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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JANUARY 1925

LIVING CONSECRATION

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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ANANDA-ASHRAMA

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Est. 1909)
La Crescenta, California

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Of India, Founder and Head

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

ASHRAMA CLOISTER

Sunday, 3:30 P. M.

- Jan. 4—Vitality of Faith
11—Self and Efficiency
18—The Goal of Life
25—Spiritual Magic

The aim of the Ashrama is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism.

CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday, 3 P. M. Thursday, 8 P. M.

In these classes the Swami will give lessons in practical spiritual unfoldment.

When the Swami is absent, Sister Daya will conduct the services.

We urgently request our subscribers to send their renewals as early as possible that the January number may be mailed to them promptly. We also beg to suggest that a year's subscription to the "Message of the East" would make a fitting New Year's gift.

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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No. 1

LIVING CONSECRATION

By Swami Paramananda

(Address delivered at dedication of Ashrama Cloister)



ET all things that breathe—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!"

This is from one of the greatest and most ancient Scriptures of the world, but its value does not lie in the fact that it is ancient or that it is given in some sacred book; its value is due to its all-embracing thought and its true spirit of catholicity. There is a saying by Jesus the Christ, showing the sense of kinship which exists in all that is true in life: "Blessed are the peacemakers, (blessed are those who bring peace upon the earth) for they shall be called the children of God." How universal these words are, how applicable to our own life! No matter where a man stands, if he has any manhood, if he has any sense of nobility and justice, he cannot help but recognize the vital truth in this. A man may be filled with intellectual gifts, with the spirit of scientific invention, or he may be in the religious life, it

makes no difference. Science has not succeeded in destroying the souls of men and it will never succeed. There is a deeper hunger and thirst in the human soul. That hunger must be fed, that thirst must be quenched; and there is nothing which can do it save that which springs from the very source of our being. Whether a teaching comes from the East or from the West, whether it comes from one religion or another is of small consequence, so long as it sounds the true note, so long as it gives the true hypothesis for life and living. The man of vision has very little use for the dry crust of dogma, or for anything that is of non-essential nature. He believes in higher living, in nobility, love, forgiveness; in that which produces a truer type of humanity, a living symbol of what is best and highest in our life. These qualities are the essence of religion and may be attained by one path or by another.

For many, many thousands of years we have had numerous religions, but they have not all been constructive; some have been just the contrary. Because of this, those who have given themselves to scientific lines of thought often scoff at the very mention of religion or God. People talk of love and non-resistance and all sorts of things that are high-sounding; yet they go to war to destroy one another. That is not religion. That is not godliness. Not only is it not religion or godliness, it is not humanity. It is the brute instinct in man that leads him to be destructive. For this reason anything that will revive our higher sense, we must welcome; a beautiful sight, a sound that has music in it, whatever kindles the soul nature in man, we must welcome. Atmosphere, environment, or any form of living that is conducive to higher idealism, we must learn to welcome with all our heart. This will bring a definite help in our spiritual life.

I am not seeking to establish a new cult or creed. There are plenty of creeds already existent; another would be only one too many. Nor am I interested in a new dogma or in occult mysteries. I have only one fundamental interest uppermost in my heart and that is interest in humanity, its betterment, its unfoldment, its all-embracing unity. With these lofty and noble ideals we have established this work. Whether many or few understand our purpose is not our concern. The most any of us can do in life is to live; and often we have to live very silently, like a flower. A dewdrop falls upon an unpretentious bud, and it opens. The bud is quite unconscious of it and the dewdrop falls without noise, but it brings the blossoming. Whoever comes near it enjoys its fragrance.

There are certain high and lofty ideals in life. They are not high and lofty because we can talk of them and quote passages about them from various Scriptures; they are high and lofty when they make our life equally so, when they bring something into our life of which we can be proud, something which we can carry to humanity, something that fills the hearts of men, something which is conducive to greater idealism and greater usefulness. What a wonderful thing it would be if all men and women or if even a very small group of men and women could be so armed with Truth, with the feeling of love and beauty, that they would go forth into the world every day carrying their ideal as a living symbol; so that no matter what the world might do to them, even if it outraged them, they would always hold up their head and glorify their ideal. Would it not minimize many of the cruel inharmonies in the world?

Sometimes we are unjust when we say this world is full of materialism and evil. What makes it evil and material? We have our share in it. If the world is full of materialism

it means that we are carrying materialistic thoughts into it. If we cannot trust humanity, there is something wrong in our hypothesis. It is not ordained from the origin of things that we should live in chaos, or with distrust and without the feeling of love and cheer. In order that we may have these superior qualities, we do not need to cling to cut and dried dogma. We must go deeper into our life, we must think for ourselves. We must not think merely of our physical interest, wherefrom our food may come, how we may clothe ourselves and how we may keep ourselves warm. These are ordinary instincts; even animals possess these instincts; they know how to look for food and go for shelter. We are in no way better when we merely foster these instincts of physical life. There is a better part in us, the God-part, and this the philosophers and mystics, the prophets and religious men cherish with greater devotion than common man gives to his bodily life. When this comes into ascendancy, we live in a purer atmosphere and we bring a purer atmosphere into the world. Then no one can come in contact with us without feeling benefited. Sometimes a cruel man is disarmed of his cruelty when he comes in contact with some one who is noble and forgiving and free from all harmful thoughts.

This is where we have a tremendous responsibility in life. We have formed the habit of calling certain things natural. Some one hurts us and we immediately feel that we are justified in being angry, that it is altogether natural for us to feel hateful. It is not natural for a man to be angry and hateful. It is a most unnatural thing. Even physical science tells us that it is unnatural, because it shatters our whole constitution. Our human body suffers from it. Whenever we yield to such feelings and encourage them in ourselves or in others, we cannot help but bring a very disas-

trous condition in our own life and in the life of the world. The solution of living, then, means that we must first cleanse our own house. In this lies the whole secret of true happiness and progress. We do not need to go out to preach and convert people. The best thing we can do is to live a life that is a true symbolic expression of our faith.

By faith I do not mean following a creed or a dogma. These may sometimes prove very dangerous and degrading. They sometimes cause a man to cling to his own religion and condemn everything else. Think of two people trying to divide the infinite sky overhead, saying: "This part belongs to me and that to you." It is equally absurd when people in their fanatical zeal try to divide the Infinite Majesty who is not limited by time, space or nationality. Blind belief can never redeem us or the world; it is rather what we are able to express through our life. We cannot perhaps convert any one else to our faith, but we can convert ourselves. We can live it. If we believe in love, we can live in love; we can create an atmosphere of love and purity and of all that is beautiful. Those who are at the same point of evolution will feel it; those who are not, may condemn, but their condemnation will not lessen its worth.

In spiritual life we require courage. Sometimes we have to stand alone. If the measure of success lay in public recognition, the very first year of this work would have been the last one. The measure of success is not in what others give us, but in what we ourselves receive from the joy of giving. Our concern is how much we are able to give, not what we may get from people; that is the leading spirit of our work. We have gathered here, a band of consecrated workers, not because we want something for ourselves, but because we believe in the power of this ideal. Suppose we stand alone, that does not make any difference. It only

makes us stronger. Whenever we stand alone with any ideal, that means it is deeply rooted. There is no religion that can put a stamp on God and claim a monopoly. There is no one big enough to say: "I hold the key to the mystery of the universe." We all hold the magic key of the universe in our own hand. Every soul has a secret sanctuary within; and when that is unlocked, another life unfolds; and in that unfolding we realize the fulfillment of our individual life and that of the world.

The world is not bad, but we can make it bad. The world is not dark, but we can make it dark. There is a beautiful parable that Gautama Buddha gives of a learned man who thought that he knew everything, and that there was no one equal to him. Because of this, he decided that the world was full of darkness and of ignorance, so whenever he went out he carried a lighted torch in his hand. One day a sage asked him: "Why do you carry a torch in broad daylight?" "Because the world is full of darkness", answered the scholar. "My friend", replied the sage, "the world is not full of ignorance, the world is not in darkness, but your own eyes are blind. The beneficent light of the sun is shining before you, behind you, above you, everywhere. Do you not see it? How can you say that this world is in the dark?"

When we blindfold our own eyes, whether it is through prejudice, ignorance, suspicion, false ideals or grief—there are many ways we can blindfold our eyes,—we condemn ourselves and we condemn others. In this work we hold no thought of condemnation. We have nothing against any religion or any human being who is trying to live his life and express his ideal in his own way. As that beautiful ancient Scripture says at the beginning: Let every one follow his own path, going forward freely and cheerfully, without ever striking a discordant note.

Dedication of a place can only be accomplished with a sense of spiritual presence. We can build castles and churches and magnificent palaces, but sometimes they are cold and lifeless. No place is of any great interest or benefit to people unless it becomes living and vibrant; and we make a place living by our own life, by our love and our interest in humanity. There are people who can go aloof, away from the world, and give themselves to meditation and to higher thinking. Perhaps they can find peace. It is far easier to find peace when we go away, that is, if we have the understanding; but it is far greater when we can forget ourselves in the thought of others. That is what I call true dedication and true consecration. There may be many obstacles. Whenever we are in public work, whenever we are trying to do something for others, we must always expect to be misunderstood. Is it wrong to be misunderstood? No. Christ was misunderstood. Buddha was misunderstood. All great men have been misunderstood. I think it is the measure of their greatness, that the world cannot understand them. So if we have a message, if we have a mission, if we have the flame of love and the sense of service within us, we must be able to endure all things.

Those who have the sense of consecration, who have a message that is all-inclusive and beneficent, they must be able to stand alone. Strength will come, because the source of strength lies not in our individual selfish self. It lies in that which gives us life and consciousness. Whenever through ordering of our life and consciousness we find our access to that source, we become a channel, an instrument, for bringing into this world that which is beautiful and beneficent. I hope and pray that those who come within the radius of this work may be imbued with this spirit, and that they may carry that message out into the world, because

the world needs it. If anything is needful in this world to-day, it is tolerance. It is very easy for us to fall into a rut, into a narrow sphere of life, and think that what we have is all in all; but it is ruinous for the individual, for the community, for the nation; and it is a very great barrier to world-progress.

We must be willing to sacrifice our individual self-interest in order to realize a larger interest, a greater fulfillment. This alone will produce an exalted type of humanity, of which the world is in great need. If there is anything that stands in our way, we must be rid of it in order that we may realize unity. No true religion at heart is opposed to this. There is but one God, not two or three or ten gods; there is but one. This thought runs through all Scriptures—Mohammedan, Chinese, Hebrew, Christian. You can quote it from any one of them, and from the Hindu sacred classics, written far back, perhaps four thousand years ago. We find the same thought in all—that there is but one God. When we are convinced that there is a God and that we are children of that great Infinite Being, then shall we find a point of contact, then shall we realize that there is one Fatherhood; and because there is one Fatherhood, there is also an established brotherhood, that all men are brothers. In that consciousness we shall find true peace.

I, Divine Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. To such my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain knowledge of all things and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking His blessings and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.—*Hermes Trismegistus.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The true church is not a separate mass of people, not a particular sect to be pointed out with the finger, not confined to one time or one place; it is rather a spiritual and invisible body of all the members of Christ, born of God, of one mind, spirit and faith, but not gathered in any one external city or place. It is a fellowship seen with the spiritual eye and by the inner man. It is the assembly and communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love,—a communion outside of which there is no salvation, no Christ, no God, no comprehension of Scripture, no Holy Spirit and no Gospel.—*Sebastian Franck, 16th Century.*

There are Brahmanas (God-knowers) all over the world.—*Asoka.*

False zeal is a tyrant who depopulates lands; toleration is a tender mother who fosters and cultivates them.—*Frederick the Great.*

It is necessary that we should be cautious in our writings, but splendid in our actions. . . . Perform great things, at the same time promising nothing great.—*Demophilus.*

That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform.—*Deuteronomy.*

A generous man compassion shows to bad as well as good, to all. He knows on earth no mortal lives who does not often fall through weakness.—*Ramayana.*

A man should never be ashamed to say he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.—*Pope.*

The more ideals a man has, the more contemptible, on the whole, do you continue to deem him, if the matter ends there for him; no courage shown, no privations undergone, no dirt or scars contracted in the attempt to get them (his ideals) realized.—*W. James.*

The man of noble character will bear with the man who is unlike himself, he will be kind to him, gentle, ready to pardon on account of his ignorance, on account of his being mistaken in things of the greatest importance; he will be harsh to no man, being well convinced of Plato's doctrine that every mind is deprived of truth unwillingly.—*Epictetus.*

BE STEADFAST IN TRUTH

Extract from letters of Swami Vivekananda

(Written to a Western Disciple and hitherto unpublished)

Be you holy and above all sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain forever; whatever not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your own standard of purity, morality and love of God; above all beware of all secret organizations. No one who loves God needs fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth or in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God." Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . .

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life. . . .

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart. We will try to do whatever we can for the good of humanity,—the rest depends upon the Lord. . . .

We do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His Name. . . .

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this country!!!

A TRUER DREAM

By Swami Paramananda

In this world of dream, my soul,
dream a truer dream,

Whose mighty pulse will lift thee
to a high pinnacle and make
thy body vibrant with new life.

Dream, my soul, of that happy realm
where joy abides alone in
unbroken oneness, and life
reigns in eternal surety.

Dream, my soul, where love dwells
in harmony, and beauty in
its virgin loveliness.

Dream of divine ecstasy whose eternal
melody is sung by all created
things.

Stop not dreaming this great dream
till its image speaketh to
thy soul with living tongue.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH MAN

*From a Dialogue between the Sage Astavakra and
King Janaka*

Weary of the endless diversity of speculative methods and conclusions, the wise one seeks repose and cares not to invent, or listen to argument, or refute.

The man of lofty aspirations feels no distractions.

The humble-hearted, wise man works without a sense of ego.

The mind of the liberated man shines like a lamp, its flame unagitated by ego or care. His doubts have vanished, all his fancies are gone and the world has lost its attraction.

Having no selfish incentive to thought and no selfish motive for action, he still thinks logically and acts well.

Listening to discourses on Truth, the man of slow understanding becomes dull and narrow.

The foolish one tries but fails to withdraw from the field of frivolity. The wise one retires at the dawning of Truth.

The pure, rational, beautiful, perfect, intangible, spotless Spirit cannot be known by those who are slaves of habit and slow of soul.

The stupid man, by a constant soulless repetition of prayer, succeeds not in securing liberation. Blessed is the man who apprehends Truth and attains freedom.

The ill-trained man thinks that the Spirit is one and pure, but he has not definite knowledge of it. He is ignorant and lives a life of desire.

The fearless soul of the liberated one does not place any reliance upon creeds and dogmas. He lives in peace.

He who has listened to the Truth, whose vision has become clear and mind independent, overlooks the artificial conventionalities of the world, leaves behind all sectarian narrowness, and rises above indifference.

He performs in a simple manner whatever duty demands of him. Like a child he does everything in a joyous spirit, without any idea of agreeable or disagreeable results.

It is generally seen that the foolish man is not quick to discover an opportunity and use it to his advantage. But hope of gain, and self-interest count not for one who is unattached.

The undeveloped man is often a prey to cares and void of high thoughts. The wise man, having a sound mind in a strong body, though ever thoughtful, is void of care.

The wise man behaves like a child. In no undertaking does he look for reward. He works with a mind purged of the pride of ego.

CHRISTMAS AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA

The impalpable spirit of Christmas brooded over Ananda-Ashrama on the afternoon of December 24th. Without, an icy wind from the snow-covered ranges of the north blew with unexampled fury; within, where the Christmas Eve Service was to be held, all was silent with an inner peace and radiant with an inner joy. The wind broke itself in vain against the stillness of this sanctuary. Long rows of ruby vigil lights glowed upon the different levels of the massive stone fireplace which suggested some primitive high altar with its great grey rocks from the Ashrama hills, its garlands and greeneries, its flaming candles in branched candlesticks and its two small shimmering trees all silver and white which caught the rosy light from the vigils. At the end of the room against a softly tinted hanging stood the Christ-Child altar bright with lights and flowers. Marigolds,—flower of the Virgin and flower of India,—held up their golden heads and formed a frame for the little picture of holy Mother and Babe. At the foot of the altar two more

little silver-white trees glistened and glowed and sparkled.

There was a question in the hearts of those who waited in the quiet room. Would the wind and cold isolate the Ashrama? Many had to come long distances and the afternoon was for bedding. But stronger than wind is the pull of the Spirit. They came, the friends of the Ashrama, they came over the separating miles, they came with frozen fingers but with warmth in their hearts, so that at four o'clock the big room was well filled. Just a whisper of voices, the tiny song of the Christmas candles and then Swami Paramananda was in the room quietly giving his Christmas message. It was a message of light, light in the heart where there must be eternal vigil, where the Christmas candles must always burn; light in the home radiating out over the world. The Christ-spirit, the Buddha-spirit, does not come with pomp and noise; it comes like the dawn, silently.

“Hail to Thee, Thou who comest at morn with gentle raiment, to open our sleep-worn eyes!

Not in dazzling splendor, but with soft white light . . .” read the Swami from one of his latest poems, a song of adoration to the dawn. He read the poem over twice that its true meaning might be caught and held. As at the Service on the preceding Sunday when the Swami spoke on “The Universal Christ”, the great note of universality and tolerance, of all-embracing unity, was sounded and sounded again. There was music, Christmas carols by the Ashrama choir and a lovely Russian hymn sung by a Slavic member, whose voice has a peculiarly pure and devotional quality. Every heart seemed overflowing with something that could not be put into words as the prayer brought the Service to its close. All seemed to feel that it was a rare spiritual experience, a very unusual experience.

That evening the Ashrama choir had planned to sing Christmas carols along the streets of La Crescenta, after the old English custom. But the member with the harp-guitar who was to play the accompaniments, said that his hands would freeze and the other members were sure that their voices would not carry above the roaring of the wind, so the carol singing had to be postponed till next year. When this was definitely decided those who had lingered were rewarded for their delay by an impromptu feast, a Christmas supper cooked then and there by the Swami under sudden inspiration. It was a large and happy circle that waited round the open fire while the feast was being prepared. The member with the harp-guitar played softly and sang and finally all joined in the Christmas carols.

After the supper the Swami read from his unpublished book of poems and crowned the evening with two Bengalee hymns to the Divine Mother which he sang at the special request of one of the members. Thus the guests went away carrying his song in their hearts like a fragrant memory.

In India an Ashrama is a sacred place of retreat for Sages and God-seekers. India's spiritual glory has sprung from its Ashramas. They are places of pilgrimage. Ananda-Ashrama proved on Christmas Eve that it also is a place of pilgrimage, which draws people in spite of all obstacles because of the yearning in their hearts for that which it has to give. America no less than India needs Ashramas. In this respect the letter from Swami Vivekananda written many years ago and placed in Swami Paramananda's hands some months after the founding of the Ashrama is of real import:

“Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this country!!!”

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The Introduction appeared in July and Chapters I-IV in subsequent numbers of 1924.)

V

LIFE AS A BRAHMACHARIN

My knowledge of Swami Paramananda's early religious life was gathered chiefly in India. He had many warm friends in Madras, Bangalore and Calcutta, who were glad to talk of him. I have always believed that the loving welcome I received in Madras was due in largest measure to the fact that I had been sent to India by him. Swami Brahmananda spoke of him always with the deepest affection, and now and then would relate some incident of his first days at the head monastery on the Ganges. He told me one evening, I remember, how much comfort and relief the Swami had brought him by his gentle touch when he was recovering from an attack of fever; and how invariably pleasing and refreshing he found every service that he rendered him. On one occasion when a second mail went by without bringing any word from the Swami, Swami Brahmananda showed the keenest anxiety and said almost as if he were scolding: "Tell the boy he must not leave us in this way without news. Tell him he must send a few lines, at least, every week."

From Swami Ramakrishnananda I learned most. He felt for the Swami such love as a widowed mother bears an only child. It was one of the deepest, most sacred feelings of his heart; and he was never tired of talking of their life together in Madras. I recall one day when he stood looking intently at a picture of the Swami for several minutes, then he turned to me and said: "Paramananda lived with me for six years and I was never able to find a single fault in him." This was a glowing tribute, coming as it did from one who was known to be the strictest disciplinarian of the

Order, so uncompromising in his demands on those who had taken up the religious life that many of the Brahmacharins (novices) shrank from his rigid training.

Basanta, the name by which the Swami was generally known during his novitiate, did not remain long at the head monastery after his admission. Swami Brahmananda felt that a more natural and fitting place for his strongly devotional nature was with a great devotee like Swami Ramakrishnananda. Also the President of the Order deemed it wise to put him for a while out of reach of those in his family who might harass him by threats or insistent persuasions to return home; so he was sent to Madras. The precaution almost proved abortive. At that time there was no through train and Swami Brahmananda arranged to have him break his journey at Puri, in order that he might make a pilgrimage to the ancient holy temple of Jaggernaut. At the Temple he ran against his aunt and a cousin, who also had come on pilgrimage to the Temple. He tried to avoid them; but they recognized him in the crowd and seized upon him. They did their utmost to thwart his efforts to continue southward. He remained unbending in his determination, however; they had no authority to check him; so they were forced to let him go on his way. A passion of spiritual fervor flamed within him. It made him unmindful of the loneliness and strangeness and discomforts of the journey. He sat in the corner of the railway carriage lost in meditation, barely touching food or moving from his seat during the entire interval of forty-eight hours.

Swami Ramakrishnananda gave him a joyful welcome. He had seen him in a dream sometime before; but the boy of his dream had had dancing eyes and thick waving hair parted in the middle, while the Brahmacharin who came to him had shaven head and in his eyes shone a graver light,

from the newly kindled fire of renunciation burning in his heart. This variance troubled Swami Ramakrishnananda, for he regarded the dream as full of auspicious promise; so scarcely had he greeted Basanta before he asked him how he had worn his hair when he first came to the monastery. Great was his satisfaction when he found on the smooth head a faint line where a part had been. His premonition about the dream was amply verified. He often told me that the Swami brought to him fresh life, inspiration and joy; that it was like a new birth for him. His care of the young Brahmacharin became one of his happiest concerns; and one of the workers at the Madras monastery told me he cherished him so tenderly that he would not let any one lay his hand on the boy, lest the touch might be too rude.

Basanta's feeling for the elder Swami is shown in these sentences from letters written to me while I was in India: "Now that you are in Madras and near a great soul, do as he wants you to do. I am not even worthy to carry the shoes of such great souls." "You do not need much of my advice nowadays, being constantly near an illumined soul." He gave to Swami Ramakrishnananda a rare love and reverence and was always overjoyed to serve him. When he came to America and could not render him personal service, he sought to be of use to him in other ways. He dedicated all the proceeds of the sale of his first book to Swami Ramakrishnananda and his work; and as his other books came out, he sent them freely in any quantities ordered, with the understanding that no return was to be made for them. There is in my keeping a letter from Swami Ramakrishnananda, in which he tells with loving pride that for some time the monastery at Madras had been maintained by the sale of the Swami's books.

The elder *Sannyasin* (monk) and the youthful Brah-

macharin lived together in what was known as the American ice-house—a large building with phenomenally thick walls, which had been constructed by an American Company for the storage of ice to cool the sun-heated people of Madras. The undertaking was a failure and the house had been transformed into a dwelling. It was occupied by a gentleman who had become a warm admirer of Swami Vivekananda during Swamiji's first visit to South India; and when Swami Ramakrishnananda came to Madras, he offered him the use of the first floor. It was several steps below the ground; and although the depth of wall made it cool, it was also dank and dark.

“There was nothing in it when Paramananda came”, Swami Ramakrishnananda told me one day, as we sat in the hall of the new monastery at Mylapore, a suburb of Madras. “But as soon as he arrived, things began to pour in. There is no doubt he is a pet child of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune). I had had nothing to tell me the time. The first offering brought was a clock. Then a gentleman gave us some cots, another gentleman some chairs, and soon the place was quite well fitted out.”

There was no luxury, scarcely comfort, and no idleness. They rose early and their first care was for the Shrine, which Swami Ramakrishnananda had established as soon as he reached Madras. The brass vessels used in worship were scoured with wood ash and tamarind. The vegetables were cut for the daily curry, which made up their one real meal. Then when bath, worship and noon meal were over, they would spread their mats, set out a low reading-desk, cover it with a freshly-washed cloth, and for two hours they would chant in the original Sanskrit and translate the Ramayana or the Mahabharata, the great sacred epics of India. Swami Ramakrishnananda was a remarkable

Sanskrit scholar; and it was this daily study with the tried teacher which gave to the younger student his rare understanding, not merely of the letter, but of the spirit of Sanskrit, so evident in his later translations of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads.

The days passed simply,—in worship, meditation, study and work. Often Swami Ramakrishnananda was away for classes and lectures. It was on one of these occasions of absence that the Brahmacharin made his first attempt at cooking. Swami Ramakrishnananda had been relentless in refusing to let the boy do anything in the kitchen, overheated by an open hearth fire. On this special day Swami Ramakrishnananda was very late in returning; nothing was ready for the noon offering to the Lord, so the Brahmacharin lighted the fire and began the noon meal. The dishes cooked were so delicate and savory, with so sweet a flavor of joy and devotion in them, that Swami Ramakrishnananda declared he had not tasted such food since he had left Bengal. This gave great encouragement to Basanta, who was trembling with anxiety lest his cooking might not be palatable or even edible. After that, Swami Ramakrishnananda grew more lenient and allowed Basanta to prepare the offering for the Shrine from time to time. Everything was cooked and everything was done for the Lord in their humble loving service. What they ate was to them literally the “remnant of the sacrifice,” as it says in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Although the kitchen was now open to him, there was still continual contention between the older and younger companion regarding the division of labor. Swami Ramakrishnananda insisted on keeping all the roughest tasks for himself, and he was unwilling to have Basanta practise the least austerity. He would say to him: “You do not need it.

Leave that for boys of coarser fibre." One day soon after Basanta arrived, he noticed some unusual red lines on his arm. He inquired what had caused them, and when he found they were the marks of the coarse straw mat which the boy spread on the floor for his bed, he hurried to the bazaar and came back with a cot, a quilt and some soft pillows. That night Basanta lay down on his bed sad at heart that so many comforts were being forced upon him.

He longed for opportunities to deny himself. Swami Ramakrishnananda was equally intent on seizing every opportunity to indulge him. It was a constant unspoken conflict between them. To escape from it, Basanta planned secretly to run away to the wilderness somewhere, in order to gain the privilege of real renunciation; but not long after he conceived the idea, he was wakened in the middle of the night by the quick touch of Swami Ramakrishnananda's hand on his face, his arm, his body. "You are still here," Swami Ramakrishnananda said in anxious tones. "I just had a dream that you had gone. Promise me that you will never go away without telling me." Basanta promised. Then Swami Ramakrishnananda talked to him until nearly dawn of the benefits and disadvantages of practising austerities, showing that it could harm as well as help, by putting undue strain on a delicate body. "Your body was not meant for such things," he said to Basanta as he left him. Basanta had promised to stay, but he still felt rebellious. At last in silent protest he shut himself up in his room and would not come out or eat for twenty-four hours, filling in his time by writing his first article—on "Freedom,"—later printed in the Bengalee magazine, the "Udbodhana," and mentioned with admiring comment by several publications.

Swami Ramakrishnananda's devotion for the boy was shared, perhaps in lesser degree, by many. The members

of the large family in the great house overhead showed him warm affection. The elder ladies especially brought him frequent offerings of sweetmeats and dainty dishes, which made him feel very shy and uncomfortable. There were also two gentlemen, exceptionally brilliant lawyers at the Madras bar, who came every afternoon after office hours in shining carriages with clanking harness to the Marina, the wonderful driveway along the seafront of Madras, bordered on one side by rolling surf and on the other by the University and government buildings with their beautiful gardens. These gentlemen would leave their carriages at the curb near the ice-house and walk up and down on the broad stretch of sandy beach, invariably ending their walk at the monastery door. Their first question always was, "Where is that Beaming Intelligence?" They had given Basanta this name when they had first seen him, before they knew his real name; and they still clung to it because they found it so eminently descriptive of him.

Basanta still gave great joy by his singing, as he had done in his childhood. Swami Ramakrishnananda took great pride in it and often invited a number of friends to hear him. There was likewise a group of Bengalee gentlemen, resident at Madras, representing the large English paper manufacturers, John Dickinson and Co., who invited him frequently to their house for an evening of music. Sometimes he paid more distant visits. One of these was to Vayambadi, a few hours' journey from Madras. A great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda lived there. He had never seen them, but he had learned to reverence them profoundly through hearing about them from Swami Ramakrishnananda; and he longed to dedicate his life to their service. Outer conditions made it impossible for him to join the Order, so he built a little Temple, where

every Sunday he preached to a large gathering, giving as best he could Sri Ramakrishna's teaching of tolerance, unity and all-embracing love. His position in the world was a very humble one and he had only what he earned from a stall in a local bazaar, where he sold dry goods and notions. With such modest resources, however, he opened a night school for low-caste boys and later one for girls. Both grew rapidly and became of the greatest helpfulness to the community. Every day the children gathered in the Temple for religious instruction, which he himself gave them; and he sought in every way to foster the highest ideals in their minds.

On Sri Ramakrishna's birthday he was in the habit of taking a life-size picture of the Master, winding round it bright and fragrant garlands, placing it on a platform upheld by bamboo poles, and carrying it to every house of his village. All the little children of both schools with many others followed after, singing holy songs; and the parents came with him, the men carrying flaming torches to light the way as night fell. Along the streets of the village each window-sill and veranda rail had its close row of flickering rustic lights—earthen saucers of oil with floating wicks; and earnest souls would run out with offerings for the Lord and refreshment for the singers. Sometimes the procession lasted until far into the night.

It was among these simple devout people that Basanta spent some time. The founder of the Temple and the schools had gone to the monastery at Madras to see Swami Ramakrishnananda and had met the new Brahmacharin. Feeling the spiritual charm of his gentle youthful personality he had begged him to return to Vayambadi with him. He even tried to induce him to remain there permanently. Basanta could not consider this, but he consented to go for a brief

interval. His visit was made an occasion for general feasting and rejoicing. The children exhibited their various talents; they sang for him, and he sang for them; and finally he was persuaded to speak for them in the Temple. He gave quite a lecture, but he told Swami Ramakrishnananda afterwards that he almost fainted from shyness. He paid other visits later on and the whole community grew to look for his coming; but Swami Ramakrishnananda was reluctant to have him go, fearing the effect of the heavy food and continual festivities on his frail constitution. "I was afraid they would kill him with their enthusiasm and devotion," he said in telling me of it.

Except for infrequent interruptions like this, the daily routine moved along its quiet way unbroken for nearly six months. Then suddenly one day in early October, near the time of the *Durga Puja*, the great Divine Mother Feast in Bengal, a letter came from the President of the Order calling Basanta back to Calcutta. Swami Brahmananda wrote that certain members of his family, indignant over the boy's persistence in his new life, had threatened to sue the Ramakrishna Mission for admitting a minor. The President thought it would be better for him to return to the monastery on the Ganges, go on from there to his home in East Bengal and come to some definite understanding with his family. Soon after reaching Calcutta, however, Swami Brahmananda fell ill, and he found special pleasure in the delicate, loving care which the young boy gave him; so Basanta stayed to nurse him and the visit to his native village was forgotten.

(Chap. VI. "Final Renunciation" will appear in February number)

Who learns and learns, but acts not what he knows is one who ploughs and ploughs, but never sows.—*Sufi Saying.*

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



FEBRUARY 1925

CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT

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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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CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT

Class Lecture by Swami Paramananda



EEP students of the human constitution know that our thoughts, whether high or low, come to us according to the attitude we take; and these students mark in our constitution certain centres which correspond to our different attitudes of mind, to our aspirations, to the sum total of our inclinations. If a man possesses low tendencies, it only means that his mind is focused on a low centre. But if the same mind becomes focused on a high centre, then we find that person aspiring to lofty ideals. It is like climbing. Your objective is the mountain-top, but as you climb you go through varied grades, and as you rise your vision unfolds, the view grows more extended and your interest changes. It is impossible for a person standing on a low level or on the plain to conceive of what you are beholding as you ascend towards the heights. According to our position our vision shifts, and according to our vision we are inclined to act. We cannot control our action whimsically. It is only as we control our thought, as we train it to remain focused on a high point, that we are able to work out our physical life satisfactorily. This is one of the truths people overlook. No outer form of training can possibly improve us until our inner centre of vision is established.

What do we mean by one centre or another? Let us find a term more nearly related to our life, to our interests;

something that will give us a key to practical wisdom. What are we trying to do and how may we accomplish what we are striving for? Everyone wants to achieve success in life. There is no one who does not want to succeed. When people say they do not care whether they succeed or fail, it is not that they do not want to be happy and successful; but through constant failure and defeat they have come to accept a morbid state of mind which does not represent what they really desire. Such a condition of mind is degrading, it means that they have fallen into a lower centre of consciousness. What we should cultivate within us is the opposite attitude. Through training, through practice, we can learn to keep our mind on a high level; then all our actions must correspond. I say "must" because there is no other way that the physical life can act. Our senses, our nervous system, our physical being, are constantly responding to our mental state.

Our physical life and our inner life are inter-related. When a person is mentally disturbed, see how quickly every fibre of his being responds and shows a corresponding reaction. Similarly, when a person is calm and composed mentally, his physical being grows calm; his nervous system is restored, his eyes become steady, his whole body is without a tremor. Sometimes a person accomplishes this unconsciously, because his mind is creating in him a centre of rest and peace. These are facts. Some people recognize them as facts, but they think it is not in their nature to have a composed attitude. There are many who argue: "I was born restless. My nervous system is differently organized from others." These are fictitious arguments. We create our own restlessness and also we create that peacefulness which sometimes manifests within us.

If we want a life that is balanced, full of co-ordination

and order—and that means a life that is fruitful—we must cultivate the right attitude of mind. We cannot have a fruitful life without these qualities and they do not come accidentally. They come through our mental attitude. A person cannot have his mind fixed on a high level without transforming his whole life. I can find no word which is so expressive as transformation. Our life does become transformed actually. But it does not become transformed merely by some superficial mental theory. That is the reason why we find in this world so many people with intellectual concepts who can talk glibly and who have plenty of theories, yet who in their practical life are absolutely barren. Many, in fact the majority of people, are on this plane of mental concepts and nothing beyond, and even these do not influence their life. Their mind creates a tremendous amount of excitement which soon dies away. That which enters into our practical living brings us the greatest benefit, but we cannot practise something other than what we ourselves absolutely believe in. Certain ideas become a habit with us and are constructive factors in our life. When some ideal or perhaps some person is very dear to us, we find our whole thought, our whole action, everything transformed.

It stands to reason we cannot think of one thing and do another; that is, we cannot be on one plane of consciousness and act as if we were on another. We have to be on the same plane as that which we desire to express through our life. That is the reason why in India the great teachers, the Yogis, worked out a regular scale of centres in the physical body. If a man is full of ordinary animal propensities, there is a reason for it; he has lowered his standard and his mind dwells in the lower centres. If a man is intellectual, he has raised his standard and his consciousness

rises to higher centres. Our physical being will not respond to anything other than where our consciousness is centred. If our mind is well established, then it is very simple for our physical being to act accordingly.

In our modern life we pay greater importance to the physical, to the outer, than to the inner. A man thinks he can maintain his health merely by looking after his body, by feeding himself certain food, by clothing himself in a certain way and by creating for himself a good home with all comforts. By these artificial means he almost believes that he is going to live forever, but it does not work out that way. We must pay a certain amount of attention to the exterior, it is true, but the exterior is not all in all. To believe it is and to depend upon it wholly, shows an impoverished quality in our inner life. It is the inner conception and inner tendencies which govern our outer life. A person may even unconsciously preserve his physical constitution if his mind is in tune and harmonious. There is not so much wear and tear, there are fewer worries and anxieties. You may reply: "Perhaps such a man has not so much responsibility as we have; perhaps he has not so many causes for worry." It is not a question of how many causes we have for anxiety. There are some people who are always anxious. It is a disease of mind. They multiply, they magnify all their troubles by their mental attitude. What I am trying to point out is that when we come to a certain form of understanding, of inner balance, it shapes our outer life. It is not a question of what we have or how much we have or where we are placed.

Our outer conditions and the qualities we express through our life are governed by our quality of mind. If we lack the right mental attitude, it does not make any difference where we are placed. Under difficult conditions we shall

go to pieces. It is not the lack of material things or the abundance of material things that can preserve us. I am not saying this as a visionary; it is the practical experience of every-day life. Our happiness, our success, our fullness of life, are determined by where we place our mind and the extent to which we can control it. Impulses rise, but one who has control over his mind, he knows how to direct it; and through this control of mind, he controls his destiny. There is no individual who lacks this power. We all have it.

It is the same mind that is used for high thought and for low thought. Every thought leaves its mark on our mind. For instance, if for a few minutes at a time we think high, constructive thoughts, what is the reaction upon our whole being? We feel revived, we feel strengthened, we feel as if we had taken a bath. It refreshes us and we are better equipped for the next step. In the same way the opposite thought works. If we allow ourselves to dwell for any length of time on a wrong thought, on unhappy or unwholesome thought, on thoughts of anger, hatred or jealousy, we shall be devitalized; and not only for the time being shall we feel devitalized, we shall find ourselves wholly unequal to the next step. Mind is conveying both of these influences in our life, yet it is not the fault of the mind. One of our great mystics used to say that the mind in its original state is like a sheet of white cloth which we dye different colors. Red dye gives it a red color, black dye makes it black; and once we have dyed it a certain shade, it is very difficult to get rid of that color. It requires hard work. Just so is it with the mind; it takes the color we give it. That is the reason we are asked to use discrimination.

Also we must avoid doing things in excess. Too often we lack a sense of balance and proportion. When we have

these the practical life becomes ordered and focused. That life is steadfast which is fastened to a definite point. The life that is fluctuating is very unsatisfying to the individual. No one likes to be tossed about. We do not like indecision even in ordinary matters. Indecision eats up our vitality, it weakens us; and indecision always comes through lack of knowledge, through lack of equilibrium. Decision never fails to come when our gaze is steadfast. In India they call this state of mind *ekagra*, one-pointed. Christ speaks of it as making the eye single. He means the same thing, one-pointedness; and we cannot be one-pointed unless our interest is one-pointed.

We cannot pretend anything; but the unfortunate part is that the majority of people think they can pretend outwardly, no matter what they have within. We must make our mind and mouth one; thus has it been spoken simply by a great teacher in India. When a man has learned to make his mind and mouth one, he has accomplished his purpose; that is, his exterior and interior nature work in rhythm. The best type of life is that which runs in rhythm; which is not always calculating "What shall I say," "What shall I do," or "How shall I conduct myself," but is established in a certain rhythm which carries it. This is a part of individual training and that training we can all acquire through our daily life, through our habits of living and through discipline.

Discipline is a very essential thing in every man's life, because it is the basis of strength. This may sound stern and hard. Why should we discipline ourselves? Discipline requires that we make sacrifice. But it is not really sacrifice. It only means trying to keep up our standard. If there is a low propensity, ignoble thought, or some tendency that would drag us down, to discipline that and to maintain

our standard means conquest, victory; and it always brings the individual to a higher form of manifestation. Our inward power grows. We leave a great part, in fact the biggest part, of our life unmanifested when we merely surround our mind and consciousness with physical being, its limitations and imperfections. But to our inner life there is no limit. We set the limit by our mental attitude and the quality of our thought.

