giving, attachment gives for the return that may come.

Those who have a perfect understanding of the spiritual life declare that attachment in any form is a great drawback; and if we wish to advance in the spiritual path, we must practise non-attachment towards all these worldly impressions, associations and possessions, to which at present we cling through sheer force of habit. By this, however, is meant an inner practice rather than an outer act of renunciation. It is a question of creating new impressions in the mind. If our present impressions have proved unsatisfactory and hostile to our progress, then we must take a stand against them. We do this and no more. We must not fight them, but we must go to work and create a totally new set of impressions.

The ego is our greatest enemy in accomplishing this. It constantly produces delusion in our mind. Yet if it is helpful to us, we do not want to destroy it. What we want is to reshape it. We want a better form of ego. This is the idea of all discipline. The only way we can conquer this subtle force is to hold ourselves as the witness. If we can imagine standing on the bank of a river, seeing the water flow by, so we should watch all impressions pass without being disturbed by them. The ordinary tendency is when someone strikes, to strike back; but this is not the case with a masterful mind. It is not that he lacks in sensibility, but these things do not move him; he has, as it were, put on an armor of fortitude and calmness.

The practice of detachment includes two distinct processes,— withdrawing and indrawing. We must withdraw ourselves from whatever retards our unfoldment; then create a strong new spiritual impression by turning our thought within. At present we are all slaves to certain habits; in order to overcome these we must cultivate another habit, which in time will become so dominant that it will efface the old ones. All our out-going tendencies, which now hold us back, must be detached from the non-essential and then drawn inward. But this is only possible through superior knowledge. If we try to do violence to our mind by a sudden uprooting of the old impressions, it suffers; but if we first acquire a correct knowledge of the relative value of things, the mind itself lets go without any pang. First we analyze, discriminate and try to see everything in its true light; then as the mind gradually detaches itself from the old impression, we turn it inward and fix it on some spiritual object. As we do this, our heart becomes more and more liberated from mundane things and finds its sole delight in God.

HYMN OF PRAISE.

From the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Salutation to that Adorable One Who endows all beings with consciousness; Who is the Soul of the Universe; Who constitutes the germ of all creation and Who is the Supreme Lord. Let us meditate upon Him.

I take refuge with that self-created One, in Whom is established this (universe); from Whom it has sprung; by Whom it was created; and Who is the basis of it, yet Who is not bound by cause and effect.

Salutation unto the Highest Lord; unto Brahman, the Supreme; unto Him of infinite power; Who is without form, yet Who wears countless forms; and unto Him of wondrous works.

Salutation unto Him, Who is the Light and Guide of the Soul, the Witness, the Supreme Spirit.

Salutation unto Him, Who is the ever-peaceful one; Whose acts are law, Who is without any shadow of difference, Who is ever the same, Who is Supreme Intelligence.

Salutation unto Thee, Who art the Soul of all, the Sovereign Ruler of all, the Witness, the Great Self, the Origin of Souls, and the Source of Nature herself.

Salutation unto Thee, who art the Cause of all, yet Thyself causeless; Who art the Source of the Vedas (Scriptures), the Mighty Ocean, the Bestower of emancipation, and the Great Refuge of all creatures.

Salutation unto Thee, Who severest the yoke of ignorance of such humble devotees as myself; from Whom cometh liberation; the Fountain of unlimited mercy, Who art never idle; Who art the inner-Soul within the hearts of all, directing their thoughts and actions in accordance with their Karma.

Salutation unto Thee, the might of Whose threefold Divine force is irresistible; Who dost manifest Thyself as the form of sense objects; the Protector of all who take refuge in Thee; of transcendental power and glory; Whose way is unattainable by those who are bent upon the enjoyment of worldly pleasures.

WHAT IS THIS WORLD?

By Ali Ghazzali.

(Persian moralist and philosopher, 11th century.)

This world is a stage or market-place passed by pilgrims on their way to the next. It is here that they are to provide themselves with provisions for the way; or, to put it plainly, man acquires here by the use of his bodily senses some knowledge of the works of God and through them of God Himself, the sight of Whom will constitute his future beatitude. It is for the acquirement of this knowledge that the spirit of man has descended into this world of water and clay.

While man is in this world, two things are necessary for him:—First, the protection and nurture of his Soul; secondly, the care and nurture of his body. The proper nourishment of the Soul, as above shown, is the knowledge and love of God; and to be absorbed in the love of anything but God is the ruin of the Soul. The body, so to speak, is simply the riding animal of the Soul and perishes, while the Soul endures. The Soul should take care of the body, just as a pilgrim on his way to Mecca takes care of his camel; but if the pilgrim spends his whole time in feeding and adorning his camel, the caravan will leave him behind and he will perish in the desert.

Man's bodily needs are simple, being comprised under three heads,—food, clothing and a dwelling-place; but the bodily desires, which are implanted in him with a view to

procuring these, are apt to rebel against reason, which is of later growth than they. Accordingly, as we saw above, they require to be curbed and restrained by the Divine laws promulgated by the prophets.

The occupations and businesses of the world have become more and more complicated and troublesome chiefly owing to the fact that men have forgotten that their real necessities are only three — clothing, food and shelter; and that these exist only with the object of making the body a fit vehicle for the Soul in its journey towards the next world. They have fallen into the same mistake as the pilgrim to Mecca, mentioned above, who, forgetting the object of his pilgrimage and himself, should spend his whole time in feeding and adorning his camel. The deceitful character of the world comes out in the following ways. In the first place it pretends that it will always remain with you, while as a matter of fact it is slipping away from you moment by moment and bidding you farewell, like a shadow which seems stationary but is actually always moving.

Another dangerous property of worldly things is that they at first appear as mere trifles, but each of these so-called "trifles" branches out into countless ramifications, until they swallow up the whole of a man's time and energy. Jesus (on whom be peace!) said: "The lover of the world is like a man drinking sea-water; the more he drinks the more thirsty he gets, till at last he perishes with thirst unquenched." The Prophet said: "You can no more mix with the world without being contaminated by it, than you can go into water without getting wet."

The world is like a table spread for successive relays of guests who come and go. There are gold and silver dishes, abundance of food and perfumes. The wise guest eats as much as is sufficient for him, smells the perfumes, thanks

his host, and departs. The foolish guest, on the other hand, tries to carry off some of the gold and silver dishes, only to find them wrenched out of his hands and himself thrust forth, disappointed and disgraced.

Although we have said so much against the world, it must be remembered that there are some things in the world which are not *of* it, such as knowledge and good deeds. A man carries what knowledge he possesses with him into the next world; and though his good deeds have passed, yet the effect of them remains in his character. Especially is this the case with acts of devotion, which result in the perpetual remembrance and love of God. These are among "those good things" which, as the Koran says, "pass not away."

THE SECRET OF RIGHT ACTIVITY.

Lecture by Sister Devamata.

As we watch the endless multiplication of machines and all the intricate apparatus of modern life, we see that in nearly every case the aim is to save labor. Man's ambition apparently is to invent a machine that will live for him, work for him, earn for him, while he sits by and merely turns a lever or pushes a button. Curiously enough, however, while he is thus intent on saving labor, he never thinks of saving life itself. For every hour spared in physical effort, he is increasing his needs, whetting his desires, accelerating the momentum of his daily living, over-reaching himself in countless ways, and as the harvest of it all reaping disappointment and exhaustion. If he could apply the same ingenuity and power of invention to the bigger problem of life, instead of to bodily activity only, he would save labor not only for a few hours in the day, but for eternity. It was to teach man this secret that those Seers of old, seated in seeming inaction on the heights of the Hima-

layas, evolved the practical system of Karma-Yoga or the science of right activity. How can man make each action bring its full equivalent? How can he perform each task with a minimum loss of energy? These were the questions for which they sought and found answers.

There can be no such thing as inactivity on the plane of manifestation, they taught. Activity may become gross or fine, it may be outer or inner; but living itself means action. The heart never stops, or the lungs; all the subconscious forces of our body are ceaselessly active. It is evident then that as human beings we have no choice between action and inaction; we may only determine the nature of our activity. Proper direction and conservation of energy become therefore the two primary lessons of life. Man should economize his inner forces as carefully as he seeks to save steam or electricity. Wise living is at bottom a problem in mechanics,— how to prevent waste and to reduce friction. Are we trying to make our life move with less and less friction? Are we utilizing every ounce of energy to some vital end? By such questionings should we challenge each rising impulse towards action.

At present we live in the comparative degree:—Is this better or wiser or higher? We should go a step further and live in the superlative:—Is this best, wisest, highest? There is a "best" at every moment:—a best way to wake up and to fall asleep, a best way to work, a best way to play, a best way to expend each hour of living. If we wake heavy, drowsy, longing for more sleep, we begin the day with the sub-conscious or lower brute self uppermost. We should train ourselves, by holding the proper thought as we fall asleep at night, to waken with the feeling of the privilege of life, the privilege of work, the wealth of the hours before us. As soon as we form the habit of waking in this attitude of

mind, we shall rise alert, strong, rested. So with each act of life; it must seem a privilege, rich in opportunity for higher attainment and service. Then there will be no division in our thought, hence no fricton or waste.

In our present scattered, nervous way of living, we expend at least fifty per cent more energy in every act than we need. The course of our day is not unlike that of a dog along a country road. In one mile he covers three, because he has no direct purpose in his zigzag search. We must learn to make straight across our day by having a single purpose in our mind. Perfect single-mindedness implies a dominant aim in life; but it also means that we should try to hold our entire thought on the task in hand, never letting it wander to what has gone before or to what is coming after. This is the secret of all efficiency — one thing at a time. Watch any great man at work and you will see how absolutely his energy is centred on what he is doing; it is almost impossible to divert his attention. The average thought is seldom fixed; it runs back and forth across the main line of activity. Is the task pleasant or unpleasant? Will it succeed or fail? Is it worth while? So it calculates and measures and questions and wastes energy; for every useless thought means leakage and decrease of power. The wise man cares little about the nature of his work; for him there is no difference between task and task, one is not irksome and another agreeable; he is wholly concerned with the force which works — that it may be used to the greatest possible advantage and to the largest end.

The quickest way to arrive at this point of view, Vedanta says, is to detach our mind from all anxiety regarding the results of our action. In nothing do we spend so much futile energy as in calculating, while we work, the outcome of

our effort. By that divided line of thought we inevitably reduce the result; and the more we waste energy in calculating, the smaller must it be. If a man stops every little while to measure the amount of ground he has covered, it will take him long to make his journey. We should put the whole of ourself into our work and let the result take care of itself. There is no surer method of gaining the largest result. It is not possible for any effort to be fruitless, for there can be no action without a reaction of equal strength and similar nature. The more centred the act, therefore, the stronger and more productive must be the reaction. Even should it fall short of our hopes, we shall spare ourselves needless suffering and regret if we keep our attention fixed on what we put into each act rather than on what we get out of it. Every disappointment borne cheerfully means so much energy saved for a future and more effective action. Life is like any other game; if a man plays, not to play well, but to win, he nearly always grows irritable and loses both his temper and the game. The good player maintains his poise under all circumstances and is intent only on the perfection of each stroke. The Gita teaches us this when it tells us that the first lesson in Yoga or spiritual practice is even-mindedness; and the second is skillfulness in action.

Not one of us is really weak, not one is incapable of great results in life. We do not know ourselves—what dynamos of power we are; what mighty things we might achieve, if we would only gather up all our energies and make the wisest use of them. We can do this only as we readjust our scale of values and put them on a sounder basis. Now we squander our vital forces because we lend importance to trivial things, which fail us as soon as we gain them, and then we must begin again. Also we imagine that our hap-

piness and greatness rest on outer circumstances and we strain every nerve to alter them. But what matters it if we are here or there? As soon as we enlarge our standard of measurement, it will not count at all. One spot or another, it is all on the same earth, revolving about the same sun, part of the same universe, governed by the same laws.

What differentiates man from man then? His own will. And what makes the difference between will and will? The Ideal and the faith with which it is served. That is all. Get a high Ideal and relate yourself to it, at once your will will grow stronger. If we try to run our little machine as an isolated mechanism, it will run down every few moments; but if we keep it connected with the power centre, it becomes inexhaustible; and it is by our thought that we connect ourselves. It is not the size of a machine that is of first importance; it is the perfection of its adjustment and the skill with which it is directed. People used to think that a big tree needed a big saw; now they have discovered that a fine saw moved at high speed cuts better. It is not a question of whether we have great gifts or small, whether we are in a place of importance or an obscure corner; it is a question of moving steadily, calmly, with fixed determination towards a lofty goal. When we can do this, our life must be fruitful for ourself and for the world.

Let us realize our possibilities and begin to develop them. It requires no special equipment, no peculiar set of circumstances. Every man must act. We cannot help it. We cannot stop it. "Not even for a moment does anyone remain inactive," the Bhagavad-Gita declares. Such being the case, how can we make this activity count? Now we are the slaves of action, let us learn to be masters. Wherever and whatever we may be, let us set out from this day to be the finest sort of person we can be and lead the highest

kind of life. Nobility of character needs no external name or condition to ennoble it. Let the humblest man serve a lofty Ideal with steadfast devotion and he glorifies himself and his condition. The secret is less in what we do or what we are, than in what we serve. Is God the pivot of every action? Then we are safe. We cannot work to small ends. That Power which keeps the earth moving round the sun and that again round a bigger sun, will keep us too swinging in our proper orbit in harmony with the universal plan.

We only live and breathe and act because we are connected with the Ultimate Source of life and action. Apart from it we are as helpless as are the great wheels in a power-house when the engine stops. But as every bolt and belt and piston is necessary to that engine; so have we a vital part in the universal scheme; and we shall fulfill that part only when we remain in constant union with the Central Power. Now we refer all things to our little self; we must learn to refer all things to Him. Every thought of petty personal gain or loss, pleasure or pain, honor or dishonor, must be swallowed up in the consuming thought of God. Whatever leads us towards Him will be accounted gain, even though it rob us of every worldly advantage; whatever takes us from Him will be a loss, though it set us in the highest place. Nor will our life grow less joyous when we adopt this new standard of action. When we walk towards the sun, all is radiance; it is only when we turn away that we see our shadow. The man who faces towards God as he works, as he plays, as he rests, is always glad-hearted, whatever the day's labor may bring him; and only the happy-hearted man does his work well.

Discontent, envy, doubt, selfish ambition, these are the causes of all friction and waste; and they can be eradicated

only by broadening our vision. We must regard ourselves not as isolated entities living a little life of our own, but as parts of a great whole with a universal mission. No ambition we can hold for ourselves can be so far-reaching as that which God holds for us. We merely limit our possibilities for achievement whenever we set a definite end for our action. When we shall learn on the contrary to yield ourselves up to His larger plan, then the beauty that is the sunset or the sunrise, the strength that is in the wind, the love that is in a Christ's heart, the wisdom that keeps all created things moving in perfect order and harmony, each according to its nature and purpose: these will manifest through us and we shall become mighty channels through which the Infinite will accomplish His perfect work.

THE SUPERIOR MAN.

Texts of Confucianism.

The superior man, acting in accordance with the state of equilibrium and harmony, may be all unknown and unregarded by the world, but he feels no regret.

The way of the superior man reaches far and wide, and yet is secret.

That wherein the superior man cannot be equalled is simply this,—his (work) which other men do not see. Therefore the superior man, even when he is not acting, has the feeling of reverence; and when he does not speak, he has the feeling of truthfulness.

A superior man keeps his speech under control, while the small man is forward to speak.

The superior man exalts others and abases himself; he gives the first place to others and takes the last himself.

The superior man will decline a position of high honor, but not one that is lowly; and riches, but not poverty.

Hence the superior man, rather than have his emoluments superior to his worth, will have his worth superior to his emoluments.

The superior man does what is proper to the position in which he is, he does not want to go beyond it. In a position of wealth and honor, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honor. In a position of poverty and lowliness, he does what is proper to a position of poverty and lowliness. The superior man can find himself in no position in which he is not himself.

In a high situation he does not insult or oppress those who are below him; in a low position he does not cling to or depend on those who are above him. He rectifies himself and seeks for nothing from others; and thus none feel dissatisfied with him. Above, he does not murmur against Heaven; below, he does not find fault with men. When occupying a high position he is not proud, and in a low position he is not insubordinate.

Therefore the superior man lives quietly and calmly, waiting for the appointments of Heaven; while the ordinary man does what is full of risk, looking out for the turns of luck.

The Master said: "In archery we have something like the way of the superior man. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of the failure in himself."

The superior man internally examines his heart, that there may be nothing wrong there and no occasion for dissatisfaction with himself.

The course of the superior man is rooted in his own character and conduct.

The superior man considers perfection as the noblest of all attainments. He who is perfect not only completes

himself, his perfection enables him to complete all other beings also. The completion of himself shows the complete virtue of his nature, the completion of other beings shows his wisdom.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF WAR IN ANCIENT INDIA.

By Prof. Bal Krishna, M. A., F. S. S.

What about the morality of war in the civilized nations of the ancient world? Civilized China, Egypt, Carthage, Persia, Greece, Rome and Assyria show no more humanity and morality in their palmy days than uncivilized Europe in the dark Mediaeval Ages. From the Homeric age down to the Roman conquest of Greece there is one horrible story to be told in this respect. Guile, treachery, cunning, falsehood, relentless cruelty, unrestrained ferocity, extreme brutality, inhuman barbarity; indiscriminate pillage, slaughter and conflagation; in short, savagery and vandalism were the morality of the day. Then the whole Roman Empire was actually watered with the blood of the martyrs and captives of war. Slavery was the foundation of both civilizations. Without this institution, so eloquently defended by that great philosopher, Aristotle, the Greek and Roman civilizations could never have seen the light of day. But is there anything of the kind to be found in ancient India?

It can be said on the unimpeachable authority of the Greek historians themselves that we made no captives in war, nor had any slaves, native or foreign, in our midst. Magasthenes, Arrian and Strabo have all testified to the truth of this assertion. Then in India belligerents had no license to ruthlessly butcher one another and win victories by every means, fair and foul; but they had to observe

many restrictions which did not allow them to transgress the bounds of morality, sympathy or humanity. War was looked upon as a contest of arms for securing peace, justice or redress of grievances; although a necessary evil, it was humanized. Cunning, treachery, unnecessary pain were against the rules of a fair warfare. Hence the fighting armies were prohibited by the great primeval law-giver and the first patriarch, Manu, to employ (a) weapons concealed in wood for treacherously killing the foe; (b) barbed arms; (c) poisoned arms; (d) weapons whose points were blazing with fire.

But it can be said that the present redaction of the Manava-Dharma-Shastra is not very old. It does not carry us far enough into the realms of antiquity. Justly so; let us go to the Sutra period. There, curiously enough, we find the same thing recorded in the Baudhayana Sutras. Thus this passage is not only a valuable historic proof of the prohibition, but also of the previous existence of poisoned arms and of fire-arms among the Indians of the 5th century B. C. Stranger still that an outright condemnation of poisoned arms is to be seen in the Ramayana. Meghnad is charged with the violation of the rules of fair fighting when he threw his poisoned javelin at Laksmana. It should be noted, however, that the use of guns, cannons and other machines was not against the rules of just warfare. Sukra has given instructions for their employment. "One should commence fighting," he says, "by placing fire-arms, both light and heavy, in the front; but the war with mechanical instruments leads to great destruction in which balls are flung by the application of gunpowder in cylindrical fire-arms."

"Persons equally circumstanced must encounter each other, fighting fairly. A car warrior should have a car-

warrior for his antagonist; he on the neck of an elephant should have a similar combatant for a foe; a horse should be met by a horse; and a foot soldier, O Bharata, should be met by a foot soldier. Guided by considerations of fitness, willingness, daring and might, one should strike another, giving notice. No one should strike another that is unprepared, or panic-stricken. One engaged with another, one seeking quarter, one retreating, one whose weapon is rendered unfit, one uncased in mail should never be struck. Car-drivers, animals (yoked to cars or carrying weapons), men engaged in the transport of weapons, players on drums and blowers of conchs should never be struck." Such are the highly interesting covenants made by the Kurus and Pandavas (at least 1400 B. C.). They reveal a very high degree of civilization, a deep regard for humanity and a laudable spirit of fair fighting. The Hague Conferences have not yet agreed to embody such humane regulations in their military codes. But here an important question crops up — whether the above rules were ever observed in actual practice? Certain rules were occasionally violated in the great Kurukshetra war, but every such occasion provokes an indignant condemnation from all the leaders.

Pillage and capricious demolishment of buildings were altogether prohibited. The whole unfighting population was to be religiously spared and promises of safety were to be proclaimed by various means. The victor was to inspire confidence among the conquered, declaring that he would protect them like his children, that they were like his own subjects. The conqueror was to find out the best means of gratifying his subjects. He was to win over the educated classes by honoring the righteous Brahmins; by worshipping the gods and lightening the taxes of the peo-

ple; by making authoritative their customs, laws and family practices; and finally by honoring the new king and his councillors with precious gifts. According to the *Agni-Purana:* "A king should treat a prisoner of war, ransomed and liberated, as his own begotten son. A defeated enemy should not be fought again, and the victor should maintain and honor the customs and usages of the country newly added to his kingdom."

The rules for the pacification of a conquered territory have been most brilliantly formulated in Kautilya's *Artha-Shastra:* "Having acquired a new territory, he (the conqueror) should cover the enemies' vices with his own virtues, and the enemies' virtues by doubling his own virtues, by strict obesrvance of his own duties, by attending to his works, by bestowing rewards, by remitting taxes, by giving gifts and by bestowing honors. He should follow the friends and leaders of the people. He should adopt the same mode of life, the same dress, language and customs of the people. He should follow the people in their faith, with which they celebrate their national religious and congregational festivals or amusements."

(Extract from contribution to Calcutta University Magazine.)

In connection with Professor Bal Krishna's article, it is interesting to note certain ancient passages bearing on the same subject. The *Agni- Purana* declares: "The king should protect his own army and worship the guardian deities of the places occupied by it in the enemy's domain, and should take special care in order that they may not be in the least insulted by an infuriated soldiery; or that their temples or the properties dedicated to their enjoyment be in the least molested in any way." Manu and the ancient authorities clearly forbid the confiscation or wilful destruc-

tion of the property of hostile subjects; and a study of the Law Codes of ancient India makes plain that the chief object of war was not to extend the territory of the conquerors by annexation, or to enrich the conquering army, but to re-establish certain lawful rights. In the Ramayana, when Rama overpowers Ravana, not a single member of the victorious army was allowed to enter the capitol of Lanka; and when even Rama himself sends a messenger, he charges him to gain the permission of Bibishana, Ravana's brother, before proceeding on his way. In the *Shanti-Parva* we read: "Brihaspati has said that a king possessed of intelligence should always avoid war for the acquisition of territory." And this is corroborated by Arrian: "A sense of justice, they say, prevented any Indian king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India."

Megasthenes, Greek ambassador to the court of the Hindu ruler, Chandra-Gupta (319 B. C.), thus testifies to the high standard of morality prevailing among the Indo-Aryans: "There are usages observed by the Indians which contribute to prevent the recurrence of famine among them; for wherever among other nations it is usual in the contests of war to ravage the soil and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste; among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when a battle is raging in their neighborhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger; for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides, they neither ravage an enemy's land with fire, nor cut down its trees. Nor would an enemy, coming upon a husbandman at work on his land, do him harm; for the men of his class being regarded as public benefactors, are protected from all injury."

NINTH ANNIVERSARY

of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated the Ninth Anniversary of its establishment on the evening of January 1st. Despite the bitterly cold weather nearly one hundred friends were present. The exercises began with a song, delightfully rendered, by Senor Blanchart. Swami Paramananda then rose and delivered an opening address, in which he said:

"We have gathered here this evening to celebrate the Ninth Anniversary of this work. The birth of an individual is always sacred; but the birth of an institution, which exists for the sake of many and for the upliftment of many, is doubly sacred. There is no doubt that the whole world is passing through a bitter crisis, and more than ever does it stand in need of a spiritualizing influence. Never has there been a greater necessity for understanding and unity, and these are the fundamental ideals of the Centre. Its object is not only to create unity between East and West, but between nation and nation, race and race, man and man, even where there is no apparent basis of sympathy or harmony. It recognizes before all else the common heritage of all living beings as related to the One Supreme Cosmic Being. This work has been established, not to introduce a new creed or to enter into rivalry with existing creeds, but to provide a place of non-sectarian worship where the followers of all creeds may find peace and spiritual blessing. When I first came to Boston I did not dream of establishing a permanent work here; I came because I had something in my heart, the same thing which had brought me all the way from India,—an earnest desire to share with others the message of love, unity and tolerance which lies at the root of all Vedanta teaching; for what

I voice is not personal, it is what India has voiced from time immemorial.

"We are now beginning the tenth season of our work, so we have come together to ask anew the Grace of God and the good will of people. If the work has gained strength, it is because of the desire and sincerity of you, the friends and students of the Centre, who come here so faithfully — not because you find a new religion, but rather because you gain a more comprehensive and unifying presentation of already familiar truths. The Centre does not lay claim to any monopoly of Truth; what it is trying to do is to give its share to humanity at large. Our work may be humble, but what we stand for is of God. We try to represent the Universal Spirit, which recognizes no race or creed. What we stand for is absence of sectarian hatred, absence of creed-bound prejudice. The inscription on this altar—"Truth is one, men call It by various names" —this is the spirit we hold close to our hearts, and this is the spirit we would give to others. We have no thought to make people embrace an alien faith; our sole effort is to make them feel the value and joy of true spiritual living. No one can ever hope to accomplish anything great without spiritual strength and spontaneity of heart. We celebrate this Anniversary every year to remind ourselves of our duty. Are we lacking in any way in the work we have undertaken? Have we ever failed to sound the note of tolerance and love? If so, you must tell us."

At the close of his address, the Swami called upon Sister Devamata to give a review of the year's work. "In the Indian Sacred Writings," she began, "we are given a picture of the great Sankara as a youth of sixteen, seated beneath a tree by the roadside; a white-haired disciple approaches and asks certain questions. The teacher re-

mains silent, yet after a time the aged man rises and goes on his way with all his questions answered. So must it be in a measure when one is asked to review a spiritual work. In the silence alone can the record be found. For who knows where the Spirit goes? Who knows what the Spirit does? We stand here as a Centre, but we can tell nothing of the ever-widening circles that are being drawn around it. One earnest seeker may come; and the thought impinging on his or her heart may give a new impetus to another, and so on and on. The surface activity represents the smallest part of the work; yet of that only can we take definite account. During the past year the Boston Centre has gone steadily on despite the difficult conditions which prevail everywhere. The Services and Classes have continued without interruption and the average attendance has been maintained — being somewhat higher than usual through the summer. Swami Paramananda has divided his time equally between Los Angeles and Boston, having spent six months at each Centre. The Los Angeles work, as you know, was definitely established in 1916. The Swami had given a previous course of lectures there in August, 1915, during his first journey to the Pacific Coast; this had led under urgent pressure to a second visit the following summer, which culminated in the formation of a Centre. The Swami spent the early part of 1917 in Los Angeles; and after his return to Boston in March our secretary, Miss Sherwood, was left in charge until I was sent at the end of April. A course of nine public lectures with bi-weekly classes held me there until the close of June.

"Swami returned to the West in July and began a series of public lectures, besides the usual bi-weekly classes, which carried him through October. He had gone with the thought of discontinuing the work for a time at

least, but at all the meetings the attendance was so large and the enthusiasm so great that he was obliged to abandon the idea. 'It does not seem right to throw all this earnest interest away,' he wrote. Besides the regular teaching, he was invited to speak before various organizations and to deliver a course of three lectures in San Diego. Also here in Boston and elsewhere there have been calls for outside lectures.

"The usual season in Washington last spring was reduced to nine days because of my long journey to Los Angeles; but during that time three public lectures and three classes were given and the days were filled with private interviews. The growth in interest surprised everyone; for the seating capacity of the hall was not only taxed to the utmost at the public meetings, but a number were content to stand throughout the lectures. Another branch of the Boston Centre, in Geneva, established by the Swami prior to the outbreak of the war, also continues its regular weekly meetings under the direction of the students.

"Existing abnormal conditions have seriously affected publishers and book-dealers everywhere, so it could not be expected that our publication department should not feel it. People are too deeply absorbed in the book of life to have much interest in the printed page. If they turn to it, it is only to find a key to the larger book. That Vedanta has offered a satisfactory commentary on it for some at least is proved by the fact that 2000 copies of our publications have gone into circulation through the year. We have likewise brought out three new booklets and two new editions of previously published books, making a total production of 4500 copies. Besides this, our monthly publication, "The Message of the East," which is now beginning its seventh volume, has carried the teaching to

many distant points in Europe and in India, as well as in this country."

After the Report, Senorita Blanchart sang with great artistic charm. Then the Swami spoke again, telling something more of his work in Europe and in the West. In conclusion he called upon all those present to join him in a prayer for the welfare, not only of the Centre, but of all mankind. A duet by Senor and Senorita Blanchart followed, after which the exercises were closed by a benediction. A new booklet containing a brief history of the work and an explanation of Vedanta was then presented to each of the guests. Refreshments were served and the rest of the evening was passed in social intercourse interspersed with music and informal speeches. Dr. Coomaraswamy, who has been appointed curator of the Indian department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, told something of the valuable collections under his care; while Mrs. Adams paid a hearty tribute to the teaching of the Centre by telling how it had broadened and ripened her understanding in all branches of thought.

The Boston Centre has published another valuable booklet, entitled "Self-Mastery." It contains three lectures by Swami Paramananda on "Self-Conquest," "How to Conserve our Energies," and "Self-Help and Self-Surrender." This is the fourth in a series of small volumes which the Swami is bringing out to give in clear and concise form the salient points of the principles and practice of the Vedanta teaching. The previous booklets were: "Universal Ideal of Religion," "Problem of Life and Death," "Concentration and Illumination." The present one will prove of especially practical help because it deals with the problems which confront those who are thrown out into active life in the world. *(Self-Mastery. Paper, 25 cents. Post. 2cts.)*

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

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REPORTS.

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Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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MATTER AND SPIRIT

By Swami Ramakrishnananda.

The struggle of Spirit against matter is what is meant by religion. This struggle must go on until Spirit has conquered matter. Now we are like prisoners in the flesh. If a man is shut up in a prison, he may now and then get a smell of liberty when the guards fall asleep or grow unmindful; then they fall upon him again and he remembers that he is in prison. So we may now and then get a glimpse of freedom in this prison of the flesh, but again the senses fall upon us and drag us back. And to get out is altogether a different thing. Blessed indeed is the man who is able to overcome matter. This body is conceived in desire and born in desire; hence it is a creature of desire, which means that in it matter preponderates over Spirit. Therefore it is not an easy affair for us to overcome matter. But if we struggle hard enough, in course of time we can even transform this body so that in it Spirit will preponderate over matter.

This struggle against matter is not the affair of a day, however. It takes a long time to master the habit of years and even lifetimes, during which matter has overruled Spirit. But we must not be disheartened or give up, because until Spirit has gained the victory, we can never

taste lasting happiness. Nor must we ever feel secure. Happy indeed is the man who even for a moment is conscious of mastery over his flesh; but he must not stop struggling and think he has conquered, for at any time he may fall. *Maya* or this world is so irresistible. It is only when God is generous to us that we can lift the veil and get a glimpse of him.

Maya is matter, and matter is dead, inert. But everywhere there is consciousness or Spirit. Some may say that matter is the cause of motion; but every movement in the universe is full of consciousness. We know the existence of matter by darkness, ignorance, doubt, miseries, fear; while Spirit is all-perfect, all-luminous, all-blissful. It is all that matter is not. It has no doubt, no fear, no misery. Yet *Maya* has so many soft, sweet ways, only the wise can detect her. All these fleeting pleasures of the world are *Maya*; sense-desire is *Maya*. There is no other. Hence he who has conquered his senses, has conquered the universe. If we can conquer sensuality, at once we shall realize our Divinity and shall know that we are no different from God.

How can we conquer our sense nature? By will or by *Bhakti* (faith and devotion). The German philosophers call it will; we call it *Bhakti*, that is intense desire to realize God. We must say: "I will conquer these senses. If I do not, let me be wiped out of existence." Napoleon was great because he would not have the word "impossible" in his vocabulary. If we have the same determination in the battle against the senses, each of us will be as great a conquerer as he was. Then we shall attain the highest realization.

In this battle, does God take account of the intensity of the effort or only of the result of the effort? He takes account of both effort and result. He takes account of

everything, for He is in everything. It is really He who makes the effort and He who brings the result. He alone knows what the effort really is and what is the result. The whole of the past, the whole of the present, the whole of the future He knows. Who of us can take account of his own words even? And how many of us know the real value of our actions? It is He alone who is doing everything. I am but a bubble, you are but a bubble, this whole universe is only a bubble on the boundless ocean of Divinity.

Say: "I have nothing to do of myself. Let Him to whom all this belongs do what He wants. I am not the body, I am not the mind. I am eternally free, eternally pure. I am infinite, beyond all limitation." This body is only an instrument, a passive instrument; and an instrument really has no existence of its own, for it is wholly dependent on the one who uses it. Suppose a pen were conscious. It could say, "I have written hundreds of letters," but actually it has done nothing, for the one who holds it has written the letters. So because we are conscious, we think that we are doing all these things, whereas in reality we are as much instruments in the hands of Spirit or the Higher Power as the pen in our hand. We must realize that nothing depends on us. When we can really believe this, then all anxiety, all fear, all doubt will vanish and we shall be eternally calm and peaceful.

I am suddenly renewed, I am changed, I am plunged into ineffable peace. My mind is full of gladness, all my past wretchedness and pain is forgot. My soul strives in gladness that she may not be separated from That which she desires to hold fast forever, as if she had found in it the goal of all her desires. — *Hugh of St. Victor.*

WISDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

From the Wisdom of Solomon.

(Apocryphal Book of the Old Testament.)

Wisdom is radiant and fadeth not away; and easily is she beheld of them that love her.

She forestalleth them that desire to know her, making herself first known.

He that riseth up early to seek her shall have no toil, for he shall find her sitting at his gates.

For to think upon her is perfectness of understanding, and he that watcheth for her sake shall quickly be free from care.

Because she goeth about, herself seeking them that are worthy of her, and in their paths she appeareth unto them graciously, and in every purpose she meeteth them.

For her true beginning is desire of discipline; and the care for discipline is love of her;

And love of her is observance of her laws; and to give heed to her laws confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near to God;

So then desire of wisdom promoteth to a kingdom.

If therefore ye delight in thrones and sceptres, ye princes of peoples, honour wisdom, that ye may reign forever.

For this cause I prayed, and understanding was given to me; I called upon God and there came to me a spirit of wisdom.

I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and riches I esteemed nothing in comparison of her.

Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all the gold of the earth in her presence is a little sand and silver shall be accounted as clay before her.

Above health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose

to have her rather than light, because her bright shining is never laid to sleep.

But with her there came to me all good things together, and in her hands innumerable riches:

And I rejoiced over them all because wisdom leadeth them; though I knew not that she was the mother of them.

For she is unto men a treasure that faileth not, and they that use it obtain friendship with God, commended to Him by the gifts which they through discipline present to Him.

Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth, think ye of the Lord with a good mind, and in singleness of heart seek ye Him;

Because He is found of them that tempt Him not, and is manifested to them that do not distrust Him.

For crooked thoughts separate from God; and the supreme Power, when it is brought to the proof, putteth to confusion the foolish:

Because wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil, nor dwell in a body that is held in pledge by sin.

For a holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will start away from thoughts that are without understanding, and will be put to confusion when unrighteousness hath come in.

For wisdom is a spirit that loveth man, and she will not hold a blasphemer guiltless for his lips; because God beareth witness of his reins, and is a true overseer of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue; because the spirit of the Lord hath filled the world, and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice.

Court not death in the error of your life; neither draw upon yourselves destruction by the works of your hands:

Because God made not death; neither delighteth He when the living perish.

For righteousness is immortal.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

Is cure of disease possible and practical by other than medical means? If there is a particle of Truth in mental or Spiritual healing we must not only cease to be antagonistic towards it, but must welcome it with our whole heart. This world is full of suffering and if any one can bring relief, we should not care through what channel it comes. In order to investigate these vital problems of life we must be willing to put aside our preconceived ideas and prejudices and take an attitude of openness and fairness. In all the Sacred Writings of the world accounts are given of supernatural cures. Healing of the sick, raising of the dead, drawing out of evil spirits: these are not peculiar to the life of Jesus the Christ, but are to be found in the lives of all the great Saviours, Prophets, Saints and Seers. There is one type of mind which regards all these narratives as absurd and mythical, designed to misguide the ignorant; there is another type which is over-credulous and inclined to magnify all such accounts, regarding them as special miracles possible only to certain divinely appointed ones. But intellectual scepticism cannot help us, neither can blind acceptance. Our attitude should be neither to discredit nor to support on hearsay, but to investigate and learn the truth.

In the Vedic Scriptures we are told that the Soul of man is beyond all mortal afflictions; that it "is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and grief, free from hunger

and thirst." These words open another vista. Are we then not what we believe ourselves to be? Are these bodily conditions unreal? No; our physical life is not unreal, but it does not constitute the whole of our being. In fact, it represents but a very small part of our real life. Unfortunately, to the majority of us it seems the largest part; and it is through such misconceptions that we block the steady flow of our life-force and suffer in endless ways. Disease always indicates disturbance and disorder; and disorder invariably results when our physical tendencies lead us away from the direct influence of the Soul, or when our bodily desires gain ascendency over our spiritual instincts. If it is true, however, that the vital part of our life is unchangeable, unaffected by suffering and disease, what is it we see around us? We recognize disease, we recognize suffering; for nearly all of us these pains and ailments are facts, while that unchangeable Reality seems at most a dream.

There is no doubt that physical science has done a great deal to help mankind. It has brought relief; but that relief is not permanent, because the elements with which it deals are not permanent. It does not reach the cause of the misery; nor does it apply the ultimate remedy. "Through the power of Spirit man liveth!" Such are the words of all the Bibles of the world. The real seat of disease is more often in the mind than in the body. We know how our mental attitude can have a devitalizing influence on our physical constitution and also how it can energize it. When we are not well, we often try change of climate; and the same kind of inward change is even more helpful, that is, change of thought. If we can leave behind all thought of disease, that is the best way of eliminating it. By this method we forget the body and thereby lift ourselves out

of the condition. But we cannot do this so long as we believe that our existence is dependent on this body. We must realize that we are born of God and sustained by Spirit, and therefore nothing can prevail against us. It is because we have severed our consciousness from this point of view and drifted away that we feel helpless and suffer.

The only true healing is accomplished by contact with the spiritual essence; but this cannot be done in a professional way. I believe in spiritual healing. I have seen too many instances of it to doubt it. One may not believe in prayer, but prayer heals. Faith also has great healing power, because it elevates us to a plane where we can be healed. There are many, many instances of this in India. Men who have been pronounced incurable by physicians have made a long journey to touch the feet of a holy man or bathe in a sacred river or pray at a certain shrine, believing firmly that they will thereby be cured, and they have been. Whence comes this power? All power is of the Spirit. Through our whole-hearted prayer and unwavering faith, we succeed in making ourselves receptive to this power. Unless we are open to its direct influence, it cannot penetrate our being and heal or help us. We see in Christ's life that He was not able to help all the people with whom He came in contact, but only those who had unquestioning faith. In St. Matthew we read: "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house the blind men came to Him, and Jesus saith unto them: Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes saying, according to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." Again He spoke thus to the woman who had touched His garment: "Daughter, be of good com-

fort; thy faith hath made thee whole." And the woman was made whole from that hour. Also to the Centurion He said: "As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee." This absolute faith is the basis of all healing; even in medical science it is necessary; but it is not that kind of faith which is identified with indiscrimination and ignorance. We must always differentiate between faith and blind belief. Faith springs from purity of heart, from direct perception. As the Soul recognizes the power of God over all things and seeks to be restored by that power, a connection is established and healing is accomplished.

The Scriptures tell us that disease is the result of sin. Some define sin as wrong thinking, others as wrong-doing; but whatever definition we accept, it is apparent that when we go against nature, we create certain results from which we cannot escape. But why do good people and innocent children suffer? Those who ask this question do not take into account that no one's life begins here and now. What comes here may be the result of mistakes in previous lives. Also suffering should not always be regarded as a punishment. It is often a great purifying agent. Through how many hardships and painful experiences have great Souls had to pass in order to attain their greatness! Even sickness sometimes proves a blessing. It all depends on the mental attitude with which we meet it. If we allow ourselves to be dragged down and made despondent and unhappy by it, then it becomes a misfortune; otherwise it may be the means of bringing to us a new spiritual awakening.

We must analyze and find out what is our real nature. We must ask ourselves: "What part of myself is my true Self? Is it my hands or my feet? Is it my mind or my ego?" Thus we keep on lifting and lifting the thought,

until we rise to a plane where we no longer identify ourselves with the body. The highest form of healing is when we do not think of the body at all. We do not seek the Spirit for a little health or a little prosperity. We love the Spirit wholly for the sake of Spirit; yet every time we come in touch with it, we are revivefied.

Before we reach this exalted state, however, there are certain scientific systems which will aid us. In Raja-Yoga and Hatha-Yoga, where health comes first, we are told that we must have a proper physical vehicle with which to work out our perfection. One way to do this is through the control of breath. The breath is the medium of life. When a man ceases to breathe we say he is dead. By the understanding and application of the science of right breathing we can keep this body in a healthy condition; because by our breathing we control the Prana or life-force. As long as this life-force continues to circulate evenly and steadily, perfect rhythm or balance will be maintained in our system and we shall enjoy good health. We know, however, from our own experience how dependent our breath is on the mind. The slightest mental agitation will destroy the regularity of the breath and cause disturbance in the system. If we are not able to bring any counteracting influence, this disturbance may develop into definite pain or disease. If, on the contrary, we can control our breathing, we shall restore the equilibrium of our mind and thereby safeguard our health. When we acquire complete breath-control, we have such a store of Prana at our command that we can send it to any part of our organism, where there may be pain or distress, and reinvigorate it. Also we can transmit it to others. This explains the sudden cures by laying on of hands and all forms of magnetic healing. One must be very careful, however, in permitting this kind of treatment; for

unless the channel is pure, it may lead to serious consequences. A man may have a certain magnetic power and yet not be free from selfish personal motives; if we bring ourselves under the domination of such influences we shall impede our higher growth, although for the time being we may gain relief from our physical ailment.

If we do not think rightly and live rightly, we cannot have health; because we generate a poison in our system by our wrong thoughts and actions, which must culminate in disease. Even medical science has come to recognize that any strong passion, such as vehement anger or bitter hatred, may lead to serious illness. If, on the other hand, we live absolutely in accordance with spiritual laws, we need not concern ourselves about our health. We shall be filled spontaneously with life from the central storehouse; for whenever man can rise above the little self and become united with that which is universal and cosmic, there is no limit to his strength. It is because we fail to keep ourselves connected with this storehouse that our vitality is so often depleted. We forget whence comes our supply; and for this reason we must have fixed hours to remind us. The tendency of materialism is to make us forget. It holds out promises of prosperity, but it cuts the very root of the tree of life. If we care merely for one flower or fruit of a tree and water that instead of pouring the water on the root, the tree withers. In the same way, only as we water the root of the tree of life by daily conscious communion with the Spirit, does it grow and become productive. When we are suffering, we must search within ourselves and see whether we are connected with the Source or not. If the connection is broken, we may know that that is the cause of our ailments. Sometimes we are unable to establish the connection for ourselves and then we are forced to seek

help outside; but this cannot be effective until we have within us a certain amount of harmony and purity; for it is not all who can be helped, but only those who are open-hearted.

It is expected of every Spiritual Teacher that his very word or touch will be full of healing. But from where does the Teacher get it? Through Divine communion and complete surrender. He merges the little self in the Infinite Self; and when anyone can rise above all sense of bodily limitation and I-ness and trust wholly in God, when his thought is based on God and he knows nothing exists outside of God, then whatever flows through his mind must be effective. A Saint says to a man: "Be thou whole," and at once he becomes whole. Why? Because constant contemplation of Truth has made the Saint truthful; nothing false dwells in his heart; his will has become part of the Divine Will; therefore whatever he says must come true, because he has no thought apart from God. The power of God destroys all limitations in human life just as the light of the sun destroys darkness. When we come to the threshold of God, the whole being is filled with power. All the Great Ones are full of this power and they have it because they do not ask anything for themselves. They give themselves wholly to the Infinite Power, hence they have power in abundance. Whenever a manifestation of the light and love of God comes, he destroys all sorrow. He becomes a constant solace to mankind and people gather round him to be healed of the wounds of this world. A Saint or Saviour is always marked by his healing grace, but we must never forget that this power is God-given and should never be used for material ends. Whoever would exercise it must always remember that it is of God, and that he must keep himself as a pure, clear channel through which the Divine Power can flow.

Spiritual healing can never be used as a profession. So long as there is the least element of self-seeking or thought of personal gain, there will always be a danger of blocking the channel of communication with the reservoir of life. The healer must feel himself wholly an instrument of God. The gift of healing the sick and comforting the afflicted comes from a Divine Source, and can only come to one who is absolutely free from self-consciousness and calculation. It must be used silently, without any noise or thought of recognition. As soon as any ulterior personal motive enters, the power diminishes; for these things cannot go hand in hand — the power of God and the ambition of man. Whenever we try to use a lofty Ideal for an ordinary purpose like money-making or self-aggrandizement, it must become degraded. In India spiritual healing has always been known, but it has never been used as a profession or as a means of livelihood. It has been practised silently and the personal element has always been eliminated. In consequence, although there are thousands of instances of healing in the lives of India's Great Teachers, very few have been recorded. Christ, too, said more than once: "Go and tell no man." Often people quote from the Bible that the laborer is worthy of his hire; but the only true wage for spiritual service can be increased spiritual power and inward joy, not any material gain. The motive in all such work must be selfless love. If our heart burns with the desire to help humanity, we shall not think of anything else. The more we feel the presence of God and the less our thought dwells on worldly gain or loss, the more shall we be filled with the spirit of love and without love there cannot be any true healing.

At every moment we have within us the possibility of health and ill-health; and when a person rouses health in us,

he only rekindles the dormant fire of life already there. Though we may obtain help from outside, we can never be permanently helped until we gain knowledge of our own true nature. Therefore Vedanta teaches "Know Thy Self," because knowledge of the Higher Self is death to all the afflictions of the world. If we can gain conscious possession of the healing power within us, we do not need to look to others for help; we can heal ourselves. There are various methods by which we may accomplish self-healing,—rigid and continuous denial of disease, constructive affirmations, and concentration of the mind on a counteracting influence. These may be effective, but all methods of self-exertion are fraught with the subtle danger of egotism. The highest and safest form of self-healing is when we do it involuntarily through meditation; that is, we abandon all thought of sickness or health, we lift our mind beyond all mundane things and strive to enter into the Divine Presence. When we are able to do this for a moment even, we are made whole. Although we do not ask to be restored, yet health comes.

Meditation has wonderful healing power. Sleep gives a hint of it. When we fall asleep we forget all our suffering, but infinitely more true is this in meditation. In meditation we are conscious only of the Infinite One and when our thought is wrapped up in that One, our whole being is flooded with new life and strength. Only when we are primarily of God and secondarily of the world do we rise above all our miseries and are healed of all our mortal pains. As the Upanishads declare: "The unbounded Infinite is bliss, there is no bliss in the finite. The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal. He who has reached this, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted."

BENGALEE HYMN

O, Lord! Thou hast blessed me with Thy vision and driven all my troubles away.
A charm hast Thou thrown o'er my Soul!
Beholding Thee as a Reality, all the worlds have forgotten their grief,
And none more than I, who rest wholly in Thy Mercy and Loving-kindness.

HEALING IN HISTORY

By Sister Devamata.

In the book of Malachi we are told that "the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings"; and by this sign above all others do we know Him. The life of every Saviour and Saint is indeed a continuous story of healing. Whether man is cured of blindness of the eyes or of the mind, of deformity of the body or of the heart, it is all one. To restore the withered hand of the man in the Synagogue was no more a miracle of healing than to reclaim the withered moral sense of a Mary Magdalene. Every Redeemer who comes to earth comes for one end alone,—to save men from sin; and sin, according to Plato in the *Republic*, "is disease, deformity and weakness." It is not strange, then, that the life-narratives of all the Great Ones are full of accounts of making whole the halt, the sick, the infirm and the afflicted.

In Persia, Zoroaster and Bochie were accredited with many cases of miraculous healing. In Egypt countless miraculous cures were attributed to Horus, Osiris, Isis and Serapis. Marduk, the Assyrian deity, called the Life-Giver, performed frequent cures. And so many were those wrought by the Greek Aesculapius that he was deified and

[illegible] the "blameless physician." [illegible] people supposed to be healed by faith [illegible] and feet, [illegible]—made of wax, silver or [illegible] deafness, lame- [illegible] pillars and walls were [illegible] sickness [illegible] exant. In [illegible] Rome, [illegible] island in the [illegible] Marcus [illegible] left an account [illegible] master. It [illegible] who had lived [illegible] distemper, [illegible] physicians [illegible] earnestly en- [illegible] faith, [illegible] pray for [illegible] while he was pray- [illegible] she im-

[illegible] to the [illegible] and accepted [illegible] historian, [illegible] who [illegible] the grief and [illegible] baby daily [illegible] before the [illegible] that the [illegible] day as she [illegible] her what she [illegible] it was an in-

fant, she asked to see it. The nurse refused, as her mistress had forbidden her to show it. The stranger, however, begged again so insistently that the nurse at last uncovered the little cripple. The lady, who was none other than the goddess, stroked the head of the afflicted child with caressing hands and said that it would outshine all the women of Sparta in loveliness. From that day the baby's appearance began to change, the crooked limbs became straight and she grew to be renowned for her beauty.

We remember how Jesus laid His hands on the woman who was bowed together and could in no way lift herself up, saying: "Woman, thou art freed from thine infirmity," and immediately she was made straight. So we are told of Sri Krishna, that while He was walking in the streets of Dwaraka as a youth of sixteen, before the trial of strength planned by His wicked uncle to destroy Him, He met an aged hunchback, who in humble devotion adorned His person with flower garlands, sandal paste and sweet scents. When asked what He could offer her in return, she begged to regain the use of her limbs. Taking her by the hand, Sri Krishna lifted her from the ground and she was not only cured of her deformities, but was also renewed in age, appearing young and beautiful.

There can be no doubt that the Essenes in Palestine were healers, for it is now believed by some scholars that their very name is a derivation of the word "*Asa*," meaning "healers"; and history tells us that they not only miraculously healed the sick, but cast out demons. The similar Order of *Therapeutae* in Egypt also owed their title to the same practice of healing. Among the Jews the casting out of devils was a frequent occurrence and went hand in hand with the practice of healing. Josephus, the Jewish historian, declared that King Solomon possessed a peculiar gift

given by Homer the title of the "blameless physician." Long after his death people continued to be healed by faith in his name; and his temples were full of hands and feet, eyes, ears and other bodily members—made of wax, silver or gold — to testify to the cases of blindness, deafness, lameness or disease cured by him. Also pillars and walls were covered with tablets giving accounts of the sicknesses healed. Many of these votive tablet are still extant. In 292 B. C., when a terrible pestilence was raging in Rome, a temple to the Greek Deity was erected on an island in the Tiber and similar miracles of healing begun there. Marinus, a pupil of the philosopher Proclus, has left an account of a remarkable cure performed through his master. It runs thus: "Asclipigenia, a young maiden who had lived with her parents, was seized with a grievous distemper, incurable by the physicians. All help from the physicians failing, the father applied to the philosopher, earnestly entreating him to pray for his daughter. Proclus, full of faith, went to the temple of Aesculapius, intending to pray for the sick young woman to the god; but while he was praying, a sudden change appeared in the damsel and she immediately became convalescent."

This cure by faith, however, was not confined to the temples of Aesculapius. It was a wide-spread and accepted fact throughout Greece. Herodotus, the Greek historian, narrates the incident of a certain rich lady in Sparta who gave birth to an unsightly cripple. Seeing the grief and shame of the parents; a faithful nurse carried the baby daily to the temple of the Goddess Helen and standing before the sacred image prayed with great faith and fervor that the child might be freed from its deformity. One day as she was leaving the temple, a gentle lady asked her what she was carrying in her arms; and learning that it was an in-

fant, she asked to see it. The nurse refused, as her mistress had forbidden her to show it. The stranger, however, begged again so insistently that the nurse at last uncovered the little cripple. The lady, who was none other than the goddess, stroked the head of the afflicted child with caressing hands and said that it would outshine all the women of Sparta in loveliness. From that day the baby's appearance began to change, the crooked limbs became straight and she grew to be renowned for her beauty.

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in this direction; and he describes how he himself saw one of his follow-countrymen, Eleazar by name, drive out an evil spirit from one possessed, while a vast multitude looked on. The Greek writer Celsus also speaks of certain men in Egypt who "cast out evil spirits and cured diseases by a breath."

For all Divine Manifestations and saintly "wonder-workers" the claim is made that they not only healed the most malignant diseases, but even raised the dead to life. The Egyptian Saviour "Horus" is depicted on the ancient monuments of Egypt holding a wand with which he raises the dead. We know how Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus and cried with a loud voice, whereupon Lazarus came forth; and how on another occasion He went to the house of Jairus, entered the room where the ruler's young daughter lay dead, took her by the hand and the maid arose. So Apollonius of Tyana, who was born about 4 B. C., restored a Roman maiden to life. She belonged to a family of rank and had died on the eve of her wedding day. Apollonius was at the time sojourning in Rome. Meeting the funeral cortege in the street, he bade the bearers set down the bier; then bending over the young girl, he took her hand and spoke a few words in a low tone. Immediately she opened her eyes, began to speak and returned to her father's house alive and well. So great was Apollonius' power of healing that the priests of Iona gave over all the sick to his care and divine honors were conferred on him. Greater still perhaps was that cure wrought by Buddha in the mind of the young grief-stricken mother, who carried her dead son to the Lord beseeching Him to restore the child; and He sends her from house to house seeking as the only remedy a sesame seed there where death has never entered. Vainly she passes from door to door, until the

intensity of her own grief fades out in the awakening consciousness of the sorrow of the world and with patient surrender she lays her little one to rest.

It is not strange that the cure of lepers should be one of the most usual forms of healing mentioned in the lives of all Great Teachers, for throughout the Orient leprosy is a common disease. According to St. Luke, Jesus on one occasion healed an entire group of men thus afflicted. "As He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off; and they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed."

A touching cure of a similar nature is given in the life of Sri Chaitanya or Lord Gouranga, a Divine Manifestation who live in India at the time of Luther. Near the temple of Kurma there was a leper in so loathsome a condition that he was obliged to remain far from any human habĭtation. Hearing, however, that a Great Light, who was believed to be God Incarnate, was passing that way, he seized his staff and dragged himself to the temple, only to find that Sri Chaitanya had gone but a short time before. Overpowered with sorrow and disappointment, he fainted, crying out as he fell, "Lord, hast Thou forsaken me?" It is said that Sri Chaitanya at the time had proceeded about two miles along the road. Suddenly He stopped and listened, declaring that He heard some one call; then turning, He ran at breathless speed back to the temple. Arrived there, He lifted the fainting leper in His arms, wholly unmindful of the foul sores which covered his body and the intolerable stench which they emitted. When the leper regained consciousness, he found himself sound and well. "What hast

thou done, Lord?" he exclaimed. "I came not to be healed. I came to see Thy Lotus feet. My loathsome disease taught me humility, and I had hopes of attaining to God. But a sound body and perfect health will again generate pride and vanity in my mind."

Lord Buddha, we are told, at Gandhara came upon an old mendicant afflicted by a disease so repulsive that none of his brother monks would approach him; but the Compassionate One hastened to his side, washed his festering sores and healed him. Also a like cure was wrought by that true disciple of Christ, St. Francis of Assisi, who made it one of his chief tasks and that of his brethren to serve the lepers. There was one, however, so perverse and sick of mind as well as body that all the brothers lost heart and resolved to leave him; but not until they had obtained permission of St. Francis. When they related the matter to him, St. Francis sought out the leper and coming close to him said tenderly: "God give thee peace, my brother most dear." The leper replied: "What peace may I have of God, who hath taken from me peace and all good things and hath made mė stinking and rotten altogether?" To which St. Francis gave answer: "My little son, have patience; for the infirmities of the body are given by God in this world for the salvaton of souls, seeing that they are of great merit when borne patiently." But the sick man retorted: "And how can I bear with patience the continual pain that racks me day and night? Besides, the brothers do not serve me as they ought." Then St. Francis, perceiving that the man was possessed of an evil spirit, set himself to pray and prayed fervently for him. His prayer ended, he said gently: "My son, I myself will serve thee, seeing thou art not content with others." "I am willing," replied the leper; "but what canst thou do for me more than these others?" "Whatsover thou dost

wish, that will I do." "Then I desire that thou wash me all over, for I stink so vilely that I cannot abide myself." Thereupon St. Francis bathed him in warm water with sweet smelling herbs soaked therein; and as his holy, loving hands passed over the sick man's body, the leprosy departed and his flesh was healed. With it also heart and mind were made whole, so that the man repenting of his sins began to glorify God.

For the great majority these are either myths or miracles; but Nature takes account of neither. No change occurs in her domain save by the working of definite forces according to fixed laws. Wherever there is a physiological reaction, there has been a normal action; it matters not whether it has been induced by the administering of a drug, of a mental suggestion or of a new spiritual ideal. It suffices that certain forces have been set in motion, which must stir the stagnant vital energies and cause a renewal. Also the subtler the force applied, the more rapid will be the change effected. We know how much swifter is the action of a gas than of a grosser substance. Therefore the highest healing, such as that wrought by a pure spiritual being, will appear instantaneous. An embrace or a touch suffices to wipe out the disease; just as a sudden emission of certain gases will immediately clear the air of disease germs or quench a conflagration.

The fact that the same so-called miracles have been repeated in the lives of the various Saviours and Saints is also used by the skeptical as an argument against their authenticity; and even against the actual existence of those who performed them. But if a doctor in Paris and later another in London should perform similar cures by the same means, we would not regard that as a proof that the cures were legendary and still less that the doctors were non-ex-

istent. It is wholly contrary to the true spirit of science to dismiss unexplained phenomena without seeking to acquaint ourselves with the forces which have produced them. When there is any deviation in the movements of a planet, the astronomer looks for some new force at work; and if anywhere in the scheme of things aught occurs which belies our past experience, only one sane course is open to us,—to seek out the power that has caused the deviation and make ourselves masters of it.

SUBJUGATION OF THE SENSES

From the Mahabharata.

When a person engages in the discipline of self-examination, after having subdued the senses, which have of their own proper objective play in the external conditions of sound, form, etc., then he beholds his own Spirit pervading the universe and the universe reflected in his Spirit. He who is wedded to his previous *karma*, although skilled in the highest spiritual wisdom, is cognizant only of his Soul's objective existence; but the person whose Soul is never affected by the objective conditions around, is never subject to ills, owing to the soul's union with the Spirit of God. When a person has overcome the dominion of illusion, his manly virtues, consisting of the essence of spiritual wisdom, turn to that spiritual enlightenment which illumines the intelligence of all sentient beings. Such a person is styled by the omnipotent intelligent Spirit as one who is without beginning and without end, self-existent, immutable, incorporeal and incomparable. This, O Brahmana, is wholly the result of self-discipline. And this self-discipline can only be acquired by subduing the senses. It cannot be otherwise.

Heaven and hell are both dependent on our senses.

When subdued, they lead to heaven; when indulged in, they lead to perdition. This subjugation of the senses is the highest means of attaining spiritual light. Our senses are at the root of our spiritual advancement, as also at the root of all our spiritual degradation. By indulging them a person undoubtedly contracts vices, and by subduing these he attains salvation. The self-restrained person, who acquires mastery over the six senses inherent in our nature, is never tainted with sin and consequently evil has no power over him.

Man's corporeal self has been compared to a chariot, his Soul to a charioteer and his senses to horses. A dexterous man drives about without confusion, like a quiet charioteer with well-broken horses. That man is an excellent driver who knows how to patiently wield the reins of those wild horses,—the six senses inherent in our nature. When our senses become ungovernable, like horses on the high road, we must patiently rein them in; for with patience we are sure to get the better of them. When a man's mind is overpowered by any one of these senses running wild, he loses his reason and becomes like a ship tossed upon the high ocean. Men are deceived by illusion in hoping to reap the fruit of these six senses; but the effects of these senses are carefully studied by persons of spiritual insight, who thereby reap the fruits of their clear perception.

As thieves cannot enter a house the inmates of which are wide awake, so if you are always on your guard, no evil desires will be able to enter your heart to rob it of its goodness. Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in its proper time and let your mind be always fixed on God.

— *Sri Ramakrishna.*

REPORTS

The course of addresses on "Emerson and the Vedanta," delivered by Swami Paramananda at the regular Sunday morning service of the Centre during February, aroused enthusiastic interest and called out a large attendance. These lectures will appear in "The Message of the East" at intervals during the current year.

On the evening of February 21st a Service was held at The Vedanta Centre of Boston to commemorate the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, the Founder of the important work in India of which the Centre in Boston forms a part. Music, meditation and an address by Swami Paramananda filled the earlier part of the evening, after which there was an informal reception. The Swami began his address by saying: "A great religious teacher in India once proclaimed that if a man thinks a noble thought, though he may think that thought shut up in a mountain cave and then die, his thought will continue to live and produce something. No truer example can be found of this than in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. A child born in a remote village, uneducated, unknown, yet something he found in his Soul which made itself felt not only in the hearts of his immediate neighbors, but in many hearts outside India in many parts of the world. This shows that the greatest thing one can give is of the Spirit, and that a spiritual gift is unbounded. But though Sri Ramakrishna's personality may be remote to many here, the note he struck was neither alien nor remote. What he brought was not peculiar to India. His message was universal. It was for all. The strength of his teaching lay not in any special doctrine, for he had none; it was not in any new revelation; it was in the fact that he lived it; and whenever a man lives his teaching truly, he starts a new current for the betterment of the whole human race."

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

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The Message of the East

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REPORT.

Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

1 Queensberry Street, Fenway
(Ipswich Street Car)

Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

TENTH SEASON—1918

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M.

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

April	*7th*	*Death and Immortality.*
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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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EMERSON AND VEDANTA

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

"If what philosophers say of the kindred between God and man be true, what has anyone to do but, like Socrates, when he is asked what countryman he is, never to say that he is a citizen of Athens or Corinth, but of the world? . . . Why may not he who understands the administration of the world and has learned that the greatest and most principal and comprehensive of all things is this system composed of men and God; and that from Him the seeds of being are descended, not only to my father and grandfather, but to all things that are produced and born on earth, and especially to rational natures, as they alone are qualified or partake of communion with the Deity, being connected with Him by understanding: why may not such a one call himself a citizen of the world? Why not a son of God?" These words of the Roman philosopher Epictetus show how all truly great men possess a universal philosophy of life; and how natural it is for them to transcend the limitations of locality, race and creed and break down all barriers of apparent differences.

This is essentially true of Emerson. You may go to the Far East — to India, Persia or China — and you will find a volume or two of his essays there when you would least

expect to find them; and meet people who accept Emerson's ideas, not only with sympathy, but as their own. Recently I saw a learned Persian gentleman in California who spoke of this, saying that Emerson voiced the spirit of their philosophy to a remarkable degree. There can be no doubt that Emerson was deeply interested in Eastern thought. In his writings we find many direct and indirect references to Oriental teachings. He was a devout student of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads, and often quoted or used stories from them. His poem on *Brahma* is a free rendering of several verses in the Gita; the story given at the close of his essay on *Immortality* is taken from the Katha-Upanishad or "The Secret of Death," as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it in his translation; and there are various other passages which recall the Sacred Writings of India.

Yet this does not mean that Emerson borrowed. I believe that there cannot be any borrowing in the higher realms of knowledge. There we cannot take what does not belong to us. We can borrow relative knowledge, but true knowledge can never be borrowed. It must rise up from the innermost recesses of our being. We must possess the power to recognize and assimilate it. Emerson was by no means the only one of his generation to study Oriental literature. Others read it; but they were unable to find in it what he did, because their prejudices and lack of understanding made it impossible for them to grasp its true import. A gentleman once said to Emerson that he had studied all the different philosophies and religions of the world and he was now convinced that Christianity was the only one; to which Emerson replied: "That only shows, my friend, how narrowly you have read them." Unless we have openness of mind and a certain depth of

spiritual consciousness, we may come in contact with many lofty ideals, but they will make no definite impression on us. We may try to borrow them, but we cannot retain them or use them intelligently until we have made them our own. And when the higher light of understanding comes, we find that there is no need to borrow, because all men have equal access to what is cosmic. As Emerson has said:

"There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent." "Of the universal mind each individual is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him." "So all that is said of the wise man by Stoic or Oriental or modern essayist, describes to each reader his own idea, describes his unattained but attainable self." "How easily these old worships of Moses, of Zoroaster, of Manu, of Socrates, domesticate themselves in the mind. I cannot find any antiquity in them: they are mine as much as theirs." This idea of the universal mind brings before us forcibly the great fundamental truth of the Vedas,— *Ekam-eva-dvityam*, "Spirit is one without a second." Out of that one essence the whole universe has evolved and in that one it rests. As it is said in the Yajur-Veda: "The Absolute, though one, is conceived as many; countless luminaries become one in Him; all the Vedas (Scriptures) become one in Him; all sacred rites become one in Him. He abides equally in the Soul of all existing things; He is the Inner

Self of all beings, seated in the heart of every living creature; He is the Ruler of all creatures and all beings become one in Him."

When Emerson gave expression to these ideas which were not strictly orthodox from the Christian point of view, he did not meet with a sympathetic welcome. He even had to resign his pulpit, as we know; but this did not make him give up his convictions, which proves his true greatness. Whenever a man is willing to make compromises and limit his beliefs through fear of public opinion, we may know that he lacks true spirituality. But Emerson was not merely a popular preacher or a scholar, he was a spiritual genius. He had a wider vision. He struck a note that was both spiritual and universal. He writes in his essay on *Circles*: "I thought as I walked in the woods and mused on my friends, why should I play with them this game of idolatry? I know and see too well, when not voluntarily blind, the speedy limits of persons called high and worthy. O blessed Spirit, whom I forsake for these, they are not thou. Every personal consideration that we allow costs us heavenly state. We sell the thrones of angels for a short and turbulent pleasure."

This passage shows clearly his attitude of mind, how unwilling he was to give up what he believed to be true and what was the result of his long and deep reflection. "What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think," he exclaims. "This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the

midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." Great Souls sometimes seem very uncompromising because they are unwilling to sacrifice that which they believe to be vital. They necessarily have a different standard, and they cannot be untrue to that standard even though the whole world turn against them. As Emerson says: "The angels are so enamored of the language that is spoken in heaven that they will not distort their lips with the hissing and unmusical dialects of men, but speak their own, whether there be any who understand it or not." Those who possess such courage of conviction are the only ones who really contribute towards the well-being of mankind.

Emerson more than once speaks of his debt to the Hindu Scriptures, and there can be no doubt that in his long study of them he found much to inspire him. In his essay on *Quotations and Originality* he says: "What divines had assumed as the distinctive revelations of Christianity, theologic criticism has matched by exact parallelisms from the Stoics and poets of Greece and Rome. Later when Confucius and the Indian Scriptures were made known, no claim to monopoly of ethical wisdom could be thought of." "It is only within this century that England and America discovered that their nursery-tales were old German and Scandinavian stories; and now it appears that they came from India, and are the property of all the nations descended from the Aryan race, and have been warbled and babbled between nurses and children for unknown thousands of years." Once more in *Persian Poetry* he writes: "The favor of the climate, making subsistence easy and encouraging an outdoor life, allows to the Eastern nations a highly intellectual organization,— leaving out of view at present the genius of the Hindoos

(more Oriental in every sense), whom no people have surpassed in the grandeur of their ethical statement."

After reading these passages we cannot doubt that Emerson fully recognized the loftiness and beauty of Eastern teaching. He also possessed an unusual grasp of Indian Philosophy and picked out here and there its fairest thoughts to mingle with his own. Today it is easy to find many translations of Oriental writings; but in his time the translations were few and imperfect; yet because he possessed the same quality of mind, he was able to draw out from them the essence. He was like the mythical Indian Swan, who when it is given milk mixed with water, is able to separate the milk from the water and take only the milk. Whenever we study in a superficial way, we do not touch the essence and the essence does not touch us. We all have the opportunity of coming in contact with great writings or great men, but they do not reach us. Sri Ramakrishna to illustrate this gives a parable of three dolls, one of salt, one of cloth and one of stone. When the salt doll went into the ocean, it at once became one with it; the cloth doll was wet through, but retained its own form; while the stone doll remained unchanged. It could not absorb the spirit of the ocean. So some people have such a stony nature, nothing seems to make an impression on them. But we can all overcome this and make ourselves susceptible to higher ideals if we wish.

Vedanta insistently proclaims that there can be no boundary lines in the realm of thought; and above all it teaches that unless we can put aside our narrow prejudices and superstitions, we can never hope to attain the highest Truth. I use the word "superstition" because whenever we cling to a fixed idea or to certain forms and rituals merely because our forefathers believed in them

or because they have become a habit with us, that is superstition. The central aim of Vedanta is to bring all into one universal fold, yet to let each one follow his own particular form of faith. When we try to force sameness of thought, it bars spiritual progress; but when we admit the possibility of perfect unity in variety, then each one is able to advance in his own way. Vedanta realizes that as long as there are such differences in human temperament and mind, we cannot expect all to worship in the same manner. To destroy diversity in life would be to destroy much of its beauty and sublimity. Therefore Vedanta includes in its scope all forms of thought. It sees that even the crudest aspect of religious faith has its value, since it would not be possible for the ignorant man and the philosopher to have the same conception of Truth. Their aspiration may be equal, but their methods of expression must inevitably differ.

