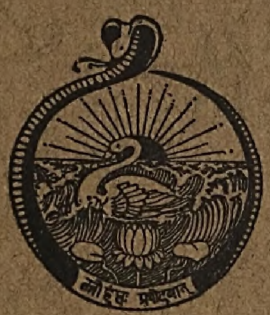
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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JANUARY, 1926

WHO IS A MASTER?

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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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.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV JANUARY, 1926 No. 1

PRAYER

LET us lift our thoughts and prayers to that one and only Source of our life, Source of our existence, Giver of all strength and beneficence.

Let us approach Him with noiseless, unostentatious, gentle feeling of heart and mind.

Let us close the gates, the avenues, to all that distracts us and distracts our vision that we may conceive a clear, a definite conception of that great Presence within us.

Let us shake off from our mind the imperfections arising from our contact with the sense-world, forgetting our own limitations and forgetting the limitations of others, that our mind and heart may become single and one-pointed in our journey towards Him.

May all our prayers be answered. May our heart's yearning lead us to our goal.

May He Who is all-seeing, all-loving, inspire us and fill our heart and mind with His love.

Let us open the avenues of our inner being that we may not, through our imperfect nature, prove unworthy to receive His blessings.

May He, the Giver of all, Bestower of all, loving and compassionate,—compassionate even towards those who have many lacks,—may He surround us with His tender protection and keep us ever in peace.

Peace, Peace, Peace be unto us and to all living beings.

Ananda-Ashrama
December, 1925.

—*Paramananda.*

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UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Wherever the superior man passes through, transformation follows; wherever he abides his influence is of a spiritual nature. It flows abroad, above and beneath like that of heaven and earth. How can it be said that he mends society but in a small way?—*Mencius.*

Christ is nothing else than love, simplicity, patience, purity,—in short all that He Himself is; and the devil is nothing but that which draws us away from these ideals.

—*Erasmus.*

Lovely is the spirit that will give his days to bring beauty to his brothers who are lost upon earth's ways.

—*John Masefield*

Wherever a self-controlled man dwells, that is a forest, that is an hermitage.—*Max Muller.*

Love, that lives and breathes without desire;
Wisdom freed from thought's consuming fire,
Will at one with God, that doth aspire
But to obey Him in simplicity. —*Jacapone da Todi.*

All our spirits, O my people, must become one spirit, united mightily as one only selfsame spirit. And if thereto we attain not, the fault, ah, it lieth not in the order of our being, not in the decree of the gods. In us alone it lieth: are we earnest? sincere? are we true? and truly kind? We have not fixed, O children, our minds with a common brotherly desire; we are not one single yearning heart lifted up to heaven in prayer; and therefore, Tirawa Atius, our Heavenly Father, Who dwelleth in the zenith, may not, woe is me, bless us His children as He is so fain to bless.—*Pawnee Indian.*

For the man who makes everything that leads to happiness, or near to it, to depend upon himself, and not upon other men, on whose good or evil actions his own doings are compelled to hinge,—such a one, I say, has adopted the very best plan for living happily. This is the man of moderation; this is the man of a manly character, and of wisdom.—*Plato.*

The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all creatures on earth as his own self, he attains the Immortal Being, the true God is ever with him.

—*Kabir.*

If one would be very spiritual, it behoveth him to renounce both them that be afar and them that are nigh and of none so much to be ware as of himself. If thou overcome thyself perfectly thou shalt the more lightly put under foot all other things. It is perfect victory for a man to overcome himself. If any keep himself so under that sensuality obeys reason and reason Me in all things he shall be a true victor of himself and lord of the world. On this vice that a man loveth himself too inordinately hangs everything almost that is utterly to be overcome; the which evil overcome and put under forthwith there shall be great peace and tranquillity.—*Imitation of Christ.*

What else can I, a lame old man, do but sing hymns to God? Were I a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; a swan, the part of a swan; but since I am a reasonable creature it is my duty to praise God. This is my business. I do it. Nor will I ever desert this post as long as it is vouchsafed me; and I exhort you to join in the same song.—*Epictetus.*

WHO IS A MASTER?

By Swami Paramananda

What I am going to give you is not a fanciful idea of a master. There is a significant saying by Laotze giving utterance to the voice of universal freedom: "He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure, he shall be the whole world's model. Being the whole world's model, his virtue will never fail. He reverts to the Absolute." This is precisely the definition of a master. He never wants to rule. He never wants to assert himself. In fact he has no more voice of the individual left in him, and therefore he becomes a mouthpiece for the outpouring of the universal law. Do you suppose that Christ was called a master merely because He gathered around Him a few disciples? That was not the reason He was so called, it was because He had achieved the conquest over His own self. The little self was conquered and in its place shone the light of God. That is the interpretation I want to give you, not the picture of some mysterious being living in the Himalayas or an Egyptian forest.

We may find masters; but the real finding must be within. Unless we have found our victory over self, our mastery over self, we may have all the great Lights of the world shining right before us and yet not see them or be aware of them, because we are conscious only of the little glitter of selfishness and egotism, blurring our sight for anything else whatsoever in the world.

All religions uphold an ideal. It is a wonderful thing. No one should seek to discredit another's ideal. We protest against God when we protest against any part of God. If you say, "that man's ideal is not pertaining to God because it is not of my creed", then you are creating a God of tradition, an idol, a very limited being. This question of su-

premacy never arises in the realm of pure spiritual life, philosophy and religion. We are very blessed when we can pour out our heart's devotion to some ideal, when we can bow before it, when we can really throw down the disturbing element of self in adoration, in the supreme recognition of our spiritual entity. Not that the great world teachers demand of us anything. They are not at all conscious of such things. Often I like to think of the beautiful incidents in the life of Christ, the Master-Spirit. Whenever He performed a miracle, whenever He gave healing to a soul and redeemed it, and men came and threw themselves down before Him in humility and worship, how His mind turned to the Source of all things! And that is the master.

To assert our voice and become domineering, to have a little following, is not the spirit of mastery. A master is one who has gained such conquest over himself that no more may the sting of self enter into his consciousness. Such a being is a benediction. This is the great lesson that the master-spirits of the world bring to us. They come, not in order to teach us to attain to some creed or dogma, to become fanatical or quarrelsome; they come so that we may learn to find our access to spiritual reality; so that instead of asserting our self-will, saying, this is mine and that is mine and you are not within my realm,—we may revert to that Absolute Being in utter self-surrender.

It is not through division and disorder that we learn of religion and spiritual philosophy. It is rather by finding a point of contact, and in order to find this point of contact with the universe we first have to find it within. It is useless for us to try to establish something for the betterment of humanity, or to seek peace, harmony and order, until we have found these within our own self. If you

go to some one with an idea or an invention, he will want to see what you have done, how much you have accomplished, what results you can show. The same way it is in the spiritual realm. You may talk to a group of people, you may tell them that there is nothing so wonderful as self-mastery and how marvelous it is for a person to have control over his temper so that he always maintains a calm spirit; but people will learn from you only and exactly in the measure that you exhibit these qualities through your life, your actions and your dealings with others. These are the lessons which make their imprint on our life in our moments of weakness, doubt and despondency.

The greatest service the master-spirits do for us is this. They inspire in us our lost hope; they quicken in us that divine life which in many of us seems to exist now almost in the form of deadness. This life they infuse in us, and that is the reason why we should always have gratitude towards these great souls. And how beautiful it is that they are so absolutely free from any self-seeking! Here lies the difference between the world and spiritual reality. The world-interest desires only for itself. When a man has one kingdom he wants another; and when he has another he wants still another; and so he goes on multiplying kingdoms, and with them trouble and turbulence. The spirit-man, however, gives up everything he has, and by giving up acquires immensity of life. You may ask: "Can we dare such a thing? Can we dare to give ourselves up? Can we dare to forget ourselves? What will happen?" These are the thoughts which hinder our progress, which bar our door, our access, into the heart of Divinity. Therefore the spiritual life begins with the selfless spirit.

A person who starts with resolute mind to follow the path of wisdom, he never finds fault with another. If there is anything lacking he tries to adjust it from within. It is the life within that opens infinite vistas for us. We learn not to quarrel with others, not to find fault with others, or even have an attitude of self-pity. Sometimes we have these thoughts playing within us. We are either finding fault with the whole world, or we have this morbid self-pitying attitude. In both conditions we are forgetful of the ultimate. Who are we? What are we? Are we self-sufficing? Are we the sole agents of our life and action? Herein lies the whole secret of life, religion and practical wisdom. When a man has connected himself with the Source he can give out continuously and still find a tremendous amount to give; while another person may start with great exuberance but will soon become exhausted because of his self-limitation. The master-spirits of the world are those who are never unmindful of the Source, of the Ultimate.

Wherein lies our self-limitation? We are successful in life, we have opportunities; but we are inclined to forget the One Who has given us our opportunities, Who has bestowed on us power and success, and then comes our calamity. Sometimes we are a great inspiration to another: some one has received help through us, and that person comes and tells us. Immediately we think that we are the one who has done this and we begin to have a tremendous feeling of self-importance. Then that power is entirely cut off from us. This is where Christ gives a lesson, and Buddha and St. Francis. They are master-spirits, not yielding to the self, not yielding to the momentary gratifications of life which they know are transitory, passing; but always with faithful ardour standing up for that which is

true and real. Here lies man's choice. When he gains victory over this self there is nothing that can defeat him or need worry him.

This our life here is absolutely inter-related with the spiritual Source and our misfortune is that we forget this. Man thinks his hands and feet have only so much capacity, that his mind can only carry so much and beyond that he should not undertake anything. In this way we make ourselves slaves of circumstances. We are attached to this and that without always keeping our mind focussed on the ultimate issue. If, however, we do succeed in doing this, then little things cannot touch us. We may ask, is it practical for a man to keep his mind on spiritual things? No matter what form of religion he may follow where will he find time to give himself to his duties, to his family, to his many obligations? There is no duty to ourselves, to others or to humanity greater than the duty to God. It may sound old-fashioned; but it is neither new nor old.

A person cannot continue to live and flourish and exhibit those powers which he is craving if he disconnects himself from the Source of life and sustenance. He may want happiness; but he cannot have happiness until he has found the way of happiness. He may have a tremendous ambition to attain it; but he cannot attain it till he has found a working hypothesis. Therefore, again we have to turn to the old-fashioned, the eternal principle: "First seek ye the kingdom of God within." If you are successful in finding your access there, if you are living in harmony there, then there is nothing that can defeat you. That is the law of life, and the great master-spirits of the world teach us this,—the abandonment of outer things. We may not be able to abandon all outer things at once. In our spiritual infancy we are given plenty of opportunities and

ample allowance is made for us; but we must prove that we have yearning.

In the realm of religion man cannot pretend. We can perhaps pretend other things, but here is something that must ring true. It must coincide with our life, and unless it so coincides we lose our grasp. We may become great fanatics; we may even fight one another, thinking we are defending our faith; but that is not the way to defend it. Defending our faith, spreading our faith, extending it to a larger humanity, means that it must be well-grounded in our own soul so that we can never forget it. We may have symbols, we may build churches, we may have all the great Bibles of the world in our library, but that will not suffice. It is from within that our strength comes, and this is where we have to exert ourselves. We cannot take a morbid attitude and say, "God's will be done." It is a very beautiful thing when a person comes to that point where he can say, "God's will be done"; when he can take that stand and remain firm; when even under pain and suffering he can stand up and say, "Thy will be done". But who can do this? Only one who has become a master, one who has truly freed himself and that is our aim and ideal.

There is no happiness for the slave. If we are slaves to attachment, envy, greed, ambition or any form of self-seeking it is useless for us to seek happiness. Attachment will always bring unhappiness. Ambition will always bring unhappiness. It will bring feverish unrest within the soul. You may have everything you desire and for which you have worked; but even when you have found all that you have worked for and more, you will fail to find the end that you are striving for. This is something that we must consid-

er. A person who is a slave of self, he may have the whole world at his command, and yet he is not satisfied. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul, and what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" How simply, how directly, how definitely it is stated: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world." Can we afford to give ourselves wholly to the world? If we do we become its slaves. One who is attached to the things of the world is at the mercy of the world. That is the law, but one who is not attached to the world, one whose heart and soul, body and mind, whose whole being is consecrated and dedicated to his Maker, the world cannot harm him. There are some people who not only flourish in this world themselves, but they hold up a standard for other travellers. We see a person going with lightness of step, with great freedom and those who are weary, worn out and burdened, they realize at once that such freedom is possible and it gives them a new impetus.

We must lighten our burden. You have seen mountain climbers how careful they are what they carry. If they carry too much it hinders their progress and they cannot reach their destination. Same way it is with our life when we burden ourselves with non-essentials through attachment, through slavery to habit, through bondage, through selfishness. All these things spring from only one source, —ignorance. It is not an impossible thing for us to destroy ignorance. That is where we must lay our stress, and not on complaining because other people seem to interfere with our having fulfillment. We must see things in a different light. Therefore to me that person is a master who is not thwarted by others. Calamities do not depress him; people find fault with him, but that does not trouble him; they maltreat him, misjudge him, misunderstand him and

yet he goes on. And wherefrom does he get his strength? He gets his strength from within, and that is the real strength for life. Those of us who seek from outside, we are disappointed. Man tries to establish his home, his happiness, on the outside and it fails him; it passes away. He is disappointed, he is crushed, he has lost all faith in God and in humanity. He becomes a wreck because he has misplaced his trust.

That which is first, we must give first place, but it is not so easy for the individual who is distracted, who dissipates his energies. We are bound by a thousand self-created fetters, and we say, who is going to save us? Each time we send out a hateful thought we bind ourselves. We may come to a state of more or less indifference to these things. We may blunt our feelings, but nevertheless the condition is there. We keep on tying ourselves hand and foot until our mind and everything about us becomes so tremendously bound that we are suffocated and the soul cries out for freedom. Here and there are lights, shining souls who have freed themselves from self. The greatest struggle is with the self. This is something we have to understand. It is not merely by making the affirmation, "I am this; I am that", that a person can wholly find his liberation. He has to remember his relationship with the Source.

In Christ's teaching we are given two incidents. In one place the Christ says, "I and my Father are one". This is identical with some of the ancient thoughts which we find in the Vedic revelation and in the Greek school, "I am one with that Absolute Being; I am That". Christ, of course, speaks the truth, because He is so filled with the divine consciousness that He has no more self-consciousness left. Then he comes to another phase of spiritual consciousness, when He altogether lays down the self and says,

"I am nothing—not my will but Thine be done". It may seem like a tremendous gulf between these two statements, —one moment a man saying, I am everything, there is no death, no disease, nothing can thwart me; and then the next moment the self-same person saying, I am nothing, Thou art all. But there can be no gulf where there is selfless spirit. The element of self-mastery, of victory, of self-assertion, is very pleasing to the individual. It is stimulating and sometimes it is helpful.

In the Vedic Upanishads there are those beautiful sayings: I have no sin, sorrow cannot touch me, I am part of that great Absolute. When we feel depressed by conditions even the thought of these will lift us up, but we must remain uplifted and that means that our life must co-incide with these ideals. Therefore it is not the aggressor, not the egotist, not the man who is inconsistent, who can find lasting consolation in these thoughts; but only one who has given his life, who has blended it with the Source of life without any more thought of division. He has found the light and he has really become the model of the world, like Christ, Buddha, St. Francis and many others.. Such pure souls are the great masters because they have no thought of ruling over any one. They have no thought of gaining anything, no more selfishness, no more self-interest. How do they come to it? They come step by step. They come here as men, walking with men, becoming the brother of man, struggling, striving, sometimes expressing pain through their faces, showing all the phases of struggle and aspiration, until finally they attain the conquest of self. Once this is reached, there is no more failure, no more defeat. He who has gained mastery over self, nothing can defeat him. We must make our life blend with those attributes which are revealed through the master-spirits of the great world.

FOUNTAIN OF GOODNESS

By St. Catherine of Sienna

One day as the blessed Catherine of Sienna was praying, our Lord appeared to her and said: "Daughter, knowest thou what thou art and what I am? If thou perfectly know this truth thou art blessed. Give heed then to my words, that thou mayest be able to understand it. Thou art she that is not, and I am He who am. Art thou not she who was made out of nothing? For as much as every creature is made out of nothing and has no being save in My almighty power, and evermore of itself tends to nothing, now if a man were thoroughly persuaded of this, that in truth he were nothing, how could he be proud or how could he glory in himself or in any of his works if he knew that he had nothing of his own but defects and sin? But because if he considered this truth alone he would fall away into despair, therefore it is needful also that he know that I am He that am.

God only is, of Himself. He alone is unchangeable and incorruptible. The creature, therefore, that sees this, and knows that he can have no being in himself, or find any good or blessedness in himself or any other creature, turns himself to God and beholds Him, the Creator and Preserver of all things, Who maintains all things in their being and blessedness, the everlasting Spring and Fountain of all goodness, Who alone is able to slake the thirst of his natural desires and longings. And so beholding Him, the creature begins to sigh towards Him and to be inflamed with the love of Him. And he conceives a certain holy fear which is the guardian of the soul, so that he will not suffer the least motion in his heart which could offend so sweet and bountiful a Master. And he rests so firmly on the provident goodness of God that no adversity disturbs

him, because he knows that Almighty God permits it for his salvation; and he understands that there is no labour or sorrow in this world, however grievous, that can be compared to the glorious reward which he looks for from the hands of God.

SURRENDER AND PEACE

By Arthur Schopenhauer

All willing arises from want; therefore from deficiency, and therefore from suffering. The satisfaction of a wish ends it; yet for one wish that is satisfied there remain at least ten which are denied. Further, the desire lasts long, the demands are infinite; the satisfaction is short and scantily measured out. But even the final satisfaction is itself only apparent; every satisfied wish at once makes room for a new one: both are illusions; the one is known to be so, the other not yet. No attained object of desire can give lasting satisfaction, but merely a fleeting gratification; it is like the alms thrown to the beggar, that keeps him alive to-day that his misery may be prolonged to the morrow. Therefore so long as consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with their constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing,—we can never have lasting happiness or peace. It is essentially all the same whether we pursue or flee, fear injury or seek enjoyment: the care for the constant demands of the will, in whatever form it may be, continually occupies and sways the consciousness. Without peace no true well-being is possible.

But when some external cause or inward disposition lifts us suddenly out of the endless stream of willing,—delivers knowledge from the slavery of the will,—the attention is no longer directed to the motives of willing, but compre-

hends things free from their relation to the will, and thus observes them without personal interest. Then all at once the peace which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us on the former path of the desires, comes to us of its own accord; and it is well with us. It is the painless state which Epicurus prized as the highest good, and as the state of the gods; for we are for the moment set free from the miserable striving of the will.

Thus between desiring and attaining, all human life flows on throughout. The wish is, in its nature, pain; the attainment soon begets satiety, the end was only apparent; possession takes away the charm. The wish, the need, presents itself under a new form; when it does not, then follow desolateness, emptiness, ennui,—against which the conflict is just as painful as against want. True salvation—deliverance from life and suffering—cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will. Till then every one is simply this will itself. If it should be absolutely insisted upon that in some way or other a positive knowledge should be attained of that which philosophy can only express negatively as the denial of the will, there would be nothing for it but to refer to that state which all those who have attained to complete denial of the will have experienced, and which has been variously denoted by the names ecstacy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and so forth; a state, however, which cannot properly be called knowledge, because it has not the form of subject and object, and is moreover only attainable in one's own experience and cannot be further communicated.

We, however, who consistently occupy the standpoint of philosophy must be satisfied here with negative knowledge,—content to have reached the utmost limit of the positive. We have recognized the inmost nature of the world as will,

and all its phenomena as only the objectivity from the unconscious working of obscure forces of nature up to the completely conscious action of man. Therefore we shall by no means evade the consequence, that with the free denial, the surrender of the will, all those phenomena are also abolished. Before us there is certainly only nothingness. But that which resists this passing into nothing—our nature—is indeed just the will to live which we ourselves are, as it is our world. That we abhor annihilation so greatly is simply another expression of the fact that we so strenuously will life, and are nothing but this will, and know nothing besides it. But if we turn our glance from our own needy and embarrassed condition to those who have overcome the world; in whom the will, having attained to the perfect self-knowledge, found itself again in all, and then freely denied itself; then instead of the restless striving and effort, instead of the constant transition from wish to fruition and from joy to sorrow, instead of the never satisfied and never-dying hope which constitutes the life of the man who wills, we shall see that peace which is above all reason, that perfect calm of the spirit, that deep rest, that inviolable confidence and serenity, the mere reflection of which in the countenance is an entire and certain gospel.

Thus, in this way, by contemplation of the life and conduct of saints,—whom it is certainly rarely granted us to meet with in our own experience, but who are brought before our eyes by their written history, and with the stamp of inner truth, by art,—we must banish the dark impression of that nothingness which we discern behind all virtue and holiness as their final goal, and which we fear as children fear the dark. We must not even evade it like the Indians, through myths and meaningless words, such

as reabsorption in Brahma or the Nirvana of the Buddhists. Rather do we freely acknowledge that what remains after the entire abolition of will is, for all those who are still full of will, certainly nothing; but conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and has denied itself, this our world which is so real, with all its suns and Milky Ways, is nothing.

(*NOTE*:—Schopenhauer has always been regarded as a pessimistic philosopher; but in this article compiled from "The World as Will and Idea", he is merely stating a spiritual truth as old as the world: the eradication of self and selfishness, of all craving for personal gratification. That which tinges his words with melancholy is the fact that he sees and states this truth from its negative, renunciatory aspect rather than from its positive aspect of spiritual fulfillment. This he admits. He realized the necessity of the desireless state but had not experienced its bliss, therefore his words are darkened by the shadow-side of sacrifice. The same charge of annihilation was made against the Buddha, merely because he could not convey to a sense-bound world a state of being beyond the senses, "beyond mind and speech". This has been the struggle of all great Teachers,—to interpret in the terms of the finite the experience of the Infinite. As Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita: "That which is night to all beings, therein the self-subjugated remains awake; and in that where all beings are awake, that is night for the knower of Self." Schopenhauer's concluding words are almost an echo of this. Thus when we read his negation of all that we call life and being, we must remember that Christ's words, "He that findeth his life shall lose it", might well chill the heart were they not followed by the promise: "and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Sri Krishna gives desire as the great enemy in this life but he reassures his disciple Arjuna by telling him that all longings drop off when one has seen the Supreme. "He who is free from desire and free from grief with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman* (the Supreme)", runs the teaching of the great Vedic Upanishads, but adds that "He who thinks he knows It, knows It not, and he who thinks he knows It not, knows It." Spiritual truth is of the very essence of simplicity and spiritual teaching can be reduced to such simple terms that humanity passes over it because of its simplicity.

There is just one barrier to divine vision and that is egotism,—the sense of self and separateness. When that is reduced to the vanishing point; when all that is left of Self is a cohesive force sufficient to hold the individuality together so that it may manifest Deity, then man and God blend in conscious unity and there is no longer, lustful craving, the sense of thine and mine, but an ineffable consciousness of oneness and glory flooding through the illumined mind and heart into the world of men. Without selflessness all other methods must prove fruitless, for no occult practices, philosophic formulas, breathing exercises or postures can raise the veil on infinitude before eyes that are blinded by the delusion of self.)

Kutadanta said: "How shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the truth?" Said the Buddha: "Learning is a good thing; but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practise the truth that thy brother is the same as thou. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self, there is immortality in the truth."

THE DREAM OF LIFE

Retold from the Hindu Scriptures

On the surface of the earth there once existed a fair and fruitful kingdom, golden with ripe corn and musical with birds whose bright plumage shone like jewels amidst the foliage. The king of this happy land was glorious as the sun in his power and beauty.

One day as he sat listening to the playing of lutes, there appeared before him a magician in fantastic attire who prayed permission to perform some magic. This being granted, he began to whirl before the eyes of the king a glittering wand set with peacock feathers. At that moment an emissary from another kingdom entered the royal presence, leading a horse, a gift from his master to the king. "Do you, O king, mount this horse," whispered the magician, and the king, dizzy from gazing at the whirling staff, obeyed as in a dream. Closing his eyes he sat like one spell-bound; but to him it seemed that he was borne on that steed through the air, passing over barren deserts and endless mountains till, after uncounted days he came to a mighty forest. Being well-nigh exhausted, he dismounted and slept in the hollow of a tree. In the morning the horse was gone and the king wandered in despair, almost dying of hunger. Suddenly he came face to face with a scavenger woman who was carrying some food. Knowing that his life might depend on his getting this, the king begged it of her, and she agreed to give it to him but only on the condition that he would marry her. He finally consented and went with her to her abode where for some years he lived with her in misery and filth, surrounded by her cruel and rapacious relatives whose vulgar quarrels made his life hideous. At last, in an effort to escape, he took his wife and the children that were now theirs, to a

cave exposed to chilling winds and rain and where they had only apes for company.

Years passed in ever increasing degradation. Then came famine. Men fought with each other like beasts over a stone thinking it to be bread. The waters dried up and, as a final curse, a consuming fire swept over the wretched land. Flying from the flames as from the fires of hell, the king found himself stranded with his family in a wilderness, without food or hope. Hearing his youngest child crying in hunger he resolved to seek release in death; but as he was on the point of ending his existence he heard voices. Opening his eyes, he found himself in his kingly robes, seated on his horse in the midst of his court with his courtiers about him watching him in dismay. He would have fallen but for their supporting arms. Bewildered, he questioned them and they told him that for two hours he had sat thus motionless. "Are my wits gone?" he asked. "Am I the scavenger or am I the king? What is reality and what is time?" Then his eyes fell on the smiling magician and darkened. "Trickster!" he cried, "In what snare did you entrap me by your magic?" But even as he spoke, the sorcerer vanished from sight. "How is this?" exclaimed the king. "That miserable man chained me for sixty years to a life of inexpressible woe, to cold and exposure, to squalor and greed,—I, a king! And now the one who caused this is gone from my grasp."

"Great Lord," said a wise counselor, "a common sorcerer never departs without pay. This was divine magic practised on the king in order to reveal to him the common lot of humanity. It was the Omnipotent Magician Himself Who spreads His illusion over men's minds. The mind alone, O king, creates all worlds to the utmost ends of the spheres. As thou, king, didst believe thyself to be a scavenger, so

do we believe ourselves to be so and so, through our mind. He alone who curbs the desires of his mind will enjoy inward happiness. He alone who knows himself as a spiritual being is freed from all affairs of this world, and all illusion. The thought that 'I am distinct from God' binds the mind to the world; but the belief that God is all, releases the mind from bondage. Let go thy thought of self; cease from thy selfish cares, O king; resign thyself to the divine will and thou shalt attain supreme felicity."

CYCLIC REST AND CHANGE

Hitherto Unpublished Article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was the last of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message".)

This whole universe is a case of lost balance. All motion is the struggle of the disturbed universe to regain its equilibrium, which, as such, cannot be motion. Thus in regard to the internal world it would be a state which is beyond thought, for thought itself is a motion. Now when all indication is towards perfect equilibrium by expansion and the whole universe is rushing towards it, we have no right to say that that state can never be attained. Again it is impossible that there should be any variety whatsoever in that state of equilibrium. It must be homogenous, for as long as there are even two atoms they will attract and repel each other and disturb the balance. Therefore, this state of equilibrium is one of unity, of rest and of homogeneity. In the language of the internal, this state of equilibrium is not thought, nor body, nor anything which we call an attribute. The only thing which we can say it will retain is what is its own nature, as existence, self-consciousness and blissfulness.

This state in the same way cannot be two. It must only be a unit, and all fictitious distinctions of I, thou, etc., all the different variations must vanish, as they belong to the state of change or *Maya*. It may be said that this state of change has come now upon the Self, showing that before this, it had to the state of rest and liberty; that at present the state of differentiation is the only real state, and the state of homogeneity is the primitive crudeness, out of which this changeful is manufactured, and it will be only degeneration to go back to the state of undifferentiation. This argument would have some weight if it could be proved that these two states, i. e., homogeneity and heterogeneity, are the only two states happening but once through all time. What happens once must happen again and again. Rest is followed by change,—the universe. But that must have been preceded by other changes, and will be succeeded by other rests. It would be ridiculous to think that there was a period of rest and then came this change which will go on forever. Every particle in nature shows that it is coming again and again to periodic rest and change.

This interval between one period of rest and another is called a *Kalpa*. But this *Kalpic* rest cannot be one of perfect homogeneity, for in that case there would be an end to any future manifestation. Now to say that the present state of change is one of great advance in comparison to the preceding state of rest is simply absurd, because in that case the coming period of rest being much more advanced in time must be much more perfect! ! There is no progression or digression in nature. It is showing again and again the same forms. In fact the word law means this. But there is a progression with regard to souls. That is to say, the souls get nearer to their own natures and in

each *Kalpa* large numbers of them get deliverance from being thus whirled around. It may be said the individual soul being a part of the universe and nature, returning again and again, there cannot be any liberty for the soul, for in that case the universe has to be destroyed. The answer is that the individual soul is an assumption through *Maya* and it is no more a reality than Nature itself. In reality, this individual soul is the unconditioned Absolute *Brahman* (the Supreme).

All that is real in Nature is *Brahman* only it appears to be this variety, or Nature, through the superimposition of *Maya*. *Maya* being illusion cannot be said to be real, yet it is producing the phenomena. If it be said, how can *Maya* herself being illusion produce all this, our answer is that what is produced, being also ignorance, the producer must also be that. How can ignorance be produced by knowledge? So this *Maya* is acting in two ways as nescience and science (relative knowledge) and this science after destroying nescience or ignorance, is itself also destroyed. Thus *Maya* destroyes herself and what remains is the Absolute, the Essence of existence, knowledge and bliss. Now whatever is reality in nature is this Absolute, and Nature coming to us in three forms of God, conscious and unconscious, i. e., God, personal souls and unconscious beings, the reality of all these is the Absolute. The reality of all these is the Absolute, through *Maya* seen to be difference; but the vision of God is the nearest to the reality and the highest. The idea of personal God is the highest idea which man can have. All the attributes attributed to God are true in the same sense as are the attributes of Nature. Yet we must never forget that the personal God is the very Absolute seen through *Maya*.

The present is a mighty Divinity.—*Goethe.*

SONG OF RELEASE

A Fragment from Chang Heng

(Chinese Poet, 2nd Century)

In death I rest and am at peace;
In life I toiled and strove.
Is the hardness of the winter stream
Better than the melting of spring?
All pride that the body knew,
Was it not lighter than dust?
What Ch'ao and Hsu despised,
What Po-ch' eng fled,
Shall I desire, whom death
Already has hidden in the Eternal Way—
Where Li Chu cannot see me,
Nor Tzu Yeh hear me,
Where neither Yao nor Shun can praise me
Nor the tyrants Chieh and Hsin condemn me,
Nor wolf nor tiger harm me,
Lance prick me nor sword wound me?
Of the Primal Spirit is my substance;
I am a wave in the river of darkness and light.
The Maker of all things is my Father and Mother,
Heaven is my bed and earth my cushion,
The thunder and lightning are my drum and fan,
The sun and moon my candle and my torch,
The milky way my mote, the stars my jewels.
With Nature am I conjoined;
I have no passion, no desire.
Wash me and I shall be no whiter,
Foul me and I shall yet be clean.
I come not, yet am here;
Hasten not, yet am swift.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Nineteen years ago Swami Paramananda, answering a spiritual call, came to this country of America. To-day, in response to this same call, his feet are turned towards the east, towards India. He is gone, for how long he cannot say definitely; but for some months at the least. The decision came quickly, so quickly that students and friends all over the country were almost bewildered on hearing it. He has left behind a sacred trust in the hands of his consecrated workers whose mission and privilege it is to carry on the work that he has built up through years of tireless, selfless effort; to preserve the spirit of love, tolerance and universality which has been so preeminently his gift to the world. The Swami's absence will be a time of consolidation, a time of testing, a time for the application of the living principles which have been the very heart of his great and simple message.