MINDFULNESS OF GOD

From the Adi-Granth

(Sacred Scriptures of the Sikhs, containing the teaching of their Leader, Guru Nanak)

The state of him who remembers God cannot be told.

If one tries to tell it, he repents of it afterward;

There is not paper enough, nor pens, nor writers.

Sitting silent, they reflect on him who remembers Him.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

If one is mindful of Him, there arises intelligence and wisdom in the mind.

If one is mindful of Him, knowledge of the whole world comes.

If one is mindful of Him, he does not go with the Lord of Death.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

If a man remembers Him, he is not stopped on the road.

If he remembers Him, he becomes known with honor.

If he remembers Him, he does not go proudly his way.

If he remembers Him, he is joined with virtue.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

As it is very difficult to gather the mustard seeds that escape out of a torn package and are scattered in all directions; so when the human mind runs in diverse directions and is occupied with many things in the world, it is not an easy task to collect and focus it.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

We must not lower the level of our aim that we may more surely enjoy the complacency of success.—*Ruskin*.

Before you do anything, think of God, that His light may precede your action.—*Sextus, the Pythagorean*.

Our imagination so enlarges the present by dint of continually reflecting on it and so contracts eternity by never reflecting on it, that we make a nothing of eternity and an eternity of nothing; and all this has such living roots in us, that all our reason cannot suppress them.—*Pascal*.

Even from poison may nectar be taken; even from a child, gentleness of speech; even from a foe, prudent conduct; and even from an impure substance, gold.—*Laws of Manu*.

Give not thy tongue too great liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—*Francis Quarles*.

By the serenity of his thoughts a man blots out all actions, whether good or bad. Dwelling within his Self with serene thoughts, he obtains imperishable happiness.

If the thoughts of a man were so fixed on God as they are on the things of this world, who would not then be freed from bondage?—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*.

SIMPLICITY OF SPIRIT*From Letters of Isaac Penington*

(Quaker Mystic, 17th Century)

Wait on the Lord in humility of heart and in subjection to what He inwardly by His Spirit daily makes manifest; that thou mayest come into the change which is wrought in the heart and conscience by the holy, eternal, ever-living power.

Thou hast found the pearl; the Lord, in mercy to thee, has discovered to thee the true pearl. Now, this remains: that thou be a wise merchant, selling all to purchase it. Thou must keep back nothing. The living Truth, the holy power of righteousness, must be dearer to thee than all. If father, mother, livelihood, liberty, friendship, outward advantages, or anything else, be dearer to thee than He, He will look upon thee as unworthy of Him; and cannot but turn from thee, and suffer hardness and darkness to come again upon thee.

Be faithful in the little, in the day of small things, if ever thou desire to enjoy and be ruler over much. But be thou simple like a child, not taking care what to answer wise professors nor what to answer the reasoning of thy own mind; but seeing thou hast felt the demonstration of Truth from God's Holy Spirit, O breathe unto the Lord to preserve thee in the innocency and simplicity thereof, that the Lord may still be with thee.

O Friend! hast thou a sense of the way to the Father? Then be careful that thy spirit daily bow before Him, and wait for breathings to Him from His pure spirit, that He would continue His mercy to thee; keeping thee in the true sense and making thy way more and more clear before thee every day. Yea, and bearing thee up in all the exercises and trials which may befall thee, in every kind; that, by

His secret working in thy spirit, and helping thee with a little help from time to time, thou mayest still be advancing nearer and nearer towards the Kingdom; until thou find the Lord God administer an entrance unto thee thereinto, and give thee an inheritance of life, joy, righteousness and peace therein; which is strength unto the soul against the sorrow and trouble which ariseth in the mind, for want of God's presence and power revealed there.

GIVE UP SELF

By Swami Paramananda

I give my peace unto thee,
 but thou must give up self.
 Be not affrighted, my child,
 There is no loss in giving up self.
 Fear brings the anguish
 and it brings the doubt;
 But doubt, anguish and fear
 will all leave thee
 When thou hast given up self.
 I shall dwell in thee
 when thou hast given up self;
 Nay, I shall possess thee, fill thee
 and own thee
 When thou hast given up self.

Ananda-Ashrama.

October, 1924.

The human body is a steed that goes freest and longest under a light rider, and the lightest of all riders is a cheerful heart.—*John Burroughs*.

He who loses wealth loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; but he that loses his courage loses all.—*Cervantes*.

FAITH AND MIRACLE

By Sister Daya

Once an earnest seeker came to the Lord Buddha and questioned Him as to miracles. Said the disciple: "So sayest thou there are no miraculous and wonderful things?" And the Blessed One replied: "Is it not a wonderful thing, mysterious and miraculous to the worldling, that a man who commits wrong can become a saint, that he who attains to true enlightenment will find the path of truth and abandon the evil ways of selfishness? The disciple who renounces the transient pleasures of the world for the eternal bliss of holiness, performs the only miracle that can truly be called a miracle."

Never did any great teacher more clearly define the value of so-called miracles and their place in true religion, yet religion and miracle have been related in the mind of man since the beginning of time. Is it that humanity doubts its spiritual vision to such an extent that it feels some outer sign is necessary to place the stamp of divinity on an inspired life? Surely the Magdalen needed no sign, no water turned into wine, to convince her that He who touched her heart and made it blossom with new faith, was a Master of miracle. The world will acclaim the one who gives sight to the physically blind, but being blind itself spiritually, it is unaware of the greater miracle,—the opening of the eyes of a soul.

The supernatural or supernormal is not always a sign of spiritual power. Sought for as an end in itself it becomes merely a psychic expression and may be accompanied by egotism, arrogance and selfishness, the very antithesis of spirituality. But coming as the result of lofty yearning, as an incident to the spiritual life, it partakes of the true miracle of holiness. There are undoubtedly finer realms of

life, subtler laws of being, beyond man's material control but responsive to the mind and will. When mind and will become purified on the long road to divine vision, they may manifest what seems to be supernatural powers. This often is an unconscious manifestation. In the case of great illumination where the soul is all but merged in the Infinite, omniscience floods through it, as it were, breaking forth in the miraculous. But the real miracle from which this proceeds is forever invisible. That which can be seen and sensed is always under Law. Spirit alone "bloweth where it listeth", and who can behold its swift touch upon a soul, its sudden flame dispelling darkness. The true miracle of the heart can thus never be profaned by the gaze of the curious, for only God can enter that sanctuary, nor can it be misinterpreted by the vulgar. Not so with the lesser miracles. Though they may be the fruit of holiness their appeal is seldom holy. They furnish material for dogma, intolerance and fanaticism. Those who have eyes to see need no proof of the soul's immortal nature, no resurrection can give them a deeper vision of the eternal Christ than they already possess. For them the outer miracle has its beauty and sacredness because of the true miracle which it signifies. It is the golden lettering on the holy missal, the words of the divine song.

The majority of men are bound by the laws of life as by iron chains, therefore anything that seems to transcend those laws, to break those chains, is grasped for with clutching fingers. The worker of outer miracles will never lack human following, whereas the worker of the divine miracle may seem to stand alone. Few there are who seek God for His own sake, who have but one thought, one desire: to give to the Divine. They flock to Him when there appears to be a chance of gaining something immediate and definite

for themselves. As in a fire men trample upon each other in the rush for safety, just as madly do they besiege one who they think may be the dispenser of health, wealth or success, even casting the spiritual gift aside for the sake of these apparent benefits. Small wonder that the Teacher looks upon them with compassionate eyes. They are suffering and they are blind. They cannot see that the miracle of holiness would give them all that they seek and infinitely more. They are like children with their toys, not yet prepared for life's realities.

But miracles may arouse faith, you say. That may be true for the heart that is temporarily obscured by some dark night of the soul; to the skeptical and doubting mind, however, they bring no real message. What materialist was ever permanently convinced by wonder-working? He soon doubts either the evidence of his own senses or the good faith of others. Not so with the miracle of a holy life. Again and again a word or a touch from an illumined soul has transformed the blackest, the most stubborn of hearts. Do not think that the holy ones of God go forth with the idea of doing anything miraculous; their minds are utterly given to the Divine. The miracle is the outgrowth of their being. We cannot help but express what we are. If we would manifest God-like powers, we must be God-like, and that we can never be if we seek or desire anything less than God. When we have found Him, have united with Him, then His power works through us. He may send us forth or draw us away to solitude and silence, and who knows what may flow through our hearts and hands. Such surrender requires supreme faith. Faith is the life-breath of miracle. Sri Ramakrishna says: "Faith is omnipotent. Before it the powers of nature all shrink and give way. What is more, sin and iniquity, worldliness and ignorance all go

out of sight before faith. Yes, faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. Thou canst do without all other things; only thou must have faith."

We can have faith in lesser things and we can have faith in the greater and according to our faith shall we receive. How many miracles of Christ were made possible because of the faith of the recipient. Even in the material world what can we do without faith? It is the road of all achievement. No scientist ever accomplished anything without it. Robbed of our faith we are robbed almost of our life. It is the supreme instrument of accomplishment and it is in the hands of every man. There is no limit to what it can do. It is the secret of miracle in all religions, of all the wonders we read of in the lives of the holy.

We say we have faith, but how do we show it? Have we the faith to lay down our lives in absolute trust? It must be more than a belief that God will take care of us. That would imply a selfish concern. No drop of egotism must poison the faith of the God-aspiring soul. He must know that whatever comes to him can come but from that Source. He will not sit supinely waiting for that Power to act. He himself will act with surrendered heart, with supreme trust that God will direct his actions. Armed with such living faith what is impossible? Christ gave but one formula for magic in all His Gospel: "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto yonder mountain, remove hence and it shall remove". This transcendent faith, this supreme love was the secret of the Christ miracle, the Buddha miracle, the miracle of every divine life that has ever been lived. It was because of this that Gautama Buddha forbade absolutely the performing of miracles within his Order. He knew how easily the hearts of men

are englamoured and therefore he held before them constantly the one pure Light, the Wonder of wonders. If the religion of Christianity had rested merely on the outer miracles of Christ it would not have survived a generation. It is because of the miracle of the Christ life that it has endured through the centuries. Religion is not a system of dogma; its strength does not lie in outer signs and marvels. The very word religion conveys to us the spiritual idea behind it. Re-ligio: to bind back,—to bind the human soul back to God. In this sense religion must always be united with the miracle of redemption and that is impossible without faith.

Let us absorb the truth of this into our very being and make it our own. We seek the hidden and mysterious when the very innermost secrets of life have been laid before us since the beginning of time; not only laid before us but urged upon us through the ages: "Have faith—have love—seek the Kingdom within—all things shall be added." Are we deaf, are we blind that we pass these things by so lightly? Have they become for us merely words? Let us shake off our dullness. Let us cease scattering our forces in a thousand directions and bend all our energies towards the one, simple truth of God in our soul. Let us pray for nothing less than faith, nothing other than love—love for the Divine. Let us be unwavering in that prayer in the face of hunger, want and even death. Then shall we see whether divine words are ever spoken lightly, or divine promises unfulfilled. Swami Paramananda puts it all in these few lines: "Miracles are only performed where there is fitness of condition. There is a miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of faith. When a man is inspired by love what can he not do! He will jump into the fire; he overcomes even nature through sheer force of selfless love."

CHINESE MAXIMS*From the She-King*

Do not speak lightly; your words are your own. Do not say: This is of little importance; no one can hold my tongue for me. Words are not to be cast away. Every word finds its answer; every good deed has its recompense.

Looked at in friendly intercourse with superior men, you make your countenance harmonious and mild, anxious not to do anything wrong. Looked at in your chamber, you ought to be equally free from shame before the light which shines in. Do not say: This place is not public; no one can see me here. The approach of spiritual beings cannot be calculated beforehand, but the more should they not be slighted.

I am pleased with your intelligent virtue, not loudly proclaimed nor portrayed, without extravagance or changeableness, without consciousness of effort on your part, in accordance with the pattern of God.

Thus King Wan watchfully and reverently with entire intelligence served God, and so secured the great blessing.

Let us not say that Heaven is high aloft above us. It ascends and descends about our doings; it daily inspects us wherever we are.

Great Heaven is intelligent and is with you in all your doings. Great Heaven is clear-seeing, and is with you in all your wanderings and indulgences.

God is with you, have no doubts in your heart.

To break the ranks of lions is but an easy thing,

But reckon him a lion who over self is king;
He becomes God's lion—that, and nothing less,
Who by God's help conquers his own selfishness.

—*Jalaluddin Rumi.*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The Introduction appeared in July and Chapters I-IV in subsequent numbers of 1924. Chap. V in January number)

VI**FINAL RENUNCIATION**

One early morning near the close of November, Swami Vivekananda was sitting with Swami Premananda on the long arched verandah outside the dining room of the Monastery at Belur, drinking a cup of tea, when he called Basanta to him and asked: "Khoka (child), can you beg for me?" The boy assented instantly. He did not know that this was one of the tests preliminary to receiving *Sannyas* (final vows of renunciation.) To him there was no element of test or humiliation in it; he was only content the master had asked a service of him. Swami Vivekananda then told him what he should do. He was to put on a ragged cloth and go from house to house in humble silence, giving no hint of who he was or whence he came. He should stand at the gate and wait for alms. If nothing was given, he should pass on; if something was brought, he should accept it, whatever it was; but he must speak no word.

When the boy was ready, he came back to Swami Vivekananda, who exclaimed in glad tones: "You do not know how happy it makes me to see you like that. How well it becomes you." "Wait," he added, "I will give you your first alms;" and he ran to the storeroom, took a little rice and some raw vegetables and dropped them into the begging bag. Then he sent the boy out along the dusty, sun-beaten road. His way was not an easy one. At one house he was strongly rebuked for leaving his parents; at another, a group of gentlemen read him a long lecture against begging; at several others all the ladies of the house wept over him, saying: "Have you no mother to keep

you at home? You are too young and delicate, too little used to hardships, to take up such a life. It hurts us to see you as a ragged beggar, how much more must it hurt your own people." At another place they would not take him seriously, but exclaimed: "Your rags are only a disguise, you are merely playing at begging. Are you a prince?" Basanta heard everything in silence. Once only did he make reply and that was by a mute gesture of refusal, when some one wished to give him money.

He returned to the Monastery about noon and laid the fruits of his begging before Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji was overjoyed, and calling Swami Premananda, he told him to use a little of it each day for the offering in the Chapel. "There is no holier offering than this pure food begged by a pure soul. Sri Ramakrishna was especially fond of such food," were his words. He then asked Basanta if he could cook, and the Brahmacharin answered "Yes." He really knew very little about it, but he was confident that knowledge would be given him if he went about his task with prayerful devotion. Swamiji waited until two o'clock for his mid-day meal. All the others at the Monastery had eaten two hours before, but he would have only what Basanta was preparing. When at last it was set before him, he declared that he had never tasted sweeter food; and he told the boy to give some to each member of the Monastery. "Food begged by such a pure heart must purify whoever eats it," he said. The Brahmacharin himself he fed from his own plate, which in India is one of the tenderest expressions of loving commendation a master can give a disciple.

A few days after this, news came to the Monastery that the husband of Basanta's eldest sister, a high official in the service of a native ruler, was lying dangerously ill at his

home in Calcutta. Basanta went to see him at once. When he entered the sick room, the brother-in-law was moved by such intensity of feeling that despite his extreme weakness, he rose up on his bed and embraced him. He passed away a short time after. Being a man of exceptional qualities, his death meant a great loss to the family. The President of the Mission sent Basanta immediately to his home in East Bengal to console them. At the same time he told him to reach some definite agreement with his father about his future course of action.

The father and his entire household were in such joy over his coming that they almost forgot their grief; and they spent themselves in attempts to break down his resolution and draw him back to the world. They even tried to persuade him to marry. Nothing, however, could turn him from his chosen vocation; but he showed no impatience at their efforts. He gave of himself generously to every one, playing with the little children, talking over family perplexities and difficulties with the older members, and doing his utmost to shed brightness and comfort on all. Especially did he seek to bring consolation and peace to his aging father. Once more he sang holy songs to him at the twilight hour, as in his boyhood; he read aloud the sacred books of those earlier days, and shared with him his deeper thoughts. This close spiritual companionship was very sweet to the yearning heart of the elder man and he longed to have it continue indefinitely; but a stronger power was at work, one he could not conscientiously oppose. At last his full consent to the new life was given, given sadly, it is true, but with frankly acknowledged reverence for his son's unfaltering dedication to what he knew to be a loftier ideal. How fully the son has justified his father's sacrifice is known to all those who have followed the Swami's life of

tireless devotion to mankind. It is to be regretted that the father did not live to enjoy the fruits of this sacrifice, but he was already seventy years of age and passed away a few months later.

While Basanta was in his village home, Swami Vivekananda sent for Swami Ramakrishnananda to confer with him regarding some important matters in the Mission. Swami Ramakrishnananda himself related that he had been at the Monastery beside the Ganges only a short time when Swami Vivekananda inquired of him: "What has become of that young Brahmacharin who came from Madras and whose body was so shining and full of light?" Swami Ramakrishnananda replied: "He is with his family." Swami Vivekananda asked again: "What is he doing there so long?" Swami Ramakrishnananda wrote this to Basanta. The boy had been away about a month and was already growing restless and eager to be once more at the Monastery, but he shrank from inflicting the pain which he knew his going would cause his father and the whole family. The letter now provided an urgent reason for cutting short his visit and a few days later he was again at Belur.

It was not long after this that Basanta received *Sannyas*. Swami Vivekananda approached him one day as he sat near the banyan tree behind the Monastery and asked him abruptly: "Would you like to become a Swami?" Basanta was overwhelmed with surprise. There were young men who had been in the Order three or four years, yet who were still Brahmacharins; and it was customary to extend the novitiate over a much longer period than he had served. His reply, however, was given without faltering,—he was willing to do whatever Swamiji wished, and the question implied what Swamiji's wish was.

The ceremony of giving *Sannyas* is never public. It is

for the master and disciple alone. The formal preparation for it is brief and simple. The real preparation has taken place during the varying probationary intervals, when the Brahmacharin is subjected to many tests and disciplines. The Upanishads are full of accounts of disciples who served for years on lonely mountain-tops, tending the master's cattle; or who kept solitary vigil beside the sacred fire while the master made long pilgrimage to some distant shrine. It is told that one disciple lived with the great teacher Sankaracharya for eleven years before a word was spoken to him by the master. It is through such days of patient, undemanding service and submissive waiting that the heart is made ready to enter the next stage of spiritual life. Here and there, however, is found a heart so purged and selfless that it has no need of these preparatory disciplines.

When the time for initiation is at hand, the Brahmacharin begins his preparation by dyeing a new cloth flame color, doubly symbolic,—of the purifying fire of renunciation and of the flame of wisdom kindled from that fire. In Bengal and elsewhere in Northern India the dye is made by rubbing a wet stone on a special rock so hard that a saying runs, the neophyte who has the patience to dye his cloth will have patience enough to bear bravely all the hardships of his future life of denial. The paste gained by the rubbing is dissolved in water and makes a bright orange or *gerua* color. The cloth is dipped in this, hung up to dry and laid away for the initiation. The day preceding the ceremony, the Brahmacharin's head is closely shaven, all except a small lock on the crown of the head. A Brahmin priest then comes and performs the regular funeral rites, to typify the death of the Brahmacharin as a man of the world and his re-birth as a man of God; or the passing

into another realm of existence, in which all values are reversed. Henceforth the personal must yield at every point to the universal; and giving up becomes the measure of privilege, not acquiring.

On the day of the initiation an altar fire is lighted and oblations poured upon it as symbols of the Brahmacharin's past, which must be consumed that a fresh life of selfless consecration may spring from the ashes of the old life. The master then ties the flame-colored cloth about the loins of the disciple. The religious name is given, and the remaining lock on the head is cut to signify the severing of all worldly ties, that they may be rebound on a loftier, more inclusive spiritual plane. Nothing is destroyed; everything is expanded and exalted. The individual's family becomes merged in the larger household of the whole human race, which the Sannyasin must serve with self-forgetting devotion and impartial loyalty.

It was by such rites as these that on full-moon day in January, 1902, Basanta became Swami Paramananda. At the ceremony, however, he sat by the sacrificial fire between Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda, who shared the sponsorship of his new vocation. Although it was Swami Vivekananda who gave him *Sannyas*, it was Swami Ramakrishnananda who nurtured and watched over his spiritual life. When in the beginning Swami Brahmananda had sent him to Madras he had said to him: "Stay with Swami Ramakrishnananda for three years and everything will be done. Your character will be fully formed in every way. Nothing more will be necessary."

The ceremony of *Sannyas* over, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda each wished to keep the young Sannyasin with him. Swami Vivekananda was setting out for Benares and asked Basanta to accompany him—he still

clung to the boyish name. Swami Ramakrishnananda was returning to Madras and begged so insistently to take the boy back with him that Swami Vivekananda waived his claim and the new Swami once again turned his face to the south. (Chap. VII. "Years in Madras." March No.)

THE HAND OF THE SPIRIT

Extract by Dr. Carl Patton

It is not where nature puts you, nor what sort of robe she throws around your shoulders, but what spirit lives within you that counts. And this spirit in which you live, though it is the most intangible thing about you, is after all the most manifest. You cannot hide it if you would. It gets into your gait, makes you drag your heels or lift them, and throws your chest out or drops it down between your shoulders. It gets into your voice and gives it the ring of the bugle or the whine of the bagpipe. It gets into your speech and turns your common conversation into a paeon or a dirge. It gets into your face, turns the corners of your mouth up or down, makes crow's feet around your eyes, and writes its name in lines that the smallest child can read. Into every little word or action the unseen hand of the spirit in which you live, squeezes the juice of laughter or tears, and seasons everything you do with the essence of victory or defeat. Almost anything else about yourself you can hide—your age, the condition of your wardrobe, but the one thing you cannot hide is the invisible, tangible something we call your spirit. That goes before you wherever you go, like a pillar of cloud by day. It stays behind you wherever you have been, like a pillar of fire by night. Deceive yourself about anything else if you want to, but make no mistake about this—the one thing about you that everybody knows is the spirit in which you live.

REPORT

On January 5th, after three months at Ananda-Ashrama, Swami Paramananda was once again eastward bound with the Vedanta Centre of Boston as his destination. According to his custom he broke the trip midway, stopping at St. Louis, Cincinnati and Dayton. It was the Swami's intention to remain away from California at least six weeks, but a sudden change of plan is bringing him back in time to conduct the regular Sunday afternoon Service at the Ashrama on February 8th. During the early months of the year, hardly a day goes by that fails to bring its visitors to the Ashrama from the eastern states, for this is the tourist season in California. How did these voyagers from far-distant points hear of the Ashrama? This question is often asked the strangers who come and their answers only go to prove how subtle and far-reaching are the connecting threads that draw people here. One young couple were led through having purchased five bound volumes of the "Message" at a book stall in Los Angeles. Some ladies from Oteora Park, N. Y., had heard the Swami speak there when he was the guest of Dr. William Norman Guthrie. They had only recently learned of the Ashrama and were delighted to renew their connection with something that had given them such true inspiration.

Lately a new department of the work has been organized by the Swami,—the Department of Arts and Crafts. The first of its activities has been incense making. Under the Swami's guidance, sweet smelling herbs were gathered from the Ashrama hills. These were ground with various Indian spices and then moulded, much as they make the incense sticks in the Indian monasteries. These with hand-illuminated book marks, pretty book covers, picture post cards with views of the Ashrama, are giving the Ashrama workers ample opportunity for artistic expression, thus helping to bring about the fulfilment of one of the Swami's dreams for the work.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MARCH 1925

*CIVILIZATION AND
SPIRITUALIZATION*

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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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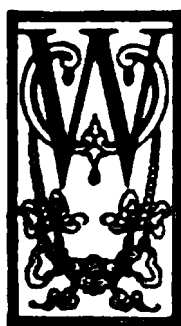
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CIVILIZATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION

By Swami Paramananda



WHAT is civilization? What are the distinctive marks of a civilized man? How does he differ from the uncivilized? It is right that we should have definite answers to these simple questions. To-day almost everywhere we hear the loud cry to save civilization. It is seldom that we can pick up a newspaper or a magazine of any worth without reading something along this line. We might attempt many superficial answers to these outstanding questions. We might say it is easy to differentiate a civilized person from an uncivilized by his manner of apparel or through the mode of his living. Richness does not make a person civilized, nor can poverty make one uncivilized. It does not consist in building up of trade or commercial exploitation, or any of these superficial means, even though they may have certain outer glamour. The distinctive mark of differentiation is in the standard of conduct. Perhaps we would better use the simple translation of the word "civilization," which means departure from brutal instinct, or reclaimed from savagery. If we have not risen above the instinct of brute passion, hatred, treachery and other low instincts common to all uncontrolled animal nature, although we may live in fine houses surrounded by great luxuries and material splendor, we are far from being civilized.

Let us turn our eyes back to what we call the dark ages, when man inhabited jungle-caves, satisfying his hunger by devouring raw flesh and fighting for it, as birds and beasts fight over a morsel of bread. His whole scope of life was limited to the narrow sphere of eating, drinking, sleeping and a certain amount of sense pleasure, until the light of intelligence enlarged his horizon and impelled him to drop his gross and unbecoming baseness and led him by its beneficent hand to a realm of greater beauty and a more enduring happiness.

Herein lies the basic difference between man and brute, cultured and uncultured, fine and gross, civilized and uncivilized. In other words, it is the dawning and unfoldment of rational instinct that places man above animals, civilized over uncivilized. Are we not all in one accord in regard to this? Do not all the ethical, moral and spiritual codes of both ancient and modern times acclaim this unanimously? Is it not the aim and object of true education that every child may receive the training to master his low instincts, such as lying, stealing, harming and all other forms of cruel and selfish impulses? Why is it that whenever we see some one who does not use self-control at his meals, we say: "He eats like an animal; how disgusting"? Does it not show definitely that man has a different standard? Again whenever we see some one under the sway of anger, hatred or similar passions, do we not often say he looks like an angry brute? Does it not signify that such instincts belong to a plane other than our own? Knowing this intrinsic and fundamental difference between base and noble, tutored and untutored, if we do not manifest a higher quality in our life, then we cannot claim our superiority over what we call savagery.

It is not merely a question of our mental grasp of the

ethical virtues that may place us in a high and exalted position. It is not a question of professing one faith or another. This quality must be a tangible and constant attribute of our life and conduct. Without question man's rational instinct is his best guide. It is his greatest asset, the most effective instrument for his achievement. Is not the evolution of science with its innumerable inventions a very great and tangible proof of this fact? There are many who will go so far as to say that science is the outcome of civilization, and that it is science which maintains civilization.

Now let us see what it has done for civilization. It has given us electricity, it has given us means for quick transportation and effective locomotion. It has given us means by which we can transmit a message from one end of the world to another in lightning flash. In short it has achieved much to make our life comfortable and smooth-running. Has it not given a nation power to protect itself against alien invasion? Has it not taught man to build invincible battle-ships and invulnerable fortresses? It is indeed the mightiest factor in our life and for our existence. Science has contributed in large measure for the comfort of mankind, for conveniences of living, for exchange of commerce, for the building up of international trade and relationship. In fact, it has done everything that should bring human hearts together, destroying all sense of distance and convincing man of his great heritage of a larger humanity. But has this been accomplished? The sword, the gun, the poison gas and other ingenious methods for destroying life may be the most astounding inventions of scientific genius, but they can never be the outposts of true civilization.

Now let us turn to religion—religion where a man seeks to find his highest ideal, religion which teaches man self-

denial in place of selfishness, religion which teaches truth in place of falsehood, religion which teaches gentleness in place of anger, religion which teaches forbearance in place of impatience, religion which teaches love, the most glorious fact in life, in place of hatred. Surely in religion we must find the fulfillment of life itself and all that is highest and loftiest that life can offer. "Why these are the very attributes that are embodied in the Christian Bible", a devout Christian may claim. "Let us therefore convert the whole world to Christianity." Will that make us civilized? Our experience and observation will prove to us that it is not the superficial acceptance of Christianity which will save us or give us the fulfillment and the ideal of civilization. The lofty principles which are inculcated in the Christian Bible are also to be found in the other great Bibles and classics of the world, but the fulfillment is only found here and there like a lone star in the conduct of human life. It has nothing to do with creed or dogma; it has to do with the clear expression of life itself.

Here I would like to draw a picture of a type which embodies a great standard of truly civilized man, possessing power but not using it for destruction, selfish aggrandizement, but only for beneficence, and I shall give this picture in the words of H. G. Wells, the eminent historian, "Asoka (264 to 227 B. C.) was one of the great monarchs of history whose dominions extended from Afghanistan to Madras. He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory. He had invaded Kalinga (225 B. C.), a country along the east coast of Madras, perhaps with some intention of completing the conquest of the tip of the Indian peninsula. The expedition was successful, but he was disgusted by what he saw of the cruelties and horrors of war. He declared, in certain inscrip-

tions that still exist, that he would no longer seek conquest by war, but by religion, and the rest of his life was devoted to the spreading of Buddhism throughout the world.

“He seems to have ruled his vast empire in peace and with great ability. He was no mere religious fanatic. But in the year of his one and only war he joined the Buddhist community as a layman, and some years later he became a full member of the Order, and devoted himself to the attainment of Nirvana by the Eightfold Path. How entirely compatible that way of living then was with the most useful and beneficent activities his life shows. Right Aspiration, Right Effort, and Right Livelihood distinguished his career. He organized a great digging of wells in India, and the planting of trees for shade. He appointed officers for the supervision of charitable works. He founded hospitals and public gardens. He had gardens made for the growing of medicinal herbs. Had he had an Aristotle to inspire him, he would no doubt have endowed scientific research upon a great scale. He created a ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races. He made provision for the education of women. He made, he was the first monarch to make, an attempt to educate his people into a common view of the ends and way of life. He made vast benefactions to the Buddhist teaching Orders, and tried to stimulate them to a better study of their own literature. All over the land he set up long inscriptions rehearsing the teaching of Gautama, and it is the simple and human teaching and not the preposterous accretions. Thirty-five of his inscriptions survive to this day. Moreover, he sent missionaries to spread the noble and reasonable teaching of his master throughout the world, to Kashmir, to Ceylon, to the Seleucide, and the Ptolemies. It was one of these missions which carried that cutting of the Bo Tree, of which we have already told, to Ceylon.

“For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Thibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.” By giving the illustration of Asoka here, I am not advocating that people should all become Buddhists. It is not a question of embracing Buddhism, or Christianity, or Hinduism, or any other existing religion of the world. Our problem cannot be solved as easily as that. It is a matter of living—living our spiritual conviction; and if we do live according to our spiritual ideal, we shall not find any outstanding difference between one religion and another because they all teach what is highest and loftiest and truest in life; and as we live them we find the gulf of separation and all fictitious barriers melting away into nothingness, leaving us united as members of one undivided cosmic family.

It is strange that in spite of all the intellectual and moral education that we have in such abundance, the primal instinct of selfishness and savagery so continuously asserts itself in man. Is there no remedy for it? My object in discussing so frankly these existing evils is not to throw a slur upon education, science and religion, or to pull them down, but to find constructive expression through them. The invention of science is not meant for evil, but to give man greater opportunity for higher achievements. It becomes evil as it is utilized by man's

lower instinct. The aim of education is to give man understanding how he may master his lower propensities and become more and more self-possessed, just and kind. The goal of religion is to exalt the human to spiritual attributes and to make man conscious of his divine heritage. If, however, we fail to bring into manifestation these qualities in tangible form in our life, then we must admit that they utterly fail us and we utterly fail to grasp their real value, and our observance of these is mere superficial performance, lacking in true character and meaning. If any of our forces are now giving expression through low channels, it does not mean that we should ruthlessly destroy them, but we must learn to raise their standard.

Every force in man can be spiritualized. Things which are proving destructive now can be made constructive. The force within us which rouses in us blind greed and thirst for selfish gain can be transmuted into the bigger attribute of largeness of heart and compassion for others. We must learn to live our ideals, not merely theorize about them. Theories have no strength. It is the practical life that gives us strength. It gives us something to stand upon. Our high ideals become great factors in our character when they find definite expression through our thought and action, and this is the way we make spiritual life real and vital. Vague and visionary ideas, however lofty, help us little, as all speculative philosophy ever leaves us stranded without a proper working hypothesis.

Our need to-day is not a new philosophy, or a new religion, but a definite working out of the high principles already implanted within our heart and soul, whether they be from Christian sources, Chinese sources, Greek sources, Buddhistic sources, or the great ancient Indo-Aryan sources. When we learn to live them, we shall rise to a

great height of spiritual grandeur, leaving behind us all that is petty, sordid and detrimental to our progress and soul advancement. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven",—let this ever ring in our ears until its voice sings within our soul, stirs every pulse in our body and makes us living and vibrant with what is true, noble and lofty.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Some wise men, deluded, speak of Nature, and others of Time as the cause of everything; but it is the greatness of God by which this creation-wheel is made to turn.

It is at the command of Him who always covers this world, the Knower, the Time of time, who assumes qualities and all knowledge, it is at His command that this work of creation unfolds itself.—*Swetasvatara-Upanishad*.

And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it.—*Ezekiel*.

Yea, I conceived of Thee as bounteous, O Ahura Mazda, when I beheld Thee as supreme in the actions of life.—*Zend-Avesta*.

They plotted, and God plotted, and God is the best of plotters.—*The Koran*.

"These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me," with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth!—*Buddha*.

All thinking beings have been made one for the other; they owe patience one toward another,—for we have all one and the same nature. We are created especially for the sake of one another. We are made for co-operation and to act against one another is contrary to Nature. The good man remembers that every rational being is his kinsman.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

Be noble! and the nobleness which lies in other men, sleeping but never dead, will rise in majesty to meet thine own. Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes, then will pure light around thy path be shed, and thou wilt never more be sad and lone.—*Lowell*.

TRUE EDUCATION

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

(From conversation with a Western devotee in India.)

True education consists in the sacrifice of vanity and the manifestation of the God within.

There have always been sects who have believed that it is impossible to perform their worship without animal sacrifice. In reality no devotee can begin his worship without such animal sacrifice and the animal to be sacrificed is the ego. Until the ego is sacrificed one cannot hope to approach God.

Destruction of ego can be effected by humility. Low ground collects all the rain, so the lowly collect all the grace,—not only what falls on them directly but also what falls off from the unperceiving and proud. God's grace is on all, but some do not know how to receive it and so it drops away from them. . . .

It is good to go from place to place to do homage to holy men and women. Vedanta does not take away from us

our reverence for others. Although it teaches that everything is inside us, that nothing is outside, that we are infinite, still we know that what is true for us must be true for others also. If infinity is here, it is also there. It is everywhere. The only difference is in the manifestation. In trees and plants the manifestation is less, in animals it is more, in man still more, and in the man who has realized God it is full, so that man is God-like. In Sri Ramakrishna the Infinite was fully manifested, so through Him we can gain an idea of Godhead. In us it is less manifested, therefore we can go and do homage to those who show it forth more fully. Thus Vedanta does not take from us our humility and regard for others. On the contrary, it teaches us to bow down to God everywhere. . . .

When we sit in deep meditation the world may slip away from our memory and even memory itself disappear. But when we come back to the universe we still have our duties,—the duty of the child to the parent, of the disciple to the Master. We must not bring one condition into the other. With the disappearance of memory, the world also goes away, as in sleep; but so long as we remember, the world must exist for us and have some claim on us.

Tzu-King approached the Master and asked him how he might most truly practise virtue. Confucius replied, "If an artisan wants to do his work well, he must begin by sharpening his tools. Even so, you should serve the wise and good and make friends of men who have this moral virtue. The higher type of man makes a sense of duty the ground work of his character, blends with it in action a sense of harmonious proportion, manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness and perfects it by the addition of sincerity and truth. Then indeed is he a noble character.—*Confucian Teaching.*

NO EAST NOR WEST*By Swami Paramananda*

When thou journeyest westward thou canst
not leave east behind;

Nor canst thou part from north when thy
feet are turned to the south.

The ray of the sun toucheth all quarters
And bestoweth on all its living, warming
balm.

The light of the soul knoweth no boundary
lines;

It hath no east nor west, north nor south.

Yea, the light of the soul shineth every-
where,

Save when we keep our doors shut—

Alas, when we keep our doors shut!

POWER OF RIGHT CONDUCT*From the Mahabharata*

The high-souled Daitya chief, Prahlada, by merit of his right conduct snatched from the great god Indra his sovereignty over the three worlds. Indra, desirous of regaining his sovereignty, disguised himself as a holy Brahmana and went to Prahlada, begging to become his disciple. Upon Prahlada's consent the subtle Brahmana inquired, saying: "O chastiser of foes, by what means hast thou been able to win the sovereignty of the three worlds?"

Prahlada answered: "O regenerate one, I feel no pride in consequence of my being a king. I bear no malice. I am of righteous soul. I have conquered wrath. I am self-restrained and all my senses are under my control. Those regenerate ones that are my instructors pour beneficial instructions upon me like bees dropping honey into the cells

of their comb. I taste the nectar dropped by these wise men, and like the Moon among the constellations I live among the members of my race."

Thus spake Prahlada to the Brahmana. Served dutifully by him, the chief of the Daityas once more said: "O foremost of regenerate ones, I am exceedingly gratified with thee in consequence of thy dutiful right conduct towards me! Ask of me the boon thou desirest. Blessed be thou, for verily I shall grant thee what thou wilt ask!" The Brahmana said: "If, O king, thou hast been gratified with me, and if thou wishest to do what is agreeable to me, I desire then to acquire conduct like unto thine. Even this is the boon that I beg of thee." At this, though delighted, Prahlada became filled with a great fear. Wondering much, he said: "Let it be so!" The Brahmana, having received the boon, went away; but Prahlada became penetrated by deep anxiety and knew not what to do.

While the Daitya chief sat brooding over the matter, a flame of light issued out of his body. It had a shadowy form of great splendor and huge proportions. Prahlada asked the form, saying: "Who art thou?" The form answered, saying: "I am the embodiment of thy Right Conduct. Cast off by thee, I am going away. I shall henceforth, O king, dwell in the faultless and foremost of Brahmanas who had become thy devoted disciple!" Having said these words, the form disappeared and soon after entered the body of Indra.

After the disappearance of that form, another of similar shape issued out of Prahlada's body. The Daitya chief addressed it, saying: "Who art thou?" The form answered saying: "Know me, O Prahlada, for the embodiment of Righteousness. I shall go there where that foremost of Brahmanas is; for, O chief of the Daityas, I reside there where Right Conduct dwells!"

Upon the disappearance of Righteousness, a third form, blazing with splendor, issued out of the body of the high-souled Prahlada. Asked by Prahlada as to who he was, that form possessed of great effulgence answered, saying: "Know, O chief of the Daityas, that I am Truth! I shall leave thee, following the way of Righteousness!"

After Truth had left Prahlada, following in the wake of Righteousness, another great person issued out of Prahlada's body. Asked by the Daitya king, the mighty being answered: "I am the embodiment of Good Deeds! Know, O Prahlada, that I live there where Truth lives!" After this one had left Prahlada, another being came out, uttering loud and deep cries. Addressed by Prahlada, he answered: "Know that I am Might. I dwell there where Good Deeds are!" Having said these words, Might went away to that place whither Good Deeds had gone.