"Truth is one, men call it by various names and comprehend it in different ways!" Such was the profound discovery of Indo-Aryan Sages as far back as in the Rig-Veda, several thousand years before the Christian era; and it has been the basis ever since for all the ethical and spiritual ideals of India. These Seers realized that dualism, qualified non-dualism and monism did not represent rival phases of belief, but different degrees of spiritual development, each having special appeal for certain types of mind. It would be just as absurd to expect a person of rudimentary understanding to grasp the loftiest ideals of monism,—that there is but one Life, one Cosmic Principle, one Consciousness permeating the whole universe, as it would be to expect a child in the grammar school to grasp the highest problems of astronomy. Yet in time we know that the child will grow to comprehend them if he perseveres.

Emerson makes this plain in his essay on *Immortality* when he writes: "Will you offer empires to such as cannot set a house or private affairs in order? Here are people who cannot dispose of a day; an hour hangs heavy on their hands; and will you offer them rolling ages without end? But this is the way to rise. Within every man's thought is a higher thought,— within the character he exhibits today, a higher character. The youth puts off the illusions of the child, the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of youth; proceeding thence puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater heights, but also rising to realities; the outer relations and circumstances dying out, he entering deeper into God, God into him, until the last garment of egotism falls, and he is with God and shares the will and immensity of the First Cause.

"It is curious to find the selfsame feeling, that it is not immortality, but eternity,—not duration, but abandonment to the Highest, and so the sharing of His perfection,— appearing in the farthest East and West. The human mind takes no account of geography, language, or legends, but in all utters the same instinct."

Emerson's great openness, fairness and love of Truth enabled him to understand the teaching of all nations; and whenever he came across great truths, he recognized and absorbed them. When a man can thus perceive the highest in other men, it deals a death-blow to all littleness. In comparing Emerson's philosophy with the Vedic teaching there is no intention to belittle the genius of Emerson. The universal facts of life are the same in East and West, in the remotest past and the present. It was because Emerson had discovered certain profound truths in his own Soul that he was able to accept with delight the

same truths when he discovered them elsewhere. Only a man who is an expert in the higher realms of knowledge can analyze and appreciate the value of ideas of rare quality when he finds them; and Emerson was able to do this. We are destined more and more to be thrown together, and I hope and pray that it may be the will of the Cosmic Being to destroy the fictitious barriers which exist between East and West, North and South; and enable us to meet in the one Universal Truth. All great minds do this. They cannot be satisfied to live in little narrow holes of their own. They must expand; and as they expand, they leave behind them all sense of difference. Those who are able to abide in this unbroken Unity become free Souls and enjoy the supreme Cosmic Bliss and Infinitude.

THE UNIVERSAL GOD

By Vemana

(An Early Telugu Sage of South India)

He whose form is universal; who is eternal; who Himself witnesses all that passes in every heart, who exists immutably throughout the universe, and is free from all shadow, is called God.

Neither in earth nor metal, wood or stone, painted walls or images, does that Great Spirit dwell so as to be perceived.

We take a skin and form it into a pretty puppet; we make it play and then throw it away. But who can see Him who plays with us?

Those who roam to other lands in pilgrimage to find the God that dwells within them are like a shepherd who searches in his flock for the sheep that he holds within his arms.

"Benares! Benares!" they cry, and delight to travel thither. Yet is not the same God here as there? If thy heart be aright, He is there and here also.

Kine are of divers colors, but all milk is alike; flowers vary, yet all worship is one; systems of faith are different, but the Deity is one.

If thy heart become calm as the breezeless firmament and the unruffled waveless deep, changeless and unmoving — this is called Salvation.

THE DUTIES OF THE HEART

By Rabbi Bachye.

(A Jewish Teacher of Spain, 11th Century)

It is the bounden duty of all who are not intellectually incapable of independent thought, to search out the true meaning of the doctrines they accept and the foundations of these doctrines in Reason. The faith of the believer is not complete unless he knows the meaning and the reasons of his belief. And this knowledge, which enables one to fulfill the duties of the heart, is the hidden wisdom that is the light of hearts and the bright effulgence of Souls. Concerning it Scripture says: "Behold Thou desirest Truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden Thou wilt make me to know wisdom." It is only those of weak intellect who are not culpable if they take on trust what it is man's duty to search out. But whoever has the strength of intellect and the power to sift and prove, is sinful if he neglects to do so; also even his lack of knowledge is a sin.

Perfect recognition of the existence and unity of God forms the only sure basis for right thought and conduct. For gratitude to the beneficent Creator of the universe and admiration of His creation involve the reasoned

resolve to benefit all His creatures, study His works and raise our Souls, perfecting them; they also tend to love of Him, resulting in obedience to His will, whether revealed through Nature or through human agency or in our innate faculties for recognizing justice and the good. The love of God and the consequent acceptance of the yoke of duty in obedience to His will is, in the Scripture passage that strikes the key-note of the faith of Israel, placed after the injunction to understand that the Creator exists, that the Eternal is God, and that He is One. ("Hear and understand, O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One.") The unity of conduct and the concentration of our love and striving after good require belief in one and only one Creator, the source of good.

Among commands relating to duties of the heart and mind are the following:—To believe that the world has a Creator, and that there is none other like Him. To accept His Unity and worship Him in our hearts. To devote intelligent thought to the wonders of His creation, so that they may be to us a sign concerning Him. To trust in Him and humble ourselves before Him; to fear Him, to tremble at the thought that He looks at us—at all that is revealed and all that is hidden about us; to desire to do His will; and to concentrate all our efforts upon good deeds that are absolutely disinterested and only motived by love of God. Also that we should not covet, and not avenge or bear a grudge. They also forbid us to think sinful thoughts or to have sinful desires, or even to contemplate the commission of any transgression, and other similar things which are hidden from man and none but God alone can see.

Thus the duties of the heart involve the formation of ideals of conduct,—love of man, faith, etc.; the cultivation

of right beliefs based on Reason; the conscious effort of the mind to realize the wonders of creation, so that we may come to know from God truths that human language, which can accurately tell only of things material, can never adequately express. That trust in God which makes right conduct possible, even at the cost of personal risk and loss; the banishing of hatred, envy, scorn, all longing for revenge and all desire for sin, are also obligations of the heart. And they include all degrees of virtue, such as those that have their being in the heart alone and are not manifested in material life, save only by their influence; and yearning, till the yearning-one turns pale with longing, to realize in thought and mind and deed the will of God. And chief among them is the attuning of the Soul into such perfect harmony with God, that all right conduct and right thought must follow without effort on our part, because our will is one with His through love.

Man is made up of body and Soul; and both alike are given us by the beneficence of the Creator. The one is visible and the other invisible. We are therefore bound to serve Him with a twofold service. That of the body and its members can be fulfilled by the visible activities of man; but the second is a hidden service, which is the fulfilment of the duties of the heart — to acknowledge the Unity of God in our hearts, to believe in Him, to love Him, to resign our Souls to Him, and to make His name the unifying central thought of all our conduct.

Without Truth I know not how man can live. A cart without a crosspole, a carriage without harness, how could they be moved?

To know what we know and to know what we do not know, that is understanding. —*Sayings of Confucius*

PRAYER

O thou Infinite Spirit, Source of all life and Giver of all strength and illumination,
Quicken within us the desire to know Thee.
Kindle in our hearts an earnest longing to dedicate ourselves to the Highest.
Give us such strength of understanding that we may not be deceived by the turbulent and fleeting glamors of material life;
But that we may walk steadfastly in the path of Truth;
And continue with unwavering devotion to do that which is true and spiritual, forsaking that which is base and selfish.
O Thou All-loving One, lead us by Thy compassionate hand that we may never go astray.
Save us from delusion and ignorance.
Fill our whole being with Thy Divine Radiance.
Bestow on us spiritual sight that we may perceive oneness everywhere.
Thou abidest within us in the form of consciousness,
Give unto us true consciousness that we may feel Thy Presence.
Awaken in our hearts perfect trust in Thine Infinite Self.
Grant that at all times and under all circumstances we may surrender wholly to Thee and be led by Thy will alone.
May all our devotion be offered unto Thee.
May all our thoughts and actions be sanctified and consecrated unto Thee.
O Thou Boundless One! Thou art our loving Mother and Protecting Father;
Grant unto us Thy loving protection and keep us ever in peace.

—*Swami Paramananda.*

THE TRUE NATURE OF RELIGION

By S. E. Waldo.

If Vedanta were only a religion for such as could give up the world and retire to a cave or a forest, it would not at all deserve the title of universal. So very few even wish to do such a thing, that it would really be unnecessary to work out an elaborate system of procedure for them. But Vedanta earns its right to be considered universal because it provides a way for every grade of humanity. We ourselves have laid upon ourselves certain duties and will have to fulfill them before we can throw them aside in order to follow what we imagine to be an easier path. Neither have we got to change our religion, if we have one that is more than a name to us. What Vedanta would say to us is to put life into *that* religion; to look to the highest ideal it holds up and be satisfied with nothing lower; faithfully, earnestly to follow this ideal; and it will in the end lead us to the same goal of realization of the true Self. What Vedanta insists upon is not form or ceremony or rite of any special kind, but it lays all the emphasis on the underlying motive prompting to these observances. In and of themselves they are useless. Form for form's sake will never be anything but an empty shell, a mere lifeless imitation of real religious effort. The one thing that must be present is faith.

This faith is not blind belief by any means; it is rather what St. Paul describes as "the substance of things hoped for." Such faith is a real religious conviction, and is what is awakened in the human heart by one fleeting glimpse of a world beyond the horizon of the senses or even the mind; it is an impression of the Infinite. After this has come to a man and become a genuine force in his life, he will become religious, even if he refuses to accept any existing form of

religion. This spirit of true religion often breathes in the writings of great scientific men, to whom an intimate acquaintance with the wonders of Nature brings a revelation of the Infinite. Followers of orthodox religions would no doubt often call these men atheists, because of their inability to accept a traditional view of God; but Vedanta recognizes in such men the true spirit of religion, and would encourage them to develop their spiritual nature through the methods best adapted for them. Hindu literature teems with examples of men and women who reached the fullest spiritual illumination through the humblest paths. A faithful performance of even arduous and disagreeable daily tasks is in no way incompatible with great religious development. And this has been proved in every form of religion—Christian, Buddhist, Moslem or Brahminical. The lives of great saints in all lands and in all ages show that they belonged to every class of life, from beggars to emperors. In every human Soul is a spark of the Freedom Absolute, which gives it power to rise above any environment and reach its source in the realization of its oneness with the Divine.

If man were entirely at the mercy of his environment, what would he be but a mere machine? What chance for improvement could ever come to him? The whole history of the human race is the history of man's use of his environment to enable him to rise above it and produce a new environment. In other words, he works in and through law finally to transcend law. Therefore, be man's conditions what they may, they cannot prevent his effort to be religious if he has the sincere desire to be so. Let man have to labor hard as he will, there will always be moments when he can lift his thoughts to the great unknown Beyond. Those who have not evolved to the place where

they are ready to do this consciously, will be pushed along unconsciously by the great law of development until they are prepared to coöperate consciously with this law. It is better and easier to go forward consciously and therefore willingly, but progress is inevitable. When man has reached that stage in the great march of evolution where he can see the purpose of it all, he is ready to make much more rapid growth. It is not necessary for him to be able to demonstrate to everybody what that purpose is. It is enough if he himself perceives it, for then he will shape his life in harmony with it.

The vast majority of mankind today regard pleasure as the purpose of life, but even that concept has greatly widened out since its first promulgation. The early Hedonists sought individual pleasure; but the more advanced of their modern successors, while still seeking pleasure, have come to comprehend that it cannot be solely of the individual; that it must be universal pleasure. Altruism recognizes the solidarity of the human race and the impossibility of complete satisfaction for one member of it at the expense of any of the rest. And the most advanced school of utilitarian ethics makes perfect unselfishness its highest ideal. Vedanta philosophy teaches a higher purpose than pleasure. It proclaims that the end and aim of all this long and often painful process of development is perfection, and that perfection can only consist in the realization of our own true Self and God.

If a man has discerned Him, who being One rules over every germ, in whom this comes together and comes asunder again, who is the Lord, the Bestower of blessing, the Adorable God, then he passes forever into bliss.

—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad.*

THOU ART HIDDEN FROM US

By the Sufi Poet Jalalu'd-Din Rumi.

Thou art hidden from us though the heavens are filled
With Thy Light, which is brighter than sun and moon!
Thou art hidden, yet revealest our hidden secrets!
Thou art the Source that causes our rivers to flow.
Thou art hidden in Thine essence, but seen by Thy bounties.
Thou art like the water, and we like the mill-stone.
Thou art like the wind and we like the dust.
The wind is unseen, but the dust is seen by all.
Thou art the Spring, and we the sweet green garden:
Spring is not seen, though its gifts are seen.
Thou art the Soul, we as hand and foot:
Soul instructs hand and foot to hold and take.
Thou art as Reason, we like the tongue:
'Tis reason that teaches the tongue to speak.
Thou art as Joy, and we are laughter:
The laughter is the consequence of the joy.
Our every motion every moment testifies,
For it proves the presence of the Everlasting God.

I have ascended higher than myself, and lo! I have found the Word above me still. My curiosity has led me also to descend below myself, and yet I have found Him still at a lower depth. If I have looked without myself, I have found that He is beyond that which is outside of me; and if within, He was at an inner depth still. And thus have I learned the truth of the words I have read, "In Him we live and move and have our being." —*St. Bernard.*

The finest achievement for a man of thought is to have fathomed what may be fathomed, and quietly to revere the unfathomable. —*Goethe.*

RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA

Adapted from the Brahmavadin.

All early religions are ethnic, that is, confined to particular peoples and races; and they are also given to the worship of the powers of Nature. It was so among Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, Phoenicians and others. Says Menzies in his History of Religion:—"In this minor Nature-worship, which spreads its network over all the early world, the character of primitive society is clearly represented; the small communities have their local worships—each clan, almost each kraal, has its shrine, its God, and limits itself to its own sacred things. Religion is a bond connecting together the members of small groups of men, but separating them from the members of other groups." When David says in the Bible that by going out of the land of the Israelites he would have to worship other gods, it is implied thereby that there was even a territorial limitation to the worship of Jehovah. It is only in comparatively later stages that religion ceases to be either ethnically or territorially limited, and with the cessation of this kind of limitation it naturally becomes propagandistic.

It is not meant by this that before these limitations altogether cease, there is no attempt at all at propagandism. Judaism, even in its exclusive condition, knew of the "proselytes of the gate." The occasional adoption of outsiders into the Grecian and Roman families is also an indication of the possibility of ethnic religions taking outsiders into their pale. In the post-Vedic period of the religion of the Indian Aryas there is enough of evidence to show that the sacrificial worship of the gods through fire was adopted by certain non-Aryan families and communities. "The worship of which the blood is the tie is not to the Aryan as to the Semite the whole of religion. . . . The

family may address Heaven by a special private name, or at a particular spot; but Heaven itself is above all these titles and places. The spirits of the household made, as all the Semitic gods do, for separation; but the gods above made for union; and as any community grew, the upper gods, which were worshipped by all its members alike, became more lofty and more important." Menzies, the author of these remarks, again says also that in regard to the "emancipation of the Aryans from the principle of local worship," he agrees with another noted writer on Comparative Religion in holding that "the rise of the conception of gods who could and did accompany the tribes wheresoever they travelled was the greatest triumph of the Aryan race." Nevertheless, in all earlier stages of religious development propagandism is more or less of an accidental nature. When, however, religions become highly ethical, and the moral barrier between different human communities becomes completely undermined through the influence of growing mutual intercourse and human sympathy, then it is that what may be called the universal spirit of religions really comes into existence. It is then that the religious man feels the duty of preaching the truth, of which he is in possession, to all those who are ignorant of it.

Of such propagandistic religions, Jainism and Buddhism in all probability are chronologically the two first known to the history of man. Jainism is considered to have been anterior to Buddhism; and it was a recognized function of the monks of both these religions to work to increase the number of the followers of their respective faiths. It is often said that religions depending upon the teachings of single founders are always propagandistic. Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mahomedanism are given as

illustrations of this position. The fact seems to be, however, that national religions too, although not altogether dependent upon the teachings of any particular founder, are sometimes seen to be intended for the whole of mankind, particularly when those religions have advanced sufficiently far towards the recognition of what is commonly known as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Students of Comparative Religion hold that in the development of religions the movement is from the tribal to the national, and from the national to the individual and universal religion. The individualist stage of religious thought is really the same as the universal stage. The religion which deals with man as an individual, apart from all considerations of the community to which he belongs, cannot make distinctions between man and man and so has to become universal.

The period immediately preceding the rise of Jainism and Buddhism in India seems to have been one of great religious ferment throughout the land. Dr. Herman Oldenberg seems clearly to refer to this religious unrest of the time when he says in his admirable Life of Buddha: "Voices are raised full of bitter lamentations over the degeneracy of the age, the insatiable greed of men, which knows no limit, until death comes and takes the rich and poor alike. . . . The rich and the noble still more than the poor and humble; the young wearied of life before life had well begun, rather than the old; women and maidens fly to seek peace for the soul in a renunciation of the world, abandon their homes and don the garb of monks and nuns." Both Jaina and Buddhistic literatures bear witness to the fact that there were then in the different parts of Northern India bodies of ascetics leading the prescribed life of poverty, celibacy,

homelessness and mendicancy, and proclaiming to householders of all ranks, with whom they came in contact, the several systems of religious thought and life by which it was believed possible to make man's life purposeful here and happy hereafter. The Aranyaka portion of Vedic literature, of which nearly all our Upanishads form a part, is known to have been produced out of the meditations of such bodies of ascetics, living in the forest their life of self-denial and divine meditation. The solutions which they obtained of the problems of life and death they naturally sought to teach to others. The philosophy and the discipline of both Jainism and Buddhism are now admitted on all hands to be largely, if not wholly, derived from the ancient Vedic teaching; and their spirit of propaganda also appears equally certain to have come from the same source.

When the Indian forests became filled with schools of philosophers and pious religious men discussing the purpose of life and the nature of the ultimate principle of all things, then for the first time in history we notice what may be termed the radiation of religious warmth and light from particular centres to regions more and more distant from such centres of spiritual thought and activity. No truth, when discovered, can be concealed under a bushel. The spirit of universality soon must burst out of the "busy bustle of these ascetic and philosophizing circles." Says Samuel Johnson very appropriately in his Oriental Religions: "To some vigorous spirit the abstract truths of contemplation will become forces of his own active realism; they will become hands and feet, and demand to be used. Organized into his moral being, these meditations, these divine dreams, carry him straightway out of his spiritual cell to say to the whole world: 'What is mine is yours also; the great all-reconciling light that shone down to me on

the mountaintop, in the desert stillness, in the night of self-abandonment to the best, this was not for me, it was for all mankind.'" In this sense the spirit of propagandism, or the attempt to carry new religious life and new religious light to all regions of comparative darkness, is undoubtedly the offspring of remote Indian Wisdom.

But the Indo-Aryan idea had no element of conversion in it. There was no thought of substituting one form of belief or worship for another. The whole desire was to lead men, not into some special form of faith, but into Truth, by what religious path it mattered not. It is interesting to see the same broad spirit of catholicity stirring in the Western consciousness of today, and to find a recent president of the Anthropological Section of the British Association venturing such words as these: "I know that the toleration of anything outside of their own shibboleths is hateful to some people, but I make bold to agree with Paul of Tarsus that in every nation there are men who seek after righteousness, that elements of good exist in all races, and that our duty is to select and encourage desirable elements, but never to impose any ideals which are peculiar to our own race, age, or civilization. I know that it is often said that only by clearing away all that is associated with error can we begin to lay out a plan according to our notions. In this again, I prefer to differ, along with that gentleman of Tarsus who preached the non-interference with any customs — even with idol offerings, provided they did not belie the real belief of the man in the sight of those around him. That same eminently practical authority did not see it needful — any more than that prince of common sense, Epictetus — to prohibit slavery, polygamy, or even gladiatorial shows. An appeal to the existing conscience of mankind, a clear statement of practical moral principles,

is thus laid down for us as a precedent in the greatest readjustment of the moral sense that the world has ever seen. Such a precedent is good because it has proved successful, and such may well be our guide in dealing with native customs, with rules of conduct, and with the details of dress and of habits. But changes flow from reflection and conviction, and then you have reformed a man and not manufactured an automaton."

Strange religions rarely grow well in strange lands. The different peoples of the world have to assimilate the same truths of religion in different ways, each according to its own culture and capabilities; and the policy of religious propaganda among the Hindus has all along been in keeping with this scientifically accurate conviction which Europe has taken such a long time to voice forth. The history of Hinduism is full of highly interesting psychological stepping-stones, by which innumerable men and women in India have risen without haste and without rest to the sublimest heights of religious realization. That no one religion can be fit for all and that all religions are not fit for the same man, are truths which Hinduism has fully embodied within itself; and to the beautiful spirit of toleration and universality breathing through almost every line of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita is due the silent, non-aggressive, heart-reforming growth of the power of religion in this ancient and famously religious land. As Swami Vivekananda declared at the Congress of Religions in Chicago: "Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture on my own theory. But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of these religions and the destruction of all others, to him I say: 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope.' Do I wish that the

Christian should become a Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or the Buddhist should become a Christian? God forbid. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor the Hindu or the Buddhist to become a Christian. But each religion must assimilate the others and yet preserve its own individuality and grow according to its own law of growth."

REPORT

Swami Paramananda left for the West on March 20th and reached Seattle on the 24th. He began his work at once, delivering three public lectures during the first week after his arrival. For the past two years he has received frequent urgent invitations to visit Seattle and it is probable that he will be persuaded to remain there for a month at least, after which he will continue his journey to Los Angeles and resume work at the Centre there. On the evening before his departure from Boston he gave an informal reception at the Centre, and although it was arranged at the last moment only, a large number of friends was present. During the evening a delightful musical programme was rendered by Senor and Senorita Blanchart and Miss Florence Colby, a violincellist of unusual ability. The Swami also spoke a few parting words.

No change will be made in the Services and Classes at the Boston Centre. During the Swami's absence Sister Devamata will conduct them, as she has done in previous seasons. On Good Friday a special Vesper Service was held at 5 P. M. Senor Blanchart sang one of the "Last Words on the Cross" and there was other appropriate music with intervals of meditation preceded by short instructions.

Swami Paramananda's lecture on "Spiritual Healing" will soon appear in pamphlet form. (Price 15 cents. Postage 1 cent.)

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MAY

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

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MAY 1918

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REPORTS.

Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

1 Queensberry Street, Fenway
(Ipswich Street Car)

Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

TENTH SEASON—1918

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M.

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

May	*5th*	*Pre-existence and Life Hereafter.*
"	*12th*	*Development of the Will.*
"	*19th*	*Idolatry and Symbolism.*
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VESPER SERVICE SUNDAY 5 P. M.

(Meditation, Music, and Short Address.)

Public cordially invited to both Services.

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CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday 8 P. M. Lessons from the Eastern Scriptures.
Open to all.

Thursday 8 P. M. Practical Spiritual Instruction.
For members only.

When the Swami is absent Services and Classes will be conducted by Sister Devamata.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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KARMA AND COMPENSATION

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

(Series on Emerson and Vedanta.)

"Thou canst not gather what thou dost not sow; as thou dost plant the tree, so will it grow . . . Whatever the act a man commits, whate'er his state of mind, of that the recompense must he receive in corresponding body." These words were spoken to the world by Manu, the ancient Law-giver of India; and they express the basic principle of the Vedic idea of Karma. This idea is not regarded in India as a theological doctrine or as an intellectual speculation; it is considered to offer the only rational, logical and satisfactory explanation of all the perplexities and problems of human life. The word *Karma*, from the Sanskrit, literally means "work," that is, all that we think, all that we do, and whatever is produced as the result of our thought and actions. It is not limited, however, to what we think and do in this life only; its scope extends to all the past and all the future. The law must operate in both directions; because if what we are doing now is to determine our future condition, then there must have been some cause in the past for our present condition. There are many who believe in a future life, but who are unwilling to accept the idea of pre-existence; yet it requires

little logic to see that if we exist in the future, then our present life must become a pre-existence to that future life.

In India the idea of Karma is not a mere dogmatic belief; it is a fundamental law and corresponds to what modern science calls the law of cause and effect. It shows that there is no such thing as chance or injustice in human affairs; that all these inequalities that we see in the world are not ordained by an arbitrary Ruler, but are the inevitable results of our own mode of life and thought. This life, in Indian Scriptures, is called *Karma-bhumi*, the harvest field of action; and according to the seeds we sow in it, do we reap. It is evident that we cannot reap what we do not sow; hence what comes to us must be of our own planting. For the same reason people have no cause to be frightened by circumstances; for however overpowering and unalterable our present condition may seem, it can always be undone by the thoughts and actions which we sow today. Emerson gives a clear expression of this in his essay on *Compensation*.

"Ever since I was a boy," he says, "I have wished to write a discourse on Compensation; for it seemed to me when very young that on this subject life was ahead of theology and the people knew more than the preachers taught. . . . It seemed to me also that in it might be shown men a ray of divinity, the present action of the soul of this world, clean from all vestige of tradition; and so the heart of man might be bathed by an inundation of eternal love, conversing with that which he knows was always and always must be, because it really is now. It appeared, moreover, that if this doctrine could be stated in terms with any resemblance to those bright instructions in which this truth is sometimes revealed to us, it would be a star in many dark hours and crooked passages in our journey

that would not suffer us to lose our way.

"I was lately confirmed in these desires by hearing a sermon at church. The preacher, a man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the Last Judgment. He assumed that judgment is not executed in this world; that the wicked are successful; that the good are miserable; and then urged from reason and from Scripture a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life. . . . What did the preacher mean by saying that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it that house and lands, offices, wine, horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, whilst the saints are poor and despised; and that a compensation is to be made to these last hereafter, by giving them like gratifications another day—bank stock and doubloons, venison and champagne? This must be the compensation intended; for what else? Is it that they are to have leave to pray and praise? to love and serve men? Why, that they can do now. The legitimate inference the disciple would draw was: 'We are to have *such* a good time as the sinners have now,' or to put it to its extreme import, 'You sin now, we shall sin by and by; we would sin now, if we could; not being successful, we expect our revenge tomorrow.'

"The fallacy lay in the immense concession that the bad are successful; that justice is not done now. The blindness of the preacher consisted in deferring to the base estimate of the market of what constitutes a manly success, instead of confronting and convicting the world from the truth; announcing the presence of the soul; the omnipotence of the will; and so establishing the standard of good and ill, of success and falsehood."

This is what we see in the world of ordinary consciousness, the world where everything is looked at and judged

from the surface. When we analyze properly, however, we find that the whole standard here rests on a physical basis; but a complete explanation of life can never be found if we limit our vision to the surface only. So long as we merely perceive the effect and judge from that, we shall always see injustice and feel resentful. Emerson writes: "Every act rewards itself, or in other words, integrates itself, in a two-fold manner; first, in the thing, or in real nature, and secondly in the circumstance, or in apparent nature. Men call the circumstance the retribution. The causal retribution is in the thing and is seen by the soul. The retribution in the circumstance is seen by the understanding; it is inseparable from the thing, but is often spread over a long time and so does not become distinct until after many years. The specific stripes may follow late after the offense, but they follow because they accompany it. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed."

This is absolutely in accordance with the Indian conception of Karma. The effect we see is nothing but the fruition of a seed of action. Whether or not anyone keeps record of what we think or do, even in the dark, the seed we sow must bear fruit; just as a seed grows even when the gardener drops it unconsciously on the soil. It is not that an arbitrary will decrees that we be happy or unhappy. The world is governed by law and man cannot escape from that law. As soon as he understands this, he tries to put himself in harmony with it. "All things are double, one against another," Emerson writes. "Tit for tat; an eye

for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love. Give and it shall be given you. He that watereth shall be watered himself. Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done, no more, no less. Who doth not work shall not eat. Curses always recoil on the head of him who imprecates them. If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own. . . . You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong." "Always pay; for first or last you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt."

This is the law, but we often forget it in the turmoil of this world, as we live on the surface and see wrong and injustice apparently triumphant. If, however, we cling to this standard of life, we lose our moral stamina and make no headway. We should not do right because it will bring us a little satisfaction, but because it is the only way to live. When understanding becomes the guiding factor in our life, then we do our duty without thought of reward. Until we reach this attitude of mind, however, all our actions will create new bondage for us. The only way we can be freed from the chain of action and reaction is by not caring for the result. But how can we work without thought of some result? What impetus shall we have? Actually if we put a price on our action, we limit the result by our own limitation and we deprive ourselves. If on the contrary we put no price whatever, but are willing to work for the sake of the work, the One who knows all things will bestow on us the greatest result. When a person gives to another or does for another with the lingering thought of gratitude or applause, this thought destroys the merit of the action. But when we can free our mind

from the desire for personal gratification, we gain everything, yet we avoid the reaction.

The compensation must come. We do not have to ask for it. If our labor is worthy of any recompense, the law will bring it to us. We cannot lose it. We are bound to get it. As Emerson puts it: "Human labor, through all its forms, from the sharpening of a stake to the construction of a city or an epic, is one immense illustration of the perfect compensation of the universe. The absolute balance of Give and Take, the doctrine that everything has its price, and if that price is not paid, not that thing but something else is obtained, and that it is impossible to get anything without its price, is not less sublime in the columns of a ledger than in the budgets of States, in the laws of light and darkness, in all the action and reaction of nature."

Sometimes this does not seem to be true, because we see people who reap results without apparent labor. Take, for example, a genius. He has not worked for his gift, he is born with it, he has it. But when we extend our vision back into the past, we find that his genius is not an accident. He has earned it, he has paid the price. He has worked for it at some time, and as the result of that labor the flower of genius has blossomed in this life. So with the child who is born miserable or unfortunate. That child has a Soul, and that Soul did not begin with this body. It has a past full of experiences which have moulded its present conditions. The man who blinds himself to these deeper facts, to him the whole universe is a mystery; and the more he tries to find an explanation, the more he becomes confused and relentless in his judgment.

"There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation, to wit, its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but

a life. The soul *is*. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole." "In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the irregularities of condition. The radical tragedy of nature seems to be the distinction of More or Less. How can Less not feel the pain; how not feel indignation or malevolence towards More? Look at those who have less faculty and one feels sad and knows not well what to make of it. He almost shuns their eye; he fears they will upbraid God. What should they do? It seems a great injustice. But see the facts nearly and these mountainous inequalities vanish. Love reduces them as the sun melts the iceberg in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother and my brother is me."

These words of Emerson remind us of a beautiful passage in the Isa-Upanishad: "He who beholds all beings in the Great Self and the Self in all beings, he never turns away from It (the Self). He who perceives all beings as the Self, for him how can there be delusion or grief, when he sees oneness everywhere?" Sorrow, hatred, jealousy and all such base qualities cannot touch him. He is enveloped with one spirit only, the spirit of love. When the great understanding of the light of Truth shines in our heart, all these little feelings vanish; and in their place there is joy, and love unbounded. "We are idolaters of the old," Emerson again declares. "We do not believe in the riches of the soul, in its proper eternity and omnipresence. We do not believe there is any force in today to rival or recreate that beautiful yesterday. We linger in the ruins of the old tent where once we had bread and shelter and organs,

nor believe that the spirit can feed, cover and nerve us again. We cannot again find aught so dear, so sweet, so graceful. But we sit and weep in vain. The voice of the Almighty saith, 'Up and onward for evermore!' "

Man must rise; he must not grieve over his dead actions. He must go onward and forward, if he wishes to attain the realm of perfection. He must not linger in the ruins of the past. He must not cling to material conditions which are ever-shifting. He must not base his happiness on this one little span of life. When the veil of death falls, he must not imagine that all is over, that his last opportunity is gone. Opportunities are never lacking, but we are not always ready to profit by them. The wisest thing for us is to make the best possible use of our present. We hamper our progress when we lay undue stress on the past or the future. If the present is well-lived, the future will take care of itself. But we must have wisdom and we must have strength. If we know the nature of the Soul, and are imbued with these bigger ideas, then we cannot do anything small.

We may make thousands of laws, but that will not check crime; we must lift the criminal by giving him understanding. If he knows that when he commits a crime, he hurts himself more than the one he tries to injure, he will not do it. When a man realizes that he is the maker of his own life, the maker of his own bondage; that he holds the key by which he can unlock the door and enter into the realms of lasting happiness; then we give him a new impetus to go on and he is not tempted to do things which create bondage. Vedanta does not threaten the wrong-doer with the rod of punishment; it does not tell him that he is sinful or accursed. On the contrary, it sounds the dynamic note: "O child of Immortal Bliss, it does not befit

thee to do these things which are unworthy and of the world."

Whatever we sow, whether consciously or unconsciously, must bear fruit, so we must become conscious beings. We must do more than just live somehow or other. Eating, sleeping, feeling pleasure and pain, these we have in common with the brute. If we limit our consciousness and aspiration to that narrow sphere, we are no better than the lower animals. We must lift our standard. We must do not only what benefits us here and now; we must benefit ourselves eternally. We must not merely think of this little self, we must work for our Soul. When we can live with supreme understanding, as children of God; when we can lay all actions like flowers on the altar of God; then we shall escape from reactionary bondage and all the actions we perform will lead us towards freedom even in this life.

THE SOWER

By G. O. W.

Beneath the quiet sky
A sower casts his seed upon the hill,
Where sleeping seed will wake
Obedient to the Spring's awakening will.

How strangely from Thy Hand
Across the darker fields of death and grief
Men's souls, like seed, are flung;
But will that harvest, Lord, like earth's, be brief?

Or to deep-furrowed Death
Dost Thou consign only immortal grain?
—Lay down in lonely Grief
Enduring hearts that deathless rise again?

THE CHAIN OF BIRTH AND DEATH

By Sister Devamata.

Something cannot come out of nothing. Such is the definite statement made in the Vedic Scriptures; such is also the conclusive word of modern science. We can never hope to create; we can only transform; because if one atom were added to the universe, its equilibrium would be destroyed and it would begin to crumble. Nor is this a law for the gross material world only; it applies equally to the realm of consciousness. That is why there can be "nothing new under the sun." All that is must always have been. Existence of itself is the proof of pre-existence; not merely a pre-existence of the elements which make up the form, but a pre-existence of the point of individual consciousness around which the form gathers. The sense of identity is as indestructible as the final unit of matter. No Soul could suddenly be born to fill a new form; rather the form is born out of it; that is, it springs into being in response to the need of that Soul for a certain kind of self-expression. Nor yet in the final analysis can it be said that the forms themselves are created; for they are but repetitions of eternal models or prototypes, as Plato calls them, existing in the Divine Mind.

What form the Soul takes up is determined by its state of development and by the use it has made of its previous forms. The principle is the same as that applied by any school or business house in dealing with promotion. In these periodical changes of form and environment, however, there is no question of birth or death for the Soul. A traveller who spends a few days, months or even years at each station along a line of railway, has no sense of a break in his existence when he moves from station to station; in the same way the Soul feels no check in the even flow of

its life-consciousness in passing from one body to another. It means no more, so the Bhagavad-Gita declares, than the transition in this body from childhood to youth and old age. The mistake we make is in breaking up this deep-flowing, steady stream of living into fragments which we call lives; whereas life in its real aspect is one unbroken, eternal, infinite existence.