The last two weeks at the Ananda-Ashrama prior to the Swami's departure were tense with concentrated activity. Every effort was made to rush the new Community House, which has been for some months under construction, to completion in order that the Swami might dedicate it before he went away. On Christmas eve, however, the day set for the Dedication Services, there was still much to be done on the house to make it ready for occupancy. All efforts, therefore, were centered on the big Assembly Room. Thursday afternoon, December 24th, workers were busy up till three o'clock, removing all traces of carpenters' debris and decorating with garlands and greens. When the doors were finally opened, people were admitted into a spacious room, golden brown in tone, whose windows on all sides command a dreamlike view of circling mountains and rainbow tinted valleys. From the beams on the ceil-

ing red vigil lights hung from chains giving the effect of a real sanctuary. The stone mantel was transformed into a high-altar with lights, flowers and holy pictures. At the east end of the room, commanding both the Assembly Room and the dining-room which opens into it at right angles, stood the Swami's platform with its flower-decked altar, and on either side, two tiny, shimmering Christmas trees.

A sacred and beautiful atmosphere was created which the Swami filled to overflowing with a feeling too deep for words, with a message so poignant, so tender, so all-enfolding that every heart was hushed. Not a few remained for supper at the Ashrama so that they might attend the eight o'clock Service and many more came. As darkness fell, the flaming candles and the hanging ruby vigils took on new beauty. To those who drove up the avenue they shone like stars. Never did Dedication Services seem to be more truly sanctified. Not only was the new house dedicated to the service of God and man, but all present were likewise dedicated. Christmas carols were sung in full chorus and as a final benediction, following the Swami's blessing, a poem by the Swami, "O Thou Tender Compassion", with music composed by the Ashrama workers, was chanted by three voices.

There is one more day that must be recorded. The Sunday following Christmas the Swami bade all his friends farewell at two Services, one at eleven o'clock in the morning, the other at half past three in the afternoon. When the very root of the heart is touched, speech is impossible. What the Swami said that Sunday, the spirit that flowed from him palpably, will never be forgotten by those whose privilege it was to hear him. At the afternoon Service the big room was full to over-flowing, between two and

three hundred people being present. "My Message to You" was the subject of the Swami's address, and it was a message to "the heart of humanity". Many were unable to speak when the Service was ended, others were weeping, and all were moved to the very core of their being. There is a flame burning at the heart of the Ashrama,—a flame of faith and consecration, fanned by the Swami's hand to glowing heat. What he has given us through his love, his life, his sacrifice, can never die. It will grow in strength and loveliness through the blessing of the Divine. At the Christmas-eve Service a gracious lady handed the Swami a farewell gift from a group of devoted friends. In summing up all that they would say to him, she quoted from the poet Keats; and these lines with their eternal promise still ring in our hearts:

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
pass into nothingness."

The Swami's work, this lady said, was a thing of beauty and could never pass into nothingness, but would increase in all blessed qualities throughout the years.

On Monday, December 28th, the Swami left Pasadena for the east. Forty friends gathered at the station and wished him "God-speed" as he stood on the rear platform, gazing down into their upturned faces till the train passed out of sight. It is hoped that the next few months will see ever greater fulfillment of the Swami's dream for the Ashrama, for his work in Boston and elsewhere. The Community House should be open for students soon after the first of the year. All Services and Classes will continue uninterruptedly and development work will go on. May 1926 be a year of beauty and fulfillment.

BOOK REVIEWS

RHYTHM OF LIFE

"Swami Paramananda a poet-mystic of undeniable charm and sincerity, has recently published a collection of songs of exaltation and adoration of the Supreme Spirit, bearing the title, "Rhythm of Life" which fitly supplements the two preceding volumes of poetry by the same author.

"In reading these offerings of Swami Paramananda's devout muse the feeling is gained that here is a human soul which has achieved that rhythmic attitude of life so desirable. With love reigning in one's heart, the poet-preacher teaches that all ills will be conquered, all wounds healed.

"There is a selflessness in these poems of worship suggestive of the songs of the Psalmist when he was closest to Divinity and with an utter forgetfulness of self poured out his soul's longings and his soul's tributes. Rhapsody is the keynote of Swami Paramananda's muse, permeating every line.—*Sam T. Clover, "Saturday Night", Los Angeles.*

ECHOES FROM INDIA

It is rarely that an Occidental is able to grasp the deeper tendencies of Oriental thought or the true significance of Eastern imagery. Even those who have lived in the East often miss this utterly. Therefore Miss Julia P. Dabney's latest book of verse, "Echoes from India" is a real achievement. Although living in Boston, she is able through a sensitive and far-reaching understanding as well as through a lovely poetic intuition to turn the thought towards the background of the Infinite across whose pure surface flash the myriad forms of Deity as conceived in the Hindu mind. This book will help to reveal the heart of India to the West and will be prized by God-seekers and poetry lovers everywhere. Ananda-Ashrama is grateful to Miss Dabney for her generous donation of a goodly number of volumes to be sold for the benefit of the work.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



FEBRUARY, 1926

PRODUCTIVE SPIRITUALITY

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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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.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV FEBRUARY, 1926 No. 2

PRODUCTIVE SPIRITUALITY

By Swami Paramananda

THAT which produces an exalted type of man or woman is productive spirituality. It is not what we profess but what we are able to express that signifies the measure of our success. This is the standard. And it should be the standard. Whenever any one comes to us with a theory, whether in the line of science, or any practical line, we wish first to see where it can be put to some practical use, where it will give us something definite to work out. If it does not stand the test of practical application, we reject it. Unless it can be made productive, we have no use for it. Same way is it with religion and its influence upon the lives of men and upon their destiny.

To-day there is a tremendous reaction in regard to religion. The very word is noxious to some people. I have known students,—young, intelligent minds,—some of whom have had this reaction even against the word "God". Once I was actually told by one of them: "We love your teaching, the simplicity of it, the directness of it, the practical part of it, but can you not leave out the word 'God'?" This made me think. Why do they want the name of God left out? It is because men have used the Name in such a way that they have made a caricature of it. Whenever we men-

tion the name of God there should be the sense of a living Presence. Whenever we utter a sound that signifies something fine, we should have a fineness of feeling to sustain it. If we do not give expression to that, it contains nothing for us. Even the tone of the voice does not seem to give us what it ought to give.

There are standards, especially in regard to things of the Spirit, and these standards must be verified by our life and through our life. We are not parrots; and we are not meant to act like parrots. Religion does not consist in a man's utterance, in his profession of faith, or in his clinging to a creed or dogma; it is primarily living and producing. Often people ask: "Show me what religion has done for you and others." It is the productive aspect that interests them and it should be the end and aim of religion, of philosophy, of life itself. There is something, for instance, very big in the concept of universal love. Every rational person feels this. We do not admire anything that is petty; anything that is small or limited. Our ideal always is for the highest and the best. But how are we to know that a man is loving if he does not hold a loving heart? How do we know that a man is kind? Through his kindly action. How do we know that a man is wise? Through his wisdom as expressed in his daily activities, in his utterance,—in things which are practical. When these qualities are absent, it makes very little difference whether he professes one religion or another.

It may be said,"These things you are telling us are identical with the Christian faith." They are. I have no desire to bring before you something new or alien. You already know what is true in life; you already have your own standards. The question is, how many are giving expression to these standards? That is what makes all the dif-

ference in life and living. If we find there is corruption in religion, it is not the fault of religion; it is the fault of its application. Once at a great Christian convention a man rose and declared that Christianity was a tremendous failure, at which another man, who was very witty, replied: "How can Christianity be a failure when it has never been tried?" Here is something we must consider, and not in a superficial way. My meaning is not to strike a blow against any faith, whether it be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or some other existing world belief. My meaning is that we should consider whether or not people are capable of living their ideal.

Take some of the fundamental principles of Christianity; put them side by side with those of other religions. You will find no fundamental difference; yet tremendous differences seem to exist. Where and what is the cause of these? When a man stands on the plains he sees a great contrast between the lowly grass and the mighty trees; but when he ascends to the mountain-top and looks from its high peak onto the plain below, all differences vanish. Therefore let us lift our vision. It is the lofty vision which gives the blending harmony. As we rise to a higher concept, to a higher realization, all these fictitious barriers vanish and we find that what we are all seeking is something that will make for a better humanity.

This is our great aim. In order to produce a better humanity, however, we must make ourselves better; and that means not merely talking glibly about our ideals, but living them. We are capable of living them. The same mind which we use for small thoughts, for selfish interests, for hatred, jealousy and anger, is capable of rising to loftier heights and giving us a larger vision. You may say that today it is impossible to live according to one's highest ideals;

that if a man should take a notion to follow the teaching of the Bible or of Buddha, that hatred is not conquered by hatred, but by love, he would be defeated. This is modern life, you may say, the interests of the people are different. They have to think first and foremost of themselves, whereas the teaching of religion is that we must think first of the Kingdom of Truth. "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth, all other things whatsoever ye desire shall be fulfilled". Now is there anything impractical in this teaching? Here is something we must consider. Have we considered it? Have we put it to the test? If we have, then we know that it is not impractical; on the contrary, that it is the most practical teaching there is. Whenever we gain our access to something bigger in the way of inspiration, in the way of wisdom, in the way of strength, we never lack for lesser things.

It is the lofty mind that finds the fulfillment of happiness, of power, of achievement in life. If we confine ourselves to narrow limitations, going in a little circle round and round ourselves and our selfish interests, although we may want happiness above everything, it cannot come. There are certain things which belong to certain spheres of life. When we climb to a high place, whatever is within the range of that elevation comes before our eyes without our asking for it; although before we have risen there, we may have imagined all sorts of things which were not true. Same way it is with life.

Our spirituality, our vision, must be made to enter into our practical life and living. What good is there to place our faith in anything unless it gives us a working hypothesis? There is a working hypothesis for religion—a fundamental, unshakable one. It is something we must discover, and not only intellectually; we must put it to the test.

This is the duty of every man and woman. You can find this working hypothesis in your business, in all your affairs of life; and by means of it you can better them. It is absurd when people say, "I cannot do this; the standard of life is different now from what it was when Jesus lived, or Buddha, or St. Francis." It is the same humanity. We possess the same human elements; our heart and mind are the same; our problems are absolutely the same with a little variation, and the only way we can solve them is to take the same basis for working them out.

We are not practical to-day in the spiritual sense. One man says that it is the duty of the priest to look after his salvation for him. Another man thinks that if he pays the minister and keeps a pew, he has done all his duties in regard to the church. What is a church? Is it something cold and material, a house, a structure; or is it something living? If it is something living, we must be sustained by That, we must bring That into our life and action, into every word that we utter. Even our ordinary words must carry significance. It is a matter of great sadness when our life becomes separated from our higher interests, when we confess to ourselves that we are not capable of pursuing a lofty ideal; that our physical and mental capabilities will not allow us to follow something high and noble.

There is but one Saviour, and that Saviour must be awakened within us by our life and by our conduct. You may say with fanatical zeal, "Christ will save me". But how are you going to know this unless you have that Christ element in your life? Have you learned to love? Have you learned to forgive? Have you learned what the meaning is of religion, of faith in the Father in Heaven? This is what makes us exalted, and for lack of this we are sordid and miserable. In our own mind and heart we carry a

self-created load; we carry it until we feel it is breaking us to pieces and we cry out and say, "There is no help—it is my destiny". Yet within the same mind and heart we can create such a tangible, beneficent, all-powerful force that we no longer recognize any misery, any defeat, anything that is pertaining to evil. You may think that this is entirely a question of imagination, of poetic concept, that a person may imagine all these beautiful and lovely things, but those who have once come in contact with that higher realm, they find it more real than food or drink, or the clothes which they wear; and because it is real to them, they give their heart and soul, every bit of themselves, with consecrated devotion.

Now what has become real to one person can become real to another. If we turn away from religion, from God, from Truth, it only means that we do not know what they signify, and the reason we do not know is because we have not tried to make them real. Whatever we want with our heart and soul, it comes to us. There is that great saying: "As a man thinketh, so is he". We cannot expect to think of material, sordid things, to place our faith entirely in the material and the changeable and yet find our rest in the Eternal. As a man places his faith and trust and as a man exerts himself along these lines, so does he achieve. Achievement in life depends upon our vision, upon our standard. First we see the picture in our own mind. It is so in business. We conceive something that we are going to do, a point that we are going to reach; then we work for it, and according to our concept our mind gives us the light for accomplishment and our body receives stimulation. The more spiritual stimulation we have, the more is our body able to create. There are some people who seem to be exalted even by strenuous work, while others perform their

tasks with a sense of heaviness. They rise in the morning with a heart full of weight, full of misery and despondency. When they go into the field of action what can they expect to accomplish? Unless we carry strength, we cannot accomplish anything, and this strength, this inspiration, comes not from our flesh, but from within. When the body is refreshed, when the mind is exalted, then we start our day full of courage and optimism, then everything goes well.

We carry with us the secret of our success and also of our failure. But the point is not that a man should merely calculate for success and try to guard himself against failure. He must have something greater than that in view. He must have so lofty a vision that his hands and feet, his mind and brain, even his environment, fall into rhythm with it and bring him fulfillment. There is no accident, there is no chance, there is no anarchy in the cosmic universe. Nothing can possibly go wrong. We are placed here by an All-wise One, and we are continually being led. It is we who close the door: we cut ourselves off from that beneficent Source. If we keep our avenue open, we shall always feel nourished and sustained.

How can a man live without God? He thinks he can, and that is his greatest folly. He thinks he can find his happiness by scheming, by cheating, by doing things not in the light of truth; but finally he comes to a place where he is dejected, where he has no longer any hope or any faith. He feels he has sinned greatly and cannot possibly enter the Kingdom of Truth. There is nothing we can do to destroy the soul we have inherited from the Supreme. It is indestructible. For us merely to be convinced that we have an indestructible Source is not enough, however. It implies a very great responsibility. What are we going to do with our heritage? Suppose you know from the Bible

or from your minister that you are a child of God; is that sufficient? You must prove it by your life and by your actions.

There is no use in people saying that they have this faith or they have that faith, that they are great or noble if they do not manifest greatness and nobility. If at any time you feel that you are superior to another, do not look down upon him; prove your superiority by your exalted qualities. If at any time you feel that you must go out and convert another to your own feeling and faith, do it by all means, but not with force; do it by your superior love, by your greater understanding. This is what gives the picture of productive religion. Sometimes we come in contact with a man of such noble nature that it does not make any difference who he is, where he was born, or what his faith is. He carries with him his manhood, his life and his conduct. His philosophy and religion shine continuously and we know that he is what he believes in. He is a child of God and as such we cannot put any label on him, whether Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Chinese.

What a wonderful thing it will be when we all reach this consciousness; when instead of quarrels and fictitious points of difference, instead of finding all the time something discordant, harsh and disturbing to ourselves and others, we shall come to the recognition that we are placed here, every one of us, not by accident, but by a divine hand, with a divine vocation. Whether we are working in the street or are holding a more important post in the social or political organization makes no difference; each man is great in his own place if he knows how to hold it. The man who does menial service with consecration and devotion—with a sense that he is here not for selfish fulfillment, but to carry out the will of God—glorifies his labour. This

may sound very vague. We have heard such things from our childhood. It is not words, however, that will convince us that this is the way to live. Conviction can only come through experience. If we feel that we have within us a greater will, a higher will, a more lofty and efficient mentality, let us try by all means to find wherefrom it comes. I am certain that after we have exhausted all our rational faculties, we shall surrender ourselves to that supreme Power and say, "Not my will, but Thine. In all circumstances may I be guided by that Will which sustains mine. In fact I want no will of my own".

It is a very beautiful moment in life when we can step out from our own little self, from our turbulence, our despondency, from all the disorder that goes on continuously within us, and feel that we are something greater than we have imagined ourselves to be. It is a tremendous evolution that a man with petty feelings, with selfishness, with limitations, with a failing and faltering attitude can suddenly come to realize that he is heir to an infinite Source. Nothing short of this realization can ever satisfy us. When we know our worth we are incapable of doing anything sordid, base or ignoble. Even when through ignorance a man does wrong, he has this heart-hunger always within him. He wants happiness and he thinks by evil means he is going to gain it; but there comes a day when he realizes that the only way to gain happiness is to follow the path set by a divine hand. This is our supreme duty.

We cannot all become saints or men of genius. In fact those of us who are ambitious for such things will never attain them. We can, however, give ourselves wholly,—mind, heart and body,—saying, "Here are my hands, take them and use them; I withhold nothing. My mind, my brain, all that I have, are Thine, because I know not how

to guide them. Do Thou guide them",—and this is spirituality. Such spirituality wherever it is found, whether in the east or in the west, in the north or in the south, has only one label, and that is universal religion. We cannot divide the infinite sky above us. It cannot be partitioned off—Godhead cannot be partitioned off. He is ours by right; but He can never be the exclusive possession of any man or creed. When that truth dawns in our mind, shall we shrink from any one? Can we live under the influence of that great, beneficent Light and act like those who are dwelling in ignorance? It is not possible. It is inconsistent. To quote lofty sentiments from the Bible, such as "Love thy neighbour as thyself", is worthless; we must prove them.

There is a simple little text that comes down to us from Indo-Aryan source. It says that religion does not consist in doctrines or dogma; religion consists in being and becoming. "Not those who call me Lord, Lord, Master, Master, by any chance enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but those who do the will of My Father." It is doing the will of the Father, or of Truth—whatever name we give to it—that transforms our life, and will produce a better humanity; not a better humanity after we all depart from this life, not in some visionary way, but here and now. Instead of hating we shall learn to know the value of love, the practical application of it. Instead of being selfish and grasping, we shall know what richness of heart means, and through it we shall experience a greater happiness. A small vessel cannot hold a large amount of anything. If we make ourselves small and petty, then it makes no difference what great sentiments, what high ideals, are poured into us, we cannot contain them.

Let us expand our heart, our soul and our mind instead

of constantly clinging to the petty and the material. It means working; but it is a wonderful thing to have opportunity to work and to serve, to lay down our very life if need be; because by so doing we prove our faith in eternal peace. As man's faith unfolds, his whole nature unfolds, his power becomes greater. He no longer theorizes; he demonstrates his faith through action. This is the type of humanity we may say is productive. This is productive spirituality.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Counsels of Father Giles

The man who is slothful loses this world and the next; for he bringeth not forth any fruit himself, and he is of no profit to his neighbour. It is impossible for a man to attain unto virtue without diligence and without great labour. When thou art able to abide in a safe place, abide not in a place which is doubtful; he abideth in a safe place who is diligent and afflicts himself and works and strives according to the will of God and for God, and neither for fear of punishment nor for reward, but for God. The man who refuseth to afflict himself and to spend himself for Christ verily refuseth the glory of Christ; and even as diligence is profitable and helpful to us, so carelessness is always contrary to us.

Very diligent ought man to be to obtain and keep the virtues and the grace of God, ever using that grace and virtue faithfully; because oftentimes it befalleth to that man who laboureth not faithfully that he loseth the fruit for the leaves, or the wheat for the straw. To one, God of His grace, granteth good fruit with few leaves, and to another He gives fruit and leaves together; and others there be which have neither fruit nor leaves. Meseemeth a great-

er thing to know well how to guard and keep secret the good gifts and graces of the Lord, than to know how to obtain them. . . Man asketh of God an infinite gift, without measure and without end; and he desireth not to love God save with measure and with end. Whosoever would be loved of God, and would receive from Him merit boundless and measureless, must love God without measure and without limit, and must always render Him infinite service. Blessed is he who loveth God with all his heart and with all his mind, and always afflicteth his body and his mind for love of God, seeking therefor no recompense under heaven, save only that he may know himself His debtor.

If a man were exceeding poor and needy and another man should say unto him: "I am willing to lend thee a very precious thing for the space of three days; and know that if, during this period of three days, thou shalt make good use of this thing thou wilt gain an infinite treasure which will make thee rich for evermore", it is certain that that poor man would be very anxious to use that precious thing well and diligently, and much would he study to profit thereby. So, in like manner, I say that the thing lent us by the hand of the Lord is this body of ours, the which the good God hath lent us for three days; for all our times and years are in comparison but as three days. If then thou wouldst be rich and enjoy eternally the divine sweetness, study to use well this body of thine lent by the hand of God, and to make it bring forth fruit in this space of three days, to wit, in the brief period of thy life; for if thou art not diligent to lay up treasure in this present life, while yet thou hast time, thou wilt not be able to enjoy those eternal riches, nor to rest for evermore in that holy celestial peace.

If all the estates in the world belonged to one person and he cultivated them not, neither caused them to be cultivated by others, what fruit or what profit would he have from these things? Certain it is, he would have no profit therefrom, nor any fruit. But well might it be that a man should have but few fields and, cultivating them well, should have much profit for himself, and for others, ample fruit and abundant. A worldly proverb saith: Set not an empty pot on the fire to boil in the hope that thy neighbour will fill it; and so, in like manner, God willeth not that any grace shall remain empty. For the good God never giveth grace to a man that he may keep it empty; rather doth He give it to the end that he may fill it with fruit of good works; for good-will sufficeth not, unless a man seek to follow it out and to fill it with the fruit of holy works.

Once a wanderer said to Friar Giles: "Father, I beseech thee give me some consolation;" to whom Friar Giles made answer: "My brother, seek to stand well with God, and forthwith thou wilt have the consolation whereof thou hast need; for if a man prepare not a spotless dwelling-place within his soul for God to live and rest therein, he will never find shelter, nor rest, nor true consolation in created things."

In practical matters the end is not mere speculative knowledge of what is to be done, but rather the doing of it. It is not enough to know about virtue, then, but we must endeavour to possess it, and to use it, or to take any other steps that may make us good. The test of truth in matters of practice is to be found in the facts of life; for it is in them that the supreme authority resides.—*Aristotle*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

He indeed is blessed in whom all the qualities of head and heart are fully developed and evenly balanced. He acquits himself admirably in whatever position he may be placed. He is full of guileless faith and love for his God and yet his dealings with others leave nothing to be desired. When he is engaged in worldly affairs, he is a thorough man of business; in the assemblage of the learned, he establishes his claims as a man of superior wisdom, and in debates he shows wonderful powers of reasoning. To his parents he is obedient and affectionate, to his relations and friends he is loving and sweet; to his neighbours he is kind and sympathetic, always ready to do them good. Such a man is indeed perfect.—*Sri Ramakrishna*

The greatest contemplative of all times was Christ. But he was ever at the service of men, and never did his ineffable and perpetual contemplation diminish His charity or His exterior activity. For the glory of this gift of intelligence consists in deed joined to contemplation. This is the source of freedom.—*John Ruysbroeck*

The wise man hath satisfaction of his knowledge; he is great through his own merits. His tongue is in accord with his mind; just are his lips when he speaks, his eyes when he gazes, his ears when he hears.—*Ptah-hotep*

He who does not do what I command sees me in vain. This brings no profit. Whilst he who lives far off from where I am and yet walks righteously, is ever near me.

— *Gautama Buddha*

He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.—*Jesus the Christ*

THEE I LOVE IN ALL

By Swami Paramananda

Thee I love in all, and all I love for Thee.
Youth and old, rich and poor,
The birds that sing, and birds that cry,
Faces that shine, and faces in gloom:
In all I love Thee, and for Thee I love
them all.
I adore Thee in flowers, I adore Thee in
trees,—and in grass that grows so
low.
I lift my head in worship to gaze upon Thee
in sapphire sky.
As I stand on the river bank and behold
Thy silver gleam on moonlit night,
My heart heaves with delight.
I sing Thy praise with the glory of dawn,
And I chant Thy supplication at the quiet
of setting sun.
I love those that dance with joy,
And I love those that are crushed by sorrow.
For Thee I love them all, and Thee I love
in all.
Above and below and on all sides hast Thou
encircled me.
It is Thy love I give Thee,
As the altar-flower gives its fragrance at
Thy feet.
Art Thou not its fragrance and its life?
Art Thou not its beauty and its soul?
Like unto that flower I lie at Thy feet
And offer Thee Thine own gift:
my love and my life.

ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE AND THE MODERN SPIRIT

By Sri Aurobindo Ghose

(From "The Renaissance in India")

What was the ancient spirit and characteristic soul of India? European writers, struck by the general metaphysical bent of the Indian mind, by its strong religious instincts and religious idealism, by its other-worldliness, are inclined to write as if this were all the Indian spirit. An abstract, metaphysical, religious mind, overpowered by the sense of the infinite, not apt for life, dreamy, unpractical, turning away from life and action as *Maya* (illusion); this, they said, is India; and for a time Indians in this as in other matters submissively echoed their new western teachers and masters. Since then Europe has discovered that there was, too, an Indian art of remarkable power and beauty; but the rest of what India meant it has hardly at all seen.

Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning,—and even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance she never lost hold of the insight,—that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organize the arts of ordinary life; but she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical. She saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is

conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the supra-sensible, the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite. She saw, too, that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is, --truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence. She saw the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity. She saw that there were ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendours of the Spirit. Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge. He could conquer these ranges of mind, become the Spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable *Brahman*. And with the logical practicality, the sense of science and organized method which distinguished her mentality, she set forth immediately to find out the way. Hence from long ages of this insight and practice there was ingrained in her her spirituality, her powerful psychic tendency, her great yearning to grapple with the infinite and possess it, her ineradicable religious sense, her idealism, her Yoga, the constant turn of her art and her philosophy.

But this was not and could not be her whole mentality, her entire spirit; spirituality itself does not flourish on earth in the void, even as our mountain tops do not rise like those of an enchantment of dream out of the clouds without a base. When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness. For three thousand years at least,—

it is indeed much longer,—she has been creating abundantly, incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics, kingdoms and empires; philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences; creeds and arts and poems, and all kinds of monuments; palaces and temples and public works; communities and societies and religious orders; laws and codes and rituals; physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration; arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts,—the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity. She creates and creates and is not satisfied and is not tired; she will not have an end of it, seems hardly to need a space for rest, a time for inertia and lying fallow. She expands, too, outside her borders; her ships cross the ocean and the fine superfluity of her wealth brims over to Judea and Egypt and Rome; her colonies spread her arts and epics and creeds in the Archipelago; her traces are found in the sands of Mesopotamia; her religions conquer China and Japan and spread westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria, and the figures of the Upanishads and the sayings of the Buddhists are reechoed on the lips of Christ. Everywhere, as on her soil, so in her works there is the teeming of a superabundant energy of life. She lavishes her riches because she must, as the Infinite fills every inch of space with the stirring of life and energy because it is the Infinite.

But this supreme spirituality, this prolific abundance of the energy and joy of life and creation do not make all that the spirit of India has been in the past. For the third power of the ancient Indian spirit was a strong intellectuality at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail. Its chief impulse was that of order and arrangement,

but an order founded upon a seeking for the inner law and truth of things and having in view always the possibility of conscientious practice. India has been preeminently the land of the *Dharma* and the *Shastra.* She searched for the inner truth and law of each human or cosmic activity: its *Dharma*; that found, she laboured to cast into elaborate forms and detailed law of arrangement its application in fact and rule of life. Her first period was luminous with the discovery of the Spirit; her second completed the discovery of the *Dharma;* her third elaborated into detail the first simpler formulation of the *Shastra;* but none was exclusive, the three elements are always present.

In this third period the curious elaboration of all life into a science and an art assumes extraordinary proportions. The mere mass of intellectual production during the period from Asoka well into the Mohammedan epoch is something truly prodigious. There is no historic parallel for such an intellectual labor and activity before the invention of printing and the facilities of modern science; yet all that mass of research and production and curiosity of detail was accomplished without these facilities and with no better record than the memory, and for an aid the perishable palm leaf. Nor was all this colossal literature confined to philosophy and theology, religion and Yoga; it embraced all life, politics and society, all the arts from painting to dancing, all the sixty-four accomplishments, everything then known that could be useful to life or interesting to the mind, even, for instance, to such practical side minutiae as the breeding and training of horses and elephants. In each subject from the largest and most momentous to the smallest and most trivial there was expended the same all-embracing, opulent, minute and thorough intellectuality. On one side there is an insatiable curiosity, the desire of life

to know itself in every detail, on the other, a spirit of organization and scrupulous order, the desire of the mind to tread through life with a harmonised knowledge and in the right rhythm and measure. Thus an ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence created the harmony of the ancient Indian culture.

I have dwelt upon these facts because they are apt to be ignored by those who look only at certain sides of the Indian mind and spirit which are most prominent in the last epochs. By insisting only upon these we get an inaccurate or incomplete idea of the past of India and of the integral meaning of its civilization and the spirit that animated it. The present is only a last deposit of the past at a time of ebb; it has no doubt also to be the starting-point of the future, but in this present all that was in India's past is still dormant, it is not destroyed; it is waiting there to assume new forms. The decline was the ebb-movement of a creative spirit which can only be understood by seeing it in the full-tide of its greatness; the renaissance is the return of the tide and it is the same spirit that is likely to animate it, although the forms it takes may be quite new. Its real key-note is the tendency of spiritual realization, not cast at all into any white monotone, but many-facetted, many-coloured, as supple in its adaptability as it is intense in its highest pitches. The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest.

Some have told us that too much religion ruined India. Precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life we have failed in life and gone under. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole

of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking and materialistic that they fell. Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense—the word is English, smacks too much of things external—but if we give to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness, and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest Self,—the divine, the all-embracing unity,—and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it. The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the age-long ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high, spiritual sense. India has the key to the knowledge and the conscious application of the ideal; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge. Whether she will rise or not to the height of her opportunity in the renaissance which is coming upon her, is the question of her destiny.

When I am through the old oak forest gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream;
But when I am consumed with the Fire,
Give me new Phoenix-wings to fly at my desire.

—*Keats*

INDIVIDUALISM

By Herbert Hoover

(From "American Individualism")

Intelligence, character, courage and the divine spark are alone the property of individuals. These do not lie in agreements, in organizations, in masses or in groups. They abide alone in the individual mind and heart. Production both of mind and hand rests upon impulses in each individual. These impulses are made of the varied forces of original instincts, motives and acquired desires. Many of these are destructive and must be restrained through moral leadership and authority of the law and be eliminated finally through education. All are modified by a vast fund of experience and a vast plant and equipment of civilization which we pass on with increments to each succeeding generation. The problem of the world is to restrain the destructive instincts while strengthening and enlarging those of altruistic character and constructive impulse—for thus we build for the future.

From the instincts of kindness, pity, fealty to family and race; the love of liberty; the mystical yearnings for spiritual things; the desire for fuller expression of the creative faculties; the impulses of service to community and nation, are moulded the ideals of our people. And the most potent force in society is its ideals. If one were to attempt to delimit the potency of instinct and ideals, it would be found that while instinct dominates in our preservation yet the great propelling force of progress is right ideals. With the growth of ideals through education, with the higher realization of freedom, of justice, of humanity, of service, the selfish impulses become less and less dominant, and if we ever reach the millennium, they will disappear in the aspirations and satisfaction of pure altruism.

We have grown to understand that all we can hope to assure to the individual through government is liberty, justice, intellectual welfare, equality of opportunity, and stimulation to service. . . There can be no rise for the individual through the frozen strata of classes, or of castes, and no stratification can take place in a mass livened by the free stir of its particles. This guarding of our individualism against stratification insists not only in preserving in the social solution an equal opportunity for the able and ambitious to rise from the bottom; it also insists that the sons of the successful shall not by any mere right of birth or favor continue to occupy their fathers' places of power against the rise of a new generation in process of coming up from the bottom. Leadership is a quality of the individual. It is the individual alone who can function in the world of intellect and in the field of leadership. If democracy is to secure its authorities in morals, religion and statesmanship, it must stimulate leadership from its own mass. Human leadership cannot be replenished by selection like queen bees, by divine right or bureaucracies, but by the free rise of ability, character and intelligence.