After this, a goddess of great effulgence issued out of Prahlada's body. The Daitya chief asked her and she answered him saying that she was the embodiment of Glory, adding: "I dwell in thee, O hero, O thou of prowess incapable of being baffled! Cast off by thee, I shall follow in the wake of Might." The high-souled Prahlada, penetrated with great fear, once more asked the goddess, saying: "Where dost thou go, O goddess, thou that dwellest amid lotuses?"

The goddess of Glory said: "That Brahmana who was instructed by thee was Indra. O puissant one, he robbed thee of that sovereignty which thou hadst over the three worlds. O righteous one, it was by this Right Conduct that thou didst reduce the three worlds to subjection. Knowing this, the chief of the celestials robbed thee of thy Right Conduct. Righteousness and Truth and Good Deeds and Might and myself, O thou of great wisdom, all have their root verily in Right Conduct."

DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP

By Fenelon. 17th Century

Keep certain season for yourself, when you can draw closer to God. Read, pray, mistrust your own inclinations and habits, remember that we have God's gift in earthen vessels. Above all, strengthen your inner life with His Love. Even when one has lived far from Him, one need not fear to approach Him with familiar love. Talk to Him in prayer of all your weakness, your wants, your troubles, even of the weariness you feel in serving Him. You cannot speak too freely or too trustfully to Him. He loves the meek and lowly, and is ever ready to talk with them. If you are one of these, let alone all your cleverness and your great things; open your heart and tell Him all, then wait and listen to Him.

Place yourself before Him, so that He may put His own stamp upon you; let your whole being listen in silence for His Voice. Such silence to the outer world, to common passions and human thoughts within, is essential if you would hear that Voice which calls the soul to die to self and live to God in spirit and in truth.

One must become as little children; there is a lowliness which is far above all greatness. Happy they who find it! To argue, reason, discuss, and decide, is worth little; the thing is to love the one sole Truth and Goodness, and to abide firmly therein. Our minds will wander, but the will should be kept firm.

Try to be calm and cheerful. Be sure that God is the best Friend, and that no one comforts as He does. No one so enters into all our troubles, and heeds all wants without being wearied by them. Let Him be to you as your second self, and soon that will supplant the first self and lay it altogether aside.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK*By Sister Devamata*

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

VII**YEARS IN MADRAS**

Once more in the familiar lower rooms of the ice house, which still served as Monastery, the two Swamis resumed their old routine. They rose before sunrise, opened the Shrine and carried the first offering of the day to the Lord. Often they were up at four, to spend the quiet hours before dawn in meditation or chanting, and the clear sweet voice of the young Swami was heard frequently in sacred song. There was one morning hymn which Swami Ramakrishnananda cared for so much that he requested him to sing it every morning at waking. When Swami Ramakrishnananda was nearing his end, he asked if any one knew the song; finding no one who did, he himself wrote out the words, remembered through constant hearing; Girish Ghose, the great dramatist, set them to music, and Swami Ramakrishnananda had them sung as he was passing. Who knows what tender memories arose in his mind of the one who had sung them to him so often at the dawning of the day!

To establish a Shrine in India implies unremitting service of a living Presence. This Presence naturally assumes some more definite and personal aspect of Divinity. The belief is that so long as our outer life is so intensely personal, in our approach to God we must have the element of personality to create a point of contact. If we serve an indefinite abstraction of Deity, our worship grows cold and alien to our daily living. We find all nations and races spontaneously seeking to establish a concrete relation with the Supreme by attributing to Him some human kinship, such

as Father or Mother or Child or by trying to reach Him through some divine incarnation. The Indo-Aryans are careful in their religious observances not to suppress or destroy this natural tendency. God in each household has His appointed place which becomes the centre round which the family life revolves.

No one leaves the house without going to bow down at the Shrine and invoke divine protection and guidance. No one returns without going first of all to greet the Lord. All food is cooked for Him and offered in the Shrine before any one partakes of it. He is tended as the most revered and beloved member of the family. A miniature bath is prepared for Him, flowers are grown especially for Him and daily laid at His Feet in worship. Every service that might be rendered a very dear mother or father is given Him, and no act of the day's routine is left unrelated to Him. To the more rational matter-of-fact Occidental mind this may seem like "playing pretend" with toys; but the result achieved is conclusive answer to all scoffing, for the Divine Presence becomes so vivid a reality in India that even the most critical are silenced and awed by it.

Thus did the daily activities of the two Swamis turn round the Sanctuary. Every thought, every word, every deed had the Lord's service for motive. Not even a glass of water was taken without a moment's pause for a prayer of oblation. Their whole life was one continuous act of worship. Leisure moments were few. There were numerous visitors. They began coming at six in the morning; many gentlemen of Madras choose the hours between six and eight for their visits. Troubles or doubts or questions brought them, or simple devotion and friendliness for the Swamis. Some came to see the new Swami, for Swami Ramakrishnananda talked of him to every one, and great

was their surprise to find the youthful face and figure, when from Swami Ramakrishnananda's words they had been led to expect a *sadhu* of mature years. As formerly, there were the vegetables to cut for the curry, the noon meal to prepare, and the vessels used in the Shrine to wash and polish. When Swami Ramakrishnananda was absent for an outside class or lecture, as often happened, all these tasks fell to the younger Swami who was over-joyed to take them. Then the sweeper woman came morning and evening to sweep up the heavy dust, which gathers quickly in a place like Madras without rain nine months of the year and not over-plentifully supplied with water; and the rooms had to be made tidy after she was through.

The two hours' reading from the Sanskrit Sacred Writings each afternoon was seldom missed; and there were occasional guests stopping at the Monastery. One of them, a Bengalee gentleman who had come from Calcutta for the National Congress, was seized with an acute attack of cholera while there, and the younger Swami insisted on nursing him through it. The Swami's care of the sick has always had a peculiar quality in it. Something seems to flow from the tips of his fingers which soothes and restores. Swami Brahmananda asked him very often to rub him when he was not well and, I was told, he would invariably give a little cry of protest when the Swami stopped. Swami Ramakrishnananda said to me one day: "Paramananda with his purity ought to be able to heal by a single touch," and I was able to tell him of several instances in which this had been verified.

Whatever service he renders he gives of himself with unstinted generosity. Another's need is reason enough to offer whatever he may have to meet it. One of the articles I carried back to India was a lovely flame-colored *chuddar*

or shawl. When Swami Ramakrishnananda saw it his face lighted up and he asked: "Do you know the story of that *chuddar*?" I answered that I did not, and he continued: "One chill rainy day I noticed that Paramananda was going about with nothing but a thin shirt over the upper part of his body. I had given him a piece of woolen cloth to keep him warm and I asked him where it was. He replied evasively, 'I am not cold.' A little later a boy from the Students' Home came in with the cloth on. I thought he had taken it heedlessly and I began to scold him, but he told me Paramananda had given it to him, saying he did not need it. I called Paramananda and asked him why he had done this. His answer was, 'He came in shivering, he had no shawl, so I gave him that one.' At once I wrote to Swami Premananda to send me the best *chuddar* that he could find in Calcutta, and this is what he sent."

Swami Vivekananda passed away on the 4th of July, 1902. His going cast a deep gloom over the hearts of the two Swamis and led them to withdraw into a still more indrawn meditative habit of life. This devout quietude continued until the end of the year, when it was broken by a visit from Sister Nivedita. She was on a lecture tour with a member of the Order and another companion; her heart also was sore with the sense of loss and she was glad to make a long pause among those with whom she felt kinship of sorrow. The new Swami had been at the Calcutta Monastery for such brief intervals that she had seen little of him. Now the closer daily contact called forth warm expressions of enthusiasm and affection. She would bring her work and sit beside him by the hour, plying him with questions about Swami Vivekananda,—what he had said and done when the young Swami first came to the Ramakrishna Mission. Also she asked him much about his own early life.

She found many points of resemblance between him and Swami Vivekananda and began to call him "Baby Swamiji." The term Swamiji when used alone always indicates Swami Vivekananda to members and friends of the Mission. Others also, especially Swami Ramakrishnananda, often spoke of this resemblance and among the gentlemen who came to the Monastery the young Swami was generally known as "Kunchu Vivekananda" (the little Vivekananda.)

Likeness to Swami Vivekananda implies another likeness,—to the statues of Buddha. When I was in India, I saw a small bronze statue of the Buddha, uncovered during recent excavations there, which I mistook for a statue of Swami Vivekananda; and when the young Swami accompanied Swami Ramakrishnananda to Ceylon, passers-by more than once stopped Swami Ramakrishnananda to inquire who the young Sannyasin could be who bore so striking a likeness to the famous Daibutzu figure of Buddha in the temple of Kamakura. Once also the young Swami was followed in Bangalore by two youths who believed him to be some super-earthly being because of his resemblance to a figure of Buddha they had in their house. Afterwards when Swami Ramakrishnananda related these incidents to Swami Brahmananda, Swami Brahmananda replied: "It is true, he is very like Buddha in appearance all except the big ears." It is an interesting coincidence that even as a little boy the Swami had an exceptionally profound reverence for the Lord Buddha, and "Buddha the Compassionate" has been one of his favorite themes for lectures since he began his public work.

Other guests followed Sister Nivedita at intervals; and later Swami Trigunatita, on his way to America, stopped at the Madras Monastery for a fortnight's visit. Swami Ramakrishnananda was away on a lecture tour at the time,

and the full burden of entertaining the honored guest fell on the younger Swami. He gave himself up with earnest zest to the unusual responsibility, expending all his energies in preparing savory dishes of great variety for the daily meal. Once when he brought to Swami Trigunatita an exceptionally delicious cooling drink, the Swami said to him: "What do you put into whatever you prepare to give it such a special flavor? Your devotion has certainly awakened in you the divine instinct so that all you do has a special fragrance." There was no bed for Swami Trigunatita, so the young Swami gave him his own. When Swami Trigunatita discovered this one night when he was retiring, he lay down on the floor and refused to take the cot. The young Swami threatened to put him on it by force, but as Swami Trigunatita weighed over two hundred pounds, everyone laughed, thinking he was jesting. Suddenly, however, he stooped, lifted the Swami and laid him on the bed to the amazement of all. When Swami Ramakrishnananda heard of this he showed no surprise, for he often said the young Swami was a remarkable combination of the gentleness and delicacy of a woman with the strength and firmness of a man.

Another visitor of a very different kind was brought to the Monastery from Adyar. He was an American member of the Theosophical Society who had come out to India to study. Something in the climate or different conditions of living affected his mind, he grew very morose and finally refused to touch food or drink. When all efforts to persuade him to eat were without avail, they took him to the Swamis, believing they might be able to help him. Swami Ramakrishnananda also failed to overcome his aversion to food, but when the young Swami offered him something, he took it without a word. Swami Ramakrish-

nananda seeing this asked the younger Swami, "What have you done to him?" and laughingly accused him of "making a magic." After that the young Swami brought him all his food. He remained some time at the Monastery and gradually recovered.

The younger Swami's own health began to break under the devitalizing heat of Madras. He lost all taste for food; and although Swami Ramakrishnananda himself went to the bazar and exhausted his ingenuity in trying to find something to tempt the waning appetite, the Swami grew weaker and thinner every day. A devoted friend hoping that a change might benefit him carried him off to Tanjore. There exists a tradition there that a very wise and holy sage, Agastya by name, has lived for many hundreds of years on the bank of the sacred river Kavary, which runs through Tanjore, coming daily to bathe in the river; and the belief prevails that the whole country round about is blessed by his illumined thought and life, though he keeps himself hidden from view. The Swami was eager to go to Tanjore and see for himself what was the ground for the tradition. During his entire visit he rose every morning at two, went to the river, and until three or after sat on the bank in meditative vigil, watching for the coming of the sage. One day he had the sense of a fleeting vision and he liked to believe that he had caught the flash and fragrance of Agastya's saintly presence.

He spent altogether three weeks at Tanjore. On his return another friend took him to the Nilgiri Hills and they passed some time at Ootacamond, the summer seat of the Madras Presidency's Government. While there the Swami formed a close friendship with a gentleman occupying a high position in the service of the Maharajah of Mysore. This gentleman already knew Swami Vivekananda and later

he became one of the most ardent supporters of the Ramakrishna Mission; but he himself told me that nothing had ever done more to deepen his longing for the religious life than the meeting with this pure, fresh young Sannyasin, so full of the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion. Their friendship has continued and now they are spiritual brothers, for the gentleman has become a member of the Order. By a striking coincidence an Ashrama was established quite recently at Ootacamond, and this new Swami was put in charge of it.

(To be continued)

SWAMP'S TEACHING REACHES THE BLIND

Extract from letter of C. L. Olin

I wish you might have seen Helen Keller the day she came from New York to make her plea for care for the aged deaf-blind people of New England at the dinner that opened the campaign for funds. She came in the afternoon to rest for a few hours at our Guild, and had tea upstairs quietly with Miss Kennedy and me. It has always interested me to see how surely she walks, and how fearlessly, into any new surroundings. This time it brought to mind the lines she had written on the photograph of herself she had sent:

“One soft hand blinds our eyes,
The other leads us safe and slow:
O Love of God most wise!”

She passed through the strange hall and up two stairways by herself with her fingers touching the wall and banisters, and then explored her room with a look of delighted discovery as she touched each piece of furniture or found a doorway or window. Then she sat down to wait in perfect content for what was to happen next. . . .

Then we laid your book in her lap, and I wish I could

picture her as she sat there in the big chair reading aloud to us as she slipped her fingertips along the Braille lines. "Through the blessings of the Supreme, may our life be fruitful," and so on to "May we serve God alone with our whole heart and soul," where she stopped to say, "Ah, this book is my creed." (The book referred to is "The Way of Peace and Blessedness," by Swami Paramananda, recently put into Braille by the Clovernook Institute for the Blind.)

She was greatly interested in hearing the book had been made at Clovernook, as she had a friend there.

"Tell me about Mr. Swami who wrote this book," she said. She could not quite pronounce the syllables of your name from the Braille, but when she put her fingertips against my lips, she repeated it correctly the very first time. "What a beautiful name! What does it mean?" she asked.

I repeated your poem "Surrender" to her, Miss Thomson, her secretary, spelling it swiftly and smoothly into her curved hand as I gave it, and she said, "I love that. He is like Tagore, is he not?"

When tea came, she had to lay her "treasure" as she called it, aside. "But," she said, "I shall read it when I get into my berth on the train to-night." . . .

Just before she left for the train, we gave her some milk and fresh sponge cake, and with her little lunch before her she said, "Now tell me some more about Swami Paramananda." She approved the idea of having some of your poems done in Braille on cards.

Never have the envious become great; never have those who are free from envy been without greatness.—*South-Indian Saint.*

Shun idleness; it is the rust that attaches itself to the most brilliant metals.—*Voltaire.*

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

There are some things which cannot be adequately conveyed in a report. Of these was the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday at Ananda-Ashrama on February the twenty-fourth. Save for the verbal announcement at the preceding Sunday Service, no notice was sent out. In spite of this, however, a large number of devoted hearts assembled at the Ashrama, Tuesday afternoon, to do homage to one whose childlike purity, consummate wisdom, divine tolerance and transcendent vision helped to rekindle in modern India its ancient flame of faith. The Service was at three o'clock but long before that time friends began to arrive with their arms full of offerings, food and flowers. These last were used upon the altar and shone like stars along the great stone mantle, where stood Sri Ramakrishna's garlanded picture.

Were we to write down on this page every word that the Swami spoke that afternoon, the spirit which was breathed forth could never be written down. The unsullied beauty and holiness of Sri Ramakrishna's life seemed to flow from the Swami, filling his words to overflowing with the grace of God. There were few who did not feel tears very close and speech difficult when the Service ended. A living atmosphere was created under whose benign influence humility, selfishness, surrender were seen as the real treasures of life, the great realities of existence. One member voiced it all when she said: "I feel as if I had partaken of the Holy Sacrament". The Swami invited everyone to remain for refreshments which he had prepared with his own hands.

"When pure Spirit shines who sees it?

Few, yea, only a very few;

For not many have the seeing eye ——"

But for those few who could see that light even a little, Tuesday will ever remain as a sacred memory.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



APRIL 1925

JOURNEY OF LIFE

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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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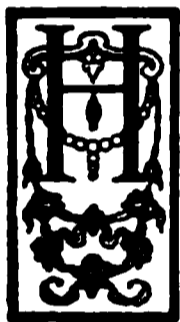
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SONG OF ADORATION

By Swami Paramananda



HAILE to Thee, Thou who comest at morn
with gentle raiment to open our
sleep-worn eyes!

Not in dazzling splendor, but with
soft, white light

Dost Thou soothe our mortal sight.

Hail to Thee, Thou who comest at morn
with fragrant breath,

Filling our mortal frame with vibrant life!

Hail to Thee, Thou who dost light in
our heart

The flame of all-consuming love!

Hail to Thee, Thou who dost rouse in
our soul

Adoration for all this, Thy creation!

In speechless thought I marvel at Thy
boundless blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The value of the figure one (1) may be raised by adding zeroes to it, but if the figure *one* be omitted, the zeroes of themselves have no value. Similarly, so long as the individual soul clings to the Supreme One, it has value—otherwise all of its efforts and works are in vain.—*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.*

He who knows himself, knows God.—*Saying of Mohammed.*

The soul is its own witness; the soul itself is its own refuge; offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of man!—*Ordinances of Manu.*

Since the nature of the soul is divine, be assured that you will attain the Divine. Through the soul, by self-identification with the soul, you will ascend to the Eternal World. You need not seek for the one Self far from your self, nor is there in reality any barrier between yourself and That. To reach the Self, take as your guide the higher principle of the soul, which is in essence one with Divine Wisdom.—*Aenead.*

A pleasant life is theirs in the celestial realm. They have the Truth for mother, nurse, and nutriment; they see all things, not the things that are born and die, but those that have real being; and they see themselves in others.

For them, all things are transparent, and there is nothing dark or impenetrable; but every one is manifest to every one internally; and all things are manifest, for light is manifest to light. Every one has all things in himself, and sees all things in another, so that all things are everywhere, and all is all and each is all, and the glory is infinite.—*Plotinus.*

POWER OF THE SOUL*From Hermes Trismegistus*

All are in God but not as lying in a place. For place is both a body and immovable, and things that lie do not have motion.

Now things lie one way in the Bodiless, another way in being made manifest.

Think then of Him who doth contain them all; and think, than the Bodiless naught is more comprehensive, or swifter, or more potent, but it is the most comprehensive, the swiftest, and most potent of them all.

And thus think from thyself and bid thy soul go unto any land and there more quickly than thy bidding will it be. And bid it journey oceanwards; and there again immediately 'twill be, not as if passing on from place to place, but as if being there.

And bid it also mount to Heaven; and it will need no wings, nor will aught hinder it, nor fire of sun, nor ether, nor vortex-swirl, nor bodies of the other stars; but cutting through them all, it will soar up to the last body of them all. And shouldst thou will to break through this as well and contemplate what is beyond—if there be aught beyond the Cosmos, it is permitted thee.

Behold what power, what swiftness, thou dost have! And canst thou do all of these things and God not do them?

Then in this way know God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

If then thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable to like alone. Make then thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from everybody; transcend all time; become Eternity, and thus shalt thou know God.

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE*By Swami Paramananda*

The philosophers call our senses so many doors and windows of the soul through which it reaches out and experiences the material world, both good and evil. The soul forms the habit of looking through certain avenues of experience, through certain definite and specific sense faculties; and some of the avenues which perhaps lead to higher, to greater understanding, are blocked; they become clogged. We know in our own house when a window is very much clouded, when it has been neglected for a long time, how difficult it is to see through it. Sometimes we may get an entirely distorted picture; a woman may look like a man, a figure may appear tremendously magnified, or the opposite. In the same way when some of our faculties are clogged or blocked through neglect or other causes, we are not able to see clearly and we doubt. It is a very sad outlook when we think that with all our desire to know, our desire to find happiness and abundance of life, we should turn away from the Source of supply.

A theme may be logical, true and based on the very highest, yet when we are not able to connect it with our own life, we say: "I cannot understand it, that is not my experience." Very true; it is true of all spiritual things, not only in regard to the laws of life, scientific and spiritual, but in relation to everything. Unless it is our own experience it avails very little. For instance, written words of the Bible, consolation that is promised, these words fall flat, unless they are related to our experience. When we are hungry, if some one comes and tells us: "Pray to God, He will give you food"; when we are stricken with disease or confronted with death, if some one says: "Fear not, your soul is immortal"; it may bring us tremendous consola-

tion if it is our own belief. If it is a conclusion drawn from our own experience, it will strike a spark within us which will enlighten our whole soul. If it is not related to our experience, it will create a jarring note; we shall feel provoked that any one dare say such a thing when we are in need, when we are in agony or pain.

The jarring note is not struck by any one from outside. No one has any power to strike a jarring note in our life. A person may try, but we hold the control of our destiny in our own hand. We have the power to maintain the right rhythm at all times, and that power is the power of understanding. Spiritual understanding is not monopolized by any religion or creed. It is the common heritage of mankind. It exists in knowledge. Either we have it consciously, or we have it not. Some people may not have it and yet they may pretend they have it; and that becomes a calamity. This is the calamity of many existing religions. Religion does not consist merely in going to church or reading a few passages from the Scriptures; unless we can live it, unless our life becomes our own product, born of our own soul and our own experience, it will not be productive. We may say, how can it be our own product? What have we to do with it? It is not that we have to give up everything we are doing or run away from our present situation. On the contrary, we must learn to do better the things we are doing; we must learn to meet our problems with a new sense of sanctity and with spiritual understanding.

We have within us the power to see spiritually as well as to see materially. Both avenues are open, but we are not always able to use our higher sense of perception. These faculties must be cultivated. A person forms the habit of being skeptical, doubting; no matter what is

brought before him, he tries to tear it to pieces; no matter who may come near him, his first thought is suspicion. He creates about him, within him, and all around him an atmosphere which is unwholesome for himself and for others. If we live in such an atmosphere to-day, and expect to find something contrary as our reward to-morrow, we are not rational. Life goes according to law. As we sow, so must we reap. It is very simple. If we abide by this simple principle, then there is nothing in heaven or earth that can rob us of our true heritage. If we think we can evade it, if we think we can bribe some one, we are very much mistaken. Whom are we going to bribe? The high intelligence that we possess within ourselves is not susceptible to such things. It has its sense of justness which is inherent, and that holds us to evil conditions or to good, whichever we create. We may escape from all the material laws. We may escape from others, we may go unnoticed; that is, when we have done something wrong, other people may forget or may not see it; but we do not escape, we cannot overlook ourselves. For that reason the highest spiritual cultivation begins from within. We do not do it out of fear, or out of compromise; we do it because a greater sense of truth has risen within us; and with that we gain power,—power over our life, power over our destiny, power to help. If we want to overcome our misfortunes and gain spiritual understanding, we must not hold an attitude of dissatisfaction, we must not have a scornful feeling towards ourselves or towards our fellow-beings or towards Providence.

We must go direct to the Cause. It is not through fear that we should seek consolation from religion. On the contrary, there is no fear where there is wisdom; there is no fear where there is love. When love and wisdom gov-

ern our life, we are removed from the error of fear, we become imbued with fearlessness. It is not because we have grown aggressive, but because we have gained a little power through knowledge, through higher conviction. When we know conclusively that we have an undying soul, there is not so much desire to accomplish everything at once, in a rush. That is one of the great misfortunes of life. People do not see more than this little span of existence. They feel that they must accomplish everything at once, and in their mad rush they do not have time to think of God; then they fall down and how difficult it is to wipe out wrong actions, their memory and reactions. When however we have this background, the knowledge that we have a soul, that we have an immortal heritage, that our life is divine, that it has come down from the divine Source, not only does it give us a sense of poise, of stability and calmness, of serenity, it also eliminates all selfish elements. Our wanting to do everything at once makes us in our haste unmindful whether we hurt or deprive some one else; but if we deprive others, it only deprives ourselves. The law holds us. That is the summary of life.

We cannot escape from our destiny, but we can conquer it. If our present life is the product of our past, then we can make our future what we want to make it by our right action and by right thinking. We can increase its power for good; also we can decrease it by allowing ourselves to be bound by material conditions and making ourselves feel that we are wholly subject to these conditions; in other words, by taking an entirely material point of view. 'This life is not a by-product like the things we mould with our hand, which have beginning and end. The soul is not that way. In order to know its nature, in order to find proper nourishment for it, to produce healthfulness and happiness

and all that is beneficent for it, we must be willing to go deep down within ourselves. An average person says the soul is full of mystery; it is darkness. It is darkness only for those who have allowed themselves to follow the path of darkness. Those who have entered the inner sanctuary with the spirit of light, they find life.

What we take with us, there we find its counterpart. Those who enter into this arena of life with faith find light; those who enter with doubt, despair and suspicion, they attract those elements. Their life is thwarted because of their own creation. The mind has the power to counteract; not only counteract, but definitely create something which smoothes our path. We are given again and again opportunities, that where we have blundered, we may not blunder again; that where we have failed, these failures may teach us how to stand up and do the right thing. This is the reason we are given opportunities during this life, and also even after this bodily life. It is a continuous existence, and we keep on living and growing and evolving and experiencing until we find our goal. This is our consolation.

We must take a bigger point of view. It does not make any difference what religion we belong to. Belonging to a religion does not mean signing our name to a doctrine or subscribing to a creed. It is deeper. It must reach our soul, and our soul must feel its response to the higher. It is knowing. And unless we know, no matter how much dogmatic belief we may have, we may fill our mind with all kinds of theories, it will be of very little avail to us when we are confronted with bigger difficulties. Therefore cultivation of a spiritual sense is cultivating within our own self a sense of Divine Presence, of Truth, of God, whatever the name we give Him. This is essential. We can be very much alone even though surrounded by many peo-

ple as long as we have not found our access to the House of God. As long as we leave its windows and the different avenues to it blocked, we mar our happiness, we endanger our safe journey. For that reason we must keep all these avenues cleansed and open. The body, our senses, all these faculties which are God-given, become a great power and a great comfort to us, if we cleanse them with pure thoughts, true aspirations, unselfish actions. When we do this we find that the happiness which we desire is not so far from our life; that the peace which we aspire for, is not in any distant place; it is already here, near us. It is only a question of knowing and feeling.

Nothing adds so much to this feeling as a sense of devotion. Devotion is not, as many people may suppose, something sanctimonious and sentimental. It is the true feeling of our being. Sometimes we do feel, sometimes circumstances compel us to feel deeply; and when we cultivate a sense of spiritual feeling, when we can truly have a sense of the Presence of Divinity within us and of a protecting hand, it becomes our safeguard, the safest guard we can have through this journey of life.

Let us lift our mind and heart that we may feel that great Presence within us and rejoice, finding our delight and rest in that great Presence which is our birthright.

PRAYER

Oh Thou Infinite Spirit of the universe,
Thou are our loving Mother and protecting Father;
Thou art our Brother, Friend and Companion;
Thou art all our Wealth and Wisdom;
Thou art our all in all.
Surround us with Thy tender love,
Give us Thy compassionate hand
And lead us ever in safety through this
journey of life.

Oh Thou Infinite, All-seeing Spirit of the universe,
 Thou knowest our inmost thoughts and feelings
 Free our hearts from all blemish of selfishness,
 unkindness and unloveliness;
 Fill it with Thy divine love and unfailing strength.
 Thou art our Source and Sustenance;
 Our Resting-Place and Abode of Joy.
 Grant unto us, Thy little children, Thy loving protection
 and enfold us ever in Thy perfect peace.

FINAL GOAL

From the Atma-Bod'h

The emancipated soul is that illumined person who throws off his former attributes and qualities, and becomes one with the true living happy Being, in like manner as the chrysalis becomes a butterfly.

Having crossed the sea of passion, and slain the evil spirits lust, hatred, jealousy, envy, etc., he is joined to tranquillity and rejoices in the Spirit.

Having renounced that pleasure which arises from external perishable objects, and enjoying spiritual delight, he is serene as the taper under cover and rejoices in his own being.

The Yogi, while dwelling in the body, is not affected by its properties; as the sky is not affected by what floats in it. Knowing all things, he remains unconcerned and moves free as the wind.

When attributes are subdued, the Yogi and all beings enter into the all-pervading Essence, as water mixes with water, ether with ether, fire with fire. He is one with God, after possessing whom, there is nothing to be possessed; after enjoying whose happiness there is no happiness to be desired; and after attaining the knowledge of whom, there is no knowledge to be obtained.

A LITTLE FLOWER OF THE WEST

By Sister Daya

This is the story of a little flower of God, and yet not the story. How can the reality of any life be conveyed in a few pages, or in words at all, and when it comes to the holy, who is qualified to speak? Therefore as much as possible we shall let this flower give of its own perfume.

Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin was born in France in the year 1873. Peculiarly blessed from her birth, she unfolded as it were, in the light of love. She lived in an atmosphere of love and she breathed forth the fragrance of love. Her parents were what in India would be called "household devotees", for their lives were consecrated to the service of God. Thus the home of Thérèse was no ordinary home. It radiated an inner joy, a simplicity, a peace, only found where faith burns with a living flame. For fifteen years Thérèse dwelt within this pure shelter, untouched by the world, then urged by an inborn vocation which swept aside all obstacles, she passed through its doors into the more austere protection of the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux. Her blooming was inside the convent walls and it was there, nine years later, that her petals fell before they had fairly opened. Only twenty-four years of life! But what is the fact of time in the records of the Timeless? That Thérèse was a Catholic of modern days, that her ideals were colored by the great traditions of the Roman Church are also facts of lesser import. Her holiness lay not in her belief but in her character,—in her selflessness, her purity, her devotion, and it is because of her essential nature that she sweetens countless lives to-day. The fragments that follow are taken at random from her life-story, "The History of the Springtime of a Little White Flower", written by her at the request of the Mother-Prioress of Lisieux,—and from certain letters and reminiscences.

“It is to you, dear Mother”, she begins, “that I am about to confide the story of my soul. . . . If a little flower could speak, it seems to me that it would tell us quite simply all that God has done for it, without hiding any of its gifts . . . under pretext of humility. . . . The little flower that now tells her tale rejoices in having to publish the wholly undeserved favors bestowed upon her by Our Lord. * * * I understood,” she states, “that if all the lowly flowers wished to be roses, nature would lose its springtide beauty. . . . And so it is in the world of souls, Our Lord’s living garden. He has been pleased to create great Saints who may be compared to the lily or the rose, but he has also created lesser ones who must be content to be daisies or simple violets flowering at His feet, and whose mission it is to gladden His divine eyes when He deigns to look down on them. And the more gladly they do His Will the greater is their perfection.”

Even as a tiny child the great Feasts of the Church drew the soul of Therese. Above all she loved the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. “What a joy it was,” she cries, “to strew flowers in Gods path! But before scattering them on the ground I threw them high in the air and was never so happy as when I saw my rose leaves touch the sacred Monstrance.” The day of her First Communion in her twelfth year, she describes as the most beautiful day of her life. “How perfectly I remember even the smallest details of those sacred hours,” she writes, . . . “but I would not and I could not tell you all. Some things lose their fragrance when exposed to the air, and so, too, one’s inmost thoughts cannot be translated into earthly words without instantly losing their deep and heavenly meaning.” At the actual moment of communion she felt that “Therese had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of

the ocean; Jesus alone remained. . . . And then," she confesses, "my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained; tears of happiness welled up and overflowed. My companions were astonished, and asked each other afterwards: 'Why did she cry? Had she anything on her conscience?' . . . And no one understood that all the joy of heaven had come down into one heart, and that this heart, exiled, weak and mortal as it was, could not contain it without tears."

The Profession of Therese at the Carmel fell on the Feast of the Nativity of Mary. How she rejoiced that it was "the *little* new-born Holy Virgin who presented her *little* flower to the *little* Jesus." The name that she took: "Soeur (Sister) Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face," typified her life. At an earlier time she had offered herself to the Child Jesus to be His little plaything. "I told Him not to treat me like one of those precious toys which children only look at but dare not touch, but to treat me like a little ball of no value, that could be thrown on the ground, kicked about, pierced, left in a corner, or pressed to His heart, just as it might please Him. In a word, I wished to amuse the Holy Child and to let Him play with me as He fancied."

Always she was the "little Therese," seeking to win God by a child-like caress. Even spiritual dryness, her most constant cross, served but to increase her sense of "littleness." "In truth, I am no Saint," she admits, . . . "I ought not to rejoice in my dryness of soul, but rather attribute it to my want of fervour and fidelity. That I fall asleep so often during meditation . . . should distress me. Well I am not distressed. I reflect that little children are equally dear to their parents whether they are asleep or awake. * * * I have not the courage to look through books for beautiful prayers," she again confesses, "I only get a headache be-

cause of their number. . . . I do as children who have not learnt to read, . . . I simply tell Our Lord all that I want, and He always understands. With me, prayer is an uplifting of the heart; a glance towards heaven; a cry of gratitude and love, uttered equally in sorrow and in joy. In a word, it is something noble, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites it with God." At another time she said: "I cannot well see what more I shall have in heaven than I have now. I shall see God, it is true, but as to being with Him, I am that already even on earth." When someone complained of distractions during meditation, she replied: "I also have many, but as soon as I am aware of them, I pray for those people the thought of whom is diverting my attention. . . . I accept all for the love of God, even the wildest fancies that cross my mind."

Although by far the youngest member of the Carmel Community, her rare qualities of mind and heart won for her the position of Mistress of Novices, a title, however, which she never chose to bear. Instead of being elated at this honor she approached her task in utter humility. "God has special love for you since He entrusts souls to your care," said one of her novices, and Soeur Therese answered, "Rather He makes me your little handmaid. . . . Provided His Kingdom be established among souls, the instrument matters not. Besides, He has no need of any one. * * * Dear Mother," she writes, "I am the little brush that Jesus has chosen to paint His likeness in the souls you have confided to my care. . . . If an artist's canvas could but think or speak surely it would never complain of being touched or retouched by the brush, nor would it feel envious thereof, knowing that all its beauty is due to the artist alone." In more playful vein, she compares herself to a little bowl filled by God with good things. "All the kittens

come to eat from it, and they sometimes quarrel as to which shall have the largest share. But the Holy Child Jesus keeps a sharp watch. 'I am willing you should feed from my little bowl,' He says, 'but take heed lest you upset and break it.' In truth there is no great danger because I am already on the ground. Not so with Prioresses. Set as they are on tables, they run far more risk."

A novice, beset by a temptation, said to Therese: "This time I cannot surmount it." "Why seek to surmount it? Rather pass beneath. . . . It recalls a little incident of my childhood. One day a horse was standing in front of the garden gate preventing us from getting through. My companions talked to him and tried to make him move off, but while they were talking, I quietly slipped between his legs. Such is the advantage of remaining small." "Oh! when I think of all I have to acquire!" exclaimed one. At which, Therese: "Or rather to lose! . . . You want to climb the mountain whereas God wishes you to descend it. He is awaiting you in the fruitful valley of humility." One day she showed to a novice who was in tears that nothing made community life more trying than unevenness of temper. "You are indeed right," said her charge, "henceforward my tears will be for God alone." "Tears for God!" instantly replied her young Mistress, "that must not be. Far less to Him than to creatures ought you to show a mournful face. . . . Frankly this is not disinterested love. . . . It is for us to console Our Lord and not for Him to console us. . . . Our Lord loves the glad of heart, the children that greet Him with a smile. . . . The face is the mirror of the soul, and yours like that of a contented little child should always be calm and serene. * * * What benefit do we derive from defending ourselves?" she asks. Leave things as they are and say noth-

ing. * * * We must offer Jesus the flowers of little sacrifices."

The Mother Prioress writes of her: "It was with difficulty that her delicate stomach accustomed itself to the frugal fare of the Carmel. Her neighbor at table said that she had tried in vain to discover the dishes she preferred and the kitchen Sisters finding her so easy to please invariably served her with what was left." Therese throws light on this with delicious humour: "I imagine myself at Nazareth in the house of the Holy Family. If, for instance, I am served with anything pungent of taste . . . I offer it to St. Joseph; to our Blessed Lady I offer hot foods and ripe fruit, and to the Infant Jesus our feast-day fare, especially rice and preserves. Lastly when I am served a wretched dinner I say cheerfully: 'to-day, my little one, it is all for you.' * * * Words do not suffice!" she cries. "To be a true victim of love we must surrender ourselves entirely . . . Love will consume us only in the measure of our self-surrender." One day in the Choir as she was beginning the Way of the Cross she felt herself suddenly wounded by a dart of fire "so ardent," she writes, "that I thought I should die. . . . It seemed as though an invisible force plunged me wholly into fire. . . . But Oh! what fire! what sweetness! . . . I have had several transports of love, and one in particular during my noviciate, when I remained for a whole week far removed from this world". Her real creed was love. This shines forth. "You ask me for a method of attaining perfection. I know of Love—and Love only. Our hearts are made for this alone. * * * When a soul with childlike trust casts her faults into Love's all-devouring furnace, how shall they escape being utterly consumed?"

For many months before the end, the Little Flower

drooped upon her stem in pain. But no agony could turn her from her chosen path. "My little way," she called it. "And what is this 'little way?'" they asked. "It is the way of spiritual childhood, the way of trust and absolute self-surrender". It was not a new way as she had thought and stated. The feet of the holy have ever followed it. Another "little one", a flower of the East calls it the "Way of Peace and Blessedness". His words sum up the life of this little flower of the West: "God is too great to be confined in any theory or belief. The only place He can manifest fully is in the pure heart. I care not where the spiritual flower grows, whether in the East or in the West; it will have the same beauty and fragrance and give the same joy to whoever comes near it. So a spiritual being is the same whether in the East or in the West. He will radiate the same beauty and truth and holiness wherever he may be."

COMMUNION

By Julia P. Dabney

When that the heart, like a fair lotus cup
Shrouding the sacred core, itself unfolds
In tremulous intuitions, sending up
The unimagined incense that it holds,
All the whole being instinct seems with light,
A swift suffusion from the Infinite!

* * *

How sinks the world away! How fades the hour,
All limits in the illimitable lost!
While the swept spirit, kindled by a power
Supreme, surrenders to its uttermost;
And there remains no consciousness nor sense
Save of the measure of Omnipotence!

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK*By Sister Devamata*

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

VIII**DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA**

The sojourn at Tanjore and in the hill country revived the Swami's strength but the heat of Madras again pulled it down; and Swami Ramakrishnananda, gravely solicitous over his condition, decided to take him back to Bengal. It was during this journey that an incident occurred which revealed Swami Ramakrishnananda's feeling about the Swami's future work. They occupied a compartment by themselves; and, as always in Indian railway carriages, there was a connecting washroom. The door of this caught in some way while Swami Ramakrishnananda was there, making him prisoner. Although of large and powerful build, all his attempts to release the door failed; and at last the Swami, outside in the compartment, determined to free him. With supernormal strength, which he always seems able to command in emergencies, he gave one resolute push, the door flew open with a sudden jerk and struck Swami Ramakrishnananda in the chest, bruising him quite badly. The Swami was grief-stricken to think he should have hurt him and reverted to it again and again. Swami Ramakrishnananda reiterated that he was not hurt. Finally, to make his denial more emphatic, he said with tender insistence: "You could not hurt any one; it is not in your nature. You have come to this world for the happiness of many and for the good of many."