The logical necessity for pre-existence becomes evident when we study our present earth-life; for even a little observation will show us that what we are today is the product of a pre-existence of yesterday; and if we trace our life back from one such small pre-existence to another, we shall reach a horizon line where the yesterday drops into another sphere of manifestation, out of which this one has risen, as a new flame leaps from the glowing embers when a fresh log is laid on the fire. It is not that we are, then as these self-conscious entities we cease to be, and again as other entities we come into new being. Never have we ceased to be and never shall we cease to be. The element of identity is constant and unchanging. Sometimes, however, our being is in visible gross forms; while at other times it is in subtle and invisible forms. But always we are. One of the meditations given in Yoga to strengthen this sense of identity is to carry ourselves in thought back to our babyhood and then to trace our life through condition after condition up to the present time, realizing how many different bodies we have worn even during this short span of years. Not one atom of that original body remains, scarcely one thought or desire of that infant mind. Our entire intellectual and moral outlook has altered; yet the consciousness of self-identity has never wavered. And so it will continue, firm and unshaken.

Future existence is as much a correlative of existence

as is pre-existence. Eternity must stretch equally in both directions; for as something cannot come out of nothing, by the same law it cannot go into nothing. No entity can ever become a non-entity. If today we are vividly conscious of a sense of I-ness, it cannot be annihilated. The process by which we evolve from self-consciousness to God-consciousness is not one of destruction or substitution, but of expansion. Our self-identity expands and expands until it becomes commensurate with the whole. First we awaken to a unity of interest with a group of people we call our family, and we so far identify ourselves with their welfare that we literally love them as ourself. Then this feeling widens to the community, the country, humanity, to every living creature, to the whole universe, and finally to the Infinite. We know ourselves at last as one with God, hence with no life or advantage apart from the whole. Only when we reach this point do we realize our true individuality or indivisibility; for so long as there is one atom outside our consciousness, that atom may divide it.

Life as we perceive it at present is actually an endless chain of births and deaths. At every moment we are dying in some part of our being, and at the same moment in some other part we are being reborn. Not for the flash of a second is any human life static. It rushes and swirls like a mountain torrent:—millions of germs entering in, as many millions pouring out; every atom bringing its minute load of vital energy, emptying it somewhere in the organism and hurrying on. Thoughts, too, hastening in and out; so also emotions and sensations. Perpetual movement everywhere; never-ending change, or continual birth and death, for each change implies the death of what is and the birth of something else. Every death indeed necessitates a birth; because existence being indestructible and the change

being in the form, not in the essence or substance, what leaves this place or body must reappear in some other form and place.

So long as our attachments, obligations and desires bind us to the physical universe, we cannot hope to stay this relentless alternation of births and deaths; for change is the very law and condition of material manifestation. The briefest interval of complete rest would mean stagnation and eventual dissolution. If a man holds obstinately to a falling object, he must fall with it; similarly, if we cling with the same tenacity to that which dies, we cannot escape death. On this plane we have no choice as to whether we shall live or die. We can only determine to what we shall die and to what we shall be reborn. Every instant of time represents a death or a new birth. There is not one thought, not one word, not one movement of hand or foot, not one act of moral choice, not one breath even that does not sign a death sentence or a promise of life eternal. Are we dying to that which dies and being reborn to that which is deathless? Then we may be sure that every day death is losing its power over us, and there will come a time when we shall be able to walk over the waters or through a fiery furnace unmoved. Acts of heroism will cost us nothing then; for it is the little self in us which always plays the coward. The Great Self, fully conscious of its imperishable nature, is fearless. By this unfailing attribute of fearlessness, indeed, we may recognize the knowers of the Divine, so the Upanishads tell us.

Now we tremble when any danger threatens the body because deep down in our hearts we identify our life with it. What exists besides seems to us too cloudlike and intangible to rest our faith upon. But one who has shifted his point of self-identity to his spiritual being can say

with all sincerity, as did Sri Ramakrishna when reproached for expending his physical energies so recklessly for others: "I would gladly give twenty thousand bodies to save one Soul." For such a lover the safety and care of the tiniest insect will seem of grave importance, because he will see its small life as an integral part of the Great Life. To him it will be a little brother groping in the blind helplessness of babyhood. So St. Francis felt towards the birds. Such was the feeling of Buddha as He begged the king to take Him for the sacrifice in place of those terrified goats. Their bleatings sounded in His ears as the voices of little children of God crying to Him, an elder Son, for succor. Could He fail them? The story is told in India of a Brahmin, who going to a well found a scorpion struggling in the water. With some effort he rescued it and held it against his breast to revive it, but it stung him. As soon as he laid it on the ground, it crawled back to the edge and fell in again. A second time he drew it out and warmed it against his breast, and a second time it stung him. So also a third time.

Such will be the patient compassion in our hearts towards all living things when we rise above the enslaving fear of death. Every nervous start, every recoil from pain or hurt is in reality this fear in subtler disguise. It thwarts our finest impulses towards self-sacrifice and noble action. If we were fully convinced that we were indestructible, we could face any danger or deprivation for even the meanest creature; but life being our most precious treasure, something within us drives us irresistibly to safeguard it and whatever contributes towards it. We call this a natural instinct of self-preservation, but it is a very primary and distorted form; because the only self within us that can be preserved is the undying Soul, and that can never

suffer harm or loss. An acquaintance with this Divine and Eternal Principle of our being, alone will release us from the haunting dread of death. For this reason Jesus taught: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth will make you free?" Free from what? From the bondage of birth and death and all the deadening limitations of gross matter.

At whatever point we touch Truth, there we touch immortal life; because Truth and existence are one. The path of liberation, therefore, is the path of knowledge—knowledge of the Higher Self first and through that, knowledge of God. "Those men who have no faith in this science of Self-knowledge, without attaining Me, return to the path of death and rebirth," it is said in the Gita. We must find something within us which defies time, space and causation; a something which not merely contains life, but which is life. It is plain that the body does not meet these requirements; nor yet the mind or character; for all are subject to the conditioning effects of time and space, and are bound by the law of causation. That something must lie deeper in the abysses of our being; and mere intellectual reasoning cannot penetrate to it, because it lies beyond. That which is life can be gained only by living. It is not enough to recognize that we are not the body; we must live as if we were not; that is, we must not make it the central motive in all our activity. We must not feel that our happiness depends on its comfort and pleasure; that our daily routine must be shaped according to its momentary state. We must look at it objectively, while we remain the subject; in other words, we must cultivate the attitude of a witness towards it, taking care of it as a good workman does his instrument, but never yielding to its caprices or identifying ourselves with it.

Then once more we must push back the point of self-

identity by objectifying our subtle body, that closer covering of mind, intellect and ego which still wraps the Soul when the gross body falls off. To confound our real being with this is as grave an error as to think ourselves one with our hands and feet or our senses. We must look upon it only as a finer tool to work with; a tool, however, of such intrinsic value that we cannot afford to neglect it or use it unwisely. The surest way to make it effective and also to detach ourselves from it, is to practise evenness of mind and mood. We must not let our consciousness sway and swing with each passing pain or pleasure, each chance word of praise or blame. The rythmic play of opposites —heat and cold, light and darkness, the pleasant and the unpleasant—is inevitable on this plane. It is foolish to suppose that we can check it; but what we can check is our reaction against it. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches that he who remains serene and unafflicted by these outer changes is the only one fitted to attain immortality. The reason of this is apparent, because to rise above them is to rise above our mortal nature. Only in the Soul can man "make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm."

Serenity is as essential to clear inner vision as is steadiness to accurate outer sight; and we gain this serenity, not by trying to alter the universe or by denying the presence of those things in it which disturb our equilibrium, but by calmly viewing all things as they are and remaining unafflicted. This does not mean insensibility; rather it implies a keener, more refined perception; because the practice of dispassion is well-nigh impossible unless beneath all these storms of good and evil, joy and sorrow, failure and success, we are able to perceive still depths of Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love and Infinite Power to which we can unquestioningly entrust ourselves and all that

is. There is a vital distinction between pain and suffering. Pain is the warning cry of nature when some abnormal condition rises in the system, and may exist when, as in sleep, we are not conscious of it. Suffering comes as a voluntary reaction against it; "kicking against the pricks," as St. Paul puts it. Nothing so quickly reduces our aches and disquietudes to a minimum as to meet them with non-resistance and surrender. Nor will this cheat us of any lesson to be learned from them; for the greatest lesson to be gained from any human experience is to learn how to rise above it.

Growth in dispassion and serenity leads naturally to growth in Self-knowledge; for as the surface of the mind becomes calm, the reflection of the Soul within is no longer broken and distorted, and man beholds the perfect image of his true nature shining in glory. Then by its transcendent light, as by a lamp, "he will see the real nature of the Supreme," we are told in the Svetasvatara-Upanishad; "and having known the unborn, eternal God, he is freed from all fetters. For when God is known, all fetters fall off, sufferings are destroyed, and birth and death cease."

THE THIRST FOR PLEASURE

From the Teachings of Buddha

Make thyself an island, work hard, be wise! When thine impurities are blown away and thou art free from guilt, thou wilt not enter again into birth and decay.

The thirst of a thoughtless man grows like a creeper; he runs from life to life, like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest.

Whomsoever this fierce poisonous thirst overcomes in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.

But from him who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off like water drops from a lotus leaf.

The channels (of pleasure) run everywhere, the creeper of passion is sprouting; if Thou seest this creeper springing up, cut its root by means of knowledge.

Given up to pleasure and deriving happiness therefrom, men again and again undergo birth and decay.

That fetter the wise call strong which drags down, which yields but is difficult to undo; after having cut this at last, people rise above the world, free from cares and leaving the pleasures of attachment behind.

Those who are slaves to passion run down the stream of desires as a spider runs down the web which he has himself made; when they have cut this, the wise go onwards, free from cares, leaving all pain behind.

If thy mind is altogether free, thou wilt not again enter into birth and decay.

If a man is tossed about by doubts, full of strong passions and yearning only for what is pleasant, his thirst will grow more and more and he will indeed make his fetters strong.

If a man delights in quieting his doubts and, always reflecting, does not turn from the unpleasant, he will certainly remove, nay, he will cut the fetter of Mara.

He who has reached the goal, who is fearless, who is without thirst and without taint, he has broken all the thorns of life.

He who never identifies himself with name and form and does not grieve over what is gone, he is indeed a true follower of the law.

Him I call a Brahmana (a God-knower) who has left behind human pleasures and passed beyond heavenly pleasures and is free from all hunger for enjoyment.

Him I call a Brahmana who has no selfish interests and when he has understood the truth does not say, How, how? and who has reached the depth of the Immortal.

Him I call a Brahmana who has risen above the bondage of good and evil; who is free from grief, from sin and impurity.

Him I call indeed a Brahmana who is bright like the moon, pure, serene, undisturbed.

Him indeed I call a Brahmana who has risen above what gives pleasure and what gives pain, who is calm and free from the germ of rebirth: the hero and conqueror of all the worlds.

Stop the stream valiantly, drive away desire, O Brahmana! When thou hast understood the destructible nature of all that was made, thou wilt understand that which was not made.

All bonds vanish from one who has obtained that knowledge.

We find ourselves in the position for which we are fit, each ball finds its own hole; and if one has some capacity above another, the world will find this out too in the universal adjusting that goes on. So it is no use to grumble. If there is a rich man who is wicked, there must be in that man certain qualities which make him rich. What is the use of fighting and complaining? That will not help us to better things. He who grumbles at the little thing that has fallen to his lot to do will grumble at everything. Always grumbling, he will lead a miserable life and everything will be a failure. But that man who does his duty as he goes, putting his shoulder to the wheel, will see the light and higher and higher duties will fall to his share.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

THE ART OF LIFE

From the Teachings of Chuang Tzu

Those who understand the conditions of life devote no attention to things which life cannot accomplish. Those who understand the conditions of destiny devote no attention to things over which knowledge has no control. For the due nourishment of our physical frames, certain things are needful. Yet where such things abound, the physical frame is not always nourished. For the preservation of life it is necessary that there should be no abandonment of the physical frame. Yet where the physical frame is not abandoned, life does not always remain.

Life comes, and cannot be declined. It goes, and cannot be stopped. But alas! the world thinks that to nourish the frame is enough to keep life. And if indeed it is not enough, what then is the world to do? Although not enough, it must still be done. It cannot be neglected. For if one is to neglect the physical frame, better far to retire at once from the world. By renouncing the world, one gets rid of the cares of the world. The result is a natural level, which is equivalent to a re-birth. And he who is reborn is near to realization.

Lieh Tzu asked Kuan Yin, saying: "The perfect man can walk through solid bodies without obstruction. He can pass through fire without being burnt. He can scale the loftiest heights without fear. How does he bring himself to do this?"

"It is because he is in a condition of absolute purity," replied Kuan Yin. "It is not cunning which enables him to dare such feats. Be seated and I will tell you. All that has form, sound, colour may be classed under the head *thing*. Man differs so much from the rest and stands at the head of all things simply because the latter are but what they appear and nothing more. But man can attain to form-

lessness and vanquish death. And with that which is in possession of the eternal, how can mere things compare?

"Man may rest in the eternal fitness; he may abide in the everlasting; and roam from the beginning to the end of all creation. He may bring his nature to a condition of one; he may nourish his strength; he may harmonize his virtue, and so put himself into partnership with God. Then, when his divinity is thus assured and his spirit closed in on all sides, how can anything find a passage within?

"A drunken man who falls out of a cart, though he may suffer, does not die. His bones are the same as other people's, but he meets his accident in a different way. His spirit is in a position of security. He is not conscious of riding in the cart, neither is he conscious of falling out of it. Ideas of life, death, fear, etc., cannot penetrate his breast; and so he does not suffer from contact with objective existences. And if such security is to be got from wine, how much more is it to be got from God. It is in God that the Sage seeks his refuge and so he is free from harm.

"An avenger does not snap in twain the murderous weapon; neither does the most spiteful man carry his resentment to a tile which may have hit him on the head. And by the extension of this principle, the empire would be at peace; no more confusion of war, no more punishment of death. Do not develop your artificial intelligence, but develop that intelligence which is from God. From the latter, results virtue; from the former, cunning. And those who do not shrink from the natural, nor wallow in the artificial, they are near to perfection."

A certain Sun Hsiu went to the house of Pien Ch'ing Tzu and complained, saying: "In peace I am not considered wanting in propriety. In times of trouble I am not con-

sidered wanting in courage. Yet my crops fail; and officially I am not a success. From my village an outcast, I am an outlaw from my State. How have I offended against God that He should visit me with such a fate?"

"Have you not heard," replied Pien Tzu, "how the perfect man conducts himself? He is oblivious of his physical organization. He is beyond the reach of sight and hearing. He moves outside the limits of this dusty world, rambling transcendentally in the domain of no-affairs. This is called acting, but not from self-confidence; influencing, but not from authority. But you, you make a show of your knowledge in order to startle fools. You cultivate yourself in contrast to the degradation of others. And you blaze along as though the sun and moon were under your arms. Whereas, that you have a whole body in a whole skin and have not perished in mid-career, dumb, blind, or halt, but actually hold a place among men—this ought to be enough for you. Why rail at God? Begone!"

Confucius was looking at the cataract at Lüliang. It fell from a height of thirty jen and its foam reached forty li away. No scaly, finny creature could enter therein. Yet Confucius saw an old man go in, and thinking that he was suffering from some trouble and desirous of ending his life, bade a disciple run along the side to try to save him. The old man emerged about a hundred paces off and with flowing hair went carolling along the bank. Confucius followed him and said: "I had thought, sir, you were a spirit, but now I see you are a man. Kindly tell me, is there any way to deal thus with water?"

"No," replied the old man, "I have no way. There was my original condition to begin with; then habit growing into nature; and lastly acquiescence in destiny. Plunging in with the whirl, I come out with the swirl. I accommo-

date myself to the water, not the water to me. And so I am able to deal with it after this fashion."

"What do you mean," enquired Confucius, "by your original condition to begin with, habit growing into nature, and acquiescence in destiny?"

"I was born," replied the old man, "upon dry land, and accommodated myself to dry land. That was my original condition. Growing up on the water, I accommodated myself to the water. That was what I meant by nature. And doing as I did without being conscious of any effort so to do, that was what I meant by destiny."

The divine man trusts to the natural development of events. He does not strive to introduce the artificial into the domain of the natural. Accordingly, life is a gain and death a loss, or death is a gain and life a loss (according to the circumstances) . . . If men revere them (these wise ones) they rejoice not. If men insult them, they are not angered. But only those who have passed into the eternal harmony of God are capable of this.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda's visit to Seattle met with overwhelming success. During the few days he spent there he delivered eleven public lectures and held seven private classes. There was an overflowing attendance at all. Although the capacity of the hall for one series of lectures was two hundred and fifty and that of the other three hundred and fifty, all available space even on the platform was crowded at each meeting and large numbers were turned away. On one occasion over one hundred people could not obtain entrance. The Swami was obliged also to devote many hours each day to interviews. Besides these evidences of the interest aroused, many hundreds of books and pamphlets were sold and the subscription list of the Mes-

sage was appreciably lengthened. There was an insistent demand for a permanent Centre, but the Swami did not feel it possible to consider it for the present. Although the lectures and classes followed in quick succession, always one and sometimes two a day, a large and earnest nucleus of the same people came regularly, giving up other engagements in order to do so. One of these, in sending a book order to the Boston Centre, writes: "Swami Paramananda left yesterday for Portland. He was in Seattle two short weeks. We all appreciated his visit so much and I trust he will establish a Vedanta Centre here. I am sure there are a great many people interested. Many evenings we were not able to seat all the people who came to hear him. Words are not adequate to express our delight in having the privilege of attending these lectures and meditation classes. The Swami's teachings are so broad, practical and full of uplifting Truth."

It was also arranged that the Swami should deliver three lectures in Tacoma—one at the prison—but owing to the pressure of engagements in Seattle he was obliged to cancel two of these. He left Seattle on the 10th of April, delivered three lectures in Portland, and after a brief stop in San Francisco, arrived in Los Angeles on the morning of the 18th. On the following day he gave a first lecture at the Vedanta Centre, established there by him two years ago, and on Sunday the 21st began a course of public lectures at Symphony Hall. His work will continue there for the present as in previous years.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston all Services and Classes were held as usual during April, being conducted by Sister Devamata in the Swami's absence. The attendance remained excellent throughout the month. During May there will be no change in the schedule of meetings.

JUN 6 1918

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

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Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

TENTH SEASON—1918

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M.

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

June	*2nd*	*Evolution and Special Creation.*
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VESPER SERVICE SUNDAY 5 P. M.

(Meditation, Music, and Short Address.)

Public cordially invited to both Services.

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CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday 8 P. M. Lessons from the Eastern Scriptures.
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Thursday 8 P. M. Practical Spiritual Instruction.
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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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ATMAN AND OVER-SOUL

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

(Series on Emerson and Vedanta)

Whether God and Soul are myths or facts is a question which has been discussed in all ages by all the thinking minds of the world; and although sages and mystics have proved it by their own light, this cannot reveal it to others who have not the same light. "Every man's words who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part," Emerson writes. "I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold. Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind." In similar words Yama, the Lord of Death, speaks to Nachiketas in the Katha-Upanishad. "This Atman cannot be attained by mere study of the Scriptures, nor by intellectual perception, nor by frequent hearing of It; he whom the Self chooses, by him alone is It attained. To him the Self reveals Its true nature. But he who has not turned away from evil conduct, whose senses are uncontrolled, who is not tranquil, whose mind is not at rest, he can never attain this Self even by knowledge." That is, unless a man lives the life and develops his higher

spiritual faculties, mere intellectual knowledge cannot help him much. As Emerson says again:

"The philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. In its experiments there has always remained, in the last analysis, a risiduum it could not resolve. Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. The most exact calculator has no prescience that somewhat incalculable may not balk the next moment. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine. . . . We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime in man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty; to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one."

The ancient Vedic Scriptures abound in passages describing in almost identical terms the relation of the phenomenal world with the Unseen One, and the connection of the Soul with its origin — that One without a second. Nowhere does Vedanta deal with the universe as a combination of unrelated fragments; it sees all things as parts of a great whole and it tries to bind all these parts together in that whole, yet without destroying the entity of each individual Soul. Therefore, before we can define our relation with the world, we must discover our relation with its Source. That is, we must project our mind beyond this little span of self-consciousness and learn to know our real Self. In the philosophy of the Vedas we find a clear distinction made between what man calls his

self and the Over-Soul; the *Jivatman* and the *Paramatman*, the individual self and the Supreme Self; or between the apparent man and the real man. Man is the reflection of God; but the reflection cannot exist without the object reflected; so man must know what God is, if he would know himself. This has been the search down the ages and this search must be made by every individual for himself; there is no one who can answer this question for another. Because of this it ever remains a hidden mystery. It is true that certain philosophies and ethical systems, like the Buddhistic, drop the self entirely; but the self they drop is the man of name, form and limitations. And it is necessary to do this, because we can never be wholly possessor of our eternal being until we drop the consciousness of mundane things.

What is the *Atman* or Self? In the Kena-Upanishad it is defined as "the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the life of the life, the eye of the eye. That which cannot be thought by mind, but by which mind is able to think; that which is not seen by the eye, but by which the eye is able to see; that which cannot be heard by the ear, but by which the ear is able to hear." Emerson draws almost the same picture when he writes: "All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not in faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A

man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims in some one particular to let the soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey.

"Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtile. It is undefinable, unmeasurable; but we know that it pervades and contains us. We know that all spiritual being is in man. A wise old proverb says, 'God comes to see us without bell'; that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power. These natures no man ever got above, but they tower over us, and most in the moment when our interests tempt us to wound them."

The eating, drinking, sleeping man thinks his whole life is contained in his physical being. His miseries to him are great realities; his hands and feet, his eyes, nose, these various bodily organs seem all-important; while he overlooks that by which he is living, acting and thinking.

When we descend to this state of consciousness, we inevitably misrepresent ourselves. As soon as we forget our Soul-nature, we become selfish entities; we think that to find happiness we must deceive or override our fellow-men, and do everything for our own gain and gratification. But the real man within, who is majestic and free from all sense of competition and rivalry, turns away from fleeting mundane vanities, because he knows that his true being is of God. "The influence of the senses has, in most men, overpowered the mind to that degree that the walls of time and space have come to look real and insurmountable; and to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, the sign of insanity. Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul." "See how the deep divine thought reduces centuries and milleniums, and makes itself present through all ages. Is the teaching of Christ less effective now than it was when first his mouth was opened? The emphasis of facts and persons in my thought has nothing to do with time. And so, always, the soul's scale is one; the scale of the senses and the understanding is another. Before the revelations of the soul, time, space and Nature shrink away."

How like these words of Emerson is the passage in the Svetasvatara-Upanishad: "When the light of the Atman or Self has risen, there is no day, no night, neither existence nor non-existence. For the sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all this is lightened. He makes all. He knows all, the self-caused, the knower, the Time of time!" Spiritual verities can never be matters of tradition. We can never believe in things until we become acquainted with them through our own direct perception. No one

can make us believe that we have a Soul until we become aware of it ourselves. Theoretical knowledge is not dependable knowledge. Even a small amount of knowledge based on direct apprehension is a far surer guide than the greatest amount of learning. Intellectual knowledge leads us into an ever-increasing tangle of diversity; while direct vision always simplifies and leads to fundamental unity. As Emerson again declares:

"The mind is one; and the best minds who love truth for its own sake, think much less of property in truth. They accept it thankfully everywhere, and do not label or stamp it with any man's name, for it is theirs long beforehand, and from eternity. The learned and the studious of thought have no monopoly of wisdom. Their violence of direction in some degree disqualifies them to think truly. We owe many valuable observations to people who are not very acute or profound, and who say the thing without effort, which we want and have long been hunting in vain. The action of the soul is oftener in that which is left unsaid, than in that which is said in any conversation."

Here Emerson strikes the same universal note which sounds through all Vedic teaching, that Truth is not the exclusive property of any one group of people, but is the common property of the whole human race and equally open to all who can claim it. Whoever is open to Truth does not care from what source it comes. It is Truth, that is sufficient. He does not try to label it. If we love God above all things and seek to be united with Him, no divisions or distinctions can exist for us. The Lord abides equally in every heart and when we see Him there, all barriers of exclusiveness must fall. God is One, Truth is One, the Infinite Spirit is One. There is but one great

family and God is the presiding head of that family. Until we recognize this and feel in our hearts that He is our real Father or Mother, we cannot be fully open to the higher revelation. Lofty spiritual Truth exists irrespective of time or place. It always stands there; and when people are ready to receive it, it unfolds itself to them. "We are wiser than we know," Emerson says. "If we will not interfere with our thought, but will act entirely, or see how the thing stands in God, we know the particular thing, and every thing, and every man. For the maker of all things and all persons stands behind us and casts his dread omniscience through us over things."

Few possess a pure spiritual sense, and one who has it, because he speaks and acts differently from others, stands out from among men; and people interpret this peculiarity as insanity. Emerson speaks of this also. "A certain tendency to insanity," he writes, "has always attended the opening of the religious sense in men, as if they had been 'blasted with excess of light.' The trances of Socrates, the 'union' of Plotinus, the vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and his Quakers, the illumination of Swedenborg, are of this kind. . . . Revelation is the disclosure of the soul. The popular notion of a revelation is that it is a telling of fortunes. In past oracles of the soul the understanding seeks to find answers to sensual questions and undertakes to tell from God how long men shall exist, what their hands shall do and who shall be their company, adding names and dates and places. But we must pick no locks. We must check this low curiosity."

When man seeks light, not for what it will bring him in the form of health, prosperity or success, but for it-

self, then alone will it come. Only when love of the Soul leads him upward and onward will he attain it. In no other way can he gain communion with the Eternal Spirit. At every step of life two paths confront us. One leads Godward; the other towards the world. The wise, distinguishing between the two, chooses the Real and Eternal; while the ignorant, preferring that which brings immediate and tangible results, chooses the lower path. The one moves inward, the other moves outward. "The self-existent created the senses outgoing; for this reason man sees the external world, but not the inner Atman or Self. Some wise men, however, desiring immortality, with eyes turned away from the external, see the Great Self within."

Bearing out this statement of the Vedic Scriptures, Emerson says: "The great distinction between teachers sacred or literary — between poets like Herbert and poets like Pope; between philosophers like Spinoza, Kant and Coleridge and philosophers like Locke, Mackintosh and Stewart; between men of the world who are reckoned accomplished talkers and here and there a fervent mystic, prophesying, half insane under the infinitude of his thought — is that one class speaks *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact, and the other class *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons. It is no use to preach to me from without. I can do that too easily for myself. Jesus speaks always from within and in a degree that transcends all others. In that is the miracle."

The same attitude is to be found among the Indo-Aryans. Mere scholarship has never been considered by them an essential qualification for a spiritual teacher. He must

be one who knows, who is directly acquainted with the higher facts of life; not one who can fill the brain with theories about God. The real spiritual genius is not dependent on any outer support, his strength comes from the Fountainhead. If I go to a man who is only brilliant intellectually, he may satisfy me for a moment, but afterwards the mind seems more confused. If, on the contrary, I go to a man who has the light of higher understanding, he may perhaps speak only one word, but that word will prove to be a seed which will spring up and bear fruit. As Emerson puts it: "The tone of seeking is one and the tone of having is another." If a man "have not found his home in God, his manners, his form of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will. If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavorable circumstance."

The eternal Self, it is true, dwells in the heart of every mortal, but it is to be attained only in a state of consciousness where reason cannot reach. When, however, the mind is concentrated and turned within, then the mortal perceives the glory of the immortal Self and "rejoices, because he has obtained that which is the cause of all true joy," as it is said in the Katha-Upanishad. Emerson also writes: "Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. It inspires awe and astonishment. When we have broken our god of tradition and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his

presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side." Also in the Upanishads we read: "The knower of Brahman (the Supreme) becomes like unto Brahman."

When a man enters the chamber of his Soul, he may enter as a man, but he comes out transformed. A man cannot help going wrong and making mistakes as long as he is ignorant of his true nature. The only aid we can give him is to kindle in him the higher sense of the reality of God and his own Soul. When he is able to perceive this, it will then not be possible for him to be dragged down by the unrealities of this world. So long as man is conscious only of his little self, he will be self-conceited; but let him come under the dominion of the Great Self and at once his consciousness will expand and carry him beyond the limits of selfish thought and action.

There can be little question that Emerson was strongly imbued with the spirit of the Upanishads when he wrote his essay on the *Over-Soul*. The title itself indicates it, for "Over-Soul" is almost a literal translation of the Sanskrit word *Param-atman* (Supreme Lord). The very expressions as well as the thought contained in the essay are all akin to those found in the Indo-Aryan Scriptures. But this does not imply that they were borrowed. Emerson undoubtedly drew his inspiration from the Vedas; yet it was his own spiritual genius which enabled him to grasp the lofty ideals they proclaim, and give them out with such masterful power. When great men study the Scriptures of the world, it does not unsettle their understanding or rob them of their own true faith, but it makes them see the universality of Truth and leads them to unite all the varying expressions of Truth into one great

whole. Whenever spiritual seeking becomes an all-absorbing passion of our Soul, we are inevitably released from all doctrinal and creed-bound beliefs and are brought face to face with the great cosmic, universal and all-abiding Truth.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME

Selection from the Mundaka-Upanishad

By truthfulness, by penance, right knowledge and abstinence must that Self be gained; the Self whom spotless anchorites gain is pure and like a light within the body.

The true prevails, not the untrue; by the true the path is laid out, the way of the gods *(devayanah)*, on which the old sages, satisfied in their desires, proceed to where there is that highest place of the True One.

That shines forth grand, divine, inconceivable, smaller than the small. It is far beyond what is far and yet near; It is hidden in the cave (of the heart) among those who see It even here.

He is not apprehended by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses, nor by penance or good works. When a man's nature has become purified by the serene light of knowledge, then he sees Him, meditating on Him as without parts.

That subtle Self is to be known by thought, there where Prana has entered five-fold; for every thought of men is interwoven with the senses; and when thought is purified, then the Self arises.

He (the knower of the Self) knows that highest home of Brahman (the Supreme) in which all is contained and shines brightly. The wise who, without desiring happiness, worship that Being, transcend this seed (they are not born again).

He who forms desires in his mind, is born again through his desires here and there. But to him whose desires are fulfilled and who is conscious of his true Self, all desires vanish, even here on earth.

When they have reached Him, the sages become satisfied through knowledge; they are conscious of their Self, their passions have passed away, and they are tranquil. The wise, having reached Him who is present everywhere, devoted to the Self, enter into Him wholly.

As the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form; thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the Divine Being, who is greater than the great.

He who knows that highest Brahman, becomes even Brahman. He overcomes grief, he overcomes evil; free from the fetters of the heart, he becomes immortal.

LOVE OF SELF

Class Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

In this world nothing is so dear to us as our own self. Other loves are secondary; love for ourself is primary. But why do we love our own self more than anything in the universe? To answer this question we must first know what we love and what we do not love. We love beautiful things, not that which is ugly. We love sweet words, not harsh ones. We love those who are pleasing to us, not those who displease us. We love good dishes, not unsavory ones. We love to be in the cool shade of a wide-spreading tree, not out on the burning desert. In short, we love whatever harmonizes with our nature; we do not love that which does not agree with it. What has the power to make us happy, that we love. What has not the power to make us happy, that we hate. We do not

like a sharp-tongued man or woman, we do not like repulsive sights, we do not like harsh sounds, because they do not make us happy.

If, then, love is based on the power to give me happiness, and I love myself most, then I must have the power to give myself the greatest happiness. I must be the most pleasing thing to myself in the universe. And since I never cease to love myself, no matter how much I grow, there must be within me a source of happiness on which I can call indefinitely. I see therefore that what the sages tell me must be true — that I am the abode of eternal happiness. "You are not three and a half cubits in length," they say, "full of troubles and miseries, as you imagine yourself to be. Bliss is your nature. You think you are helpless, that you are dependent on the world for everything; whereas you are by your very nature all-blissful." This self which I know, however, is certainly not all-blissful. It does not always please me or make me happy. It cannot be this self, then, that I love. On the contrary, as I begin to know myself better, I find that this thing which I call myself is the real cause of all my misfortunes and sufferings. In it is localized all that which limits and deludes me. It is the real seat of ignorance or Maya, and only as I get rid of the idea of ego does Maya lose its hold on me.

This is true. Pull out the foundations and the whole house will collapse. Similarly take away the ego and the whole structure of Maya will fall. Now you think you are one with the body; that you have risen somewhere and you must set somewhere; that you are man or woman, weak or strong, Brahmin or non-Brahmin. These are all the qualifications of the ego; and if you analyze, you will find that they all rest on the body, so

that ego and body must be one. But you existed before the body and you are going to exist after the body; therefore you cannot be the body, hence the ego is not you. In this way you can rid yourself of the idea of ego. And once you have gone behind the ego, in a trice Maya and egoism will vanish. Then you will realize the state of perfect calmness and know yourself to be something which is neither the body, nor the mind, nor the ego. To do this, however, you must go beyond all these to the eternal reality of your nature. And when you can do that, you will begin to know what happiness means. Then all the world will seem nothing to you but a playground. The whole universe will be a vast stage and you will play your part of man or woman, Brahmin or non-Brahmin, with the same gusto as a king plays the part of a sweeper in the theatre of his palace.

Now if some one asks: "Who are you?" you reply: "I am Mr. So-and-So, with such a name, belonging to such a family; I am tall or short, fair or dark, ill or well." And you keep thinking: "If I do not get food, I will die of starvation; if I do not get water, that will kill me; if I do not get air, I will smother." To jump suddenly from this habit of thought to that other pole — that you are infinite — is not possible in a moment. You will say: "I am feeling hungry at this instant; how can you tell me I have no hunger? I am just now suffering from thirst, how can you say that I am not thirsty?" Intellectually it is easy to grasp, this idea that you are infinite; but when it comes to practice it is very difficult, for you are sure that you must earn your living, that you must seek the favor of this one who can help you find a position, or of that other who can procure for you some other advantage. You cannot suddenly form a totally new habit of thought; the change must be gradual.

There was once an opium-eater who came to a wise physician to be cured of his weakness. "My dear fellow," the physician said, "you have been in the habit of taking such a large quantity of opium ever day, it will not be possible for you to give up all at once. But do this: Weigh the amount you take each day with a piece of chalk on the other scale, but before you put the chalk on the scale, always draw a line with it on the floor." The patient did this, and at the end of six months he found that the piece of chalk had been reduced to half its original size and also the quantity of opium he took. By the end of the year the chalk was gone and the man had completely broken himself of the habit. So everything should be done gradually. We cannot all at once think that we are not the body. As long as we believe that our happiness comes through the senses, we shall love it and cling to it. When, however, we begin to realize that if we get some pleasure through our sense life, we also get much misery, then we shall begin to look elsewhere. So by degrees, as we search for the source of happiness in us, or as we try to find that thing in us which makes us love ourself, we shall move back through layer after layer of our being until we reach our real nature, that Atman or Self on which our existence rests. Then the bondage of our lower nature will be broken.