Our social and economic system cannot march toward better days unless it is inspired by things of the spirit. It is here that the higher purposes of individualism must find their sustenance. Men do not live by bread alone. Nor is individualism merely a stimulus to production and the road to liberty; it alone admits the universal divine inspiration of every human soul. . . . Spirituality with its faith, its hope, its charity, can be increased by each individual's own effort. And in proportion as each individual increases his own store of spirituality, in that proportion increases the idealism of democracy. For centuries, the human race

believed that divine inspiration rested in a few. The result was blind faith in religious hierarchies, the Divine Right of Kings. The world has been disillusioned of this belief that divinity rests in any special group or class whether it be through a creed, a tyranny of kings or of proletariat. Our individualism insists upon the divine in each human being. It rests upon the firm faith that the divine spark can be awakened in every heart.

While there are forces in the growth of our individualism which must be curbed with vigilance, yet there are no less glorious spiritual forces growing within, that promise for the future. There is developing in our people a new valuation of individuals and of groups and of nations. It is a rising vision of service. Indeed if I were to select the social force that above all others has advanced sharply during these past years of suffering, it is that of service—service to those with whom we come in contact, service to the nation, and service to the world itself. If we examine the great mystical forces of the past seven years we find this great spiritual force poured out by our people as never before in the history of the world—the ideal of service. When we rehearse our own individual memories of success, we find that none gives us such comfort as memory of service given. When we traverse the glorious deeds of our fathers, we to-day never enumerate those acts that were not rooted in the soil of service. Those whom we revere are those who triumphed in service, for from them comes the uplift of the human heart and the uplift of the human mind.

Humanity has a long road to perfection, but we of America can make sure progress if we will preserve our individualism, if we will preserve and stimulate the initiative of our people, if we will build up our insistence and safeguards to equality of opportunity, if we will glorify ser-

vice as a part of our national character. Progress will march if we hold an abiding faith in the intelligence, the initiative, the character, the courage, and the divine touch in the individual.

A TRIBUTE TO FA-HSIEN

By an Anonymous Writer of the Chin Dynasty

(Fifth Century)

(*Note*: Fa-Hsien was a Chinese Buddhist monk who undertook a pilgrimage to India in order to secure for China books of the Buddhist Canon, and Buddhist images. He went practically all the way on foot, walking from Central China across the desert of Gobi, over the Hindu Kush and through India down to the mouth of the Hoogly where he embarked for China, reaching there safely after an absence of thirteen years. Beside his perilous voyagings the journeys of St. Paul sink into insignificance. In his own words, taken from the record of his travels, written always with due modesty in the third person: "The countries he passed through amounted to rather fewer than thirty. From the Sandy Desert westwards all the way to India, the dignified deportment of the priesthood and the good influence of the Faith was beyond all expression in detail. As, however, the ecclesiastics at home had no means of hearing about these things, Fa-Hsien had given no thought to his own unimportant life, but came home across the sea, encountering still more difficulties and dangers. Happily he was accorded protection by the divine majesty of the Precious Trinity, and was thus preserved in the hour of danger. Therefore he wrote down on bamboo tablets and silk an account of what he had been through, desiring that the gentle reader should share this information." On his arrival in China he was given shelter by a stranger who wrote the

following tribute to this fearless and faith-inspired pilgrim.)

* * * *

It was in the cyclical year chia-yin (A. D. 414), the 12th of the period I-hsi when the year-star (Jupiter) was in Virgo-Libra, at the close of the summer retreat, that I went out to meet the Buddhist Fa-Hsien and when he arrived I kept him with me in my winter apartment. At the opportunities we had for meeting and discussion, I questioned him again and again on his travels, and to all my queries he replied affably and without hesitation and in accordance with truth. I therefore urged him to write out in detail that which so far he had merely sketched, and he retold the whole story from beginning to end. He said:

"Looking back upon what I went through, my heart throbs involuntarily and sweat pours down. That in the dangers which I encountered whether riding or on foot, I did not spare my body, was because I kept my object steadily in view and concentrated upon it a simple honesty of purpose. And so I could risk my life in places where there was no certainty of escape, in order to accomplish even a minute fraction of what I had hoped for."

I was much affected by his words, and, sighing, said to myself, "This kind of man has been rare in all ages. From the time that the Great Religion began to flow eastwards, there has been no one forgetful of his life in the cause of the Faith to be compared with Fa-Hsien". Thus I came to know that there are no obstacles, however numerous, which the power of sincerity will not break through, and no meritorious services which the stimulus of determination will not achieve. And the man who brings his labours to a successful issue—is he not the one who neglects the things which are generally prized and prizes the things which are generally forgotten?

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

January was a month of farewell as from coast to coast Swami Paramananda's friends wished him "God-speed". On the evening of January seventh, just two days before he sailed for India, the members of the Boston work held a farewell reception in his honor at the new Marlboro Street Centre. It was a goodly gathering of friends old and new. Many were there who had loved and cherished the work ever since its humble beginnings,—faithful, tried hearts, forever dear to the Swami because of their devotion. Naturally there was a deep and poignant feeling as he gave to them his parting message; but it was an exalted feeling, vibrant with love, courage and consecration. All were profoundly glad that a wider world than America was to know the blessing of the Swami's word and presence, and that he was free to carry that blessing. The Swami spoke from the fullness of his heart. "I have only one desire", he said, "and that is to unify, to bring nearer, that which is true and human in all hearts, joining them with the bond of love. We want people who feel—no wrangling for effect, but feeling. There is the point of contact. Whether I am here or not, keep your hearts open and move on with the current of things if you want to play your parts in the upbuilding of humanity, in the great brotherhood of mankind. Be charged with the ideas that are vibrant with love and nobility, so that people may be inspired by looking at you. When you are so imbued with the spirit of love, fellowship and service that you are not conscious of doing anything, you are more blessed. When your ears are not spoiled by listening to the praise of men, then you leave them open for the voice of God to fill them. That is the acme of spiritual work. That is my dream. That is the message we have given one way or another through

philosophy, religion, prayer, poetry, spoken or written. When we allow our hearts to pulsate in rhythm, we have this great gift of outpouring. Let us all work toward that end. When you have moments of doubt, self-pity, depression, discouragement and total darkness, do not let that overwhelm you; the light is yet to come; the clouds will disperse." As a "parting, loving benediction", the Swami read his poem, "Thee I love in All", with the hope that it would give something that his friends might carry, "as a very great thread of love, a thing that nothing can untie, that is the tie of Spirit, unbroken and unbreakable."

Several gifted members made the evening lovely with music. Mrs. Mahoney (Bangs Burgess) recited a poetic tribute to the Swami in which she hailed him as a "Spirit strong from light within". Finally with tender sentiment, in the name of many, Mrs. Milliken presented the Swami with a silken love-knot binding in a golden package, as she expressed it, their humble offerings with love and God-speed. With such expressions of devotion ringing in his heart, the Swami left Boston knowing that the altar-fires will be kept burning in his absence.

ST. LOUIS AND CINCINNATI

The Swami was able only to touch at St. Louis and Cincinnati on his way east but it was a real touch of the heart. At St. Louis he spoke three times in one day, while at Cincinnati devoted students gathered round him to assure him of their loyalty and love.

RECEPTION IN NEW YORK CITY

On the eve of his sailing, the Swami was again guest of honor at a reception, this time in New York City at the studio of Miss Villa Faulkener Page. As there was a very short notice the gathering was necessarily small; but, as one member wrote us: "for the very same reason there was a quality of intimacy, sympathy and understanding". The Swami, in speaking to his friends, laid emphasis on the fact that he had never felt as an alien in a strange land, and for that reason the gates of the people's hearts were opened to him. Swami Rhagavananda of the New York Vedanta Society paid him tribute, as did other friends. Dr. Elliot White of Grace Church, New York, earnestly urged every one to live up to the Swami's teachings instead of waiting for his return from India to do so. The Swami closed the evening with a reading of a few of his poems. A member writes: "Never were four hours spent so happily and gloriously as then."

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THE VEDANTA CENTRE, 176 Marlboro St.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MARCH, 1926

HEART OF MANKIND

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV MARCH, 1926 No. 3

HEART OF MANKIND

By Swami Paramananda

(Farewell Address given by the Swami at Ananda-Ashrama on his departure for India, December, 1925)

TO-DAY as I am about to depart for a time from this country after my long, long sojourn here, I would like to give you a message that you may keep as a gift from me,—a farewell gift, although I do not like to use this word farewell.

If you were asked in what way this teaching differs from other teachings and why it is different, how would you sum it up? It is not different and our point of emphasis has not been to show differences. The world has never been enriched because it has evolved dogmas and creeds, philosophies and religions, different and divergent; but it has been enriched by the thought of blending harmony which runs through them all, and it is upon this under-current of harmony that our emphasis has always been laid. There is no east nor west, no north nor south, and it is our greatest misfortune when we create fictitious lines of difference. As I turn over page after page of my book of life, filled for the last nineteen years with the most intense activity, I find but one thought in all that I have done, but one thing that comes before me with vivid, glowing reality, and that is,—the heart of mankind. If I could put my finger on any one thing as being fundamental,

as being the essence of what I have tried to convey to you through all these years of preaching, I think that would be the gist of it.

When a man of the East feels that he has no point of contact with the Occident, that he is not in any way related to it, he opens an avenue for his degradation. There is no word strong enough. A man degrades himself when he thinks that because he was born in a far country, in a remote place, he has no share in the life of humanity as a whole. Who but a mad person, intoxicated with ambition and greed, can say, "So long as I am happy it does not concern me what happens to other people, other nations, other lives." As a matter of fact, it is not possible for any one to degrade himself to such an extent that he can have exclusive happiness, disregarding the happiness of others. This was forcibly brought before my mind's eye at the outset of this last war, the Great War, that we are absolutely inter-related. "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God." We are all children of God, but we do not all learn to manifest in our practical life those God-like qualities which would show to men that we are here primarily to express spiritual attributes. Where in politics, in creeds, even among people of the same nation, do we find such fundamental unity as we find among those who come together in understanding, in this blending harmony of spiritual Principle? The reason is that spiritual Principle is the basic principle of life, and life pulsates through it. We never go very far in the line of advancement when we ignore it. The men who are over-weighted with material consciousness forget this fact.

There is no use our having religion, even with all its moral and ethical systems, and all the literature that the world has ever produced, unless we can give it at least a par-

tial expression in our lives. It is not found in theory, rather is it in our practical life that we find it. This has been the dominant thought in every word that I have spoken from the public platform, in intimate talks, and in all my written books. We are not great merely because we can talk glibly or theorize, or impose something on other minds. Our greatness depends upon what we are fundamentally. Man in his home, man in his waking and sleeping hours, man when he is taken altogether unaware, if under these conditions we can see him stand up and really show that he has an ideal, and that he has given himself to it utterly, it will not matter what that ideal is. You cannot measure it, I cannot measure it. No one wants to measure it, save as we find its revelation in the lives of men.

How do we know that God exists? How do we know that He is all-loving and beneficent? We know it because we see these attributes exhibited in men's lives, in characters which have blended with that eternal Principle, surmounting all distance and all difficulties through the divine Spirit. That to me is the sum and substance of religion. If this work has any value, or any significance, it lies in that, and not in the fact of a new cult, distinctly different from anything else. Peculiar phases of religious development, mysteries and complicated matters, these do not interest me in the least, but there is a way of reaching the heart of mankind, and we must find it. First, however, we must reach our own depths. That which we believe to be true, that which we have been nurtured with, we must bring into our daily living. If I could give in one word what my message is, it would be wisdom—practical wisdom. Herein lies the whole secret of life.

We may preach to others and try to convert them, try to make them believe as we do; but do you suppose we can

ever really convince any one until we have awakened in our own soul such ardour for the spiritual Principle that we can convey it without a word? Unless we have this ardour, instead of converting people we may repulse them and turn them away. That is a lesson the Occident can well learn from the soul of the East. It is an attribute of Oriental life. In India, for instance, men believe in it so tremendously that if a man is willing to endure anything for his Ideal, to die for it without a whimper, they will take from him what he has to give, without a word being spoken; they will receive it in silent contemplation.

This is not a cheap philosophy. God is never a popular subject, and those who have tried to preach Him have never been widely accepted. You may question this, you may say: "Are we not all God-fearing Christians?" Ask that again and define it within your own soul. If Christ came, not as we have pictured Him, but in His natural garb with His simple spiritual message, how many of us would accept Him? I fear there would be more who would bring about His silent crucifixion than would recognize Him. That is the world. And yet the world is ever hungering and thirsting for the message that Christ brings. The world has need of that healing balm, but in its mad intoxication it forgets and tries to destroy the very thing that would save it and bring it blessing.

Often I have heard it said, even by well-known leaders of men, "There is no use trying to help mankind. Men are not interested in humanity, or anything that is going to bring harmony upon earth; they are interested only in themselves." It may be true, but should we be discouraged because this is the state of the world? When we have a very high fever we are delirious, we do not know what is good for us. In fact we have distorted notions. We turn

away from those things which would save us, destroy our illusion and give us healing. Yet that is the very moment when we need them. We need something fundamental and enduring. Many come with teachings that have a popular appeal, but only for a time. They do not last. They are like a hay-fire, as one great teacher, a very great mystic and seer, defined them in his vivid, simple way. You touch a match to a stack of hay. It blazes tremendously for a few minutes, and then it is gone. Same way is it in human life. The things which blaze are not the abiding things. What we need is something which is enduring, which will stay with us and sustain us, and that is the spirit of religion, the import of spiritual philosophy.

If I have given any message with special insistence, it is that people may know their own worth, may know their own religion. Once when I was travelling, a gentleman asked me if I were a missionary. I told him I did not believe in conversion. "What is your work then?" he enquired surprised, and I replied, "My work is to infuse the Spirit which changes and transforms the lives of men." Whenever we have occasion to touch a life, some struggling and despondent soul, and can awaken and quicken in that soul a ray of hope, we have done our part. Whether that soul is true to us, or turns to something else, should not be our concern. The great Laotze once said something very wise. He said: When you have done good work and another has benefitted by it, why do you look for the third thing as the fools do? That is one of the greatest lessons I have learned through life, and to-day as I am about to depart I want to share it with you.

People often have said to me, "Why do you not do more public work?" The dew-drop that falls upon the flower-bud, so gentle, so unostentatious, is symbolic of spiritual work.

It does not make any noise but it opens and brings forth a blossom. Is it not sufficing for the dew-drop to know that it had a part to play in the blossoming of a flower? It may sound abstract to you, yet it contains the secret of life. If we could all learn to do our little part, knowing that we are placed here, are led and are guided by a divine Hand, a Hand that is nowhere absent, what a beneficent force it would bring into the world! Our attitude of criticism and condemnation would disappear altogether from our minds; no longer would we seek to destroy others merely because they did not agree with us, for we should see that same divine Hand in their lives as in our own. There is a wonderful ancient prayer which expresses this universal tolerant spirit: "Let all things that breathe —without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path." There have been many beautiful prayers in the classics of the world, but none that gives in so comprehensive a way what I want to convey to others through my words. Let each one follow his own path. Why should he not? This message is needed to-day. In spite of all our advancement, if we can call it advancement, in spite of all our science and our material progress, we need this balancing.

Man must not forget God. Also he must not be content merely to worship the God of tradition. He should have a bigger concept of Divinity. When he says, "Thou art infinite and all-loving, O God", and then the next minute goes out and fights his brother, it is incongruous. How can he expect his prayers to be fulfilled? It is not that a person should change his belief, but that he should bring into active operation the things he believes in, the things he knows to be true. What else can one do, and still be

worthy to be called a child of God? A man may not speak or preach, may not profess any faith, and yet be the embodiment of all faith. This is my message to you—my message to every one.

You have heard us call this a non-sectarian place of worship. It is easy for one to claim anything. A man may call himself non-sectarian or universal, but what does it imply? That he is not in any way, with his thought, his word or his action, interfering with his brother man. We strive here to realize this ideal, and I pray that this work may grow in spiritual magnitude, may unfold, so as to touch other lives and inspire them with breadth of vision, with spirit of tolerance. It may not seem a great work in the sight of the world, but I feel that it has a great mission, because it is inclusive. It does not strike any one, it does not hinder any one. On the contrary, it seeks to give inspiration to all, to bind the hearts of men together, and anything that will do that, anything that will unite men's hearts, whether it comes from east or west, north or south, we should welcome with all our being. For we are terribly scattered in the world to-day. No wonder people are unhappy and that we have so many complications in our life.

I am powerless to express all that I should like to express; but this I must say to you, and it is the greatest tribute I can pay you: I have lived with you here in a country which ordinarily I might consider as alien; yet I have never had that consciousness, that word is not in my vocabulary. I have moved freely both here and in Europe, and it has been my special privilege to feel in return a kinship, a friendship which is more than friendship, which is a soul relationship. That this instinct may be awakened in mankind is my greatest hope and prayer. To that end this

place has been established; and it is maintained especially so that those who have thought profoundly along spiritual lines, no matter what their land or creed, may live under its beneficent shadow, and thus create an atmosphere, a living atmosphere, which will convey to the world what it stands for. That to me is life, philosophy and religion.

When a man comes and talks to you of lofty things, you look him over to see whether what he says coincides with what he is. If it does, your admiration is awakened, your faith quickened, and you are willing to listen. Same way it is with life in its deepest sense. Also is it true of helpfulness. We may profess a great deal of sympathy, charity and love for others, but it is what we are in our heart that conveys to another heart. We all carry livingness of life, and in order to find our access into life itself, into the living world, we must be alive, vibrant with spiritual force. Do not take this as a vague and far-distant thing. It is not far-distant for any one, not even for the business man. How are we going to play our part in life and do our duty unless we know how to be guided? It is not the aggressor, not the scheming, planning man who achieves his utmost; it is the man who has a sense of consecration. Herein we find the key to life, the key to inspiration. We may build houses, cities, civilizations, but it does not take much to destroy them again unless there is builded within us a consciousness which will preserve them.

Money, clothes, food, gratification of all our desires, these are not sufficing for human needs. We must have larger interests in life. Greater comprehension will bring us greater happiness. If all that the modern world has achieved in science and industry and along other lines of advancement could be brought into blending harmony with the spiritual Principle, this would be a nobler, a far more

peaceful world. There is no use our saying that we will not fight or quarrel, so long as our thoughts are producing things which will cause explosions. If a man continues to think bitter thoughts, if he maintains a hateful attitude, he will inspire another heart with hatred, and there will be a quarrel. When a man, however, grasps the higher order of life, when he removes such thoughts from his consciousness and learns that greatest of all laws,—the law of love,—the practical principle—he not only brings healing to his own soul, but he gives healing to the world.

It is not enough to profess a faith, we have to live it. Where? Not merely in church one day a week. That does not suffice. No one can go and worship in his church and have that worship accepted by an all-knowing, all-seeing Deity, unless he has already prepared for it throughout his day. Work and worship are not two different things. We cannot play hypocrite in the realm of reality. A man who has noble instinct expresses it through his work, through his hands, his heart, through every part of him, because it permeates his whole being, it ever accompanies him. By looking at his face we receive inspiration. Not because that face is designed differently from other faces, but because it exhibits the glow of God. It has become an avenue of expression for divine qualities. Why does a man become sordid and ugly? It is not that God Almighty has put that stamp upon him, he has put it on himself. God has not made him unattractive; he makes himself so by his thoughts of distrust, doubt, apprehension and fear. These things are constantly marking him, but let him transform his mental constitution, and he will grow beautiful, he will become a beneficent force. Is it hard work? No harder than work that we do to earn our bread and butter, than our toil in the soil for selfish gratification,—no harder than that.

What we need is understanding. Sometimes through our delusion we cut ourselves off from our Source. We can, however, learn to merge ourselves with the Infinite and what a tremendous factor that knowledge becomes in our life! Let us not blame any one else for our misfortunes or the misfortunes of others. We have, each one of us, our part to play in human destiny, and if we are fulfilling our part, if we are doing our share, that much of the world will be made better because of our existence, because of our love. If instead of holding the sordid idea that the world is all wrong and that we cannot and should not trust our fellows because they are full of evil, if instead of that we began to believe men to be better than they seem, and to trust them because fundamentally they are children of God, would it not transform life for us and for them? Imagine a number of people feeling this way, acting from this hypothesis, looking for the divine Principle in themselves and in others.

We cannot perhaps do as much as Christ or St. Francis in the way of sacrifice, but still we have that instinct within us, and we must unfold it from within, otherwise our lip praise means nothing. God is not a lover of flattery. We make a caricature of our life when we say one thing and do another. Let us banish from our hearts all unworthy thoughts, all bitterness, envy, jealousy, and strive to make this world as it befits God's children to do. That is my mesage to you: not a new cult, not a new creed, but a prayer that through your life, through your living, through your inspiration, through even your momentary actions, you may share in upbuilding this great world. As we learn the art of upbuilding, our hands will blend with the Almighty Hand, and our will, no matter how insignificant it may seem, how frail and faltering, will become part of that great

Will. Only then shall we know peace. Because we cannot have completeness of happiness, or peace until we have learned to blend ourselves in harmony, in unity, with the heart of the universe, with the heart of God.

Let us all rise with prayer in our soul, with love in our whole being, that through our love and prayers, through our intensity of feeling, we may feel the Presence of that great Reality and we may learn to convey it to others. Oh, let us give our heart and soul and body and mind to that One from Whom we have received the blessing of life. Let us withhold nothing, so that we may be sanctified, that we may be purified and inspired to do His Will.

ASHRAMA NIGHT

By Mildred Phillips

(Written at Ananda-Ashrama, California)

Now all is silence and the stars draw near;
Mount Elsa lifts her head, serene, benign;
All down the valley myriad stars appear,
And climbing upward in one golden line
The city lights of Pasadena shine.

The vigil light that burns with steadfast ray
Is Hope for all who see its shining bright;
Is Faith for all who kneel by it and pray;
Is Courage too for all who bravely fight;
But more,—'tis Love, resplendent through the night.

O happy place! with royal mountains nigh
Above my head protectingly to loom,
With stars to show my path, from low-hung sky,
With fragrant blessing of acacia bloom,
With vigil light to guide me through the gloom!

FLOWER OF THE FIELD

A letter from Saint Therese of Lisieux to her sister Celine.
April 25,1893.

My little Celine,—I must come and disclose the desires of Jesus with regard to your soul. Remember that He did not say: "I am the Flower of the gardens, a carefully tended rose"; but, "I am the Flower of the fields and the lily of the valleys." Well, you must be always as the drop of dew hidden in the heart of this beautiful Lily of the valley.

The dew-drop—what could be simpler, what more pure? It is not the child of the clouds; it is born beneath the starry sky, and survives but a night. When the sun darts forth its ardent rays, the delicate pearls adorning each blade of grass quickly pass into the lightest of vapour . . There is the portrait of my little Celine! She is a drop of dew, an offspring of heaven—her true Home. Through the night of this life she must hide herself in the field-flower's golden cup; no eye must discover her abode.

Happy dew-drop, known to God alone, think not of the rushing torrents of this world! Envy not even the crystal stream which winds among the meadows. The ripple of its waters is sweet indeed, but it can be heard by creatures. Besides, the Field-flower could never contain it in its cup. One must be so little to draw near to Jesus, and few are the souls that aspire to be little and unknown. "Are not the river and the brook," they urge, "of more use than a dew-drop? Of what avail is it? Its only purpose is to refresh for one moment some poor little field-flower."

Ah! they little know the true Flower of the field. Did they know Him they would understand better our Lord's reproach to Martha. Our Beloved needs neither our brilliant deeds nor our beautiful thoughts. Were He in search

of lofty ideas, has He not His angels whose knowledge infinitely surpasses that of the greatest genius of earth? Neither intellect nor other talents has He come to seek among us. . . He has become the Flower of the field to show how much he loves simplicity.

The Lily of the valley asks but a single dew-drop which for one night shall rest in its cup, hidden from all human eyes. But when the shadows shall begin to fade, when the Flower of the field shall have become the Sun of Justice, then the dew-drop—the humble sharer of His exile—will rise up to Him as love's vapour. He will shed on her a ray of His light, and before the whole court of Heaven she will shine eternally like a precious pearl, a dazzling mirror of the Divine Sun.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

That God, the Maker of all things, the great Self, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, the soul, the mind;—they who know It become immortal.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad.*

To the one Mind that arranges the whole universe, and one Providence set over all, and to the helping Powers that are ordained to all, different honours and names are given by different people.—*Plutarch*

Wherever snow falls or water flows or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love, —there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.

—*Emerson*

Without, the world is tired and old,
But once within the Enchanted Door,
The mists of time are backward rolled,
And creeds and ages are no more;
But all the human-hearted meet
In one communion vast and sweet. —*Dolben*

The individual's life is in the life of the whole; the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable; —this is an eternal truth, and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built.—*Swami Vivekananda*

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord, your God.—*Leviticus*

The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination.—*Shelley*

After all there is but one race—humanity.

—*George Moore*

My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination
around the whole earth,
I have look'd for equals and lovers and found them ready
for me in all lands.
I think some divine rapport has equalised me with them.

—*Walt Whitman*

THE BEGINNING OF NEWNESS

By Katharine Berry Judson

(A Zuni Indian legend of the Creation from "Myths and Legends of California and the Old Southwest".)

Before the beginning of the New-making, the All-father Father alone had being. Through ages there was nothing else except black darkness.

In the beginning of the New-making, the All-father Father thought outward in space, and mists were created and uplifted. Thus through his knowledge he made himself the Sun who was thus created and is the great Father. The dark spaces brightened with light. The cloud mists thickened and became water. From his flesh, the Sun-father created the Seed-stuff of worlds, and he himself rested upon the waters. And these two, the Four-fold, containing Earth-mother and the All-covering Sky-father, the surpassing beings with power of changing their forms even as smoke changes in the wind, were the Father and Mother of the soul-beings. Then as man and woman spoke these two together.

"Behold!" said Earth-mother, as a great terraced bowl appeared at hand, and within it water, "This shall be the home of my tiny children. On the rim of each world-country in which they wander, terraced mountains shall stand, making in one region many mountains by which one country shall be known from another." Then she spat on the water and struck it and stirred it with her fingers. Foam gathered about the terraced rim, mounting higher and higher. Then with her warm breath she blew across the terraces. White flecks of foam broke away and floated over the water. But the cold breath of Sky-father shattered the foam and it fell downward in fine mist and spray. Then Earth-mother spoke:

"Even so shall white clouds float up from the great waters at the borders of the world, and clustering about the mountain terraces shall be broken and hardened by thy cold. Then will they shed downward in rain-spray, the water of life, even into the hollow places of my lap. For in my lap shall nestle our children, mankind and creature-kind, for warmth in thy coldness."

So even now the trees on high mountains near the clouds and Sky-father, crouch low toward Earth-mother for warmth and protection. Warm is Earth-mother, cold our Sky-father.

Then Sky-father said: "Even so. Yet I, too, will be helpful to our children." Then he spread his hand out with the palm downward and into all the wrinkles of his hand he set the semblance of tiny yellow corn-grains; in the dark of the early world-dawn they gleamed like sparks of fire. "See," he said, pointing to the seven grains between his thumb and four fingers, "our children shall be guided by these when the Sun-father is not near and Thy terraces are as darkness itself. Then shall our children be guided by lights." So Sky-father created the stars. Then he said, "And even as these grains gleam up from the water, so shall seed grains like them spring up from the earth when touched by water, to nourish our children." And thus they created the seed-corn. And in many other ways they devised for their children, the soul-beings.

The object and aim of all divine commands is to love God truly, and to cleave to Him. This cannot be completely attained without a knowledge of the works of the Lord. No one can arrive at a knowledge of the Lord without knowing his own soul, his own mind, and body; for what wisdom can he possess who does not know himself?

—Ibn Ezra

SERVE AND BE HUMBLE

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

The Lord's grace doesn't manifest itself unless one resigns oneself to Him up to the last. It is no easy thing to surrender oneself to the Lord, and that whole-heartedly. They say that a devotee always beholds the Lord. It is quite true. In the Bible it is written: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath". All this is very true. It is a law of nature. But there is another side to the question. The Lord is the Protector of the humble—their Friend and Helper. It is, however, very difficult to be humble. Humility does not come so long as there is any egotism left. Sri Ramakrishna used to recite the story of the sweeper woman. Her work was, as you know, the lowest that could be imagined, but no sooner did she possess an ornament than her vanity knew no bounds. There is an ocean of difference between the lowness of position due to worldly circumstances and the humility of a devotee—that meekness of spirit which leads him to consider himself lower than even a blade of grass.

Serve! Serve! Serve! That is the greatest teaching. Be humble! Be the servant of all! Only he who knows how to serve is fit to rule. A selfish man cannot lead. One who is ready to sacrifice himself can alone be the leader. Only as we give, do we receive. If we love others, others will love us. What will mere words do if there is no character behind them. Control your passions, anger, jealousy, pride, and never speak ill of others behind their backs. Let everything be open and free. When anything has to be done always be the first to do it, others will follow. Control the mind, be not controlled by it. Surrender yourself to

Him alone, your everything,—your body, mind and soul. We can be perfectly at peace if we resign ourselves to the Lord. Let Him do what He thinks best. It is foolishness to dictate terms to Him as regards His dealings with us. Once you have surrendered yourself at His feet there should be no room left for the assertion of your individual will. He knows what is best for you. Even if you pray for what is not desirable, He will do the right thing for you. Thou art guiding me by the hand, O Lord!—this is not a mere poetic concept. A true devotee cannot have a permanent fall. Even if he falls he is bound to rise again through the grace of the Lord.

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

I

AL GHAZALI

We of the West have long admired the love poems of Hafiz and Sadi, the daring quatrains of Omar, the tender profundity of Jalalud-Din-Rumi without really knowing the motive power behind them, without, indeed, grasping the vital truth of the poems themselves. Mysticism, that intense yearning of the soul for inner contact with Truth, that hunger of the heart for direct experience of Reality, must ever go hand in hand with religion. Wherever in the world organized religion has been found, there also has sprung up with dynamic insistence its mystic expression. Sometimes this has come like a consuming flame to a few hearts, again it has inspired individual groups to a new life of inner realization within or without the main body of belief. Extolled in theory by the preachers of the letter, it has often been opposed by them in practice, when it appears as living Spirit. By its very nature free from all

fear and from all bondage, it has always been dreaded and condemned by those whose power rests upon fear and bondage. Naturally when the external form of a religion is fanatic and intolerant, repressive measures have been correspondingly severe. In such an environment saints must speak by the book if they value their safety.

Amazing is it, therefore, that from the rigid trunk of Mohammedanism, a religion which has permitted no deviation from its prescribed teachings, there sprang with unobstructed glory the *Rosa Mystica* in its purest and loveliest form. This spiritual outgrowth known as Sufism soon became for all men the religion of poetry. For the Sufis, like the troubadours of mediaeval Europe, concealed within an impassioned poetic utterance the open secrets of the soul, and under the guise of song gave forth a record of profound inner experience, which if openly stated might have drawn down upon them the wrath of the orthodox world. This lyrical expression, fresh and spontaneous, thus not only served as a shield and guard; but it flowered forth later into some of the most beautiful religious poems the world has ever known.