He spoke to me more definitely in the same tenor on more than one occasion, when I was in Madras. I recall one especially. It had been a day of flaming heat. The sun seemed to burn its way through tiled roof and solid wooden

shutters. In the evening after *arati*, the vesper service of prayer, meditation and waving of light and incense in the Shrine, a gentleman, closely allied with the Monastery, sent his carriage to take us to the sea front for a breath of cool air. We drove up and down the Marina or ocean parkway for awhile, then we drew up by the curb to enjoy the fresh breeze a little longer; and Swami Ramakrishnananda talked at length of the Swami's work, speaking with frank praise of what he was doing. He referred once or twice to certain acts of the Swami's which had been misunderstood by some members of the Order, and he exclaimed as if summing up his conversation: "I have not a doubt in my mind, whatever Paramananda does he does as an instrument in Sri Ramakrishna's hand, and that it is Sri Guru Maharaj (the great Master) working through him. He is a pure clear channel for His divine power and follows His will always." Another day he said: "I firmly believe Paramananda belongs to the immediate group of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples and was brought here later in order to carry on the tradition longer." These words seem prophetic in the light of the Swami's subsequent achievement.

When the travellers reached Calcutta, expert advice about the Swami's health was sought immediately and they were told that there was nothing wrong; the young Swami was merely run down and in need of rest and nourishing food. It was, however, the rainy season when illness is rife in Bengal and he fell a prey to typhoid fever. His vitality was low, his power of resistance small, and there seemed little chance of saving him. When the danger was at its height, a strange experience came to him. His consciousness withdrew from outer surroundings into what seemed to be a continuous meditation. One day sights and sounds faded away completely. He had the sensation of passing out of

his body to the other side and feeling joy in the change; but Swami Premananda came and begged his life of Sri Ramakrishna, that he might return to work in the world, and he came back. Whether it was a vision or a dream or an actual experience, he was too ill to tell; but when he returned from it, he felt within him a new and persisting conviction that his life was to be utilized to some special end ordained by a higher Power. This impression was intensified subsequently by many other unusual experiences both at the hours of meditation and at other times.

It was significant that from now on people began to seek him out and ask to be taught by him. He was forced into the position of teacher even before he had fully regained his health. In Howrah, across the river from Calcutta, there lived an ardent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. His wife also was a devout follower of the Master; one son had joined the Order; and they considered themselves peculiarly blessed whenever any member of the Ramakrishna Mission paid them a visit. It was to this home that Swami was sent by Swami Brahmananda to pass his convalescence. The President was deeply concerned for his welfare and eager to procure the best conditions for his complete restoration to health. The place also was not far distant from the Monastery and it was possible for him to watch over the convalescent; and as the Swami grew stronger, he could go back and forth at frequent intervals.

The house, a large and luxurious one, was the daily meeting place for a number of young men, drawn there by the eldest son. They were a pleasure-loving group, passing their time in smoking, card-playing and music. The sudden appearance of a Swami with the suggestion of austerity which his shaven head and orange cloth gave, put a check on their gayety. The Swami realized they were ill

at ease with him and tried to break down the barrier they felt, even offering to play cards with them. This won him a place in the group and when they found he played cards better than they, winning constantly, they tried less to avoid him. He passed every evening with them and his new friends fell in the way of asking him questions about the religious life and the Scriptures, for interest in spiritual things is never wholly absent from the Indo-Aryan mind. In response the Swami related to them stories from the Sanskrit Sacred Writings. One night he told them the life of Lord Gouranga, a great divine manifestation who lived in India at the time of Luther, and the group listened with rapt attention.

Every evening cards were laid aside for a time and there was an ever-lengthening talk on some holy theme. The interest grew more and more keen, till at last one of the group more deeply touched than the others, exclaimed: "Why waste our time on cards? We cannot always have the Swami with us. Let us make the best of our opportunity." After that, they would hurry home from their offices in Calcutta declaring they had looked forward the whole day to the evening's talk, and for nearly a month the card party was transformed into a class for Scriptural study. The head of the house joined the class and said to the Swami again and again in amazement: "What have you done to these boys? You have succeeded in doing in a few days what I have been trying to do for years. You must certainly be full of electricity (meaning magnetism)."

From Howrah the Swami went back to the Monastery. Then a letter from his brother urging him to come home and remain until his health was fully restored led him once more to his native village. When he returned to the Monastery again, he was strong enough to take his place in the

daily routine. During this time following his recovery more than one test came to him. One day an older Swami approached him and began to rebuke him harshly for something he had not done. The young Swami kept silent and the older Swami grew sterner in his words; still the young Swami said nothing. At last the older Swami exclaimed sharply: "What is the matter with you? Are you deaf and dumb that you do not speak?" In the evening when the younger Swami was washing the dust from his feet before going to the Shrine, the older Swami came to him again and spoke with the greatest tenderness, saying he knew all the time he was not at fault, but he wished to test his endurance. Also in Madras, Swami Ramakrishnananda once scolded him for something he had not done. It was the only time he ever rebuked him. The younger Swami offered no justification. When Swami Ramakrishnananda discovered his error he was so distressed over it that he scolded the Swami again for his silence.

Not long after his return from his native village the Swami went again to Madras and the old life was resumed. But a new element had entered into it. Swami Ramakrishnananda now talked frequently of the work that lay before the young Swami and he said more than once that his work would be in the West. The Swami also was conscious of a growing belief that his field of work would be in the Occident, but he did not wish to leave India until he had seen all parts of it. The opportunity to do this presented itself unexpectedly. A member of the Order was returning from the West, the Swami accompanied Swami Ramakrishnananda to Colombo to meet him. They were entertained at various places in Ceylon, after which they journeyed north by slow stages. Everywhere they were received with great enthusiasm and honor. While I was in Bangalore, I

heard much of their visit there. For ten days they were guests of the Maharajah of Mysore. His father, when Maharajah, had done much towards making it possible for Swami Vivekananda to attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and the son was eager to keep up the tradition by paying worthy homage to Brothers of the great Swami.

They were given a royal welcome. Triumphant arches festooned with green garlands and flowers were erected along the way by which they were to pass. High officials in the Prince's service met them at the railroad station, they were driven in a State carriage to a bungalow in the royal park set apart for their use, and special officials were appointed to look after their needs and comfort. Meetings were arranged and the older Swamis delivered lectures to audiences of a thousand or more. They were also entertained by various Societies. Before the visit was over the Government presented the Mission with a tract of land adjoining the extensive grounds of an ancient cave Temple on the outskirts of the city, and the corner stone of a new Monastery was laid. There was already a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission not far off under the direction of Swami Atmananda, but the work occupied rented quarters and the Government's donation gave the promise of a permanent home for it. The laying of the corner stone was carried out with elaborate ceremony. The Dewan (prime minister) and many of the most important officials of the Maharajah's service were present and great enthusiasm was manifest.

The Swami watched all these festivities as a quiet witness. In the various group pictures taken at the time, he sits garlanded like the others, but always with a smile on his face, as of one who is assisting at an amusing play. Being the youngest of the visiting Swamis, he kept himself in the

background; but many at Bangalore spoke to me of his charm and deep spirituality. The real trend of his mind is shown by an incident related to me by a physician at Bangalore, a man of genuine religious zeal. One afternoon the Swami felt the need of rest and preferred to stay quietly at home. The doctor asked to remain with him. After talking for a while, the Swami began to sing holy songs. In the middle of one of them, the physician told me, he passed into a higher state of consciousness and continued there for some time. When he returned, his face, the doctor said, was shining with a light such as he had never seen on any other face; but the Swami went on singing without a word.

From Bangalore, the Swamis proceeded through Puri to Calcutta; thence to Benares, Agra, Allahabad, Almora, stopping in Rajputana as guests of a native ruler, then on to Ahmedabad and Bombay. Swami Ramakrishnananda had left them at Calcutta. The Swami had seen India and as few see it—India in festal garb, garlanded and gay with song and music; for everywhere they had been welcomed with acclaim. Now he was ready to point his course westward. The member of the Mission with whom he was travelling was returning to America. He sailed with him on November, the tenth, from Bombay by a P. & O. steamer for England. After two weeks in London they continued their journey across the Atlantic and reached land in time to hear the Christmas chimes ring out from the belfries of New York.

(To be continued)

Let us turn to God with an ardent desire and activity, that God may be honored and glorified by the annihilation of our selfhood and all that we are able to do. May all men become enlightened and come to a knowledge of the Truth.
—*Ruysbroeck.*

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MAY, 1925

POISE and EFFICIENCY

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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magnitude who lacks this quality. It does not belong peculiarly to East or West, it is the special quality of the soul. How does one gain this poise? Through sanctity, through consecration, by fastening the heart to something other than self and never following the dictates of self-will. The man who is constantly tossing himself and tossing others, creating unrest and impatience, perpetually generates within himself and in others troubled emotions. We know how it is when we come in contact with a person who makes us feel nervous or tired and irritable. We may have all kinds of affirmations or denials in our mind, but these feelings continue to exist. Why? Because they exist in human character.

What makes up human character and the atmosphere which people create? The sum total of their thoughts and feelings, both inner and outer. Because of these, people are constantly exhibiting some special virtue or its lack; they are constantly creating an atmosphere. We partake of that atmosphere, and either we are depressed and hurt by it or we experience fresh enthusiasm, new courage and inspiration. It makes us feel light-hearted. It is too much perhaps for us to expect that whenever we are full of unrest or unhappy, we should go to some one else to tune us and put us in right mood. Even if some one could do it for us, we may again lose our bearing. It must be of our own making. It is a task for the individual himself.

There are models, beautiful ones, spiritual beings who are sanctified, and such examples are the greatest that the world can copy. We do not want to copy the characteristics of an angry man or of a soul that is intoxicated with ambition and vanity; but innately we want to absorb those virtues which make one like a mountain, unshakable and steadfast. Calamity may befall the man who possesses

these, many painful conditions may overtake him, the world may turn its back towards him, all kinds of things may go wrong with him, yet we find him unmoved and calm. This calmness is not, as some people may imagine, a negative morbid quality; that the man, not being capable of striking back, has no alternative left for him but to endure. His calmness springs rather from a triumphant spirit. The outer conditions come and try to thwart him, but he does not live on that plane. Therein lies the secret.

It is not the mental calculation which we carry with us when we go to our work or business, or when we enter our home, that is going to give us the tranquillity and poise we need for our own preservation and for the peace and harmony of our family and of humanity. What have we to do with humanity, you may ask. Is it not sufficing if we can find a little happiness in our own heart and in our own home? Humanity is not so distant as we think. We cannot have anything worth while in our own soul, in our own heart, without enriching the destiny of all mankind. The man who thinks big thoughts and lives high ideals, perhaps silently and quietly, without ostentation or publicity, is the man who contributes something lasting and abiding. We see on the water surface how many bubbles come up and burst, but the main body of water is always there, still and dependable; similarly there is in the quality of man's life an underlying something which remains always serene and dependable. As long as we forget this and run after passing fancies, we produce nothing but big bubbles, which have no lasting existence; they vanish as they rise.

There is no other disease but the disease that springs from self. Of course this term "self" can be used in many ways; but here it is meant in the sense of that which rouses the evil in man,—egotism, vanity, passion, that some-

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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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POISE AND EFFICIENCY

Lecture by Swami Paramananda



IT IS not through chance that a soul is turbulent; it is also not through chance that we see some one who exhibits a sacred sense of poise and unshakable sanctity. Poise comes only when our lives have blended with Truth and we cannot blend our life with Truth accidentally. It springs from certain qualities in our soul, and these qualities we do not earn when we live casually and carelessly. They must be cultivated. Every hour of life is giving to us something to foster these qualities or to hinder them. There are thoughts which, as soon as they rise in our mind, make us feel better; they inspire us, they rouse our spirit, they open a new vista before our mind, and thus we become bigger. Also there are thoughts which make us feel small. We may not realize that we are feeling this smallness, but every one who contacts us feels it. We become suffocated in our own body because of our thoughts; they leave no room for the soul's expansion. We already have a narrow enough sphere; but we make it narrower through petty thoughts, small ideas, hateful attitude, and through anger and impatience.

Poise is a very wonderful attribute of the soul. I cannot imagine a man rising to any great height, to any great

thing which comes when we want what belongs to others or when we desire something better than others. Whenever we indulge in selfish instincts and petty thoughts, they always arise from that one central point, "I" and "mine." A man of spiritual experience drops these altogether for the good of his own self and the good of humanity. There is no great soul who ever strikes a discordant selfish note, or tries to seek victory through slaughter and annihilation of his enemies. He seeks by other means to reach his end. He conquers himself first. He first becomes the master of himself; and after finding his peace within, he gives a calm atmosphere to the world. Picture the image of Buddha, what does it represent? A serenity, a calm which comes to the soul only when it has transcended the realm of selfishness and self-seeking. Picture the life of Christ. In the midst of all opposition and what the world calls agony it was centred in something that was unshakable.

You may wonder why this serene poise cannot be distributed like a patent medicine, when people need it so much. We all know that it is necessary for our body, our mind and our nervous system; that each one of us would be a better person if we could maintain our inner peace and calm. But it is not anything that can be imposed from outside. It is something we must all earn. There are thoughts we can hold in our mind which will instantly bring a sense of relaxation, a sense of majesty within our soul. The body in spite of itself will respond and become pliable. Instead of being tense and rigid, even to the breaking point, it will become flexible; because it always yields to thought. That is the reason why sometimes we see a person exhibiting most wonderful beauty, very different from ordinary beauty. It is not the result of polishing the body or touching up by artificial means; it is a loveliness that rises from

the inner instinct of man. And wherefrom does it come? It comes from the depths within. As soon as we touch that inner depth, we are incapable of doing anything that is ignoble sordid or unpleasing to our higher instinct. This is the secret. It is not by any artificial method that it comes. There may be many rules and exercises and affirmations that we may repeat; but it is the quality of the soul which gives us that wonderful, most coveted beauty.

One of the mystics tells us that every human life should try to imitate the example of the tree or the example of mother earth. We plough deep into the earth, yet it continues to hold us up. A still better example is given by the tree. A person cuts its branches, yet it continues to give him shade and shelter. These are symbolic illustrations of life. If we think of these and try to understand their spiritual significance, we shall cease to be impatient or fretful. We are always complaining because some one else has done us an injury or robbed us of our happiness. No one else can rob us of our happiness, we rob ourselves. Suppose some one calls us by unkind names or uses harsh expression, or even tries to thwart us deliberately, yet it cannot touch us unless we make ourselves vulnerable through our own attitude or action. The people who do not entertain unkind feelings, harmful thoughts, unloving attitude, no one can harm them. That is the greatest safeguard we can have. But this requires great calmness of spirit. The small man lives on the surface. Every word gives him a jarring note. Sometimes elation lifts him up to the sky, the next moment he falls into depths of despondency. The man of larger vision goes deeper into life and he remains poised.

Tranquillity and poise give us certain qualities which make our life more fruitful. If we think calmly and deeply,

we can act profoundly and efficiently. But to-day in our modern life we altogether disregard this. A man believes he can spend his whole night in worry, calculation and scheming; then get up in the morning and really accomplish something. He needs freshness of spirit. His body needs re-strengthening; his mind must have the stimulation of inspiration, and these do not come to a soul that is indifferent to higher laws. People want happiness; people want all the beautiful things that make life complete; but these must be acquired through intelligent effort. It is not that we need to sacrifice or make ourselves martyrs. All the efforts that we are making now, all the energy that we are expending, perhaps in misdirected ways: we must direct these through proper channels and they will bring us rich fruition. This, however, requires calmness of spirit.

The most beautiful illustration that any one has ever given is the picture of a body of still water. The surface of water which is absolutely calm, how accurately it gives every image; but when it is agitated, not only does it not give a clear picture, it distorts. If a clear body of water can do so much, how much more a calm spirit will give to man. Yet these things we neglect. We say it is all right, we can go through the world and do our part,—we can work with our hands even though our mind is stirred up. We cannot neglect the most vital factor in our life. Whether any one else has offended us or tried to hurt us is not the question. The thing is, we can never disturb our own balance and benefit by it. We harm ourselves more than any one else, whenever we lack dignity, whenever we lose our poise. Even when troubles and disturbances come from all angles, what we need most is not to run for help from outside, but to keep a calm spirit.

It is through that, we learn to overcome evil. If we

grow nervous, we accomplish nothing. You may say: Some people are born with nervous tendency, with unsettled spirit, and it is natural for them to be thus. That is a tremendous illusion. We are not born with unsettled spirit; and we are not so weak that we cannot cure it, even if we think we are born with it. There is within us a Spirit which is always poised and calm; and when we find our contact with that source of perfect peace, we can cure all our ills. Form the habit of giving yourself a little opportunity, find a chance to connect yourself with that reservoir of life. It may sound visionary and vague and fictitious, but there is within the soul of man a real and inexhaustible supply. When he fails to draw from that supply and runs after outer things, although he may have a passionate longing for fulfillment, he will find only shadows.

When we contact our inner life and realize the true quality of our soul, something happens to us. A person who is fretful, who is nervous and irritable, suddenly becomes transformed; because he cannot contact a bigger thing without being transformed. That is the sum total of life. It is not by running after the pleasures of the world that we find satisfaction. All our experiences should teach us this one great lesson, to turn within. As we learn to turn within and more within, we find a sense of security and safety, and this is the source of all true poise and peace.

O friend, never strike sail to a fear. Come into port greatly, or sail with God the seas. Not in vain you live, for every passing eye is cheered and refined by the vision.—*Emerson.*

Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. As the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

HIGHER CHOICE*By Marcus Aurelius*

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains; for he who has preferred to everything else his own intelligence and his inner guide acts no tragic part, does not groan, will not need either solitude or much company; and what is chief of all, he will live without either pursuing or flying from death. Whether for a longer or a shorter time he shall have the soul enclosed in the body, he cares not at all.

In the mind of one who is chastened and purified thou wilt find no corruption, nor impurity, nor any sore skinned over. Nor is his life incomplete when fate overtakes him, as one may say of an actor who leaves the stage before ending and finishing the play. Besides, there is in him nothing servile, nor affected, nor too closely bound to other things, nor yet detached from other things, nothing worthy of blame, nothing which seeks a hiding-place.

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, in a word anything better than thy own mind's satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice: if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul and enjoy the Deity planted in thee, which has subjected to itself all thy appetites, and carefully examines all impressions; and, as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense and has submitted itself to the gods and care for mankind. It is not right that anything of any other kind, such as praise, or power, or enjoyment of pleasure, should come into competition with that which is rationally and practically good.

HOLD FAST TO THY COMPASS*By Swami Paramananda*

Sail thy vessel on,—
 Steady, friend, steadily sail along.
 Water may be rough
 Or water may be smooth;
 But ever hold fast to thy compass.
 The sky may smile
 Or the sky may frown—
 Hold fast to thy compass.
 Wind may roar
 Or wind may be still;
 But hold fast, hold fast to thy compass
 and sail thy vessel on.
 Steady, friend, steadily sail along.

DISCRIMINATION AND SURRENDER*From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda*

As a bird flies to the sky with its two wings, so we must have the two wings of discrimination and renunciation to fly to the heights of liberation. Spiritual instructions make a lasting impression on the mind that is possessed of discrimination and renunciation, and when there is a lack of these the impression produced is proportionately small. If one has real discrimination and renunciation, one is safe. A man runs after water in a mirage only so long as he mistakes the mirage for real water. Once the delusion is broken, nobody goes to a mirage for water. The truth about it is that he only escapes whom the Mother Herself holds by the hand.

“Everything depends on Thy will, Mother, Thou actest as Thou pleasest.” If we are submissive to Her, She never fails to protect us. The more time passes, the more this idea

appeals to me. "Good and evil—both come from Thee, O Mother. Through Thy will all things come to pass. Thou makest the lame to scale mountains and the elephant to stick in a quagmire." There is a relief in the thought that behind all this there is a Power which guides everything. But the rationalists will not admit this view. They say: "Can an effect be produced without a cause?" And the other party replies: "He is the Cause of cause itself."

In my boyhood, when I saw a puppet-show and heard a puppet scream, I at once thought that it actually made that sound. The puppets seemed to move of their own accord. But later on I was disillusioned to find that some one pulled the wires from behind the scene.

The best servant is he who acts reading his master's mind; he who merely obeys his master's command is the mediocre servant; and the worst servant is he who gets the order but neglects to carry it out. It is very difficult to be a disciple. Have you heard the story of a man who wanted to be a disciple? He went to a Guru (spiritual teacher) and said: "Sir, make me a disciple." The Guru replied: "Will you be able to be one? A disciple has to bring water, fetch wood, and serve the teacher. Will you be able to do all this?" Then the man said, "And what has the Guru to do?" The teacher, smiling, replied: "Not much to speak of. He sits at ease and now and then gives a little instruction. That's all." Then the man said: "If you think it difficult to make me a disciple, why don't you make me a teacher?"

We must decide on a particular course and devote our whole life to it. We must make ourselves ready. Before taking up any work, make yourself fit. Because Krishna-murti drives a motor car, must I try to do the same? It would be foolish. But it is not an altogether impossible

feat. If one watches how he does it and makes one's self gradually fit, then one can do it, as Gobar is doing. Most people do not know their own strength.

Books on Yoga say that all power is in us. We must, however, learn to control the mind through proper discipline, then only will this power be manifest. For the accumulation of spiritual power absolute continence is needed. From continence comes strength. Meditation also is a great help. When the mind is withdrawn from all other objects except one and fixed on that, then the succession of similar impressions on that object is called meditation. As Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Pinning the mind to some particular object like a lump of dough is called concentration." Why do not all have concentration? Because they do not fulfill the condition for it, absolute continence. This is the source of strength. What can you expect of one who lacks this strength? The long and short of it is that one must have full self-control. The Gita says—"In my opinion, spiritual practice is impossible for one who has not self-control. But one who has controlled his senses may, if he tries, attain it by adopting the proper means."

People follow their own whims and fail to get good results. The Scriptures are there, but they do not turn to them. Nor will they listen to the teacher. In the end they become unfit for spiritual practice. One who is moderate in food and pastime, who is moderately engaged in work, and who divides his time proportionately between sleep and wakefulness,—such a man finds an end to all miseries.

If it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity, but as long as I can avoid it, I will never be unhappy.—*Sydney Smith.*

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS*St. John of the Cross*

(A Spanish Carmelite Monk and close associate of St. Theresa. 16th Century.)

Do not despise others because as it seems to you they do not possess the virtues you thought they had. They may be pleasing to God for other reasons which you cannot discover.

Never excuse yourself. Listen calmly to the reprimand and consider it to come from God.

Make neither much nor little of him who may be against you, and strive always to please God. Pray that His will may be done, and love Him much, for it is His due.

Love to be unknown to yourself and others; never regard the good nor the evil of others.

The communications which come really from God have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend.

When God communicates His gifts and graces to the soul, He excites in it a repugnance to accept honours and distinctions; but in the way of humility and self-abasement, He gives it ease and readiness.

If you wish devotion to be born in your heart, the love of God to grow, together with the desire for divine things, cleanse your soul from every desire and self-seeking, so that nothing of the kind remains with you. For as a sick man, freed from the evil humours which troubled him, feels instantly returning health and a taste for his food, so shall you recover your health in God if you rid yourself of your spiritual disorders: and if this be not done, whatever you may do, you will make no progress.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

IX

BEGINNINGS OF THE WORK IN BOSTON

The Swami's first Christmas was spent in New York, also the second. The third was celebrated in Mrs. Ole Bull's house in Cambridge. Sister Nivedita and Sir J. C. Bose, the famous botanist, with Lady Bose were also there; and Sister Nivedita arranged a Christmas Eve Service in the truly eclectic inclusive spirit of Vedanta. Holy Ganges water stood in a porcelain shell held by a Christian angel; the Swami, who conducted the Service and gave the final prayer, chanted Vedic texts in Sanskrit and sang Bengalee hymns to the Divine Mother. Other guests sang carols of Jesus and Mary; Nivedita herself read the narrative of the Nativity as given in St. Luke; and at the close she requested the Swami to bless all present with the Ganges water that she herself had carried all the way from India. But this Service was not the chief motive of the visit to Cambridge. In a letter of December 8th, 1908, written to me in India, we read: "This is just a line to tell you I am going to Boston and I leave New York on Friday. Pray to the Mother that this new career which I am undertaking may be Her own work. May I feel that alone."

With Mrs. Bull's invitation for the holiday season she had sent an urgent request that the Swami come prepared to remain permanently and start a Centre in Boston. Remembering a chance remark of Swami Vivekananda that Boston was the most difficult and the most worth while place in America, he felt favorably inclined towards the proposal. His decision, however, was somewhat shaken when he discussed the matter with Mrs. Bull and Sister Nivedita.

Anxious to sponsor the new work, they had mapped out a detailed and rigid plan for it in which politics were mingled with religion. To move by human calculation was totally alien to the Swami's habit of life. He knew but one Guide, the unfailing, all-wise Power speaking in the silence of his soul; and he had always gone forward spontaneously and planlessly, attentive only to That. Any other method, he felt confident, would hamper his free action and predestine the new undertaking to failure. He determined, therefore, to set out independently and look to God alone. "I will begin the work in strength, not in weakness," he writes, in another letter. "I will try my best to do it; and if help does not come from anywhere, I will try to be contented, thinking it is the Mother's will."

The Swami was unfamiliar with Boston, but he knew some Hindu students and he determined to join them. They were living in a shabby lodging-house in Appleton Street. The place was unclean; the bathroom, used by many people, was ill-kept; and the only accommodation available was a cot in the public parlor. He left his trunk at the express office, put aside his usual traditions of living and met the situation with cheerful courage. The next morning he began a search for more suitable quarters. At the end of three days he was able to move into an inexpensive lodging in St. Botolph Street. It was clean and decent, but far from comfortable, and the months spent there were months of real hardship.

The house was not sufficiently heated and sometimes he had to break the ice in his water pitcher before he could wash in the morning. He ate in cheap restaurants and not infrequently, when he did not find one where he chanced to be, he went dinnerless or supperless to a class or lecture engagement. His passing comment in a letter to me in India

at this time was: "As you see, I am working in Boston—working for a new Centre. You know how hard it is to build up something in the midst of strange people, and one must go through certain discomforts and hardships." Austere simplicity was not alien to his habitual manner of life, for whenever he is left free to shape his mode of living, he always shows himself indifferent to physical comforts. He bore with cheerful fortitude whatever came to him in his new life; but it put a great strain on his body.

Now and then his letters contained amusing incidents in his daily round. The humor of them, however, was lost on Swami Ramakrishnananda. They only made him uneasy for the Swami's welfare. When he heard that he was making a meal on "one egg and buttered toast," called across the half partition of a dairy lunch, he grew gravely solicitous and said to me: "Write to Paramananda that he must eat enough. If he lacks for money we will send it from here." This gave me a new glimpse of the warmth of his love for the Swami, for the Monastery at Mylapore was none too prosperous at that time, and ampler meals in Boston would mean poorer ones in Madras. The Swami on his side was equally concerned for Swami Ramakrishnananda's well-being and out of the little he had, through unremitting denial, he succeeded in saving a generous sum badly needed for building repairs at the Madras Monastery.

Lack of ease in his daily life, however, was a matter of small concern to the Swami. He was eager to be at work. But how and where to begin? He had brought with him from New York a letter of introduction to a lady living on Commonwealth Avenue. When he presented it, he found that a death had just occurred in the family, so he withdrew at once, merely leaving the letter with his card. A few days later he received a cordial invitation from the lady

to lunch with her. She was an ardent Swedenborgian and a large class for the study of Swedenborg's writings met almost daily at her house. She requested the Swami to remain for the afternoon and address the Class. Then he was urged to return and give another talk on the following morning.

After this second talk a member of the Class, who lived not far away near the Charles River embankment, asked if he would speak in her home. She was leaving town and Wednesday was the only available day. As it was then Monday, it did not seem possible in two days to gather together a large number; but forty-five responded, many of them being prominent people of Boston. The outcome of the meeting was significant. The Swami's simple and direct way of giving his message created an immediate and deep impression; a regular class for the study of concentration and meditation was formed and many joined. A lady in Waltham organized another class; a series of drawing-room lectures was arranged at a delightful home in Milton, a suburb of Boston; he was also invited to lecture at the Public Library in Lynn; and soon his time was so filled that he sometimes had three meetings in one day and often two.

On his own initiative he engaged a hall on Huntington Avenue and announced a series of Sunday afternoon lectures. The hall seated about two hundred; it was full the first Sunday and people were most hearty in their enthusiasm. Mrs. Bull was there and as she grasped the Swami's hand warmly after the lecture, her appreciative remark was: "You have an unusually happy way of presenting the teaching. Another might say the same thing, yet he would antagonize." The basic unifying note sounding through all the Swami's teaching now, sounded then too; and she had caught its ring.

There was a break in his Boston activities at the beginning of March. He was asked by the New York Vedanta Society to come there and conduct the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday; but before he left, an effort was made to create an organized Centre in Boston. A meeting was called after the final Sunday lecture before his going, and there was much discussion of officers and ways and means. While he was gone, those who had started this new departure, changed the hall for the public meetings and engaged from another Society the use of two rooms for the Classes and the sale of literature. The Swami always felt that this gave the new work a perceptible check. The attempt to organize was premature and contrary to his normal method. It has always been his custom to let his work outgrow itself and demand new and expanded conditions by its inherent need. He never forces growth. He lets the petals of the blossom of his effort drop off through the swelling of the fruit. His course has been like the slow upward push of a long-lived tree. That is why in all his work there has been no halting or falling back, no boisterous glory and also no failure or defeat; but a gentle, unswerving, continuous going forward to the highest ends with undaunted steadfastness. The results visible to-day are too obvious to require definition.

It took some weeks to regain the lost momentum caused by the visit to New York and the change of place for the Sunday lecture. When the season closed, however, the Swami felt fully justified in continuing his work another season. The struggle to establish it had not been a light one. The bodily hardships formed only a small part of the difficulties encountered. Swami Ramakrishnananda followed the Swami's progress with the tenderest interest. Once when the weekly mail brought word of the happy solution of

a perplexing problem, he exclaimed with triumphant satisfaction: "Now the boy has won his spurs," and another day when he learned that a trying situation had been overcome, he said to me: "There is no doubt that Paramananda was born with realization. Otherwise he could not remain so steady under all circumstances."

The next summer was passed at the pleasant home in Milton where he had given the course of drawing-room lectures in the early spring. His hostess had come one day near the middle of May and carried him off from his lodging for a fortnight's visit. The first fortnight stretched into a second, then a third and fourth, until the summer was over and he had not gone anywhere, except once or twice to New York or Greenacre for brief periods. He was even dissuaded from a contemplated visit to England. His hostess was reluctant to let him go, feeling the blessing of so rare a guest, who with his youthful gayety and gentle wisdom had brought new freshness of life into her home. It had always had for her the sanctity of a sanctuary and the Swami's presence seemed a new consecration.

Often he was up and out at six in the morning, singing his way through the tangle of phlox and poppies in a lovely garden lying in a little hollow below the terrace, with a tiny lake beneath tall trees not far away. Now and then he found his hostess there before him, scraping the grass from flower-edged paths or pulling weeds from over-grown beds; and they would talk together, sometimes playfully, sometimes of graver things. Then there were long philosophic discussions on the curved seat beside the trickling fountain outside the open-air dining room; or they would sit on the terrace in the moonlight and the Swami would tell them of life in India. They also read much aloud, especially in the evening. His hostess however was not

selfish with her unusual guest. She sought to share him in various ways. A close friend was invited to spend the whole summer with them, and many others were asked for luncheon, dinner, tea, and for breakfast even. Out of these numerous meetings came a few vital contacts, made with people who penetrated beneath the outer charm of the Swami's winning personality to the deeper inner charm which gave the shining light in his eyes, the radiance to his smile, the serenity and gentleness to his manner. They sensed he had a lofty message and they asked for it. Among these was a gentleman of Milton who was shut away from active life by bodily illness. The wife had been strongly attracted to the Swami and had asked him to come to see her husband. The Swami went and made a delightful friend. He found the gentleman deeply interested in the Upanishads and much discouraged over the poor translation of them he had at hand. He begged the Swami to translate them and write a commentary. It was this friendly suggestion which led to the Swami's subsequent translation of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

This summer at Milton was followed by others, and it was interesting to watch the gradual transformation of the house through the Swami's subtle silent influence, from an acknowledged centre of social and intellectual activity to a quiet forest hermitage, not unlike the woodland retreats of ancient India. Although the house was not isolated, it was so placed in the property, and the grounds were so laid out and planted that it gave the sense of great remoteness and seclusion. The rooms were crowded with pictures, ornaments, and old embroideries, collected during frequent journeyings in Europe. The second summer everything of secondary artistic value was put away, leaving spaces in which to enjoy more fully what remained. Entertainments

were reduced to a minimum, and only those were invited to the house who were in sympathy with the new order of things.

The third summer all servants were given up, to create a freer atmosphere for meditation and study, and the members of the community family divided the labor of the household. Each one took care of his or her own room; some washed dishes, others the pots and pans; and the hostess herself did the cooking. We shelled peas or peeled carrots on the verandah, while the Swami expounded the Upanishads, or explained the Bible, giving to Christ's teachings the deeper interpretation of an Oriental. These informal hours proved the seed of an interesting course of lectures on "The Bible in the Light of Vedanta" delivered at the Centre in Boston the following winter. We swept and dusted, weeded and sewed; then when the morning's work and study were done, we played croquet or other games on the lawn in the little valley below, with lemonade under the trees to quench the thirst of both victor and vanquished. Swami's side was invariably victorious. To be his opponent meant sure defeat. An artist who joined the family the third summer grew so grimly determined to win at least one set of tennis that he used to go elsewhere to practise, coming back each time expecting success; but he always lost the set, although occasionally he won a game. He made an important addition to our life, for he had a remarkable gift for improvising on the piano, and our conversation in the evening had frequent melodious interludes of music.

Sometimes he played at the evening Service, but more often it was the hostess herself; for the hour of sunset was an hour of prayer with us always. We had made a lovely Chapel in the studio on the upper floor. Swami is seldom

anywhere for long without creating a place for worship. This one was beautiful with church embroideries and hangings; an altar stood at one end, lovely and fragrant with flowers from the garden; a temple lamp threw a ruddy glow over everything; and when the evening hymn sounded out from the little organ brought from the music room we seemed very far away from the pains and distresses of the world and very near to the heart of God.

People began to envy our happy simple life, with its wholesome mingling of work, play and prayer. Now and then some one was asked to make a part of the family for a week or two, and gain a new impetus from the spiritual lesson which the Swami's daily living never fails to give. Occasionally there were two or three such guests, but we were seldom more than six. The house provided an ideal setting for the Swami and his teaching and became a second home for the Boston work as it gradually took form. It was once more an organized centre, now, not of social, but of spiritual activity; and the one who presided over it has been ever since one of the Swami's ablest assistants and one of his staunchest friends. (To be continued)

THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

During Swami Paramananda's prolonged absences at Ananda-Ashrama, the activities of the Vedanta Centre of Boston have been carried on by the members with ever increasing devotion. Easter Sunday Shrine and outer altar were sweet with flower offerings, and the congregation while not large in number was fervent in its appreciation. Thus the sacrifice entailed upon the Boston work has served but to strengthen and stabilize it by giving to the workers a deeper sense of responsibility. Swami Paramananda expects to be again in Boston about June first and will remain several weeks.

EASTERTIDE AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Eastertide began at Ananda-Ashrama several days before Easter, the preparations being as much a part of the sacred festival as the Services themselves. The whole working force of the Ashrama was busy clearing away the brush from new areas of the property, creating charming groves and shady nooks, where the tired could rest and spend their time in silent thought. Some of the devoted followers, with great loving spirit, also came to help. Everything was done with incredible speed under the personal supervision of Swami Paramananda. The Swami was the most tireless and active of all the workers, ever busy with pick, axe, saw, hatchet or shears, climbing and pruning the oaks with great dexterity and skill.

On Good Friday there was a Service at three o'clock which was attended by a large number of faithful devotees. With remarkable simplicity and clarity the Swami spoke on the deeper significance of the day—the Crucifixion, its message of immortality; the blessing and glory of pain and adversity endured without resistance; its purifying and strengthening influence in our lives.

The Swami had conceived the idea of making it possible for all who desired to share in the beauty of the Ashrama, to spend the day of Easter. There were Services held—a Sunrise Service, a Devotional Service at eleven, and the regular Sunday afternoon Service at three-thirty. The Ashrama opened wide its gates and avenues to an eager and appreciative number, who reached the mountain side just as the first gleam of the rising sun touched the plateau, where, in deep reverence, they awaited the Service. For many days will the splendor of the Sunrise Service live in the hearts of those who witnessed both the light of the sun creeping over the hills and the light of understanding in-

filling their hearts. It was an exalting moment, a blessed experience!

The words of the Swami on "Rebirth" held a deeper meaning at that hour, and were in such wonderful harmony with the marvels of dawn, the miracle of spring, that each and every one understood more fully the true nature of the feast of the Resurrection. The birds, intoxicated with the joy of life and the beauty of morn, vied with each other for the honor of voicing their delight. They carolled loudly their exuberance as the choir sang the Easter Hymn by the Swami: "All Souls Awake," which had been specially set to music for the occasion; and never did his song of "Dawn, Lovely Dawn" ring with greater meaning than at that moment of sunrise. By the end of the Service the sun's rays completely enveloped the plateau and all those present felt the benediction of the hour and gave thanks.

After the Service breakfast was served in the Guest Canyon for those who wished to remain. Later all were at liberty to enjoy the unusual beauty of the place, made ready for them with so much love, until the Devotional Service at eleven o'clock. By that time the sun had advanced considerably in its course and was shedding its warmth and blessing in full measure, symbolic of the great ardor welling in all hearts. Places were found underneath the sheltering trees on the terrace facing an altar covered with Easter lilies and other offerings of flowers. There in this beautiful setting, fanned by a soft and fragrant breeze, never to be forgotten instruction on our relation to the Infinite and All-Abiding Spirit was given us by the Swami, in stirring and poetic language.

It was marvellous with what rapidity the Swami changed his robe after Service and went to the kitchen to prepare with his own hands the noon meal which followed. Tables

were set for more than sixty people beneath the trees in the Guest Canyon and all partook of the feast with the sanctity of a sacrament. The Swami moving among the happy guests was full of radiance, joyous that the opportunity had been given him to shower blessings on so many.

The Afternoon Service was held in the patio which was filled to overflowing. All present were prepared by the previous Services to receive the spirit of the address on "Incarnation and Resurrection." Through the Swami's words one was lifted to great heights. Many declared that for the first time they understood the true significance of the Resurrection. Every heart that listened could not help but feel the rising of a new and holier life of which Christ's Resurrection was the sign and symbol. The final prayer and benediction were particularly inspiring and closed this memorable Easter, sending homeward all hearts aglow with joy, hope and gratitude. Music formed a large part of the day's Services. Many of the Swami's sacred poems were sung by the Ashrama choir. A Russian artist sang several Russian songs with great fervor and beauty.

Numerous gifts and offerings were brought. One gentleman who two days before had visited the Ashrama for the first time was so deeply touched by its spirit and peaceful atmosphere, that he came to the Sunrise Service bringing with him six gallons of orange juice specially prepared from oranges in his own grove.