It is the greatest relief when we get rid of egoism. It feels as if a heavy burden had rolled off from us. At once all our doubts, fears, anxieties and troubles disappear. When the "I" is gone, then nothing remains but God. Let Him exist alone in His glory. Why should I — this little I — do anything? All is He, and He is perfect, full, complete. Deny the ego. It is the cause of all our miseries. This egoism is the real hell-fire. What in the West they

call Satan, we Hindus call ego. All forms of selfishness and suffering spring from it. To be rid of it is *Mukti* or freedom.

When man gains the consciousness of his pure Soul-nature, he becomes perfectly happy. That one has freed himself from slavery who knows that all the things which he wants are to be found inside himself, not outside; for then all want ceases, and want eats into man not only in this life, but in all lives to come. If then everything we want is inside, if we have there an inexhaustible fountain of bliss, is it not foolish to keep all our interests on the outside — our pleasures, our pursuits, our companions, all outside ourselves? So long as we do this, we shall never get rid of our miseries and taste true happiness. As the Bhagavad-Gita declares: "He whose joy is within, whose pleasure is within and whose light is within, that Yogi, being wholly united with Brahman (the Supreme), attains to freedom absolute. Only he whose heart is detached from external experiences, tastes the happiness which is to be found in the (Highest) Self alone."

THE TWO WAYS

From the Apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas

(Barnabas was a companion and fellow-preacher of St. Paul)

There are two ways of doctrine and power, the one of light, the other of darkness.

Now, the way of light is this:

Thou shalt be simple in heart and rich in spirit. Thou shalt not cleave to those that walk in the way of death. Thou shalt turn from that which is not pleasing unto God. Thou shalt abhor all dissimulation. Thou shalt not neglect any of the commands of the Lord.

Thou shalt not exalt thyself, but shalt be humble. Thou shalt not take honor to thyself. Thou shalt not enter into any wicked counsel against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not be over-confident in thy heart.

Thou shalt be gentle. Thou shalt be quiet. Thou shalt not keep any hatred in thy heart against thy brother. . . Thou shalt love thy brother above thine own Soul.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, neither shalt thou be an extortioner. Neither shall thy heart be joined to proud men; but thou shalt be numbered among the righteous and the lowly. Whatever events shall happen unto thee, thou shalt receive them as good.

Thou shalt not be double-minded or double-tongued; for a double tongue is the snare of death.

Thou shalt not be bitter in thy commands towards any one of thy servants that trust in God, because He came not to call any with respect of persons, but whomsoever the spirit had prepared.

Thou shalt share with thy neighbors of all thou hast; thou shalt not call anything thine own; for if ye partake in such things as are incorruptible, how much more should ye do it in those that are corruptible?

Thou shalt not be forward to speak; for the mouth is the snare of death. Strive for thy Soul with all thy might.

Thou shalt love as the apple of thine eye every one that speaketh unto thee the Word of the Lord. Thou shalt seek out every day the persons of the righteous.

Thou shalt judge righteous judgments. Thou shalt never cause divisions, but shalt make peace between those that are at variance and bring them together.

Thou shalt confess thy sins, and not come to thy prayer with an evil conscience.

This is the way of light.

WATERS OF LIFE

By J. P. Dabney

It happened to me once, in my journey through the world, to come to a broad highway whereon were travelling a great multitude of diverse manners of people.

There were old people and young people; folk richly attired and beggars in rags; strong, lusty people shoulder to shoulder with crippled and deformed ones, who had to limp along heavily by the aid of crutch or staff. Many of this company bore vessels in their hands; one a golden flagon, another an earthen vase, another a mean cup, and so on. Some had only broken sherds and fragments of vessels, and the major part of them carried nothing. All faces were turned one way, and, cheerfully or dolefully as it might be, all were moving, slower or faster, in one direction.

I was astonished at the sight, and asked of one and another:

"Who be all these folk that travel so determinedly? and whether do they go?" to which all called back:

"Come drink, come drink."

Then I perceived near to me a tall old man of serene countenance, who walked along with the aid of a staff whereon was scrolled in runic letters the word "Meditation," and him I accosted.

"Fair sir, will you tell me whereunto all this great company is travelling?"

He, smiling slowly, made answer:

"They have heard of the Waters of Life, to drink of which makes men immortal, and they go forward to seek for them."

"And where may these Waters of Life be met with?" I persisted, "and do you know your way thither?"

"Peradventure not wholly," he returned; "but we have signs which we follow for a season, and then we discern other signs that lead us further."

"It seemeth, sooth, a weary way," I said; "and how shall all these folk who carry no cups drink of the Waters when they be found?"

"They will make cups of their own linked hands and that is the best of all. It mattereth nothing how we drink, so long as we do drink," he replied gravely and hurried along.

There seemed to me something of moment in all this adventure and my heart warmed to it, so I fitted my paces to the others' and followed along with them. What nor where might be these Waters of Life, I knew nothing, but the humor was upon me to find out.

A weary way we travelled. Dust parched us and untoward winds chilled us. Many grew faint-hearted and dropped by the wayside, complaining: "It is but a mirage. There *are* no Waters of Life!" Others, of frivolous mind, espied across the fields afar companies of folk dancing or carousing or otherwise making merry; and this sight so inflamed their own desires that they forthwith forgot the object of their quest and leaped the quickest hedges and raced away to join the revellers. Others still there were, who, going a little apart, planted their staves, as they might be trees, into the ground, and sat themselves down there beside in a sort of complacent satisfaction. And upon one staff would be scrolled the word "Creed"; upon another the word "Church," upon still another "Ritual," and so on. And to all who questioned why they thus did they would return the same answer:

"The umbrage of these trees affordeth us all shelter. We are satisfied; why should we journey further?"

Yet were our ranks not greatly thinned, because folk from some earlier company of travellers who had fallen out discouraged by the wayside, caught enthusiasm again from sight of us and arose and joined us. Others still, wild and torn — for they had been a long time lost — struggled out of the tangled boscage and joyfully fell in with us; so that we were a great company.

And now, from the stone-bound ridge of a high and windy hill, we paused, looking for some further sign to guide us — none having been discovered this long while; and lo! beyond and below us in a smiling valley we glimpsed a mighty sheet of water glistering in the flooding sunlight. And at that sight the whole company broke into a tumultuous song:

"Glory! Glory! Glory! The glory of the Lord is upon us!"

Whereat with one accord they quickened their paces, so that they verily ran over the ground; the lame leaping, the crippled scrambling in a mad haste to reach that shining margent.

As I stood upon that long-sought shore, a great wonder and awe overcame me, for I looked upon a vast, spirit-circled sea stretching in fair beautitude away, away, into mysterious horizons, farther than eye could fathom.

And so limpid were those waters, so mystical-transparent, so transpierced, depth upon depth, with flickering tongues of light — as 'twere flame and fluid — so irradiate that they seemed capable of shining by themselves of their own radiance. And above them there seemed a sort of evanescent mist, a brooding glory like the sun, yet an incommunicable splendor far beyond the sun — beyond all human imagining.

Then I perceived that all around the shores and far

away as eye could reach there were other companies hasting down to the edge of the waters — strange-appearing and alien peoples, many with dark faces and curious and barbaric dress.

"Who may be these strange folk over beyond?" I cried in amaze to my Sage.

"Those are other races of men, coming also to drink of the Waters," he replied.

"But how could they have come? They were not upon our way."

"Nay; they have come by other religions."

"Surely you mean *paths*, not *religions?*" I contended.

"Religions *are* paths; naught else," he declared. "The Waters of Life are *One*. They are for all peoples, all races, all ages; but each will approach from a different angle—the angle of individual evolution. The special path mattereth nothing; the thing of moment is to come, to come; to find the Waters; to drink of them, and to thirst no more."

Then following my companions I made a cup with my two hands, and scooping up some of the water drank thereof. Much of it drained out of my hands, but of the moiety that remained I found I could swallow only a mouthful. Even this worked in me a wonderful transformation; for it was, as it were, a subtle draught of fire—gentle, yet stimulating —which pervaded every fibre of my being, inducing a warmth, a thrill, a sense of peace and well-being beyond words to render. And I asked my companion:

"How cometh it that I am unable to drink as much as these others?" For I beheld many others who quaffed and quaffed again, and seemed still to be athirst.

"You are new to it and have no training. You have not developed in yourself the unquenchable thirst," he gravely told me.

Then I became aware that those with ewers and great vases were not themselves drinking, but were dipping up the Water and bearing it carefully away; but even as they went it leaked out, draining away through whatever material the vessel might be made of. Whereat in dismay they returned to the shore and refilled their vessels, only to have the accident repeated.

"What are these folk doing? And why do they not drink now?" I asked.

"These folk," said the Sage, "are not inspired by thirst but by avarice. They would bear away the Living Waters and hoard them, doling out the golden fluid drop by drop; but the Waters of Life cannot be hoarded. They must be drunk by each man for himself and made a part of him, there and then."

Now I further beheld that some of the thirsting ones waited only to drink a little, and then—as though blindly—waded out into the water; first to the knees, then to the middle, then striking out with a great plunge into deep water. And the waters swirled about them and seemed to draw them under and they vanished.

Then arose a great cry from those upon the bank.

"The waters have whelmed them and they are lost!" And I lifted up my voice with the rest. But the Sage reproved me:

"O foolish boy, wherefore so lament? These be the God-intoxicated, so filled with divine thirst that naught less than absorption shall suffice them. They are the perfect Souls. They have not lost themselves, but found themselves. Drink again, and look abroad once more."

I did as he bade me, and lo! my vision was as it were deepened and clarified, and I could see that those who had so strangely vanished had not, as seemed, been swept be-

neath the waters, but up into the brooding haze. I could dimly perceive their forms there—the same yet not the same; for that which seemed they, was of a substance so ethereal and unsubstantial that even as I looked they seemed swept away as in an irised glamor and I saw them no more.

And now came to me the greatest experience of all; for my companion, the Sage, who had stood long silent leaning abstractedly upon his staff, now lifted up his face and I saw that it had grown luminous with a strange inward light and joy. Then he flung his staff from him and he too waded out into the waters; first to the knees, then to the middle, and lastly, with a rapturous cry, he plunged headlong into the deep waters and evanished like the others. But, as before, I could perceive that he was not swept under, but as it were lifted out of the waters into the golden mist. For a moment I beheld his form there, but so enlarged, so transfigured that I scarce recognized it. And even as I gazed, it became more and more sublimated and was withdrawn beyond the ranges of my vision.

I was left upon the shore, and a great, great loneliness fell upon my spirit. . . .

I have plucked boughs from the boscage of the hillsides and built me a wattled hut beside the Shining Waters, that I may pass my life anear them and develop the unquenchable thirst. When the tender mystery of the dawn holds enchanted all things, and again at eve, when the skies are transfigured with beckoning glories, I drink of that living draught, drinking ever deeper and deeper. For my prayer is that some time I may get my whole being so saturate with that divinest fire that I too shall become God-intoxicated, and be able to plunge into the deep waters; and so, losing myself, find myself forevermore.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda is still continuing his work in Los Angeles. Besides the regular Sunday evening lectures and bi-weekly classes given in connection with the Vedanta Centre there, he has delivered a number of lectures elsewhere — at the New Thought Convention in Long Beach and in Los Angeles, at the Buddhist Temple, in Pasadena, and he has likewise been invited to speak in Santa Barbara. A special course of lectures was also arranged for him at Long Beach. Among the subjects named on his circulars we find "Spiritual Awakening," "Life After Death," "Self-Mastery," "The Higher Consciousness," "Spiritual Healing," "Creative Power of Thought," "Secret of Happiness," and "Reincarnation and Evolution." Since his arrival in Los Angeles, the work has been gaining steadily in numbers and in enthusiasm, which has made it difficult for the Swami to fix a date for his return to Boston; but he is expecting to start on his homeward journey before long.

There was no abatement in either interest or activity at the Centre in Boston during the month of May. Each Sunday brought a large attendance to the regular morning Service and the number of strangers present seemed to testify to a growing recognition of the value of the Vedanta teaching. The classes were also well attended. At the Tuesday Evening Class, which is open to the public, the Svetasvatara-Upanishad was the subject of study; while at the Student's Class on Thursday the Narada Bhakti-Sutras served as the basis for a course of practical Talks on the devotional life. All meetings will continue through June as heretofore.

We urgently request our subscribers to notify us promptly of any change of address during the summer.

V41
JUL 1918.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

JULY 1918

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NOTICE: We beg to remind our subscribers that no number of the magazine will appear in August or September.

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Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

1 Queensberry Street, Fenway
(Ipswich Street Car)

Swami Paramananda

of India in charge
TENTH SEASON—1918

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M.
SERVICE WITH ADDRESS
SUBJECTS

July 7th	*Spiritual Awakening.*
" *14th*	*How to Conserve our Forces.*
" *21st*	*Reincarnation and Evolution.*
" *28th*	*Duty and Service.*
Aug. 4th	*Higher Consciousness.*
" *11th*	*Fatalism and Free Will.*
" *18th*	*Power of Devotion.*
" *25th*	*The Science of Yoga.*

VESPER SERVICE SUNDAY 5 P. M.
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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.

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THE LIGHT WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda.

The object of spiritual devotion is to keep the lamp of our inner life burning brightly. Just as an ordinary lamp requires constant refilling that it may not go out, so we must feed the flame of our spiritual life by the faithful practice of devotion. If we have not the habit of such practice, the light is quickly extinguished. For this reason we are asked to have fixed hours for devotional practice; because habitual practice alone will keep it burning. It is present in every Soul, but in some it is more apparent than in others. In the truly great ones it burns with steady glowing flame. It is indeed this light of the Soul shining through them which makes them great.

There come moments, however, in every life when the inner spiritual lamp seems almost extinguished. We feel doubting, helpless. At such times the only way we can revive and sustain it is by conscious communion with its Source. Actually this light has no limit except that which we put upon it by our own thoughts and actions. When we remove these self-created limitations, we find that at once it gains in power and we no longer feel ourselves in darkness. We must strive, therefore, to make God a reality and learn to sustain this light within that it may never grow dim.

First we must trust in the Divine. We must believe God to be more potent than material things and we must be willing to give ourselves to Him. But we cannot do this in a half-hearted way. We must give ourselves wholly; and when we do this, our trust grows. It is our scatteredness and complexity which make spiritual things appear so unattainable. To the simple heart they seem near and easy of access. Perfect trust, however, cannot rest on hearsay. What others tell us of God can never give us unshakable faith. We must prove Him for ourselves. But before we reach that point, we need perseverance and patience; for we shall have to cross over many obstacles. If we show any faint-heartedness or weakness, we cannot attain the highest. When, however, we are determined to go on with our spiritual life and resolutely trust in God for guidance, He sees our effort and comes to our aid.

It does not matter how many times we fail, we must still push on. Some people become frightened at once and are thrown off their path because they meet with a little opposition. But in reality opposition is a great blessing, because it fortifies our character. If we cannot stand a little jar, how can we strengthen our will? That man is a strong man who can go through all the calamities of life unmoved. Anyone can be carried away by a little joy or a little sorrow, but he who meets all things with perfect calmness has a finer element in his heart. When we learn to base the whole structure of our life on the rock of Truth, it does not matter what our conditions are; but it does matter very much that we remain loyal and ever-devoted to the great Cosmic Spirit. If we do not, we are cut off from the Source. If, on the contrary, we are firm in our devotion and pass through every test unshaken, then the light will shine brightly in us.

God is never partial. His mercy and grace are constantly upon us, but we do not know how to retain them. They fall away, like the rain water that flows off a steep hillside. Only the lowly, trusting heart is able to retain the grace of God. Whenever we grow disturbed and begin to feel the injustice and misery of the world, we must always look within for the cause. When there is joy there, all the world will seem full of joy. The only salvation to be found is in our own inner being. There alone shall we find the light, as we live close to the heart of God.

One of the signs of spiritual growth is independence of external things. He who has true spiritual gifts maintains his independence no matter with what he is surrounded. The tendency of the worldly mind is to look first to material comforts; while the wise men make it their first effort to establish themselves in spiritual things. They never make the sacrifice of spirit for matter. We betray our habit of life and our attitude of mind by this,—whether we give the greatest importance in our daily living to matter or to spirit.

Whole-hearted desire forms the basis of all devotion. We must have single-hearted longing for our Ideal or we cannot be devoted. Yet what is now only on the surface can be increased and strengthened. At present with the majority of us the spiritual plane seems vague, because we have not made the effort to acquaint ourselves with it; but when we lay hold of the spiritual faculty within us and begin to cultivate that, then the things of the spirit become real to us. Spiritual powers are as subject to culture as intellectual or physical powers. They can be developed so as to take a vital place in our life. It depends upon our mental attitude. Make God a reality and the whole life becomes consecrated. When we live in touch with the

Supreme Cosmic Being, our power is renewed every hour.

Let us then lift our hearts beyond these limited conceptions of life, that they may breathe freely in the infinite expanse of God. Let us dedicate our thoughts and all our conscious and unconscious activities to Him; for when they are dedicated to the Highest, they transcend all limitations. Let us try to make our heart and mind receptive, and silence this constant play of ego which creates so much unrest in us. Let us surrender all our powers to the Great Power which abides within us and which should rule us at every moment of our existence. If we can do this, then we may be sure that that light which is a part of the Great Light will shine in us and drive away all darkness.

Our spiritual pursuits, when looked upon from the worldly point of view, often appear indefinite and lacking in direct evidence and we begin to doubt. But this attitude will make it more difficult to get any clear perception of Truth; for whatever we undertake with sceptical attitude will not carry us far. It is like rowing a boat without pulling up the anchor. Before we begin our higher quest, we must make the channel perfectly clear. Frequently we work on one side and leave another side unprotected. The story is told of a man who labored the whole day to water his orchard; but when the evening came, he discovered that all the water he had pumped out had run off into two big holes and his orchard was as dry as before. So, often, while we think we are laboring for spiritual things, at some point the channel is blocked and we fail to derive the benefit we expect. If we have any hard or hateful thoughts towards anyone, no matter how many prayers we may say before our altar, it is impossible for any blessing to flow to us.

Our spiritual devotion must come from the whole heart. It is not enough to give our prayers to God, we must also

give our thoughts and actions. Our entire study is for this —to quicken us, so that we may handle all our forces consciously and direct them into higher channels. We cannot possibly stop thinking or acting; we shall continue to think and act and perform our duties, but we shall do it with a different point of view. All our activities and thoughts will be consecrated and actuated by the Higher Power which abides within us.

We must take the same thought for our spiritual welfare as we do now for our material welfare. The concern we feel at present as to what we shall have for our body tomorrow or the day after, the same concern we must feel as to what we shall have for our Soul. We must cultivate a genuine fervor, an intense yearning for spiritual things. When our devotion is truly sincere, it will generate a great power; and through this we shall lift ourselves and unite ourselves with God. We must, however, first root out from the mind the false conception which makes us believe that our bodily life is the greater reality and that our material needs are of foremost importance. These ideas will fall away when we come to know the bigger facts of Nature; and when we come to know the biggest fact of all, we cannot help but drop all littleness and selfishness. Then a sense of true spiritual consecration will rise spontaneously from the innermost recesses of our being.

At every hour we must strive consciously and unconsciously. You may say, How can we strive unconsciously? If we strive earnestly through our conscious hours, then in the unconscious hours our heart and mind will refuse to do anything unworthy. Thus at last our whole being will become attuned to the Supreme. We shall realize that we have come here, not to work out our own selfish ends, but to fulfill the will of God. Then all the baser instincts of

our nature will be destroyed and the light within will shine in its full glory.

PRAYER

O Thou who art the Soul of our souls, the Light of all lights, the Ever-living and Unchanging One!
Our words of supplication, our prayers and thoughts go to Thee.
Manifest Thy immeasurable Glory to us.
In all humility and surrender we offer unto Thee our devotion.
Kindle within us a greater yearning to dedicate ourselves to the Highest.
We pray Thee to give us ever greater strength and wisdom.
Fill our hearts with compassion and the spirit of peace.
May peace abide in us and all love;
For by the bonds of love are we united with all thy children,
And with Thee who art the storehouse of Infinite Love.

THE CHAPLET OF ROSES.

A Miracle of Our Lady

(Free Rendering of a Mediaeval Mary-legend)

There was a young monk, of the Order of Saint Benedict, who cherished in his heart a burning devotion for the most Glorious Virgin Mary. As a lover might serve an earthly mistress, so did this youthful friar spend himself for his Lady of the Heavens. That he might worship Her the more fervently, he kept in his cell a fair image of Her; and each day, as he prayed, he would weave for Her a chaplet of deep red roses and make offering of it at Her feet. With such ardor and heat of supplication did he repeat his rosary that, it is said, the Holy Virgin wrought a strange miracle and, entering into the sacred statue, She daily bowed Her head that he might place thereon his

fragrant rosey crown. At this his heart flamed with new passion, which again lent new ardor to his prayers. Thus the summer went by in an ecstasy of communion and adoration.

But the time of blossoming passed, the rose trees in the monastery garden stood bare, and the monk's heart too grew sere and saddened as he gazed upon his Lady, without garland and devoid of life. The Abbot, observing the cloud of melancholy upon his face, called the young brother to him and commanded him in holy obedience to make known the cause of his sorrow. The youth, being submissive and frank of nature, confessed to his Superior his passion for the image of the Lady Saint Mary in his cell and how now his heart languished because She had ceased to show him favor. Nor knew he how to please Her, since he could no longer make a chaplet for Her sacred head.

Then the Abbot admonished him in these words: "Winter and summer both come by the will of God, and each season has its own manner of service. You may no longer weave a chaplet of fair roses; but in its stead make a crown of five and twenty *Ave Marias* and offer that daily to the All-Glorious Mother of our Lord. No flowers are sweeter to Her than the prayers of Her faithful children."

The friar returned light-hearted to his cell; and as he was bade, each day he repeated five and twenty times the *Ave Maria*, kneeling devoutly before the image of his Celestial Lady. And behold! as he said over the familiar words, in the hands of the Virgin appeared each time a rose, and for Herself She wove the crown to place upon Her gentle head, bent tenderly towards him. A new and wondrous radiance entered the heart of the humble loving brother, and winter became to him as joyous as the summer.

But it so happened that out in the world there still

lived the mother and father of this young monk and a great desire rose in him to know something of their well-being. Therefore he sought and gained permission of his Abbot to journey to his home for a brief period. The thought of reunion with his parents so seized upon his mind that he forgot all else; and when the day of departure came, he set forth without repeating the five and twenty *Ave Marias* before his Blessed Lady.

Of a sudden, however, at the hour of Prime the remembrance of his broken faith came upon him. Yearning to make amends for his great sin, he begged the brother monk who journeyed with him to proceed on the way and leave him solitary for a little while. Then he went apart into a field and, throwing himself upon the ground, he cried out in humility and contrition beseeching his Merciful Lady to grant pardon for his sore neglect. Again and again he implored Her, weeping bitterly as he prayed. Then with deeper fervor than ever in his cell, he said over five and twenty times the *Ave Maria,* as commanded by the Abbot.

His companion, the while growing uneasy as he saw not his brother following after, turned back along the road to enquire the reason for his long delay. But when he had proceeded a short distance only, he checked his steps amazed; for there in the field he saw the figure of a lovely Lady and about her a company of angels and virgins wearing crowns of shining jewels. Only the Lady's head was bare. And though a bitter wind was blowing and the countryside all round was brown and barren, it being the winter time, yet the Gracious Lady was weaving a chaplet of most sweet and perfect roses, which when She had finished it, She placed upon Her head as a crown. Then all the virgins and holy angels bowed before Her, singing joyously the *Ave Maria.*

Beholding this fair vision, the monk hastened to the spot and found his brother kneeling in rapt contemplation, but the Lady was gone. Then knowing that he had gazed on holy things, he told what he had beheld, and the other one confessed to his brother his grievous fault—how he had forgotten to worship the image of the Blessed Virgin in his cell before starting on his journey, how he had wept tears of lowly penitence in the field by the roadside, and how in Her Divine Mercy the Queen of Heaven had deigned to comfort and absolve him. Then the two brothers went forward on their way, "full of rejoicing, their hearts being uplifted by thanksgiving and celestial love, and singing sweet praises to that Virgin Mother,

Virgo clemens!
Mater Amabiles!
Regina sacratissimi Rosarii!"

Disciple: O where is this naked ground of the Soul void of all self? And how shall I come at the hidden centre, where God dwelleth, and not man? Tell me plainly, loving Sir, where it is; and how it is to be found of me, and entered into?

Master: There where the Soul has slain its own will and willeth no more anything as from itself.

Disciple: But how shall I comprehend it?

Master: If thou goest about to comprehend it, then it will fly away from thee; but if thou dost surrender thyself wholly up to it, then it will abide with thee and become the Life of thy life and be natural to thee. — *Jacob Boehme.*

Attainment comes only by means of this sincere, spontaneous, and entire surrender of yourself and all things. Only with the annihilation of selfhood comes the fulfilment of love. — *Dionysius the Areopagite.*

DEVELOPMENT OF THE WILL

Lecture by Sister Devamata.

According to the cosmology of Vedanta, one force works throughout Nature, one substance is worked upon. These two primordial elements, called in Sanskrit *Prana* and *Akasa*, lie at the base of all created things. Wherever there is any manifestation of energy, whether objective or subjective, exterior or interior, it must be an expression of this *Prana*; and in the largest sense every act of *Prana* is an act of will, either individual or universal. But although this force is one and homogeneous, it appears under many different aspects because of the varying degrees of density or subtlety of the *Akasa* on which it plays. Taking the human organism for example, we see it acting on the subconscious plane in the reflex motions of the muscles, the beating of the heart, the pumping of the lungs, in all the automatic processes of physical life. On the conscious plane it manifests itself as sense-perception, reason, discrimination, moral choice and the diverse reflex acts of will springing out of these. In the superconscious realm it shows itself as direct vision, illumination and intuitive volition.

When we carefully observe its operations on these three planes, we find that it appears feeblest on the middle plane. In its subconscious aspect there is a certain dependable precision and determination about its methods. Granted normal conditions, it works with much the same mechanical, unerring exactitude as do the lower animals when performing their habitual tasks. Little conscious reasoning or direction is required for the functional activities of the body. On the superconscious plane elaborate processes of reason are still less necessary, because man moves by sight, not by inference, and there is no occasion for cal-

culation or delay. The conscious realm alone seems to be the area of indecision, tardy volition, frequent blundering and waste. Apparently as the will becomes more peculiarly our own, it wanes in power. Why should this be?

We must bear in mind that the basic force of *Prana* is one always. If existing conditions permit it to work as a unit, it is effective. When any element enters in to divide it, it is immediately weakened. The self-conscious or human plane is the plane of duality. Man always sees two—the self and the not-self. These two ever-present factors create a continuous division in his mental outlook. As human beings we are confronted at each moment by a relentless act of choice. An event occurs calling for a decision. At once two or more lines of action present themselves for our consideration. We compare and reason, weigh and measure, then weigh and measure again, exhausting all our energy in a perplexing, see-sawing calculation, until at last when we come to a decision, no force remains for the final act of volition and we fall short. "The good we would, we do not," because our whole store of vital energy has gone in the preliminary process.

The root of this indecision and abortive action, however, lies less in the diversity confronting us on the outside, than in the play of duality within, born of a twofold standard of measurement. We cannot be wholly selfish, nor yet wholly unselfish. We consider the question at issue, first from the material angle of advantage, then from the moral angle of virtue. At one moment we give ear to the loud voice of public opinion; at the next we listen to the still small voice of conscience. An impulse rises and drives us in one direction; then suddenly a half-formed, spectral Ideal stands in our way and warns us back. As we thus consider and vacillate, the possible benefits and

disadvantages of either course of action multiply in our mind, until we find ourselves turning dizzily in a whirl of indecision regarding perhaps the veriest trifle, which should have been settled and dismissed from our thought an instant after its inception.

The first step towards correcting this weakness is to unify our standard and establish a single point of appeal. When we have done this, we shall soon find it easy to focus our energies; and clearly defined acts of volition will result. Desire is the most potent factor in accomplishing this. Desire, indeed, lies at the very root of will. "As is a man's desire, so is his will," it is said in the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad. Whenever we have a dominating desire or purpose, that focalizes the *Prana* and generates a strong driving-power; but only as this becomes continuous, does the will develop. Impulsive people are those who are swayed by changing desires and focus their energy in puffs. As a result they move fitfully, like a sailing-craft before a squally wind. But this kind of will accomplishes little, because it invariably reacts into periods of inertia. Also it involves great waste; for frequent stopping and starting are as wearing for the mechanism of the will as for electric motors and steam engines. When, however, the desire is steadfast, it becomes an impelling force which commands Nature and circumstance. We see it in the body of the athlete, who exercises daily with his whole ambition fixed on gaining physical agility and strength; or in the musician, who labors tirelessly to develop his technique: both focalize the *Prana* to such good purpose that sometimes the most discouraging physical disabilities are overcome.

The same law also applies to the subtle body. The scientific investigator or inventor through a tenacious de-

sire to discover the secrets of Nature, centralizes his energy in his perceptive faculties, until he is able to penetrate far below the surface of things. The learned scholar by zealous study localizes the *Prana* in his memory and organs of intellectual assimilation, and thereby becomes an inexhaustible storehouse of information. The reformer focuses his power on the social or political needs of his time and according to the measure of his strength changes the face of society. Whenever the energy of the organism is focalized and carried forward to a fixed point, we have a manifestation of will. The reverse of this process gives us the explanation of feeble-mindedness. When a person has no fixed ambition or predominating desire, but moves according to the sense impulse of the moment, his *Prana* is never centralized and he is incapable of any sustained act of will. His energies are held together so loosely that he cannot even coordinate his mental impressions or bodily functions. The leakage of *Prana* is incessant and his very physical motions have a peculiar, dangling appearance. To counteract this, definite exercises in volition must be given: some simple task which will focus the attention during lengthening intervals, until the pupil is capable of a spontaneous volitional act.

Everyone, however, who would increase his will power must set for himself some specific exercises of this nature. They are as essential as the practice of technique in music. At no time perhaps in the ordinary routine is the will weaker than at the hour of waking in the morning. Here then is the moment to begin our volitional practice. We should fix a time for rising and hold to it resolutely, whatever may be the arguments of mind and body against it. Often we imagine that a sense of exhaustion or heaviness indicates the need of more sleep; but our headache or langour may

be due, less to lack of vital energy, than to sluggishness in its circulation. It needs to be stimulated. Coddling at such moments is the worst possible thing for us. The person who says to us: "You will feel much better if you get up," is the truer friend. The daily religious practices, our meditation and sacred study, may also become valuable exercises in will if we perform them with unfailing regularity, without regard to our passing feeling. Weariness in well-doing is a grave check to spiritual growth. Only those who pull beyond the stress-point gain in strength. He who lets go and takes hold according to his mood or circumstance advances little. A new habit can never be formed so long as we yield to the old tendency whenever it asserts itself aggressively. Resisting it now and then will not efface it; our effort must be consecutive and diligent.

In reality there is no act of life which cannot be converted into a volitional practice. Being prompt in meeting appointments; keeping strictly to our word even in the most trifling matters; completing what we begin; resolutely following out a course of action when once it has been decided upon; never procrastinating; cultivating directness of line in walking, economy of motion in working, precision and simplicity of expression in talking—all these may seem commonplace and even childish practices, but they serve as excellent five-finger exercises for the will; and if we make use of them, we shall see how rapidly we shall gain in resolution and vigor.

It is not enough, however, to learn to focalize our life-force; we must also provide against its loss. Whoever is striving to develop his will should be constantly watchful not to scatter or waste his energy; otherwise there will be none left to focalize. We do this primarily by the gradual elimination of all non-essential elements from our life. At

present the spaces between the inevitable occupations of our day are filled full of non-vital concerns and activities, which unnecessarily tax our vital force and will-power. As soon as we begin to remove these, we shall experience a fresh accession of strength and quietude. In social economy it is regarded as a reprehensible waste to throw away the real product and run the mill merely for the by-product: to crush all our coal to slack, for instance, or to grind fair slabs of marble into dust. Yet in human life this is the prevailing habit. These little gains and losses, pleasures and pains, victories and defeats, are the mere by-products of existence; yet to them is devoted practically all our energy, while the real product, understanding or knowledge, receives only our chance attention. But Christ told us that we must know the Truth, because only the Truth would make us free. It is towards this above everything then that our volitional power should be directed; not for our own sake alone, but for the sake of the world; because the unenlightened man is always an unproductive member of society.

When we learn to make this ultimate knowledge the ruling purpose of all our activity, the *Prana* or vital energy will become permanently centralized; and there will be no further need for the laborious efforts of choice and volition which now drag upon us and create so many wearisome struggles. The moment that our eye grows single, our being will be full of light; our mental processes will be instantaneous and will terminate automatically in unfaltering acts of will. The swift and effective blow of the angry man may give us some idea of the process; but here the force is centralized by a blind lower instinct. How much mightier must it be when focused and directed by a clear-seeing, higher intuition! We cannot deny that there have been

many masterful human wills, which, gathering momentum from a long-held steadfast aim, have swept aside every obstacle. But do we know of one which has not shattered itself in the end against the mightier Cosmic Will? There is only one way to make our will invincible; that is, to cease to focalize our *Prana* as an isolated factor in the universe. Actually it is an integral part of the Cosmic *Prana*, and operates as such, obedient to the higher command. We are in it, it is not in us. As we move with it, we are mighty; when we strive to bend it to small personal ends, it breaks us.

Can we picture what would become of a wave in the sea if it should say: "Why should I always rise and fall with the ocean? I shall have tidal hours of my own." We know that only as it moves in harmony with the ocean, will it add its thunder to the roar of advancing breakers on the beach. Also only as we link our will with the Supreme Will, shall we share in the power of the one Cosmic Force which impels all things, "making them revolve as if mounted on a machine." This is why all the Illumined Souls who have come to earth to teach mankind have brought the same message,—"Not my will, but Thine." Apart from the Eternal Will, the individual will has no motive power. We may roll a wheel by little pushes of the hand, but it has neither force nor balance; attach it to a locomotive engine and its firm strength becomes tremendous. Yet as a wheel its character and individual usefulness have not been destroyed. Nor will man's will be annihilated through surrender; it will merely take its proper place in the scheme of things and share in the power of the whole. Can we believe that we shall lose by the union, when we look out over the universe and see the working of the Great Will? The human will works sometimes in glory, sometimes in abase-

ment; sometimes in power, as often in weakness; sometimes in wisdom and again in darkest ignorance. But wherever we see the Divine Will in free action, we are awed by the unfailing wisdom and power and glory manifest through It.