If we would understand the strange fascination which the Sufi movement exerted over the noblest minds of Persia, we must know that Mohammedanism was not native to Persia; it was grafted upon her by her Arabian conquerors and never, perhaps, took very deep hold upon her being. There were other powerful counteracting forces: her own Zoroastrian faith, overlaid but not wholly forgotten; the mighty influence of mystic India, flowing constantly across her borders, often as a return wave from her conquests of India, and last but not least, her own temperament with its burning sense of beauty, its instinct for Vision. Because of all this, when the Arabs withdrew after three hundred

years of domination, the higher class Persians shook themselves free of their conquerors mentally as well as physically. The codes of the Koran were still strictly enforced to satisfy the demands of the masses, but a new-born spirit of freedom made itself felt in social, literary and religious life, urging men to fuller expression. This marked the beginning of a golden age of poetry when mystics spoke in their native tongue. What is the native tongue of the mystic? Poetry. What is the perfect language for poetry? The Persian. This blending of mystical thought, lyrical utterance and musical speech, resulted in a pure beauty of expression that will forever defy translation. The Sufis became the Poet-preachers of the world.

As to the outer origin of Sufism and the meaning of the word itself, there are differing opinions. There is little doubt that the movement had its rise at a very early date, being connected with certain Arabian contemplatives who withdrew from active life from time to time, in order to develop through silence and solitude the desired state of ecstasy. The word, Sufi, meaning wool, was used to designate the woolen garment which they wore and by which they became generally known. Other derivations connect the word with root words meaning wise or pious. As early as the eighth century A. D., Rabia, a woman Sufi, stood at night upon her housetop and reaching out her hands to heaven in a rapture of devotion, sang impassioned songs to the one divine Lover. "O God!" she sang, "hushed is the day's noise; with his beloved is the lover. But Thee I have for my Lover and alone with Thee I joy."

It must not be thought that orthodox Mohammedans looked complacently at this strange and even frenzied development in their midst. Had it come in ordinary form they would have known how to act according to the rules

laid down by the Prophet. But here was something bewildering which might or might not be heresy. There was confusion in Islam. In the meantime the Sufis had their saints and their martyrs, though the word of anathema was yet withheld. It might well have been spoken had it not been for the famous Arabian philosopher Al Ghazali who placed upon Sufism his stamp of approval about the year 1100 A. D. Not only was this man regarded as a great teacher, he was looked upon as the chief teacher of the Faith after Mohammed. Therefore his decision was final and the Sufis were left free to express their philosophy in peace so long as they kept to Mohammedan metaphor and to poetic form.

His real name was Abu Hamid Mohammed. "Al Ghazali" was merely a title of honour given him according to the Arabian custom, and meant "The Man of Ghazali", or, as some think, "The Thread Merchant", owing to his father's trade in gazel or thread. As a young man he travelled widely, finally reaching Bagdad where he became the foremost philosophical instructor of his time. Not satisfied, however, with academic philosophy, he resumed his travels, wandering in search of Truth for eleven years. And Truth he found at last, so he felt, in the rapture of spiritual realization as taught and exemplified by the Sufis. Returning to his public life he led a reform in Mohammedanism, teaching the more symbolic and emotional interpretation of the Prophet's words. His long search for wisdom he himself describes in a remarkable confession called "The Rescuer from Error". This Rescuer is Mohammed with his Koran, but a Mohammed seen through Sufi eyes. As one commentary reads: "Al Ghazali was scarcely a typical Mohammedan teacher. He was, as his book will show, an independent thinker who reached his form of religious faith

only after seeking through all systems of philosophy. He had tasted the emptiness of materialism and had faced the black shadows of despair."

His testimony for Sufism is simple and direct. He found it a philosophy of realization which held God to be the one and only Reality and all else, illusion. Through the confusion of the seeming, the human soul, itself a fragment of Divinity, must grope its way back to its Source, impelled by a passionate yearning and ever-increasing ecstasy of self-surrender. What he describes is a true religion of devotion or *Bhakti*. As such it employs the imagery of human love and union, the only symbols capable of expressing even faintly the rapture of that final union with God, the Beloved. The religious poems of the Sufis can be read either sensuously or spiritually according to the state of mind of the reader. At their worst they are exquisite love poems; at their best they are the cry of beatitude. We find similar ecstatic outpourings among all peoples. Al Ghazali reveals their inner truth far better than any one to-day can reveal it. His confession goes straight to the heart of religion itself and is of immense value, in that it sheds light not only on the Sufi movement but upon all spiritual striving. For this reason we give it in part.

After reviewing the various forms of philosophy and belief, he says: "When I had finished my examination of these doctrines I applied myself to the study of Sufism. I saw that in order to understand it thoroughly one must combine theory with practice. The aim which the Sufis set before them is as follows: to free the soul from the tyrannical yoke of the passions, to deliver it from its wrong inclinations and evil instincts, in order that in the purified heart there should only remain room for God and for the invocation of His holy Name. It was more easy to learn

their doctrine than to practise it. I acquired a thorough knowledge of their researches, and I learned all that it was possible to learn of their methods by study and oral teaching. It became clear to me that the last stage could not be reached by mere instruction, but only by transport, ecstasy and the transformation of the moral being.

"To define health and satiety, to penetrate their causes and conditions, is quite another thing from being well and satisfied. To define drunkenness is quite a different thing to being drunk. In the same way there is a considerable difference between knowing renouncement, comprehending its conditions and causes, and practising renouncement and detachment from the things of this world. I saw that Sufism consists in experiences rather than in definitions, and that what I was lacking belonged to the domain, not of instruction, but of ecstasy and initiation. I saw that one can only hope for salvation by devotion and the conquests of one's passions, a procedure which presupposes renouncement and detachment from this world of falsehood in order to turn toward eternity and meditation on God. Finally I saw that the only condition of success was to sacrifice honors and riches and to sever the ties and attachments of worldly life."

Here begins an account of the terrible struggle he went through in determining to cast aside his position in Bagdad and all that went with it in the way of earthly fame and riches. It was a struggle that devastated his physical health, torn as he was between "the opposite forces of earthly passions and religious aspirations." "On the one side", he writes, "the world kept me bound to my post in the chains of covetousness, on the other side the voice of religion cried to me, 'Up! Up! Thy life is nearing its end, and thou hast a long journey to make. All thy pretended

knowledge is naught but falsehood and fantasy!' " At last religion won and he left Bagdad. From then on he dedicated himself to a life of meditation and prayer, following the forms of devotion which the Sufis had taught him.

"Ten years passed in this manner", he continues. "During my successive years of meditation there were revealed to me things impossible to recount. All that I shall say for the edification of the reader is this: I learned from a sure source that the Sufis are the true pioneers on the path of God; that there is nothing more beautiful than their life, nor more praiseworthy than their rule of conduct, nor purer than their morality. The intelligence of thinkers, the wisdom of philosophers, the knowledge of the most learned doctors of the law would in vain combine their efforts in order to modify or improve their doctrine and morals; it would be impossible. With the Sufis, repose and movement, exterior and interior, are illumined with the light which proceeds from the Central Radiance of Inspiration. And what other light could shine on the face of the earth? In a word, what can one criticize in them? To purge the heart of all that does not belong to God is the first step in their cathartic method. The drawing up of the heart by prayer is the keystone of it, and the last stage is the being lost in God. I say the last stage, with reference to what may be reached by an effort of will; but to tell the truth, it is only the first stage in the life of contemplation, the vestibule by which the initiated enter.

"From the time that they set out on this path, revelations commence for them. They come to see in the waking state angels and souls of prophets; they hear their voices and wise counsels. By means of this contemplation of heavenly forms and images they rise by degrees to heights which

human language cannot reach, which one cannot even indicate without falling into great and inevitable errors. The degree of proximity to Deity which they attain is regarded by some as intermixture of being, by others as identification, by others as intimate union. But all these expressions are wrong. Those that have reached that stage should confine themselves to repeating the verse,—*What I experience I shall not try to say; call me happy, but ask me no more.* In short, he who does not arrive at the intuition of these truths by means of ecstasy, knows only the *name* of inspiration. The miracles wrought by the saints are, in fact, merely the earliest forms of prophetic manifestation. This state then, can be revealed to the initiated in ecstasy, and to him who is incapable of ecstasy, by obedience and attention, on condition that he frequents the society of Sufis till he arrives, so to speak, at an imitative initiation. Such is the faith which one can obtain by remaining among them, and intercourse with them is never painful.

"But behind those who believe comes a crowd of ignorant people who deny the reality of Sufism, hear discourses on it with incredulous irony, and treat as charlatans those who profess it. To this ignorant crowd the verse applies: 'There are those among them who come to listen to thee, and when they leave thee ask of those who have received knowledge: What has he just said? These are they whose hearts God has sealed up with blindness and who only follow their passions.' Among the number of convictions I owe to the practice of the Sufi rule is the knowledge of the true nature of inspiration."

It is rare indeed for a great intellectual light, one who has in his mental grasp the processes of mind and nature, to perceive the emptiness of all outer knowledge and to feel that all he has gained is but dross beside realization of the

essence of things. There must have been a mighty yearning for Truth in the heart of Al Ghazali to have so cleansed it of the glamour of men's praise, that he had the vision to see and the strength to renounce. What he cast aside would seem to most men the crown of life itself,—wealth, comfort, adulation and an undisputed authority. Foremost leader and teacher of Islam, who could grasp the motive for such renunciation? Of this misunderstanding he himself writes: "The Imams of Irak criticized me with one accord. Not one of them could admit that this sacrifice had a religious motive, because they considered my position as the highest attainable in the religious community. 'Behold how far their knowledge goes!' "

Al Ghazali cannot be classed as a Poet-preacher, neither was he a Persian; but his was the liberating word which freed the Sufis from persecution and unsealed their song. For this reason we have included him in their ranks. He died in retirement at his own home, a Sufi to his last breath. His spirit is revealed in the prayer at the close of his Confession, and it really sums up his life: "I pray God the Omnipotent to place us in the ranks of His chosen, among the number of those whom He directs in the path of safety, in whom He inspires fervor lest they forget Him; whom He cleanses from all defilement, that nothing may remain in them except Himself; yea, of those whom He indwells completely, that they may adore none beside Him."

(To be continued)

My poet's vanity dies in shame before Thy sight. O Master Poet, I have sat down at Thy Feet. Only let me make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for Thee to fill with music.—*Tagore*

REPORT

A cable from India on February 16th brought the happy assurance that Swami Paramananda had safely reached Bombay where he was accorded a hearty reception by his Brothers of the Ramakrishna Mission. He was to reach Calcutta by the 19th, so as to be present at the great public celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, to be held at the Head Monastery at Belur on the Ganges a few miles from Calcutta.

Both at the Vedanta Centre of Boston and at the Ananda-Ashrama the work goes steadily on. The Community House at the Ashrama is now open and is gradually filling up. Last Christmas Eve, at the Boston Centre, after a lovely Service, the members united in sending to the Ashrama a love-offering to be used in the furnishing of the new house. This generous thought inspired faithful hearts in California so that now three rooms are charmingly equipped and others are gradually losing the sense of bareness. Every day sees a little added touch—a table here, a chair or a rug there—supplied by some devoted friend. In this way the Community House is growing; it is truly the result of inspiration and loving co-operation.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA'S WORK IN THE NORTHWEST

Splendid reports come to us of the results of Swami Prabhavananda's untiring activity in the Northwest. Only a short time ago under his inspiration and guidance, a Vedanta Society, of which he is Head, was founded at Portland, Ore. Now news comes to us of the organizing of another Society at Tacoma, Washington, where the Swami spent the 8th, 9th and 10th of February, giving three lectures in the Theosophical Hall. A friend sends us the following account: "At his first lecture, 'Evolution and Reincarnation', as well as at his second, 'Karma and Freedom', the

hall was filled to capacity and the interest shown was most intense. The Swami presented the truths of his subject so clearly and logically that, at the conclusion, expressions of satisfaction and delight were heard on every side.

On Wednesday afternoon—in his third lecture—he spoke on 'Avataras or Divine Incarnations'. Very lovingly did the Swami handle this subject which is of such vital and universal interest. The attendance was good considering the fact that the meeting came at a time when many are engaged with their duties in the workaday world. In the evening, an eager group of men and women gathered in the home where Swami Prabhavananda was being entertained, to listen to him in a less formal and more intimate way. After an hour of music and pleasant talk, during which time the Swami answered most satisfyingly many questions, it was suggested that a Class for study and the practice of meditation be formed. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm and the group was organized into a small Society. A president and secretary-treasurer was elected, and a committee appointed, looking toward the time when a Centre can be opened with a Swami in charge.

Though the meeting was most informal, the earnestness of those present was plainly apparent and we are praying that from this small shoot the mighty tree of Vedanta will grow, spreading its all-welcoming shade over many weary way-farers on the Path, enabling them to find rest, refreshment and soul-enlightenment beneath its sheltering branches."

The fresh vital West should respond to the lofty teachings of Vedanta, and we are happy that the Swami is finding such warm response from so many hearts. All success to his mission.

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PUBLISHED BY
ANANDA-ASHRAMA
La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, California, U. S. A.

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THE VEDANTA CENTRE, 176 Marlboro St.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



APRIL, 1926

INVINCIBLE SPIRIT

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV APRIL, 1926 No. 4

THINK ON ME

By Swami Paramananda

THINK on Me when thou hast reached glory's heights;
Think on Me when thou hast fallen into misery's uttermost depths.
Think on Me when world wounds thy heart;
Think on Me when thou hast spoke or done aught to wound thy brother.
Think on Me, oh, think on Me when thou art drowned in despair.
I will purge thy heart of grief;
I will heal thy wounded soul
And plant a new seed of life to redeem thy dead hope.
Why dost thou wander away from Me?
Why dost thou brood in darkness?
Come to Me with guileless heart:
I will not fail thee;
I will grant thee peace.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen.

—*Revelation.*

If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death?
It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body.
If He is found now, He is found then.
If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.
If you have union now, you shall have it hereafter.

—*Kabir.*

Everything seems flying towards me: the sunlight and the sunshine, the rustling of the forests and the forest breezes, beings of all ages and of all kinds—all seem beautiful and rendered transparent by the sun's glow. I am! I am in God! If I could only die now and be wafted through this joy to dissolution and redemption! But I will live on until my hour comes. Come, thou dark hour, whenever thou wilt! To me thou art light! I feel that there is light within me. O Eternal Spirit of the universe, I am one with Thee. I was dead, and I live,—I shall die and yet live. Everything has been forgiven and blotted out. There was dust on my wings. I soar aloft into the sun and into infinite space. I shall die singing from the fulness of my soul.—*Berthold Auerbach.*

Verily I say unto thee; the Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and dying. . . . Self is death and truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting.—*Buddha.*

I am the first-born god of primeval matter, that is to say, the divine Soul, even the souls of the gods of everlastingness, and my body is eternity. . . "He that never suffereth corruption" is my name.

—*Egyptian Book of the Dead.*

That Self (immortal Spirit) is a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that boundary, nor old age, death, and grief; neither good nor evil deeds. All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of *Brahman* (the Supreme) is free from all evil. Therefore, he who has crossed that boundary, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. Therefore when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of *Brahman* is lighted up once for all.

—*Chandogya Upanishad.*

Only he who dwells in love, dwells in God; only to him who dwells in love, who is thoroughly imbued with love, is eternity opened here on earth; only he enjoys here below already a foretaste of its bliss. For He who dwelleth and ruleth in eternity is the all-animating Love,—is God.

—*Stunden der Andacht.*

The Resurrection is the work of the Wind of Heaven sweeping over the worlds. The angel born on the Wind does not say: "Arise, ye dead"; he says, "Arise, ye who live!"—*Balzac*

Holy is the true Light, and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict.

—*Church Service*

It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing.— *Jesus the Christ*

INVINCIBLE SPIRIT

By Swami Paramananda

Easter is a very symbolic expression, and it is not only in Christendom that it is celebrated. After winter's devastation spring brings life and redemption, and Easter or Ascension stands for that. Nature gives us its interpretation. Physically and spiritually we rise and follow that great call of the soul, that higher call whose dictate every man and woman must sometimes follow in an effort to rise from the burial-ground of matter. Spring brings new life; it redeems even those trees and plants which we think are dead. If we can only understand its significance, not grasping so much its intellectual value, as giving ourselves to it, opening our heart and soul to it, we shall find it revives that which is tired and worn out within us.

The great truths of life are all written in nature. Sun, for instance, revealer of all things, dispeller of darkness, the giver of light and illumination, is a wonderful symbol for us to carry in our mind of the spiritual Sun rising in our soul as Truth, the real Source of light in man, the destroyer of darkness and gloom. In the East there are some sects who rise at the dawn. They feel their day will not be complete unless they are up in time to behold the rising sun and pour their oblation of worship before it. How may our day be better prepared than by rising early with a sense of spiritual vocation, with a feeling that we have a definite duty to perform and that the light of the sun is going to throw its glow on our path, revealing our way, directing our steps? That is why a Sunrise Service is a most beautiful thing. Nature has a great part in God's creation and when we approach it with spirit of understanding, then we gain benefit even from these outer events. It is not that the outer world suddenly opens be-

fore us with something unusual, but we are given the vision. Those who live too much in the external, for instance, miss the true beauty and significance of nature; it means very little to them. The mystic and seer, however, sees it as interwoven with God. It brings him upliftment, inspiration and a sense of adoration. It becomes symbolic in his life.

God is ever trying to reach us through many avenues: through man, through beast and birds, through trees, through sunlight—through all things. In the hour of distress when human voice cannot reach us, the note of a bird may arrest our mind, inspire us and make us forget our trouble. The voice of Truth is ever in the world. It is not that we do not hear it; we do not heed it. We close our eyes and our ears. We yield to our material nature and allow the living qualities within us, the soul's instinct, to be buried by material things. There is no burial-ground so depriving us of blessings as the burial-ground of matter. Let us not shut the doors of our soul! We brighten our cities with dazzling lights; but what avails if the inner life remains in the dark? We must bring in the light, taking it as a symbolic expression of God's benediction. Here is this redeeming, life-giving sun. If we open every door, it will penetrate us physically and revive us spiritually. Let us throw wide our whole being before the Sun of Truth, the Sun of Life, the Sun of Grandeur; then there will be nothing hidden, nothing calculating within us, nothing in darkness.

Our life and the best in us suffers and withers when we are cut off from our Source and sustenance. What is our life? This is a question which must rise in every human heart, and to find its answer is to find life's fulfillment. When that answer is found within the soul, there comes a

great sense of surety. It is the lesson which Easter holds for us,—that even death and tragedy are only apparent. Christ rose to show the man of flesh, the man who dreads death, the man who feels the sting of all physical suffering, that death is but a delusion, that life is eternal. Not only Christ: all Christ-spirits resurrect, and all people who are born of the Spirit. Do not think, however, that ascension means preserving the physical body as it is. Physical immortality might become a tremendous doom for a soul. Ascension is a spiritual thing. It is a new consciousness which dawns within us, enlarging our life, bringing greater vision and usefulness. We do rise: we rise even before we are dead, through this consciousness, through this vision and with such feeling that death touches us but very lightly. It does not destroy anything or annihilate anything. In the midst of this world's confusion we find an unbroken peace, a sense of stability which can never be overthrown. This is the real work of man,—to find his access into the infinite Life, so that in spite of all the apparent, changing conditions he can take his stand there and feel that he is a partaker of the divine grace.

Why should we be fretful? Why should we be fearful, and doubtful of our heritage? We ascend from the burial-ground of matter and find our place as it is given to us by God's hand; because we are His primarily: His children. Does not the Christ Ideal remind us to "be perfect even as our Father which is in Heaven?" That which is perfect is limitless and indestructible. We must find our contact with that perfect life, and the best way to find it is to forget as much as we can the limitations of the physical. We all need this inner contact, although we often altogether turn away from it. We must not do so. It will replenish our life, it will bring us inspiration, it will bring

new vitality into our physical being. Whenever there is any opportunity of rising from this plane to a higher one, we should give ourselves to it with all the power, with all the devotion, with all the intensity of our soul, that we may lift ourselves from the burial-ground of matter and see the Light as it is, in all its beauty and magnificence.

This is the heart of religion,—that a man walk with God, yielding himself to the Will of the Divine Intelligence. In our hurry, in our madness of material fever, we forget this. It is our real life. If it remains hidden and forgotten, then we go through this world as beggars, when we have a great heritage. Thus the Christ Ideal stands to remind man again and again and over again of the Truth that is in him so that he may not be altogether caught in the meshes of material things. In every turn we are reminded that life is eternal, that it cannot be destroyed, that man cannot die, and yet we dream these vacant dreams, we think that we are mortals, that we are frail and incapable, that we have no place in the divine realm. But spring redeems winter, and a Christ-spirit descends to the world to overcome death, to show in symbolic way that the Spirit of man rises over death, that it can never be buried, for flesh is not the real life.

One of the great mystics tells us that a Saviour or Avatar is the Messenger of God. He is like the Viceroy of a mighty monarch. God becomes man so that man may understand God. That is the simplest definition in regard to a divine Incarnation. It is not the small, selfish and cruel type of humanity, however, that is going to understand. People who are dogmatic, who have only a sectarian training, their concept of Christ or of any Saviour becomes a mockery for the simple reason that they do not follow in the footsteps of their Ideal. For

instance, in Christ's Incarnation His all-lovingness is one of the outstanding features. Who that lacks lovingness is going to understand Him? The best way we can revere any great being is by following in His footsteps, and that can only be done in one way,—by our life and conduct. We do not honor our chosen Ideal through fanatical means.

It is when we touch spiritual life directly that we find something definite, something of practical value for the larger world. People who are buried in dogmatic or materialistic thought, they have no expansion. They live in a little, narrow circle, going round and round, creating an atmosphere which is suffocating to their soul. No one can come near them without feeling that suffocation, that lack of freedom. God made us after His image, but we are trying to make God after our own. The many illustrations that we see around us show that man is making a caricature of his real being. We must follow the divine pattern. We cannot reverse the order of things. "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth, all other things shall be added" is the eternal principle.

One of the most interesting little incidents in the Bible concerns the learned man who came to Jesus of Nazareth to learn the secrets of the Spirit. He found many things of value in His teaching, but he feared criticism, just as people of social position fear it to-day, so he did not come openly; he came at night when no one could see him, and said: "You are a Rabbi, you are a man of God, tell me of these things." And what was the answer? "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The man thought to himself as we would think now: "What is he talking about? Is it possible for a man to enter the mother's womb a second time?" And Christ repeated: Except a man be born again of the Spirit he cannot under-

stand these things; this book of life is sealed for him. What is the significance of Christ's statement? Many lands have definite forms and rituals symbolizing second birth. In the Christian Church, for instance, there exist baptism and confirmation, while in India they have what they call the "twice-born," a man who being born in the flesh and brought up in the flesh, is given a second spiritual birth through which he is supposed to understand the law of spiritual life. We may have all forms of ritual, however, and yet not have access to the divine realm. It is not by artificial means that we can enter that Kingdom. There must be quality of soul. We must be spiritually reborn. It is to show us this that an Incarnate Spirit comes. As a man He comes, as a real leader and Saviour; but not with dazzling splendour, not with the pomp and glory of the material world. No! He comes just like the dawn, so subtly, with such gentle and soft light that only those who are wakeful, who have certain spiritual refinement, ever hear or know anything about His coming.

If Christ should be born to-day, do you suppose that people even in the very heart of what we call Christendom would understand Him unless they had the Christ-consciousness within them? They would be the first again to crucify Him if their spirit was not His Spirit. There are many who profess Christ and who will fight for Him, but the very fact that they fight for Him and use means which are alien to the Christ-spirit defeats their purpose. It is not by evil that we overcome evil. We know the simple, practical wisdom, that wherever there is darkness we must bring light. Light is the only remedy for darkness. We must kindle our lamp and keep it burning. Those who are not too clever, they pay heed to these things. The world may call them dull, but they are the best, the most intelli-

gent type among human beings. Kings and emperors come with desire to rule, to triumph, to trample people under their feet so that they may have glory; but the result is just the opposite. They are buried in the distant past and forgotten, while a simple, unpretentious, unarmed figure survives. It lives and continues to live, shedding the blessing of its life upon humanity.

The greatest lesson that we learn from religion is to find the essence. To-day we are altogether turning our eyes away from the essential. We are striving to preserve the things which cannot last. We are trying to dress up matter, saying, "This is what we are going to worship; this is what is going to survive," though we find at every instant that it fails us. It is like playing with dolls. There is within the soul of man, however, something which cannot be confined within narrow and dogmatic concepts, something which seeks expansion, which longs to see things as they are. The Hindus give the beautiful illustration of the mythical swan who when given a cup of milk and water mixed, can drink the milk, the essence, and leave the water. We are placed here in this world of great mixture, of good and evil, of things which are lasting and things which are perishable and we must learn to take the lasting, the essence, and let the rest go. When we have found our access into the Eternal, then we can make use of all the material things. It is not by destroying the physical that we are going to rise in spiritual grandeur, but by tuning our life, our thought, our conduct with spiritual principles. Then the same vision comes to us that we find in Christ's life, and that vision transforms the world of matter into divine beauty. Thus through our spiritual consciousness we rise, we rise even before we are dead and buried.

Within the body of man, within the house of clay, there

is something which is indestructible. Man is not weak; the Spirit of man is invincible. That eternal song has been sung throughout the ages. The voice of the great Upanishads tells us: "That which is vast and unbounded, which is not born, which does not die, That thou art, O man!", and the great Incarnate Spirits come to remind us that in our life, in our living, we must not keep our gaze fixed only upon the changing and the fleeting, but upon Something beyond these apparent conditions, Something that never changes. As we fasten our mind and soul and heart's interest on that, we rise, we ascend, and this is the real ascension.

There are people who cling to the external,—they build tombs and mosques to preserve the dead bodies. The Hindus, however, are peculiarly free from that element. They cremate because they have such absolute faith in the invincible quality of the soul. They know that the soul continues to exist. And it does continue to exist. We bury it through our thought, and we help it to rise through our thought, through our feeling and aspiration. People who are already buried under the burden of material life, it is difficult for them to rise even after they die; but those who live with lightness, with spiritual yearning, with high vision, death means nothing to them, it touches them very lightly because they have already ascended. These are practical facts and we must apply them in our life. The concept of immortality is the very rock of religion. We cannot be greater or better; we cannot be truly spiritual unless we have this established in our soul. Why do men do things which are mean and selfish? Why do they become criminals? It is because of a constant, feverish unrest—they fear that they are going to lose their opportunity. As soon, however, as we can implant in their soul

this idea that Eternity is behind them and before them, above them and below them, they are not going to have this restlessness. They are now looking only to one little point, one small, limited span of existence. When their vision is extended, when they see the immensity of life and feel themselves to be definitely a part of that great immensity, it is going to take away all their fear, all their meanness and pettiness: everything will then have for them a spiritual significance. There is no man strong enough to live without God, without Truth, no matter how intellectual or clever he may be. Our greatest calamity is when we make this of secondary importance and seek first the material glory, thinking that afterwards we shall find God. We never find Him afterwards. We only find in our life what we have followed in our thought, in our consciousness. That is the reason why Christ repeated, Except a man be born again, born of the Spirit, not of corruption, he cannot understand these things or find his access into the Kingdom of God. Spiritual birth means transformation.

When the soul is inspired by high vision the little body cannot interfere with it. Why, this soul of man, this part of God is indestructible, deathless, diseaseless! Nothing can destroy it! "Sword cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it." It is immortal and invincible. Such is the heritage of man. The Saviours and the great spiritual seers prove it every instant. We must learn this lesson. We must not fear—fear should not remain in our mind and heart; doubt must not dwell there. We cultivate skepticism because we think that is the rational way of looking at things; but it only robs us of all that is beautiful and fine in our character. Faith is constructive, while doubt is destructive. As we increase

our faith in spiritual immensity, as we find our own harmony and peace, we shall benefit the world at every turn. Our thoughts will be of calm nature, our actions will be fundamental and creative. Then even casually and unconsciously, we shall convey something to our fellow-beings, and as we share our blessings with others, our life will be complete, the purpose of our existence will be fulfilled.

ABSOLUTE RELIGION

By Theodore Parker

(From "A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion.")

It is sometimes feared that Christianity is in danger; that its days are numbered. Of the Christianity of the church, no doubt it is true. . . But the Christianity of Christ, absolute religion, absolute morality, cannot perish: never till love, goodness, devotion, faith, reason, fail from the heart of man; never till God melts away and vanishes, and nothing takes the place of the All-in-All. Religion can no more be separated from the race than thought and feeling; nor absolute religion die out more than wisdom perish from among men. Man's words, thoughts, churches, fail and pass off like clouds from the sky that leave no track behind. But God's word can never change. It shines perennial like the stars. Its testimony is in man's heart. None can outgrow it; none destroy.

For eighteen hundred years the Christianity of Christ has been in the world to warn and encourage. Violence and cunning . . have opposed it. Every weapon learning could snatch from the arsenals of the past, or science devise anew, or pride and cruelty and wit invent, has been used by mistaken man to destroy this fabric. Not a stone has fallen from the heavenly arch of real religion; not a

loop-hole been found where a shot could enter. But alas, vain doctrines, follies, absurdities without count, have been plied against the temple of God, marring its beauteous shape. That Christianity continues to live, spite of the traditions, fables, doctrines wrapped about it, is proof enough of its truth. Reason never warred against love of God and man, never with the Christianity of Christ, but always with that of the church. . .

Can man destroy absolute religion? He cannot with all the arts and armies of the world destroy the pigment that colors the emmet's eye. He may obscure the truth to his own mind. But it shines forever unchanged. So boys of a summer's day throw dust above their heads to blind the sun; they only hide it from their blinded eyes.

THE POINTS OF PERFECTION

(From an Old English Translation of "The Mirror of Simple Souls," a mystic treatise written by an unknown French Contemplative, 13th Century).

O soul, touched of God, dissevered from sin, in the First Estate of grace, ascend by divine grace into the Seventh Estate of grace, where that the soul has fulhead of perception by divine fruition in life of peace! And among you, actives and contemplatives, that to this life may come, hear now some of the might of the pure love, of the noble love, and of the high love of the free soul. . . This soul has six wings, as have the Seraphim; . . . with two she covers the face of our Lord; that is to say, the more knowledge this soul hath of the divine Goodness, the more she knows not the amount of a mote as in regard to His Goodness; the which is not comprehended but of Himself. And with two she covers His feet. This is to say, the more that this soul hath knowledge of the sufferance that Jesus Christ suffered for us, the more perfectly she knows

that she knows naught, as in regard of it, . . . the which is not known but of Him. And with two she flies, and so dwells in standing and sitting. This is to say, that all she covets and loves and prizes, it is the divine Goodness. These be the wings that she flies with, and so dwells in standing, for she is always in the sight of God; and sitting, for she dwells always in the divine Will.

Whereof should this soul have dread, though she be in the world? And the world, the flesh, . . . and the four elements, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, tormented her and despised her and devoured her, if it might so be, what might she lose if God dwelled with her? Oh, is He not Almightiful? Yea, without doubt: He is all might, all wisdom and all goodness, our Father and Brother and our true Friend. He is without beginning and shall be without ending; He is without comprehending, but of Himself. . . . This soul nor desires despite nor poverty, nor tribulation, nor disease, nor masses, nor fasting, nor orisons. . . . She is alone in love. This is to say, that she has nor comfort, nor affection, nor hope in creature that is made in heaven or in earth; but only in the goodness of God. . . . For herself she cares not, but God cares for her, and Him she loves so much that herself she cannot love. "This soul," says Love, "has so great faith in God that she has no dread to be poor, for as much as her love is rich; for faith teaches her that right so as she hopes of God, right such shall she find Him." (*Reason has asked Love to expound the nine points of perfection in a soul. We omit the description of the first five. Love now comes to the sixth Point which is, that none may teach the free soul*).

"Now for God!" says Reason, "Lady Love, say what is this to say!" "This is to say," says Love, "that this soul is of so great knowledge that though she had all the

knowledge of all creatures that ever were, be, and shall be, she would think it naught as in regard of that that she loves."