The heartfelt and renewed expressions of all those who had shared in the first public Easter celebration at the Ashrama were both touching and gratifying. The Swami, in response to numerous requests has promised another day of Retreat in the near future. It is the deep desire of the Swami that the Ashrama shall exist for the blessings of the largest possible number.—*H. C. A.*

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JUNE, 1925

SOUL'S TRIUMPH

Issued by

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(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Est. 1909)
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Of India, Founder and Head

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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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MY CREED

By Swami Paramananda.



BIDING Presence, Spirit of the universe,
Breath of our life,

In temples and chapels did I seek to wor-
ship Thee.

On pilgrimage I sought Thee;

In seclusion I craved to find Thee by quiet medi-
tation.

Many long roads have I followed with eager
spirit.

In many turns I thought I almost touched Thee.

Now I find thee here,—here in this nearest
space that is not space.

I see Thee everywhere!

Thus the holy truth of Scriptures, known to all
seers, I see with my naked eyes:

That Thou are ever present, pervading and
permeating all.

Now I bow before Thee,

Neither to the east nor to the west,

Neither to the north nor to the south;

But to all quarters I make my obeisance;

For I see Thee in all.
 Is my worship in my sacred shrine ended?
 My intimate communion before the chosen
 altar, will it be no more?
 Nay, I find Thee there still;
 Yet art Thou manifest in all without.
 Thus I worship Thee in forms of infinite vast-
 ness.
 In Thy unfathomed glory the atom of my life
 is magnified.
 In this unfolded vision my soul is expanded;
 And knowing how my finite life is contained in
 Thine Infinite Majesty,
 My soul is at peace.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Let a wise man blow off the impurities of his soul, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver, one by one, little by little, and from time to time.—*Buddha*.

The soul's descent to the body was predestined so that it might hear what it had not heard. It is like a flash of lightning shining over the meadow and disappearing as if it had never gleamed.—*Avicenna*.

There is a treasure that man or woman may possess, a treasure laid up in the heart, a treasure of charity, piety, temperance, soberness. It is found in the sacred shrine, in the priestly assembly, in the individual man, in the stranger and sojourner, in the father, the mother, the elder brother. A treasure secure, impregnable, that cannot pass away when a man leaves the fleeting riches of this world. This he takes with him after death.

—*Khuddaka-Patha*.

When one candle is lighted, we light many by it; and when God hath kindled the Life of His glory in one man's heart, He often enkindles many by the flame of that.—*Peter Sterry, English Platonist. 17th Century.*

It is deathlessness, bliss, peace, the divinity in humanity that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the thickest layers of ignorance. This is the real man, the deathless one, the free.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

The whole secret of remaining young in spite of years and even of grey hairs is to cherish enthusiasm in one's self, by poetry, by contemplation, by charity,—that is, in fewer words, by the maintenance of harmony in the soul.—*Henri Frederic Amiel.*

Self or the immortal soul is below, above, behind, before, right and left—Self is all this. He who sees, perceives, and understands this, loves the Self, delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self—he becomes a self-ruler; he is lord and master in all the worlds. But those who think differently from this, live in perishable worlds, and have other beings for their rulers.—*Chandogya-Upanishad.*

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.—*Isaiah.*

SOUL'S TRIUMPH*By Swami Paramananda**(Address delivered at dedication of an Open-Air Temple at Ananda-Ashrama.)*

Poets and mystics have been inspired by nature because Nature is vibrant to those who have resourcefulness and livingness of soul. We may think that we all have living souls. Theoretically for us they are living; but they become more living and more vibrant when there is a definite point of contact with the source of life. That is the reason why we find in some people a greater manifestation of triumph over all the ills of life; while we see other souls weighed down by their troubles and tribulations, miseries and misfortunes. They have become so absolutely overwhelmed by existing conditions that even though the Bibles and sacred classics of the world are constantly reminding them of their Source and of their omnipotent nature, they are not able to rise above their ills. This is because such a conception of the soul they have in theory only. But it is not in theory that we realize the glory of the soul. It is not in theory that we find a real contact with Godhead. It is in silence, in solitude, in the hour of meditation, in our aloofness from all things that are distracting and debasing, it is then that we gain a contact with our Source; and through that contact we rise to greater heights.

No man can rise from the material, no man can disconnect himself from that which is heavy and unwholesome, without feeling renewed, without becoming more and more living and more and more vital. It is this quality in the soul that makes us fruitful; that gives us power to do, power to act, power to love, power to give. When we think of our smallness, we are afraid to give, because we fear we are going to lose by giving. We imagine that we have

only a certain amount, and if we give more than that amount we shall have less for ourselves. It is this calculation which makes for discord, war, intolerance and rupture in human families. One of the most essential things in life is not to try so feverishly to battle against evil conditions, but to overcome them through knowledge, through wisdom, through higher qualities. Nothing gives us the power to do this so much as access to our inner soul.

When a man knows his true worth he ceases to be small. When a man knows the immensity of his soul, he is incapable of doing anything that is sordid, base and selfish. We preach to a man, "You must not be selfish, you must not do anything that is evil, you must not steal," yet in spite of all our teaching and preaching and laws, he continues to be selfish. Why? Because we cannot stop evil merely through restriction. Nor can we overcome evil by evil. Throughout the ages people have fought evil conditions; they have used swords and guns and poison gas, but they have not been able to vanquish evil. Evil is not overcome by evil; it is overcome by contacting good. A man is not redeemed by artificial methods. His salvation is not gained through any code or ritual, or ceremony; his salvation is not determined by any person. It is within his own destiny, held by himself, realized by himself and won by himself. When we understand this, we depend less and less on the artificial aspect of life. We become more and more dependent on that which is solid and abiding. And the soul needs what is enduring and lasting. The soul triumphs through it. It conquers evil when it does not lower its standard even though it may be abused, maltreated or apparently defeated. One who has thus overcome evil does not lie because his enemies lie. He does not hate because his enemies direct their hatred towards

him; he triumphs through spiritual means, and that is the soul's best victory. We never find victory on the physical plane.

Most people yield to their physical desires regarding them as inevitable conditions. Physical lethargy robs them of their spiritual blessings, making them morbid and lifeless. They are ever crying for some one to help them. But the true help is within. There is not a soul who cannot rise up above all conditions, by defying them and becoming victorious. This is one of the most vital teachings that comes down to us through Vedic revelation. It declares that soul must triumph over all things, not with aggressiveness, not by trying to override another; it triumphs because it has attained knowledge and wisdom and discovered certain secrets in the spiritual realm.

When a man has found something that is of worth, he must prove it through his higher qualities. He must subdue all the ordinary propensities in his life and nature, and let the soul qualities shine forth. This is what we need to-day more than anything else. It is not that we need to multiply physical comforts. People are already growing softer and softer, more and more unthinking. Even in the question of salvation they hope that somebody may work it out for them in the shortest possible way, by some sort of calculating machine, so that they may not have to bother with it. That will never be possible. We may deceive ourselves; we may think that some one may come and direct us to salvation; but to attain it the soul must know its own worth. Herein lies the whole secret. A man who is morbid, doubtful, despondent,—despondent because he has no faith in himself, no clear vision in regard to his own real being—how can he take a stand and make the best of life? We must have a foundation. We must find the basic

rock of life, then alone can we begin to rise. All the things that we are doing now, all the energy that we are expending even in our ordinary tasks can be of very great value to us when we have found a solid foundation for life. And what is it? Some say it is religion. Others say that it is understanding the laws of being, the laws of the universe; it is learning to do our duties properly. We may give many, many answers; but the real answer can only be given from the soul itself. Has it found the point of contact with its Maker?

Religion consists in this. What do we know about religion? What is our conception of God? What is our concept of soul? How close have we come to a conscious relationship with the Supreme? We may say that is the business of the church; it is the concern of the soul. Every soul can make a definite contact with its Maker. In fact we can never do justice to ourselves or to our duties until we have found this definite contact. No tree can live when it is severed from its root. A stream cannot flow when it is cut off from its source. It dries up. Same way it is with our life. The fullness of life is only realized when we have perpetual connection with the Source of our life. What are we doing to establish that connection? What are we doing to maintain it? Our whole success depends on that. We cannot establish or maintain this connection from a sense of obligation. It must be from a sense of perpetual joy and enthusiasm, because contact with the Source never fails to fill the soul with enthusiasm.

Our energy is unending. Our mental power is unending. Our force cannot be dried up so long as we keep ourself connected with that Source; but this is something we cannot do by artificial means. It is not enough for a person merely to belong to a church to feel his spiritual nature.

There must be an active, constant and perpetual Presence. This Presence must become a living thing in the life. If we carry something with us very precious, but do not know its value, what will be the reaction? We shall not be any richer. Similarly we carry this wonderful soul that the Vedic sages describe and the Bibles of the world proclaim to us, a soul that is invincible; how then can we go on crying and walking on this earth as beggars.

The immensity of the soul is within this our house of clay. When we have found it there, we find it everywhere. The birds speak to a soul that is awake; the trees, the sky, all Nature seems to glow before him because Nature is the image of God. How little we know of it! We turn a deaf ear to the voice that can speak to our soul. We close our eyes before that image which can give us a sense of sanctity and inspiration. Where can we find God? If we have not found Him within our soul, we shall not find Him without in Nature. If we have not found Him in the internal, we shall find Him nowhere. If we have found Him within, we find Him everywhere.

One of the most impressive things that I have experienced lately, especially in connection with this work, is the living Presence of God in Nature and through Nature. I think people miss a great deal who do not feel this. They close their doors to higher inspiration when they enslave themselves to artificial modes of living. We live in cities, we see only the artificial creation of man—buildings, chimneys, factories, paved streets. It is all right for us to see them, because it is through man He works; but why not sometimes see His direct expression, as we find it in Nature? Nature exhibits a beautiful expression of His Divine image—trees, flowers and birds singing His glory; all these things speak to us with a living voice, that we may

hear Him. The one who does not hear, misses a tremendous thing. First of all Nature rests one. A tired soul finds rest as he comes in contact with Nature. Body is refreshed, soul is reinforced, mind is invigorated. We need these for true understanding and true worship of Divinity.

Worship can be done in one way only—when we feel it; when we are able to express our feelings in some delicate and genuine manner. Nature contributes abundantly, and it is that thought that gave the inspiration to have an open-air temple. God needs no special altar. The altar is already set. Nature with her bounty provides it. Even some of you have noticed when the choir is singing, how the birds sing. Sometimes when I give my chant and benediction, the birds seem to strike their note in rhythm. How much more inspiring these things are than the artificial things we create, and we should not overlook it. On the contrary, we should derive great benefit and inspiration as we come in contact with Nature.

Soul finds its expansion and its power to express when it comes out in the open; and what we find in Nature, we must try to cultivate within. We must not confine ourselves with small and sordid ideas,—that we are little, insignificant; that we can only do a certain amount; that if we give something to another out of impulse, we may be the losers. Constant calculation is the worst possible thing for us. When, on the contrary, we learn to see ourselves from another viewpoint,—not as man of flesh, not as we are represented constantly by others, but as we are truly made in His image, these thoughts inspire us. They uplift our spirit and give us strength, such strength that under all conditions we are able to stand up and not feel the sting of life. There are some people who flourish when all goes according to their calculation and expectation. They are

happy because everything moves as they expect; but when anything goes out of order, they seem to know no way of keeping their balance. There is no out of order. Everything has its place. Even miseries have their place; and the great men instead of being made miserable by their miseries, glorify them. When misfortune befalls them, instead of going down under it they seem to lift their misfortune. That is what we have to learn; and the only way we can learn it, is by laying greater emphasis on our soul nature and less on our bodily nature. If we are overwhelmed by physical life, then we feel the stings of the physical; we feel our aches and pains, our disappointments and sorrows; less and less we think of that part of our being, less and less we feel it. Therefore some of the philosophers declare it to be non-existent, some say it is only relatively existent.

Some people magnify their troubles and some people minimize them. How do they minimize them? Not by any magic. They are able to do it because they are more conscious of their souls, more conscious of God, of their spiritual existence; and before that consciousness ordinary things fade away. Before the light of the sun, darkness vanishes of its own accord. If we can keep that consciousness of the soul, the majestic, the beautiful, the undying soul, then we shall never suffer. How can we do it? When we come in contact with the world, it reminds us of the flesh, of material things, of vanities, of undependable qualities; we cannot help it. The best thing we can do for ourselves, for our religion, for our fellow-beings is to redeem ourselves by soul-consciousness. There is a very beautiful passage in one of the ancient classics of India—"O, man, in order to raise thyself, never lower thyself. Raise thyself by thine own Self, for thou art thine own friend and thou canst be thine own enemy through carelessness."

When our spirit is downcast, our word cannot give comfort to any one. When we ourselves feel unhappy and our mind is full of doubt, it is useless for us to try to preach to some one that doubt is a terrible thing. When we have become united with the Source of our life; when spiritual existence is no longer a theory for us, but we are fully convinced that our first and foremost consideration must be Spirit, then love conquers hatred, all that is small and unworthy is banished from our consciousness, and our soul rising above the flesh becomes triumphant.

SPIRITUAL PEACE

By Miguel de Molinos, 17th Century

The means of obtaining mental peace is not sensual pleasure, but spiritual consolation, and the destruction of self-love.

There is a saying of St. Bernard that the only way to serve God is to do good and to endure evil. He is in error who would reach perfection by means of comfort and consolation. No other consolation may be asked of God than we sacrifice our life to Him from love. The path of our Lord Christ was not the path of comfort and well-being; also, by His words and example He did not counsel us to follow it when He said: "Who would do even as I, must deny himself and take his cross upon him and follow me."

Open your eyes and consider what His counsel and desire were, when He asked us not to follow the pleasure and comfort of our own desires, but to deny ourselves. He said: "He shall deny himself," as if He would say: "He who would follow me and reach perfection must give up his self-love and, leaving all behind, must resign himself completely to the yoke of obedience and submission through self-denial, which is the truest cross." There are many souls resigned

to the will of God who have received from His hand great thoughts, visions and spiritual illumination; yet the Lord withal does not grant them the grace to perform miracles, to know hidden secrets and to predict coming events; while He has endowed other souls with these powers who have ever walked with sorrow, temptation and the true cross, in the spirit of full humility, obedience and submission.

Oh, what great happiness it is for a soul to be oppressed and subordinate! What wealth to be poor! What high honor to be despised! What exaltation to be humbled! What consolation to be sad! What proof of true knowledge it is to be thought ignorant, and lastly, what inexpressible bliss it is to be crucified with Christ! That is the praise of which the apostle said: "Let others boast of their wealth, of their rank, their pleasures and honors, but for us there is no higher honor than to be despised."

"Many are called, but few are chosen", says the Holy Spirit. Many are called for perfection, but only few reach it; because few take upon themselves the cross with patience, endurance, peace and resignation. To deny one's self in all things, to subject one's self to the judgment of others, ever to kill all inherent passions, to destroy one's egoism in every respect, always to follow what is opposed to one's own will, desire and fancy—those are things which only few can do. There are many who preach them, but only few who practise them. Some souls have begun on this path, and walk it daily; they persevere as long as they have the sweet taste of their first enthusiasm; but hardly has this delicious sensation and spiritual enjoyment ceased, than they waver and fall off in the face of the breaking storm of sorrow, temptation and insensibility—a clear sign that they sought themselves, not God or perfection.

The monster of self-love appears everywhere. It seeks

mental pleasures by even leaning upon the gifts of God which, in His grace, He magnanimously gave to man. Another time it demands boundless preservation of health and seeks, under pretense of being an instrument of God, only its own good and its own comfort. At times it surrounds itself, under wonderfully fine disguises, with the semblance of goodness; and finally it clings with a remarkable tenacity in all things to its own judgment and its own preconceived opinion, of which the roots have formed deep within it. All these are expressions of self-love, and it is impossible, before they are overcome, that man ever reach the height of perfect contemplation, the highest bliss of loving reunion and the exalted throne of spiritual peace.

THE PRESENCE IN THE SHRINE

By Sister Daya

There is a Presence in the shrine,
It moves with noiseless tread;
But oh, Its feet are shining,
And a flame burns round Its head.
Sometimes It sits in silence
And God is all around;
Sometimes It sings a blissful song
And God is in the sound;
Sometimes It seems to leave the shrine,
We hear the high doors close;
But when we linger on in prayer
A constant blessing flows.
I know that It is always there,
Divine, enrapt, apart,—
That blessed Presence in the shrine,
The shrine within my heart.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

X

CENTRE IN WASHINGTON

The Centre in Washington may be said to have been brought into existence by the raw chill winds of Boston. When Swami began his second season in Boston he was constantly hampered in his public speaking by a cough and hoarseness. The hardships of the previous winter and continual exposure in going about to so many widely separated classes and lectures had left their mark upon his constitution and he was strongly advised not to spend the winter in the harsh climate of New England. Washington had always seemed to him an especially favorable place for a Centre because of its cosmopolitan, non-commercial character; the climate also was mild, so he determined to shift his activities there. I had returned from India in the late autumn, a devoted friend of the work from New York joined us and together we started southward. The search for suitable quarters for the work was a weary one. We had carried a letter of introduction to the friend of a friend; we also had one or two acquaintances, and they all did what they could to help us; but the conditions were peculiarly trying. When we found a house that from the exterior looked possible, the key was always at the agent's office downtown. When we had procured it, the interior did not suit our purpose and a half day had been wasted.

This went on for two weeks. We were almost at the point of abandoning further effort, when the Swami said to me as we set out on a last attempt: "I have prayed very hard and a strong impression has come to me that this afternoon we shall find the right place and there will be

some one there to show it to us." We had meant to take the first street through to the car line, but in talking we passed it by and took the second. We had gone nearly the full length of a long block when we saw a house for rent. A boy was just putting the key in the door. We asked him to let us see it. It was exactly what we wanted and the next day we signed the lease. It was on Kalorama Road, and the people in India always believed that we had renamed the street; for Kalo is a descriptive Sanskrit name for Krishna, Rama the name of another divine manifestation; the two together make Krishnarama, or reversed, Ramakrishna, the name of the great teacher who founded the religious Order to which the Swami belongs. It is suggestive and interesting to find so striking a similarity between an old North American Indian name and the compound of two ancient Indo-Aryan names.

The house was extraordinarily well adapted to our needs. On the third floor were three rooms and a bath, which provided the Swami with a bedroom, study and Chapel quite apart from the activities of the house. The fourth floor was used solely for storage. The second floor had another bath and three rooms for workers. The ground floor was practically all thrown together. There was no end partition between the reception room in front and the large central hall; and unusually wide sliding doors between this and the dining room, which extended across the full width of the house. It was here that we placed the platform; and looking through the stretch of space to the front, one could easily imagine it a lecture hall, with a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty. This floor was entirely renovated and also some of the other rooms; but we were anxious to take possession and while the repairs were still in progress we moved in, with five trunks and three

cots as the sum total of our furniture. One of the Swami's most efficient and faithful workers came from New York the day we moved and spent the first difficult weeks with us.

We cooked on the first floor and ate on the third. During the day the workmen were busy on the second floor and even in the kitchen while we were cooking. The furnace caused us continual disquietude. None of us had had experience with furnaces and we were constantly afraid it would go out. Swami would get up at five, go down and peer in to see if the fire was still burning; one of the workers, unaware of this early visit, would creep down at five-thirty; another would follow at six; and at seven the colored boy, who came night and morning to stoke it, would come and rescue it from too frequent shiftings of the damper. Once when this was left open and the fire got very low, one of the workers sat up with it nearly the whole night; another hearing the ash-shaker at half past two, came down to do her share of shaking, and at three Swami was about to dress and lend a hand, when the sound of the two workers' footsteps on the uncarpeted stairs told him the crisis was over and the furnace again ablaze. After we got used to it, we took it less seriously; but we had many other inconveniences to meet. Gradually, however, we got settled and collected the bare essentials for the house-keeping. We kept, however, to the most rigid simplicity, as the Swami did not wish to root the household too deeply until we knew how the work would go.

On Christmas Day we consecrated the little Chapel on the third floor. We had hung a mediaeval embroidery, made by the monks of Salamanca, against the wall on one side of the room and placed an altar before it. The air was sweet with the fragrance of incense and the perfume of flowers and blooming plants; the Swami lost himself in

the joy of chanting holy texts or in meditating; and although there were only three present, the Service was a long and impressive one. The Swami offered the new work to the Lord with all the burning fervour of his pure heart and invoked divine blessing on it. From that moment there seemed to come a new Presence in the house, a Presence which the noise of painters, carpenters and plasterers could not obscure. We had tried to observe habitual hours of prayer from the time we moved in, but they were frequently cut short or disturbed by the prevailing confusion; now that there was a place set apart, there was regular worship in the morning, at noon and in the evening. It created a wonderful atmosphere. Every one who crossed the threshold felt and spoke of it. A letter to the Swami refers to it thus: "I always think of the meetings at the Vedanta House in Washington as bringing to me what I had been long needing—a spiritual conception of the meaning of life and its realities. The atmosphere of those rooms brought me even more than did the words I heard. I have not felt that atmosphere in any other place; it affected me deeply and made me quite speechless when I wanted to say how much you had helped me." What the writer sensed was the subtle, permeating influence of that upper chamber dedicated to worship and prayer, and watched over with ardour of devotion by the Swami. It made the nascent work strong and vibrant even before the meetings began.

While the workmen were finishing, circulars were printed, folding chairs bought, together with other indispensable furniture, a platform was made, and on the first Sunday in January it was possible to hold the first public meeting. We had put announcements in the church notices of the different papers and friends had told their friends; this was the extent of the effort to make it known,

yet the response was remarkable. The attendance was excellent and every one was most appreciative of the Swami's lecture. Two mid-week classes were started, but the growth of these was slower. The evening is always a busy time in Washington and people were seldom free. In a short time, however, an earnest nucleus was formed and after that the attendance increased steadily. Later in January a large reception was given for the Swami by the Oriental Esoteric Centre. He also delivered a lecture there before a numerous gathering, and this rebounded on the work bringing many more to the new Centre.

There was every reason to feel hopeful, but the Swami's heart was still half in Boston. He was sincerely interested in the Washington work, but he was also reluctant to throw away all the strenuous effort of the previous season in Boston. He had put so much of himself into it, it was not easy to withdraw; and people were constantly writing, pleading with him to return. Finally he decided to go back, look over the ground once more and determine what to do, leaving me to take care of the work in Washington. He started for Boston early in April. From New York he wrote: "Try to build up the work. What you are doing now, do everything in His Name, then you will be always safe and irresistible. Do not have any thought that the Washington work is only temporary. It has all been done through His Will and for some purpose. Tuesday morning I leave for Boston at ten o'clock."

Later came this word: "Have the meetings continue as long as you think best, and tell all our friends not to get discouraged. I shall be very glad to come there every season if they really want the teaching and make it possible." This was followed by the more definite instructions: "Please go on with the meetings until the third of

July anyway. Then we will see. You understand it is very important, a work which is so young must be given all possible care to make it strong. As long as people are so eager for the teaching in Washington it will be a mistake to close the work, when the weather remains so cool, do you not think so? Work is young and it ought to be protected by all means. Serve the Lord and His work; He will take care of the rest. I shall write to you soon again more fully. In the meantime go on with the services and classes with wholeheartedness. We get such strength when we do the Lord's work faithfully."

And in a subsequent letter: "Our duty is to harmonize, sympathize and never antagonize. Sometimes it may take long to make people understand a great ideal. But patience, perseverance and love conquer everything in the end. It is good to give people joy and happiness, but it is infinitely greater to help people through light of understanding; because light of wisdom saves one from many rounds of births, and gives eternal bliss. All are His children and everybody is dear to Him."

Another passage gives this unexpected glimpse of what was passing through the Swami's mind: "Swami Ramakrishananda's letter is very good. He speaks mostly of the suffering one has to go through who undertakes any noble work; how the world misunderstands him and misinterprets everything he does. Then he says: 'Do not pay any attention to what people say, but do your duty. Great souls never find any comfort in this world. Only selfish people seek for such things.' It is a nice letter. Mr. N's letter has made me so homesick for India, I hardly can resist it; but I am ready to serve Him with my whole heart, body and soul, if He will only show me the right way."

The Swami holds and has always held his work and his workers up to the loftiest standard of undeviating consecration; but he invariably chooses the heaviest burden for himself, and his solicitude for each one who shares in his work is tender and constant. It found expression in such words as these, written to me in Washington after hearing that I was feeling the after-effects of an attack of fever in India: "I hope you are feeling well and strong, full of life and light, like a true devotee, free from all pain and depression. Do you know what intense joy it is to the Lord to have you bravely do this noble work? May you be blessed more and more every day in unselfishness, happiness and love infinite, is my constant prayer for you. My prayers are also for your health, your eyes and every bit of you which have all been offered unto Him for His service. Therefore they are all holy and should be treated so. All blessings on you and all Divine Love surround you." "Everything will come right through Divine Mother's Grace. Feel blessed that She has chosen you to serve Her. God bless you and make you a stronger instrument every day is my constant prayer." "Divine Mother protects you always and may my prayers always bring you joy and blessing."

In another letter were these words: "In Him must we trust and look to none else, to none else. Our faith in Him and love for Him must make us immovable. Impatience, planning or other human effort is not characteristic of a true devotee. The Lord is our Guide and we must get all our support from Him. In the face of all difficulties we must look to Him for peace and understanding. True devotees only are fearless and all-blissful; no one can be fearless who has a doubting mind. Everything goes well when we feel His Presence. He is the Sun, the Dispeller

of all darkness and all clouds of sorrow. What is there to fear in this world so long as we do not forget Him, being led away by worldly thoughts. Be a true devotee, full of cheer, full of hope, full of godly powers."

As the time to close the meetings for the season approached, the question arose whether the Centre in Washington should continue. The work in Boston was well started again and was moving forward briskly. The Swami had apparently committed himself to remain there, and was it then wise to go on in Washington? When the uncertainty was most acute came this letter: "Now I am going to write something which has come very strongly over me since this morning, a strong feeling against breaking up the Washington Centre; and I am going to suggest the various thoughts that have come to me. Through your help and willingness I think Washington work can be continued. Our work there has been most successful; there is no reason for breaking it up. You see I can come there in autumn and stay until the end of October; then you can carry it until the end of February; then I can again come and stay until April and you may come here for a little while. Of course the only question is whether it is advisable to keep the present house or not. We can take a smaller house in a more central part. I think the Lord will be pleased if we carry on His work even at a little sacrifice of our personal pleasure.

"I will give you in detail the idea that has come to me. Suppose I go to Washington in early September and open the work on September 11th and continue till October 23d; that will give six Sundays, six Wednesdays and six Fridays. Then I come here to resume Boston work and I will have two Sundays in October, all November, December and January; then back to Washington in February and stay

until perhaps the middle of April. You can come here for a while and give some talks and I can give a spring course in Boston and close by the middle of June. You can think about it. The Lord will bring help whenever it is needed. If you approve of this, you can call a meeting and decide plans for next fall. I can write a letter to be read at the meeting. We must do it now when the interest is alive. I do not think the work will suffer for lack of funds. I know everything will come right through His Grace. All these strong feelings have also come from Him. Whom do we need when we have Him in our hearts? No fear. We must work boldly, having full faith in Him the Lord. Tell all sincere friends who are truly interested to put their shoulders together and make it a success."

Swami came from Boston to Washington in June for a few days only. A meeting was called, a number responded and a keen desire to keep the Centre was shown. One of the members suggested a subscription list and at once enough was subscribed to allay any doubt regarding the financial status of the work. Many warm tributes were paid to it and to the Swami, and he was deeply gratified with the spirit of enthusiasm manifested. "The idea of keeping the Washington Centre has made me very happy and I am sure it has come from Him" was his comment in a letter after his return to Boston.

(To be continued.)

Life is a mighty drama enacted on the theatre of infinitude, with suns for lamps and Eternity as a background; whose author is God and whose purport and thousandfold moral lead us to the "dark with excess of light" of the throne of God.—*Carlyle*.

DEDICATION OF OPEN-AIR TEMPLE

On April 26th Ananda-Ashrama celebrated its second birthday anniversary. Swami Paramananda desired that something special and beautiful should mark the day; so very quietly he prepared a lovely surprise. The Sierra Madre mountains hold many a secret in their maternal arms and one of these secrets they shared with the Swami. Within a stone's throw of Ashrama Cloister lies an unsuspected fairyland, cool with the coolness of great trees, oaks and sycamores, and shut in on all sides by the sage covered hills. At this season of the year tall masses of violet-tinted canyon lupin lend soft color to its vistas, and shy wild birds break its silence with their calls. To transform this hidden sanctuary into an open-air temple had been one of the Swami's dreams from the first. But there were difficulties: the ways to it were blocked with tangled masses of brush, its walls were steep and its floor narrow; a dry stream bed which might carry water in the rainy season, cut through the centre of it. The dream persisted, however, and the Swami's dreams have a way of finding their fulfillment.

One day, ten days before the anniversary, the Swami innocently asked for two strong workers to go with him up the canyon and help clear out some poison oak. The next day they vanished in the same direction and the next day and the next. More helpers were called till on the ninth day the canyon was fairly humming with activity. The following morning those who came to attend the first Service at eleven o'clock, were amazed to see a fine new trail leading up the canyon where a few days before had been an impenetrable wall of growth. Over the entrance to the trail hung a rustic sign reading: Open-Air Temple. They were told that there the Service was to be held. Little did

they dream as they followed the turns of the trail up its easy grade, what a transformation had been wrought through the inspiration and under the personal guidance of the Swami. All they knew was that a great peace lay about them filling their hearts with a sense of sanctity as they approached the spacious natural temple with its roof of sky and its walls of greenery. The opening words of the Swami's poem, "Holy Sanctuary," which is sung at every Sunday Service, may have passed through their minds: "In solitude's inmost stillness there is a sacred shrine"; and as their feet moved silently over the carpet of fallen leaves, they may have recalled its closing lines, "Nor can one enter there whose footsteps are heavy and hard." Seated on redwood benches made for the occasion, they looked upon a garlanded altar and past that through fluttering leaves to the sheer cliffs beyond. There was music, human voices and the voice of birds, which blended with the silence.

It was told of the Chinese sage Huen Sha that once as he was about to begin an address a bird suddenly filled the air with song. Stepping down from his pulpit, Huen Sha remarked that the sermon had been preached. Those that came to the birthday Services, morning and afternoon, were glad that the Swami did not follow the example of Huen Sha, but rather conveyed to them the meaning in the bird songs, the rhythm of the silence, the divinity in Nature which he called "an undiluted part of God."

As on Easter, luncheon was served at the Guest Canyon for those who wished to attend both Services. Many remained and many more came in the afternoon. The new Temple was filled to overflowing. There were few who failed to feel a healing balm, a deep sense of benediction, an abiding Presence. The second anniversary was thus a blessed day.

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

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Message of the East



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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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WISDOM OF THE UPANISHADS

By Swami Paramananda

(Class Lecture at Ananda-Ashrama.)



WHAT are the Upanishads? Upanishads are the highest revelation of Indo-Aryan genius. They are India's immortal heritage. One of the names given to them is *Aranyakas* or Forest Books, which means that the thoughts set forth in these books were realized by consecrated seekers after Truth in the serene silence of some forest hermitage or in the unperturbed depths of majestic Himalayan mountains. It is very significant that I should take up this study here in our retreat, and should feel specially inclined to give lessons from the Upanishads. Their wisdom is not limited by any means to a special time, clime or condition; and yet it seems to require a certain environment and type of intelligence, a certain aptitude of mind, before we can comprehend it or it can touch our life. A person who has the right kind of mind may come in contact with its beneficence in the street, in a crowd, or in the midst of business; but as a rule it does not happen that way. In spiritual study there are no hard and fast rules. That is one of the things perhaps very difficult for western minds to grasp. They think all they have to do is to go to a class, take down some notes, pay a certain fee, and nothing more is required for gaining knowledge.

This may be true to a certain extent in regard to secular knowledge; but when we come to study higher branches of wisdom, such ideas and such attitude of mind would be more a hindrance than a help for our soul-unfoldment. It is rather the quality of mind that makes it possible for us to find our access to wisdom, and this is peculiarly true in the study of the Upanishads. In one sense what we find in the Upanishads is not something written in a book or in several books. It is something very subtle. I doubt very much whether by reading a literal translation of the Upanishads one could obtain any real benefit from it; yet it is profoundly simple. We must have the key, and the key to it is simplicity, openness of heart and firmly resolute mind. This is the key which opens the door to a higher realm of realities. It may come to a person who is perhaps not so well equipped intellectually or so polished in manner, yet who has all the necessary qualities—purity, one-pointedness and sincerity of purpose.

We find this again and again in the experience of those through whose lives the Upanishads were evolved. Sometimes pupils would go to a teacher and the teacher would test them. It was not a question of paying a fee and finding access. It was rather a different kind of fee the student had to give,—the right quality of mind. He had to prove that he was sincere. He could not deceive the teacher by a superficial interest or even by outer expressions of devotion. He had to go through certain discipline. You may say: “Why should we be put through any rigid test when we approach a teacher? Is it not our right to be taught?” Whatever is our right is given to us. A teacher always gives enough discipline to strengthen our mind and conviction and unfold such qualities that we may retain when we receive. You know very well that often we hear

words of wisdom and we retain them in our mind; again often we hear the same words spoken by people and they do not convey anything at all. Why is it? Because it is not in the words. Wisdom does not consist in words. Same thoughts can be repeated by half a dozen people and each of those people will convey a different meaning altogether; because it is the life that gives the power to express. One person may talk about charity or purity or love and it means nothing; because these things must be backed by the character. Character is the real basis of what we believe in and what we are capable of expressing.

To return to the Upanishads. The term "Upanishad" has several archaic meanings. One meaning is "sitting near the teacher," or "sitting at the feet of a wise personage." Another meaning is "that which shatters our ignorance." When we come in contact with an illumined soul, if we are ready, our ignorance is shattered; just as we cannot come into the light of the sun without being freed from darkness. It is said in the Katha-Upanishad: "The wise, who by means of the highest meditation knows the Ancient One, the Eternal One, so difficult to perceive, seated in the innermost recess, hidden in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the depth of inner being, as the Supreme, as God, is liberated from the fetters of joy and sorrow." It requires tremendous amount of concentration to understand this. What does it mean? Why again and again is so much emphasis laid on the subtlety of that Being "hidden in the cave of the heart, seated in the innermost recess, dwelling in the depth of our inner being?" Why is the same idea repeated? What does it signify? People search everywhere for happiness, they strive and struggle for its fulfillment. They go after this, they go after that, and the farther they go outward, farther away are they from

the goal. That is the general experience of every one. The less resourceful we are, the more dependent we become on material circumstances; the less chance is there for our peace and happiness.

We may repeat this beautiful saying, commit it, try to comprehend its magnitude intellectually; but unless we can relate it to our life, it remains indefinite. Spiritual life, spiritual feelings are very subtle and delicate. There are certain flowers, if you touch them, they fade away; so spiritual life is not anything that can be handled with roughness, or with cut and dried intellectuality. It is something we have to evolve, and we do this through meditation. Perhaps it is selfish for us to follow the path of wisdom and meditation, if we are capable of following it. I say "if we are capable", because we may think that meditation is a simple matter, that anybody can sit down and devote a lot of time to it; but meditation can be very deceptive. A person can meditate on a selfish subject; he can fall into a state of negation; but pure meditation—"the highest meditation" which the Upanishad speaks of—implies that all these outer things, all distractions and petty thoughts are eliminated. When this takes place, then we find our contact with the inner being; we are liberated; we know what it is to touch the Ideal; or as the devotees call it, we sit at the Feet of the Lord, the Absolute One. That is the consummation of meditation.

It is a tremendous experience and the life is altogether transformed by it. This our outgoing mind, this our long-standing habit which has made us a slave to circumstances, goes through a radical change. A person who is timid and who says he does not want to be alone, that person finds he is never alone when he turns his eyes within. A new world opens and a much more interesting world than this

chaotic, turbulent world we know now. Perhaps we should not venture such a thing. Will it make us less efficient? People are sometimes fearful to take up meditation because they do not know what it means. We are not afraid to take a bath; on the contrary we look forward to it, because it is refreshing. Even after we have had a feverish night, when we take a bath in the morning it gives us a sense of freshness; our mind is revived by it, and we feel we can make a new start. If so much we receive from a physical act of cleanliness, how much more must it mean when we have the actual sense of taking an internal, purifying bath of wisdom! It brings great stimulation to the spirit of man.

We can never attain the highest as long as we remain attached to the lowest. If we cling to small motives, then we shall never reach the Supreme. When we find the highest, however, all the lesser things come to us. People want health, they want happiness, they want success, they want peace; but these are only the fair attributes of life. For instance, bliss is the natural expression of true life and it is as inseparable from the life of the wise as fragrance from a flower. When you have reached the Highest, all these attributes will be fulfilled in your life spontaneously. If we concentrate on some definite object of desire, we do bring it to us; but also it brings with it a tremendous reaction. That is, if a person tries to follow an Ideal with a small motive to fulfill his selfish desires, he may have his dream fulfilled, but a great reaction comes with it.

Let us put away all our petty ideas. There are many things we want for our happiness and they may seem very real; but thinking on these many desires we hinder ourselves in the fulfillment of our Ideal. If instead of this, we can have discrimination enough and wisdom enough to

focus our whole being—our thought, our feeling, our aspiration—so completely that we make a point of contact and open up a new source of supply, then these lesser things also will come to us. Take a flower; when it comes to blossoming, it expresses beauty without asking for it. Every one knows it is beautiful. We are attracted even to a simple wild flower when it blossoms. It is fragrant, and because of its fragrance we are attracted to it. That is the way with our life. We want to be attractive, we want to be happy, we want many blessings; but these blessings come as a fulfillment. If we follow the law and live the life, then without having to ask for these things, they come to us. We do not have to calculate every moment: "To-day we are going to get this, and to-morrow we are going to set our mind on something else." These are very insignificant means and they bring only petty results.

We may not be capable of having the highest meditation to-day, but that must not discourage us. We do not need the highest, because the highest would be too high for us in our present state of mental evolution. When we open our eyes after sleep, if the light is too bright it hurts them, but if we open them gradually, our eyes get accustomed to the light and adapt themselves naturally. So if gradually we come in contact with the light of wisdom by simple meditation, that is the best way. Meditation gives us a sense of balance, it gives a sense of proportion. When we meditate, we are not excitable; if we are, then we are unfit for any such practice. Balance, steadfastness, these are the principal qualities in life. They are not very popular because people think they can get these suddenly; they imagine that they can buy wisdom. It is not possible. We must be willing to work for it faithfully and evolve it.

We cannot think on anything that is lofty, spiritual and

strengthening without reinforcing ourselves. "A mortal, having heard and fully grasped this, and having realized through discrimination the subtle Self, rejoices, because he has obtained that which is the Source of all joy," the Upanishad says again. In India, whenever we seek spiritual Truth, we go in search of a person who embodies it, who has realized it. If there is a God, we want to have a very definite contact with that God; and in order to have that very definite contact, we want to find some one who has made it his business to realize and embody Divinity. We do not ask for credentials,—at what university he was graduated, or how much he has studied. No, it is rather whether or not he himself possesses and radiates divine gifts. What a difference it makes. Sometimes we go to a lecture, or come in contact with a person who has a certain amount of outer culture; perhaps he can give a brilliant address; but when we come home there is no impression left. Again we come in contact with a person quite subdued, with no thought of self, no desire to make himself known, yet there is something behind him that carries. Spirituality is a living thing, and that living thing transforms the whole life and character.