Foolish indeed is the man who fears to ally himself with God. He is like an untrained soldier marching to battle alone, instead of behind an all-wise commander fully informed of the devices of the enemy. Until this alliance takes place, we can have no fixed standard of measurement, no final point of appeal, hence no firm basis for thought or action. But when we learn to cast aside our small personal measure of things and move in line with the great cosmic forces, obedient to the cosmic plan, we shall act with the force of the universe behind us, confident and unafraid because we shall know ourselves to be "strong in the Lord and in the knowledge of His might." Then no time or energy will be lost in futile indecisions, regrets and disappointments. Resolution and immediateness will mark our every action; and the motive behind will be purged of all littleness. The hero does not stop to calculate personal safety or advantage. He lives in the realm of the superlative, where comparisons and calculations have no place. "Heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right....It speaks the truth and it is just, generous, hospitable, temperate, scornful of petty calculations and scornful of being scorned." Such are the words of Emerson.

No plan in the world can excel God's plan in beneficence or beauty. Why then try to substitute a lesser plan? Why try to cut our will off from the Universal Will and direct it to second-best ends? All our abortive effort is due to this alone—that we are living and working at odds with the universe. Our will-power at present is used to wage

war against God, to force the hand of destiny; that is why we are so often spent and saddened. If, instead of this, we should utilize our volitional energy to swing our life back into harmony with the cosmic life, the battle would be over; all our life-force would be used to the largest ends; and our will, unified with the Supreme Will, would partake of all Its qualities,—conquering as often by gentleness as by power; moving with swift precision, yet with grave deliberation; working, not for fleeting finite achievement, but to accomplish the Eternal and Perfect Will of God.

A wise and good man submits to Him who administers the whole, as good citizens do to the laws of the commonwealth. This is the way that leads to freedom, this is the only deliverance from slavery, to be able at length to say from the bottom of one's Soul: "Conduct me, Jove, and thou O Destiny, wherever your decrees have fixed my lot. I follow cheerfully, and did I not, wicked and wretched, I must follow still." —*Epictetus.*

THE CHALICE

By G. O. W.

Great Priest I cannot see Thee as Thou art.
Though Thy deep voice across the solemn night
Chants the vast litany of life and death,
Yet is the altar hidden from my sight.

Hast Thou a quenchless taper in the dark?
Some loving acolyte to lift for Thee
A censered heart? or art Thou all alone,
Requiring naught from brief mortality?

I will not question more. Thy ritual
I may not know. Yet if to Thee seem good
To fill Thy cup, break sacrificial bread,
May they be mine, my body and my blood.

LOVE TOWARDS GOD

By Ali Ghazzali

(Persian Moralist and Philosopher, 11th Century)

Human perfection resides in this, that the love of God should conquer a man's heart and possess it wholly; and even if it does not possess it wholly, it should predominate in the heart over the love of all things....The following prayer was taught by the Prophet to his companions: "O God, grant me to love Thee, and to love those who love Thee, and to love whatsoever brings me nearer to Thy love; and make Thy love more precious to me than cold water to the thirsty."

Many claim to love God, but each should examine himself as to the genuineness of the love which he professes. The first test is this: he should not dislike the thought of death, for no friend shrinks from going to see a friend. The second test of sincerity is that a man should be willing to sacrifice his will to God's, should cling to that which brings him nearer to God, and should shun what places him at a distance from God. The fact of man's sinning is no proof that he does not love God at all, but it proves that he does not love him with his whole heart. The saint Fudhail said to a certain man: "If anyone asks you whether you love God, keep silent; for if you say, 'I do not love Him,' you are an infidel; and if you say 'I do,' your deeds contradict you."

The third test is that the remembrance of God should always remain fresh in a man's heart without effort; for what a man loves, he constantly remembers; and if his love is perfect, he never forgets it. The fourth test is: if his love is really strong, he will love all men, for all are God's servants; nay, his love will embrace the whole creation; for he who loves any one, loves the works he composes and his handwriting.

The fifth test is: he will be covetous of retirement and privacy for purposes of devotion; he will long for the approach of the night, so that he may hold intercourse with his Friend without let or hindrance. If he prefers conversation by day and sleep at night to such retirement, then his love is imperfect. God said to David: "Be not too intimate with men; for two kinds of persons are excluded from My presence: those who are earnest in seeking reward and slack when they obtain it, and those who prefer their own thoughts to the remembrance of Me. The sign of My displeasure is that I leave such to themselves." In truth, if the love of God really takes possession of the heart, all other love is excluded. A sixth test is that worship becomes easy. A certain saint said: "During one space of thirty years I performed my night devotions with great difficulty, but during a second space of thirty years they became a delight." When love to God is complete, no joy is equal to the joy of worship.

Yahya Ibn Muaz relates: "I watched Bayazid Bistami at prayer through one entire night. When he had finished he stood up and said: 'O Lord, some of Thy servants have asked and obtained of Thee the power to perform miracles, to walk on the sea, and to fly in the air, but this I do not ask; some have asked and obtained treasures, but these I do not ask.' Then he turned, and, seeing me, said, 'Are you there, Yahya?' I replied, 'Yes.' He asked, 'Since when?' I answered, 'For a long time.' I then asked him to reveal to me some of his spiritual experiences. 'I will reveal,' he answered, 'what is lawful to tell you. The Almighty showed me His kingdom, from its loftiest to its lowest; He raised me above the throne and the seat and all the seven heavens. Then He said, "Ask of me whatsoever thing thou desirest." I answered, "Lord! I wish for noth-

ing beside Thee." "Verily," He said, "thou art My servant."

On another occasion Bayazid said: "Were God to offer thee the intimacy with Himself of Abraham, the power in prayer of Moses, the spirituality of Jesus, yet keep thy face directed to Him only, for He has treasures surpassing even these." One day a friend said to him: "For thirty years I have fasted by day and prayed by night and have found none of that spiritual joy of which thou speakest." Bayazid answered: "If you fasted and prayed for three hundred years, you would never find it." "How is that?" asked the other. "Because," said Bayazid, "your selfishness is acting as a veil between you and God." "Tell me, then, the cure." "It is a cure which you cannot carry out." However, as his friend pressed him to reveal it, Bayazid said: "Go to the nearest barber and have your beard shaved; strip yourself of your clothes, with the exception of a girdle around your loins. Take a horse's nose-bag full of walnuts, hang it round your neck, go into the bazaar and cry out, 'Any boy who gives me a slap on the nape of the neck shall have a walnut.' Then, in this manner, go where the Cadi and the doctors of the law are sitting." "Bless my soul!" said his friend, "I really can't do that; do suggest some other remedy." "This is the indispensable preliminary to a cure," answered Bayazid; "but, as I told you, you are incurable."

The reason Bayazid indicated this method of cure for want of relish in devotion was that his friend was an ambitious seeker after place and honour. Ambition and pride are diseases which can only be cured in some such way. God said unto Jesus, "O Jesus! when I see in My servant's heart pure love for Myself unmixed with any selfish desire concerning this world or the next, I act as guardian over that love." Again, when people asked Jesus, "What is

the highest work of all?" he answered, "To love God and to be resigned to His will." The saint Rabia was once asked whether she loved the Prophet. "The love of the Creator," she said, "has prevented my loving the creature." Ibrahim Ben Adham, in his prayers, said, "O God! In my eyes heaven itself is less than a gnat in comparison with the love of Thee and the joy of Thy remembrance which Thou hast granted me."

SONG OF SUPPLICATION

Paraphrase from Sanskrit of the Saranagati-Gadya by Sri Ramanuja.

(Great Spiritual Teacher of India, 11th Century)

O Supreme Mother of the Universe! I, who have no other refuge, take refuge at Thy Blessed Feet. My own Mother art Thou, and the one sure Refuge for all who have not found a refuge.

To Thee I come, Adorable Consort of Divinity, possessor of all gracious qualities, of form most glorious, perfect and without stain.

To Thy lotus-feet, Divine Protector, I fly for shelter. May I find delight in naught beside Thy service, and may I seek in all things to fulfill Thy holy will.

As I realize the marvel of Thy faultless beauty, may my heart glow with steadfast high devotion; and may my joy in Thee become unbounded. May, too, the light of knowledge flood my mind, and my whole being burn with intensest love for Thee.

To Thee, Who art all-perfect, existent through eternity, shining in glory and of dazzlng charm and loveliness: to Thee I come in supplication.

Deity. Be it as thou wilt! By such all-absorbing love alone canst thou attain!

Devotee. In Thee, Whose nature consists of knowledge infinite and eternal bliss, Who art the storehouse of all blessed qualities; in Thee, Who art changeless, beyond thought, divinely perfect, everlasting and unsurpassed, in Thee I take my refuge.

O Thou Who art possessed of boundless wisdom, strength, dominion, valor, power and glory; Thou Who art again a shoreless Ocean of tender mercy, sweetness and compassion; Who art truthfulness itself, and the essence of courage and generosity; Who art all-knowing, yet all-forgiving; O Thou Who alone hast power to fulfill the longings of Thy devotees; to Thee I come; hear Thou my supplication.

O Ruler of the Heavens! Even the greatest sage cannot define Thy power and splendor, or the wonders of Thy creation, infinite, eternal, matchless and perfect. O Thou for Whom it seems but play to create, support and break this universe, full of joy-giving objects and of beings who enjoy; this universe composed of *Prakriti* (matter), *Purusha* (Soul), and *Kala* (time), ever moving in accord with Thy all-ruling Will;

O Thou, Who desirest Truth alone, who willest Truth and only Truth; Thou who art Supreme and Absolute, the Highest Being, whose dominion is Great Glory; hear Thou my supplication.

In Thee, Who takest not account of the weakness of Thy devotees, but dost offer to all alike shelter and protection; Who removest the sorrows of all who bow to Thee in worship; Who coverest with Thy love those who seek Thee in devotion;

In Thee, to Whom all things are known; Who seest the true nature of all beings; Thou Who dost govern the moving and the unmoving; Who holdest in Thy hand the

dead and the living; upon Whom rests the whole created universe; in Thee I take my refuge.

Source of my life, like unto Whom there can be nothing; Who alone canst fulfill the desires of Thy faithful ones; O Friend of the helpless, Shelter of the homeless, having no other refuge, I take refuge in Thee.

Grant unto me supreme devotion, supreme knowledge and supremest love. And through these may I come to know Thine Eternal Being. Make me Thy servant, finding sole delight in Thy Divine Command. Make me Thine own, lost forever in absorbing love for Thee.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda returned from Los Angeles on June 8th after six weeks of active work at the Vedanta Centre there. He resumed charge of the Services and Classes at the Boston Centre on the 16th and will continue to conduct all the meetings throughout the summer. There will be no interruption in the usual schedule of work. The Thursday Class was suspended, but as many of the students found the interval between Tuesday and Sunday too long, it was reopened and will continue for a time at least. During the month of June a large number of strangers came to the Centre, manifesting great interest and appreciation, and the attendance at all the meetings filled the Chapel. On the 12th of June Sister Devamata was invited to speak on "The Practice of Devotion" at a large Unitarian Conference in Groton, Mass., and this has lead to other similar invitations. The students at the Los Angeles Centre continue to meet regularly twice a week.

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

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REPORT

Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

1 Queensberry Street, Fenway
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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

TENTH SEASON—1918

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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.

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OCCULTISM AND MYSTICISM

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

"The eyes of my Soul were opened and I beheld the plentitude 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!' Wherefore did I now comprehend that the world is a small thing; I saw, moreover, that the power of God was above all things and that the whole world was filled with it. Then He said unto me: 'I have shown thee something of My power,' the which I did so well understand that it enabled me better to understand all other things. He said also: 'I have made thee to see something of My power, behold now and see My humility.' Then I was given so deep an insight into the humility of God toward man and all other things, that when my Soul remembered His unspeakable power and comprehended His deep humility it marvelled greatly and did esteem itself as nothing at all." Such are the words of the mediaeval mystic, Angela da Foligno, and they remind us forcibly of the sayings of certain illumined Vedic Seers who exclaimed in the fervor of their spiritual

vision: "Whatsoever exists in this universe is filled with God," with that Absolute One Who is "beyond mind and speech."

The finite mind, however great, can never define the infinitude of God; yet by taking every aspect of manifestation—such as majesty and humility, gentleness and power—we may arrive in some measure at a comprehension of the allness of immeasurable Being. The effort to describe the Indescribable has often led the mystics into extremes and contradictions of language, which, instead of convincing men of the reality of the unseen, have rather made them doubt the sanity of the seer. Or if they have believed but not understood him, they have thrown about his words a veil of mystery which was far from his simple and illumined intent. This has been peculiarly the attitude of the Occident towards the East, and especially towards India. The term occultism, indeed, has become almost a synonym for Hinduism. There is a certain type of mind in the Occident, which without investigating looks upon everything coming from the East as occult and hence to be rejected. In reality, however, the teaching embodied in the ancient Vedic religion reveals the profoundest truths regarding the cosmos and God in the most direct and simple manner. If these spiritual revelations seem mysterious to the undeveloped mind, it is only because they are beyond the range of his vision.

Nor is this true only of the spiritual realm. Wherever there is any unusual manifestation, whether in physics or metaphysics, it is always looked upon at first as strange and esoteric; and people are fearful of it. But when the veil is taken off from our minds; or in other words, when we grow up to the new truth in our understanding, that which once appeared mysterious becomes clear and simple.

Whatever we cannot explain will always be a mystery to us. Take an ignorant man into a chemical laboratory and every experiment will seem to him the working of magic. All nature is full of such mysteries, but they cease to be such when the law is known. God's book is always open to everyone alike, but it is we who lack the openness of heart necessary to read it. The Lord has not limited our sphere, but we limit it by our own narrowness. We shut off certain realms of knowledge and if some one comes and talks of them, we regard him with suspicion because we do not understand. Later, however, we grow to understand and then that realm ceases to be a mystery to us.

The idea of the occult, as conceived in the West, is wholly absent from the pure Vedic teaching. There was no desire on the part of those early Sages to keep anything from the people. If the more advanced instruction was withheld from the ignorant, it was not because they wished to hide knowledge; but because they recognized various grades of mental capacity, and they sought to give each one the presentation of Truth which was suited to his power of comprehension. To put a profound text-book on astronomy or philosophy in the hands of a child would merely strain his mind, not enlighten it. Also to give the truths of Nature to the unworthy would harm both the giver and the one who receives. Christ Himself said: "Cast not your pearls before swine;" and for the same reason the Gita declares: "The wise man should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant"; in other words, all teaching must be fitted to the development and requirements of the pupil. Great Teachers know how to give according to the need of different Souls. It is really we who determine the degree of teaching we receive by the use or abuse of the knowledge we have. So certain teachings may be withheld from us until we show ourselves fit for them.

The true teacher knows where to place the right teaching just as the artist knows how to place each color in a picture. All my study of spiritual philosophy convinces me more and more that what the wise men try to do is to simplify and give the shortest road to Truth; but our minds being complicated and clouded, we often create mysteries and secrets out of what they tell us. Take for example the parables. In form and language they are symbols of the unseen, but they represent a method of teaching which unless properly interpreted means nothing. Spiritual men are always spontaneous. They speak out of the spontaneous feeling of their heart; but the disciples are sometimes unable to grasp their intention, so they complicate and create mystery. There was once a Yogi who, when he meditated, was constantly disturbed by a cat; so each day before he began his practices he was in the habit of locking up the cat in an adjoining room. This Yogi left behind him a faithful disciple, who wanted to imitate his master in each little detail of life; and believing that the cat had some special esoteric significance in the master's practices, he spent most of his time trying to find a cat, regarding it as an essential factor in his meditation. This is repeated in history again and again, and it arises from the fact that we lay too much stress on the outer form and think too little of its inner significance.

What is mysticism? It is that which brings to us the revelations of the unseen. It forms a vital part of the spiritual life of all peoples. We find mystics among the Hindus, Egyptians, Greeks, Neoplatonists, Mohammedan Sufis, as well as among the Christians. Mystics are those who are endowed with super-sensuous sight, but this has nothing to do with magic or occultism. Truth never hides its face. It never fears the test of science or rational in-

vestigation. Yet physical research cannot always prove the facts of metaphysics. For that we must find a super-science which transcends our ordinary senses, and this science is the province of mysticism. There are two poles of consciousness in our mental sphere which are described thus in one of the Sanskrit Scriptures: "That which is night to all beings, therein the self-subjugated remains awake; and there where all beings are awake, that is night for the knower of Truth." This shows that the spiritual plane, which to the worldly-minded is full of obscurity, to the wise is bright like the daylight; while the sense plane, where ordinary mortals are awake and vitally interested, appears to wise men like dark night, because they realize the fleeting nature of all mundane things. When we awaken our higher intuitive faculties, we discover the source of our existence, hitherto left unexplored; and the discovery of this does away with all perplexities and scepticism, and our whole being is flooded with the light of Truth.

Mysticism is the study of transcendental life. Therefore we must guard ourselves against the blunder of interpreting the terms of mysticism in a literal physical sense. Take for instance the symbolic expression of the third eye, which is supposed to exist in the forehead. If any one should accept it literally and try to find it by dissection, he could never succeed in locating it. It is the eye of the Soul; and as the Soul is not demonstrable by any method of natural science, neither is the Soul's eye. Sri Krishna points out this difference between physical and spiritual vision when he says to Arjuna: "With these eyes of thine thou canst not see the Supreme Lord; therefore I give thee Divine sight." There are finer objects, finer sounds, subtler odors in the cosmic universe than our gross senses are capable of

perceiving; therefore when we read of heavenly visions, of celestial voices, of all the supernatural experiences of the saints or mystics known to us, we must not regard them as mere hallucinations or imaginations. They have a greater reality than the physical world has for the common mind. What Carlyle writes of *The Hero as Prophet* applies equally to the spiritual Seer: "The great Fact of Existence is great to him. Fly as he will, he cannot get out of the awful presence of this Reality. His mind is so made, he is great by that first of all. Fearful and wonderful, real as Life, real as Death, is this Universe to him. Though all men should forget its truth and walk in a vain show, he cannot. .....Direct from the Inner Fact of things he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that."

The mystic is not content merely to believe, he wants to see. This burning passion for deeper vision leads him on and on, until he perceives things hidden to others. In India the mystic is called a Yogi, which literally means one who has gained union with God. It becomes self-evident that the teaching of one who is thus directly in touch with the spiritual world and has first-hand knowledge of the ultimate facts of life, will necessarily bear the mark of simplicity and directness. Wherever there is an effort to veil the Truth or to mystify, we may be sure that it arises from some ulterior motive or from priestcraft. Unfortunately the so-called occult powers have a great fascination for a certain class of minds; and if someone comes and claims that he can develop these powers, large numbers will flock to hear him. If however, we place ourselves under the influence of such teachers without discrimination, we do so at the peril of our Soul.

We must be watchful whenever anyone pretends to possess unusual powers. Men who are truly endowed with

such powers do not speak of them. It is by their silence and humility that they prove that they possess them. The mystic is a man of God. He has nothing to do with magic. If he seems to exhibit miraculous powers, it is the spontaneous and natural result of the state of God-union in which he lives. His joy and power spring from unbroken exalted communion with this Divine Source; but because ordinary mortals are incapable of comprehending such transcendental Reality, his ways seem to them mysterious and obscure. It will indeed be a happy day for us when our consciousness will be so purified and uplifted that, instead of seeing the diversity and evil of the world, we shall be able to cry out with conviction from the depths of our Soul: "Truly the whole world is full of God."

THE LIFE HID IN GOD

Extracts from Letters of Isaac Penington

(Devout English Quaker, 17th Century)

Then the Soul lies down in peace, dwells in peace, feeds on living nourishment in the green pasture of life, in peace. Then Jerusalem, the building of life in the heart, becomes a quiet habitation, where God and the Soul dwell sweetly together; and there is nothing that hath power in it to disturb, annoy, or make afraid. Why so? Because the Lord God of power is present there, stretcheth out His wings there, is a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night there.

He hath raised up His glorious life in that heart, whereof He is very choice; and He hath also spread a defense over His glory, with which the Soul is so encompassed and defended, that it feels the walls of this city to be salvation, and its gates praise. Oh! cry to the Lord to keep the eye open and the heart single, and the Soul in the true sense and

feeling; that the heavenly voice, which drew you out of the earth, may be daily heard further instructing you, and gathering you more and more up into Him, who is your life.

So, ye that fear the Lord, and love His name, and have tasted of His goodness and powerful salvation, Oh! hate evil! All that His light hath made manifest and drawn you from, Oh! take heed of ever dallying with again. Still wait in everything to feel the motion, guidance, quickening, and sweet, pure, heavenly leading of the Spirit of your Father!

Hath the Lord spoken peace to you, peace which passeth man's understanding and only flows from Him? Hath He given you any proportion of this precious peace? Oh! may He watch over you, and preserve you in that wisdom, in those heavenly instructions, in that heavenly life, Divine power, and holy conversation, wherein ye met with that peace, and wherein alone ye can enjoy and possess it; and keep you out of all manner of sin, lust, and foolishness of the fleshly mind and spirit; for peace is not there.

Be not discouraged because of your Soul's enemies. Are ye troubled with thoughts, fears, doubts, imaginations, reasonings, etc.? Yea, do ye see yet much in you unsubdued to the power of life? Oh! do not fear it; do not look at it, so as to be discouraged by it; but look to Him! look up to the power which is over all their strength; wait for the descendings of the power upon you; abide in faith of the Lord's help, and wait in patience till the Lord arise; and see if His arm do not scatter what yours could not.

So, be still before Him; and in stillness believe in His name; yea, enter not into the hurryings of the enemy, though they fill the Soul; for, there is yet somewhat to which they cannot enter, from whence patience, faith and hope will spring up in you, even in the midst of all that they can do.

Now, Friends, in a sensible waiting and giving up to the Lord, in the daily exercise, by the daily cross to that in you which is not of the life, this work will daily go on; and ye will feel, from the Lord, that which will help, relieve, refresh and satisfy, which neither tongues nor words can utter. And then, as to what may befall us outwardly, in this confused state of things, shall we not trust our tender Father, and rest satisfied in His Will? Are we not engraven in His heart, and on the palms of His hands, and can He forget us in anything He doth? Shall anyone hurt us? Shall anything come between us and our life, between us and His love and tender care over us?

What, though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither there be any fruit in the vine; what, though the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat; what, though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls; may we not for all this rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of our salvation?

And what though the earth be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; what, though the waters roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; is there not a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God? Is not the joy, the virtue, the life, the sweet refreshment thereof, felt in the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High?

And He that provides inward food for the inward man, inward clothing, inward refreshment; shall He not provide also sufficient for the outward? Yea, shall He not bear up the mind, and be our strength, portion, armor, rock, peace, joy, and full satisfaction, in every condition? For, it is not the condition makes miserable, but the want of Him in the condition. He nourisheth, He preserveth, He upholdeth, with the creatures or without the creatures, as it

pleaseth Him; and he that hath Him, he that is in Him, cannot want.

Hath the spirit of this world content in all that it enjoys? No; it is restless, it is unsatisfied. But can tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, come between the love of the Father to the child, or the child's rest, content, and delight in His love? And doth not the love, the peace, the rest, the joy felt, swallow up all the bitterness and sorrow of the outward condition?

The just lives by his faith; and he that is in union with the just, lives by the faith of the just, and takes no more care than the lilies, but leaves the care of all to Him to whom it properly belongs, and who hath taken it upon Him; who nourishes, clothes, preserves, and causes the lilies of the field to grow and flourish in beauty and glory: and shall He not much more clothe, nourish, and take care of His own lilies, the heavenly lilies, the lilies of His Garden?

Thus, my dear Friends, let us retire, and dwell in the peace which God breathes, and lie down in the Lamb's patience and stillness, night and day, which nothing can wear out or disturb.

O the conquering faith, the overcoming life and power of the Spirit! We cannot but speak of those things; and cry up the perfect gift and the power of Him, who is not only able to perfect His work in the heart, but delights so to do. .....If thine eye be towards the Lord, He will uphold and strengthen thee and bring thee through all that stands in thy way; manifesting to thee daily more and more the path of holiness, in which the ransomed of the Lord walk, and enabling thee to walk therein. Therefore, watch the thoughts and reasonings which rise in thee, and retire from them, waiting to feel the Holy Spirit and to hear its voice in stillness.

THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

By S. E. Waldo

To reach the oneness with Absolute Existence is the end and aim of the teaching of the Vedanta. This Absolute Existence is called Brahman and of It we can only say: *It is.* The term often used in speaking of the Brahman is *Sat-chit-ananda,* meaning Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. This is not a trinity; but means that Existence Absolute *is* Knowledge Absolute, *is* Bliss Absolute, by its very nature. No qualities or attributes can be given to the Brahman, inasmuch as the Absolute transcends all relativity and is "one only without a second."

All that we call the world is really Brahman, because nothing else exists; but we do not see it as it really is, on account of our ignorance. The world we know is not real, nor is it unreal. We may compare it to our view of the sun, as we see it from the earth. With a telescope we see it differently, yet it is the same sun. If we conceive ourselves as gradually travelling towards it, we shall see it apparently changing; until, when we reach it, we shall find it as it really is, and undoubtedly totally unlike the sun it first appeared to be; yet all the time the sun must have remained unchanged and only our point of view has been the varying factor. So it is with this world of ours. No two of us see it just alike, because of the difference in our point of view. In fact, we literally make our own world, each for himself or herself. The suggestion comes from outside, but that is not the world we see. All we know is the reaction from that suggestion, which we ourselves project and which forms the world for us. This statement, though possibly startling when first heard, can readily be verified if we take any object that we say is outside of us and carefully sift out what we really know about it. We shall soon find that

all we are sure of in regard to it is our own impressions thereof, made into a whole on the background of our minds and then objectified and put before us, also by our own minds.

Because all knowledge is within us and not from without, all that any teacher can do for us is to offer the suggestion that will enable us to teach ourselves. The gardener cannot make the plant grow, he can only help it to develop its own nature. By care of the soil, by the proper supply of water and sunshine, and by removing obstructions, the gardener helps the plant to come to perfection. By improper treatment also he may dwarf and retard its growth. So it is with teachers, they too can obstruct, but can never destroy; and they are less likely to hinder development when they understand its nature and seek to draw out or educate, rather than to put in or teach. In seeking to aid spiritual development, the first necessity is to build up, not to destroy; to seek to increase and encourage the good in anyone, not to assail and drive out the evil. The method is not to sweep out the old first before the new can come in; but rather to let the new work its way in gradually, until the old and less desirable elements are replaced by better things. We do not kill the child to produce the man, but the child naturally disappears when the man is full grown.

The first necessity for spiritual progress is that we shall recognize its value and really desire it. This desire may possibly be awakened in us by the words of some particular person, but it is for us to cherish and increase it, until it becomes strong enough to rule our lives and make us struggle to realize our highest aspirations. It is an unfailing spiritual law that with the real desire to progress in the direction of higher things, there never fails to come the help we need, whether in the form of a visible teacher, or in

the equally effective leading of an inner light. What we desire sufficiently we get. The reason why we often think we do not is two-fold. Either the desire is less strong than we imagine, or we look for the result too soon. We are so accustomed to regard this life as our only earthly chance that we have fallen into the habit of believing that what we have not now, we shall never have; and yet with a curious inconsistency we postpone all reward and punishment of the deeds done here to a future life, about which we know little or nothing.

The second necessity for spiritual progress is toleration. In looking round for the way best suited to our needs, we must ever bear in mind that the same rule applies to every man: each must find his own way and not be bound by the way of any other. We must not think, even in the privacy of our own hearts, that our way is better or wiser than that of our neighbor who chooses a different one. We must rid ourselves once and for all of any sense of superiority. Our work is to attend to our own actions and aspirations and stop criticizing what others do. Having then a great desire to get spiritual knowledge, and a loving, harmonious frame of mind in which to set out in quest of it, we must next search for suitable teaching; and finding it, we must first carefully listen to it, then think it out; and lastly, if we accept it, we must give ourselves up to diligently following its precepts. The whole secret of success lies in practising.

Only what we earn really belongs to us. That is why success in reaching spiritual heights depends upon nothing so much as upon constant effort to learn and constant practice of what we already know. It can readily be seen that only when we have set our goal clearly before ourselves, can we make any intelligent effort to reach it. Be-

fore that, we are like men lost in thick woods or a trackless desert without a compass or a guiding star. We wander back and forth, often going over the same place, even in the same footsteps; but we make no progress. Let us all set before us our highest ideal and then earnestly persevere in the attempt to attain it. True, as we approach it, we shall find it ever losing itself in a still higher ideal; but at last we shall reach the end of all our struggles and realize our oneness with the Divine.

Consciously or unconsciously, the goal of the whole universe is freedom. Everything we know, from atom to man, is struggling towards freedom. This desire to be free is the real motive power of saint and sinner alike, and it forms the essence of all religion. Man instinctively feels that there is something beyond the little world he knows, to which he is in some way related, and that upon a harmonious relation with that unknown something depends his true well-being and happiness. Religion is therefore his unceasing effort to transcend his present limitations, to increase his knowledge and his experience until it includes the All. Like captive birds, we flutter and dash ourselves against our prison bars, often too eagerly desiring escape to note the open door to that freedom which we are so madly struggling to attain, an open door always within our reach and always available.

When we understand what freedom really means and that it is a necessity of our very nature, we can set ourselves to work to unclasp the fetters that now bind us: fetters which we ourselves have forged, and which we, in turn, by sheer hard work and strength of will must burst asunder. The various branches of Yoga practice given in the Vedanta are so many avenues of escape; so many implements in our hands to enable us to strike off the shackles

that restrain us; so many open doors to that great Beyond, where we transcend the relative and its bondage and reach that Knowledge Absolute, which itself is Freedom Absolute. We can realize this Absolute in this life in what the Vedanta calls "Samadhi," or the super-conscious state. It is true that while these bodies of ours last we must again return to consciousness, but the world will then be to us like the mirage to one who has ascertained what it is. He still continues to see it, but no longer can it deceive him.

THE RAFT OF WISDOM

Selection from the Mahabharata.

One endued with intelligence should be abstemious in diet and should conquer his senses. Indeed, having subdued both lust and wrath, and having washed away all his sins, he should strive for attaining to Brahman (the Absolute).

The Brahmana (seeker after God), who is endued with intelligence, succeeds in crossing the stream of life that is so difficult to cross, that is so furious and terrible, that has the five senses for its waters, cupidity for its source, and wrath for its mire.

The mighty river of Time, overspread with eddies constituted by the years, having the months for its waves and the seasons for its current, the fortnights for its floating straw and grass, and the rise and fall of the eyelids for its froth, the days and the nights for its water, and desire and lust for its terrible crocodiles, the Vedas and sacrifices for its rafts, and the righteousness of creatures for its islands, and profit and pleasure for its springs, truthfulness of speech and emancipation for its shores, benevolence for the trees that float along it, and the *Yugas* for the lakes along its course;—the mighty river of Time, which has an

origin as inconceivable as that of Brahman itself, is ceaslessly bearing away all beings created by the great Ordainer towards the abode of Yama (Lord of Death).

Persons possessed of wisdom and patience always succeed in crossing this awful river by employing the rafts of knowledge and wisdom. What, however, can senseless fools, destitute of similar rafts, do when thrown into that furious stream?

That only the man of wisdom succeeds in crossing this stream and not he that is unwise, this alone is consistent with reason. The former beholds from a distance the merits and demerits of everything. But the man of unstable and small understanding, whose self is full of desire and cupidity, is always filled with uncertainty. Hence the man destitute of wisdom never succeeds in crossing that river. He also who sits inactive can never pass over it.

The man who has not a raft of wisdom, having to bear the heavy weight of great faults, sinks down. One also who is seized by the crocodile of desire, even if possessed of knowledge, can never make knowledge his raft.

For these reasons the man of wisdom and intelligence should strive to float over the stream of Time without sinking in it. He, indeed, succeeds in keeping himself afloat who attains knowledge of Brahman.

One who is pure in conduct, who is self-restrained and observant of good vows, whose self is under control, and who is possessed of wisdom, certainly succeeds in this and the other world.

That Brahmana who is possessed of fortitude, who is always heedful, who is self-restrained, who is conversant with righteousness, whose self is under control, and who has transcended joy, pride, and wrath, never languishes in grief.

One who is not possessed of clear vision does wrong even when he wishes to do right. Such a person, even when exercising his judgment, performs such acts as partake of the nature of iniquity.

Desiring to do what is right, he does what is wrong. Similarly, desiring to do what is wrong, he does what is right. Such a person is a fool. Not being able to distinguish between the two kinds of acts, he has to undergo repeated rebirths and deaths.

If emancipation be desirable, then knowledge should be acquired. For a person who is borne now up and now down along the stream of Time or life, knowledge is the raft by which he can reach the shore.

Those wise men who have arrived at certain understanding regarding the character of the Soul and of life by the aid of wisdom, are able to assist the ignorant in crossing the stream of Time with the raft of knowledge. They, however, who are ignorant, are unable to save either themselves or others.

He who wishes to obtain superior knowledge, should by the aid of his understanding restrain both speech and mind. He who wishes to have tranquillity, should by the aid of his knowledge restrain his self.

That person who cherishes no desire for earthly objects, who is not unwilling to take what comes, who is dependent on earthly objects only to the extent that is necessary for sustaining life, who is free from cupidity, who has driven off all grief, who has restrained his senses, who performs all necessary acts, who is regardless of personal appearance and attire, whose senses are all collected for devotion to the true objects of life, whose purposes are never left unaccomplished, who bears himself with equal friendliness towards all creatures, who regards a clod of earth and a

lump of gold with an equal eye, who is equally disposed towards friend and foe, who is possessed of patience, who takes praise and blame equally, who is free from longing with respect to all objects of desire, who practises Brahmacharaya (godliness and continence) who is firm and steady in all his vows and observances, who feels no malice or envy towards any creature in the universe—that one is a Yogi who succeeds in winning emancipation.

Borne up and down on life's ocean, he who is capable of meditation seizes the raft of knowledge, and to achieve his emancipation clings to knowledge itself (without reaching out to seize any other support).

It is wisdom which leads to the fruition of all aims. It is wisdom which brings beneficial results. It is by wisdom that the high and the low among beings are distinguished. It is wisdom or knowledge that is the highest refuge of all things.

HINTS ON YOGA

Extract of Lecture by Swami Vivekananda.

According to the Yogis, there are three principle channels; one they call the *Ida,* the other the *Pingala,* and the middle one the *Sushumna,* and all these are inside the spinal column. The *Ida* and the *Pingala,* the right and left, are clusters of nerves; while the middle one, the *Sushumna,* is a hollow canal and not a cluster of nerves. This *Sushumna* is closed, and for the ordinary man is of no use, for he works through the *Ida* and the *Pingala* only. Currents are continually going up and down these nerves, carrying orders all over the body through other nerves running to the different organs of the body.

It is the regulation and the bringing into rhythm of the *Ida* and *Pingala* that is the great object of breathing. But

that itself is nothing. It is only so much air taken into the lungs; except for purifying the blood, it is of no more use. There is nothing occult in the air that we take in with our breath and assimilate, to purify the blood; the action is merely a motion. This motion can be reduced to the unit movement we call *Prana*; and everywhere, all movements are the various manifestations of this *Prana*. This *Prana* is electricity; it is magnetism. It is thrown out by the brain as thought. Everything is *Prana*; it is moving the sun, the moon and the stars.