"The Seventh Point," says Love, "is this: that men may not rob her. Oh, how might they rob her? For though she were robbed of her honour, goods, friends, heart, body and life, yet rob they her naught, if God with her dwell."

"The Eighth Point, Reason," says Love, "is that men may give her naught. Yea," says Love, "what might they give her? Though they give her all that ever was given, and shall be given, it should be naught in regard of that that she loves and shall love."

"But God Himself, Lady Love," says this soul, "loves in me and shall love. . . He only is my God that none can one word of say, nor all those of Paradise one only point attain nor understand, for all the knowing that they have of Him."

"The Ninth Point," says Love, "is this: that this soul has no will. Oh, without fail, no! For all that she wills . . . it is that which God wills that she will. And that wills she . . . for God's Will to fulfil, and not for her own will. And this may not she will of herself; but it is the Will of God that wills in her. So that this soul has no will but the Will of God, that makes her will all that she ought to will.

"This soul has in her the Master of Virtues that is called Divine Love, that has merged in them all and to Him united. So that she is not with herself nor with virtues." "With whom, then?" says Reason, that would by asking learn. "That ye wit of me, Reason," says Love: "that her has all turned in me." "And what be ye, Love?" says Reason. "Be ye not a virtue within us, save that ye be above us?" "I am God," says Love; "For Love is God and

God is Love. And this soul is God by condition of Love, and I am God by nature divine. And this is hers by righteousness of Love. So that this precious, loved of me, is learned and led of me out of herself; for she is turned to me, in me. This is the eagle that flies high, so right high, and yet more high than does any other bird, for she is feathered with fine love. And she beholds above others the beauty of the sun and the brightness of the sun. And the heat therein gives her in food the gum of the cedar. . . Such a soul has no matter in her that might blemish her clear sight, sithen that she is made naught only by virtue of very meekness. And she is common to all, by largesse and perfect charity. And she is alone in God by the divine touchings of pure, fine love."

Meditation of Pure Love has but only one intent, and is this: that she loves always truly, without willing any guerdon. And this may not the soul do but if she be out of herself, . . . for they that have will that God do their will, willing of His comforts to feel, they trust not perfectly in His Goodness alone, but in the gifts of His riches that He has to give. "Without fail," says this soul, "who that well loves, he thinks neither of taking nor of asking, but of giving without anything withholding. Therefore true love has but only one intent, and that is that she might always love truly. . . . And she wills naught but one thing; and that is, that the Will of God be always in her done.

"This soul," says Love, "swims in the sea of joy. . . She feels no joy, for she herself is joy. She swims and drenches in joy, for she lives in joy without feeling any joy. So is joy in her, that she herself is joy by the virtue of joy that has merged her in Him. And so is the Will of the Loved and the will of this soul turned into one as fire and flame."

THE PARIJATA FLOWER

By Swami Atulananda

(Reprinted from "Prabuddha Bharata.")

"In whatever form a man seeks to worship Me with faith, in that form I make his faith firm and unflinching."
Bhagavad-Gita

In ancient times in a village of Bengal a pious Brahmin and his family lived a happy, simple life. They were of the old orthodox type, devoted to each other and to God. The wife worshipped her husband, the husband cherished his wife, and the children, two boys, honoured their parents. The door of their little cottage always stood wide open to friends and strangers alike. Under their hospitable roof any belated wayfarer was sure to meet with a hearty welcome, and no beggar ever was turned away disappointed. When a wandering monk happened to pass through the village and halting at their door in the name of God called for alms, the boys would run to their mother and say, "Mother, a Mahatma has come. May we give him food?" "Yes, my children," the mother would reply, "Offer it with reverence. May the holy man bless you." Then the boys carrying a little rice and lentil soup would place it respectfully in the cocoanut-shell that was held out as begging bowl, and the monk blessing the children, would pass on. Thus, smoothly, life moved by. The gods being pleased bestowed on the family not only a fair measure of prosperity but also an abundance of contentment.

Now it happened one day that the Brahmin after his early morning devotions went to the village market to buy fish for the midday meal. Squatting on the ground behind their baskets the fisherwomen with loud, rancorous voices cried, "Fish! Fish! The best in the market!" One woman, the most vociferous of all, seeing the Brahmin, hailed him

with, "Oh, Brahmin! where are you going? Come and buy from me!" The Brahmin smiled and halting at her basket after examining her catch, struck a bargain. Now when the fish was being weighed he noticed with horror that against it on the balance was placed a Salagrama—a sacred stone used in worship as an emblem of Lord Vishnu. Filled with indignation he upbraided the woman for her sacrilegious conduct of profaning a sacred symbol of the Lord. But he found her quite ignorant of the meaning of the Salagrama, and when he offered to buy it she was willing to let him have it for next to nothing, as any ordinary stone of the same weight would serve her purpose equally well.

The Brahmin reverently carried the Salagrama to his house where he purified it by bathing it in milk and Ganges water. Then he began to worship Vishnu to whom the stone was sacred. That night he had a dream and with the dream, a vision. Lord Vishnu stood before him. "My Lord!" the Brahmin exclaimed in great joy, "what have I done to deserve the honour of your visit to my humble hut?" The Lord, smiling sweetly, said in a very gentle voice, "Good Brahmin, don't you know that I bring many afflictions to those who worship Me? By depriving them of worldly happiness I draw their hearts closer to Myself and fill them with the spirit of renunciation." Then the vision vanished.

The Brahmin awoke. He was not a little puzzled by the strange message of the dream. A strain of sadness mingled with his joy, for he was not quite willing to have the flow of his peaceful life interrupted by calamities. On the other hand, he knew very well that it was his duty as a Brahmin, as one of the great priestly caste, to worship before the holy Salagrama. At last he decided to be true to his faith,

and morning and evening he worshipped, placing flowers and fragrant sandal on the stone after having washed it with holy water, uttering Vedic texts as he did so. And he burned incense and a little light in honour of his God.

This went on for some time. Then one evening at the hour of dusk his little son came running home from the woods crying, and showed on his foot two tiny spots where a venomous adder, stepped on unwittingly, had left his deadly marks. A few hours later the child expired in his mother's arms. The lifeless little body was carried to the cremation ground. When the last flames of the fire were extinguished, the stricken parents carried home a casket with ashes, all that was left of their darling, sometime to be consigned to the tender care of Mother Ganges, the holy river, in whose embrace the remains of so many pious Hindus find final rest. The father remembered the vision. But faithfully, though with aching heart, he continued to worship before the Salagrama. Now it happened that a few days later cholera broke out in the village, and among the first victims of this dreadful disease was counted the other son. "Thy will be done, oh Lord!" the Brahmin sighed with a trembling heart, and he continued to worship before the Salagrama. But the bereaved mother, utterly disconsolate at the loss of her two boys, died of grief.

The Brahmin well-nigh gave in to despair. He had no one left. His cottage was empty. No child's laughter to cheer him, no tender word of welcome when he entered his little home. On his bed his weary eyelids closed, but he could not sleep. Days and nights were to him like so many ages. Then, one night when he was dozing a little, he was roused by a voice. "Good Brahmin," the voice spoke, "don't you know that I am the Friend of those who possess nothing—of those who have resigned themselves entirely to

Me?" Hearing these words, a great peace entered his desolate heart. Lord Vishnu had taken his all, but He had not forsaken him! With a hopeful mind he rose, and at early dawn, taking with him the Salagrama he left his cottage. In the forest he made for himself a little shelter near a pond, and there he gave himself entirely to God and devoted all his time to worship. Sometimes a great pain would steal over him, a feeling of anguish, an uncontrollable longing for his departed ones. But then he remembered the sweet voice, "I am the Friend of those who possess nothing—of those who have resigned themselves entirely to Me." The Lord was his Friend. He surely would not forsake his beloved ones. And with fervour renewed, he worshipped before the Salagrama.

Now one morning, when after his ablutions he was occupied with his devotions near the pond, a slight disturbance in the water attracted his attention. There was a bubbling sound, little ripples formed, and these increased into waves, till the entire pond became a mass of commotion. Astonished and hardly able to believe his eyes, he watched. Then to the surface came a bright, golden figure of shining beauty. The figure approached, and before him stood a celestial nymph. Her voice was like music as she addressed him softly with the words, "Holy Brahmin, your faith is unparalleled. As reward I have brought for you a Parijata flower. It comes from Vishnu's garden. No such flower ever before has come to earth." Then dropping the flower in his lap, she vanished. Examining the flower, the Brahmin thought, "This certainly is a divine creation. No flower of this world can compare with it in beauty of shape and colour, and the fragrance it emits is exquisitely delicate. But what shall I do with it? Let me take it to the king, for it is more fit to embellish a

palace than my poor little forest-hut." Accordingly he took it to the king, and then returned to the woods and his devotions.

Now the king had two wives, and as he had only the one flower, he gave it to the elder queen. At this the younger queen became jealous and angry. Locking herself in her room, she began to weep. The king tried to explain matters, but she would not listen unless she also was given a Parijata flower as beautiful as that of the elder queen. The king, at his wits' end what to do, at last summoned his minister and told him to go to the Brahmin and order him to bring another Parijata flower within twenty-four hours. If he disobeyed he would be beheaded. The poor Brahmin receiving this order, greatly frightened, betook himself to prayer. Then in the midst of his supplications he was startled by a voice asking him what he wanted. Opening his eyes, he saw the same celestial nymph.

"You are the cause of my impending death," the Brahmin exclaimed. "Unless you give me another Parijata I must die!"

"But that is impossible," the nymph replied. "Indra gave me that one flower once when he was greatly pleased with me. These Parijatas are exceedingly rare even in heaven."

The Brahmin, however, continued to plead with her most earnestly. Then, at last, she said, "Well, I will take you to heaven. Ask Indra himself." And all of a sudden the Brahmin found himself in Indra's presence. Being asked by Indra what he wanted, he told his story.

"But," said Indra, "I cannot procure another flower. These Parijatas belong to Vishnu. Ask Him."

So the Brahmin went to Vishnu. He found his Lord seated on a throne of glory, surrounded by a galaxy of angels bright as the midday sun. Half blinded by this

heavenly sight, he threw himself at Vishnu's feet. With choking voice he told his Lord what had happened, and prayed to be delivered from his impending doom. Vishnu, coming down from His throne and gently touching the prostrate body of the Brahmin, said, "My child, I am pleased with you. I have watched your long and fervent devotions as you worshipped me in the Salagrama. Rise and come with Me to My garden. I will give you many flowers."

The Brahmin beholding the Lord's sweet, smiling face felt comforted. Rising to his feet he followed Vishnu. They came to a garden-gate, and entering, the Brahmin was overwhelmed with joy, seeing the beauty of this paradise. His body became light as air. He moved without effort. An ethereal atmosphere seemed to fill and sustain him. He felt ecstatic. Birds were singing their heavenly songs as he passed by trees and plants laden with fruits and fragrant flowers. Shining, smiling faces greeted him on all sides. He was in the land of the spirits. On a velvety lawn a beautiful boy was playing with a deer. "There," the Lord said, pointing to the child, "is one of my Parijata flowers." The boy looked up, and seeing the Brahmin came running towards him with out-stretched arms. "Father!" he exclaimed, "have you come at last? I am so happy!" Then from behind a bush another boy came running—the Brahmin's eldest son. A little farther on he came upon his wife. "These" the Lord said, "are my Parijata flowers." Thus the family was happily reunited in Vishnu's heaven.

"Inscrutable, oh Lord, are Thy ways," the Brahmin said in great humility and joy. "My apparent misfortunes were but angels in disguise." And Vishnu, in the words of Sri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, said, "No one who practises virtue, My son, comes to an evil end."

THE EMBODIED IDEAL

By Count Hermann Keyserling

(From: "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher).

Faith in the religious sense does not mean believing-to-be-true, it means striving after self-realization by concentrating the powers of the mind upon a given ideal. And the incomparable effect of living divine men (where we can think of them at all) is due to the fact that they made their own ideal incomparably clear to their followers, and thus increased its formative force to a tremendous degree. . . Belief is an *a priori* quality, an independent creative power which justifies itself by itself. Modern man does not know such faith. His faith is a tender plant which may succumb to the slightest wound, and of all sufferers disappointed man is in the worst position, because loss of faith really devitalizes. Without faith, full self-consciousness is impossible. Because faith is lacking, so many people hanker to-day after a new religion; they need an external focus in order to collect their inner forces into one unity, for very few have reached by now that degree of inward independence which makes them incapable of disappointment, without external assistance. . .

Doubtlessly it is a matter of import who the man is to whom one gives one's faith. An enlightened mind can still illumine dark existences, a genius of love can soften even hardened hearts, while lesser men are unable to do so, no matter how strong the faith is which they inspire. . . No teacher can give what is not existent in a latent state; he can only waken that which is asleep, he can liberate what is imprisoned and bring to light what has been concealed. This is sufficient to secure the rank which men have always given to him, for it happens all too rarely that an individual becomes conscious of himself without external

assistance. Without it, latent forces manifest themselves only exceptionally.

On what depends ultimately and metaphysically the desire to give ourselves up to something higher than ourselves, our happiness in being allowed to behold the higher Being, and the tremendous inner progression which it brings with it? It depends on the fact that man sees in what is above him a truer expression of himself than the one which he is able to present. Everyone feels only too strongly how imperfectly he realizes his true being in his appearance. He does not act in accordance with his self, nor does he think as he intends to, and he is different from what inwardly he feels himself to be. . . . Every one knows that he is essentially more than what he can express, and he therefore recognizes himself better in somebody else's perfection than he does in his own imperfect form. In the same way we sometimes perceive a truth instantaneously which we would never have found by ourselves and we say: "That is really what we meant." For this reason, too, we feel marvelously uplifted and enlarged in the presence of perfect beauty, for our being finds its finally adequate means of expression only in perfect shape. . .

Anyone who has ever met a great man has said to himself; "I always knew him." Of course he did. This, then, is the final explanation of the immense effect which the mere existence of such a man radiates. He shows men what every one could be, what all men are at bottom, in spirit and in truth. And just as the clear expression of that which our consciousness gropes for vainly, not only makes us happy, but also accelerates our progress, so does the anticipated expression of ourselves which a great man means to us, help us all to more rapid self-realization.

This brings us to the root of the recognition that the mere existence of a saint is more beneficent than all the good actions of the world; this explains, moreover, the ultimate significance of a saviour. He gives an example to mankind; this is what Christ too intended. And in so doing, he renders the extremest service which one being can render to another. He shows men their profoundest selves in a mirror; he makes their own ideal clear to them. He embodies it visibly, and thus gives to the creative forces which impel every one towards heaven, the longed-for aim and example. Now they know whither they are to go, now they know the range of their possibilities. And thus it can happen that the mere existence of one great man who has personally no purpose in external life, can give a new direction to the lives of all.

REPORT

Word comes that Swami Paramananda is receiving warm welcome from the Motherland he is revisiting after an absence of fourteen years. As is the Hindu custom in welcoming holy men, the Swami's fellow-countrymen have greeted him at every turn with garlands, flowers and offerings of fruit. In Bombay, his port of entry, two public lectures were arranged. The attendance both times was large. The Swami's message was an urgent appeal to his Indian hearers to be the thing that their philosophy taught. He reached the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission, at Belur near Calcutta, in time to share in the great public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, and it is supposed that he is still there as his name is down as a speaker at a great convention of Swamis to be held at Calcutta April 2nd.

The members of Ananda-Ashrama have had lately a feast

of music. Mrs. Laura Kelsey Allen, a violinist of distinction, played several times at the Sunday Services, giving rare pleasure, while on March 21st, Mr. Jetson-Ryder, a well-known concert singer contributed the gift of his rare voice to the musical program.

EXTRACTS FROM BOMBAY PAPERS

"Swami Paramananda, President, Vedanta Centre, Boston, arrived here last Friday after an absence from India of nearly twenty years. A public reception under the chairmanship of Mr. K. Natarajan was given to the Swami last Saturday. The Swami said that the message he would give to India as a result of his experience in the West was that the true joy lay not in external possessions, but in the inner vision and self-consecrated service of others. That was also the message of Hinduism—"

* * *

"Under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society, a public meeting was held this evening to welcome Srimat Swami Paramananda. . . The hall was tastefully decorated with flowers and on the platform were seated Some Swamijis of the Ramakrishna Mission. A large number of citizens of Bombay attended the function." (There follows a long account of Swami Paramananda's work in the West—publications, etc., then the article continues:) The President in opening the proceedings said that the Swami had been away from India a very long period which he had devoted to the dissemination of the highest truths of Universal Religion, the greatest gift of his motherland to the world. An Address was then presented to the Swamiji which referred to the great part he had played in furthering the Mission of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. He had considerably popularised the truths of Vedanta and had been successful in founding two important centres—the

Vedanta Centre at Boston and the Ananda-Ashrama at La Crescenta in the arms of the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains in California. Swami Paramananda in thanking the members of the Society said that the proper way of responding to their welcome was not by a long speech, using calculated words, but by expressing his own feelings in words that expressed the spirit of the soul. He said that the only message he had to give to the people of India was the great truth which Sri Ramakrishna had given and demonstrated in his own life,—the establishment of fellowship among all the followers of the different religions of the world knowing them to be but so many forms of the one universal and eternal Religion."

BOOK REVIEW

Swami Prabhavananda, Founder and Head of the Vedanta Societies at Portland, Ore. and Tacoma, Wash., is the author of an illuminating little booklet entitled "Subconscious Mind and Its Control." The Swami brings to bear upon this very popular subject a mind enriched by the profound philosophy of the Indo-Aryans, and fortified by its own realizations, lacking which, as the Swami says, the words of the so-called psychologists of the present day "sound like the prattling of children." Not only does the Swami illumine with the light of Vedic knowledge the nature and functions of the sub-conscious, but he also throws light upon the terms and tenets of Eastern thought by relating them to our modern psychological concepts.

This little booklet is published by the Vedanta Society of Portland, and can be obtained directly from the Society, 616 Kraemer Building, Second and Washington Streets, Portland, Oregon, or from the Ananda-Ashrama.

—*S. D.*

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Message of the East



MAY, 1926

WHAT IS YOGA?

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established [illegible])

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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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."
—Tryndall.

Published Monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV MAY, 1926 No. 5

WHAT IS YOGA?

By Swami Paramananda

WHAT is Yoga? I am going to give a simple, direct answer to this question, although it is a subject some people like to veil in mystery. Yoga literally means union. It is a Sanskrit word, a very simple word, but tremendously inclusive. Also it is a sacred word—so very sacred that over it hangs a hush of silence. The idea which it contains is the same as that which was later on developed and unfolded through some of the Christian mystics,—the idea of mystic union. Union with whom? Union with what? What does this union signify? Its spiritual significance is absolute union with the Source of our being; surmounting all obstacles, we find our access into the divine realm. As the Yoga system unfolded, however, it likewise gave man access into his physical being. It was never used for any ordinary purpose, but one part merely branched out into physical culture because those great teachers who evolved it found it necessary to add to it practical methods of self-control.

It is not enough to tell a person that he must meditate, that he must pray, that he must merge himself with the infinite Life; we must give him the means by which he may do this. So with Yoga another aspect had to be considered,—the taming of the flesh, of the mind, of all

evil propensities. Now it is our experience that as we begin to practise this, there grows naturally within the soul a concentrated purpose. Instead of scattering our strength and energy through many, many channels, we begin to focus our being; we learn to direct our interest. This implies physical, mental and moral concentration. No man can do his best until his body is focussed—unified, and this focussing and unifying means becoming stronger. Even the physical body becomes more efficient. A person, for instance, who is nervous and irritable, who cannot sit still for a moment, that person learns through this practice to have proper control of his physical forces, and as he gains mastery over them, his physical being grows more and more poised. There comes upon him a sense of tranquillity, for the body cannot be tranquil without the mind becoming equally so. Body and mind react upon each other. We would not have so many nervous breakdowns and troubles which are alien to human destiny if we applied this knowledge.

Is there anything mysterious about this? Is it not the most simple means of living a normal life? The Hindus have taught it in India by means of their system of Yoga for hundreds of years. They have always taught it very simply and directly, because they have no ulterior motive. This is one of the things I want you to remember. I know of no great spiritual teacher who would proclaim himself to be a Yogi or a Master, or who, if he had any knowledge along such lines, would make a trade of it. That would be impossible. It does not go with the vision of Yoga and the Yogis. Such a being—one who had real claim to mastery, not by fancy, but by actual right—if you should bring him to New York, for instance, and announce that he was a great Master, who was going to give lessons on the

mysteries of Yoga, I think he would altogether fade away from your midst. It would be a very painful experience for him, absolutely inconsistent with his life.

It is good for you to know these things. Idle curiosity is worse than ignorance. At least there is excuse for ignorance; but when intellectual, seemingly rational people run hither and thither without knowing their purpose, aim or objective, it is a tremendous waste of time and energy, and that wastefulness can react only in one way: as a great bar to progress. I do not want to paint the dark side, however, but to give something constructive. This age-old, very beneficent system that was evolved in India, gave man definite methods by which he could control his physical being and thus express those innate qualities of soul which give access to that inner Kingdom we read of in the Bible. "Kingdom of Heaven is within". One who finds it lacks for nothing; there is immensity of richness there. We, however, look without, and see only our imperfections, our limitations, our many defective qualities. Thus when we are told that our spiritual heritage is God, Infinitude, we cannot fathom it, although we may try to believe in it with a morbid sense of faith. What we need is the means by which we can realize it. We cannot live on words. We must gain our own access into the Kingdom. We must find a way to work these things out for ourselves, and that is what the system of Yoga teaches through concentration, meditation and self-mastery.

As we gather our forces through these means, we seem to open another vista altogether. One who ordinarily says: "I am weak, I cannot do this, I am altogether a slave of my nature", that same person begins to realize that he is born here with a definite purpose which is to master his nature, and that his religion will amount to nothing until he can

put into practical application these high ideals. Instead of sitting in a corner brooding with a sense of uselessness, he lifts up his head, he becomes erect. Right here is a symbolic thought. In the system of Yoga tremendous emphasis is laid on the spinal column of the human being. A person must have a flexible and erect spine. Even some of the Roman philosophers recognized the fact that man is born erect and that if he does not learn to hold himself so, instead of being held erect by others, he will have a miserable existence. The reason is that we cannot have freedom of life if there is anything crooked in our thoughts, in our habits, or even in our physical construction. It is very essential to keep the body absolutely free and upright, and the Yogis teach us this. It is not anything artificial. No one can accomplish it through physical exercise alone, though that will help to a certain extent. It is in the thought. There are certain thoughts which make the body tense, brittle, which bring it almost to the breaking point; then again there are other thoughts which make it flexible and relaxed so that the current of life can flow and circulate through it without hindrance. Do you suppose people can bring this about merely by following certain physical methods? If so, we could almost challenge God with our scientific inventions.

Science plus spiritual intuition makes the complete Yoga system. Thinking of the physical and nothing but the physical can become a tremendous hindrance to a man. Take some of the modern healing movements, for instance; many of their aims and ideals are most wonderful, identical with what we know in India as the monistic system of philosophy,—not recognizing sickness, not recognizing anything that makes for sickness, but always pointing the mind to that which is infinite, unlimited and vast. Such a view-

point, so long as it is kept pure, is a mighty asset. It is what we need to overcome the sickness and the evil of life; but when we begin to think of it only in relation to our own betterment, no matter how great our need may be, we shall find that though we may have it in theory, we have lost the ideal. Same way it is in connection with Yoga. There are certain definite principles which it gives us, and these principles we must follow in order to master ourselves physically and mentally so that spiritually we may find our access into that inner Kingdom. That is what is called union,—body, mind and heart uniting themselves for a great end.

The Yoga training, when we understand the import of it, is not limited to spiritual benefit. It makes one an all-round man. Man is a homogeneous being; but how many of us can claim really to be so. We find that our hands and feet are preying on each other, that our mind and heart, instead of working together with absolute unity of purpose, are going in different directions. That is the reason we often accomplish so little. We lack co-ordination, we lack concentration. With the Yogi, however, the physical body is harmonious and lends itself to any task he undertakes; moreover, the mind is flexible, and what is more, possesses a marvelous power of introspection. Even science recognizes the value of that. It realizes that unless a man's faculties are quickened, unless he has power of penetration, he cannot accomplish his utmost. In every branch of learning we shall find that more or less in one way or another they follow the identical method which Yoga gives: complete union with the subject of knowledge. There is no possibility of any knowledge, or any revelation until these two, mind and subject, come together. We may copy somebody else's ideas, we may

form them into a system, but real clarified truth comes only as a result of this union.

Whether it is in science or music, in art or religion, wherever we find any clarified expression of life, it comes as the fulfillment of what the Hindus call Yoga or union. There is nothing between you and the object of your search. It is like projecting a light. We project our light into whatever is hidden and it becomes revealed. We can see clearly; no longer is there any darkness connected with it. We can apply this to every problem; but the question is, how can we find the light? Must we borrow it from some one? Is it hidden somewhere in mystery, or do we already have it within us? Of course we have it within us! Because of that light we are able to think, we are able to feel, we are able to learn and remember, only we do not know how to control it. When we have gained control, when that light of thought is focussed, instead of being scattered and dissipated, when we have made it steady and one-pointed, then it becomes like a search-light, brilliant and revealing.

This is the sum and substance of the system of Yoga, but it is only an outline. It implies a great deal that we must put into practice. For example, sit down for a moment and try not to think of anything. Ordinarily we imagine that to think of nothing would be very simple; but when we try to do it even for an instant we find it almost impossible. It is not that we lack the power. We have tremendous amount of power, but the mind is a very active instrument, not even for a single moment does it want to be passive. It is alert, it is keen, and it is very restless. The thing is to bring it to the point where it will be fruitful and productive as well. This training of the mind is a most gigantic task for the individual. Not that

the task itself is so difficult; in reality it is very simple, but our preconceived ideas, our past habits, our negative thoughts make it seem difficult.

We stand in our own light. We remind ourselves constantly that it is impossible to control the thinking process, that it cannot be done. We complain that every time we try to concentrate, every time we try to quiet the mind, there comes a terrible rush of thoughts and we are conscious of a great disorder. We fail to realize, however, that this rush of thoughts is constantly going on within us, this disorder is ever present in our consciousness, only ordinarily we do not notice it, and we wonder why we have misery and unhappiness. We blame others for our misfortune. We seek to account for it by outer reasons, not realizing that there cannot be any reason for unhappiness, discontent or restlessness save in our failure towards ourselves.

This is something for you to carry as a mental picture, —something to infuse into the minds of your children. Whenever they are fretful, whenever they are unhappy, instead of trying to justify their unhappiness, seek to give them inward sight. Let them see that no one can bother them, that no one can hinder them once they have made their connection within. For lack of this knowledge we most of us have a very vague way of looking on life. For instance, we meet a person who has evolved a sense of intuition, who is calm and poised under all conditions, never affected by outer events, and we are filled with tremendous admiration. We wonder how it has come to him, but it does not occur to us that it has not come to him accidentally. Instead of vaguely admiring, we should seek to find out how he has developed these qualities, so that we may also develop them. This is where practical training begins.

Man is born to conquer nature. That is the greatest and most dynamic thought given by the Yoga system. He is not born to be a slave, to run hither and thither at the command of nature, but to conquer it. The average human being who does not know the secret of life, is tossed up and down by every circumstance, like a boat without a rudder; but the Yogi rises above these outer conditions. The great system of Yoga is not in the least concerned with teaching men how they may collect a lot of curious information, or how they may acquire some mysterious power by means of which they can control other minds. Its purpose is to teach men how they may control their own minds, may gain a sense of value, a sense of rhythm, a sense of true manhood. The only mind we can legitimately control is our own. We shall find it very difficult to control the mind of another, even that of a two year old child. By controlling our own habits of thought, however, by gathering and directing that force which is going to waste through misunderstanding or misguided zeal, we cannot help but become a great factor in life.

All this that I have given may not appeal to the majority of people, because it contains no element of mystery. Why should I want to mystify them in regard to a subject that is already crowned with mystery? Our purpose should be to simplify things which seem dark, confused or hidden. There is the path of life, for instance—we can simplify that, and our work should begin right with our own life, with our own home. It must be cleansed and put in order. How pleasing it is when a home is kept in order,—more than in order—in harmony; everything in its proper place; the color scheme soothing, harmonious, inspiring! I want to give you this picture because it is also the picture of one who has learned the art of living. Such a person puts ev-

erything in his life where it belongs; there is no wastefulness, and not only that, if there is any interruption from outside he knows how to retire within himself and find there a sense of rest and repose. That is the great art, the great science, and Yoga teaches it.

The Yogis give the illustration of the turtle, or the tortoise, as they call it. It is symbolic of self-control. If you hit it with a hammer, it gathers all its limbs inside. No matter how much you may strike it you cannot make it come out and resist you. Same way it is with a human being who has gained mastery. Once he has entered his inner being, there is nothing from outside that can hurt him or destroy his harmony. He has found the secret of life. He knows that this body, no matter how much care we give it, will wither if severed from its Source; this mind, no matter how clever and well trained it may be, is bound to be weak and faltering, to make mistakes, unless it is in connection with the cosmic Mind. In fact, the whole purpose of Yoga is to keep body, mind, the entire being in perfect tune, in perfect connection with its Source.

Why should this seem unnatural, mysterious or dangerous? There is a class of people who have the notion that the ideas contained in Yoga are very dangerous, and there is another class who will run after it just because of the name and the idea of mystery connected with it. Both of these are unbalanced states of mind. God has given us rationalism; He has given us a sense of value, and it is just that sense of value which Yoga teaches. Again and again you have heard me say that it teaches the rhythm of life. Also it teaches a sense of proportion. Through this balancing of life, which is union with our cosmic Source, we learn all these things in right propor-

tion and in mighty rhythm. Even a small, struggling, insignificant person at once lifts up his head, and all his burdens roll off when he realizes that he has something great in the background of his life. Man grows stronger as he becomes united with that Source, and it is through Yoga that we learn consciously to find our union with it. We never find it accidentally. We have to cultivate certain thoughts, certain rhythm and harmony, not only sometimes but at all times. One who has learned the rhythm of life and always moves in rhythm, in his life there is no wastefulness.

A Sanskrit text from the Upanishads gives this simple definition of Yoga: That which teaches us skilfullness in thought and in action. Thought and action are inseparable. Whenever we learn the art of doing things in direct line, avoiding all useless motion and all waste, that is skilfullness. Therein the whole secret of life is contained. When the mind is focussed, when the interest is focussed, when the entire being has learned to be homogeneous,—hands, feet, mind, brain and aspiration,—then is man united with himself, and being united with himself he cannot be disunited from anything.

Thus the work begins in ourself. Whenever there is any trouble, physical or mental, we can know that we have within us the means by which we can correct it. We may sometimes receive a little outer help, a little upliftment from some one else, or even from nature; that is possible, but the final working out is in the individual life. When this is accomplished consciously and systematically and with a sense of wisdom, then what we gain becomes a permanent asset. In the midst of poverty and sickness, sorrow and difficulty, we have something which is invulnerable, something which no one can buy, which nothing can take away from us.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The infinite power of the Spirit brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon Itself makes of man a god. Manifest the Divinity within you and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

To kill one's fellow-creatures needs no great genius; but to calm a tempest by prudence and judgment is a worthy achievement indeed.—*Erasmus.*

If a man holds himself dear, let him watch himself carefully; the truth guards him who guards himself.