I have been talking on the great classics of India, the wisdom of the Indo-Aryans. Although it means the thought and culture of a very distant time, the value of anything does not consist in its antiquity; because it is old, we must not accept it as a final authority. Whether or not it has a practical bearing on our life, how much we can bring it into our daily living, that is the main consideration. Words of wisdom written in a book or Bible may give us stimulation for the time being; they may arouse something in us; but their fulfillment can only be expected when we prove how much of them we can express through our life. Any-

thing that will give us an impetus to live and to express what is highest and noblest, whether it is from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, whether from the past or from modern times, that should be our concern; not only should we accept it, but we should encourage its spread.

Although to-day many think they are free from superstition, and free from prejudice; yet whenever there is any glamour of mystery, people flock there, because they do not recognize that they must find all subtle knowledge through their inner life. That is the real sign of wisdom. It does not make us arrogant when we look within and find the source of an unfailing supply. On the contrary, it strengthens our consciousness and conviction. It gives us something very definite. A person blunders only when he is weak in this regard. No truly strong person ever committed a crime. No truly strong person is ever selfish or hateful. You may not agree with me. You may say: "Oh, yes, we see very strong people who are hateful and aggressive." They are not strong according to my meaning; they are very weak; because of that they are selfish, they are arrogant, they are aggressive. A strong person is subdued. He is incapable of doing harm to any one, because his lower propensities are subjugated. He is incapable of indulging in hatred or anger.

Our real strength consists not in our muscle, not in the possession of a material background, it is something that comes from the inner conviction that we are part of something other than just this flesh. It is not that we should denounce our physical life. On the contrary, we should strive to make it more efficient, more helpful to ourselves and others. If however we can bring something in addition to the consciousness of the physical, if we can feel that we

are something other than just what we imagine ourselves to be, that we have a spiritual aspect, we gain new power. A man who goes into the world to do his duty, if he does not confine his consciousness and his inspiration only to the physical, but feels he is led, that there is a Power that is using him, if he can actually feel that Power which we call God, it is a tremendous thing. This is what makes us unflinching, unerring.

No person, no matter how gifted he is, can ever come to such a point that he is self-sufficient. When we think we are self-sufficient, that is the beginning of our downfall; that is when we stumble. The more we know and the more we are capable of expressing that Infinite, Absolute One, the more humble we grow. A tree that bears fruit in abundance bends down its head as if to give a symbolic expression of what humility is. A tree that does not bear any fruit is stiff and unlovely. The same way it is with our life. People who have made their life productive, they are humble, gentle, loving and lovable. Those who have accomplished very little are full of arrogance, of dissonance and harshness.

There is no one who is so base that he cannot lift up his head and say, "Yes, I am part of that Infinite One." If we are not capable of lifting up our head to that Supreme Ideal and of drawing our inspiration from it, then there is something wrong in our consciousness. It is not enough for a person to profess a religion. The ideals of that religion must become living in our consciousness. We must manifest it, carry it in our thought and unfold it in our action. We must let our whole life be the testimony of our faith. We cannot expect to transform this world, we cannot change everybody's mode of thought or life, but we can change our own life for the better, making a happier one.

We can radiate what is beneficent. Our first concern should be unfoldment from within, but we cannot do this without influencing the world. No person can be better or happier or wiser without making this world better and happier. When we fail to do this, we impoverish ourselves and we have less to give. We owe this to ourselves, to those whom we call our own and to the greater world. A person imagines that if he enslaves himself, if he labors in the field of the world and earns money, he is giving happiness to his family; but it requires something more than that. What we need to give happiness is balance, understanding, stability; and these come from inner spiritual resourcefulness, not from outside.

The Upanishads give the vision of a larger life, a greater humanity. They hold before us the higher vision as the working hypothesis for our every-day life. How can we realize this broader view? We must create an atmosphere—not merely talk about a greater humanity; we must live it, live it with the spirit of love, tolerance and practical spirituality. I do not mean we should sit down and meditate and do nothing. No. Our life should be so well shaped that it has all aspects unfolded—action, inspiration, love. When our life is imbued with these qualities, then we realize that subtle One “hidden in the cave of our heart,” and we rejoice because we have “obtained That which is the Source of all joy.”

O Breath reviving! Breath of the grace of God,
 One Breath came, touched us, and passed away,
 Soon He send another; keep awake, aware!
 Lest of gracious breathings thou shouldst miss
 thy share.

Jalaluddin Rumi.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The entire realm of action ends in wisdom. Learn this by reverence, by enquiry and by humble service. Those men of wisdom, who have realized the Truth, will teach thee supreme wisdom.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

He who is favored with divine grace becomes worthy of our homage and respect, as having adorned and raised up the equality of our nature by the participation he has gained with what is most excellent.—*Hierocles*.

He who is a thief of his own thoughts does not accomplish anything. How canst thou see God when thy whole heart and soul do not long for Him? . . . In God, who is Indivisible Ever-Existing Bliss, there is a consolidation of all happiness and of all pleasures. They who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the hollow pleasures of the world.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

He alone is God who can never be sought in vain; not even when He cannot be found.—*St. Bernard*.

Man at his birth is tender and weak; at his death he is rigid and strong. Plants and trees when they come forth are tender and crisp; when dead, they are dry and tough. Thus rigidity and hardness are the concomitants of death; softness and tenderness are the concomitants of life.—*Chinese Teaching*.

Simplicity of intention collects the dispersed powers of the soul into unity of spirit, and unites the spirit itself to God. It is simplicity of intention which honours and praises God, which offers and presents our virtues to Him; thus entering into and overstepping itself and all creatures, the soul finds God in its own depths.—*John Ruysbroeck*.

Didst thou ever descry a glorious eternity in a winged moment of time? Didst thou ever see a bright infinite in the narrow point of an object? Then thou knowest what spirit means—that spire top whither all things ascend harmoniously,—where they meet and sit connected in an unfathomed depth of life.—*Peter Sterry, English Platonist 17th Century.*

O grace abundant, by which I presumed to fix my gaze through the eternal Light so far that I consumed my power of vision therein!

Within its depths I saw contained, bound by love into one volume, what is dispersed in leaves throughout the universe.—*Dante. Il Paradiso.*

PRAYER

By St. Francis de Sales

O my God! We lose nothing by serving Thee, nothing is a burden in Thy service, pain itself is as it were a recompense.

Great God, Who seest the bottom of our souls, illuminate us with so clear a light, that we shall advance straight towards Thee, without turning aside.

Let us give ourselves to God, O my soul; entirely and without reserve! Let us not be numbered amongst those servants who give the bark and not the tree!

May my heart and my lips praise Thee, O great God! May my body, my senses, and all the powers of my soul act only for Thee! May my will be free only to go to Thee! May there be nothing in me which does not glorify Thee!

The well of life is love, and he who dwelleth not in love is dead.—*John Tauler.*

BEATIFIC VISION

By Dom Anscar Vonier

The Beatific Vision is the direct result of all the acts of our higher life here on earth. We are not made spiritual through pious imagery, but through the assimilation of simple, but far-reaching principles. The Vision of God, as the term implies, is the seeing of God not with bodily eyes of course, but with the mind. The main idea conveyed by the term "vision" is this: It is God as it is in Himself, Who is seen in the mind; it is not a mere image of Him, a mere idea of Him however clear; it is Himself. It is a direct uninterrupted gazing on God's beauty. . . .

God has many ways of making the created mind know Him; but all ways fall short of the Beatific Vision. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, God Himself becomes the idea which is in the mind of the elect. We clearly see our idea of a thing is not the thing itself. Here is no such idea of God as distinct from God to stand for God, in my mind. God's very nature is the idea. In fact God has to be the idea for nothing could ever do duty for God Himself in my mind. If I am to know Him as He is He must be Himself the idea that makes my mind a knowing mind. God alone has the power of being personally within a created mind which power God makes use of in the Beatific Vision.

Thoughts grow higher and higher and the thoughts of God are getting purer and purer on the summits, but they are mere thoughts of God.

The Beatific Vision is that of the totality of God. We can behold the infinity of God though we do not behold that infinity, with intellectual keenness. But what is necessary, in God can be seen His attributes of mercy, justice, sanctity and goodness. The act of the Beatific Vision alone is above the division of time, and has a stability far superior to that of the Light.

TAO-TEH KING AND VEDIC SCRIPTURES

Parallel Passages

The Tao (Divine Way) that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging Name. . . . Conceived of as having no name, It is the Originator of heaven and earth; conceived of as having a name, It is the Mother of all things. . . . Under these two aspects It is really the same, but as development takes place, It receives the different names. Together we call them the *Mystery*.—*Tao-Teh King*.

No one has grasped Him above, or across, or in the middle. There is no image of Him whose Name is Great Glory.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad*.

He is not apprehended by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses, nor by penance or good works.—*Mundaka-Upanishad*.

There the eye does not go, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know That; we do not understand how It can be taught. It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown. . . . That which speech does not illumine, but which illumines speech; know That alone to be the *Brahman* (the Supreme) not this which people worship here.—*Kena-Upanishad*.

Always without desire we must be found, if Its deep mystery we would sound; but if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.—*Tao-Teh-King*.

He who is free from desire and free from grief, with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman* (the Self).—*Katha-Upanishad*.

We look at It and we do not see It, and we name It "the Equable". We listen to It and we do not hear It, and we

name It "the Inaudible". We try to grasp It and we do not get hold of It, and we name It "the Subtle". With these three qualities It cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain the One. . . . There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before heaven and earth. How still It was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger of being exhausted. It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. . . . Its upper part is not bright, and Its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in Its action, It yet cannot be named, and then again It returns and becomes nothing.—*Tao-Teh King*.

Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, He sees without eyes, He hears without ears. He knows what can be known, but no one knows Him; they call Him the first, the great Person.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad*.

That One though motionless is swifter than the mind. The senses can never overtake It, for It ever goes before. Though immovable, It travels faster than those who run. By It the all-pervading air sustains all living beings. It moves and It moves not. It is far and also It is near. It is within and also It is without all this.—*Isa-Upanishad*.

It shines through the functions of the senses, and yet It is without senses; unattached, yet It sustains all; devoid of qualities, yet It is the experiencer of qualities. It exists within and without all beings; It is unmoving as well as moving, incomprehensible because of Its subtlety; It is far and also near. . . . It is the Light of lights and is said to be beyond darkness.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

He who knows the Tao does not care to speak about It; He who is ever ready to speak about It, does not know It.—*Tao-Teh King*.

He who thinks he knows It not, knows It. He who thinks he knows It, knows It not.—*Kena-Upanishad*.

All-pervading is the great Tao! It may be found on the left hand and on the right.—*Tao-Teh King*.

That immortal *Brahman* (Supreme) is before, that *Brahman* is behind, that *Brahman* is to the right and to the left; that *Brahman* extends above and below. The supreme *Brahman* alone is the whole universe.—*Mundaka-Upanishad*.

TO THE LIVING GOD

By Marion F. Gilmore

Thou living God of Love I cry to Thee!
 In the still night I feel Thy presence near,
 In the hushed dark I know Thy presence here,
 Within, around me, Sacred Mystery!

Thou art my Life—I have no life but Thine;
 Thou art my Health—I have no health but Thee;
 Thou art my Joy—no happiness can be
 Unless it flow from Thee, Thou Joy divine!

Thou art my fount of Love, Thou Love indeed,
 Which cannot fail nor ever pass away;
 Thou art my Law—oh! help me to obey!
 Thou art fulfillment, Lord, of every need.

So in the quiet night I call to Thee—
 “Speak, Lord,—Thy servant heareth!” and I feel
 Thy Spirit, deep within me, strengthen, heal,
 And hear Thy silent voice reply to me.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

CHAP. X

CENTRE IN WASHINGTON — Concluded

The schedule formulated in the spring was put into effect in the autumn and the Swami went to Washington the second week of September, leaving me at the Boston Centre. He wrote on arriving: "I am here all safe. Mr. B. was waiting for me at the station. He received me most cordially and brought me here in a taxi. He took the reading notices to the papers with great pleasure and will attend to them regularly. He has informed all his friends already. This is certainly a beautiful house." The Swami resumed the meetings at once and everything began well, but the large house seemed to overweight the daily life of the two or three workers who shared in its care, and a change was considered. "I have been thinking much about the house problem," the Swami wrote. "I hope through the Lord's Grace everything will come all right."

Before the end of the month a decision was made to transfer the work to an apartment in Iowa Circle, which was much nearer to the centre of the city. Around a pretty central park stood a number of imposing dwellings and one of them had been converted into apartments. It was here that we moved the Centre. It required some effort to secure the apartment. The owner was an orthodox churchman, one of the pillars of the Church of the Epiphany. He looked askance at what seemed to him a heathen faith, but he was won over by the Swami. His attitude of mind was soon so completely altered that when a tenant objected to public meetings in the house he offered to cancel her lease. By the end of the year he was the Swami's staunch friend and on hearing that he was giving up the apartment he

wrote two full foolscap pages with his own hand urging the agent to do his utmost to keep the Centre. "Give them whatever they want," the letter ran. "I don't know anything about the Swami's religion, but it must be a good one to make him what he is. He is one of the nicest tenants I have ever had. Every one else who comes into the office does nothing but kick, but he has always been satisfied with everything. He has never spoken a word of complaint. Keep him if you can."

The new apartment provided a seating capacity almost as great as that of the house in Kalorama Road. The rooms were large and high-studded. In the front room nearly one hundred chairs could be placed, and the adjoining library held half as many more. Next to the main room was a smaller one which seemed as if made for a Chapel, with a leaded glass window at the end. The Swami moved in on the eighteenth of October. At the end of the week, after holding the first Sunday's meeting in the new quarters, he returned to Boston. He came again at Christmas time and it was during this visit he established his custom of giving a large annual dinner to members, for which he himself prepares all the dishes. He began by asking a few, then the few multiplied into many, until nearly forty were invited. We were ill equipped to entertain so large a number and the time was short; but a worker from New York who had come for the holidays hurried down town and bought plates, glasses, forks and several large cooking pots. The preparations occupied the whole day, but the dinner was a great success; and when Swami went back to Boston he immediately gave one for the members and friends there.

During the winter of 1911 and 1912, the work went on encouragingly; although wind, rain and snow caused occa-

sional fluctuations in the numbers at the meetings, for the Washington public is very subservient to weather. I remember one night when a storm was raging outside and only three came to the Wednesday evening Class. Two sat on the front row and, exhausted perhaps by the battle with the elements, slept quietly, except for an occasional forward start to catch a sliding purse. The third one, still a faithful friend, sat on the very last row wide awake. I talked to her about the Upanishads for an hour, while she smiled and nodded assent to all I said. Then the others woke up, we had the closing meditation and the class ended. But this did not happen when the Swami was there. People braved storm and cold to hear him and kept alert and intent while he spoke.

The Centre made rapid progress when he came to Washington in February and remained for ten weeks, sending me to Boston to hold the meetings there. The large front room and library were often crowded and he was obliged to provide more seats. The members had time and opportunity to catch his spirit and also to come into closer personal touch with him, for he did his own housekeeping and he was glad for all the friendly help that came. His letters written at this time contained graphic and ingenious accounts of his daily domestic round. "It is nearly three o'clock now and I am just through my dinner and washing the dishes," one runs. "Cooking and other little household details take more time than we like to allow. I went out for my walk about half-past eleven but I did not take so long a walk, I was back before one. I finished yesterday's cream this morning with a shredded wheat and took an egg for breakfast. Then for dinner I cooked some rice and two boiled eggs with some sauce, used all the left over cream for that; it was all in good condition (not sour). Now I

Have the fresh bottle of cream and milk for supper. I did not eat anything last night but drank lemonade. I think I have given you all the details of my housekeeping. There was a little notice in the 'Star' last evening."

Other letters read: "I am just through my morning duties. The lecture room and library are quite ready for the afternoon. We had a slight snow storm here last night. I hope it will not hurt the buds. We had a very good meeting despite the storm—such nice people. Every one seemed very appreciative. It will be a great work if we can build up a strong Centre in Washington. Mrs. W. said to me last night: 'Even if the Centre should not continue here, do not think your effort has been wasted. The seeds you have sown will grow and spread.' I went through a little discouragement over the work last week. The public sometimes seems so indifferent and unresponsive, but I know nothing is impossible, through the Lord's Grace."

"It rained here yesterday and was a very dull day. I did not expect very much of a meeting but there were quite a number. It takes time to build up a Centre. It requires steady, faithful work. Mr. A. came early to arrange the chairs and he said: 'I wish I could give you hundreds of dollars a year, but I am going to do all I can to support the Centre.' Of course I told him it was not money that counted, but interest and devotion. I have received a good many presents since Saturday noon. Saturday when I was eating my dinner some one rang. I thought it was the cleaning woman; but it was a bottle of grape juice with a note from Mrs. W. She had to go to Philadelphia for two weeks. Then came Sarah with a big grape fruit and a big orange from Mrs. M. In the evening Mrs. C. and her daughter called to see me with some apples and oranges and some almond wafers. After they had left and I had finished

my supper, some one else appeared bringing me some fruit salad and nice pink roses. Another member brought some very beautiful pink rose buds when she came to the evening lecture."

With a flash of playfulness he begins one letter: "Behold a gray hair! I found one this morning. Well, people do not realize how old I am." Then he continues: "I am just through all my morning household work. The plants are watered; library, bedroom are all in order and tidy. Now it is about a quarter to eleven. I was a little late in starting. You will be glad to hear the meeting last night went off nicely, all the chairs were taken and a few had to stand. Mr. A. was all full of smiles when he brought the sign up. I asked him what was the matter and he said, 'I am feeling happy over the meeting.' I think it gave them all encouragement. A number of the members stood through the whole lecture and gave their seats to strangers."

"It is just ten and I am nearly through all my duties. I began a little early. This morning it was gloomy but now the sun has come out in its full glory. I did not see any one yesterday, it hailed and rained all day and was very disagreeable. I went to the market in the morning and bought some vegetables for fifteen cents and some butter. I am eating well and everything is going well with me. It takes some time to get adjusted to these conditions. But I am growing quite used to the life here. People have shown great concern regarding my comfort. I am always glad to hear that the work is going on well in Boston." Then with a sudden turn to deeper thought, which comes so frequently in his letters, he adds: "The secret in serving a noble cause is to overcome all thoughts of credit and discredit; they are very, very limiting; also to rise above thoughts of suc-

cess and failure. Through constant service, through love and devotion and through the Lord's Grace we become endowed with all noble virtues. Do not ever forget that we must be genuine. Those who serve Him truly, no harm can come to them. It is the greatest thing in life to be able to dedicate our lives to Him and to be used by Him as He wills. This is true freedom and peace."

The Swami's time was not filled wholly with housekeeping and the Centre's lectures and classes. He was asked to speak before many different organizations. Among the important invitations he received was one to deliver a lecture at the Cosmos Club, one of the most exclusive and most intellectual clubs of Washington.

The Swami returned to Boston in April and in July he sailed unexpectedly for India. In September he was still absent and he had requested me to take care of the Boston work until his return. No date had been set for that. It seemed unwise to renew the heavy lease of the apartment, so it was decided to suspend the meetings for a time and store the furniture. Scarcely had this decision been reached when a delayed letter came from the Swami instructing us to do this. Evidently his thought had travelled faster than the mail.

Before dismantling the apartment, we had a three weeks' course of classes and lectures. It was not easy to carry the news to Washington that the work was to be closed, for all the members had begged so earnestly to have it continue. Swami himself had written in the spring: "We had a nice class and after the meditation we talked about the Centre. It makes me sad to see the way Mr. A. and others suffer at the very idea of giving it up. We shall see and whatever the Lord wills will be best for all. We shall have to do as it comes from Him." At the time it seemed only a

temporary suspension. The Swami however returned from India with such enlarged ideas for the development of the Boston Centre that it became necessary to concentrate all effort there and convert the Washington work into a branch of the Centre in Boston, with a shorter season of lectures and classes.

The work went on in this way for some time, until the war created such abnormal conditions in Washington that it was no longer possible to continue the meetings and they were given up altogether. There still remains, however, a group of devout, loyal members who through the "Message of the East", the Swami's books and an occasional letter keep in touch with both teacher and teaching, and by their devotion and earnest living keep the spirit of the Centre alive and helpful to the world.

(To be continued.)

DEDICATION SERVICE

The dedication of the new home and chapel-auditorium of the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the 7th of June, marked a new day in the history of the Boston work. In the minds of many who have cherished the Centre and followed every step of its growth with keen interest there had been much speculation. Was this move to be a growth? Was this new home at 176 Marlboro Street to maintain the dignity and prestige of the old, or was it to become merely a small branch of the main work now unfolding at Ananda-Ashrama? Their questions were answered the day of the dedication, as they stepped into the spacious auditorium, for they found it more imposing and commodious than the lovely chapel at 1 Queensberry Street, the home of the Centre for the past twelve years. Swami Paramananda came on from California to conduct the Dedication Services. In spite of a terrific heat wave the three Services were

very well attended and no outer conditions could mar the pure and universal spirit of the Swami's message which has already filled the new place with the same rare atmosphere of sanctity which was so palpable in the former home.

The following Tuesday an informal reception was held. Although it was arranged on very short notice many friends came to admire and to rejoice. For they find that the Boston work has taken a real step forward. The new Centre is remarkably accessible, being close to Copley Square, the very centre of Boston life. It is a neighbourhood peculiarly friendly to the student for the famous Boston Public Library is but a short walk away. As a result, an ever-increasing number drop in at the Centre in the afternoon for study, rest and refreshment.

RHYTHM OF LIFE

On the evening of June 19th, the Eastern Culture Club gave a reception at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, 176 Marlboro Street, in honour of the "Rhythm of Life", Swami Paramananda's latest book of poems. This makes the third volume of poetry from the Swami's pen. These poems contain for many the very essence of his teaching, conveyed through the medium of pure beauty of expression, a beauty that is brought out very poignantly when the Swami himself reads the poems as he did on this occasion. Each volume has its champions, but all are agreed that it is impossible to place one higher than the other, for the same inspiration runs through all. The Foreword to the "Rhythm of Life" is written by Mr. Carleton Noyes, Cambridge scholar and author, a well-known authority on Walt Whitman. Mr. Noyes pays high and sincere tribute: "A book of devotion," he says, "inspired and inspiring, of spiritual vision and divine communion, Rhythm of Life is an experience and a prayer."

“TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES.” Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



OCTOBER, 1925

LIVINGNESS OF LIFE

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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JUST OUT RHYTHM OF LIFE

New Book of Poems by
Swami Paramananda

As in his two preceding volumes, **SOUL'S SECRET DOOR** and **THE VIGIL**, here Swami Paramananda, founder and leader of the Vedanta Centre of Boston and the Ananda-Ashrama in California, reveals himself as also a poet of authentic utterance, a master of simplicity and beauty. In him unite the practical idealism of the west and the supreme mysticism attained by India of old.. A book of devotion, inspired and inspiring, **RHYTHM OF LIFE** is an experience and a prayer.

The volume, prose and poetry, of Swami Paramananda ever have been illumined by a devotion to spiritual things—a devotion which not often is found in man. To him the soul is all and the body nothing. He has taken for his own the metaphysical wisdom of the Great Books. He passes it on to the reader in beautiful and intense lines, rich in proud devotion to the Spirit of Life. Every one would be better for reading these books.—*Cincinnati (O.) Enquirer.*

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THE VEDANTA CENTRE

176 Marlboro Street, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

La Crescenta, California, U. S. A.

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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OCTOBER, 1925

No. 8

NATURE'S SANCTUARY

By Swami Paramananda



S I roam in this, my Nature's sanctuary,
Fragrant with perfumed breath,
Shining with living radiance of beauty,
Sacred by its own virtue,

Bestowing beneficence,

Awakening life and ecstasy,

Asking naught yet giving all to its

votaries,

Where would I seek God if I find Him

not here?

My body, bend thou now and sing thy song
of holy humility.

My heart, rejoice!

Here is enshrined the Maker of all beauty.

My soul, now is the hour of thy fulfillment.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

—*Jesus the Christ.*

It is not enough to be a member of the Church, one must also be a member of Christ. . . . I once picked a stone out of a pool and broke it. About six or seven inches of it were wet, but inside and in the centre that stone was quite dry. That stone was in the water, but the water was not in the stone. It is the same with men. Some in the Christian Church know a great deal about Him, but the centre of their heart is dry. Christ is not in their hearts.

—*Sadhu Sundar Singh.*

O beloved Pan, and ye other gods of this place, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man, and that whatever outward things I may have may be at peace with these within. May I think the wise man to be rich, and may I have as much wealth as a wise man can employ usefully and prudently. Do we need anything else, Phaedrus? For myself I have prayed enough.—*Plato.*

Homage to thee, O thou who art Re when thou risest, and Tem when thou settest in beauty. . . . The gods of the south and of the north, of the west and of the east, praise thee, O thou divine substance from whom all forms of life come into being. Thou sendest forth the word and the earth is flooded with silence, O thou only One, who didst dwell in heaven before ever the earth and the mountains came into existence. O Runner, O Lord, O only One, thou maker of things which are—let me snuff the air which cometh forth from thy nostrils, and the north wind which cometh forth from thy mother Nut. Oh, make thou to be glorious my shining form, O Osiris, make thou to be divine my soul!—*Egyptian Book of the Dead.*

LIVINGNESS OF LIFE*By Swami Paramananda.*

(Address given at the Dedication of the Open-Air Temple at Ananda-Ashrama, Sunday Morning, April 26th, 1925)

Let us lift our thoughts and prayers to the Supreme Being of the universe. Let us make our hearts free from all alien and unworthy feelings that we may feel His Presence in our hearts, that we may find our upliftment in His Divine Presence, that we may rejoice and rest in that great Presence. May the Supreme Spirit of the universe, He Who is the Mother and Father of all living beings grant us His loving and abiding protection and keep us ever in peace.

“The true church is not a separate mass of people, not a particular sect to be pointed out with a finger, not confined to one time or one place; it is rather a spiritual and invisible body born of God, of one mind, spirit and faith, but not gathered in any one external city or place. It is a fellowship seen with the spiritual eye and by the inner man. It is the assembly and communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love,—a communion outside of which there is no salvation, no Christ, no God, no comprehension of Scripture, no Holy Spirit and no Gospel.”

In these few lines by a mystic and seer this our simple Consecration Service probably is expressed. Ten days ago we did not know that it was going to take place, or that this place was to have a Service of such nature. Ten days ago any one coming here would not have had an easy access to this canyon. We conceive ideas and we receive our inspiration from the one Source that can give us inspiration; our consecration also must be in the name of that One, unbounded and all-pervading. A true place of wor-

ship—church or temple, whatever we may call it—should embody all the qualities of the Spirit and we know of no place more fitting for spiritual expression than a spot such as this where Nature gives us her bounty and blessing. Here we have a true temple and the only way we can dedicate it is to show our harmony of spirit with Nature. When a weary soul comes in contact with Mother Nature, she seems to absorb all the poison out of that tired heart and gives it refreshment. A tree gives its shade and shelter; the sky overhead gives us that which makes our life beautiful and bountiful. If we can sing as the birds sing, freely and fully from their depths; if we can speak with the silent whisper of the trees conveying their feelings to an unseen Spirit, then we have something which leads us to a closer contact with the Infinite. We cannot draw too close to that great unchanging Fact, and we should cultivate whatever in our life gives us that sense of closeness. Living beings become more living, more vibrant, more active and more productive when they touch this simple truth which Nature holds for us, when they come into communion with her, because Nature is a very living and undiluted part of God.

When we get into the turmoil of the cities, the man-created chaos of life, how little of Nature, how little of that which is true and unspoiled, is left for us. This means we have to create a new setting. In order to find any access to the divine realm, our efforts to break through the wall of artificiality have to be greater; but our path is made easier when we come in contact with bountiful, grand and majestic Nature. What shrine has man that is more fitting than the shrine Nature offers us, decorated wholly by trees, by their leaves, by their blossoms and fragrance, with what God's hand has created, and not by the artificiality of man. We are very blessed when we can have such a thing at

times, and I hope and pray that this, our vision in its infancy, may lay the true foundation for a larger work so that people may come and find here an atmosphere—an atmosphere of sanctity, an atmosphere that produces inspiration. For is not that the greatest part of the service we can render to humanity? But we must have this ourselves before we can extend it to others. In fact we never can give anything to any one else that we do not ourselves possess first. Spiritual life must become something very practical and definite, just as a man gives a gift. He may hand to you a flower and before you know his aim and object you are at once interested in the gift because it is beautiful, it is fragrant, it conveys something to you. Then, as you know the motive, as you feel the spirit of the giver, it becomes even more precious and full of blessing. So it is when we come in contact with the majesty, the beauty of God's creation.

My Service to you this morning is to convey if possible the vision and the spirit of consecration which we hold in our heart. A work of this type cannot be expressed so much through outer grandeur and magnificence. It is expressed rather by silent growth, by unfolding ourselves in harmony with great Nature itself. The birds are free and they sing their best when they are freest; sun gives its light when it is unobstructed; wind blows and gives its refreshing blessing when we are out in the open and benefit by it. Similarly, our souls express their best and truest, the subtlest, the most profound factor in our life, when they are freest.

There is no such thing as cut and dried religion. That is where we make our mistake. It must bring a sense of mellowness, of gentleness; it must transform. True religion changes a person's life; even his voice changes. If

we have touched even the outskirts of the spiritual realm, it brings such an influence upon us that we no longer can do anything that is out of keeping, out of tune and out of harmony with the Divine. Nature bestows upon us a tremendous blessing in this respect. As we learn to commune with her, we get closer to that One who has created this beautiful universe, and it is remarkable what healing she holds for us for all our ills. People who are fretful and sordid, harsh and cruel, they cease to be so. Nature has the most beneficent influence upon our life. Why? Because it is part of Divinity. Human beings are also part of Divinity. All living beings, everything animate and inanimate, express Divinity; but we must find a point of contact and anything that gives us the closest point of contact we must welcome and encourage. In this way we find the real meaning of worship.

These our hands and feet, mind and brain, senses of hearing, seeing and touching, and all these faculties that we possess can either misguide us or guide us to the goal. When we become conscious that we are not aloof from the centre of life, are not cut off from the Source of life, but are altogether interwoven, are altogether a part of that great Immensity, then we begin to feel a new awakening in our soul. We feel that these little hands of ours are no longer confined by the limiting adjunct of mind, but are guided by another more mighty Hand; that our little mind is incapable of doing anything that is harmful or erroneous, because it is directed by another Mind. That is the meaning of consecration. Is it too much for us to expect such a thing? No. It is the only logical and legitimate hope we can hold.

As human beings we can so limit ourselves, so entirely cut ourselves off from the infinite Source that we are over-

whelmed with our sense of limitation. We feel lonely; we feel that life is very heavy for us; we find that we are incapable of carrying it successfully. Then again through Divine Grace, when our inner eye is open, when our vision is clear, we come to the very practical ground of the livingness of life, livingness of the spiritual, livingness of religion; not the dogmatic, sectarian type of religion that we may profess in church or code, but religion that has become a vital part of our being. Every day when we go to work we feel that we are carrying something with us, that we have something to accomplish, and that what we have to do is done not only through our own whim, emotion or ambition, but that it is a definite task ordained by the Infinite Being. We can go against this and find ourselves bumping against a hard rock, or we can go with it and find that our path is made clear, that strength is given to us, that inspiration infills our soul. It is not that we wholly change our routine or our vista, that we shift our position in life, it means that all the interests we are concerned in, all the things we are doing, we do with a sense of living consecration.

We never learn to love God or love the best part of ourselves until we have this awakening which makes everything living to us. I cannot imagine any one devoid of sensitiveness and spiritual intuition becoming a lover of God or lover of Truth. The man whose inner doors are closed, whose heart is hard and harsh, lacking in gentleness and subtlety, he cannot find any access to the divine realm. I want you to carry this in your mind and remember what a place of worship means, what spirit it must invoke within us, what atmosphere it must create to become truly representative of God's sanctuary. "The true church is not a separate mass of people. . . . It is the assembly and

communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, newborn persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love." It is through love, through the sense of sanctity, through spiritual awakening that we draw close to that Infinite Spirit. When we lack these we may spend our life in a temple, or in a church, in a place that is already marked as God's dwelling, and find nothing and create nothing that is helpful to others. That these words are by a Christian mystic makes it all the more interesting. It shows that those who have risen to a height of spiritual consciousness come to the same view-point.

Narrowness, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger and envy, they all melt away before the spiritual sun just as ice melts before the sun. If we have not found that warmth which comes through spiritual awakening, we cannot be cured of coldness, calculation and worry. We may keep before our desk so we may read them every day, lines telling us that all our aspirations, whatever we do and whatever we think, should be directed Godward; yet we forget. We forget so long as small propensities are dominant in our mind and in our heart. This establishing in our consciousness a living sense of God is not merely to benefit the world. Primarily we benefit ourselves. It brings tremendous rest; it brings a great sense of upliftment for the soul to know that it is not an isolated being, full of fear, full of danger, full of uncertainty; but that we are all in His Divine Hand, constantly guided and protected. This knowledge, however, cannot be gained in any cut and dried manner. It must come from within. Every morning we rise up and at our rising, if our hearts are rightly attuned, we can feel a joyous spirit, a spirit that stills our whole being, making it vibrant with new life, that fills our mind with inspira-

tion till our thoughts are so potent we hardly touch the material ground. We all have known in our lives times when we are filled with such spiritual influx we hardly recognize that we are touching the ground. These are the moments when we are most exalted, because thought has such power over us. Then again we have thoughts and feelings which make us conscious of material life. We feel that life is so complex, so full of uncertainty, so full of defeat that it is not worth living. Put these two attitudes side by side and see their influence upon us, what they produce in us and what they produce in the world in general. We are part of this great universe—we can bring into it joyousness, sanctity and a sense of sunshine. Also we can spoil it for ourselves and for others. These are the vital thoughts for every individual to hold in his or her mind, and according to these thoughts we rise or fall.

It is no accident in life if a person carries a tremendous burden. If he feels that it is inevitable, he is mistaken. It is not his through chance and he is not going to escape it through chance either. He must learn to tune his soul with the finer forces. This he must do gradually. We cannot partake of that great Immensity suddenly. We comprehend it first mentally, then we absorb its spirit: our body lends itself, our mind lends itself to its comprehension, then our whole being becomes in tune, and that is the greatest moment in our life. It enriches our consciousness; it gives us vigor and strength for all things that we have to do in the material world, and it brings us a sense of spiritual surety. It is not in dogma or doctrine; it is not in professing or observing one custom or another. It is the outpouring of the soul; it is the unfoldment from within. We know and therefore we believe, and because we believe in the abiding Presence we become unshakable in our reso-

lution. Whatever actions we perform are stamped with real success in the spiritual sense.

Consecration is of the life. When we have consecration in our life, whatever we say, whatever we do, everything that we touch has that sanctity. Then we become instead of world-abiding, God-abiding. Now we are too conscious of material things. That is the reason we feel disturbance and unhappiness. We are often unsettled by the world's changes. When our mind is established in Godhead, when our body is established in Him, our whole being becomes part of His great consciousness; we learn little by little to do His Will and as we learn to do His Will, we find a complete change in our horizon. It does not fluctuate any more. The sun rises and sets, gloomy weather comes and goes, unhappiness appears and vanishes—all these changes pass before us and we stand, because of that great consciousness, firm, resolute and unshakable. That is the way of life, that is the way of productiveness. Whether we are absorbed in worldly interest, or free from it, whether we have many duties and obligations, or few, whatever may be the position we hold, or whatever may be our mode of living, we all need this abiding sense of sanctity, for it enlarges and enriches our entire life. Small and great, in every step we find a sustenance and a surety, and this is the sum and substance of spiritual faith and the heart of religion.

The blessed one who hath beheld the vision divine, becometh like a child, simple, open, turning his eye upon the fresh world as it is, stripped of its artificial names and formulas. Often he is intoxicated with the wine of divine love, at the sight of the revelation before him. He is one with the living fountain of holiness.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

ST. FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

From "The Little Flowers of St. Francis"

Shortly after his conversion, the humble servant of Christ, St. Francis, having already gathered many companions and received them into the Order, stood in great anxiety and in great doubt as to that which he ought to do; whether to devote himself wholly to prayer or sometimes also to preaching; and touching that matter he desired greatly to know the will of God; and because the holy humility which was in him suffered him not to trust to himself nor to his own prayers, he bethought him to inquire of the divine will through the prayers of others; wherefore he called Friar Masseo and said: "Go thou to Sister Clare and tell her in my name that, together with certain of the most spiritual of her companions, she should devoutly pray God that He may vouchsafe to show me whether it be better that I give myself to preaching or to prayer alone. And thereafter go to Friar Sylvester and tell him to do the like." . . . Friar Masseo departed and, according to the bidding of St. Francis, did his embassy first to St. Clare and thereafter to Friar Sylvester.

Therewith Friar Masseo returned to St. Francis; and St. Francis welcomed him with very great charity, washing his feet and setting food before him. And when he had eaten, St. Francis called Masseo into the wood; and there he kneeled down before him and drew back his cowl, and making a cross of his arms, asked him: "What doth my Lord Jesus Christ bid me do?" Friar Masseo made answer: "To Friar Sylvester as to Sister Clare and to her companion, Christ hath made answer and revealed that His will is that thou go through the world to preach, because He hath not chosen thee for thyself alone but also for the salvation of others." Then St. Francis, when he had had this answer and

knew thereby the will of Jesus Christ, rose up with exceeding great fervour and said: "Let us go in the name of God;" and he took as his companions Friar Masseo and Friar Agnolo, holy men. And going with impetuosity of spirit, taking thought neither of way nor path, they came to a walled place which is called Savurniano; and St. Francis began to preach; but first he bade the swallows which were twittering to keep silence until such time as he should finish preaching; and the swallows obeyed him. . . .

And passing on, full of fervour, he lifted up his eyes and saw certain trees hard by the road, whereupon was an almost infinite number of birds; whereat St. Francis marvelled, and said to his companions: "Ye shall await me here on the road, and I will go and preach to the birds my sisters;" and he went into the field and began to preach to the birds which were upon the ground; and anon those which were in the trees came to him, and all of them stood still together until St. Francis finished preaching; and even then they departed not until he gave them his blessing; and according to that which Friar Masseo afterward related to Friar James of Massa, when St. Francis went about among them touching them with his mantle, none of them moved therefor.

Now the preaching of St. Francis was on this wise: "My sisters the birds, much are ye beholden unto God your Creator, and always and in every place ought ye to praise Him, because He hath given you liberty to fly wheresoever ye will, and hath clothed you on with twofold and threefold raiment. Moreover, He preserved your seed in the ark of Noah that your race might not be destroyed. Again, ye are beholden unto Him for the element of the air which He hath appointed for you; furthermore, ye sow not neither do ye reap; yet God feedeth you and giveth you rivers and

fountains wherefrom to drink; He giveth you mountains and valleys for your refuge, and high trees wherein to build your nests; and, in that ye know not how to sew nor spin, God clotheth you and your little ones; wherefore doth your Creator love you seeing that He giveth you so many benefits. Guard yourselves, therefore, my sisters the birds, from the sin of ingratitude and be ye ever mindful to give praise to God."