We say, whatever is in this universe has been projected by the vibration of the *Prana*. The highest result of vibration is thought. If there be any higher, we cannot conceive of it. The nerves, *Ida* and *Pingala*, work through the *Prana*. It is the *Prana* that is moving every part of the body, becoming the different forces. In working we become exhausted because we use up so much *Prana*. The breathing exercises called *Pranayama* bring about regulation of the breathing and rhythmic action of the *Prana*. When the *Prana* is working rhythmatically, everything works properly. When the Yogis get control over their own bodies, if there is any disease in any part, they know that the *Prana* is not rhythmic there and they direct the *Prana* to the affected part until the rhythm is re-established. Just as you can control the *Prana* in your own body, so if you are powerful enough, you can control even from here another man's *Prana* in India. It is all one. There is no break; unity is the law. Physically, psychically, mentally, morally, metaphysically, it is all one. Life is only a vibration. That which vibrates this ocean of ether, vibrates you. Just as in a lake various strata of ice of various degrees of solidity are formed, or as in an ocean of vapour there are various degrees of density, so is this universe an ocean of matter.

It is an ocean of ether, in which we find the sun, moon, stars, and ourselves, in different states of solidity; but the continuity is not broken; it is the same throughout.

Now, when we study metaphysics, we come to know the world is one; the spiritual, the material, the mental, and the world of energy are not separate. It is all one, but seen from different planes of vision. When you think of yourself as a mind, you will forget the body. There is only one thing, that you are; you can see it either as matter or body,—or you can see it as mind or spirit. Birth, life and death are but old superstitions. None was ever born, none will ever die; one changes one's position, that is all.

The whole universe, therefore, is a unit, from whatever standpoint you view it. Just now, to us, this universe is a unit of *Prana* and *Akasha*, force and matter. And mind you, like all other basic principles, this is also self-contradictory. For what is force? That which moves matter. And what is matter? That which is moved by force. It is a see-saw! Some of the fundamentals of our reasoning are most curious, in spite of our boast of science and knowledge. "It is a headache without a head," as the Sanskrit proverb says. This state of things has been called *Maya*. It has neither existence nor non-existence. You cannot call it existence, because that only exists which is beyond time and space, which is self-existent. Yet this world satisfies to a certain degree our idea of existence. Therefore it has an apparent existence.

But there is a real existence in and through everything; and that reality, as it were, is caught in the meshes of time, space and causation. There is the real man, the infinite, the beginningless, the endless, the ever blessed, the ever free. He has been caught in the meshes of time, space and causation. So has everything in this world. The reali-

ty of everything is the same infinite. This is not idealism; it is not that the world does not exist. It has a relative existence, and fulfills all its requirements. But it has no independent existence. It exists because of the Absolute Reality, beyond time, space and causation.

Man is an infinite circle, whose circumference is nowhere, but the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. He works through all hands, sees through all eyes, walks on all feet, breathes through all bodies, lives in all life, speaks through every mouth, and thinks through every brain. Man can become like God and acquire control over the whole universe, if he multiplies infinitely his centre of self-consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the chief thing to understand. Let us say that there is an infinite line amid darkness. We do not see the line, it lights up its different parts in succession, and all that is left behind becomes dark again. Our consciousness may well be likened to this luminous point. It's past experiences have been replaced by the present, or have become subconscious. We are not aware of their presence in us, but there they are, unconsciously influencing our body and mind. Every movement that is now being made without the help of consciousness was previously conscious. Sufficient impetus has been given to it to work of itself. The great error in all ethical systems, without exception, has been the failure of teaching the means by which man could refrain from doing evil. All the systems of ethics teach: Do not steal! Very good; but why does a man steal? Because all stealing, robbing and other evil actions, as a rule, have become automatic. The task before us is tremendous; and first and foremost, we must seek to control the vast mass of sunken thoughts which have become automatic

with us. The evil is, no doubt, on the conscious plane; but the cause which produced the evil deed was far beyond in the realms of the unconscious, unseen and therefore more potent.

Practical psychology directs first of all its energies in controlling the unconscious, and we know that we can do it. Why? Because we know the cause of the unconscious is the conscious; the unconscious millions of our old conscious thoughts. Old conscious actions become petrified; we do not look at them, do not know them, have forgotten them. But, mind you, if the power of evil is in the conscious, so also is the power of good. We have many things stored in us as in a pocket. We have forgotten them, do not even think of them, and there are many of them rotting, becoming positively dangerous; they come forth the unconscious causes which kill humanity. True psychology would therefore try to bring them under the control of the conscious. The great task is to revive the whole man, as it were, in order to make him the complete master of himself. Even what we call the automatic action of the organs within our bodies, such as the liver, etc., can be made to obey our commands.

This is the first part of the study, the control of the unconscious. The next, is to go beyond the conscious. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness. When this superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and Divine; death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious. Everyone without exception, every one of us, can attain to this culmination of Yoga. But it is a stupendous task. If a person wants to attain to this truth, he will have to do some-

thing more than listen to lectures and take a few breathing exercises. Everything lies in the preparation. How long does it take to strike a light? Only a second; but how long it takes to make the candle! How long does it take to eat a dinner? Perhaps half an hour. But hours to prepare the food! We want to strike the light in a second, but we forget that the making of the candle is the chief thing. But though it is so hard to reach the goal, yet even our smallest attempts are not in vain. We know that nothing is lost. In the Gita Arjuna asks Krishna: Those who fail in attaining perfection in Yoga in this life, are they destroyed like the clouds of summer? Krishna replies: Nothing, my son, is lost in this world. Whatever one does, that remains as one's own and if the fruition of Yoga does not come in this life, one takes it up again in the next birth.

Breathing, posture, etc., are no doubt helps in Yoga, but they are merely physical. The great preparations are mental. The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free and place yourself in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He who desires a comfortable life and at the same time wants to realize the Self, is like the fool, who, wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and everything shall be added unto you." This is the one great duty. Live for an ideal and leave no place in the mind for anything else. Let us put forth our energies to acquire that which never fails—our spiritual perfection. If we have true yearning for realization, we must struggle; and through struggle growth will come.

The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (*Dhyana*). In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our Divine nature. We do not depend upon any

external help in meditation. The touch of the Soul can paint the brightest colour even in the dingiest places; it can cast a fragrance over the vilest thing; it can make the wicked Divine; and all enmity, all selfishness is effaced. The less the thought of the body the better. For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment to it, identification with it, which makes us miserable. This is the secret: To think, I am the Spirit and not the body; and the whole of this universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil, are but as paintings, scenes on a canvas, of which I am the witness.

REPORT.

For the first time in several years, Swami Paramananda remained in charge of the work at the Boston Centre throughout the summer, conducting two Sunday Services and the week-day classes. There was no decrease at any time in either the attendance or the general activities of the Centre. Many strangers attended the meetings, among whom a certain number have affiliated themselves with the work. The publication department was exceptionally active. A second and revised edition of the Swami's translation of the Bhagavad-Gita was brought out; likewise a fifth edition of "The Path of Devotion," and a second edition of "The Way of Peace and Blessedness," also by him. His three lectures on "Emerson and Vedanta," which appeared in the current volume of the "Message," now collected in one volume, will soon be in print. The chief work of the summer was the preparation of the first volume of the Upanishads, translated and lucidly commentated by the Swami. This will go to press in a few days, and we hope it will be ready before Christmas. Besides these, two reprints of pamphlets and one new pamphlet, "The Development of the Will," by Sister Devamata, have been published.

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REPORT

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Ezekiel.

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Tyndall.

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BUILDING OF CHARACTER

By Swami Paramananda

Character survives in the midst of all fleeting things. It is the vital part of man; and even after the body is dissolved, it still endures. Pleasure and pain have an equal share in forming character. Misery plays its part as much as happiness. If we are able to take out of every experience the essential lesson it contains for us, then we are not hurt even by the hardest experience. Life is sometimes like a fiery furnace; it burns. But if we can go through it without being consumed, then the heat of the fire becomes a great purifier. In reality the true part of us cannot be consumed; and when the fire of discipline burns away the impurities, the true part alone remains. So we have to go through many difficulties to bring out the best in us. That which is pleasant to us and that which is unpleasant, both serve to mould our character. Whenever difficulties rise before us, if we do not run away from them, but face them bravely, they cannot fail to prove a benefit. We judge the experiences which come to us, too hastily. When a calamity overtakes us, we regard it as a great misfortune; but often in the end we find it a blessing. The story is told in India of a man who, seeing himself pursued by some wild monkeys in the jungle, began to run. But as he ran,

more and more monkeys joined in the chase; and he was almost breathless with terror, when a man called out to him: "Why are you running away? Of what are you afraid? Turn and face the brutes." The moment he turned, they all fled. So in life; when we face our adversities boldly, they crumble before us.

It is these tests which give us an insight into our character and help us measure our strength. The heart which is filled with true understanding is not overwhelmed by darkness or despair even in the greatest misfortune. There where not the smallest ray of hope seems to penetrate, even there it finds light and cheer. Great Souls do not pray to have the road made easy and smooth; on the contrary, they pray that they may meet with difficulties and obstacles; because they know that as man encounters difficulties and obstacles he gathers strength. They serve as reminders. We turn more towards God when things do not go well; whereas when everything is running smoothly, too often we lose our spiritual point of view. Nor must we think that when life goes wrong, it is a punishment. We need these special lessons, that is why such trials come; and if we accept them cheerfully, our character gains new force. As each condition arises, we must try to meet it calmly and wisely, never letting it disturb our balance. But this is only possible when we have placed ourselves in God's hands.

Character cannot be based on theories. We must make our ideals and convictions an integral part of ourselves. Therefore, living the life is the most important thing in the building of character. We must *be* what we believe. True greatness consists in carrying out our inner convictions independent of the praise or blame of the world. We do right because it is our nature to do right. We love because

we are loving. This is the basis of all true heroism and fearlessness. It is what we find in the lives of such men as Socrates. He was cheerful and unshaken even as he drank the cup of poison. To die meant less to him than to sacrifice his spiritual principles. So it was with Christ, nailed to the cross, but holding with unfaltering steadfastness to the task laid upon Him by His Father in Heaven. It is told also of the Prophet Mohammed that when his uncle urged him to yield to his persecutors and abandon his new religious ideals, he replied: "If they should give me in one hand the sun and in the other the moon, I would not abandon my convictions; for they are dearer to me than life."

It is easier, much easier to be heroic when we have some personal motive, or where there are many to praise us. The thought of gaining fame and glory spurs us on. But he is truly a heroic character who stands by his principle even when he is not noticed by any creature. It is this attitude of mind which lies at the bottom of all true character; and until a man possesses such fearlessness, he cannot progress morally or spiritually, for it is the fundamental factor in the spiritual life. Without it we cannot travel far on the spiritual path. Imagine what the world would be like if everyone were self-possessed and full of lofty courage.

Until we are genuine, we are not happy; nor can we bring happiness to others. Some people have the idea that it does not concern others how we act; but it does concern our fellow-beings vitally. Every thought we think adds to the thought current of the world; every act adds something to the universal condition. When we think it does not matter, we weaken the whole stamina of society. What we say and do has an effect on our own character first, and

then it affects those with whom we come in contact. It is all one world and whatever is done is felt in one central point. Every individual life, however obscure, has a deep cosmic significance; so we must not be impelled by small personal motives. Instead of living for our own selfish gratification or for selfish ambition, we must do each act with an exalted, dedicated point of view.

The first blossom of character is unselfishness. In order to enjoy true happiness we must give up all self-seeking. We are dual in our nature; one part is constantly reaching out towards the physical, the other part is reaching out towards the spiritual. The conflict between the two parts is perpetually going on. When we can sustain the better part, we gain freedom; and until we are free, we are not able to do our work in the world, nor can we be happy. A slave is never truly happy. As long as we are not the masters of our destiny, we go on rising and falling with circumstances. But not so is it with men of strong character. They are never overthrown by any outward condition. Evil does not overcome them; they overcome evil. They stand like towers of strength in the hour of trouble; and because they never think of self, their thoughts and deeds have a far-reaching effect. They are the real helpers of humanity, though their work may be silent and unseen.

Character resides in the subtle body, which is composed of mind, intellect and ego. This body is much less destructible than the physical body, so we must pay greater heed to it. Ordinary people are not conscious of this finer body; but those who seek for higher things devote their chief energy to its unfoldment. If we wish to develop a strong character, we must go within and begin to gather what is unchangeable and imperishable. Think of those who have built up great earthly kingdoms, and put them beside a

Christ or a Buddha. Their kingdoms perished with them, but the influence of Christ and Buddha still lives. God has given us higher powers; therefore we must not follow our lower instinct and be satisfied with mere material ends. As human beings we are endowed with superior faculties and we must try to call out the highest in us. We want our children to be strong; but before we can make them so, we must exhibit the same traits in our own character. Words do not carry weight. We must live what we would teach others. We all like to give; but we must have something before we can give, and this something we must earn. Only when our own life overflows, can we really give anything to our fellow-men.

We must always bear in mind that whatever our heart is attached to, we become that. When we think constantly of the world, we become worldly; when we think of God, we become godly; and when we live wholly in the thought of God, then we destroy the distance btween ourselves and the highest heaven. In reality, there is no distance. We create it by our thought and life. God is always in the background of our being. He is always sustaining us. It is He who is using our hands and feet; it is He who is directing our mind and heart. If we remember this and seek in each act of our day to relate ourselves ever more closely with the Supreme Source of our existence, we cannot fail to become God-like characters.

Our life must be lived thoughtfully. We must strive untiringly to find the great Power, who watches over us and with whom we can establish conscious connection only through sincerity and purity of heart. But it is not easy. Man must work for everything. As he labors for his physical maintenance, so he must work for his spiritual life. We must be careful to leave no flaws in our conduct; to harbor

no envy or jealousy or other impurity in our thought. Our heart must be clean. Also we must have discrimination, that we may distinguish between the material world and the higher realm. Above all we must have a sense of consecration. No human being can stand alone. If he tries, he is sure to fall. But if he stands with God, then he is safe everywhere. The world can never weaken him or drag him down.

There are various types of character, but the highest type comes when there is perfect unity between the Soul and God. Although we may not always realize it, what we value is the real man; and the real man is what makes true character. That which is lasting is to be found in Spirit only; and when we build our character on the foundation of our spiritual nature, then we have something that can never be destroyed.

HYMN OF THE ROBE OF GLORY

By Julia P. Dabney

We are weaving, weaving, weaving—
We are weaving, as we go,
Robes of glory in the Sun,
Robes of glory Spirit-spun;
For we know
That the light we are receiving
Is the glory of the One—
We are weaving, weaving, weaving
Robes of glory in the Sun!

We shall wear them, we shall wear them
In the regions beautiful;
When the veils are torn aside,

And our vision clarified,
Free and full;
Shall with God-like things compare them
In the joy that doth abide:—
We shall wear them, we shall wear them
When the veils are torn aside!

When we turned us and descended
From the Fullness of the Height;—
Clothed ourselves in webs of sense
For our earth-experience;—
All our light
Darkened seemed, and interblended
With phantasmal dreams immense;—
When we turned us and descended
To the realms of flesh and sense.

Orphans were we, in confusion—
Knowing not our heritage—
Following gleams of false allure,
Finding nothing fixed or sure:
Youth and age
Snatching at the earth-illusion
Evanescent and impure:—
Orphans were we, in confusion
Following gleams of false allure.

But again our footsteps turning,
Up the Sacred Way we climb,
Consecrate with coming grace,
To regain our dwelling-place!
For all time
In our hearts the fires are burning

And aglow each upturned face:—
Joyfully we are returning
To our rightful dwelling place!

We have heard the whispered story
We are children of the King,
Serving out an exile day,
Till illusion pass away;
Triumphing
Over all things transitory
When we tread the Shining Way:—
We rehearse the stirring story
As we tread the Shining Way.

We are weaving, weaving, weaving,
We are weaving as we go
Robes of glory in the Sun,
Stainless raiment, Spirit-spun,
For we know
That the light we are receiving
Is the glory of the One!—
We are weaving, weaving, weaving
Robes of glory in the Sun!

He will not behold the Light who attempts to ascend to the vision of the Supreme whilst he is drawn downwards by those things that are an obstacle to the vision; for he does not ascend alone, but brings with him that which separates him from the One; in a word: he is not made one.

—*Plotinus.*

This I say, Brothers—Flesh and blood can have no share in the Kingdom of God, nor can the perishable share the imperishable. —*St. Paul.*

THE TWO POLES OF EXISTENCE

By Swami Ramakrishnananda.

There are two opposite poles in life. What is night to those who cling to this world is day to the wise man; and what is day to the worldly-minded is night to the Sage. What the ordinary man, absorbed in material concerns, regards to be good, the man of spiritual vision sees as bad. What tempts the one, repels the other. That is, their minds are diametrically opposite in their points of view. The man of the world thinks that only in the world can he find happiness. Therefore he is constantly struggling to amass and utilize the good things of this earth. If he sees anyone who is living wholly on the inside, he believes him to be deluded and altogether in the wrong. The Sage, on the contrary, knows that there is no bliss whatever on the outside. He has learned by experience that matter breeds misery and that Spirit breeds happiness.

Mind is not altogether matter, nor is it altogether Spirit. It is a mixture of both; therefore in all our mental impressions and perceptions we must have the combined effect of the two. This is why with the mind we cannot see Spirit; nor can we wholly lose sight of it. Whenever we taste any happiness, we may always be sure it comes from Spirit; while when we are unhappy, we may know that the cause is to be found in matter. This creates a bitter-sweet; and that is what life is. The bitter comes from the material side of our nature, the sweet from the spiritual side. The more the material side predominates over the spiritual, the more miserable must we be; if we would escape from our misery, we must work hard to give a preponderant place to Spirit. In the man of the world the material factor has been cultivated at the expense of the spiritual. In the Sage the spiritual outweighs the material.

The man of the world seeks all his satisfaction in material pleasures and external acquisition; but the Sage has discovered that to go outside is to lose his happiness. He expects all his happiness to come from inside himself; while the worldly man expects it to come from outside himself. The ordinary human being is full of anxieties and troubles; but the man who keeps himself intact within himself, has no anxiety about material things and he can be peaceful. When we open our mind to these worldly worries, each asks us to be mindful of it and no room is left for mindfulness of the Soul. But Wisdom says to us: If you wish to be happy, if you wish to be wise, if you wish to be strong, never let the world take you. The boat may be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat; so we may be in the world, but the world must not be in us. Why should we admit these worldly disturbances inside of us? Why do we allow darkness to enter? Lust, greed and all our disquietudes are generated by lack of true knowledge; and they come when the veil of matter hides the Soul.

If we search at the bottom of all our miseries, we shall find that they are based on our material nature. When Spirit dominates, we may live in the midst of the world, but nothing will disturb us. And why should we let these things affect us? Naked we came from our mother's womb, naked shall we go out of life. We shall not be able to take one bone of our body with us. As a man who works in the government mint may handle thousands of pounds and act like a millionaire; but when he goes out, he is searched lest he take a farthing with him; so the whole world belongs to the Governor of the Universe, and we can bring nothing in when we come, nor can we carry anything away when we go. If we constantly remember this, we shall realize how foolish we are to base all our happiness on bodily pleasures and bodily conditions.

How does the world get inside of us? It enters when we begin to think: "All this is mine." The more we feel the "me" and "mine," the more we take the world inside. The more we cultivate the "not mine," the more will the world be kept outside. This is the secret of overcoming the world. If we want to get rid of anxiety, fear, unrest, there is but one way—develop the spiritual factor in us. The true Sage is not moved by the good and bad of this world; he does not measure his happiness by external conditions, nor does he count his life by the few years he spends in this one body. There was a great Sage, called the hairy Sage because of the number of hairs on his body. He was in the habit of spending a few days under this tree, then a few days under another tree. Once Narada came to him and said: "My dear friend, all Sages have hermitages; why do you not have one?" The hairy Sage replied: "You see, my life is so short, it is not worth while." "Why, are you going to die soon?" Narada asked. "Do you see the number of hairs on my body?" was the Sage's answer; "so many years shall I live."

To him this life was nothing, because his mind was directed towards eternity; and compared with eternity even seventy thousand cycles appear infinitesimally short. When we study Geography, we read of so many mountains and rivers, we feel we cannot even count them all; but when we open a book on Astronomy, all the mountains and rivers vanish and this earth becomes a point without length, breadth or magnitude. In the same way, when we think only of this life, all the concerns of the world seem very important to us; but when we think of eternity, these outer things seem as nothing. This is the reason why it is so difficult for the man of the world and the wise man to understand each other.

Vedanta, however, never teaches us to run away from the world. It says rather: "Do not be a coward and run away. Stay in the world, but in the world be a Sage. If you wish, you may even be a householder, with many cares and occupations, but be a Sage at the same time. Do not give up work. Stay and work in the office of God, this universe, knowing that all is His, not yours. Never forget that this body, this house, all these people who surround you, belong to God. You, also, do not belong to yourself; you belong to God." The one who can feel that he can call nothing his own, that he is truly "poor in spirit," he becomes the richest of men, and in him, we may know, Spirit has triumphed over matter.

Oh Poverty, high Wisdom! to be subject to nothing, and by despising all to possess all created things.

God will not lodge in a narrow heart; and it is as great as thy love. Poverty has so ample a bosom that Deity Itself may lodge there.

Poverty is naught to have and nothing to desire: but all things to possess in the spirit of liberty.

—*Jacopone da Todi.*

Nothing is bitterer than severance from Thee,
Without Thy shelter there is naught but perplexity.
Our worldly goods rob us of our heavenly goods,
Our body rends the garment of our Soul.
Our hands, as it were, prey on our feet;
Without reliance on Thee how can we live?

—*Jallalud-din Rumi.*

What man dwelling on the decaying mortal plane, having approached the undecaying immortal realm, and having known the nature of pleasure produced by material things, would delight in long (earthly) life? —*Katha-Upanishad.*

THE TRUE SAGE

From the Teachings of Chuang Tzu

The prince of Lu, hearing that Yen Ho had attained to Tao (the Divine Way), despatched messengers with presents to open communications. Yen Ho lived in a hovel. He wore clothes of coarse grass, and occupied himself in tending oxen. When the messengers arrived, Yen Ho went out to meet them; whereupon they enquired, "Is this where Yen Ho lives?"

"This is Yen Ho's house," replied the latter.

The messengers then produced the presents; but Yen Ho said, "I fear you have made a mistake. And as you might get into trouble, it would be as well to go back and make sure." This the messengers accordingly did. When they returned, however, there was no trace to be found of Yen Ho. Thus it is that men like Yen Ho hate wealth and power.

Wherefore it has been said that the best part of Tao is for self-culture, the surplus for governing a State, and the dregs for governing the empire. From which we may infer that great deeds of kings and princes are but the leavings of the Sage. For preserving the body and nourishing vitality, they are of no avail. Yet the superior men of today endanger their bodies and throw away their lives in their greed for the things of this world. Is not this pitiable?

The true Sage in all his actions considers the why and the wherefore. But there are those now-a-days who use the pearl of the Prince of Sui to shoot a bird a thousand yards off. And the world of course laughs at them. Why? Because they sacrifice the greater to get the less . . .

Hsu Wu Kuei went to visit the Prince. The latter said, "Living, Sir, up in the hills, and feeding upon berries or

satisfying yourself with leeks, you have long neglected me. Are you now growing old? Or do you hanker after flesh-pots and wine? Or is it that mine is such a well-governed State?"

"I am lowly of birth," replied Hsu Wu Kuei. " I could not venture to eat and drink your Highness' meat and wine. I came to sympathize with your Highness."

"What do you mean?" cried the Prince. "What is there to sympathize about?"

"About your Highness' Soul and body," replied Hsu Wu Kuei.

"Pray explain," said the Prince.

"Nourishment is nourishment to all alike," said Hsu Wu Kuei. "Being high up does not make one high, nor does being low make one low. Your Highness is the ruler of a large State, and you oppress the whole population thereof in order to satisfy your sensualities. But your Soul is not a party to this. The Soul loves harmony and hates disorder. For disorder is a disease. Therefore I came to sympathize. How is it that your Highness alone is suffering?"

"I have long desired to see you," answered the Prince. "I wish to love my people, and by cultivation of duty towards one's neighbor to put an end to war. Can this be done?"

"If your Highness starts from this basis, the result can only be disastrous. Everything that is made good (by calculation) turns out bad. And although your Highness should make charity and duty to one's neighbor, I fear they would be spurious articles. For the inward intention would appear in the outward manifestation. The adoption of a fixed standard would lead to complications. And revolutions within lead to fighting without. Surely your High-

ness would not make a bower into a battlefield, nor a shrine of prayer into a scene of warfare! (The mind).

"Have nothing within which is obstructive of virtue. Seek not to vanquish others in cunning, in plotting, in war. If I slay a whole nation and annex the territory in order to find nourishment for my passions and for myself, irrespective of military skill, wherein does the victory lie? If your Highness will only practise self-discipline, that will be enough. Cultivate the sincerity that is within your breast, so as to be responsive to the conditions of your environment, and be not aggressive. The people will thus escape death (from oppression); and what need then to put an end to war? . . .

Confucious said to Prince Chu: "The sea does not reject the streams which flow eastward into it. Therefore it is immeasurably great. The true Sage folds the universe in his bosom. His good influence benefits all throughout the empire, without respect to persons. Born without rank, he dies without titles. He does not take credit for realities. He does not establish a name. This is to be a great man. A dog is not considered a good dog because he is a good barker. A man is not considered a good man because he is a good talker. How much less in the case of greatness? And if doing great things is not enough to secure greatness, how much less shall it secure virtue?

"In point of greatness, there is nothing to be compared with the universe. Yet what does the universe seek in order to be great?

"He who understands greatness in this sense, seeks nothing, loses nothing, rejects nothing, never suffers injury from without. He takes refuge in his own inexhaustibility. He finds safety in according with his nature. This is the essence of true greatness."

THE SPIRITUAL LESSON OF WAR

By Sister Devamata

War is a human storm, based as wholly on natural law as the fierce flashes of lightning which play across the summer sky. When the passions of men reach a certain density, it must come; just as when the pressure in a volume of gas is increased beyond a given point, an explosion is inevitable. And as the tornado is the culmination of a gradual gathering of certain forces in the upper air; so these cyclones of warfare which sweep over the world are the result of a long accumulation of destructive elements in our social order. We cannot have brutal competition in commerce, shrewd jugglery in diplomacy, ambitious aggression in the national policy, and not have war. Nor can we hope, when the causes lie so deep, to suddenly abolish it at the mere wish of man.

In reality, on the plane of manifested life war always exists. Creation implies duality; and wherever there are two, conflict must arise. Evil will war on good; darkness and light will battle for ascendancy. Emerson acknowledges this in his essay on *Heroism,* when he writes: "Our culture must not omit the arming of the man. Let him hear in season that he is born into the state of war, and that the commonwealth and his own well-being require that he should not go dancing in the weeds of peace, but warned, self-collected, and neither defying nor dreading the thunder, let him take both reputation and life in his hand, and with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob by the absolute truth of his speech and the rectitude of his behavior."

A similar lesson is taught in the Bhagavad-Gita, when Arjuna refuses to fight the battle for his lost kingdom and Sri Krishna rouses him with the stirring words: "Yield

not to unmanliness; it does not befit thee. Casting off this mean faint-heartedness, arise, O terror of thy foes . . . Looking upon it even from the standpoint of thy moral and religious duty, thou shouldst not waver; for nothing is higher for a Kshatriya (a warrior) than a righteous war. Therefore arise and be resolved to fight." Within the Soul of every living thing there sounds the same determined appeal—a cry to live and not die. What indeed is the instinct of self-preservation in animal and man alike but a call to battle against foes within and without? When has man gained anything anywhere without combat? Religion itself is a perpetual warfare; and every Scripture in the last analysis may be classed as a soldier's manual, telling each one how to fight the good fight for God and his Soul.

On this plane of existence, therefore, the question can never be whether we shall have war, but where the battle will be fought. If all our desires and ambitions are external and material; if in our scale of values things of the body come first and things of the Spirit second, then war too must be external, and the earth must again and again be drenched with blood. Even in the life-time of present generations who can remember a moment when somewhere in the world human beings were not in conflict? Can we hope to wipe out the struggle and leave untouched all the seething causes which lie beneath it? Would we organize a society to check an earthquake? Why suppose then that a peace party can stay a like human unheaval? No; the problem is not one to be handled in groups. Its solution lies deep down in each individual life. The choice lies before each one of us: Shall we fight our own battle against the forces within which make for war; or shall we go on our thoughtless way and some day pay soldiers, perhaps our own son or brother, to fight the culminating battles which

are the natural outcome of our own moral indolence and false standards of living?

How far men had gone on the outside, how external and materialistic was the prevailing point of view, was evidenced at the outbreak of the present war by the universal attitude towards it. People were overwhelmed by the bodily horror of it. They seemed to see only the physical side; and it has been the soldiers themselves returning from the trenches, mere mutilated fragments of humanity, who have taught the world a new and mighty lesson. Perceiving the light in their faces, a light kindled by the joy of self-immolation, people have learned that men who grope their way in outer darkness may see more vividly than those who still have eyes. Or that men who swing along on crutches may possess a greater majesty of bearing than those who run freely on whole limbs. In other words, the world has learned from these simple heroes that man is not a body, he is a Soul; and mangled members cannot destroy his inner sense of wholeness.

If that be so, is it then so dire a calamity to have this gross outer garment of the Spirit torn or even rent in the service of a noble cause? And has the war after all proved such a curse, if in the glare and roar of battle on the fields of France men have awakened to the supreme privilege of sacrifice; or have been lifted into new life by the sudden revelation of a something in them that is deathless? Can anyone indeed claim that conditions which perhaps break the body, but lay bare the Soul, are half so great a menace to the social welfare as those, too often existing at home in times of peace, which deaden the Soul-consciousness and nurture bodily indulgence and material desires? "As we pity the lame and blind, why do not you rather pity those who are blinded and lamed in their superior faculties?" are the wise words of Epictetus.

A man's productive value to the world does not depend upon his hands and feet, but upon his mind and heart and character. And his service should not be measured by the size of his gift, but by its quality—whether it is the highest, holiest thing he has to give. If we sit day after day folding bandages to staunch the bleeding wounds of men in France, and are not struggling to root out from our own hearts that which daily wounds our fellows, we are doing little to assuage the misery of war. And though we may work zealously to bring about a League of Nations, unless at the same time we are laboring with even greater zeal to break down our own narrow prejudices and exchange our petty personal or even racial point of view for a broader cosmic vision, we are contributing nothing towards real world unity.

Each one of us has had his share in bringing about the present universal conflict, and upon each one of us rests the grave responsibility of hastening it to a close. By our own fireside, in our own closet, must it be done, by fighting bravely and to a finish the great inner battle. We must gradually readjust our scale of values and learn what is vital and enduring. It is always for the fleeting and non-essential that man wars. The real things, like the sky, are there, more than enough for all. We have only to open our hearts and take them. If there is need to fight, it will always be against our own lethargy, not any outer foe. When things go wrong, we must teach ourselves to seek the cause at our own door, instead of reeking vengeance on our neighbor. If we rise in wrath, let it be against ourselves, not some other. Let us recognize once for all that our only enemy in all the world is our own ego—that deluding principle within us, which by every cunning device leads us to believe ourselves separate from the whole, with rival interests and contending rights.

Let us outwit it by cultivating a sense of solidarity and sameness. Actually there can be no separateness; for as we cannot take our body out of the great ocean of matter, on which it is a wave; or sever our mind from the universal mind-substance; or cut our life off from the cosmic life; so as human beings we are powerless to disconnect ourselves from the vast ocean of humanity, of which we form a part. Every thought we think, every word we speak, every breath we breathe, reaches out in its influence to the farthest corners of the globe. We are our brother's keeper and he is ours, whether we will or no. We cannot detach ourselves from the universe. We belong to it. All our members, our senses, our mind and heart, belong to it; and we are answerable to the whole for the use we make of them. When a man has gained this larger view of life, he cannot crawl back into a narrow personal shell. It smothers and oppresses him. Personal material aims appear too small. He has a cosmic part to play. His dominating ambition is to put himself into the whole, not to snatch something out of it. Like a good musician in an orchestra, he works for a perfect *ensemble*; he has no selfish desire that his instrument shall drown the sound of any other. When we have thus dropped behind us this haunting sense of "I" and "Me" and "Mine," then we have done our part towards abolishing war. For peace is not a surface quality or condition. It abides down deep in the heart. And it comes, not by legislation or convention, but by the radical transformation of the characters of men.

Love toward a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind with pure joy, and is wholly free from sorrow; this is to be greatly desired and strenuously sought for.

—*Spinoza.*

THE POWER OF PRINCIPLE

From the Discourses of Epictetus

What are these events which you call great?

Wars and seditions, the destruction of numbers of men, and the overthrow of cities.

And what great matter is there in all this? Nothing. What great matter is there in the death of numbers of oxen, numbers of sheep, or in the burning or pulling down numbers of nests of storks or swallows?

Are these like cases then?

Perfectly like. The bodies of men are destroyed, and the bodies of sheep and oxen. The houses of men are burnt, and the nests of storks. What is there great or dreadful in all this? Pray, show me what difference there is between the house of a man and the nest of a stork, so far as it is a habitation, excepting that houses are built with beams and tiles and bricks, and nests with sticks and clay?

What, then, is a stork and a man a like thing? What do you mean?

With regard to body, extremely like.

Is there no difference, then, between a man and a stork?

Yes, surely; but not in these things.

In what, then?

Inquire, and you will find the difference consists in something else. See whether it be not in acting with discernment; whether it be not in a social disposition; in fidelity, honor, steadiness, judgment.

Where, then, is the great good or evil of man?

Where his difference is. If this is preserved and remains well fortified; and neither honor, fidelity, or judgment is destroyed; then he himself is preserved likewise; but when any of these is lost and demolished, he himself is lost also. In this do all great events consist. Paris, they say, was un-

done, because the Greeks invaded Troy and laid it waste, and his family were slain in battle. By no means; for no one is undone by an action not his own. All that was only laying waste the nests of the storks. But his true undoing was when he lost his modest, faithful, hospitable, and decent character. When was Achilles undone? When Patroclus died? By no means. But when he gave himself up to rage; when he wept over a girl; when he forgot that he came there not to get mistresses, but to fight. This is human undoing; this is the siege; this the overthrow; when right principles are ruined; when these are destroyed . . .

This law hath God ordained, who says: "If you wish for good, receive it from yourself." You say, No; but from another—"Nay; but from yourself." In consequence of this, when a tyrant threatens and sends for me, I say, Against what is your threatening pointed? If he says, "I will chain you"; I answer, It is my hand and foot that you threaten. If he says, "I will cut off your head"; I answer, It is my head that you threaten. If he says, "I will throw you into prison"; I answer, It is the whole of this paltry body that you threaten: and, if he threatens banishment, just the same.

Doth not he threaten you, then?

If I am persuaded that these things are nothing to me, he doth not; but, if I fear any of them, it is me that he threatens. Whom, after all, is it that I fear? The master of what? Of things in my own power? Of these no one is the master. Of things not in my power? And what are these to me?

What, then! do you philosophers teach us a contempt of kings?