—*Dhammapada*

One who is devoted to Yoga, of purified mind, self-subjugated and a master of the senses, realizes his Self as the Self of all beings; though acting he is not tainted.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

This is an excellent foppery of the world: that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour —we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion.—*Shakespeare*

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.—*Proverbs*

The man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition and self-denial in unnecessary things, will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast.—*William James*

The mind which is free from the bondage of passions is a citadel.—*Marcus Aurelius*

PRACTISING LIFE

By Joseph Lhevinne

(One of the world's most famous living pianists)

By intensive study and with a properly focussed aim, anything within the realm of possibility may be accomplished. Of that I am sure, and I am equally sure that not one of us ever attains his birth-right, because we are mentally lazy when it comes to training the will. We don't mind spending an hour every day in some gymnasium to put our muscles in prime condition, but who ever heard of a mental gymnasium? It is so much easier to wish than to will. I became interested in the possibilities of this power we possess but use so little, after an experience on one of my tours. A few hours before the concert a tooth started to jump and broadcast pain. I could not find a dentist at that hour, so determined to play anyway. I said to myself: Just imagine you like it, and enjoy the sensation. And strange to say, as the concert progressed, the pain seemed to subside. Possibly it was the music, nevertheless the incident led me to study this great force and I found it just a method of practising life as one practises the piano—putting aside a certain portion of the day for thinking practice.

Thus, in time, one acquires the habit of concentration, reasoning, self-perception and self-control. Trembly nerves respond the speediest to this regime. You will soon find that you mind yourself, which really means that you are your will and that your mind is only the servant who takes orders. The sub-conscious mind is one of the greatest factors in life and we use it the least.

By all means use sometimes to be alone. Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear.—*George Herbert*

LONE WANDERER

By Swami Paramananda

Lone wanderer, rest thy feet—
There is no need of haste.
Refresh thy tired spirit
In the cool shade of surrender.
Do not strain nor run in feverish haste:
He is not far.
Miss Him not through haste,
Nor blur thine eyes through strain.

THE TREE OF VISION

From the Yoga Vasishtha Maharamayana

Vasishtha said:—Hear me now relate to you concerning the tree of *Samadhi* (supreme vision) which grows in the forest of holy people and is ever loaded with luxuriant foliage, flowers and luscious fruit. It is the soul's regret at the world which is the seed of *Samadhi,* and it grows of itself in the soil of the contrite heart of the wise. It is the duty of the well-taught man, after the sprouting forth of the seed, to preserve it always with the assistance of his two consorts—contentment and cheerfulness. He should then keep the vultures of desire and cupidity from darting upon and picking up the seed. The dust of vanity is to be swept away by gentle acts of piety, and the shades of ignorance are to be dispelled by the ineffable light of the sun of reason.

The tree of Godliness being nourished with the moisture of unworldliness attains its full height in the course of time. This tree shoots forth luxuriant branches of wisdom which stretch far and wide with their fresh verdure. These are the branches of frankness and truth, of constancy and firmness, of equanimity and unchangeableness, of calmness

and friendliness, of kindness, self-respect and renown. It spreads an awning shade of harmony; it stretches a quiet composure over the mind, just as an extensive cloud overspreads a still calm in the air. As the arbour of discrimination grows higher and higher day by day, it stretches a continuity of cooling shade over the hearts of men.

The deer-like mind, being tired with its wanderings in the desert of the world, finds its rest and refuge under this cool shade, just as a weary traveller, harassed from his very birth in his journey among men, comes to take his rest at last. The silent sage who is full of divine grace attains to a state of ineffable felicity such as the tired wanderer finds in sweet sleep after the turmoil of the busy world. Forsaking all his thoughts and desires he becomes free as the open air and sky. The soul which is liberated from its desires comes of itself into the possession of endless bliss by being dissolved in the Source of bliss, by means of meditation. It becomes conscious of holy light in itself; it loses the sense of its meditation and is wholly lost in that light, as a drop of clarified butter offered in sacred oblation, is burnt away in the sacrificial fire. Let the wise resort to and rest in that place where all meet in one self-shining unity. To the right understanding, the whole world with all its living beings appears as one with one's self; but men of dull understanding bear no mutual sympathy to one another. The knowledge of twain tends to difference and disunion betwixt man and man, but that of oneness leads men to fellow-feeling and union. Thus the tree of meditation produces of itself the fruit of knowledge.

God-vision is not far from him in whom love hath manifested its glories.—*Sri Ramakrishna*

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

II

OMAR KHAYYAM

(Literal translation of quatrains, by E. H. Whinfield. This article of the series will be concluded in the June number of the "Message".)

It is often the case with new movements struggling against prejudice and fanaticism for their very being, that their first apostles are more dynamic than mild, more denunciatory than gentle. They strike with sledge-hammer blows and with fierce scorn against opposing walls of ignorance, bigotry and hypocrisy, carving a way, as it were, for the more serene prophets who are to follow. Thus it was that Omar—thorn in the side of orthodoxy, scourge of smug respectability—became a voice in the wilderness for the Sufis. Many will deny this. "What!" they will cry, "Omar,—singer of love and wine, cynic philosopher, scorner of God,—to be classed as a religious enthusiast, a seeker for divine vision?" They will hold up the Rubaiyat which for so long, especially in the West, has been the skeptic's Bible, as incontrovertible proof to the contrary. It may come as a surprise to these to know that among the Persians Omar is generally looked upon as a mystic poet.

We of the West do not know the real Omar at all—in so far as his real self is revealed through his writings—most of us know only his partial reincarnation in the beautiful but misleading translation of Edward Fitzgerald. The Rubaiyat, as we are familiar with it, is far from being an exact rendition of the original. Put side by side with a literal translation it is hard to trace the source of some of the quatrains. Many lines were added by the translator, and the very verses which reveal the secret of Omar's faith were omitted. Every man sees only what is within

himself and can reveal only that. So it was that Fitzgerald colored Omar's verses with the hue of his own mind and simply failed to see anything beyond. The average reader of the original text would feel that Fitzgerald was amply justified in his interpretation. He was. But a more mystic reading is equally justifiable. The quatrains themselves are so contradictory, and so at variance is the sensuous, surface philosophy which they proclaim with what is known of Omar's life, that none dares dogmatize. It is with this recognition that the views of the present article are put forward. In a case where there is no solution and where scholars are as much at sea as laymen, any one can form his own conjectures without seeming presumptuous. Also, when it comes to spiritual experience the earnest seeker for practical realization, however humble he may be, can read its signs in the lives and words of others better, perhaps, than can a mere scholar or intellectual for whom mysticism is only a theory. We should remember that to gain an insight into Omar's mind we must take into account his environment—the influences physical, religious and spiritual beating upon him—as well as the current mode of expression of his times.

He was a native of Khorassan, the richest, most powerful and most cultured province of Persia. Nishapur, its foremost city, was his place of residence, and,—if we can accept negative testimony,—his place of birth. At least there is no authentic word to the contrary. He was simply accepted as a Nishapuri. Let it stand, then, that "somewhere amid the enchanted rose-gardens of Nishapur", as one chronicler puts it, "towards the beginning of the eleventh century of the Christian era, was born Ghiyas Uddin Abul Fath Omar Ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyami, the astronomer-poet of Persia." As to his family, contemporary evidence

is mute. We can infer that his father possessed adequate means, for he was able to send his son to be taught by Imam Mowaffik, the head of the foremost college or school of Nishapur, and a teacher renowned throughout the East. The fact that Omar could obtain admission into such an exclusive circle of learning bespeaks his cultural standing. His family name Khayyam or al-Khayyami, meaning "tent-maker", is not found among the Persians; but among the Arabs the name is fairly common. Early in the ninth or tenth century an Arab tribe known as *al-Khayyamis* was said to have existed and it is more reasonable to assume that Omar was a descendant of some fugitive member of this tribe than that he or his father were actual tent-makers.

Our first real glimpse of him is afforded us in the last will and testament of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Vizier to the Sultan Alp Arslan. This will is in the nature of an autobiography and among other things records a rather remarkable bond entered into by Nizam-ul-Mulk and his two bosom friends at Imam Mowaffik's school—Hassan Ibn Sabbah and Omar al-Khayyami. According to this bond whoever of the three outstripped the others in life's race was to do all in his power for the advancement of his two friends even to the extent of sharing with them his wealth and honors. Now it happened that Nizam-ul-Mulk rose swiftly to a preeminent position which he filled with great dignity. Omar, in the meantime, had been quietly prosecuting his mathematical and astronomical studies, apparently under some financial pressure, for we find him appealing to Nizam-ul-Mulk for a fulfillment of the bond. At once his old friend offered him a high official post, which, however, not being to the liking of the quiet and studiously inclined Omar, was replaced by a government annuity of

1200 gold pieces. This lifted from Omar's shoulders the material burden of things and left him free to develop his scientific and poetic genius unharrassed. By his life he repaid a thousand times over his indebtedness to his government.

Quite otherwise with the third friend Hassan. He likewise appealed to Nizam-ul-Mulk and was likewise given an important government position which, however, he used treacherously to further his own ends. Faced with exposure and punishment, he joined the sect of the Ismaillis and became the founder of the terrible brotherhood of Hassaniyehs or Assassins, through whose agency Nizam-ul-Mulk ultimately perished. Omar's former friendship with this despicable character was often used against him by his enemies. For Omar's long life of over a hundred years was a constant struggle against the forces of orthodoxy. Mohammedanism had gained such a strangle-hold on the people and on the government that it was dangerous to voice an unorthodox opinion, even in private. A close friend might well be a spy in the employ of the authorities. What safeguarded Omar from actual official interference was the tremendous eminence he attained as a scientist, and the protection afforded him by some of the greatest in the land, such as the Sultan Malik Shah the Seljuk who gave him much money to buy astronomical instruments and who used to invite him to sit beside him on the throne whenever Omar came to court.

Among the more ignorant masses he was regarded as a great astrologer and possibly somewhat feared. An ancient Persian manuscript records an instance of his prowess in this connection. The King sent a message to Omar, commanding him to choose auspicious days for a hunting expedition inasmuch as there should be no unfavorable

weather. Omar gave the matter careful attention. The day was selected, the king started forth, when suddenly the sky became overcast and rain threatened. "All present fell to laughing", reads the manuscript, "and the king desired to turn back. But Khaja Imam (Omar) said: 'Have no anxiety, for this very hour the clouds will clear away, and during these five days there will not be a drop of moisture.' So the king rode on and the clouds opened and during these five days there was no moisture, and no one saw a cloud." But the Chronicler had his own ideas about astrology, for he adds "Prognostication by the stars, though a recognized art, is not to be relied on and whatever an astrologer predicts he must leave to fate". Omar seems to have shared this opinion, for one of his quatrains reads:

> "The stars who dwell on heaven's exalted stage
> Baffle the wise diviners of our age.
> Take heed, hold fast the rope of mother wit.
> These augurs all distrust their own presage."

Omar's reputation as a scholar, however, did not rest on any such flimsy foundation as augury. He was first and foremost a mathematician and astronomer. At the command of Malik Shah, he, along with six others, reformed the existing calendar. The result, according to Gibbon, surpassed the Julian and approached the accuracy of the Gregorian style. He was also a physician of no mean skill, and, what counted most in Mohammedan eyes, a distinguished expounder of the Koran. Al Ghazali, the great Arabian philosopher, paid high tribute to Omar in this connection. They met more than once during Al Ghazali's visits to Nishapur and often exchanged opinions concerning obscure verses in the Scriptures. The *Nuzhat ul Arwah*, written two hundred years later, describes one of these encounters:

"One day Omar Khayyam, going to see the Vizier Abdul Rezak, he found there Imam Abdul Hassan al Ghazali, chief of the Readers of the Koran. The Vizier and the learned Imam were discussing certain disputed readings of various passages in the Sacred Book, when Omar entering, the Vizier greeted him with the exclamation, 'Behold the expert,' and appealed to him for his opinion. Omar then enumerated the versions of a great number of Readers, all of which he criticized unfavourably, and finished by quoting at length the only one with whom he agreed. Then said Al Ghazali, 'May God add such men to the number of the learned. Verily I do not believe any of the Readers could have remembered so many, not to speak of the philosophers.' "

This knowledge of Omar's—so essential for a scholar of Islam,— was not an unmixed blessing, however. Although it undoubtedly added weight to his utterances, it likewise marked him out in his heresies and helped draw down upon him the bitter enmity of the Orthodox world. His continuous travels for many years have been attributed to religious persecution rather than to a desire to extend his knowledge of men and affairs. Travelling was too difficult and too costly in those days to be undertaken without cogent reasons. Omar, always the student, sought retirement rather than the life of courts, and silence rather than discussion. It is recorded of him that he ever avoided argument. Fearless as he was, he had to hold his tongue and, in writing, to veil his real thoughts to a great extent for his very life's sake. In an effort to appear to fulfill orthodox requirements it was said that he even undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. In "The Book of the Learned Men", a thirteenth century document written by Ibn al Kifti, we find this portrait of him. Coming as it does, from an unfriend-

ly hand, the testimony it gives as to his life and learning is the more valuable.

"Omar al-Khayyami, Imam of Khorassan, was the most learned man of his day. Not only was he versed in all the wisdom of the Greeks, but he encouraged the search after the One and preached the elevation and purification of the soul through abstinence from the things of the flesh. He also taught the necessity of studying science according to the principles of the Greeks. The later Sufis have professed to find in his verses confirmation of their own doctrines, and have discussed them both in private and at public meetings. But their inner meanings are as stinging serpents to the Mussulman law, hence the men of his day hated him and exposed the secrets he fain would have concealed, so that, fearing for his life, he controlled his tongue and pen. He performed pilgrimages not from piety but from fear, and thus one of his evil secrets was revealed. . . . There was no equal to him in astronomy and philosophy; in these his name was proverb. Oh, that he might have escaped the wrath of God!"

A story is told of a Doctor of Law of Nishapur who used to come secretly at dawn to be instructed of Omar in philosophy, but who during the day, would denounce him as a heretic. Hearing of this, Omar summoned numerous drummers and trumpeters to his place. When the Doctor of Law came as usual, he bade them beat their drums and sound their trumpets. Naturally people came running from all directions. When a sufficient crowd had collected, Omar rose and addressed them, saying: "Men of Nishapur, behold your man of learning! Every morning at this hour he comes to me to be instructed in philosophy, then he goes his way among you and speaks evil words concerning me. If I am what he says I am, why does he come to me to be

instructed, and if I am not, why, then, does he speak evil of his teacher?" This is an illustration of the type of persecution Omar was called upon to endure.

(To be continued)

THE BUDDHA'S PITY

Translated by Arthur Waley

(From the "Upasaka Sila Sutra." Translated into Chinese from the Sanskrit in A. D. 428 by the Central Indian monk Dharmaraksha)

My children,

The Enlightened One, because He saw mankind drowning in the great sea of birth, death and sorrow, and longed to save them,

For this was moved to pity.

Because He saw the men of the world straying in false paths, and none to guide them,

For this He was moved to pity. . .

Because He saw them afraid of birth, old age and death, yet still pursuing the works that lead to birth, old age and death,

For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them consumed by the fires of pain and sorrow, yet knowing not where to seek the still waters of *Samadhi*,

For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them living in an evil time, subjected to tyrannous kings and suffering many ills, yet heedlessly following after pleasure,

For this He was moved to pity. . .

Because many born at the time of His incarnation had heard Him preach the Holy Law, yet could not receive it,

For this He was moved to pity.

THE INNER TREASURE

By William Law

(English Mystic, 17th Century)

Consider the treasure thou hast within thee: the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee as a spark of the divine nature which is to overcome sin and death and hell within thee and generate the life of heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God, within itself. Thou seest, hearest and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thine outward eyes; thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church and outward exercises; but there thou wilt not find Him till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart and thou wilt never seek in vain; for there He dwelleth, there is the seat of His Light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within thee is thine only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him but in that place where He dwelleth in thee. For though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thine inward faculties of understanding, will and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth in thee from whence all these faculties come forth as lines from a center, or as branches from the body of a tree. This depth is called the center, the fund, or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity, I had almost said the infinity of thy soul, for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the Infinity of God.

A GREETING

(A letter from "M", the author of "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna", to a Western woman devotee visiting in India.)

Many thanks for your kind and affectionate note. To me it was a voice from the far West singing forth the marvels that are being wrought by the Name of our beloved Master and Lord. Here, I could not help being convinced, was another soul who had, through His Grace, realized "the one thing needful, the good part that shall not be taken away, the Divine Love that passeth all understanding".

It is the Lord who has led you to India, the Land of realization, the Land of the Rishis or seers of God, the Land of the renunciation of all sense-enjoyments, the Land where *Niskama-Karma* (desireless work) has been preached from time immemorial, the Land of avatars, the Land of communion with the Infinite and the Eternal, the Land where God has repeatedly shown His wonderful love for His own and His anxiety to protect them, much as the hen protects her chickens with her wings.

Your kind visit to this home has been an inspiration to us,—to us who have been times without number taught by the Good Master to look upon woman, not only as a ministering angel at the time of trial and tribulation, but as a veritable manifestation of the Mother of the Universe, as another form of the Mother Divine. . .

We are very happy to learn that you spent some pleasant hours at the Temple of Dakshineswara, the blessed Shrine where the Master communed with the Mother without ceasing, realized Her Presence, talked to Her, and revealed Her and Her Life-giving Immortal words to His beloved disciples! May He shower His choicest blessings upon you and all other *Bhaktas* (devotees) of the far-off land of your birth is our constant prayer to Him.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AT DELHI

Report by Swami Adyananda

A special invitation was sent to Swami Paramananda by the citizens of the Imperial City of Delhi to attend there the Birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami, accepting, left for Delhi on the evening of the 24th of February, accompanied by another Swami from the Math (monastery). Arriving the morning of the 26th, they were received at the station by a large crowd and taken to Raisina, a quarter in the new extension of Delhi, where accommodations had been arranged for them. In the evening the Swami was visited by a group of local gentlemen who gathered round him in conversation for over an hour. Some lines of his poems were read and were much appreciated. The next morning began the real celebration, which continued for two days. On the first day's program the Swami spoke in the morning. At noon there were functions in connection with the celebration of the Birthday. In the afternoon at four o'clock a public meeting was held with a gathering of about two thousand people, under a durbar tent set up specially for the occasion. For over an hour the Swami addressed this audience on "The Universal Aspect of Religion and its Relation to Practical Life."

The next day held a very full schedule. The morning began with *kirtanam* (holy singing) and reading of Sanskrit verses. The Swami held an informal meeting, inviting questions from the audience. One gentleman rose and asked, "Can you, a *sannyasin*, a holy man, prove to me that your life of religion is better than mine without any religion?" In reply the Swami said, "I deny any claim of superiority of my life over that of any other." And added: "Religious temperament and tendencies are inborn in man, so it is impossible for one to say that he is not religious."

This man, as well as others, brought up some very practical questions, all of which the Swami answered satisfactorily. At noon about 700 *daridra Narayanas* (God in the form of the poor) were sumptuously fed.

In the afternoon was the main event of the day,—a meeting which drew a concourse of about four thousand ladies and gentlemen, among them many prominent leaders of India who were in Delhi attending the Council sittings. The proceedings began with the election of the Swami Paramananda to the Presidential chair. Mr. S. M. Bannerji, who holds a very high position in the government of India Service, introduced the Swami; he said: "The Swami's personality appeared so attractive to me that I urged him to be my guest at Delhi." After briefly describing the Swami's career in the West he paid a very high tribute to him for his simplicity, sincerity and love, saying, "I do not know whether the Swami is a saint; but his childlike simplicity has so much appealed to me that if simplicity is a qualification for saintliness, I boldly declare that he is, in my opinion, one of the greatest saints I have ever met."

The next speaker was Mrs. Sorojini Naidu, the famous Indian Nationalist, President of the last Indian National Congress, and also one of the best Indian poets writing in English. Following this lady, the Swami Adyananda, who accompanied the Swami Paramananda to Delhi, spoke in Bengali for the benefit of the ladies present who did not know English. Swami Paramananda followed. Rising from the Presidential Chair, the Swami confessed that he was no orator and that if the audience had come expecting high-flown speech from him they would be utterly disappointed. "Dealing with the life of Sri Ramakrishna", said the Swami, "we find simplicity and sincerity as the most fundamental and essential factors of religion." This was

the main purport of the Swami's speech. Thus the program very happily closed. The lectures given by the Swami on these two days having created a deep interest in the minds of those who heard them.

On Tuesday, March 2nd, the students and members of the teaching class of the Ramjas College (under Delhi University) invited the Swami to speak for them. He took as his subject, "Man-making Education" and spoke for over an hour, also reading some of his poems. The lecture made a great impression on the students, and at their request the Swami presented the College library with a complete set of his works. Later he went to the Bengali Club of Delhi where the members had arranged a reception for him and the presentation of an Address of Welcome. The Swami spoke there about two hours on his experiences in America and the West.

Sunday evening the Swami lectured on the "Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life", Mr. B. C. Pal, a very famous leader of the Indian National Movement, presiding. The next morning the Swami received visitors, a large number desiring to see him, as he was to leave Delhi that night. In the evening an open-air meeting was arranged in one of the public parks, where an Address of Welcome, written in very appreciative and devotional language by the residents of the Imperial City of Delhi, and printed on a beautiful piece of silk cloth, was presented to the Swami. The Swami, replying to the Address, spoke on *Sevadharma*, (Religion of Service). He spoke in English, his lecture being immediately translated by another gentleman into the local language. About two thousand people attended this meeting, among them being many prominent leaders of the different provinces of India. The Swami left for Calcutta that same night.

REPORT

The Easter-tide was, as usual, the culmination of spring activities at both the Boston and the California Vedanta Centres. Ananda-Ashrama seemed flower-decked for the occasion, for at this season it is veritably "Nature's Sanctuary", as Swami Paramananda has described it—"Shining with living radiance of beauty, sacred by its own virtue". A sunrise Service Easter morning seems inevitable in such an environment, especially as it has become a custom of the Californians. Several guests spent Saturday night at the Ashrama Community-House in order to be up betimes in the morning, and as early as five o'clock motors began to arrive. The Service was held, as last year, on the terrace in front of the Cloister, overlooking far-stretching valleys. The altar was ethereal with its burden of lovely flowers, crowned by a garlanded cross at the centre of which was the Word, the Aum, in Sanskrit. The music was in rhythm with the hour and the setting,—voices and violin blending with the early call of the birds. Clouds hung low, however, and the air was chill. Yet in spite of this there was a joyous gathering of people, some of whom remained for the morning and afternoon Services at 11 a. m. and 3:30 p. m. These were both well attended, although the rain began falling at breakfast time and kept up throughout the day.

One little incident during the second morning Service, made a happy impression on all who witnessed it. As the congregation sat in the Assembly Room of the Community-House, looking out through the many windows, suddenly a deer appeared and stood outlined on a ridge about two hundred yards away. It seemed symbolic of Ananda-Ashrama. Truly a spirit of peace was abroad—a spirit of fellowship, of universality, and of life that is ever new!

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JUNE, 1926

POWER OF INWARDNESS

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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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."
—Tryndall

Published Monthly except in August and September.

VOL. XV JUNE, 1926 No. 6

POWER OF INWARDNESS

Class Lecture by Swami Paramananda

IN the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna, the Lord says: "With these eyes of thine thou canst not see Me, therefore I give thee divine sight." Divine sight means inward gazing. We can never see truly without turning our mind within, and yet that is one of the last things we try to do. In our life, and life's experience we seem to think, feel and seek outwardly. When we have trouble, we look without,—we go to people and to places to find the remedy, not realizing that all our disturbances come from outer contact. This is very pronounced to-day in our modern life. We depend upon outer things to such an extent that if we are left alone, we feel desolate, lonely, helpless. What does it indicate? That we are growing more and more resourceless. Instead of feeling helpless and desolate, we should welcome that time of quiet, as giving us opportunity for inward gazing, for making our contact within, and instead of trying to find some diversion to kill time, we should be thankful that God has ordained a time for us to be with ourself.

The gift of inward gazing is far greater than all the riches we possess. What it unveils—what it gives to the individual can never be fathomed until we ourselves have entered that inner sanctuary. Then every part of our life

becomes filled with the radiance of light; there is no more uncertainty, no more indecision or wandering in darkness, no more possibility left for stumbling, because all is revealed by that light. That is why the wise man always first seeks to adjust his inner life, his spiritual being. And what is the result? His outer life becomes rhythmic and free from accident. There cannot be any accident in his thought or his action. It is through the inner that we govern the outer. Even science is coming to this philosophy. Therefore, we should make that the determining factor and realize that the Kingdom of Heaven is within.

If the inner life is impeded, nothing will fill the outer. Many accept this, they understand it intellectually, but they fear that this point of view will be detrimental to their material interest. When our intellectual and spiritual faculties are well organized and balanced, however, it is not likely that we shall suffer in the physical. A man to reach his highest efficiency must have this balancing. Sometimes when we are absent-minded, we think that we are becoming spiritual. It is not so. It is overpowering lethargy. People who are quickened spiritually do not forget anything. True spirituality means practical wisdom. In order to make ourselves fit for the higher place in spiritual life, we must make ourselves fit for the lower place. Here lies the danger. People take dullness for serenity, but these two are different as can be. We are bored by a dull person; we are rested by one who is calm and serene. One is full of light, the other of darkness.

The light must come from within. That is where spiritual life begins. Why is it that one person radiates a certain quality so that everything he touches blossoms with fruition and another person fails no matter what he does? You may say it is fate or that it is predestined. These are

only expressions. There is a definite reason for it. There are people whose minds are so scattered that they cannot move a step without dropping things and breaking them. This is an attitude of mind. They say, "excuse me" and again do the same thing. There is no reason for us to scatter our energies in this way and misrepresent ourselves. When we think that we are backward, inefficient or unsuccessful, we are misrepresenting ourselves. There is no need for it. As soon as we begin the ordering of our faculties, we find that the whole life becomes ordered, transfigured.

We are so overburdened. Our rooms are crowded, our whole life is crowded with things and we do not know how to utilize them. It is not possessions that benefit us. "What profits a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" There must be an inner ordering. It is not that we should make such radical change that we are indifferent to our outer life and possessions; what we need is readjustment and this we must work out in a practical way. Spiritual unfoldment does not mean that we have an easier or more contented life in the sense of an uneventful life; but it means that no matter what comes, no matter what the emergency, we have such deepening of understanding that nothing really matters. Thus a painful thing ceases to be painful. Elation, if it comes, does not have an unsettling influence upon us. We view life with different eyes. The spiritual life in its purest form, in its highest and best, is the living form. It becomes living in you and you become living through it. It is not enough merely to say, "Kingdom of Heaven is within," we must find it. When it is found it changes the whole tone of our life. A noisy person becomes quiet, a scattered person becomes poised, an idle person becomes quickened. It can transform human society.

There would be no calamities if every individual took time for going within. Often people who are overpowered by trying conditions want to be alone. How often we hear it said: "I wish I could be alone." We can either make opportunities for this, or through our mental attitude make is impossible. What does being alone mean? It means finding our own being, finding a point of contact with that divine inner resourcefulness. No one can do his best work till he has learned this. Until the individual life finds its point of contact with that inmost resource it cannot accomplish its utmost. This is a fact.

There can be no real expression of inspiration till we have wiped out self-consciousness. We must give our whole concentration. That is the great secret. Sometimes we see a genius coming out with some tremendous expression. We may think it is just chance. It is never a matter of chance. What we show in the outer life, either of success or failure, of beauty or ugliness, is the result of what we have evolved from within. We are responsible for it. We are preparing all the time for our blessings and for our misfortunes. The whole thing is determined by whether our thought, our attitude, our interest are incoming or outgoing. Through our outgoing tendencies we are not only made personally unhappy, but we see so much of evil and disorder in the world.

There is God's world and man's world. In man's world there is confusion. We do not know whom to trust because everything seems fluctuating and changing. If we fix our whole interest on the external, then we see nothing but this confusion and there is little possibility for bringing about any ordered state of mind. That is why we need to develop the ingoing tendency. There must be a foundation for our life, a very definite place where we can retire and

find our guidance. Every one of us can approach that Source, just like a child, with guileless simplicity. We should never shut our door against those aspects of life which quicken our inner faculties. A man cannot continue to live solely in outer life without breaking himself.

People often ask me the secret of health. The only secret I know is, "do not be filled with yourself." There must be other things to think of than your physical body, your desires, your appetites. Do not saturate your whole being with self. It is the cause of all our suffering and sorrow. There would be no war, no difficulties, no unhappiness in human families if people thought less of themselves. It is not by thinking of ourself that we save ourself; it is by means of inner unfoldment. As our mind goes deeper within, our attitude becomes poised and in our actions there is greater dignity. Also we are less inclined to be affected by outer happenings. A person who lives on the outside magnifies things. He thinks that people look on him with evil intent. We can magnify evil to such an extent that our life becomes a tremendous burden to us. We find no peace even in a jungle. We must learn to conquer this. It is an interesting thing in life that we cannot conceive anything other than our standard. The height where we stand determines the vision. One cannot stand on a low level and see beyond that level. We have to raise ourselves to a greater height to extend our vision.

You may say, we have no time for all this. Make time. For unless we work out these principles as they are related to our life, we are never going to find any peace or comfort. The secret of right action is to learn to do the greatest amount in the least time, and that comes from the inner faculties. We must cultivate the inner life. Every one wants happiness, helpfulness and peaceful mind; but

these things cannot be bought in the market, though there are those who advertise that they will give cosmic consciousness for so much, and some people believe them. Inner consciousness,—inner light—is something we must evolve. Take no chance; carry a light with you. If you are grovelling in the mire and some one says, "there is danger in the dark, carry this lantern," do you think it unpractical? Then why when a spiritual teacher comes and tells you, "walk in the light, keep this light burning," do you think that is unpractical?

What is this light? The light of love—the light of wisdom. "Love will conquer all your ills" is practical philosophy, but one must live it. What kind of love? That is something we must evolve in our own soul. This whole universe is made out of love, sustained by love. Often what we call hate is another aspect of love, misrepresented. Self-love leads to hatred, selfless love leads to love. When love is the opposing factor then other things vanish. Just like darkness and light. Philosophers use this simile. When we bring the light, the dark cannot live. We do not need to fight darkness, all we have to do is to keep a light burning. Love is the greatest factor. We cannot afford to be without God's love. We must keep an easy access open to that light, that love. People who surround themselves with gentleness of love have a far greater armour about them than anything else they can have. We make ourselves so invulnerable through understanding spirit that no matter what comes, no matter how we are misunderstood, it cannot react upon us.

When we draw within, nothing can touch us; we find such wonderful peace, such shelter within. This is the mark of distinction between the wise and the foolish. Gautama Buddha says: "Find that innermost within, where no

storms can reach," a place where nothing can mar our peace. A man who has found this, he does not lack anything. It is not a question of fancy or imagination. As we strive to contact it, our deepening consciousness will prove to us that the Kingdom within is not a theological statement, but a very real thing. Whatever leads us to it, that helps us to regain it, to realize it, is the greatest asset we can have. This is something we cannot afford to put aside.

We must find our contact with our Source. It is the way we replenish our life. When our life is disconnected from the Source, from the inner Kingdom, it is depleted. We should take no chance with our spiritual being. Life is never safe for us, unless we walk in the light. When a man has kindled his inward light and life, he not only has a blessing that is sufficing for himself, he brings light and comfort to others. For he who carries the Light of God, radiates it. He becomes a true child of Divinity.

I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance—this for the lack of a better word—I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away in boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words —when death was an almost laughable impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said, the state is beyond words.

—Tennyson

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Mencius said to the disciple Kaou, "There are the foot-paths along the hills; if suddenly they be used, they become roads; and if, as suddenly, they are not used, the wild grass fills them up. Now the wild grass fills up your mind."—*Chinese Teaching.*

What do you find within, O soul, my Brother?
What do you find within?
I find great quiet where no noises come.
Without, the world's din:
Silence in my home.—*Evelyn Underhill*

Passion is overcome only by him who has won through stillness of Spirit the perfect vision.—*Santi Deva*

Make the counsel of thy heart to stand; there is none more faithful unto thee than it. For a man's soul is sometime won to bring him tidings, more than seven watchmen that sit on high on a watch-tower.—

—*Wisdom of the Apocrypha*

He who is in the fire, and He who is in the heart, and He who is in the sun, they are one and the same. He who knows this becomes one with the One. . . The shrine which consists of the ether in the heart, the blissful, the highest retreat, that is our own, that is our goal, and that is the heat and brightness of the fire and the sun.