And, as St. Francis spake these words unto them, all those birds began to open their beaks, and to stretch out their necks, and to open their wings, and reverently to bow their heads even unto the ground, and to show by their motions and by their songs that the holy father gave them very great delight: and St. Francis rejoiced with them and was glad and marvelled much at so great a multitude of birds, and at the most beautiful diversity of them, and at their attention and fearlessness; for which cause he devoutly praised the Creator in them.

Finally, when he had made an end of preaching, St. Francis made over them the sign of the Cross and gave them leave to depart; whereupon all those birds rose into the air with wondrous songs; and thereafter, according to the form of the Cross which St. Francis had made over them, they divided themselves into four bands; and one band flew towards the East, and one towards the West, and one towards the South and the fourth towards the North, and each company went singing marvellous songs; signifying thereby that, even as St. Francis, the Standard-bearer of the Cross, had preached to them, and made over them the sign of the Cross, according whereunto they separated themselves toward the four quarters of the world, so the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by St. Francis, was about to be carried through all the world by him and

by his friars; the which friars, like unto the birds, possess nothing of their own in this world but commit their lives wholly to the providence of God.

DRAMA IN A CLOISTER

By Sister Daya

There are certain periods in history when ignorance, superstition, cruelty and fear throw their grim shadow over the minds and hearts of men. Dark ages, truly, during which human vision is strangely distorted and there seems to be no light anywhere! These conditions come both as the result of outer circumstance and inner reaction. It is the eternal swing of light to darkness and darkness back again to light. Thus the dark ages in Europe came as a reaction from the pure fine fervour of young Christianity vibrating to the clear call of the Christ, as a reaction from the intense emotional stirring of that earlier time. Also they were due to political conditions and material threatenings which left no place of outer refuge for any man.

People can endure invasion, persecution, pressure from all sides so long as their ideal remains inviolate, so long as they have sanctuary in the Spirit. But without the vision the people perish. Europe in the tenth century had lost its true vision. Harassed by Huns, Normans and Saracens it turned in vain to the church for the inner stability which it had lost from its own soul. Rome had degenerated into a hotbed of debauchery, intrigue and licentiousness. Every man was for himself in that blackest of black centuries, in which hope, aspiration and all the nobler human qualities seemed to be dead. The whispered prophecy of the end of the world in the year ten hundred only served to add confusion to the gloom. "An iron century", writes one author, "in which the clash of steel on steel was almost dulled by

lamentations; a barren century, too despairing to create, too wretched to dream, hag-ridden by terror."

Strangest of strange things that above the din of that time one of the few voices we hear is anything but the voice of despair. It is a virile voice withal tender, dogmatic yet compassionate, fresh and fearless. It is the voice of Hrotsvitha, a Benedictine nun of the Abbey of Gandersheim in Germany, the only woman of that age whose literary achievements have survived. Fast cloistered in one of the strictest of Orders, Hrotsvitha wrote plays for her sister-nuns to act, while outside the convent walls the mad world of Europe spun to its apparent doom. A curious medium in that day for a woman, especially a religieuse, to adopt! Yet nothing could have conveyed so well the colour of the times as she saw them, and her own mental environment.

She was the author of poems and letters as well, but her comedies were her real contribution. They tell us of her gentle breeding, of a fine culture which turned equally to the pagan poets and to the New Testament; of either a wide social experience before her entrance into the convent, or a wide imagination. Humour, passion, delicacy of feeling, an ever present religious background, characterize these plays that were in no sense miracle-plays, but comedies. "Far from bewailing the vileness of earth or prophesying future ill, the infinite mercy of God was her constant theme", writes her biographer, Evangeline Wilbour Blashfield. And she adds that "In the long darkness which extended from the extinction of the classical drama to the rise of the mediaeval miracle-play, Hrotsvitha's dramas present a single luminous point." Dogmatic she no doubt was, restricted in her expression, but filled with a tender humanness and a spiritual luminosity which shines through many of her pages.

As an example of this universal spiritual quality, we have chosen her play "Abraham". In this play a pious recluse, Abraham, binds his orphaned niece and ward Mary, at the age of eight, to a life of religious renunciation. Mary, submissively, almost eagerly accepts a vocation which she does not yet grasp and, renouncing what she has not yet experienced, for twenty years lives an ascetic life in solitude in the desert. Then comes the inevitable reaction brought to its culmination by the advent of a dissolute priest. Together they flee to the city where he abandons her. In despair she takes up the life of a courtesan, not daring to seek pardon or help from her uncle. Abraham goes forth to seek Mary and finally discovers her whereabouts. Disguising himself as a soldier he goes to the house where she is staying and through amorous advances gains access to her. An odour about him suggests her former life, her former abstinence, and for a few moments she almost breaks under the burden of remorse. But Abraham diverts her mood with his wooing. Finally they are alone together and the hour has come for Abraham to unmask. He throws aside his disguise. Right here is where eternal compassion speaks through Hrotsvitha, for her treatment of this scene is far other than one would expect from a nun of the tenth century. We give it in a condensed form:

Abraham: (Aside.) It is now time to take off the hat which hides my face and to show her who I am. *(Aloud.)* O, my adopted daughter, O part of my soul, Mary, do you recognize in me the old man who brought you up with the tenderness of a father and who betrothed you to the only Son of the heavenly King?

Mary: Alas for me! It is my father and my master Abraham who speaks to me. *(She is stupefied with fear.)*

Abraham: What has happened to thee, my daughter?

Mary: A great misfortune.

Abraham: Who deceived thee? Who seduced thee?

Mary: He who overthrew our first parents.

Abraham: Where is the angelic life thou didst lead on earth?

Mary: Utterly lost.

Abraham: Where is thy virginal purity? Where is thy admirable chastity?

Mary: Lost.

Abraham: If thou dost not re-enter the way of salvation, what reward canst thou hope to receive for thy fasts, thy vigils, when falling from the height of heaven thou art drowned in the abysses of hell?

Mary: Alas!

Abraham: Why didst thou despise me? Why hast thou abandoned me? Why didst thou not tell me of thy fall?

Mary: After I fell into sin, soiled as I was, I no longer dared to approach your holiness.

Abraham: Whoever was exempt from sin except the Son of the Virgin?

Mary: No one.

Abraham: It is human to sin, it is devilish to continue to sin. Not he who falls should be blamed, but he who does not rise again at once.

Mary: Unhappy wretch that I am!

Abraham: Why art thou overcome? Why dost thou remain motionless lying on the ground? Stand up and listen to what I say to thee.

Mary: I am terror-stricken. I cannot bear the weight of your paternal rebuke.

Abraham: Think, my daughter, of my tenderness for thee and cease to fear.

Mary: I cannot.

Abraham: Was it not for thee that I left the desert and renounced the observance of discipline? Was it not for thee that I, a professed eremite, became the boon companion of debauchees? I, who for so many years have been vowed to silence, have I not bandied light jests in order not to be recognized? Why with bent head dost thou look downward? Why dost thou disdain to answer me?

Mary: The consciousness of my guilt overwhelms me. I dare not raise my eyes to heaven nor mingle my words with yours.

Abraham: Do not distrust heaven, my daughter; do not despair; rise out of this abyss of desperation and put your hope in God.

Mary: The enormity of my sins has plunged me in the deepest despair.

Abraham: Thy sins are great, but the divine grace is greater than all created things. Banish then this sadness and profit by the short time that remains to thee for repentance.

Mary: If I had the slightest hope of meriting forgiveness, I should not fail to give myself up to penitence.

Abraham: Let the toil which I have borne for thee move thee to pity, my daughter; cast aside this fatal discouragement, which is more wicked than any sin, for he who despairs of God's mercy to evil-doers commits an unpardonable transgression. As truly as the spark that darts from the pebble cannot fire the sea, the bitterness of our sins cannot alter the sweetness of the divine clemency.

Mary: I do not deny the greatness of the supreme goodness, but when I consider the magnitude of my offense, I fear that no penitence can suffice to expiate it.

Abraham: I take your iniquity on myself; only return

to the place you have left and resume the life that you abandoned.

Mary: I shall never oppose one of your wishes and I obey your commands with respect.

Abraham: I see now that I have found my daughter again, her to whom I was a father. Now indeed are you dearer to me than aught else.

Mary: I possess some gold and several costly garments. I will dispose of them as your authority dictates.

Abraham: What you have acquired by sin, you must abandon with sin.

Mary: I thought that I would distribute them among the poor or offer them to the altar.

Abraham: The wage of sin is not an agreeable offering to God.

Mary: Then I will trouble myself no more about it.

Abraham: Dawn is whitening the sky; it is growing light. Let us go.

Mary: It is you, beloved father, who should precede, like the good shepherd, the sheep that you have found, and I, following you, will walk in your footsteps.

Abraham: No, not thus. I will go on foot and you shall ride my horse, so that the roughness of the road may not bruise the soles of your tender feet.

Mary: O, how can I praise you worthily? What gratitude can repay so much goodness? Far from forcing me to repent through terror, you gently lead me to penitence by the tenderest exhortations.

Abraham: I ask nothing of you but to remain faithful to the Lord during the rest of your life.

Mary: I will follow God with all my will, with all my strength; and if I lack the strength, at least I shall never lack the desire.

Abraham: You must now serve God with that ardor with which you followed the vanities of the world.

(They complete the journey and reach the hermitage.)

Abraham: With what celerity we have surmounted the difficulties of this hard journey.

Mary: Devotion makes all things easy.

Possibly Hrotsvitha's age has been maligned, but we must remember that no age can smother the voice of eternal love and eternal pity. When the soul touches God even ever so little, it rises above its age and speaks a universal language which all times and all hearts can understand.

MOHAMMED THE MERCIFUL

Extracts from the Sunan, traditional sayings of Mohammed

When God created the creation He wrote a book which is near Him upon the sovran throne and what is written in it is this: "Verily my compassion overcometh my wrath."

Say not, if people do good to us we will do good to them, and if people oppress us we will oppress them; but resolve that if people do good to you, you will do good to them, and if they oppress you, oppress them not again.

There are seven people whom God will draw under His shadow on that day when there will be no other shadow: one a just king; another, who hath employed himself in devotion from his youth; the third, who fixeth his heart on the mosque till he return to it; the fourth, two men whose friendship is to please God, whether together or separate; the fifth, a man who remembereth God when he is alone, and weepeth; the sixth, a man who is tempted by a rich and beautiful woman, and saith, Verily I fear God; the seventh, a man who hath given alms and concealed it, so that his left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.

When God created the earth it began to shake and tremble, then God created mountains and put them upon the earth, and the land became firm and fixed; and the Angels were astonished at the hardness of the hills, and said, "O God, is there anything of Thy creation harder than hills?" and God said, "Yes, water is harder than the hills, because it breaketh them." Then the angel said, "O Lord, is there anything of Thy creation harder than water?" He said, "Yes, wind overcometh water: it doth agitate it and put it in motion." They said, "O our Lord! is there anything of Thy creation harder than wind?" He said, "Yes, the children of Adam giving alms: those who give with their right hand and conceal from their left, overcome all."

Think not that any good act is contemptible, though it be but your brother's coming to you with an open countenance and good humour.

There is alms for a man's every joint, every day in which the sun riseth; doing justice between two people is alms; and assisting a man upon his beast and with his baggage, is alms; and pure words, for which are rewards; and answering a questioner with mildness is alms; and every step which is made towards prayer is alms; and removing that which is an inconvenience to man, such as stones and thorns, is alms.

Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and free the captive if he be unjustly bound.

A keeper of fasts who doth not abandon lying and slandering, God careth not about his leaving off eating and drinking.

Fear God in respect of animals: ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired. A man came before the Prophet with a carpet, and said, "O Prophet! I passed through a wood and heard the voices of

the young of birds; and I took and put them into my carpet; and their mother came fluttering around my head, and I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them, then I wrapped them up in my carpet, and there are the young which I have." Then the Prophet said, "Put them down." And when he did so, their mother joined them: and the Prophet said, "Do you wonder at the affection of the mother toward her young? I swear by Him who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His servants than the mother to these young birds. Return them to the place from which ye took them, and let their mother be with them."

Verily there are rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink. An adulteress was forgiven who passed by a dog at a well; for the dog was holding out his tongue from thirst which was near killing him, and the woman took off her boot and tied it to the end of her garment and drew water for the dog and gave him to drink; and she was forgiven for that act.

. . . He who is not loving to God's creatures and to his own children, God will not be loving to him.

It was asked, "O Messenger of God, what relation is most worthy of doing good to?" He said, "Your mother"; this he repeated thrice. . . . Whoso comforteth a woman who has lost her child will be covered with a garment in paradise.

The hearts of men are at the disposal of God like unto one heart, and He turneth them about in any way that He pleaseth. O Director of hearts, turn our hearts to obey Thee.

A man asked the Prophet what was the mark whereby a man might know the reality of his faith. He said, "If thou derive pleasure from the good which thou hast done, and be grieved for the evil which thou hast committed, thou art a true believer."

REPORT

The outstanding event at Ananda-Ashrama during July, August and September was the benefit "Concert of the Nations" given in the patio of Ashrama Cloister the afternoon of August 15th. This concert was arranged by a devoted friend of the work as an expression of gratitude to the Swami for the inspiration and help she had received. Its central idea was to show the drawing together of Eastern and Western music through the adoption by modern composers of the five-tone Oriental scale. This was illustrated on the piano with compositions of Debussy, Royce, Wachtmeister and others, and by the singing of Chinese and Japanese folk songs. There were also folk songs of other nations and recitation with piano accompaniment. The artists, who were all members of the work, were in costume, and as most of them had professional training, the concert seemed in no sense an amateur production. The green grass, the blue sky, the trees, the flowers and the stone-flagged arcades made a charming background for this little pageant of world-wide song. As a culmination one of the members with a clear soprano sang a new poem of Swami Paramananda's, "Bird of Song", arranged to an air of Chaminade's, which matched the words in its ecstatic lilt. The attendance was good and many who could not come bought tickets. The return from the concert was dedicated by the Swami to the erection of a little rest home at the Ashrama for those who come seeking physical as well as spiritual help. This is the first time in the history of the work that a benefit performance has been given. That it should come spontaneously from a grateful heart was one of the loveliest things about it.

During the past summer many good friends have visited the Ashrama from various parts of the country—east, mid-

dle-west and north. Of these, some departed regretfully after a few days or weeks and some are still lingering on. For the benefit of the growing Ashrama community, the Swami has established a Sunday morning Devotional Service at eleven o'clock to which all friends are welcome.

There have been outside activities as well: a series of eleven lectures at the Pasadena Theosophical Forum on Friday evening; a course of lectures which the Swami gave at Santa Monica, and a garden party at a lovely Pasadena home arranged by several devoted members for the purpose of introducing to their friends the Swami's new book of poems, "Rhythm of Life". The Swami read and interpreted the poems himself, after which refreshments were served under a vine-covered pergola.

REVIEWS

A voluminous Life of Sri Ramakrishna is the truly valuable contribution which the Advaita Ashrama at Almora has just made to the world. The publishers have sought to present their facts in a simple, straight-forward manner so that the reader may form from them his own judgment of this marvellous life which, Mahatma Ghandi states in his foreword, "enables us to see God face to face", and convinces us that "God alone is real and all else is an illusion".

* * * *

The Vedanta Society of San Francisco has done well to present to the Western reading public in attractive pamphlet form Swami Vivekananda's lecture on the "Women of India". There is no subject more misunderstood in the Occident than this subject of the Hindu woman, so gracious and beautiful in herself, and so mighty in the worship of motherhood which she has inspired throughout India.

These publications are obtainable at Ananda-Ashrama.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



NOVEMBER, 1925

HEAL THYSELF

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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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HEAL THYSELF

By Swami Paramananda



O turn within for help is perhaps the last thing we mortals do when we are in need. As a rule, we seek our remedies outside. In the world of sickness we try to find the remedy for sickness; in the world of trouble we try to find the remedy for trouble, and in our great desire to cure our ills we seem to increase them. Fresh tragedies occur and thwart our purpose. For this reason the wise seek other means than those the world can give. The great Roman philosopher, Epictetus, tells us that, "It is more necessary for the soul to be cured than the body, and it is better to die than to live unworthily."

There is a legend concerning a woman who was very vain, especially of her lovely locks. Through misdeeds she brought upon herself the tragedy of blindness. Her friends urged her to go to a certain shrine noted for its healing and pray that her sight be restored. This she did with great yearning heart and humbleness of spirit. The priest of the church, a saintly man, looked at her and said, "Sister, I see that you have very fair locks; they are to you an element of danger. Cut them off and lay them on the altar." She was so desirous of receiving her healing that she was willing to make any sacrifice. So she cut off her

hair and offered it to the Virgin and immediately her sight returned to her. Her friends gave great thanks, but her heart was very sore, and she cried: "Oh, Mother Mary, at what cost hast Thou bestowed on me Thy Mercy!" No sooner had she thought this than her locks came back to her, and also with them, her blindness. What avails healing if there is blindness in the soul? The outer sight does not suffice.

Every man's soul must be healed. It must be cleansed and bathed, and it is not the earth water that can cleanse it. There is within us a mighty Source, sufficing for every need, physical, mental and spiritual. There is a very great Hand that is ever ready to guide us, but we draw our own hand away and then we cannot help but suffer. Whenever we come in contact with that divine essence, our soul is healed. Instead of going directly to it, however, as a child goes to its mother, we seek guidance from the worldly wise and our minds become confused. It is our own ego and self-interest that distort our vision. Continuous concern for body and bodily health may prove a great drawback, and this body interest may be present even with those who take their stand upon the Spirit. For instance, there are people who assume that body does not exist; body is matter; it is only Spirit that is real. Yet in spite of all their affirmations, in spite of all their themes and theories, we find that they lay their emphasis upon the very thing they claim is non-existent. Of course, this is inconsistent and irrational. There is no doubt that the affirmation of high principles is helpful to the individual, and sometimes it acts as a tonic, but only as we realize the reality of Spirit definitely in our mind, the afflictions of the bodily life are minimized almost to the point of nothingness.

We must not be drastic in our assertions; we should

not make statements which are inconsistent with our life and action. Bodily life exists, and there is no need of denying it. A good and efficient body can be a very eminent help in working out the best principles of living. We should strive to make it a fitting instrument for the highest expression of the soul. Until it is fitting, until it is in harmony with our thought and aspiration, we shall not be able to reach our goal. So long, however, as we are conscious of the body, even of a healthy body, we do not demonstrate the highest type of healthfulness. The very fact that we are not conscious of the body makes it possible for us to think freely and to act freely. The body is no longer a hindrance. The man who is constantly thinking how he may protect his body and maintain his health, he is never going to find the true standard of healthfulness, or reach the highest achievement in human existence. Such people are always afraid,—afraid of free action, and that fear impairs the best element in life. He, however, who through superior intelligence has learned to merge his will with the higher will and give his hand to be led by a wiser hand, an infallible hand, he finds the goal.

Let us sometimes forget this thought of health and bodily welfare. I have known illnesses which physicians pronounced absolutely incurable, to be cured, where people have been able to free themselves from the bondage of bodily consciousness. How to account for it? Disconnection from the source of illness and connection with the Source of life. By laying undue importance on physical health we make ourselves unhealthy; disregarding health also is unhealthy. It is sanity of mind which gives us a balanced state in all our affairs. Moderation in everything is a very good principle for healthfulness. Health is not

an accident. We cannot have a healthy body unless we have a healthy mind, and a healthy mind does not come as a matter of chance. We cannot indulge in hatred, jealousy or anger, without opening ourselves to some violent reaction, first on the emotional plane, and then on the physical. Instead of creating with our mind, we destroy; and we cannot destroy anything without destroying ourselves; that is, breaking our moral fibre. In one sense soul can never be destroyed, but it can be buried under meshes of matter, under doubt, despondency and despair. Doubt of ourselves, doubt of God, doubt of humanity, these are the most diseased conditions that can exist. The greatest death-blow to the ills of life is to walk in the light. Some day or other we come to this recognition and that is the end of our trouble.

When we give up scheming and planning by artificial means for our happiness and our restoration; when we learn to go directly to God, to that spiritual essence, then we find the real cure for our ills. We cannot preach God unless we have God-abiding consciousness; we cannot preach health unless we are ourselves healthy. By that I do not mean merely a healthy physical body, but a soul that shines from within with the glow of love, consecration, purity and nobility. When we have this we constantly benefit the world. We radiate the spirit of Truth.

In the metaphysical life to-day, healing has become very much like the sale of patent medicine. Practically every one has something to say on the subject. From this we must recognize its eminent need. People are running after health, so that whenever any one comes with a new method, we find masses gathering there. Perhaps he has something to give. It may be borrowed knowledge, or he may have worked it out himself; but this is certain: the individual

life has absolutely everything to do with healing. A doctor may give medicine and rescue you from some illness; a healer may put you on your feet; but you can again be laid up, if you do not know how to benefit by what you have received and conduct your life through such channels that your health will be safe-guarded. This implies right living. There is no way of evading it. You may say: "I exposed myself, therefore I am ill. I ate too much, or ate something imprudently." These things do not happen through chance. If there is an element of greed in a man, he will not be able to control his appetite. This will invariably lead him to some breakdown. It may not happen to-day, but it will come.

Until we have opened the channels of healthfulness within us, no one can really help us. We may be given a set of rules for noble living, but unless we apply them they will avail us nothing. That is the tragedy of modern life. To-day we have books, we have theories—hundreds of them, thousands of them. We study them intellectually, but when it comes to their practical application, we fall short. You may deny this; you may point to the wonderful equipment for the care of the sick, to the sanitariums and hospitals. It is very wonderful, the efficient care that is given; but would it not be better if there were less sickness, so that so much equipment would not be required? Would it not be a happier existence? This is where we have a distorted notion of life. We think that to be civilized we must have all that stands for outer glamour, even to the military power with its poison gas and ingenious inventions. This opens another avenue: that we have to be controlled by such drastic measures, that we have lost our self-control and sense of proportion, our sense of right and of spiritual values to such an extent that these things are necessary. Same

principle is involved in the measures that are being taken to bring relief and comfort to people. It is a very fleeting comfort. Would it not be much better if we could find means by which they could be taught to live in the right way? Living in the right way implies less sickness, less unwholesomeness, less disorder in life. It is not what we do, but how we do it. Unless we have spiritual principles to sustain us, life will break us whether we sit idle at home or work at the office.

We cannot have a secured form of health until we have cleansed our house. That means remodeling our life, and our habits; re-organizing our entire daily routine, and primarily our thoughts. A person can make himself sick just through his attitude of mind. For instance, in the morning you feel something in you a little out of tune, and unless you know how to re-establish your lost equilibrium it will express itself through a word of impatience or angry act. As you dwell on it, the whole horizon of your mind grows clouded, your functioning becomes disordered, and before you know it you are ill. These are not merely theories. Even scientists recognize these facts. Any physician will tell you that so long as a patient dwells on his condition no amount of medicine will save him, because his whole consciousness has become saturated with sickness. His mind must transcend the condition. But mind needs some ideal by means of which it can transcend. Man must have an ideal. Otherwise life becomes a danger.

We can never do anything contrary to our faith. If we believe altogether in the flesh we shall follow the way of the flesh no matter how much Bibles and religions may cry out against it. Sometimes we have to be taught through utmost tragedy. We have almost to be broken so that we can be mended; and we are mended, we are restored and

redeemed when our spirit blends with its Source. It is a very wonderful, very fortunate moment for us when we come, even through tragic experience, to the foot of the altar, when we really learn to lay ourselves there and say: Now I come to Thee bare, without any will of my own; self-will has brought me only disaster.

Let us make that which is first, our first consideration. If a man is well established in his spiritual life, if he feels that surging power of life itself flowing through him, through his body, his mind, his heart, through all his actions, he is not going to be ill. It is not a question of imagination. If we cut off the root of the tree, how long will the tree flourish? We may be able to keep it for a while, but it will surely die. Same way it is with our life. We cannot find life's fulfillment until we get to the very root of our being and learn to nurture it with noble thoughts and habits of living. This is not only the wisdom of ancient times; it is the eternal wisdom: "First seek ye the Kingdom of God" is given as the very first principle. All other things whatsoever we have need of, will be added.

You may say that this is nothing new. It is not, but its application will bring new results in our life. Are we paying any heed to this principle? On the contrary, we are trying to reverse it as much as possible. We come seeking this and we come seeking that. We want to find something that will give us health so that we may never be ill; we want to be taught how to retain our youthfulness so that we may always be young. These special whims and desires we have, but the only way we can fulfill them is by following certain principles. Then all these things come to us as the fruition of life. Often people ask: What is the secret of youth? It is an open secret, though few take it and benefit by it. Cease to think of yourself. That is the

secret. It is by thinking of ourselves that we break ourselves down. Every one wants beauty, but in order to have beauty we must first connect ourselves with the source of beauty. Every one wants happiness and health, but to possess these we must acquire inner wholeness and peace. It is very simple and only when our minds are twisted and distorted do we find it difficult to accomplish. If we go simply, directly towards it, we can accomplish it. When we forget ourselves altogether in that great Immensity, wonderful power flows through us, and it is this which enables us to do our work.

When our mind is focussed on something bigger, better and more wholesome than our physical self, necessarily we receive sustenance. Intellectually we perceive this, but the body asserts its hold upon us. It takes us unaware. Instead of thinking upon God or holy things, we find we are concentrating upon our little aches and pains, or perhaps on a grudge we bear against some one. Whatever we think about, we absorb constantly. If we think we are going to die, we may almost come to the door of death through our fear. Again when we lift our mind to that aspect of life which is undying, we become imbued with the deathless Spirit. It is there for us all,—that Spirit. Christ and the saints have no monopoly over it. In fact they do not want a monopoly. To say that we have no access to it, that we are sinners born in an imperfect condition, is a very detrimental thing; it is a diseased condition of mind.

One who has formed the habit of living in an unwholesome way can also form the habit of living in wholesome way. The body will respond. Even a dead body, a body which is dense and deformed, will respond to the call of the Spirit. That is what we see as miracle. Where there is a living point of contact, at once there is response, and the

only point of contact that is living, that will redeem the ills of the world, is the contact of love. If we begin to analyze fundamental principles, we shall find that all miracles are the response of life. Where there is no light, no one can give light. Light cannot come out of non-light. But what avails, if we understand these things only intellectually? We must try to live by them, abide by them, saturate our whole being with them. The things that we desire,—happiness, beauty and eternal life,—all will come of their own accord when we have given our soul a chance for ripening. We shall never gain them through anxiety, ambition, or by cheating another. If we, however, patiently, watchfully, fervently work for this inner ripening, it will come in due season and then we shall have fulfillment. If in spite of all our watching and care we stumble, we must not let that discourage us. We must keep on, keep on, keep on and each time we shall draw a little nearer to the goal. Our whole life will become in tune, and we shall say the right thing, do the right thing and think the right thing without any calculation. That is my greatest plea to humanity: rhythmic life, a life that strikes no discordant note. If we are not discordant within ourselves, we shall never strike a discordant note in others. Wherever there is light, there is no darkness. Wherever there is glow of Spirit, there is no illness.

Heal your soul. You cannot do it yourself, but One from whom we have descended, that One can always redeem us. Guard your mind; guard your thought. It is the great lesson we must learn. Strive to express life in its fundamental beauty. It is the truest form of self-expression. It is the keynote to all spiritual philosophy. Open the doors, the windows, every avenue of your soul to the beneficent Sun, that it may keep you sanctified and clean. When every-

thing is cleansed and purified, there will be no ills. If a man has not cleansed his inner life his prayers will never ascend. Do you suppose he can lift his prayer to God and have it granted, if his heart is filled with selfishness, egotism and harshness? Every prayer is fulfilled when it comes with childlike simplicity. Our helplessness is our greatest safeguard.

Find your healing in the arms of God. When once we have found it there, our tendency will be to reach others with the same love, to give out of our bounty. That is what I call divine love. When once our life is touched by that, we no longer fear, we no longer are anxious for ourselves or for anyone else. No matter what our religion, our faith is never well tested until we can face every condition of life and keep our gaze fixed on that One; until we can place ourselves wholly in His hands, can give ourselves over to Him altogether and say: Not my will but Thine, at all hours, be done. That is the fulfillment, the highest goal of life.

GREAT COMFORTER

From the "Gospel of the White Lotus"

(A Japanese Buddhist Scripture)

The Gate of Infinite Law explains all things, opens the way to the immortal, delivers from the bondage of custom, removes the worries of existence, and gives great rest to the soul. It is a doctrine true and good, a great realm of bliss, from an unsought Teacher. It gives a place of calm joy, of salvation, protection, and is a great defence. It has a great and faithful Leader who is eyes for the blind multitude: a pilot,—a great Pilot; a chief physician,—the great chief Physician; a comforter,—the great Comforter. Great is this awakening Light!

The great and holy Lord, by the incense of His virtue, makes all things fragrant. . . . The principles of all goodness come from Him. Because of this light pride and insolence disappear; one becomes a new being. For this new life one renounces every hindrance ungrudgingly: in word or thought ready to give head and brains for others' weal. Fearing not sword nor spear, nor wounds of curse, nor insult, one enjoys a royal calm. Following it one can surmount all difficulties. After receiving this new life, one can persuade others to forsake their doubts.

There is a way which enables its followers to attain the highest wisdom. This way is called "Eternal Righteousness". From eternity until now its nature is calm. The Scripture called "Eternal Righteousness" is true and upright, honors the highest. All the Illumined, past, present and to come, proclaim it. It uproots the sorrows of all beings. . . . After untold *kalpas* (ages) men fail to reach the highest wisdom because they do not know how straight the right way is; therefore, they take the wrong and fall into many snares. This wisdom makes those who once were without aim in life desire to save their fellowmen. There opens up before them a boundless vista of righteousness, reaching beyond this mortal life. Quite fearlessly, like their Guide, they pass from death to life: like Him they pass from death to life. If one receives the Doctrine of this Scripture and reverently believes it, as though seeing God, then he becomes like God! The weak in faith is transformed into the strong because of this august Scripture's power. It is as though this body were endowed with the endurance of the immortal and had arrived in Port. Whoever calls upon the Name of God, God's Way has found already. Of these who hearken and obey, there is not one who shall not thus become immortal!

IMPLICIT PERFECTION*By Friederich Froebel**(A German Educational Reformer of the 18th Century)*

All that does not grow out of one's inner being, all that is not one's own original feeling and thought, or that at least does not awake that, oppresses and defaces the individuality of man instead of calling it forth, and nature becomes thereby a caricature. Shall we never cease to stamp human nature, even in childhood, like coins? to overlay it with foreign images and foreign superscriptions, instead of letting it develop itself and grow into form according to the law of life planted in it by God the Father, so that it may be able to bear the stamp of the Divine, and become an image of God?

The theory of love is to serve as the highest goal and polestar of human education, and must be attended to in the germ of humanity, the child, and truly in his very first impulses. The conquest of self-seeking egoism is the most important task of education; for selfishness isolates the individual from all communion, and kills the life-giving principle of love. Therefore the first object of education is to teach to love, to break up the egoism of the individual, and to lead him from the first stage of communion in the family through all the following stages of social life to the love of humanity, or to the highest self-conquest by which man rises to Divine unity.

What shall we learn from our yearning look into the heart of the flower and the eye of the child? This truth: Whatever develops, be it into flower or tree or man, is from the beginning implicitly that which it has the power to become. The possibility of perfect manhood is what you read in your child's eye, just as the perfect flower is prophesied in the bud, or the giant oak in the tiny acorn. Strive

to define to your self what is that generic ideal which is wrapped up in your child. Surely, as your child—or in other words, as child of man—he is destined to live in the past and future as well as in the present. His earthly being implies a past heaven; his birth makes a present heaven; in his soul he holds a future heaven. This threefold heaven, which you also bear within you, shines out on you through your child's eyes.

The beast lives only in the present. Of past and future he knows naught. But to man belong not only the present, but also the future and the past. His thought pierces the heaven of the future, and hope is born. He learns that all human life is one life; that all human joys and sorrows are his joys and sorrows, and through participation enters the present heaven—the heaven of love. He turns his mind towards the past, and out of retrospection wrests a vigorous faith. These celestial virtues will link his life with the Divine life through which all life is one—with the God who is the supernal fountain of life, light, and love.

PRAHLADA'S HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

Yoga-Vasishtha Maharamayana

I thank Thee, O Lord and great Spirit, that are beyond all things; yet art found in myself by my good fortune.

O my Lord, save Thee, that dost vouchsafe to embrace and look upon me when I pray unto Thee, I have no other friend in the three worlds.

It is Thou that preservest and destroyest all and givest all things to everybody; and it is Thou that makest us to move and work and praise Thy Holy Name. Now art Thou found and seen by me and now Thou goest away from me.

I hail Thee, Thou felicitous One, that art my Maker and Preserver also! I thank Thee that art the stalk of this

form of the world and that art the eternal and pure soul of all.

I thank Thee that art the creator and beholder of all and the manifestor of innumerable forms. I thank Thee that art Thyself the whole of nature.

There is nothing here that is permanent, O God, beside Thyself. This being obtained, there is nothing else to desire.

I thank Thee, Lord, that art obtained, seen and known by me this day, and that shalt be so preserved by me as never to be obliterated from my mind.

As the feeling of heat and cold is perceived by touch, and as the fragrance of the flower is felt in the oil with which it is mixed, so I feel Thy Presence by Thy coming in contact with my heart.

As the sound of music enters into the heart through the ears and makes the heart strings to thrill and the hairs of the body to stand on end, so is Thy presence perceived in our hearts also.

As the objects of taste are felt by the tip of the tongue which conveys their relish to the mind, so is Thy presence felt in my heart, when Thou touchest it with Thy love.

Thou dwellest, O Lord, in my formless, tranquil, transparent and conscious soul, as Thou residest in Thy own Spirit, which is unbounded by the limitations of time and space.

The succession of pain and pleasure ceases to be felt by one who feels Thee within himself, just as the shades of darkness, the twinkling of stars and the coldness of frost cease to exist in the bright sunlight.

The temporary feelings of pleasure and pain can find no room in the fulness of heavenly felicity, just as a minute fraction of time is of no account in the abyss of eternity.

All joy to Thee that art both born and unborn with the body, and decaying, art undecaying in Thy nature, that art the unsubstantial substance of all qualities and art known and unknown to every one.

When Thou art situated in me, my soul is freed from all troubles and desires and passions and is placed in perfect rest. There is no more any fear of danger or difficulty or of life and death, nor any craving for prosperity when I am absorbed in everlasting bliss with Thee.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

This attention to health is a hindrance to learning of any kind, to invention, and to diligent study, as we are always feeling suspicious shootings and swimmings of the head, and blaming our learned studies as the cause; so that it is a great stumbling-block when virtuous objects are aimed at and pursued, for it makes us always think ourselves ill, and never to cease feeling pain in our body.—*Plato*.

The body has in itself a certain power of curing itself and many things can rouse this curative power into action, such as mental conditions or medicine, or exercise. As long as we are disturbed by physical conditions, so long we need the help of physical agencies. Not until we have got rid of bondage to the nerves can we disregard them.

—*Swami Vivekananda*.

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity.—*Shelley*.

There are also three in every ten whose aim is to live, but whose movements tend to the land or place of death. And for what reason? Because of their excessive endeavors to perpetuate life.—*Tao-Teh King*.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Owing to lack of space several chapters have been omitted here. They will appear in the book)

CHAP. XIV

WORK AND TRAVELS IN EUROPE

The Swami's first real contact with Europe was during his journey to India in 1911. A lecture at Stratford-on-Avon and an informal meeting at Dusseldorf were the only public activities attempted by him at that time. Both of these however called forth urgent requests to return. An invitation from Italy bent his thoughts still more strongly towards Europe. A final determining factor in the summer's plan was a letter from a Swiss lady and gentleman, asking how they could reach the Swami and obtain from him permission to translate his "Path of Devotion" into French; adding that they hoped the Swami would pay them a long visit, should he come abroad. With openings in Switzerland, Italy, Germany and England, the Swami felt fully justified in sailing for Europe the first week of June, 1912. On the tenth he wrote from the steamer: "Much has happened. I have met a number who are interested in the teaching and yesterday at their request I gave a talk about eleven o'clock. . . . Everything comes through Mother's will. I know the Divine Mother always protects us."

His letters from this time give a succinct and vivid account of his teaching and his travels. From Paris he wrote on the thirteenth: "We arrived here safely Tuesday at six a. m. after spending the night in the train from Cherbourg. We have taken several drives and seen many, many interesting things. I have enjoyed it very much. I think the park system of Paris is the most beautiful I have ever seen in any city. . . . I received a letter from Mr. S. yesterday saying that he had arranged everything in Ger-

many. This evening I received a wire asking me to come at once. He does not want me to go to Florence first."

And on August sixteenth: "There is no doubt that the French people are artistic by nature. You will probably smile at me if I express even a very small part of the enthusiasm I feel about Paris this time. Yesterday we went to Versailles; we enjoyed it immensely. It was a beautiful day for the trip. We started at ten and got back in the evening. There were so many things to see of such absorbing interest that I was really thrilled by it. . . . This morning we visited the Museum and Park of the Luxembourg. While walking in the Museum I forgot that I was in Paris. This taught me a great secret. When we reach the heart of a nation, we find something which is neither individual nor national, but universal. It is the same heart, but it beats differently in different nations."

"To-morrow morning I leave by the seven-fifty train for Hagen and am due there at five-forty. Mr. S. sent me another wire to come and not hearing from me, he telephoned from Hagen to Paris to come at once. His devotion is really touching. . . . I have heard from L. She saw Mrs. D. and they want me to come to Florence after the first of July. I also have received a very nice letter from Switzerland. They are ready to welcome me at any time and they want me to stay long. T. says that they want me at Stratford in August. Of course I shall probably go to Florence first, then Switzerland and then we shall see about the rest."

How the days passed at Hagen is shown by this entry in the Swami's diary: "Read the life of Lord Gouranga in the afternoon. Miss M. and Miss P. and some others came and we had a nice meeting. We saw the big airship and after supper we took a long walk in the woods." The work

done during this visit was of an intimate nature. No public lectures were delivered and no publicity was attempted; but a zealous faithful group climbed the steep slopes beyond the city once or twice daily to listen to the Swami and some of them still remain his ardent students. Out of this group has grown an organized society for Oriental study to which many professors and learned scholars belong. Every summer with unfailing regularity they send the Swami an insistent request to deliver a course of lectures in Germany. One of the number has also translated several of the Swami's works which have been published by the Society.

From Germany the Swami went to Italy. "I arrived here on July third after spending the previous night at Milan", his first letter from Florence reads. "L. and her mother met me at the station. . . . Now about the work here. I have met some very charming people. They are most anxious to start a branch Centre. To-morrow afternoon I am going to speak at their villa. I have been to dine with them and they have been here twice. They do not seem to be able to express their joy and gratitude and declare they cannot say enough and are full of devotion. They are trying to organize a Centre, although most people are away. I shall go to visit them by the first of next week and will probably stay until the end of the month. It seems that the Lord has already made some plan for work here. I shall also write to Marquesa T. I shall visit her by the first of next month. This villa where I am stopping is a wonderful place, very large. Mrs. D. offered me the use of it for the work. I think the villa B. would be better. I shall not go to England this year as I shall have enough to do here and in Switzerland."