By no means. Who of us teaches any one to contend

with them about things of which they have command? Take my body, take my possessions, take my reputation, take those who are about me. If I persuade any one to contend for these things as his own, accuse me with justice.—"Ay, but I would command your principles too."—And who hath given you that power? How can you conquer the principles of another?—By applying terror I will conquer it.—Do not you see that what conquers itself is not conquered by another? And nothing but itself can conquer the choice. Hence, too, the most excellent and equitable law of God, that the better should always prove superior to the worse. Ten are better than one.

To what purpose?

For chaining, killing, dragging where they please; for taking away an estate. Thus ten conquer one in the instance wherein they are better.

In what then are they worse?

When the one hath right principles and the others have not. For can they conquer in this point? How should they? If we were weighed in a scale, must not the heavier outweigh?

But show me that he who hath the worst principles gets the advantage over him who hath the better. You never will show it, nor anything like it; for the law of Nature and of God is this: Let the better be always superior to the worse.

Men are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and notions which they form concerning things. Death, for instance, is not terrible, else it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the terror consists in our notion of death that it is terrible. When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never impute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles.

REPORT

Like all other churches in Boston, with few exceptions, The Vedanta Centre held no services or classes during the first two weeks of October. Services were resumed on Sunday the 20th and Swami Paramananda delivered a peculiarly appropriate address on "Spiritual Optimism." In the course of it he said: The spiritual Ideal cannot be attained in a day. At the outset of our spiritual journey we are more conscious of the obstacles than of the help given us; but if we do not lose faith in God and in our Self as part of God, we shall be able to overcome anything. The hopeful, optimistic spirit is never thwarted, even by the most insurmountable obstacle. Everyone has equal endowment and equal opportunity, and God never fails to help all alike in the measure in which we call upon Him. What we need is spiritual fervor and conviction. That man is a true man who invariably follows the higher impulse within. If we do not give up because we cannot hear God's voice, but still cling to Him in the silence and darkness, striving all the while to reach Him through fervent prayer, He will surely reveal Himself to us. As soon as we know Him and our relation to Him, never again can we be hopeless or joyless.

The same note was carried through the address of the following Sunday on "Sin and Salvation." When a man debases himself and is willing to exchange his Soul for fleeting mundane things; when he loses his higher standards of life and runs after lower material gratifications, then he is guilty of sin, the Swami declared. The nature of sin, he held again, is to contract our vision more and more, until we no longer see God; but if we keep ourselves free from whatever shuts away the Divine, then we shall move through life with a sense of perfect security.

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

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NOTICE

With the present number THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST completes its eighth volume. We earnestly request all subscribers to renew their subscriptions promptly. That the Message each month carries new strength and inspiration to many hearts is proved by the frequent expressions of appreciation and gratitude which reach us. We hope therefore that all who have learned to value the magazine will do their utmost to lend it their loyal support, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of all who may gain new light and courage through it.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE EXALTED LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

There are many Sacred Writings and Sayings in many different languages, but the same note sounds through all, whether of ancient time or of recent date; for the human heart beats everywhere in the same rhythm. Men may differ and do differ in their human interests and views; but when we are fortunate to catch the deeper note of life, little difference remains; for there in the depths we all live in Him, move in Him and have our being in Him, as St. Paul says.

Spiritual ideals vary and must vary. According to our mental development each of us evolves his own Ideal. Also our conception of God grows as we grow. We make our picture of Divinity according to the degree of our mental penetration. Religion is not in dogmatic beliefs or in philosophic systems. It comes from the Soul. We may begin with very small ideas. Perhaps it is only fear that prompts us to seek God, fear without any element of love or devotion in it. We may have no thought higher than self-preservation. But as we come nearer to God, we transcend this; because we find there is no need to fear. Thus gradually we pass from the more primitive ideals to the loftiest conceptions of God and the spiritual life.

At the outset we may be inclined to dispute and try to uphold our own Ideal by denouncing others; but this exclusive attitude cannot continue when we experience directly the immensity of God. As the bee ceases to buzz when it enters the flower to suck the honey, so we grow silent when we draw close to the Divine realm. The noise of discussion goes on only before we have crossed the threshold. When the heart is transformed by contact with God, it makes little difference whether it is a Christian heart or a Hindu heart; the same universal love and sympathy fill it full. As soon as we give up theory and begin to practise, there comes a broader understanding and we see everything in a new light; but this requires strength—the strength of earnest and sincere devotion.

A simple, prayerful attitude and steadfast devotion help us more in our practical spiritual life than any amount of argument or intellectual study. We can never fathom the Fathomless Being unless He reveals Himself to us; and this revelation comes to us not through any external means, but as the result of our own state of heart and mind. It is not enough to follow some religious form outwardly. This will not bring devotion; our innermost feelings must be offered to God. No loud prayer is necessary; one thing alone is essential—that our prayer come from the depth of our heart. It must be deep and it must be spontaneous.

Also our mind must be free from doubt and despondency. Trustfulness in our attitude towards the Supreme is the saving grace. Without it we may try to fortify ourselves at every point and even imagine ourselves to be invulnerable, yet at some point of weakness we may be struck and overthrown. The safest thing we can do is to cultivate, with all humility and love, a sense of the presence of the Divine. In no other way can we become strong; and we are

always cowards when we lack in spiritual strength. Those who can go through the hardest trials and come out without scepticism, they are the true devotees. We see this manifested in the lives of the great saints; but we too can cultivate the same spirit. We are all children of the one Supreme Being, why should we not all have equal access to Him? We have; but we ourselves block the channel. There are moments when we feel that we can really approach Him and worship Him worthily, then that sense of nearness goes. The aim of the spiritual life is to make those moments constant.

We must never go anywhere without carrying the light of the Ideal in our hand. We must make ourselves so in accord with the Cosmic Being that we can be led absolutely by Him. When we have the sense of actual relationship, we cease to be anxious and fearful. Our greatest security is when we feel that we are with God, and our greatest duty is to keep close to Him. Without a definite spiritual Ideal our life is like a boat tossed by strong winds, often losing its course and unable to hold against the current. Many unexpected things come upon us; and unless we have a firm spiritual conviction, we shall always feel adrift. But when beneath our ordinary consciousness there flows an unbroken consciousness of God, then we are able to meet all conditions bravely.

No life can be complete without happiness, and there can never be any real joy on the outside unless the spirit within is rejoicing. This is the lesson of every religious feast and especially of the birthdays of the Great Saviours. We cannot have the Christmas spirit unless we have joy. The Soul must feel the presence of the Christ within and delight in that presence. It is easy to exchange material gifts; but what is the true gift? Love, forgiveness, toler-

ance, all-embracing sympathy. Christ is born of love, and only as our life becomes filled with the elements of love and light can we be called His followers. These two go together; because love always makes the path clear and throws the light of understanding across it. The Christ spirit is ever living. It rises again and again in our Soul. It never dies except through our ignorance. When we begin to doubt or deny what is most sacred in our life, the reality of God and of our relation to Him, we shut ourselves off from the source of light and cheat ourselves of the greatest blessing.

Every being is a living altar of God; and if we do not feel His presence, we lead a life of blindness and do things which are unworthy of our higher nature. To unite this ordinary external life with the inner spiritual life is the chief aim of all the Great Teachers. Actually God is the nearest of all things, yet we feel a vast difference between Him and ourselves. This is because we make life so complex and attach too much importance to every little experience. But some day our eyes will be opened and we shall see how small is human attainment, even the greatest, compared with the larger realities. Then we shall be ashamed to have dreamed such vacant egotistic dreams and we shall realize the true significance of life.

Religion is the highest activity of man; not formal religion, but true devotional aspiration and actual experiencing. Nothing can stand between us and Godhead except our own self. Often we think there is no light to reveal Him, but in reality we stand in our own light. The shadow is cast by our own ego and selfishness. Worldly wisdom bars our progress. What we need is to put in its place spiritual wisdom; and our spiritual wisdom depends largely on the atmosphere we are able to create by our acts and

thoughts. This is why sometimes we feel the presence of the Deity and sometimes the access is wholly blocked. Our heart must be tranquil and free from unworthy feelings, such as hatred, enmity, anything that creates disturbance.

There is no doubt that the external environment helps also—a holy atmosphere or association with lofty souls; but these cannot really help unless the mind is right. The outer condition we can transcend; but the inner condition is very difficult to transcend, because it deals with our own mind. How hard we have to struggle often to forget something which has disturbed us! For that reason the spiritual life is an inner thing. It is not a matter of books or of study. It is a matter of purifying our thoughts. We must fill our hearts so full of trust and spiritual yearning, that we can go to God as we would go to an earthly mother or father. Those who can thus create a real relation with Him, become like living shrines. Then there is not so much need to go to church, because we carry our own altar and our own holy atmosphere with us. This is the way we make our spiritual Ideal a tangible reality.

The world is changeable; that is the reason why we should establish our life in God, Who never changes or fails. He loves us, not because we love Him, but because His nature is love. And when we can offer our thoughts and prayers and acts to Him, not because we want something of Him, but because we find our joy in Him and long to lose ourselves in Him, then our life will overflow in blessing. To forget ourself wholly in an ecstasy of love, this is the way to learn to love even our enemies. A saint does not love this one because he is pleasing or good, and hate that one because he is unsympathetic or bad. He loves everyone alike. His whole being radiates love. Love alone is the motive power in all his thoughts, words and actions;

feelings of hatred or jealousy or envy are wholly alien to his nature and can find no place in his heart.

The only way to reach this exalted state is by giving all. When we become united with the Storehouse of all blessing, we have no fear of lack and we give freely, asking nothing. We must realize that we are direct descendants of the All-loving One. When our life and thought are in perfect harmony with His higher spiritual laws, then will it be natural to us to depend upon Him and be unceasingly conscious of Him. But this will come only when our whole heart is dedicated with child-like simplicity, humility and devotion to that All-Compassionate Deity.

May He awaken in our hearts such true yearning and earnestness that we may know how to seek and find His Presence within us! May He fill us with His Divine Wisdom, and destroy all our ignorance and selfishness! He alone can give us strength and understanding. He alone can reveal Himself unto us, for by no other light can we perceive Him. He is the one Lord, the one Resting-place of the universe, the one unchanging Reality, the Bestower of all blessings. Let us turn our whole being to Him. Let us lift our thought to Him in constant supplication. Let our prayer be:

O Thou All-effulgent, All-pervading Spirit! Manifest Thy Infinite Glory in our hearts! We seek our rest and refuge in Thee. We seek our strength and inspiration from Thee. Forgive us all our weakness and lead us by the right path. O Thou Infinite Being, embodiment of all love and compassion, fill our hearts with love that knows no hate and a compassion that forgives all things. So mould our life that we may live with Thee and be instruments in Thy hands. Make us worthy by giving us Thy support. Grant unto us Thy loving blessings and keep us ever in peace.

ANCIENT INVOCATIONS AND PRAYERS

BUDDHIST PRAYER

Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

Let all creatures everywhere, all spirits, and all who have taken birth—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

Let all women and all men, all Aryans and non-Aryans, all gods and all men, and they that have fallen into lower spheres of life—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

ZOROASTRIAN PRAYER

I believe Thee to be the best Being of all, the Source of light for the world. Everybody shall choose Thee as the source of light; Thee, Thee, holiest Spirit Mazda! Mayest Thou grant me the Truth and tell me the best to be done.

That I will ask Thee, tell me it right, Thou living God! Who was in the beginning the father and creator of Truth? Who made the sun and stars the way? Who causes the moon to increase and wane, if not Thou?

Tell me good things to perform, the duties which are enjoined by Thyself, Thou Wise One! Those things which are communicated for the welfare of all beings by the Good Mind. What good, intended for the increase of life, is to be had, that may come to me? Instruct me aright in the faith which, being the best of all, may produce every

good thing, by means of words and actions. My heart wishes that I may know Thee, Thou Wise One.

FROM THE CHALDEAN LITURGY

Merciful One, begotten of the universe, Who founds His illustrious seat among living creatures.

Long-suffering Father, full of forgiveness, Whose hands uphold the lives of mankind.

Lord, Thy Divinity is as wide as the heavens and fills the sea with fear. . . .

In heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

On earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

ASSYRIAN INVOCATION

Thou art the Powerful One. Thou art the Life-giver. Thou also art the Prosperer. Merciful One among the gods; eldest Son of Him who made heaven and earth. Lord of heaven and earth, no equal hast Thou. Merciful One, Who the dead to life raiseth.

HINDU PRAYER

O merciful God! I have always been and ever shall be Thy servant, and Thou hast been and ever will be my Lord. Whether Thou art pleased with me or not, I have none to look to except Thee.

There is none who is so patient as Thou in bearing with my shortcomings; and there is none here, O Lord, so unworthy as I of Thy mercy. O Lord of the worlds! I am, as Thou knowest, Thine eternal servant; I belong wholly unto Thee. Of whom then, O Upholder of the universe, shall I be afraid? To whom else shall I look for blessings?

What is impossible to Thee, O Eternal Father, Who art the Lord of all and possessor of all things? What I may ask of Thee counts as nothing compared with what Thou canst grant. O Master of all worlds, Most Merciful One, if Thou art not gracious and kind to me, where can I find a refuge?

Thou art the only Protector of the worlds. Thou art the great Bestower of good. Thou art the All-knowing and the All-kind. Who beside Thee can gratify our desires? Countless are Thy gifts; and equally just art Thou to all. Therefore, O Lord, Ruler of the universe, Possessor of all riches, have mercy upon me.

Knowing that Thou art the Friend of the poor and the distressed, I surrender myself wholly unto Thee. Protect me, O Lord; and bestow on me what Thou deemest fit. Thy will be done, O Lord of the universe. Thou art the Helper of the needy, Thou art the Fountain of all mercy. Thou art the Guide and Friend to all, and the real Support of those in affliction. Therefore, O Lord, I crave Thy Divine mercy; save me that I may not perish in the ocean of this world of birth and death.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Sermon by John Tauler

(A Mystic of Strassburg, 14th Century)

Our Lord says here that the kingdom of God is nigh to us. Yea, the kingdom of God is in us; and St. Paul says, that now is our salvation nearer to us than we believe. Now ye ought to know, first, *how* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; secondly, *when* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

We must give earnest heed to take note of all that is contained in these words, "The kingdom of God is nigh at hand." For if I were king and did not know it, I should be no king; but if I were fully convinced that I was a king and if all men deemed me so likewise; and further, if I knew that all men deemed me such, I should be a king, and all the riches of the king would be mine. But if any of these three things were wanting, I could be no king. In

like manner does our blessedness depend upon our perceiving and knowing the Highest Good, which is God Himself.

I have a power in my Soul which enables me to perceive God. I am as certain as that I live that nothing is so near to me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myself. It is a part of His very essence that He should be nigh and present to me. He is also nigh to a stone or a tree, but they do not know it. If a tree could know God and perceive His presence as the highest of the angels perceives it, the tree would be as blessed as the highest angel. And it is because man is capable of perceiving God and knowing how nigh God is to him, that he is better off than a tree. And he is more blessed or less blessed in the same measure as he is aware of the presence of God. It is not because God is in him and so close to him, and that he hath God, that he is blessed; but because he perceives God's presence and knows and loves Him; and such an one will feel that God's kingdom is nigh at hand.

Often, when I meditate on the kingdom of God, I cannot speak for the greatness thereof. For the kingdom of God, what is it but God Himself with all His riches? The kingdom of God is no small thing. If we think of all the worlds that God could create, that is not the kingdom of God. When the kingdom of God is manifested in a Soul, and she knows it, you need not to preach or to teach; for that Soul is taught of God, and assured of eternal life. He who knows and perceives how nigh God's kingdom is, may say with Jacob: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."

A Master has said: "He knoweth God aright who knoweth Him in all things alike." He who serveth God with fear, it is good; he who serveth Him with love, it is better;

but he who in fear can love, that is the best of all. That a man should have a life of quiet or rest in God is good; that a man should lead a painful life in patience is better; but that a man should have rest in a painful life is best of all. Whether a man walk out in the fields and say his prayers, and feel God's presence, or whether he be in the church and feel God's presence, does he perceive him any the better because he is in a place of rest? If he do, it comes from his own infirmity; the difference is not on God's side; for God is in all things and places alike, and is ever alike ready to give Himself to us, in so far as we are able to receive Him; and he knows God alike who sees Him in all things.

St. Bernard says: "Why does my eye perceive the heavens, and not my feet? Because my eye is more like the heavens than my feet." Thus, if my Soul is to perceive God, it must be heavenly. Now what will bring the Soul to see God in herself and know how nigh God is to her? Consider! The heavens cannot take any imprint from other things; neither can they, by any violence or force, be turned from their order. In like manner, the Soul that would know God must be so grounded and built up in Him, that neither hope, nor fear, nor joy, nor sorrow, nor weal or woe, nor anything else, can so move it as to force it from its place in Him.

Nothing hinders the Soul so much in its knowledge of God as time and place. Time and place are parts, and God is one; therefore, if our Soul is to know God, it must know Him above time and place; for God is neither this nor that, like these complex things around us, for God is one. If the Soul is to see, she must not look at the things that exist in time; for so long as she is looking at time and place, or at the phenomena dependent thereon, she can never

perceive God Himself; just as, if mine eye is to perceive color, it must first be cleared of all tint in itself. I say more: if the Soul is to know God, she must forget herself and lose herself, for while she is looking at and thinking about herself, she is not looking at and thinking about God; but when she loses herself in God and lets go of all things, then she finds herself again in God.

When she comes to know God, then does she know to perfection in Him, both herself and all the things from which she has separated herself. If I am truly to know the Highest Good, or the Eternal Goodness, I must know it in that wherein it is good, namely, in itself,—not in these things in which it is only in part. If I am to know real Being, I must know it in that where it is self-existent, that is, in God. In God alone is the Divine Substance. In one man you have not all humanity, for one man is not all men; but in God the Soul knows all humanity and all things in their ideal, for she knows them in their substance. So I am as certain as that I live and God lives, that if the Soul is to know God, she must know Him above time and space; and such a Soul knows God, and knows how nigh God's kingdom is; that is, God with all His riches.

The masters have set forth many questions in the schools as to how it be possible for the Soul to know God. It is not of God's severity that he requires much from man; it is of His great kindness that he will have the Soul to open herself wider, to be able to receive much, that He may bestow much upon her. Let no one think that is is hard to attain thereunto. Although it sounds hard and is hard at first, as touching the forsaking and dying to all things; yet, when one has reached this state, no life can be easier or sweeter, or fuller of pleasures; for God is right diligent to be with us at all seasons and to teach us, that He may

bring us to Himself when we are like to go astray. None of us ever desired anything more ardently than God desires to bring men to the knowledge of Himself.

God is ever ready, but we are very unready; God is nigh to us, but we are far from Him; God is within, we are without; God is at home, we are strangers. The Prophet says: "God leadeth the righteous by a narrow path into a broad highway, till they come into a wide and open place;" that is unto the true freedom of that spirit which hath become one spirit with God. God help us all to follow Him, that He may bring us unto Himself! Amen.

LOVING JESUS, CANST THOU BE—

By E. C. Adams

Loving Jesus canst Thou be
Human friend to one like me?
Heart's companion have I none
So must go my way alone
Unless, Jesus, Thou canst bend
Thy dear Head to be my friend.

Nearly all my hours must go
Into toilsome work, and so
I'll not need to trouble Thee
Through the day to comfort me.
But when evening follows day
And the tired mind longs for play,

When the weary heart craves rest
Near the one that loves it best,
Yearning sore for cheer that lies
Warm in answering human eyes,
Then, dear Jesus, canst Thou be
Just a play-time friend to me?

THE NEED OF A MEDIATOR

By Sister Devamata

In all religious aspiration and struggle two clearly-defined aims are apparent:—one, to lift the human into the Divine; the other, to draw the Divine down into the human. The first is the mark of spiritual manhood; the second, of spiritual youth and childhood. Any sense of aloofness chills the child heart and engenders fear and distrust. It longs with an instinctive longing to come into unveiled contact with the hidden Power dimly sensed in the dark beyond; and feeling impotent to travel out into the darkness, it strives age after age to draw that Unseen One down within its reach. Thus it is that invariably we find the awakening of the religious consciousness expressing itself by some attempt to invest Deity with familiar and tangible form.

This, I believe, is the origin of all Nature-worship. It is the effort of man to touch God through the common elements of daily life. Modern thought interprets it as benighted superstition, not considering how keen must be the consciousness of Divinity to be ever mindful of Its presence. How often do we with our boasted enlightenment have any real sense of God as we watch the leaping flame or the growing grain or the bubbling mountain stream? "The world which is now divine only to the gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it," Carlyle writes in his *Hero-Worship*. "The young generations of the world, who had in them the freshness of children, and yet the depth of earnest men, who did not think they had finished off all things in Heaven and Earth by merely giving them scientific names, but had to gaze direct at them there with awe and wonder; they felt better what of divinity is in man and Nature."

No one ever worshipped Fire or Wind or Water for itself. It was the Nameless Power within them which called forth the invocation or sacrifice: — to propitiate when that Power raged over the earth in flood or storm or conflagration; to adore in childlike wonder when It came in the gentler aspects of the hearth-fire, the sacred river or the fertile furrow. To those early seekers there was nothing strange in the fact that Satyakama should hear the voice in the fire teaching him, as is told in the Chandogya-Upanishad; or that tree and mountain should answer the Sage pursuing his fleeing son, Sukadeva. On every side that Hidden One was calling to them; and wherever the dividing veil seemed thinnest, there they sought to break through and touch the unseen Presence.

As time went on, however, the lonely hearts of men were not content to leave that Power nameless and formless. A name and form seemed to bring It nearer; so the mighty family of gods sprang into existence—sons and daughters of the Great Mother, Nature. Agni, Vayu, Indra, Surya (gods of fire, wind, storm and sun) of the Vedic Aryans: Loke, Aegir, Thor, of the Norsemen: Helios, Hera, Poseidon, Zeus, of the Greeks: Gibil, Ea, Samas (fire, sea and sun gods), of the ancient Chaldeans: all point to a common parentage. But these deities are never more than messengers or intermediaries of a Being beyond. Even in that oldest Scripture, the Rig-Veda, we find an unmistakable recognition of the One, Whose emissaries these Bright Spirits are, dispensing wealth or learning, success or long life, according to the special prayer of the deserving worshipper. They are invariably looked upon as minor aspects of Deity, near enough to the mortal plane to be willing to satisfy mortal desires. "Those who long for success in the world worship the gods," the Bhagavad-Gita

tells us; and Homer says: "All folk yearn after the gods." The Gita adds, however, that whatever the form of Deity man may worship to gain his end, from the Supreme alone comes the satisfaction of his desire.

So long as fear or material gratification—sons, cattle, victory in arms or abundant harvests—furnished the chief impetus to religious effort, Nature and the gods remained the mediators between Divinity and man. But as fear softened into love, and desire for earthly benefactions changed into hunger for spiritual blessing, even these seemed too far removed from the human need. Man's soul cried out for a closer companion—a personal mediator or intercessor. So in every religion there appears the Saviour, who is known as "Redeemer," "Slain One," "Sin-Bearer," "Only-begotten Son," "Anointed One"; by all the names, in fact, which are usually regarded in the Occident as peculiarly Christian. Prometheus was called a "crucified Saviour" and a "Divine Sufferer." Hermes was invoked as the "good Saviour," also Apollo and Aesculapius. On an ancient statue of Bacchus, who is frequently spoken of as Saviour and Redeemer, we read the inscription: "It is I who guides you; it is I who protects you and who saves you; I who am Alpha and Omega." The Persians looked upon Mithras as a "Divine Mediator"; Horus, the Son of Isis, was worshipped as the Divine Saviour of the Egyptians, as was also his father Osiris; while Fo-hi was declared to be a Saviour by the Chinese.

The idea of the *Logos* is equally universal. The Indo-Aryan had it under the form of the *Sabda-Brahman* or "Sound-God." The Chaldeans claimed their *Memra* or "Word of God;" and to the Assyrian the Saviour Marduk was the "Word." An ancient Egyptian record relates how Thulis, a great monarch of Egypt, one day asked the

oracle of Serapis: "Tell me if there was before one greater than I, or will ever be one greater?" To which the oracle made answer: "First God, afterward the Word, and with them the Holy Spirit: all these are of the same nature and make one whole, of which the power is eternal. Go away quickly, mortal, thou who hast but an uncertain life." In early church history again we find the Christian Father, Justin Martyr, asking the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius why the followers of Jesus should be so persecuted, "considering," he adds, "that you have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word and Messenger of God." The *Logos* also figures prominently in the philosophical teaching at Alexandria during the last years of the pre-Christian era. Philo, the most eminent of this School, addresses it as a distinct being, calling it "Interpreter of God," "Eternal Bread of Heaven," "Ambassador of God," "Mediator," "Intercessor," "First-Begotten Son of God."

With the Saviour or *Logos* in these more deific forms, however, the line of intercession does not close. Nearer still stand the incarnate Ones, the "Word made flesh"—Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ; true God-men, radiant with Divinity on the one side, humbly human on the other. It would seem that the effort to humanize the Divine must culminate with these embodied representatives of Godhead; yet in every form of religion the intimacy of relationship is pushed one step further. The Son intercedes with the Father, but the Mother is invoked to intercede with the Son. Thus wherever we find a Saviour proclaimed, with it springs up the adoration of the Virgin Mother. In Egypt the worship of Isis with the child Horus in her arms dates back at least six thousand years; and like the Greek "Virgin Queen of Heaven," Juno, and the Virgin Mary, she was depicted as standing on the crescent moon.

The ancient Scandinavians had their Madonna; and the ancient Germans worshipped a virgin goddess Hertha, who conceived of the "active spirit" and gave birth to a son. In Mexico is to be seen a hieroglyphic showing the annunciation of the Virgin Chimalman, who was told by the ambassador of God that she should become the mother of the Saviour Quetzalcoatl. In Gaul the Druids invoked the *Virgo-Paritura* as the "Mother of God"; while the ancient Muscovites bowed before a sacred family consisting of mother and child with another child standing beside her, as we see John the Baptist beside the Christian Madonna. India, Persia, China, all had their Blessed Virgin Mothers; and everywhere names and customs and dates associated with this worship of Divine Motherhood are strangely identical.

These multiple proofs, however, of the unanimity of human minds, whatever the race or creed, should not weaken our belief in the reality and Divine sanctity of any Saviour or any special form of religious worship. Rather should they make our faith the stronger. In science isolated phenomena contribute little toward the establishment of Truth; it is the continually repeated fact which confirms the law. Why should it be otherwise in religion? If God had come only once and to a portion only of the human race, if the religious consciousness had expressed itself once only in certain forms and symbols, we might doubt the authenticity of the records or the correctness of our interpretation of them. But when the higher needs of man are met again and again and still again in the same way, then we may safely believe that the Mediator is a fundamental fact of life; and that the symbols and prayers and rituals, which reproduce themselves in East and West, North and South, are the natural and spontaneous expres-

sions of religious aspiration among all peoples; just as men everywhere have given expression to their physical needs in closely-related material forms.

The recognition of this fact also may help to stay the iconoclastic spirit of the scientific reformer and image-breaker, who would make religion only for mature minds. The wise spiritual leader is he who recognizes that in the primary grade of the church, as of the school-room, the object lesson is necessary; and the child in spiritual evolution will remain Godless, if he cannot have a God nearly related to his human consciousness. As long as the Supreme Being seems far away, the distance must be filled with mediating manifestations of Divinity; and the greater the distance seems, the longer will grow the line of intercession. Semitic peoples filled it with their angels, archangels and heavenly hosts; the Indo-Aryans with their *devas, ghandarvas,* and *pitris;* Greeks and Romans with their gods, demi-gods and deified heroes.

It is useless to try to clear the space. Sweep away these intervening entities in one form and the human heart will bring them back clothed in new names and forms. Buddha, as we know, preached an impersonal and isolated Deity. His adherents fashioned a concrete God of Him, and to provide a sense of duration, propounded the idea that Boddhisattwas are perpetually taking form. Mohammed turned the eyes of the Sabeans away from their sacred stars and cast out the gods of the Arabs; but his own revelation, he claimed, was received from the angel Gabriel.

Never by creating an empty void between God and man, can we bring the human nearer to the Divine. Theology may decide that no mediatory entities shall stand between, but the human heart will reach its own decision by an inner intuition bred of a far-stretching evolutionary memory. It

sees unbroken continuity throughout Nature; every grade of life manifesting itself in some form; no break anywhere from amoeba up to man. Why should the chain be broken at this midway point, it asks, and the Soul be called upon to take a sudden leap across the wide chasm dividing humanity from Divinity? Let it rather bridge the chasm with any higher mediating influence that may awaken its faith and reverence. Communion with the saints, loyal devotion to an Incarnate Saviour, companionship with the holy of heaven or earth, these are all divinely appointed means by which the yearning heart of man may find the God without and learn to pass to the God within.

THE SIGHT OF THE BLIND

Mediaeval Legend of the Blessed Virgin

In the city of Roc Amadour there was an abbey-church dedicated to Our Lady, which had become a chosen place of pilgrimage because of the miracles wrought therein. At a day's journey thence there lived a gentlewoman, who through a life of vanity and the misuse of her eyes in gazing ever at worldly glitter rather than at God's glory, had been deprived of her sight. Finding herself in darkness, repentance seized upon her heart, and she vowed herself wholly to the Blessed Mary, if only that loving Mother in Her infinite pity would give her back the light.

Counselled by the priest of her township, she determined to make a pilgrimage on foot to the abbey-church at Roc Amadour and at the shrine of the Virgin repeat her vow. With her went a large concourse of her neighbors, grieving that she should be thus afflicted and eager that she might find redress. So together they journeyed, at times right wearily, for the way seemed long, until they reached the hilltop of Mont Joye, where the church of miracles

could first be seen. There they fell upon their knees and all together repeated the *Salve Regina* and *Ave Maria*. When the lady who was blind heard that they were near the end of their pilgrimage, she began to weep bitterly and, throwing herself upon the ground, prayed thus to the All-forgiving Mother:

"Sweet and most piteous Lady! I implore you by your holy name and that of your dear Son, that did show compassion to the blind and healed them, look with mercy on this poor sinner, sad and sore afflicted. I know full well, Most Gracious Mother, that if you will but hear my prayer, I may once more see the light. I entreat you, Blessed Lady, give me back my sight, and I do promise you that from this day I shall vow myself to a holy life and do all things according to your good pleasure."

Scarcely had she spoken these humble words of penitence, when the veil of darkness lifted and she saw more clearly than ever in her life before. Then she began to cry in a joyous voice: "Dear Mother, Queen of Heaven, I see! I see! All glory and thanks be unto you, for I know that by no grace of mine have you thus shown me favor." And with eyes fixed in devout fervor on the distant church of Roc Amadour, she sang: "Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium" ("I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help").

All the neighbors, seeing the miracle, began to weep for very joy and ran along the way to tell of it to other pilgrims. So did they go, all praising with one accord the Holy Mother of God, who had thus restored sight to the blind. When, however, they reached the door of the church and the gentlewoman thought to enter, she could not cross the threshold; nor could any other, even the strongest, draw her over. So they called the priests, who said that,

though penitent, yet had she not been shriven; and for this reason was she kept without the House of God. So one, wise and zealous, came in his surplice to hear her confession; and she told in deep humility, word for word, all that she had done to gratify the vanity of her heart and accomplish her own pleasure in the world. Then the priest, looking upon her and seeing how comely was she and how great might be her temptation once again to mislead by giving before His altar."

"My dear sister, I fear me that by these fair tresses you have done much hurt to other souls, and they may yet be to you a snare of the enemy. It is meet now that you be rather adorned with modesty and humility. I admonish you, therefore, if you would be absolved of your sins, that you let yourself be shorn of these fair locks and make them an offering at the Blessed Virgin's shrine. Then will you be delivered of all chance to vanity and you will see not only with these eyes of the body, but also with the eyes of the Soul. If you consent to this, then shall you be able to enter God's House and make your act of thanksgiving before His altar.

Fearing lest the blindness might once more come upon her, the gentlewoman submitted, though right unwillingly, to the penance laid upon her. She knew full well that these golden waving tresses were her chief beauty; and as she carried them in her hand to the Holy Virgin's shrine, a secret displeasure rose within her, so that with her prayer was mingled a sense of bitterness that Saint Mary should have sold her favor at the cost of so dear a sacrifice.

Having finished their devotions, the pilgrims set out on their homeward way, singing and giving thanks for the great mercy of the Blessed Mary; but the gentlewoman

joined but coldly in their rejoicings. At Mont Joye again they paused, facing Roc Amadour, and knelt to repeat a last *Ave Maria*, as a loving farewell to Our Lady. But this gentlewoman instead cried in a loud voice:

"Alas, Holy Saint Mary, what have you done to me? I came to you adorned with great beauty, and you have robbed me of what was my dearest treasure. My heart grieves for those tresses that you have taken from me and I return home disconsolate and sorrowful."

As she prayed, behold! there came upon her head the golden curling tresses which had been shorn and laid before the Virgin; but her eyes were blind so that she could not see them. Her neighbors led her home, amazed and wondering. But from that hour prayers and pilgrimages profited her nothing. To the end she remained in darkness; and all who heard her story learned that it availeth little to restore the sight of the eyes when there is blindness in the Soul.

REPORT

During the past month all Services and classes continued as usual at the Centre, except on Tuesday, November 12th, when a thanksgiving Service was substituted for the usual class. After music and meditation the Swami spoke with deep feeling of the reestablishment of peace in the world: "The conflict has ceased," he said, "and what is the lesson we have learned from it? That no one individual or nation can work for its own happiness; that there cannot be such a thing as selfish happiness. We must feel for one another. Only when we do this can we grasp the real import of such moments as the present one. We pay a very great price when we lose the universal point of view, for it alone gives a death blow to all self-seeking. When both in the small

and the large facts of life we are able to forget ourselves completely, then whatever we do must prove constructive and fruitful. The soldiers have taught us how to transcend the little things of life. But these transcendent experiences do not come in one way only, and they never come so long as we cherish selfish desires.

"Rejoicing is good, but we must remember that there is no true joy unless our heart is free from hatred. We must never lose our spiritual point of view. In days of sorrow it is natural for us to turn to God, but we must turn to Him with great fervor in days of rejoicing. Indeed, we must pray even more in the hour of joy, that we may keep our balance and hold fast to our Ideal. A time of many changes lies before us. Small groups of people and nations are to be broken apart in order that the world may have a larger feeling and all men work together in a common cause. We must prepare ourselves, then when the hour strikes we shall not fail to do our part. When we have bigger ideals and live in a bigger way, we must also be ready to make bigger sacrifices. We must not be satisfied to live in the same narrow circle. The world is growing and if we do not grow with it, we must suffer. As it outgrows certain things, we too must expand our vision and adapt ourselves to the new conditions. Let us merge our little selfish happiness in a bigger happiness; and when we pray, let our prayer be, not for ourselves, but for all living beings."

There was another special Service on Thanksgiving evening at which the Swami in his address once again expressed deep gratitude for the blessing of returning peace; a peace which, he prayed, might prove lasting and mark the beginning of an era of greater unity and brotherhood among all the peoples of the earth.

The Swami will remain in Boston through December.

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