—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*

On earth we die. In heaven we die. In the highest heaven we die. It is only when we reach God that we attain life and become immortal.—*Swami Vivekananda*

Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing awe and admiration: the star-lit heavens above, and the Moral Law within.—*Kant.*

BLESSED COUNSELS

By Friar Giles

(A Spiritual Son of St. Francis of Assisi)

In humility the mind rests and reposes; patience is her daughter; holy purity of heart sees God, but true devotion tastes Him. If thou lovest, thou wilt be loved. If thou servest, thou wilt be served. If thou fearest, thou wilt be feared. If thou shalt do good unto others, it is fitting that others do good to thee. But blessed is he who truly loves and desires not to be loved. Blessed is he who serves and desires not to be served. Blessed is he who fears and desires not to be feared. Blessed is he who does good to others and desires not that others do good to him. But inasmuch as these things are very high and of great perfection, therefore the foolish can neither know nor attain them.

Three things are exceeding high and very profitable, and they who have acquired the same shall never be able to fall. The first is if thou bear willingly and with joy every tribulation which befalleth thee for the love of Jesus Christ. The second is if thou humble thyself every day in everything that thou dost and in everything that thou seest. The third is that thou faithfully love that highest good, celestial, invisible, with all thy heart; the which no man is able to behold with the eyes of the body. Those things which are most despised and reviled by worldly men are of a truth most acceptable and most welcome to God and to His saints and those things which are most loved and most honored and most pleasing to worldly men are those which are most despised and reviled by God and by His saints. This foul contradiction proceedeth from human ignorance and human wickedness; for wretched man loveth rather those things which he ought to hate, and hateth those things which he ought to love.

Once Friar Giles asked another friar, saying: "Tell me, most dear brother, hast thou a good soul?" The friar made answer: "This I do not know." Then Friar Giles said: "My brother, I would have thee know that holy penitence, and holy humility, and holy charity and holy devotion, and holy joy make the soul good and blessed.

PURIFY THE MIND

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

"Do not ruffle the mind. Control the mind, be not controlled by it. Surrender yourself to Him alone, your everything,—your body, mind and soul." Thus said the Swami to one who sat before him and then sang: " 'O my Mind-bird, why fly from tree to tree tasting different fruits? Make thy eternal nest on One Who can offer thee the greatest fruit.' To transcend the mind is fully to manifest the intellect. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the pure mind and the pure Self are one. The mind gets purified as soon as its worldly character is destroyed. A pure mind is that which, fully believing in the unity of Self, sees the same *Atman* (Supreme Self) in all and deals with them accordingly. In the Gita and the Upanishads you will find that words meaning 'steady' and 'well-balanced' are repeatedly used. Such a state happens when the mind has become pure. If you succeed in purifying the mind, everything is set right. The pure-minded have things pre-arranged for them in the external world.

"One must keep out attachment. All the trouble is due to love being centred on specific objects. When you dive into the Ganges you don't feel any weight, although there are tons of water overhead. But one feels so burdened when one places a cask of water on one's head! Even the spine may give way. You may love all the beings in the

world and not be at all under bondage, but the moment you allow your love to be centred on any special object, you are bound. If you can get rid of these loads, then only you can attain to peace and liberation. Constant discrimination sharpens the intellect. Truth surrenders itself to a man who is always discriminating to attain it. There is a gulf of difference between compassion and attachment. A *sadhu* (holy man) must have compassion and not attachment—the idea of 'me' and 'mine'—for that is the root of all bondage. Look to the *Atman,* not to the body. Practise to have the mind ever fixed on the *Atman.* 'One gets attached to objects by constantly thinking of them. From attachment comes longing, and from longing anger.' Anger is a concentrated form of lust. It makes one lose one's head completely. Lust does not so absolutely overwhelm the mind. Never think of transient things. That way you can escape attachment.

"Even saints may slip and become bound. Self-exertion is what is needed to snap through bondage. It is self-exertion that brings about quick results; otherwise there is no knowing when the success will come. It is in the human body that the gates to emancipation open. So every man should be on his guard and make a good use of his life. Enjoyment that one is after is possible in other bodies also, but emancipation is not. What we know we must bring into practice at least once. Sri Ramakrishna practised everything three times. Through practice new knowledge comes. Do something—practise! Bondage and freedom are both in the mind. *Atman* is beyond mind. Try to live with those who have mastered the mind. If you cannot live with them, think of them. Mind controls mind. The mind can be concentrated in many ways, through meditation, singing, reading, etc. Always watch your mind. Be the

master of senses and mind. There is a place even in this body where the mind being pitched, one can be perfectly at ease. What is required is a change of the angle of vision. No escape from trials and difficulties by flying from them."

Towards evening a party of pilgrims came to see the Swami. One of the men remarked that meditation is dangerous without a *Guru* (teacher). The Swami did not agree with him. "*Pranayama* (breath control) is dangerous without proper instruction," he said, "but not meditation. In the sixth chapter of the Gita you will find instructions for meditation. When the mind gets concentrated, the breath also becomes even. He who realizes the Lord within, finds Him without too. One can explain a thing if only one has a clear grasp of it, which is the outcome of concentration. Better still is meditation. At Srinagar I used to meditate on the Upanishads. It was a charming occupation. In this way eight Upanishads stuck in my memory. What is meditation but great absorption in a subject? By concentrating on a subject, its inner secrets come out of themselves. First you have to prepare the mind. After that, any subject to which you may apply it, will stand explained. The method of controlling the mind is by seriously watching it for some length of time. It can be done both by love and by discipline, according to circumstances. The mind should be under your control—it must not be allowed to ride on you, for then the tables will be turned.

"Whatever one has the least attachment for, gives the mind a loop-hole to direct you as it pleases. You become a slave to it, which is not the case if you are unattached. Lust, attachment and the like are one and the same thing, varying only in intensity. One must turn the mind away before it gets attached to any object. Otherwise it is an

impossible task. 'Through whatever reason, the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from that, bring it under the subjugation of Self alone.' With unflagging perseverance the mind must be again and again brought back to the *Atman*. It is the nature of mind to be fickle and restless, like a naughty child that has to be pulled back by the ear to its studies. Of course repeated and incessant efforts are necessary, but at last the mind will come under your control and remain calmly fixed on the *Atman*. Then you realize the Self as pervading everything. You find that He alone exists, nothing else. And that is called the state of Transcendental Consciousness."

SPIRIT OF GOD

By Sir Thomas Browne

There may be, for ought I know, an universal and common Spirit to the whole world. It was the opinion of Plato, and it is yet of the Hermetical philosophers. If there be a common nature that unites and ties the scattered and divided individuals into one species why may there not be one that unites them all? However I am sure there is a common Spirit that plays within us, yet makes no part of us; and that is, the Spirit of God, the fire and scintillation of that noble and mighty Essence. . .This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters and in six days hatched the world. This is that irradiation that dispells the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whosoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this Spirit, though I feel his pulse, I dare not say he lives; for truly, without this, to me there is no heat under the tropic, nor any light, though I dwelt in the body of the sun.

DESERT-NIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

This star-strewn canopy o'erhead,
Covering vast expanse of space,
Alluring our gaze to limitless vision—
The play of light and shade,
Seen and unseen,
The strange and mysterious drama of life,
enacted in unspoken words,
Make us dumb with wonder,
And our mind still with unfathomed thoughts.
Our soul cries out in dumb ecstasy:
O wonder of wonders!
O beauty of creation!
O boundless life!
I, a part of Thee,
And Thou, my origin!

HOURS OF THE SOUL

By Walt Whitman

The Night

I am convinced there are hours of Nature, especially of the atmosphere mornings and evenings, addressed to the soul. Night transcends for that purpose, what the proudest day can do. Now, indeed, if never before, the heavens declared the glory of God. It was to the full sky of the Bible, of Arabia, of the prophets, and of the oldest poems. There in abstraction and stillness . . . the copiousness, the removedness, vitality, loose-clear-crowdedness of that stellar concave spreading overhead, softly absorbed into me, rising so free, interminably high, stretching east, west, north, south—and I, though but a point in the centre below, embodying all.

As if for the first time, indeed, creation noiselessly sank into and through me its placid and untellable lesson, beyond—O, so infinitely beyond!—anything from art, books, sermons, or from science, old or new. The spirit's hour—religion's hour—the visible suggestion of God in space and time—now once definitely indicated, if never again. The untold pointed at—the heavens all paved with it. The Milky Way, as if some superhuman symphony, some ode of universal vagueness, disdaining syllable and sound—a flashing glance of Deity addressed to the soul. All silently—the indescribable night and stars—far off and silently.

The Dawn

This morning between one and two hours before sunrise, a spectacle wrought on the same background, yet of quite different beauty and meaning. The moon well up in the heavens, and past her half, is shining brightly—the air and sky of that cynical-clear, Minerva-like quality, virgin cool—not the weight of sentiment or mystery, or passion's ecstasy indefinable—not the religious sense, the varied All, distilled and sublimated into one, of the night just described. Every star now clear-cut, showing for just what it is, there in the colorless ether. The character of the heralded morning, ineffably sweet and fresh and limpid, but for the esthetic sense alone, and for purity without sentiment. I have itemized the night—but dare I attempt the cloudless dawn? (What subtle tie is this between one's soul and the break of day? Alike, and yet no two nights or morning shows ever exactly alike.) Preceded by an immense star, almost unearthly in its effusion of white splendor, with two or three long, unequal spoke-rays of diamond radiance, shedding down through the fresh morning air below—an hour of this, and then the sunrise.

The East

What a subject for a poem! Indeed, where else a more pregnant, more splendid one? Where one more idealistic-real, more subtle, more sensuous-delicate? The East, answering all lands, all ages, peoples; touching all senses, here, immediate, now—and yet so indescribably far off—such retrospect! The East—long-stretching—so losing itself—the orient, the gardens of Asia, the womb of history and song—forth issuing all those strange, dim cavalcades. . . Always the East—old how incalculably old! And yet here the same—ours yet, fresh as a rose, to every morning, every life, to-day—and always will be.

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

III

OMAR KHAYYAM

(Literal translation of quatrains, by E. H. Whinfield)

Fortunately for Omar, he was blessed with an abiding, if somewhat ironic, sense of humor which must have done much to lighten for him the weary weight of life. One delightful anecdote reveals this. It tells of a donkey with a load of bricks, which refused to enter the courtyard of a seminary where Omar was seated with his pupils. After watching the futile attempts of the workmen to get the stubborn little beast to move, Omar, smiling gently, approached the donkey and repeated some verses to him, at which he pricked up his ears and started along. On being questioned, Omar, probably very gravely, replied: "The soul of this donkey at one time occupied the body of a former teacher in this seminary and he refused to enter until he found he met with recognition on the part of his equals," which to the serious-minded means that Omar

believed in the possibility of a man becoming a donkey, or, to put it philosophically, that he held to the transmigration of souls.

As a matter of fact, Omar did not dogmatize concerning any belief. Like all great philosophers, he looked existence squarely in the face, but made no claim to possessing a key to the enigma. Never for one moment, is he a skeptic, however. Never for one moment does he question the existence of one infinite inscrutable Being. We may be helpless pawns upon the checker-board of life, but there is always the great Player. We may be balls hither and thrither driven, but He who drives us on, "He knows, He knows!" It was this unshakable belief of his in the Absolute One who moulds men's lives as a potter moulds his clay, which made of Omar a fatalist, a rebel and a worshipper; likewise it caused him to be unwaveringly humble with the basic humility of the wise.

"My critics call me a philosopher,
But Allah knows full well they greatly err;
I know not even what I am, much less
Why on this earth I am a sojourner.

The world will last long after Khayyam's fame
Has passed away, yea, and his very name.
Aforetime we were not, and none did heed,
When we are dead and gone 'twill be the same.

Who was it that did mix my clay? Not I.
Who spun my web of silk and wool? Not I.
Who wrote upon my forehead all my good,
And all my evil deeds? In truth not I."

If, as the Upanishads say, "He who thinks he knows It, knows It not, and he who thinks he knows It not, knows It," then Omar must have been close to final knowledge.

"What eye can pierce the veil of
God's decrees,
Or read the riddle of earth's destinies?
Pondered have I for years three score and ten,
But still am baffled by these mysteries."

Or as he puts it in another great poem of his: "The Wisdom of the Supreme":

> "The world is Thine, by Thee it rose,
> By Thee it ebbs, by Thee it flows.
> Hence worldly lore! By whom is wisdom shown?
> The Eternal knows, knows all, and He alone."

Thus on one side of being Omar faced a Power, infinite and absolute; on the other side, a universe, living, sentient, endless as God, yet impermanent as a cloud,—a universe whose very atoms seemed to bleed with the agony of change. This twin concept formed the background of his life and philosophy. It plays through every line of his poems.

> "The joyous souls who quaff potations deep,
> The saints who in the mosques sad vigils keep,
> Are lost at sea alike, and find no shore,
> One only wakes, all others are asleep."

This human life which seems so real to us is but of the fabric of dreams: *Maya*, illusion,—nothingness!

> "You see the world, but all you see is naught,
> And all you say, and all you hear is naught,
> Naught the four quarters of the mighty earth,
> The secrets treasured in your chambers, naught."

For all is naught save One; no self exists save One; nor "you," nor "he," nor "I" exist, but only One. Yet "you," and "I", and "he" trapped in this fleeting dream, tricked by this seeming real, what shall we do?

> "O live this present moment which is thine,
> Seek not a morrow, mourn not yesterday!"

cries Omar. The present—that vanishing-point between the future and the past—is all we have. And what if it should be our vanishing-point into Infinitude?

> "Drink wine! and then as Mahmud thou wilt reign,
> And hear a music passing David's strain:
> Think not of past or future, seize to-day,
> Then all thy life will not be lived in vain.

Peace! the eternal "has been" and "to be"
Pass man's experience and man's theory;
In joyful seasons naught can vie with wine,
To all these riddles wine supplies the key.

What time my cup in hand, its draughts I drain,
And with rapt heart unconsciousness attain,
Behold what wondrous miracles are wrought—
Songs flow as water from my burning brain."

The question now arises: was this wine of which Omar sings the actual juice of the grape? Was this joy which Omar vaunts, the bitter-sweet, ever-fleeting joy of the senses; or did he mean Something far deeper, Something which these symbolized,—a draught from an eternal cup, —divine intoxication which is never-ending bliss? Love and wine, these have ever been the accepted symbols of mystic experience, why then should Omar not use them as such, compelled as he was to hide his real heart? Did he mean to hide it from all, or did he write merely for those who had eyes to read, as in this quatrain?

"When false dawn streaks the east with cold grey line,
Pour in your cups the pure blood of the wine;
The truth, they say, tastes bitter in the mouth,
This is a token that 'the Truth' is wine."

It may be that Omar does not always use it in that sense, however.

The Rubaiyat has been called a mirror of passing moods. It is more than that. It is the summing up of a life's experience written we are led to think when that life had nearly reached its term, for in one verse, at least, Omar refers to having touched the century mark. Its quatrains are a record of his reactions to those two great, fundamental facts of which we have spoken: the allness of the One, the nothingness of the many, and, in addition, to the poignant, human facts of joy and pain, of ignorance and cruelty, of laughter, love and death. The Rubaiyat is the

voice of a noble soul, torn with pity for the helplessness of men, filled with fiery scorn for what is false and harsh and dissonant in men—for vice concealed by men beneath the cloak of cant, hypocricy and pride. Thus it is that in open defiance of "those hypocrites who build on saintly show," he sings sometimes of human, sensual love, of actual wine, of joys forbidden by the Mussulman law on earth, but promised good Mohammedans as their reward in Paradise:

"In Paradise, they tell us, Houris dwell
And fountains run with wine and oxymel:
If these be lawful in the world to come,
Surely 'tis right to love them here as well."

Ah, how this soul abhorred hypocricy! Let the world, if it would, think him profligate! Better that than play the saint. There is One who knows, One whom no sham can trick.

"The heavenly Sage, whose wit exceeds compare,
Counteth each vein, and numbereth every hair;
Men you may cheat by hypocritic arts,
But how cheat Him to whom all hearts are bare?"

For Omar there was a greater sin than drunkenness. It was lack of love, lack of feeling for one's fellow-man.

"Blame not the drunkards, you who wine eschew,
Had I but grace, I would abstain like you,
And mark me, vaunting zealot, you commit
A hundredfold worse sins than drunkards do.

Hear now Khayyam's advice and bear in mind,
Consort with revelers though they be maligned,
Cast down the gates of abstinence and prayer,
Yea, drink and even rob, but oh! be kind!

Whate'er thou doest, never grieve thy brother,
Nor kindle fumes of wrath his peace to smother;
Dost thou desire to taste eternal bliss,
Vex thine own heart, but never vex another."

Omar's was a living creed, if creed it can be called, a creed of kindliness, of love and of overwhelming pity. Because of this pity he sadly, often cynically, arraigns the Author of the drama, yet, at the next moment cries:

"O Thou! who knowest the secret thoughts of all,
In time of sorest need who aidest all,
Grant me repentance and accept my plea,
O Thou who dost accept the pleas of all."

This deeper note sounds over and over again, a note of passionate yearning for that One whom he proclaims as both the Spectator and the Spectacle.

"My body's life and strength proceed from Thee!
My soul within and Spirit are of Thee!
My being is of Thee and Thou art mine
And I am Thine, since I am lost in Thee!

Although the creeds number some seventy-three
I hold with none but that of loving Thee;
What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin?
Thou'rt all we need, the rest is vanity."

Is this the faith of a sensualist? Could he who scorns even the joys of heaven find solace in a wine cup? He sought not heaven but the One, and having visioned that One all else seemed chaff.

"In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule,
But they who master Allah's mysteries,
Sow not this empty chaff their hearts to fool.

Some hanker after that vain fantasy
Of Houris feigned in Paradise to be,
But when the veil is lifted they will find
How far they are from Thee, how far from Thee."

No! Omar's vision of the Ultimate never wavers. Though he may rebel, though he may deride, though he may fling his sensuous lines in the face of all the schools and even in the face of God, he holds fast to that faith. In his own words, "One as two he ne'er misreads," therefore he never despairs of grace.

Whoever thinks that such a mind could evolve a cheap, licentious philosophy, only measures his own depth. True, life with its beauty and its pain filled Omar's heart to the brim. True, for him there was more reality in a drunkard deep in wine, in the intoxication of human love than in a

harsh and sterile piety; but renunciation it was that gave him the power to feel and the vision to see. He was a poet, and his poetic soul thrilled to the poignant loveliness of ever-dying things, yet in line after line he reveals that his true life was a stripping clean of self, of everything save God.

"O heart! when on the Loved One's sweets you feed,
You lose yourself, but find yourself indeed;
And when you drink of His entrancing cup
You hasten your escape from quick and dead.

Think not I am existent of myself
Or walk this blood-stained pathway of myself;
This being is not I, it is of Him.
Pray what and where and whence is this 'myself'?

O Lord! from self-conceit deliver me,
Sever from self and occupy with Thee!
This self is captive to earth's good and ill,
Make me beside myself and set me free!"

Does it take much vision to see that within the cup of the quatrains was dissolved a pearl of great price?

"Soon shall I go, by time and fate deplored,
Of all my precious pearls not one is bored;
Alas! there die with me a thousand truths
To which these fools fit audience ne'er accord.

In drinking thus it is not my design
To riot or transgress the law divine,
No! to attain unconsciousness of self
Is the sole cause I drink me drunk with wine.

The more I die to self, I live the more,
The more abase myself, the higher soar;
And strange! the more I drink of Being's wine
More sane I grow and sober than before.

Man is a cup, his soul the wine therein,
Flesh is a pipe, Spirit the voice within;
O Khayyam have you fathomed what man is?
A magic lantern with a light therein."

Only when all thoughts of sense and self fall away in divine ecstasy does man attain his true being. This is *Samadhi*, this is *Nirvana*, this is union with the Divine; but the path to it is narrow and few there be who enter thereat.

"If you have sense, true senselessness attain,
And the Etern Cupbearer's goblet drain.
If not, true senselessness is not for you—
Not every fool true senselessness can gain."

If by the term "wine" Omar means merely the juice of the grape, then the following quartrain is not clear; but if divine communion is meant, then its import becomes plain:

"All night in deep bewilderment I fret,
With tear-drops big as pearls my breast is wet;
How can I fill my cranium with wine,
How can it hold wine, when 'tis thus upset?"

The disturbed mind has no trouble in holding wine; but it cannot hold God—it cannot commune with Him. Are not these the words of one who has left theory behind and is entering into a world of ever deepening realization, a world that cannot be too openly proclaimed? More than once Omar touches upon this need for concealment.

"There is a mystery I know full well,
Which to all, good and bad, I cannot tell;
My words are dark, but I cannot unfold
The secrets of the 'station' where I dwell.

To knaves Thy secret we must not confide,
To comprehend it is to fools denied,
See then to what hard case Thou doomest men:
Our hopes from one and all perforce we hide."

So rich is the Rubaiyat in these verses which reveal the deep mystic intent of Omar, that it is a pity they cannot all be given here. Some are clearly outspoken, others are full of subtle implication as in the following, touching upon the "Truth", a Sufi term for God:

"The 'Truth' will not be shown to lofty thought,
Nor yet with lavished gold may it be bought;
But if you yield your life for fifty years,
From words to 'states' you may perchance be brought."

That is, from words or theories to actual states of being, what else? At-one-ment with Deity and nothing less was what this poet craved. He was old and weary, it is true, this often is revealed in his lines; but deeper than the cry

for rest was the cry for release from the never-ending round of existence.

> "I never would have come had I been asked,
> I would as lief not go, if I were asked,
> And to be short, I would annihilate
> All coming, being, going were I asked!"

Do we not hear in this an echo of the prayer that rises from every Hindu heart: "O Thou Eternal One, deliver us from the endless round of births and deaths!" Everything must have its end, good and ill, joy and pain, heaven and hell, therefore why seek peace in the changing?

> "Suppose the world goes well with you, what then?
> When life's last page is read and turned, what then?
> Suppose you have a hundred years of bliss,
> Yea, and a hundred years besides, what then?"

In the face of this evanescence what should be our attitude? Omar tells us:

> "Souls that are well informed of this world's state,
> Its weal and woe with equal mind await:
> For be it weal we meet or be it woe
> The weal doth pass, and woe too hath its date."

and he adds this bit of practical advice for the long-faced:

> You know all secrets of this earthly sphere,
> Why then remain a prey to empty fear?
> You cannot bend things to your will, but yet
> Cheer up for the few moments you are here."

Can one imagine such a soul deliberately attaching himself to the things of the senses?

No Hindu could express the *Sannyasin* ideal of complete renunciation more emphatically than Omar, when he says:

> "If you seek Him abandon child and wife,
> Arise! and sever all these ties to life;
> All these are bonds to check you on your course,
> Arise and cut these bonds as with a knife!"

And finally, lest men misinterpret the love that he praises, he writes:

"This worldly love of yours is counterfeit,
And like a half-spent blaze lacks light and heat,
True love is his, who for days, months and years
Rests not, nor sleeps, nor craves for drink or meat.

My true condition I may thus explain
In two short verses which the whole contain;
From love to Thee I now lay down my life
In hope Thy love will raise me up again."

In that love, after a century of living, Omar Khayyam "veiled his countenance in the dust" and was buried in a spot where the trees shed their blossoms on him twice a year, thus fulfilling a prophecy he himself had made at the city of Balkh, a prophecy which seemed at the time impossible of fulfillment because of Mohammedan burial customs. One of his pupils writes: "His tomb lay at the foot of a garden wall, over which pear trees and peach trees thrust their heads, and on his grave had fallen many flowers. Then I remembered that saying in the city of Balkh, and I fell to weeping, because on the face of the earth and in all the regions of the habitable world, I nowhere saw one like unto him. May God (blessed and exalted as is He) have mercy upon him by His grace and favour."

A philosopher turns his back upon illusion, but a poet sees through it as through a veil and beholds eternal beauty. Because of Omar, love, birds, blossoms, dawn, the very dust, are filled with wonder. This poet by his vision of the One makes even the jug within our hands seem living, and this little life of ours he calls "a breath blown from vasty deeps" to seem no other than the Breath of God. Brave, unflinching soul! May his comings and goings find their term at last in those great deeps; may his heart's prayer be answered: "O Thou, who out of nothing didst create all things, uplift me from this nothingness to Thine own glory."

(To be continued)

REPORT

BOSTON

On April 21st, the Vedanta Centre of Boston gave a reception to the Hindu Students' Association, at the Centre's new home, 176 Marlboro Street. There were about eighty present, students and their friends,—young people of various races and traditions who exchanged song, story and experiences in a spirit of international camaraderie. At the close refreshments were served. It was a happy evening for all and none went home without feeling richer for this wider contact.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ananda-Ashrama has steadily carried forward the work of development during Swami Paramananda's absence in India. The new Community House is gradually evolving a garden,—pergolas, lawns and stone walls having taken the place of builders' debris, to the surprise and delight of Sunday visitors who each week see a decided change. It is through the loyal and devoted labour of consecrated workers that these changes are being brought about, not to mention other things, essential to the maintenance and development of an extensive property like the Ashrama. Only those who saw it at the beginning can appreciate all that has been accomplished by tireless effort, during these past three years.

INDIA

From India there has been little detailed news as to Swami Paramananda's activities. Through letters we learn of the wonderful reception given him at Dacca, his home district, where friends of his childhood vied with each other to do him honour. The greatest event, however, of the Swami's sojourn in his Motherland, was the Convention held at the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission

at Belur, near Calcutta, when several hundred Swamis from all over India assembled. It was the first time in the history of the Mission that such a gathering had occurred and it brought into close contact the oldest workers and the youngest, direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, as well as the latest members of the Order, all united by the great principles of love, renunciation and service. It was Swami Paramananda's privilege to read before the Convention the Address of Swami Shwananda, venerable President of the Mission, and we take pleasure in giving a few of the closing paragraphs, so that the West may share with the East the spirit of this unusual and holy occasion. After reviewing in a comprehensive way the ideals for the Ramakrishna Mission as laid down by the Swami Vivekananda at its inception, the Presidential Address read as follows:

"Religion is the great mission of India. This is the only gift that we can bestow on the world. From time immemorial religious ideas flowing from this land have been contributing their quota to shape the civilizations of the world. We are still alive in spite of the many vicissitudes that have befallen this unfortunate race during the last ten centuries, only because religion forms the back-bone of our life. With us God is the central pillar round which move all other schemes of life individual or collective. True greatness is estimated here in the scales of spirituality. . . Incarnations and Prophets have come before in numbers to show us light in the midst of darkness, to elevate us from national depression. But darkness of former ages that necessitated the advent of Prophets, compared with the darkness that has overwhelmed us at present, may be said to be light itself.

"Through thousands of years' chiselling and modelling, the lives of the great prophets of yore come down to us;

and yet, in my opinion, not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything. That great personality is behind you. Our forefathers performed great deeds, you must do greater deeds still. Each one of us will have to believe that everyone else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect, has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves. Putting your faith in our Lord, everyone of you can say, 'Let me stand where I am and I shall move the world.'

"I exhort you with all the earnestness at my command not to be disturbed or discouraged by momentary failures. Failures are but the stepping-stones to success. Viewing success and failure alike, work on with unwavering faith and victory will be yours at the end. I only pray that your surrender may be complete. Be like the arrow that darts from the bow. Be like the hammer that falls on the anvil. Be like the sword that pierces its object. The arrow does not murmur if it misses the target. The hammer does not fret if it falls on the wrong place. And the sword does not lament if it is broken in the hands of its wielder. Yet there is a joy in being made, used and broken; and an equal joy in being finally set aside. . . Let the atmosphere of this Convention vibrate with a spirit of love and benediction. Let us, in conclusion, say with the great Indian sages: 'Sweet blow the winds and the rivers scatter sweetness! May the herbs and trees be full of honeyed sweetness! May night and morning yield us joy! May the dust of the earth be sweet onto us! May father Heaven give us happiness! May the sun shower bliss on us! May the cows yield us all-sweetness! Om Joy! Sweetness! Bliss!' "

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



NOT ISSUED IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER

JULY, 1926

DIVINE MIRACLES

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

Entered as second class matter, Feb. 14, 1924, at the Post Office at La Crescenta, Calif., Box 85, under the act of March 2, 1879.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Published Monthly Except in August and September

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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."
—Tryndall

Published Monthly except in August and September.

Vol. XV JULY, 1926 No. 7

DIVINE MIRACLES

By Swami Paramananda

"VERILY, I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Although these words of the Christ are consoling, although they are marked with high spiritual standard, they will not seem practical to the man of the world. How can he believe this? How can he expect a mountain actually to remove? Yet it is very definitely spoken, so definitely that there is no room left for doubt as to its meaning. If such a thing should happen—the moving of a mountain by faith—we would call it a miracle. What is a miracle? If we analyze, not merely with the superficial intellect, but with all the higher rationalism and spiritual qualities we possess, we shall find that the forces we are working with to-day, the forces that are creating their reactions in the world around us, these same forces, when they are directed through higher channels, will bring the opposite fulfillment. Not knowing this, we fail to recognize them and look upon such reactions as supernatural and miraculous.

The Christian Bible, as well as the other Bibles of the

world, are full of miracles. We might discard them as vague and indefinite imaginations of man's mind, but man has never been able to imagine anything other than what has existed somewhere at some time. Man has not such ingenuity that he can create with his imagination something out of nothing. He might enlarge on what is already existing, he might magnify it, but there is always a reason for every imagination, and there are reasons for all miracles. When a man directs his forces through doubt, suspicion, mental calculation and other elements of a similar nature prevalent in his mind, he brings about certain definite conditions as the result of his thoughts, and he looks upon these as physical or natural laws. It is quite natural for us to be sick, and it is quite natural for us to reach old age and die, because we have stamped these facts on our physical and our intellectual life as the accepted course of events. They are the sum total of our current thoughts. Every man and every woman is indulging in this way of thinking and is calling it the natural way; a man must think of his own interest, of his physical welfare and, at most, of the welfare of his immediate family.

Our thoughts are constantly revolving around those things which pertain to the flesh, to bodily life, thus limiting the adjunct of our mind as well as the possibilities of our intellectual and spiritual faculties. As a result of this, all our experiences are centred on the material plane, and because we are meeting them every day and in every turn, we call them the fulfillment of natural laws. If some one comes with a different viewpoint, with a different standard, with different hopes and expectations, and brings about another set of results, we are not able to account for them. We are astonished, we are bewildered,

and we call them miraculous happenings. There is, however, only one law which is operating in life, eternally operating,—the law of the divine Principle. When we learn to understand and to abide by this Principle, we find the natural fulfillment of that great law. For instance, hope, faith, love, spiritual fervour,—whenever a person exhibits these qualities he brings about conditions which seem to be miraculous.

We have very vague and visionary ideas in regard to spiritual principles. There are devout Christians who say that many things were possible in the life of Jesus that are not possible for any one else, because He was divinely appointed. But what made these things possible? Did He not ask every one to bring the same conditions into his own life. "Be ye perfect, therefore, even as your Father which is in Heaven." Did He not warn His disciples and followers again and again, even those few who had the courage and understanding to follow Him, that it is not the one who calls Me, Lord, Lord, Master, Master, by any means who enters into the kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of My Father. No one can ever become spiritual, no one can ever follow a high standard of living and bring betterment into his own life and into the lives of others without following at least some of these principles.