Again on July twentieth: "Our meeting here last Saturday went off nicely. There were a number of people and

most of them seemed deeply impressed. I came to visit Mr. and Mrs. B. and I cannot tell you in words what a hearty welcome I received. It is a most wonderful household. Even the smallest children seem to feel keenly about my coming here. They all went in town to buy me some presents. Madame B. is a wonderful soul. She is the mother of seven children. She is very spiritual, pure and strong-minded. She brings up her children on a vegetarian diet and they are all healthy and strong. Her feeling for the work and teaching is very beautiful. The little children come to me constantly and when they come to say good-night it is too cunning for words. I am really overwhelmed by their devotion. It looks as though we were going to have a Centre here."

A little later he wrote: "I shall leave here for Bellaggio by the end of this month and from there to Gryon. May the Lord bless us more and more every day with all spiritual strength that we may bring blessing to many others." And on the nineteenth of July: "The time has passed very rapidly here. There is so much genuine interest. I talk by the hour and some of it is falling in good soil. Every one is so kind to me here. I went to dine at the Villa Gamberaia with some new friends. I found the Princess G. and Miss B. deeply interested. They want me to visit them when I get back in the autumn. Also they say that their motor is at my service at any time. Miss B. said that she had already ordered a number of books."

With the close of July the Swami's field of activity shifted to Switzerland, for he had promised to spend the month of August with his unknown Swiss friends at their home in Gryon-sur-Bex. A letter of August fifth from there tells of his journey and arrival. "I arrived here yesterday evening after a long journey through the Italian lakes. I left

Florence at midnight of the first. Mr. and Mrs. B. both came to the station to see me off. Their devotion is tireless. It was very difficult to get away from them at all. Now they are expecting me to come to Viareggio, a seashore place, for the last few days of August. I can only say that all this is the work of God. He has awakened a tremendous feeling of devotion in these hearts and He is leading them on."

"I arrived at Bellaggio at eleven o'clock in the morning after nearly two hours' trip on Lake Como. Marquesa T. met me with her motor at the station and drove me to her mountain home. I did not stay with her for many days but left for Gryon. She is an elderly person and very appreciative. From Bellaggio I went to Minaggio, then through Lake of Lugano, through Luino and Lake Maggiore. I spent the night on Lake Maggiore. The trips on the lakes were beautiful."

"Next morning I took the train for St. Maurice and after two hours' wait at Bex arrived in Gryon at about six in the evening. Mr. and Mrs. P. appreciated very much my coming. They are doing everything to make me comfortable. They are going to have a meeting this afternoon. People will come from the village and probably we shall have meetings every day." And a few days later: "Yesterday was a very busy day for me. Some gentlemen came from Lausanne to see me. One of them is the editor of a state paper. I don't know exactly what that means, but he is a scholarly man. He speaks several languages. He knows Japanese and also a little of Sanskrit. He seemed very happy to meet me and said, 'If I were free I would follow you everywhere,' etc. He and others are thinking quite seriously of the translation of the 'Path of Devotion' and also of bringing out a French edition of the 'Message.' All things are possible for Him."

“My time is quite full. In the morning there comes a group at ten and again in the afternoon at two or so. Then there is the regular class meeting at four-thirty and again in the evening a meditation class. There are some who come just to receive the blessing, although they do not understand English. This attitude is the same as that of India. Things are gradually taking shape. Mr. and Mrs. P. (his host and hostess) are getting more and more deeply interested. They are very attentive to my comfort. I have all my meals in my room separately. This constant giving out drains the physical vitality. The other day as I was talking to people, a thought came to me that a fountain was going on and people coming with little tumblers, pitchers and buckets, but they could not exhaust the fountain. It seems exactly like that; God’s power is inexhaustible.”

And again: “I always feel sure that Divine Mother has some plan for her work. God’s power no mortal can resist. That is what I am conscious of all the time. The task may seem like cutting a road through solid rock, but everything is possible through His will and grace. Power of devotion is wonderful; it opens all possibilities of our knowledge. It is the only way to attain true union. True devotion makes our life richer and more blissful every day. Before long the ‘Path of Devotion’ will probably be translated into Italian and German. Some one here wants to translate it into Dutch, but he is not the person to do it.”

We get a picture from a different angle through letters of the lady and gentleman whose guest the Swami was. These are passages from them: “The Swami gives us a lecture every day and we could listen for hours. He reads the Gita in Sanskrit and explains it. May he stay with us for a long time! We also have an hour for silence—and the joy of it! What holiness radiates from him. We love

him more and more every day. It is wonderful to have him with us and to be able to serve him. The days pass all too quickly. Twice a day, morning and evening, friends come for the hour of silence and receive the blessing of the Swami's presence. The Swami gives himself no rest. People have come all the way from Lausanne to hear him. Others, staying in Gryon for the summer, come daily."

"Our beloved Swami left us on Saturday. My husband and two devoted friends wished to accompany him as far as St. Maurice. They looked after him lovingly and came back the next morning. He took a night train for Italy. All were so sorry that he was leaving. One little girl burst out sobbing. The last day he was incessant in his loving ministrations. Every one wanted a private talk with him and he lectured at the usual hour as well. His purity, his holiness and his utter unselfishness endeared him to everyone."

The seven weeks in Florence which followed the month in Switzerland were unusually productive ones. A course of seven public lectures was given at the Villa B. in the Via Santa Marta, which wound its way up one of the picturesque hillsides of suburban Florence. A large and very lovely music room provided an ample and appropriate setting for the lectures, and the host and hostess, untiring in their zeal and devotion, had a descriptive circular printed and widely circulated. After the first lecture the following notice appeared in the Paris Herald, telegraphed from Florence: "There was a large attendance at the Villa B. yesterday for the first of a series of lectures to be given during September and October by the Swami Paramananda. The subject yesterday afternoon was 'India and Her Contribution to the Thought World.' The Swami comes to Florence from America, where he has founded a Vedanta Centre in

Boston. His object is to form such a Centre in Florence.”

Besides these public lectures there were classes and many informal gatherings; for the Swami was surrounded by those who were ardently eager for the teaching and their ardor filled him with ever fresh vigor and enthusiasm. This passage from a letter of September ninth gives us a glimpse into his daily routine: “Perhaps you would like to know the routine of the day here. I always get up early and finish my meditation and reading of the Scriptures before Monsieur and Madame B. come up with my breakfast. They always start the day that way. After breakfast I go out into the garden for a walk and then I do some work. We have our dinner at one o’clock, all of us, including four of the oldest children. Then in the afternoon we have a long walk and after supper we either talk or do some work. Last night we worked on the chapter on ‘Purity’ from the ‘Path of Devotion’—I mean the French translation of it. Then again M. and Mme. B. come up to my room with me to bid me goodnight.”

And in another letter: “You will be happy to know that the work here is starting nicely through His will. There was a large gathering here last Saturday at the class and every one showed great appreciation. Last Thursday we also had a large number. People are just beginning to get back from their summer vacation so we shall have more and more people. I have an invitation to go to Paris. There was a French lady who visited the Chalet at Gryon while I was there. I shall probably go there in November after spending a few days at Gryon and Geneva. The work seems to be spreading. Everything is through His will.”

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord, our God.—*Psalms.*

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ever since its foundation, Ananda-Ashrama has had great need of a Guest-house. It was inevitable that the peace, the beauty, the spiritual atmosphere of the place should draw an ever-increasing number of those who seek to spend a few days, weeks or months under its benign influence. Up to this time, however, there has been barely accommodation for the consecrated workers, so that all requests for temporary residence met with the answer: "Soon we hope to have a Guest-house."

Through his vision and faith, Swami Paramananda is bringing this hope to fulfillment. Through his vision, because he has seen the instant need of it and the part that it will play in the future of the work; through his faith, because without unshakable faith he could not have undertaken such a heavy responsibility at this time. The building was started in September and already the Swami's faith is being justified. Eager hands and hearts have been offered for his service. One member has spent days in an effort to secure materials at wholesale figures and his enthusiasm has borne fruit. Two other members have left their places of employment to aid in the building and have put into the construction a true spirit of consecration. One gentleman made a donation sufficient to pay the wages of a carpenter for a short time. "I cannot come and work myself", he said, "but I can help some one else to work." And so the walls are being raised in love and every day as the building grows those who watch it are struck by the simple beauty of its lines, which seem to reflect the spirit of its designer,—the Swami himself. It stands below the Cloister on a slight eminence which commands marvelous views, and has about it a feeling of friendliness and cheer. It is hoped that it will be ready for guests before the New Year.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



DECEMBER, 1925

CHRIST WITHIN

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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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CHRIST WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda



THE whole secret of life and its sustaining power lies in whether or not we have found our real centre of being. "In each human spirit is a Christ concealed, To be helped or hindered, To be hurt or healed. If from any human soul you lift the veil, you will find a Christ there hidden without fail." The truth is given here simply and directly; it is we who hide our spiritual heritage and again we have the power to reveal it. Intellectually we may grasp the value of seeing God, of finding Christ within,—that beautiful spiritual significance symbolized in Christ. We can even talk about it. It is very easy to pick up a sentence or two, or to quote texts from one Bible or another. They are noble, they are exalting, they are true. But are we able to give them expression in our life? That is the point. If we are not, then our words will be empty, especially for us, although some one else who has the quickening within his soul may benefit by them.

Our faith must be living and definite. We must prove it. How may we prove it? It is not proved by our word of mouth. One who has true worth within himself does not go out with aggressive spirit to voice his wisdom. Chal-

lenging some one, fighting, quarrelling, disputing,—that is not the way to prove anything. How do we prove when we have real humility? By our very existence—the word we utter, the attitude we take; in our walking, even in our speaking, we exhibit it unconsciously, because it is a perpetual experience in our soul. You say you have love in your heart. How do you prove it? Not in words. It finds its expression through your action. Therefore, if we have Christ within, we must prove it by our conduct, that we may resemble Christ, or our conception of Christ, in love, in understanding, in humility, in wisdom, in service. These are the qualities which make our life worth while. In order to find its greatest fulfillment this human life of ours requires something other than just the care of the body. There is no man who can be truly satisfied by the external. We cannot merely feed the body and be sustained; we cannot nurture our physical existence properly if in any manner we neglect our spiritual existence. That is why it is not enough for us to say vaguely, Christ is within. We should venture to prove it, not in order to make a demonstration before others, but because it is our need. We need this realization just as we need food and shelter, clothes and their warmth. When these outer needs come to us, we feel them very definitely and we exert ourselves to supply them. In same way, this great spiritual need is present in every soul and until it can be satisfied there will be a tremendous vacancy within.

It is not possible for a soul to find happiness, peace or anything that is abiding, so long as there is this inner vacancy. It must be filled. To this end there is the world of religion. Yet in spite of all the churches, that vacancy in the soul remains. Most men think their duty to religion is performed if they go to church once a week. This

may be an inspiration to them, a stimulus to remind them of their divine origin; but it is a negative form of religion. No tree can live when it is severed from its root. Nothing can live that is separated from its source. Keeping ourselves connected with the Source of our life through our thought, through our actions, through our aspirations, through our whole routine of living, is to my mind the practical expression of religion and spirituality. We must prove our religion by our life, by our conduct, and this we cannot do accidentally. It requires devotion. A man who carries thoughts of business and worries in his mind continuously, sometimes will speak them out even in his dream. Same way it is when we have delicate thoughts and feelings, we convey them unconsciously, they permeate our life; and if they are spiritual, they will conquer all our ills.

We wonder why our life is so empty, why we are so unhappy. The key is in our own hand. That little poem of Jalalud-Din-Rumi is significant, very, very true. "In each human spirit is a Christ concealed". Christ is concealed in each human spirit, in the universal sense. Knowledge of this fact can be a most tremendous help to a man. It can become his constant guide, like a lamp that he carries during the dark hours. In the moment of struggle he finds that this light reveals his path, shows him the road. When he neglects it, does not consult it, or goes against it, he suffers. "If from any human soul you lift the veil": this veil comes in the form of doubt, in the form of despondency, in the form of malice, envy or jealousy, and it is we who create it. We may pretend to be very pious, we may go and kneel before the altar and make a show of devotion, but unless there is genuine feeling within, we derive nothing. Spirituality is not pomp or ostentation, but that which is directly manifested in our soul. When this consciousness

is established within us, not as a vague or visionary idea of religion or God, but as a very definite factor in our life, it becomes a real, a constant friend. If we have a very wise friend our first thought in elation or perplexity is to share it with that friend. Same way it should be in our relation with God. It is not only in the hour of distress that we should pray to God to be delivered from our trouble. That is a very poor way of religion. It brings the spirit of bartering and bargaining. True religion comes when the heart, through sense of love, through sense of justice, through sense of longing, reaches out so perpetually, so continuously towards the eternal Source that no vacancy is left. If there is no vacancy in the soul, there will be no room for any evil to enter.

Sometimes one who has been church-going and very pious, succumbs to the calamity of great evil. Do not suppose that we become angry or hateful, or do something that is ignoble suddenly. We prepare ourselves for such things and no amount of church, creed or dogma can prevent our falling under their sway. God is not the respecter of creed or dogma; He sees our souls as they are. We are related to Him as souls and as souls we go to Him, cleansed and purified. We need no other recognition. There is no one so full of fear, or so degraded that he cannot lift his head and heart and go to that all-merciful, tender, divine Parent. If we have any misgivings, if we have any fear that we have done too many wrong things, that we have lost our opportunities and cannot go there, we should free our mind from such anxieties. Have you ever known a true mother who would turn her back on a child because of his misdeeds or the blunders he has committed? On the contrary, a mother may wait a long time, for she knows it is no use trying to persuade that child until he comes to her of his

own will, and it is in this way we are ever protected and sustained by the Divine Mother.

That which is within we must reach from within. Not with the power of wealth can we buy for the soul its birth-right. It is not the man of wealth who finds inner happiness and peace. To find that inner peace and abiding happiness, we must create certain qualities within ourselves,—qualities of the soul. There are some souls whom we cannot disturb in any circumstance because they have found that lasting, abiding shelter. We may try to hurt them; we may say unkind, even blasphemous things against them, but they turn altogether a deaf ear. The usual response of the world to such things is anger, hatred or revenge; but these souls, we find, are above that. We do not reach this point by taking a negative attitude; rather is it through a very strong spiritual conviction. When we realize our divine birthright, when we feel within our soul that great Presence, when we know that we are sustained by That, can never be severed from That, what a tremendous sense of security comes upon us! It is only as we lack this vision, or have not this definite connection, that we are fretful, anxious, jealous, hateful, that we take to mean methods of scheming and petty devices to gain our ends. As soon as that other vista opens before us, however, it brings wonderful healing to the soul.

This divine Presence, this Christ-spirit we all possess. You may say: "If we all have it, there is no need for any exertion." We all have it, but for the majority it is only a theory, an abstract, indefinite idea. We must draw our hearts close to it; and to this end we must take time, just as we take time for our physical needs. How refreshing it is in the morning to have a bath. It revives us. Even a sick person feels new life from it. Same way when we make

our inner contact, we feel perpetually a new impetus, a new desire for a better life, a new up-holding by a mighty Hand. We make this contact through prayer, through devotion, through study, or through a spirit of consecration. It makes no difference how we reach it, but there must be a very definite contact in our soul. There is no man strong enough to walk alone. Souls intoxicated by wealth, ambition, materialism, often think that they are self-sufficing. Some of the great monarchs, men mighty in the sense of world values, what is their destiny? They crumble or their ambition crumbles to nothingness. They bring only destruction. Do not let us be intoxicated by materialism. Rather let us cure this intoxication by spiritual values. There is not a man who does not possess this inner sense of value in his soul.

Recently as I was musing within myself, thinking and pondering, I tried to find a clear definition of Christ's command: "Resist not evil." It is not enough for us to understand it and abide by it to a certain extent; we must find its definite relationship with life in a world of action. It is not a negative teaching, although the majority of people have taken it as negative, because they have never found its vital contact with life, nor the meaning that Christ gave to it. Evil is a definite experience in man's life. Whenever there is any apparent evil he feels that he must fight it, must try to conquer it by force. This fighting of evil has been the usual habit of man. Now what is the practical value of non-resistance? "Resist not evil" means just what is stated; but we should add to that Christ's further injunction, as interpreted by St. Paul: "Overcome evil with good". When these two rules are put together we find the complete expression. Thus non-resistance does not mean merely a negative, passive attitude; it means a positive overcoming of evil by good.

It is the sign of wisdom not to touch anything that might contaminate us, and we cannot fight evil without partaking of it. Therefore the wise man never resists it. When we take that attitude nothing can touch us, nothing can hurt us. But we shall not be able to maintain such a position unless we have some deepening of spiritual understanding. The man who lives in a world of passion and emotion, excitement and anger, jealousy and hatred, it is impossible for him even to venture it. Let him, however, change his mental outlook, then it will not seem such an impossible task; on the contrary, it will become a very dynamic safeguard for him. Unconsciously he will be following a path which will lead him to higher illumination.

To some people this world of ours appears to be full of evil, while others say it is full of good. All is not good in this relative world, and also all is not evil. There is a mixture of good and evil; but in the midst of these dual conditions there is one unchanging Reality. When man finds his relationship with That, then he can go through life with balance, with poise. Call that Reality Christ if that gives you a sense of definite relationship with It; call it Divinity, —Truth— or whatever may be your conception of It; but know that until you find It, it will be very difficult to walk the path of life without failing and faltering. It is only when we establish ourselves on a rock of Truth that we have an unshakable foundation for our life. Then all our actions,—whatsoever we perform with our hands, with our mind,—and all things that are related to us, will have some value. Until we find this basis, however, we are easily shaken; many, many times are we overthrown.

This shows the need of spiritual life and the active man of the world needs it in one form or another even more than does the person who has retired from worldly life.

He needs something other than his little planning and scheming; something that will give him intuition, power, wisdom for right action and the effective carrying out of his plans. There is not a soul who does not at some time or other feel a great yearning, an instinctive reaching out for something other than just this little life and consciousness. Children feel it; grown-up people feel it; and sometimes when we are pressed by circumstances and depressed by the miserable conditions of life, we turn to that great Source and instantly we find a response. Let us turn to it more frequently. Evil devices will never succeed in overcoming evil, no matter how ingenious they may be. It is the gentle power that conquers, not ostentation, not haughtiness, not the might of the sword and gun; it is the gentle spirit, the power of love, the power of forgiveness, and these qualities we all possess.

We cannot afford to touch evil. We cannot touch it without soiling our hands and minds and consciousness, without degrading ourselves. For this reason, the great Teachers, such as Christ and Buddha, gave us the watchword of non-resistance for our own safe-guarding. As we understand it, as we relate it with our life, and bring it into our daily activity, we shall find a great and ever-increasing benefit. We cannot benefit ourselves in the real sense without benefiting others. We cannot be true, good, kind, heroic and unselfish without helping others, for it is by our life, not by our word of mouth, that we shed blessing upon other lives.

Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for thee.

—Luther.

THE DIVINE LOADSTONE*By William Law**(English mystic, 17th Century)*

Heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us; they come not into us from without, but spring up in us according as our will and heart are turned either to the Light of God or the kingdom of darkness. Thou needest not, therefore, run here or there, saying "Where is Christ?" For behold, the Word which is the wisdom of God is in thy heart; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal, speaking Word will speak wisdom and love in thy inward parts and bring forth the birth of Christ within thee.

There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind, and that is to introduce or generate His own Life, Light and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many images, temples and habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's will to all Christians, Jews and heathens. They are all equally the desire of His heart; His Light continually waits for an entrance into all of them; His "Wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice", not here or there, but everywhere, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.

Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian and a third for the heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one; and that is, the desire of the soul turned to God. When this desire is alive and breaks forth in any creature under heaven, then the lost sheep is found and the shepherd hath it upon his shoulders. Thus does this desire do all: it brings the soul to God, and God into the

soul; it unites with God, it co-operates with God and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive, not in motion either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship, either of the Law or the Gospel, are but dead works that bring no life into the soul, nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine life or operation of God enters into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those that never heard of His name.

O my God, just and good, how great is Thy love and mercy to mankind, that heaven is thus everywhere open and Christ thus the common Saviour to all that turn the desire of their hearts to Thee! O Holy Trinity, immense ocean of divine love, in which all mankind live and move and have their being! None are separated from Thee, none live out of Thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of Thy mercy, all are partakers of Thy divine life, the operation of Thy holy Spirit, as soon as their heart is turned to Thee. O plain and easy and simple way of salvation, wanting no subtleties of art or science, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reason, but all done by the simple, natural motion of every heart that truly longs after God.

When, therefore, the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it; it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up, therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise men of the East followed the star from heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star did for them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem of Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thine own fallen soul.

ARMOR OF LOVE

Compiled from the Writings of Mahatma M. K. Gandhi

In this age of the rule of brute force, it is almost impossible for any one to believe that any one else could possibly reject the law of brute force. Such being the hold that the doctrine of the sword has on the majority of mankind and as my views on this matter affect the conduct of a large number of people, I am anxious to state them as clearly as possible. I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer war, the so-called Zulu rebellion and the late war. Hence, also, do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the methods of violence. But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier; but it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

Purity is the only weapon of the weak. The strong in body, in their insolence often mobilize their "hard fibre" and seek to usurp the very function of the Almighty. But when that "hard fibre" comes in contact, not with its like, but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on and against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air. This terrific insolence can only be met by the utter humility of the pure and the meek. God helps the helpless, not those who believe they can do something. Let us therefore be strong in soul, though weak in body.

The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as

well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the Spirit. A correspondent asks, "Is it not true that the loss of Hindu kingdoms is on account of the people having attained to the highest order of spirituality?" I do not think so. We know, as a matter of fact, that the Hindus have lost each time for want of spirituality, in other words, moral stamina. We often confuse spiritual knowledge with spiritual attainment. Spirituality is not a matter of knowing Scriptures and engaging in philosophical discussions. It is a matter of heart-culture, of immeasurable strength. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral. I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means constant suffering. He serves best who suffers most; but it must be the willing suffering of the strong and not the unwilling suffering of the helpless weak. Christ died on the Cross with a crown of thorns on His head, defying the might of a whole empire. Suffering cheerfully endured ceases to be suffering and is transmuted into an ineffable joy. The man who flies from suffering is the victim of endless tribulation before it has come to him, and is half dead when it does come. But one who is cheerfully ready for anything and everything that comes, escapes all pain.

The spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility. Non-violence means reliance on God, the Rock of ages. If we would seek His aid we must approach Him with a humble and a contrite heart. We must act, even as the mango tree which droops as it bears fruit. Its grandeur lies in its majestic lowliness. Complete non-violence is complete ab-

sence of ill-will against all that lives. It is pure Love. I read it in the Hindu Scriptures, in the Bible, in the Koran. Non-violence is a perfect state. It is a goal towards which all mankind moves naturally though unconsciously. Man does not become divine when he personifies innocence in himself; only then does he become truly man. In our present state we are partly men and partly beasts and in our ignorance and even arrogance say that we truly fulfill the purpose of our species when we deliver blow for blow and develop the measure of anger required for the purpose. We pretend to believe that retaliation is the law of our being, whereas in every Scripture we find that retaliation is nowhere obligatory but only permissible. It is restraint that is obligatory. Retaliation is indulgence requiring elaborate regulating. Restraint is the law of our being, for highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint. Suffering is thus the badge of the human tribe.

The goal ever recedes from us. The greater the progress, the greater the recognition of our own unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory. Therefore though I realize more than ever how far I am from that goal, for me the Law of complete Love is the law of my being. Each time I fail my effort shall be all the more determined for my failure. The hardest fibre must melt in the fire of love. Let me declare my faith. I believe in loving my enemies. I believe in non-violence as the only remedy open to the Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews of India. I believe in the power of suffering to melt the stoniest heart. Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism,—in fact religion,—is on trial. Either we believe in God and His righteousness or we do not. No power on earth can stop the onward march of a peaceful, determined and godly people.

GOD-KNOWER AND GOD

From the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

According to certain philosophers the Absolute is the only Reality; the universe is unreal. From the point of view of the Absolute or the Undifferentiated, the universe and man and other creatures are unreal, for the only Reality is the Absolute. Such is the point of view of a non-dualist philosopher. Devotees or lovers of God, however, think and feel differently. Unlike the non-dualists, they look upon the waking state as a real state and upon the external world as real and not like dreams. They believe also in names and forms. They say that the objects before us of the universe are the works of God, Who is a personal God and possessed of many attributes. The starry heavens, the sun, the moon; the mountain, the sea; men, birds and beasts,—all are His glorious works.

True God-knowers are they who have realized God both as impersonal and personal. They have seen God both within and without and have received this revelation from Him direct. When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive—neither creating, sustaining or destroying—I call Him the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying—I call Him the Personal God or Divine Mother. But really the distinction is a distinction without a difference. The Impersonal and the Personal are one and the same Being, even as fire and its burning property are one. Ye cannot conceive the fire apart from its power of burning. They are one even as milk and the whiteness of milk are one. One cannot conceive the milk without the whiteness. They are one even as a gem and its brightness are one. They are one even as a serpent and its movement in a crooked line are one. Ye cannot conceive the serpent without its serpentine, tortuous motion. It is

through the changeable, phenomenal world that you must feel your way to the Unchangeable, the Unconditioned. When the Personal God or Divine Mother wipeth out your ego in divine vision, God the Absolute is realized and it is all silence and whatever is, is there.

DE SANCTO SPIRITU

By Adam de Saint Victor

(French monk and writer of Latin hymns, 12th Century)

Bright Light, dear Light, thou dost put to flight the gloom of inner darkness: by thee the worlds are purified. Thou dost destroy sin and the blight of sin. Thou dost make known the truth, and dost show the way of peace and the road of justice; thou dost shun the hearts of the evil, and dost enrich the hearts of the good with the gift of knowledge. When thou dost teach, nothing is obscure; when thou art present, then is naught impure: at thy presence our joyful soul exults; our conscience, gladdened by thee, purified by thee, rejoices.

When thou dost come, thou dost soften our hearts; when thou dost enter them, the black clouds of darkness flee. O sacred fire, thou dost inflame our breast; thou dost not burn it, but thou dost cleanse it from all earthly cares when thou dost visit it. Thou dost instruct and arouse minds that before were ignorant and buried in sleep and forgetfulness. Thou dost help our tongues, and dost form the sound of our word; the grace given by thee makes our heart inclined to the good.

O help of the oppressed, O comfort of the wretched, refuge of the poor! Grant us contempt for things of earth; draw our desires to the love of things of heaven. Drive away evil, remove our impurity, make the discordant concordant, and bring us thy protection.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

CHAP. XIV.

WORK AND TRAVELS IN EUROPE—Concluded

Letters continued to come from Florence telling of the Swami's work. One reads: "I have been translating the Bhagavad-Gita. I dictate and Mme. B. writes it down. Five chapters are already finished. This idea came to me while I was in Gryon." And another: "Our meeting here was quite satisfactory on Saturday. Lecturing is certainly the smallest part of the work. The main thing is to sow the seed. Those who are ready will feel the living quality just from the Presence without words. Divine Mother knows her work and I am always ready to do Her will. This afternoon the Gita class begins. Everything is so sympathetic here. Children are so sweet and dear. They all come to bid me good-night every evening with their mother when the candles and incense burn on the altar. It is just like a daily service for them—and gives such a joy to me. Divine Mother knows her own and when she attracts no power can resist it. Blessed are those who are attracted to be blessed!

Although the work in Florence had begun with so much promise, the Swami realized, when he returned to Boston, that it was not possible to carry on two Centres separated by a broad ocean. His decision was a disappointment to many, above all to his hostess of the Villa B. When she heard it, she wrote: "The Swami's work is for the world, for all, thus he must ever pass on to new fields. It is for us whose hearts have had the privilege to be opened to receive the blessing of his words to retain it. The room where he had his altar, I go there every morning and late afternoon to pray. My little girl joins me in the afternoon and then

I read to her, by the light of the altar candles, the 'Path of Devotion,' which she loves. The interest that the Swami's lectures awakened here is growing in many hearts. The German translation of the 'Path of Devotion' which a dear friend of mine has undertaken is really marvellously well done. She has understood the spirit of it most profoundly."

In one of these letters the Swami speaks of translating the Bhagavad-Gita. This translation from the Sanskrit text was the most important achievement of his autumn sojourn in Florence. As with everything he does, it began spontaneously and without calculation or planning. His host and hostess had a translation by a Western scholar, which was so confusing that they brought it to the Swami to clarify. He soon grew weary of bending back into shape the distorted text and began making his own translation, which his hostess wrote down for her personal use. One or two others assisted at the informal class and they were all so impressed with the beauty of the Swami's rendering that they urged him to publish it. The translation was made in the short interval of six weeks.

The Swami returned to Europe the following March (1913) as the guest of his German friends, Mr. and Mrs. S. They met him at Naples and they spent a holiday of several weeks at Capri. Then they moved northward by gradual stages, making various stops on the way. The next letter came from Switzerland and was dated April twenty-first: "Here I am once more in Gryon. Sometimes I have felt like returning to Boston at once. But the Lord will surely make His will known. Mr. and Mrs. S. want me to come to Göttingen. They will also invite others to come and discuss the plan of our work in Germany. We talked about starting a Centre in Berlin, but my thoughts have been very strongly on finishing what we have already undertaken in Boston.

I see many attempts in starting a work in Europe and Asia. I see many attempts in trying to create one."

The Swami's mind at all times rested very lightly on the outer career of his life. The under-flow of his thoughts was always far away from worldly concerns and we touch its depths in the words which came a few days later: "It is a great pity when people miss an opportunity out of thoughtlessness or otherwise. Everything depends on Divine Mother's Will and Grace. Bondage and freedom both are in Her hands. Those who pray humbly and earnestly, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Egotism lends no access there: it only prevents our going to that blissful abode. As long as this demon in the form of ego rules in us, so long our striving for spiritual things will prove fruitless. I am realising more and more every day why all sages laid such great stress on this: 'Man has no other enemy than his ego.' This is absolutely true. When this great enemy is conquered then alone one realizes how majestic the soul is. All our limitations and sorrows, all our littleness and imperfections arise from this one source. It is the absence of ego which fills our hearts with purity, humility, love, peace and with all the blessed qualities.

"Through the Grace of the Divine may you all taste the nectar of *Anandam* or Bliss to be found in the egoless state. May Mother protect you all is my constant prayer. I have been enjoying the simple life and quiet here very much but work must be done when the call comes. My earnest prayer is that God may give you strength and wisdom to follow ably what is best for your welfare and for those who look to you for help. This world cannot prove dangerous when our heart is steadfastly fixed in God, but without love of God and His Mercy life is altogether unsafe and full of peril. Pray to Him earnestly for light; try to do your

duties with non-attachment; practise purity and self-control in all your thoughts, words and actions; this will give you peace."

He went to Geneva as he had planned and on May fourth he writes from there: "I arrived here last Tuesday evening. Friday evening I gave my first lecture. From the next day I began a course of talks on Bhagavad-Gita at the studio of Madame Van N. where I am stopping. This is a very old-fashioned place but any place is good enough for my simple needs. They are rather anxious to form a Centre here and they have been asking many questions regarding it. There is little time these days for writing. Much activity is going on, but He alone can do His work." The next letter reads: "Yesterday morning the publisher came and I have arranged about the French translation of the 'Path of Devotion'. This afternoon will be my ninth talk here, all given in about a week's time, and just as many interviews. I must say that my body has shown real endurance. A Class has been formed for the study of Vedanta which will be held once a week."

Paris followed Geneva; but on his way he went to Gryon for a few days' rest and he writes: "I returned to Gryon to-day at three o'clock. It seems so beautiful to be here again in this quiet spot. Yesterday we had a very interesting meeting at the house of the distinguished gentleman of Geneva. It was very successful. I met several professors and they all expressed great appreciation. Mr. S., a very broad-minded clergyman, wants to translate the 'Teachings of Christ and Oriental Ideals' and publish it in his magazine first and then publish it in book form. It will be a good thing to have for work among French-speaking people. The Lord alone knows His work, we can only try to make ourselves fitting instruments in His Hands. It was quite

strenuous in Geneva, but beginning of everything requires display of great strength and devotion. Some good may come out of it." Among the professors the Swami met at this gentleman's house was Professor Oltramare, the well-known Orientalist. Other members of the Faculty of the University of Geneva also attended the lectures.

The Swami's strenuous activities in Geneva were by no means unfruitful. His transforming touch fell on many lives and roused them to new fervor, calling forth such expressions of thankfulness as this: "In a few simple words may this letter be the token of our deepfelt gratitude and love to you for the great blessing your presence and teaching have brought us, who have had the privilege of coming beneath them, here in Geneva. May our gratitude and love be translated into faithful work in the service of the Supreme Being, as you have given us the example; and in the way you have instructed us. May love and tolerance guide us in the real spirit of humility to realize and impart the sense of Truth in study and meditation where self is lost in Light."

The Swami sent one more letter from Gryon. "If you work with pure and whole-hearted devotion," it reads, "it must all go well and you will feel more blessed every day. The strength of the Boston Centre has been harmony and tolerance. To bring even a shadow of anything else would be to weaken it. The work will surely grow strong if we all learn to stand together. The spirit of self-surrender and prayer will enable us to accomplish this."

For sometime the Swami had been in correspondence with a lady in Paris who was eager to have him come there, remain for several months and deliver an extended course of lectures. She writes him in the early days of June 1913: "The way seems to be opening very pleasantly for your

welcome here. There is an artist who has offered her large studio for the meetings, situated on a park in a very desirable part of Paris, connected with the Bois de Boulogne. This same lady will be delighted to have you stay in her home. It is a fine large house. You will be quite free there. As my friend has been in India, you will find it a congenial atmosphere. It is quite wonderful the number of souls who are awaiting this teaching here. I saw in the Paris Herald that there is in Paris a society recently formed, under the patronage of President Poincare, of members of the Sorbonne to invite the speakers of the highest planes of civilization to address Parisian audiences. We shall announce your coming to President Poincare asking him to notify those who would like to meet you."

The Swami delivered two public lectures in Paris and met with an immediate and most sympathetic response. The delicacy and grace of his method of presenting his message, the depth and penetrating quality of his thought and his great spiritual charm made a strong appeal to the subtle French mind. The French intellect is at all times so piercing and transcendent that it seems to hover on the threshold of the spiritual. It was therefore able to sense the Swami's unobtrusive lofty wisdom. It seemed as if a new and fertile field was opening before him; but the urge to return to Boston and devote himself with renewed energy to the Centre there grew too irresistible to be ignored. He cut short his Parisian season and sailed for America in a few weeks. Europe, however, was as insistent as Boston. Demands for lectures and Centres were continuous and cumulative. With each visit they multiplied. The Geneva group also were pleading with him to return. Another summer in Europe seemed inevitable. June (1914) therefore found the Swami again crossing the Atlantic: writing on board the steamer:

“So far the trip has been beautiful. Last night, I gave an address on ‘Religious Ideal for This Age’ before a large audience. You see it is very difficult for me to get over my long Sunday habit. . . . I hope all is going well with you and the Centre. Just be brave and have patience. Patience conquers everything in the end. Our moods and feelings are only momentary—they come and go, being fleeting in nature, therefore we must try to endure them and look upon them as a witness. Never tear down your peace and happiness unnecessarily. Never lose faith in yourself. I pray that Mother may make your faith ever stronger and stronger and give you joy, selflessness and true devotion.”

The next news came from Geneva and was dated July second, 1914: “I arrived here safely after a long and dusty train ride of eleven hours and a half from Paris. I was met at the station by Mrs. Van N. and Mr. Reelfs, who brought me here to this beautiful country home of Mr. Selleger. The hospitality I am receiving from this household is simply overwhelming. Mr. Selleger is an old gentleman of eighty-four and he is a wonderful soul. He and his daughter used to come to hear me last year. I often observed their earnest faces but did not dream that they would invite me to stay with them. It is so peaceful and quiet here. I have almost a whole chalet to myself with a bath. They really know how to live comfortably and simply without the extravagance of unnecessary luxury which consumes so much time and strength. I am more and more impressed with this fact, as I come to Europe year after year. They are all strict vegetarians in this family and Miss Selleger yesterday cooked me a most delicious meal of boiled rice, macaroni and stewed lettuce with a sauce. I feel as if I am receiving hospitality from an Indian household.”

A letter of July third reads: "These have been very full days. To-morrow morning I am starting for Gryon. There I shall probably have some real rest. But we can never tell. Divine Mother may have some more surprises for me, as my reception at Geneva seemed like a real surprise from Her. Knowing these people may mean a possible opening for Holland. Miss Selleger has already spoken to me about it. Her brother as well as her brother-in-law who lives in Holland are both interested and are anxious to meet me. Most of the audience here is made up of Russians and Dutch. There is no doubt that plenty of people here are earnestly interested. I have promised them that I would come back in September and stay longer. People have been showing deep feeling and some of them have come steadily twice a day—long distances, too."

(Note: Owing to lack of further space it is impossible to complete the present narrative in the "Message". It will soon go to press and will appear in book form with seven or eight additional chapters and numerous illustrations.)

VEDANTA ACTIVITIES

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has continued its work uninterruptedly during Swami Paramananda's absences in the west. At these times Services and Classes are conducted by Miss Galeni Philadelphus who by her consecrated spirit preserves the serene and lovely atmosphere always associated with the Boston work. On November 4th the Swami spoke for the Wollaston Woman's Club, near Boston, on "Right Thinking and Right Living." His handling of the subject was so practical that the president remarked at the close, "Are we not all surprised; we did not expect anything like this." At the request of the members the Swami concluded with the reading of some of his poems.

* * * * *

It is with great pleasure that we report the establishing of a Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, by Swami

Prabhavananda, assistant to Swami Prakashananda of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco. The new Centre was dedicated on November 8th by the two San Francisco Swamis, who conducted an impressive ceremony at the new room acquired for the purposes of the Portland work. We wish it well.

* * * * *

During November Swami Paramananda visited both Cincinnati and St. Louis on his way between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. At both places he was given a warm welcome and addressed large and appreciative audiences.

* * * * *

Ananda-Ashrama was without the Swami's presence during the first part of November. He returned, however, in ample time to celebrate Thanksgiving with a special Service in the morning, held in the patio, and a dinner in the afternoon, cooked by the Swami and served out under the open sky. Many came and felt that for the first time they had touched the true spirit of Thanksgiving.

* * * * *

Grace Church, New York City, was the setting for a truly momentous occasion when, on October 26th, the Swami as guest of honor for the Fellowship of Faiths spoke before an audience of over a thousand people. The evening was dedicated to Judaism and the Swami showed how only by going within and more within could one grasp the significance of any faith. The opening of the doors of Grace Church for such a purpose was, he said, symbolic of the times. The response to the Swami was deep and spontaneous. As a friend writes: "Although the president of the meeting had asked the people not to clap in the church, the feeling was so heartfelt that the audience burst out clapping when Swami finished his lecture." The following day a luncheon was given in honor of the Swami. This new contact opens many possibilities for Vedanta work in New York as it has brought the Swami into sympathetic touch with prominent leaders of thought,—ministers, rabbis and metaphysical workers.

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