If we establish our interest upon things that are passing and perishable, we must expect perishable experiences in our life. Man believes with his whole fervour in the flesh, in material existence. It has hypnotized him, it has paralyzed his higher sensibilities; therefore, every incident of the flesh seems overwhelming, he cannot rise above it. Sometimes, vaguely and indefinitely, he may quote a sentence from the Bible, or from some great Classic, but he

has not the faith. Do you suppose we can carry anything unless we possess it? If we have that faith, whatever we desire, whatever we command, it will be fulfilled. One man comes and speaks glibly about some theory or idea, and it makes no impression on our mind; another man speaks perhaps of the same thing and at once we want to find out more, because of the fervour, the conviction he puts into it. Then there are souls who speak with such definite feelings that there is no uncertainty left, like the Christ when He said, "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed",—nothing indefinite about it.

What is this? Is it something dependent upon a creed that we must profess and that we must have faith in? No. It means coming in definite contact with certain real facts of life, and if we believe in them because they are based on our experience and vision, then nothing can go wrong in our life. Not only that, but we can bring light instead of darkness into the lives of others. In India we find certain types of people who are so definitely constituted that they would rather hold to the power of faith than to all the glamour of material conditions. They would rather embrace the life of poverty and follow the life of God than possess all the richness which the world can offer. Why? Because they have found a greater richness, a greater strength, and a more enduring life. One of the lessons we have to learn to-day is not to accept or follow a religion merely because we are born into it and cannot escape from it. Religion must become a vibrant, living fact in our life. We must live with it, walk with it; we must learn to know what we are doing, and why we are placed here. As soon as we have found our Father-Mother, the very root of our existence, that Absolute Being, that Word, as the mystics call It, why our strength is increased a

thousandfold. A man may say, "I want this and I want that," but he wants it for his own little happiness, his own little gain, and it does not come to him. Another speaks as did Christ, with that definite feeling, and at once we find his prayer is fulfilled because he has connected himself with a great Immensity.

Where shall we establish our faith? In this little flesh? In this little mind, in this little brain, in the capacity of our little hands? Or shall we place our faith in That which is the Source of our sustenance? According to where we place it, we find the measure of our success in life. We are left altogether free to choose. We are our own masters. We can give ourselves to the Ideal, or we can make ourselves slaves to this world and its events. We can so burden ourselves with life, that we are not even able to take care of our own needs. They overwhelm us and our mind becomes enshrouded with doubt and despondency. Again we rise up with the same consciousness, with the same mind, to a great height. It is not that we have to make a radical change in our life and habits, but we must have a definite grasp on spiritual principles if we would find fulfillment in life, otherwise we meet with disaster.

What others have done we can also do, and never for one moment think that we are asked to choose a vague and visionary path, or that we should simply fold our hands and sit thinking, "I have faith, I am going to move the mountain." It is not the morbid, not the calculating people, not those who are revolving round and round their petty self and its small interests who will ever realize the truth of this teaching, but only those who are fervent, who are active, who have given themselves to big things,—those who have expanded their life and consciousness and

have dared to touch Infinitude. How can we dare to touch It if we are always afraid of stepping out of our little self? We must make our choice. We can either choose the God-path, the path of faith, the path of love, the path which leads to constructive unfoldment, or we can choose the path of greed, of selfishness, of helplessness. We sometimes are helpless in our choice because we have not the power to choose something better. We have not the resolution, the courage, the steadfastness, and thus we fall into a snare of deception and defeat. In this way we bring all the existing conditions into our life.

When a person is under depression, when he is going through a state of confusion, the only way he can come out of it is not by speculation, doubt, suspicion and self-depreciation, but by turning his mind into another channel, by lifting himself to another sphere where he can stand and see what his needs are and how he can escape from the onslaught of circumstances. This means a definite working out, and not just an indefinite way of saying, I believe in this, or I believe in that. Our life must become established in facts. And what is the greatest fact in life? Life itself, the Source of life. It is not enough merely to come into existence and drag ourselves through life saying, "Well, there is nothing else for me to do." Every one of us who is here has been given a definite mission, but we cannot fulfill that mission simply because we have some intellectual training or a little bit of material resourcefulness.

Our greatest resource lies within, and he who finds his access there, his life blossoms forth, and we say, "Here is a man of miracle." He lays his hand upon the sick and destroys all illness; he speaks a word and at once a soul is quickened; he raises men almost from the dead,

and we call it miraculous. But such miracles are all about us. The Supreme One does not want us to be despondent; He does not want us to be doubting and destructive to ourselves and to others. How often He comes and knocks at our very doors and we refuse to wake up and see Him! The Light is right before us and we close our eyes. This means our misfortune.

People who are weighted with the slumber of material consciousness think that they are going to be saved by some miracle. They have the idea that something is going to happen over night to change their destiny. But things do not happen that way, and they never happen to those who are lethargic, unawakened and unprepared. We have to prepare for the great happenings of life, and we do this not through doubt and miscalculation, despondency and hatred, but through our finer qualities. Instead of doubt, we bring faith and hope; instead of hatred, we bring love. It is much easier for the Lord to find His access into that heart which is full of love than into that which is lacking it. There are certain conditions which bring fulfillment. A man closes all the doors and windows of his house, pulls down all the shutters and shades and says, "There is no sunlight." The only way he will have sunlight in his house is to rouse himself and open the doors and windows. Likewise the only way he will have sunlight in his soul is to open the doors and windows of his soul and let the light shine in. It will awaken him, it will bring healing, it will transform his life; his weakness will cease; and the indefinite quality of his mind will vanish, because he will see definitely, and seeing, he will believe. That is the way it is with us. We go begging that some one may perform a miracle and cure us of our ills, when the very remedy for those ills exists within us.

The foundation of real miracle is in man himself. When His disciples came with blind and miserable, how often Christ said: "Do you believe that I can do these things?" We can close the door altogether so that there is no power which can infuse us. We can make ourselves so impenetrable through doubt, through wrong attitude of mind, that no spiritual force can enter within us. Also we have the power to open ourselves, and through that openness of soul comes the great awakening, the blending power. No one can relate himself to better conditions without bringing a definite force for betterment into this world.

A man of faith, a man of hope, a man of courage, a man of love—he is a walking miracle. He performs miracles in the same manner as spring performs them after winter's devastation. Flowers and shrubs and trees spring forth with new life. Same way it is with our life. Sometimes through misconception we may sit in a corner, feeling that life is not worth living, but if we come in contact with one who has found the key of life, has touched the Essence, it quickens us. How lovely it would be in this world if we had more people with faith in God, faith in Divinity, faith in their own inherent power, people who through their faith, hope, courage and love could quicken the same faculties in others. What greater work can one do in this world? What greater miracle can one perform than to rescue a man who has lost his hold on life and is sinking because he does not know that he already possesses within himself the saving grace.

According to a Hindu parable, there was once a Brahman priest to whom a milk-maid every morning brought a supply of milk. Often she was delayed, however, and one day, the priest, very provoked, said to her: "Why do you come so late?" She replied, "Good Sire, the ferry

boat is not on time and the passengers detain me. But for that I would bring the milk every day with absolute punctuality." "Kind woman", said the priest, "people cross the ocean of life through faith, yet you cannot even cross this little river. Faith is the greatest power; if you only had faith you could cross it." She took this very strongly to heart. All that night she thought of his words, that one who possesses faith can cross the ocean of life and here was only a little river. The next morning she arrived on time with the milk and the morning following. This went on for several days till finally the priest noticed it and asked her: "How is it that you come now every day without fail?" "Did you not tell me," replied the milk-maid, "that with faith one could cross the ocean of life? I relied upon your word and walked across the river." The priest was amazed and thought, surely if a poor, ignorant woman can do this merely through my word, I can do it. So he went with her and as she began to walk on the water, he attempted to follow her, repeating the Name of the Lord, but at the same time carefully guarding his clothes from getting wet. Almost immediately he began to sink and she, seeing this, called to him: "You cannot walk on the water and not have faith, and if you have faith, then you cannot possibly take any precaution."

One who takes this in a superficial way will think it only a visionary story, but it has profound significance. When we have our whole being in our task, when we are not conscious of physical limitations, it is a very great asset; it rouses us from the slumber of doubt and despondency, and lifts us above our connection with the material world. Whenever we fasten our heart and soul to any ideal without any bias, without any division, without any conflict, it creates a tremendous force. Thus we find through-

out history that when a great teacher, a God-embued spirit, lays his hand upon another, upon one who opens his heart with simple faith, that one is redeemed and restored. We cannot analyze these things with the mind because they are not within the realm of the ordinary mind. It is altogether a different realm. We may come very close to it and yet not know we are there. It is what the mystics call the divine realm. The Scriptures say and declare it is the Kingdom within. We all possess this great heritage within us and yet we go on begging; moreover, we grow doubtful not only of God and humanity, but of ourselves. We cannot help but doubt ourselves, humanity and God when we have not the right principle.

If a man enters into this world with calculation and suspicion, he will draw things of that nature to him. He brings disaster upon himself and others, because that is the only reaction such thoughts can create. That one, however, who has fastened his heart and soul and mind to the divine Principle, he cannot touch any part, any life, anything in this world without bringing spiritual fruition. Do not hold these thoughts aloof as something vague and indefinite which in no way concerns you. You are a child of God, but to know it, to abide by it—that is what brings fulfillment. We cannot help but abide by it if we know it. Our inherent divine Principle will never fail to give us sustenance. It is that which transforms our life. But it is not the letter we should cling to. "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed": we may have that written right before our eyes, yet it will convey nothing unless our life has unfolded those qualities by means of which we become more and more conscious of the Divine.

We all want happiness, we all want health, we all want things that make for our betterment; but we can never find

them so long as we give ourselves to conditions which are changeable, which bring disease, doubt and affliction. Therefore, let us learn little by little to give ourselves to the Unchanging, the Absolute, the Word, deep within us, —not only within us, but without us and all about us. No one can be aware of That without being better, happier and more resourceful. We cannot be conscious of the higher without attaining a higher measure of happiness and power to do things. Through our faith we exalt ourselves, and through lack of it we defeat ourselves. In the world to-day it is quite the fashion not to believe in anything. There are some people who even take pride in being atheists. It is, however, the greatest defeat any man can have, when he is bound so absolutely by the glamour of the material that he fails to find his relationship with the Source of life. It is the empty shell of vanity and sooner or later he finds that he does not know anything.

Every one of us must try to find access into the Source of life. When we have found it, our weakness will cease, our doubts will vanish, and our despondent feelings will not exist any more. In their place we shall have a divine, a perpetual, an abiding happiness in such measure that even those who are sad and downcast will find peace through us, and our very word will cheer them and give them a fresh start. There is nothing so saving, so elevating, so life-giving as a man of faith, a man of love, a man of God, not in theory but in reality. It is this consciousness we must evolve. We are here for that purpose, and when we fail to evolve it, we impoverish ourselves. We may have great material wealth, we may have fine houses and nice clothes and great abundance of food, but they do not suffice. There is a void, an emptiness within. We may not confess it; we may try to hide it and say, "I have

everything;" we may even pretend a smile, but that emptiness is there and it is infectious. It can saturate a whole family.

The only way we can help ourselves and those who depend upon us is by not confining ourselves to this little shell of material life. We must find our expansion. We must make our contact with the Source of our being. We may think that we do not need it, but there is no man, no woman, no living creature who can do with less. Sooner or later every one comes to realize this. Without that great consciousness we are incomplete. With it we are invincible. Through it our power is enlarged, our capacity is magnified, our horizon of happiness so tremendously extended that it seems like a miracle. But it is not miracle, it is the fulfillment of higher laws.

NEW PARABLES OF JESUS

Discovered by Professors Hunt and Grenfell

Jesus saith: Except ye fast to the world ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God. . . . I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them and I found all men drunken and none found I athirst among them and my soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart.

Jesus saith: Wherever there is one alone I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

Jesus saith: Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and, having reached the kingdom, he shall rest.

Jesus saith: Ye ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in heaven? The fowls of the

air and all the beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea. These are they which draw you, and the kingdom of heaven is within you; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Almighty Father; and ye shall know that ye are in the city of God and ye are the city.

THE FOURTH PROHIBITION

From the "Gospel of Buddha"

Jotikha, the son of Subhadda, was a householder living in Rajagaha. Having received a precious bowl of sandalwood decorated with jewels, he erected a long pole before his house and put the bowl on its top with this legend: "Should a samana (holy man) take this bowl down without using a ladder or a stick with a hook, or without climbing the pole, but by magic power, he shall receive as reward whatever he desires."

And the people came to the Blessed One, full of wonder and their mouths overflowing with praise, saying: "Great is the Tathagata (the Buddha). His disciples perform miracles. Kassapa, the disciple of Buddha, saw the bowl on Jotikha's pole, and stretching out his hand, he took it down, carrying it away in triumph to the monastery."

When the Blessed One heard what had happened, he went to Kassapa, and, breaking the bowl to pieces, forbade his disciples to perform miracles of any kind.

Soon after this it happened that in one of the rainy seasons many bhikkhus (monks) were staying in the Vajji territory during a famine. And one of the bhikkhus proposed to his brethren that they should praise one another to the householders, saying: "This bhikkhu is a saint; he has seen celestial visions; and that bhikkhu possesses su-

pernatural gifts; he can work miracles." And the villagers said: "It is lucky, very lucky for us, that such saints are spending the rainy season with us." And they gave willingly and abundantly, and the bhikkhus prospered and did not suffer from the famine.

When the Blessed One heard it, he told Ananda to call the bhikkhus together and he asked them: "Tell me, O bhikkhus, when does a bhikkhu cease to be a bhikkhu?"

And Sariputta replied:

"An ordained disciple must not commit any unchaste act. The disciple who commits an unchaste act is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni (Buddha).

"Again, an ordained disciple must not take except what has been given him. The disciple who takes, be it so little as a penny's worth, is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"And lastly, an ordained disciple must not knowingly and malignantly deprive any harmless creature of life, not even an earth-worm or an ant. The disciple who knowingly and malignantly deprives any harmless creature of its life is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni. . . .

And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus and said:

"There is another great prohibition which I declare to you:

"An ordained disciple must not boast of any superhuman perfection. The disciple who with evil intent and from covetousness boasts of a superhuman perfection, be it celestial visions or miracles, is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"I forbid you, O bhikkhus, to employ any spells or supplications for they are useless, since the law of karma governs all things. He who attempts to perform miracles has not understood the doctrine of the Tathagata."

MY NEIGHBOUR AND MYSELF

By C. F. Andrews

(Reprinted From "Modern Review")

When I was quite young I was told by my mother the Golden Rule of life, to "love my God with all my heart and soul and to love my neighbour as myself." She used to impress upon me that this was the whole duty of man and that all the years of my own life would be too long to seek to fulfill it. When I grew older, I used to puzzle over the last part of the Golden Rule, and I had never fully understood it until I came out to India. For I used to ask myself: "How can one love another person only just in the same way that one loves one's own self?" I used to take the phrase "as myself" to mean to love other people like myself; and taking the word in that sense, I could not feel that this was quite strong enough. For instance, my own mother loved me evidently more than she loved herself. Was that extravagant love of my mother for me, her child, wrong? Was it a breach of the Golden Rule? Ought she to draw a line somewhere in the extravagance of her love? Somehow, this idea of limited love used to vex me, and I had an unquiet feeling about this quantitative standpoint of love. But when I came out to India the truth was suddenly revealed to me through the Upanishads, that I did not know truly the meaning of the original passage in my own Scriptures. The true meaning was this: That I should love my neighbour as myself, because he truly was myself. There was, therefore, no mere limited measure of love, no mere likeness between him and me, but identity.

I heard only recently a very beautiful story about the saint, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, how when he had realized this supreme truth of the Advaitam, and wished to carry it out in action, he used to go out at night time and

do the sweepers' work in the neighbouring places, removing the very filthiest things and the most repulsive, in order that he might truly identify himself with the sweeper and not merely talk about unity.

THE DIVINE DARKNESS

By Dionysius the Areopagite

(Unknown Christian Mystic, writing under name of the Areopagite about 500 A. D.)

What is the Divine Darkness?

Triad, Deity above all Essence, Knowledge, and Goodness; Guide of Christians to Divine Wisdom; direct our path to the ultimate summit of Thy Mystical Lore, most incomprehensible, most luminous, and most exalted, where the pure, absolute, and immutable mysteries of theology are veiled in the dazzling obscurity of the Secret Silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their Darkness, and surcharging our blinded intellects with the utterly impalpable and invisible fairness of glories surpassing all beauty.

Let this be my prayer; but do thou, dear Timothy, in the diligent exercise of mystical contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things sensible and intellectual, and all things in the world of being and non-being, that thou mayest arise, by Unknowing (that is,—realization transcending all finite knowledge) towards the union, as far as is attainable, with Him Who transcends all being and all knowledge. For by the unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and of all things, thou mayest be borne on high, through pure and entire self-abnegation, into the superessential Radiance of the Divine Darkness. But these things are not to be

disclosed to the uninitiated, by whom I mean those attached to the objects of human thought, and who believe there is no Superessential Reality beyond, and who imagine that by their own understanding they know Him Who has made Darkness His secret place. . . .

Thus the blessed Bartholomew asserts that the Divine Science is both vast and minute, and that the Gospel is great and broad, yet concise and short; signifying by this, that the Beneficent Cause of all is most eloquent, yet utters few words, or rather is altogether silent, as having neither (human) speech nor (human) understanding, because he is superessentially exalted above created things, and reveals Himself in His naked Truth to those alone who pass beyond all that is pure and impure, and ascend above the topmost altitudes of holy things, and, who leaving behind them all divine light and sound and heavenly utterances, plunge into the Darkness where truly dwells, as the Oracles declare, that ONE Who is beyond all.

. . . The divinest and highest things seen by the eyes or contemplated by the mind are but the symbolical expressions of those that are immediately beneath Him Who is above all. Through these, His incomprehensible Presence is manifested upon those heights of His Holy Places; that then It breaks forth, even from that which is seen and that which sees, and plunges the Mystic into the Darkness of Unknowing, whence all perfection and understanding is excluded, and he is enwrapped in that which is altogether intangible and noumenal, being wholly absorbed in Him Who is beyond all, and is none else (whether himself or another); and through the inactivity of all his reasoning powers is united by his highest faculty to Him Who is wholly unknowable; thus by knowing nothing he knows That which is beyond his knowledge.

The Necessity of being United with and of rendering Praise to Him Who is the Cause of all and above all.

We pray that we may come unto this Darkness which is beyond Light, and, without seeing and without knowing, to see and to know that which is above vision and knowledge through the realization that by not seeing and by unknowing we attain to true vision and knowledge; and thus praise, superessentially, Him Who is Superessential, by the abstraction of the essence of all things; even as those who, carving a statue out of marble, abstract or remove all the surrounding material that hinders the vision which the marble conceals, and, by that abstraction, bring to light the hidden beauty.

It is necessary to distinguish this negative method of abstraction from the positive method of affirmation, in which we deal with the Divine Attributes. For with this latter we begin with the universal and primary, and pass through the intermediate and secondary to the particular and ultimate attributes; but now we ascend from the particular to the universal conceptions, abstracting all attributes in order that, without veil, we may begin to contemplate the Superessential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existing things.

What are the Affirmations and the Negations concerning God?

. . . The higher we soar in contemplation the more limited become our expressions of that which is purely intelligible; even as now, when plunging into the Darkness which is above the intellect, we pass not merely into brevity of speech, but even into absolute Silence, of thoughts as well as of words. Thus, in the former discourse, our contemplations descended from the highest to the lowest, embracing an ever-widening number of conceptions,

which increased at each stage of the descent; but in the present discourse we mount upwards from below to that which is the highest, and, according to the degree of transcendence, so our speech is restrained, until, the entire ascent being accomplished, we become wholly voiceless, inasmuch as we are absorbed in Him Who is totally Ineffable.

But why, you will ask, does the affirmative method begin from the highest attributions, and the negative method with the lowest abstractions. The reason is because, when affirming the subsistence of That which transcends all affirmation, we necessarily start from the attributes most closely related to It and upon which the remaining affirmations depend; but when pursuing the negative method to reach That which is beyond all abstraction, we must begin by applying our negations to things which are most remote from It. For it is not more true to affirm that God is Life and Goodness than that He is air or stone; and must we not deny to Him more emphatically the attributes of inebriation and wrath than the applications of human speech and thought?

That He Who is the Pre-eminent Cause of all things sensibly perceived is not Himself any of those things.

We therefore maintain that the Universal and Transcendent Cause of all these things is neither without being nor without life, nor without reason or intelligence; nor is He a body, nor has He form or shape, or quality, or quantity, or weight; nor has He any localized, visible, or tangible existence; He is not sensible or perceptible; nor is He subject to any disorder or inordination or influenced by any earthly passion; neither is He rendered impotent through the effects of material causes and events; He needs no light; He suffers no change, or

corruption, or division, or privation, or flux; none of these things can either be identified with or attributed unto Him.

Again, ascending yet higher, we maintain, that He is neither Soul nor Intellect; nor has He imagination, opinion, reason, or understanding; nor can He be expressed or conceived, since He is neither number, nor order; nor greatness, nor smallness; nor equality, nor inequality; nor similarity, nor dissimilarity; neither is He standing, nor moving, nor at rest; neither has He power, nor is power, nor is light; neither does He live, nor is He life; neither is He essence, nor eternity, nor time; nor is He subject to intelligible contact; nor is He science, nor truth, nor kingship, nor wisdom; neither one, nor oneness; nor god-head, nor goodness; nor is He spirit according to our understanding, nor Filiation, nor Paternity; nor anything else known to us or to any other beings, of the things that are or the things that are not; neither does anything that is know Him as He is; nor does He know existing things according to existing knowledge; neither can the reason attain to Him, nor name Him, nor know Him; neither is He darkness nor light, nor the false, nor the true; nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him, for although we may affirm or deny the things below Him, we can neither affirm nor deny Him, inasmuch as the all-perfect and unique Cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and the simple pre-eminence of His absolute nature is outside of every negation,—free from every limitation and beyond them all.

Ignorance constitutes the only darkness which covers all things and makes them look mysterious. When everything is lighted by Knowledge, the sense of mystery vanishes.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

GOPALA AND THE COWHERD

By Sister Nivedita

First I must tell you that Gopala had the best mother that ever lived. His father, too, had been a good man. He had not cared about money. All he had wanted was to be good and read the holy books, learning all the beautiful things he could, and teaching them to other people. The village folk regarded him as their learned man, so they gave him a little field in which he could grow corn, and there was a patch of ground near his house which produced fruit and vegetables, and this had always been enough. When he lay dying he said to his wife, "Beloved, I am not very anxious about you and Gopala. I know that our Lord Himself will take care of you. Besides the field will bring you corn, and our kind neighbours will dig the garden for you, that you may have food." And the mother said, "Quite right, my husband. Have no care about us. We shall do well." Thus she cheered him with all her strength, that he might die in peace, fixing all his thought on God. And when all was over, the neighbours came and carried the dead body away. And they put it on a pile of wood, and set lighted straw to it, and it was burned until only a few ashes were left. Then they took the ashes and threw them into the river, and that was the end of Gopala's father.

So now the child and his mother lived all alone in the forest and the only thing she was waiting for was the day when she also could die and rejoin her husband. But she wanted to be quite sure of being allowed to go to him. So she said many many prayers, and bathed three times every day, and tried to be hardworking and good. And the neighbours were indeed kind. Her corn was sown and harvested with that of the village, and they came and helped in the gardening, so that there was always food enough.

By-and-by when Gopala was four or five years old, his mother felt that it was time he went to school. Only before that could happen he must have new clothes, and a little mat to carry under his arm and unroll for a seat at school, and inside the mat a number of palm leaves for a copy book, and a pen box with an ink stand in it, and some reed pens. He would not need a slate just yet, for very little boys have sand strewn over the floor and make their first letters and figures with their fingers in that. I wish you could have seen the new clothes he wanted! Poor little Gopala! India is such a hot country that two long pieces of cotton are all a little boy needs. One, called the chudder, is thrown over the left shoulder like a kind of shawl, and the other, the dhoti, is folded round him below, and fastened in at the waist. I suppose he would want four of these, two for to-day and two for to-morrow, when to-day's suit would be washed in the stream. Of course all these things together cost very little, but to the poor mother it seemed a great deal, and she had to work hard for many days at her spinning-wheel to earn the money.

At last all was ready, and, carefully choosing a lucky day, she blessed her little son, and stood at the cottage door, watching him go down the forest path to his first lessons. As for Gopala, he went on and on. The road seemed very long and he was beginning to wonder if he had lost his way, when at last the village came in sight and he could see numbers of other boys going in to the school. Then he forgot that he had been a little frightened, and hurried up with the others and presented himself in class. It was a long and delightful day. Even when lessons were over, there were games with the other boys, and when at last he set out to go home, it was almost dark. It was a long time before Gopala could forget that first

walk home through the forest alone. It grew darker and darker and he could hear the roar of wild beasts. At last he was so frightened that he did not know what to do, and so he began to run and never stopped till he was in his mother's arms.

Next morning he did not want to go to school. "But", said his mother, "you had such a happy day yesterday, my child, and learnt many beautiful things! You said you loved your lessons. Why do you not wish to go to-day?"

"School is all very well, mother," he replied, "but I am afraid to go alone through the forest."

And then he stood there, so ashamed. But how do you think his mother felt? Oh, such a terrible pain came into her heart, because she was too poor to send any one with him to school. It was only for a minute though, and then she remembered the Lord Krishna. She was one of those who worship Him as a young child, almost a baby, and she had called her own little one after Him, for the word Gopala means "cowherd". So she told her little boy a story. She said, "You know, my child, there lives in these woods another son of mine who is also called Gopala. He herds cows in the forest yonder. He is always somewhere near the path and if you call out to him, 'O, Cowherd Brother, come with me to school!' he will come and take care of you, and then you will not be frightened, will you?"

And Gopala said, "Is it really true that my brother will come and take care of me?"

And his mother said, "Yes, it is true—just as true as it is that you are God's child and that He loves you."

"Good-bye, mother," said Gopala, "I love to go to school."

He set out bravely enough, but a little way down the forest path it was rather dark and he began to feel afraid. He could hear his own heart go pit-a-pat. So he called

out, "O Brother Cowherd, Brother Cowherd, come and play with me!"

The bushes first began to rustle and then parted, and out peeped a boy's head, with a little gold crown on it and a peacock's feather in the crown. Then a big boy jumped out and took the child's hand, and they played all the way to school. But when they came near the village, the young cowherd, telling His little brother to call Him again on his way home, went back to His cows. There was something so lovely about this boy, He was so full of fun, and yet so kind and gentle and strong that Gopala grew to love Him as he had never loved any one before. And as, day after day, he told his mother all about it, words could not express her gratitude. But she was not in the least surprised. It seemed to her quite natural that the Child Krishna should comfort a mother's heart.

So time went on. And then something happened. The schoolmaster announced that he must give a feast—a wedding party, or something of the kind. Now people in India practically never pay a schoolmaster for keeping a school. It is quite easy for him, all the same, to obtain food. For his field, like the widow's, is part of the village-lot, and the villagers plant and dig for him also. But on a special occasion, such as the present, when it becomes known to his pupils that he must provide a feast, each boy will go home to his parents and say, "My noble teacher"—for so the master is called—"my noble teacher is about to give a party. What gifts can I take to him?" Then some mothers will set to work and cook quantities of sweetmeats, cakes and puddings; some will prepare great trays of fruit; one will buy beautiful silk cloth for him and his wife to wear at time of worship, and others will send cotton and muslin for daily clothing. In this way the school-master

and his wife are amply provided for. And now, like others of course, Gopala said to his mother that night, "Mother, to-morrow is our noble teacher's party. What can I take to him?"

Again her child's words made the poor mother very sad for a moment. She knew that she was not rich enough to give her little boy anything for his master. But it was only a moment, and she brightened up again, for she thought of the Child Krishna and knew that He would help them.

"I cannot give you anything to take to your teacher, but ask your Brother in the forest for something as you go to school in the morning," she said.

So in the morning Gopala and the Shepherd Boy played all the way to school; but just as He was leaving Gopala said to Him, "O Brother, I almost forgot. Will you give me something for my teacher to-day? He is going to have a party."

"What can I give you? What am I but a poor Cowherd? Oh, but I know"—and away He ran for a moment, and came back with a little bowl of sour milk. In India they eat the thick part of sour milk and call it curds. And He said, "That is all I can give you, Gopala. It is only a poor Cowherd's offering. But give it to your teacher." Gopala thought it was a beautiful present, the more so because it came from his woodland friend. So he hastened to the master's house and stood eagerly waiting behind a crowd of boys, all handing over what they had brought. Many and varied were the offerings, and none thought of even noticing the gift of the fatherless child. This neglect was disheartening, and tears stood in the eyes of Gopala, when, by a sudden stroke of fortune, his teacher chanced to look at him. He took the tiny pot of curds from his hands,

and went to empty it into a larger vessel, but, to his wonder the pot filled up again. Again he poured, again the little pot was full. And so he went on, while it filled faster than he could empty it. Then the master gave them all curds to eat, and went on pouring and pouring. Still the little cup was full. Every one said, "What does this mean?" And Gopala, as much astonished as the rest, understood for the first time who His Brother in the forest was. Never till this moment had he even guessed that the Child Krishna Himself had come to play with him. So when the master turned to him with the question, "Where did you get this curd?" it was very reverently that he answered, "I got it in the forest from my Brother, the Cowherd."

"Who is He?"

"One who comes and plays with me on my way to school," said Gopala. "He wears a crown on His head, with a peacock feather in it, and carries a flute in His hand. When I reach school He goes back and tends His cows, and when I am going home He comes again to play with me."

"Can you show me your Brother in the forest?"

"If you come, Sir, I can call."

So hand in hand the master and Gopala went along the path together. At the usual place the child called, "Cowherd Brother! Brother Cowherd! Won't you come?" But no voice answered. Gopala did not know what to do, and he saw a look of doubt on his teacher's face, so he cried once more, "O Brother Cowherd, if you do not come they will think I do not tell the truth!"

Then came a voice, as if from far away in the forest, "Nay, little one, I cannot show My face. Thy master still has long to wait. Few sons indeed are blest with mothers like to thine!"

REPORT

Nothing conveys the illusory nature of human life more than does the element of time. Thus the many months of Swami Paramananda's absence seemed to melt away completely as he stood on the station platform at Glendale, surrounded by friends eager to welcome him back to America and the West. It was as if he had never been away. Accompanying him from the Orient was Swami Akhilananda who is to assist him in his work, and Swami Dayananda who remained behind in San Francisco as assistant to Swami Prakashananda.

The following day, June 20th, being Sunday, a large number assembled at Ananda-Ashrama to attend the Services, expressing in this way their joy at the Swami's return. On Tuesday an impromptu reception at the Ashrama Community-House gave the Swami opportunity to greet his friends in a more informal way and to present to them Swami Akhilananda who expressed his appreciation of the warm welcome accorded him, in sincere, earnest words which immediately won sympathetic response. All were eager to hear about the trip to India and looked with interest at photographs, Addresses of Welcome and other souvenirs which were arranged on a long table for inspection.

Although the Swami, weary from his voyagings, would gladly have remained uninterruptedly at the Ashrama for some months, the call of faithful hearts at Boston, Cincinnati and elsewhere, as well as certain insistent duties, drew him east on June 29th. He is gone, however, only for a few weeks, it is hoped, and expects to be back in California before the first of August. During his absence Services and Classes at the Ashrama will be conducted by Swami Akhilananda and Sister Daya.

BOOK REVIEWS

Superconscious Vision.—By Swami Prabhavananda.

(Published by The Vedanta Society of Portland. Price 20 cts.)

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